

"You are a King, then?" said Pirate. Jesus answered, "'King' is your word. My task is to bear witness to the Truth. For this was I born; for this I came into the world, and all who are not deaf to Truth listen to my voice." Pirate said, "What is Truth?" And, with those words, went out again to the Jews.

Pirate did not wait for an answer from Jesus. Alas! The pity of it! Jesus knew himself as the Way, the Truth and the Life. Instead of learning from Jesus what he had come to teach, Pirate went out again to the Jews who were clamouring to have Jesus crucified.

The oath

When we probe into the question posed by Pirate, we are confronted by a battalion of 'buts'. The person in the witness box swears with his hand on a holy book or on his chest to speak "the Truth, the whole Truth and nothing but the Truth." But the Truth, the authentic stuff, is neither cognisable nor communicable. Every one of the witnesses, while professing to speak the 'whole' Truth can indulge only in half-truths, which are often double lies! They give differing versions of the incidents or actors, since their responses are painted or polluted, trimmed or transfigured by the desire for vengeance or victory. The observation itself, though from close quarters and by persons watchful and intelligent, is mostly through glasses coloured by conceit or prejudice, servility or hatred. Seldom is truth spoken unqualified, or unvarnished. It is treated as a tool and not as an axiom. In every argument, contest, or dispute, struggle, strife or war it is the first on the casualty list.

Truth too delights in the game of hide and seek. It revels in camouflage and masquerade. The real and the genuine challenge our faculties to the utmost, for they appear only as we desire, decorated, modified or moulded in order to flatter our likes and dislikes. No wonder, an aspirant for experiencing the Truth bewailed, as the Veda records, "What thing I am I do not know. I wander alone burdened with my mind." The mind squirts its ink of aversion or attachment, avarice or anxiety on whatever he prefers as Truth. Swami declares, "the knowledge of the Truth is acquired by uninterrupted inquiry by the clarified intellect and purified mind."

Purified mind?

Our senses gather such bits of information of the objective world as can please the ego that is their paymaster. "Our brains shuffle the bits around, until they call into same acceptable pattern", says Lyall Watson. Arthur Koestler says, "Between the retina and the higher centres of the cortex, the innocence of vision is irretrievably lost; it has succumbed to the suggestions of hidden persuaders." Some of these persuaders have surprisingly filtered through even the subtle genetic sieve from our previous sojourns on earth!

There is another equally deluding factor—the needs and beliefs of the others amidst whom we have to grow. We are "cultured" into accented and respected patterns of action and reaction, analysis and synthesis, ideas and ideals. We are conditioned so much by the invidious forces of social approval that we imbibe and implement, customs and conventions, frills and fashions,

opinion.

Clarified intellect?

An experience is an airy something, seeking a local habitation and a name. It can seldom secure admission into the realm of awareness except by means of words or linguistic labels, or vocalised visas. It has to be categorised and catalogued by the faculty of reason, compared and confirmed, before being registered. The richer one's vocabulary, the more rewarding his experience becomes, for himself and others. We have to be content with blunt multipurpose vocables for delineating the indefinite.

Much depends on the integrity of the person who utters and on the Intelligence of the listener. But even when both are so equipped, if they are yoked to a language in which sublime spontaneous experiences are not expressible through distinct words or through prefixes and suffixes, prepositions and paraphrases, it becomes difficult to have them stamped on the memory for recapitulation and reflection.

This defect was noticed centuries ago by the sages of the Upanishad texts. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, while dilating on Sathya Vidya, the process of meditating on Brahman (the Absolute) as Sathyam (Truth) reveals that the word Sathyam is a tri-syllable. Sa-thi-yam—"The first and last syllables are Truth; in the middle is falsehood (anrtham), Falsehood is embraced by Truth; thereby, it partakes of the nature of Truth."

The mirage

Schroedinger speaks of Reality as 'observer created'. Heirenberger writes, "The object we perceive is inextricably connected with our subjective consciousness. In fact, no one can observe any object or individual without colouring it with himself. There are no observers; there are only participators."

Einstein has told us, "Whoever undertakes to set himself up as judge in the field of Truth is shipwrecked in the laughter of the gods. The Vedic Hymn laments:

Who really knows? Who can presume to declare?
Whence was this born? Whence came this creation?
Did the gods come after non-being became being?
And being became this? How has this come to be?
That out of which creation has happened—
Whether That held it firm? or, not?
He who oversees it in the highest heaven
He really knows ... Or, maybe, He does not.

A hundred answers

If Pilate had questioned a hundred persons, "What is truth?" and waited for answers from them, he would have received a hundred different replies—each one an unconfirmed guess, a tentative

is what I uphold, Truth is the Conscience that pricks, Truth is what the Book proclaims, Truth is what survives the onslaught of centuries, Truth is the child's lisp, the Flash of the Sword, Truth is what the stars reveal to the adept, the Oracle asserts, the lie-detector reveals, Truth is the nugget that the psychiatrist digs up, etc. etc., mostly fictitious, fragile, fragmentary figments of one's own imagination.

The path to Truth is paved with discarded certainties. The level of moral purity, mental clarity, intellectual verity and emotional stability decide the Truth we can rely upon. When the horizon widens, the waves subside and the storms are stilled, more facets of Truth come within our reach.

Our minds with their numberless preferences and prejudices, desires and designs, befog the Truth in order to please our passing fancies. This diversionary strategy stunts our intellect and stultifies our intuition. So, we have to grope for Truth in the wilderness of a vast "Perhaps". Indeed, we have in India an honest and honoured school of sceptic metaphysics named Syad Vada, which professes and propagates its view of Truth as 'may be', 'perchance', 'perhaps'!

This Syad Vada appears as legitimate. Therein, the innate incomprehensibility of "the Truth, the whole Truth and nothing but the Truth" is demonstrated by seven steps of an astonishing logic of possibilities, the Saptha Bhangi Nyaya, which debunks the idea of finality: (1) Syad asthi (perhaps, it exists) (2) Syad nasthi (perhaps, it does not exist); (3) Syad asthi cha, nasthi cha (perhaps, it exists and does not exist); (4) Syad avakthavyah (perhaps, it is indescribable); (5) Syad asthi cha avakthavyah (perhaps, it exists though indescribable) ; (6) Syad nasthi cha avakthavyah cha (perhaps, it does not exist and is indescribable) ; (7) Syad asthi cha, nasthi cha avakthavyah cha (perhaps, it exists and does not exist and is indescribable).

No scepticism

But, Sankara the most meticulous exponent and protagonist of Advaita Darshan which collates mystic awareness of Truth with logical validity and scriptural revelation, is not enamoured of scepticism. While commenting on the Saptha Bhangi Nyaya he writes, "How can a teacher of this school of philosophy, who has to be assumed as an, authority, impart instruction when the means of knowledge, objects of knowledge, the Knower and Knowledge remain indefinite in nature? Also, how can those who rely upon his views act upon his instruction?"

In spite of this indeterminism, incomprehensibility and his own incompetence, man is persistently urged by an inner hunger for Truth, an inner Voice that prods him to Arise, Awake and receive instruction from the Masters. He pleads "Lead me from the unreal to Reality: lead me from darkness to Light; lead me from death to Deathlessness." When the hunger is tolerated, dismissed or suppressed and when the Voice within is jammed or joked about, the Master, the Swami presents Himself as Teacher to guide Man to his Truth.

"Human-ness and God-ness, the Role and the Reality co-exist inseparably in every one of you," Swami told a gathering of students in 1974. "They are the negative and the positive,

in the awareness of Reality, you can wander safe and free in the alleys of the Apparent."

God is the truth

Swami says, "God is the Truth of all beings and things. Every wave and particle, every atom and cell is filled with God and functions in and through God. You may, out of perversity, pride or poverty of intelligence reject this Truth, but life has been assigned to you again so that you free yourselves from the shackles of falsehood and reach the goal of Truth." Subjective defects and objective distractions are the challenges one confronts, but they are not as formidable as they seem. "Ask; it shall be answered. Knock; it shall be opened. March; you shall reach," we are told.

Countless numbers of pilgrims and pupils have criss-crossed the earth, along its highways and bye-ways, in search of Truth, the Truth of themselves and of the scenario and struggle into which they have been thrust. The trek of patients in search of cures towards the doors of the wise has continued throughout history. Man can find no peace until he understands the Truth of whatever arouses wonder, awe, sympathy, reverence, curiosity and fear. He strives for unity and coherence, harmony and beauty. He wants to know things as they really are, not as they seem to be or pretend to be.

Luckily, there is a bright side to the story of man's journey to Truth. Prophets, sages and saints, Masters and Messengers, have appeared among all peoples and taught men by precept and example the Truth that can free them. The Cosmic Consciousness itself, when it becomes aware of its fragments getting fogged and frustrated, wills to shape Itself into a Form that can move among men and move them Home towards Itself. Such a Form is known as an Avatar, a particularisation of the Absolute. The Avatar happens in order to fulfill a felt need and so, its Wisdom, Love, Power and Compassion pour over all who need them. All men, indeed all living beings, are its concern. And, 'lifeless' matter too.

For, as Swami says, Sarvam Brahmanam, everything has emanated from Brahman, the vast Ocean which emanates ripples, wavelets, waves, foam and flakes of snow and icebergs. The Atom is a replica of the Cosmic energy; cell is an echo of Cosmic will "Vasudeva is all," the Gita declares, without exception. The Rg Veda proclaims, "All this is Purusha himself, all that has been and all that is going to be." This is the Truth. The Rudra Adhyaya of the Yajur Veda commands man to adore 238 representative entities of God, illustrating thereby that there is nothing except God. (The Katha Upanishad condemns those who see the Cosmos as manifold and not as basically Brahman; they have to plod through life after life until they realise the error).

Rudra, the name assigned to God, is described in the Vedic texts as the motivator seated in all hearts, as the provider, the saviour of the Universe which is His self-assumed form. He is identified with the chiefs, the middlings and the lowly, the tall, the short and the stout, the aged, the young and the juvenile, the wise, the curious and the dull, and the sleepy. He is stone, sand and dust, slush, pollen and gravel, ripple, foam and wave, river, stream, lake, and canal, lightning, cloud, shower and rain, ocean, island and shore. Rudra is the highway, the road, the

tree and the timber. He is the one engaged in trading or farming or rearing cattle. He is the cow-pen and the crop, the food and the cook. He is the man behind the plough on fertile land or barren. He is the person who is brave and fearsome, fighting from trenches and on open fields, with missiles, arrows, spears and swords. He is the warrior who revels in duels, who moves forward in chariots with helmet and coat-of-mail. He is the foot-soldier, the horseman, the leader of dogs and the led. He is the scout, the messenger, the smith, the carpenter, the hunter, the wily guerilla, the cheat and the dacoit, the decoy and the impersonator.

Rudra is in the form of the monk, the cave dweller having a crown of matted hair, the one who has mastered the steady pose, the sage who has crossed over and who leads others across, the elderly scholar, the dialectician delighting in debates, the Vedic expert and the master of rituals. He is the person who is compassionate, sweet and tender.

In fact, God is the warp and woof, the cotton and yarn, of the fabric, apparent to us as the Universe. That is the Truth which is encased in every cell and star.

—*N. Kasturi*

Christmas 1986

On Christmas Day, two thousand candle-bearing overseas devotees moving to the melodious strains of Christmas carols converged on the Lotus courtyard facing the Mandir for the Dawn Darshan. The voices rose up in a crescendo of adoration when Baba appeared at the Silver Door and blessed the vast congregation. On Christmas Evening, at Poornachandra Auditorium, Baba spoke on the significance of the advent of Jesus. Later, a large group of children offered their songs to the Lord. A choir, of two hundred voices, sang the Glory of God. Then the renowned trumpeter Maynard Fergusson, supported by the students of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, on a variety of wind instruments, played an assortment of Christmas songs ending with the heart stomping refrains: "When the Saints go marching in".

You might have heard people talk of the 'miracles'; of my 'making' this, and 'giving' that, of My fulfilling your wants, of My curing your illnesses. Of course, I confer on you these boons of health and prosperity; but, only so that you might, with greater enthusiasm and with less interruption, proceed with Spiritual Sadhana.

—**Baba**

All living beings emanated originally from water; humans have bodies built out of food based ultimately on plants sustained by water. Speech is the special acquisition of human beings and the earliest use man made of this talent to utter the glory of God and pray for His Grace is the Rk of the Rg Veda. The Rk was rendered enchanting because it attributed Names to God while paying homage to the Supreme. All such Names are subsumed and treasured in the sound OM the audible but not visible sign and symbol.

The pranava sound

OM indicates the Omniself, the Param-Atman the Cosmic and Trans-Cosmic Consciousness. Every moment, in every cell in every atom, the OM resounds, reverberates, and activates. OM energises, sustains and fills the Universe. "OM ithi ekaksharam Brahma" (The one letter OM, the indestructible is Brahma) assert the Upanishads The Vedas assure us "Ayam Atma Brahma" (This Atma-Soul-is Brahma). The sages were aware that the Atma is OM, even when they defined OM as Brahma. In fact all the three expressions indicate the one and only Entity.

The four stages

Every one has to achieve the awareness of this Atma in him. Man passes through four phases of life, each single day. He is awake (jagrat), he dreams (swapna), he sleeps (sushupti) and he reaches the phase beyond the three (turiya). When awake, the person is involved incessantly with the objective world, through the senses. The eyes are able to distinguish colours; the ears welcome good and bad sounds; the tongue tastes, and rejects; the nose gathers information about fragrant and forbidding smells. The basic attributes of the five fundamental elements (ether, :wind, fire. water and earth) are apprehended by the five senses as sound, touch, form, taste and smell in that order. So the individual is concerned not only with itself but with all the Cosmos around. Therefore the waking stage is named Vishwa (global). The soul of man then assumes an omnipresent form, reminiscent of Vishnu, of the Director of sensual activities, the Hrshikesha.

During the phase of dreams, man turns into himself. The senses of perception and action lie dormant. The individual is busy with his memory and the plans and projects the mind has played with. People sleeping adjacent to one another dream differently according to each one's urges and mental mysteries. The dream has validity for the dreamer; it absorbs light from the deeper levels of consciousness; it reveals the latent through inner luminosity. So, the stage is named Taijasa, partaking the nature of Tejas or shining.

During the phase of 'deep' sleep (Sushupti), the senses, the faculty of reason and the mind are all out of action, and are subsumed in the Self. The person is unaware during sleep of himself or others but he is able to recall every detail as soon as he wakes. He is, during sleep, merged in consciousness, pure and simple. So the phase is named Prajna.

The fourth stage is Turiya, where the person is aware of the Divinity that is his nature. He attains merger with the Absolute or Samadhi.

The sound, OM, known as Pranava has also four parts or stages. The sound A (as in manna) is a basic sound in speech and is universally utilised. It is parallel to the Vishva or Wakeful phase of man's daily life. The sound U (as in put) is indicative of the breathing process (inhaling and exhaling), which ensures the glow of Vitality or Tejas. The breath persists in the dream stage and so it corresponds to the dreaming phase. Then we have in OM the M sound (as in am), which closes all externalising and internalising outlets and inlets of consciousness and enables man to be alone with his Reality, Prajna or Brahma. So it symbolises the condition during Sushupti and can be defined as the Prajna phase. The silence into which the OM tapers is the consummation, the Turiya phase, when the veil of ignorance, that has prevented the ecstasy of Brahman from illumining the awareness, is removed and one is conscious of the mergence.

The Atma is associated with speech, breath and mind in the body, though it remains unaffected. It is a spark of the all-comprehensive Brahman, the all-pervasive OM, the ever-present is (Asti). Brahman is defined as Being (Sat) Awareness (Chit) and Bliss (Ananda). When it is said that education must result in the manifestation of the Divinity already in man, it is the awareness of the Atma that is indicated as the goal. When the sage Narada approached Sanatkumara for spiritual guidance, he was asked by the Guru to relate what he had learnt up to that moment. The credentials had to be laid bare. Narada reeled off along list of subjects and texts that he had mastered. He was happy that Sanatkumara was listening to him with attention. When he finished, Sanatkumara described, the entire list as mere 'names' of things and ideas, names devoid of substance. He told Narada, "Speech is more meaningful and weighty than Name, the Mind; from which Speech springs is more significant than Speech; the Will is more, fundamental than the mind; Consciousness is the prompter of the Will; both, these depend on Vital Energy which is derived from Food. Food is grown on earth with the help of water; the element Water is a derivative of Fire which itself is by-product of Air. And Air is a manifestation of Space, the first projection of the Will latent in Brahman. Therefore, unless you know Brahman, your knowledge cannot be total and completely satisfying."

This teaching of Sanatkumara reveals that the Cosmos is Brahman, in and through and that OM is activating it as the Cosmic Sound. Matter is saturated with the Divine, every molecule of it. Though Matter is the product of Becoming, it is still a genuine fragment of the Being that has become matter. Hence, it is that we are able to see it, deal with it and recognise it as a whirl of energy. Energy, latent or patient, greater or less, exists in all things. It is the Divine characteristic in them.

Contemplation on the One and on its symbol OM resounding in us with every breath and reminding us of the One which persists in us during daily wakefulness, dream and sleep, can ensure the awareness of the Sat-Chit-Ananda we really are.

—*From Divine Discourse, on 30-12-1986*

When a person engaged in meditation forgets both himself and that he is engaged on meditation, then it is Samadhi.

When it is realized that the knower is pure consciousness, the act of knowing is pure consciousness, and that which is known is pure consciousness—then there is no more agitation or mental activity. This is Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

When the soul attains complete realization, it has full wisdom, beauty, splendour, power, fame and fortune. One's nature is then full existence, full knowledge, full bliss—Satchidananda.

—Baba

Loving Service Forever

The Annual Conference of the Akhila Andhra Sadhu Parishath, an assembly of sanyasis, was held in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan at Prasanthi Nilayam on Jan. 2, 3 and 4, 1987. More than three hundred monks and nuns of various orders from Andhra Pradesh, and neighbouring states, and even beyond from Varanasi and Rishikesh were present, with their disciples and followers. They went through a crowded schedule of discourses and discussions. Bhagavan blessed the Conference in His Inaugural Address, granted the Conference His gracious Presence during the discourses and in His Valedictory Address, and directed them to accept with faith the spiritual elevation of society as the essential path towards Self-realisation.

The Vedas

The Sanathana Dharma (the Eternal Religion) which is the basis of Bharatiya Culture is the essence of the lessons enunciated in all the Vedic texts. This Dharma is the source and spring of the various systems of philosophy, codes of morality and even of the different forms and streams of literature. Through these means the Dharma has taught that man cannot live in peace, until (1) he knows what ought to be known, (2) he casts away what has to be cast away, and (3) reached the goal he has to reach. Veda means awareness, knowledge, and discrimination. The four Vedas teach us who and what we really are and how we are related to the world around us. This is the greatest gift that the Vedas offer. This is the end of all enquiry, the aim of all scientific search.

Knowledge has its consummation in the discovery of Truth, Truth which survives Past, Present and Future unaffected. 'Sathyam, Jnanam, Anantam.' Both Sathyam (Truth) and Jnanam (knowledge) are Anantam (without end). They are eternal and limitless. The Vedas are vocal expressions of both these. To consider Vedas as literature or poetry is to devalue them. Vedic hymns are not intended for empty worship by rituals. They have been recorded by sages to help, experience and practise. The sages had recognised this factor and therefore the Vedas have survived untarnished until today. Their practice became Yajnas. Their prayers became songs.

The three tools for awareness

Speech, Mind and Breath are the three most vital instruments for adoration and awareness of Truth and Knowledge. Among the Vedas Rg-veda highlights speech; the Yajur-veda highlights

three Vedas reveal the Cosmic principle which is the reality of every atom in the universe. They do this in simple language, using easily understandable similes and metaphors. The Vedas prescribe the ceremonies, rites, rituals and actions necessary for the prosperity and progress of mankind, here and hereafter.

The burden

The body needs a second principle to guide it but that principle the Atma is One without a second. When attention is diverted from the 'body-mind-senses complex' the splendour of the Atma becomes brighter and brighter. The body seeks gathering and possessing; the Atma seeks giving and showering Light, Love and Grace. Attachment to the sheath (Upadhi) is the greatest obstacle for liberation (Samadhi) which is the ultimate goal of the spiritual aspirant. Wisdom dawns when man realises, that the body he believed to be his is understood as only temporary hesitation and a burden he assumed out of sheer ignorance.

The task

Activity finds fulfillment when wisdom dawns. Karma is the path by which Jnana is attained. And, wisdom in action is the highest Karma. Worthwhile activity must result in purifying the mind. Therefore, no one, not even a recluse or monk can desist from engaging in good intentions. These deeds must originate spontaneously and should not leave any trace of pride in the mind. Nor should any attachment to the result of the deed lead to a craving for claiming it for oneself. Renunciation must be the only source of joy. Tyaga is the truest Bhoga for the Sanyasi. The Gita recommends 'inaction in action' and asserts that 'inaction is the most rewarding action' for those who strive for supreme peace. This attitude is named Karma Sanyasa (nonattachment to action). Action or activity is generally associated with the body only, but the mind is also busy with the world. The Atma alone is the unaffected witness. So, the secret of 'inaction in action' lies in taking refuge in the Atma and in recognising all living beings as fundamentally Atma.

The wise act solely for the promotion of peace and goodwill in the human community with no consideration of I and Mine. The ego is deep-rooted in man during countless previous lives. It grows fast in this life also, seeking sensual pleasure, possessions in plenty, applause and appreciation, authority over others, fame and fortune. It can be removed only by relentless enquiry into our Reality.

The seed

A tree has a trunk covered with bark and myriad roots to feed it and hold it firm. It has branches spreading in all directions, tapering into twigs. It has millions of leaves which breathe and borrow energy from the Sun. It fulfills itself by attracting bees to fertilise the flowers into seeds. All this variety of colour, fragrance; taste, smell and softness, of strength and toughness and tenderness has emanated from one single seed. All creation has emanated similarly from God. This is the Truth. This is the Reality inherent in all. That Thou Art. Be firm in that faith.

Ponder on a river merging in the ocean. The waters of the ocean rise up as vapour when warmed by the sun and form clouds, which drop them down on earth as drops of rain. Each drop has inside it the yearning to return to the ocean from which it has been exiled. But, the feeling of individuality overcomes the yearning. The raindrops accumulate and flow as brooks and streams which swell into tributaries of rivers, flooding the plains. At last, the river merges in the ocean and loses its name and form and attributes. In spite of all the modifications undergone in the journey from ocean to ocean, water remains as water in vapour, cloud, rain and river. Names and forms and qualities do change but the core remains unchanged. Man too emerges from the ocean of Divinity and his destiny is to merge in it. This is the Truth. This is the Reality. That Thou Art. Be firm in that faith.

The drop

Take a lump of salt and drop it in a cup of water. The salt dissolves soon and disappears, though we know it exists. In every drop, the lump cannot be picked up but we can assure ourselves of its presence by tasting the water. God is present everywhere, though invisible. But, He can be known by the taste. You are the taste, the Divine droplet. This is the Truth—That Thou Art.

The I

While awake, man experiences a variety of relationships. He is interested in a multiplicity of persons, possessions and problems. He passes through joy and grief, praise and ridicule, insult and injury, honour and dishonour. But, while engaged in dreams, the entire tangle fades away. He withdraws from the outer world and is wholly his own designer. He projects situations of pleasure and pain, happiness and misery. He plunges into fear and throws himself in despair. He creates both friends and foes and deals with them as the fancy dictates. While asleep, he is no more alert or active. He is alone with the Atma, with his Reality. The Atma, the Self was his Reality all through the three stages, even when he denied it and ignored it. This Atma is the Truth. That Thou Art—Tat Twam Asi.

Persons who have dedicated their lives to spiritual search and success have to discover the Atma in themselves and others. The discovery will confer sympathy and compassion and promote loving service. Ashrams of monks must be centres of spiritual illumination, sources of Ananda and the inspiration to share the Ananda with all. Institutions and Orders arise out of the unselfish enthusiasm to serve and save those who have lost their way and are flourishing on trivial pursuits. Fortunately, a long series of saints has upheld in this land these high ideals. The world is in dire distress today. It can be saved only by dedicated man setting an example of high morality, self-less service and universal Love. Equipped with a calm and serene temper, adhering always to Truth, man must involve himself in society with full faith in God as Protector and Provider.

—From Bhagavan's Discourse on 2-1-1987 at Poornachandra Auditorium

distinct marks by which they can be identified. Such people have a compassionate heart. If a person turns the rosary on the fingers, and is intently engaged in watching the tip of his nose, unmindful of the distress that dances around him, we can at best name him a sloth, that is all. Get up, place the rosary in its bag, and activate yourselves in relieving distress that is the true spiritual path. Do not waste all your years with stone images, pictures or idols. Learn to see in every living vital active person, the embodiment of all energy, all beauty, all beneficence, namely, God. God is subtler than ether, filing the smallest crevice with His majesty. Know this and serve His manifestations, wherever you meet them.

—Baba

Peace through Seva

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, and 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.

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 Kuanyin 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 Negara or, as one of the pillars of national life. If

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 their 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 events 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 to 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.

—*Y. B, Dato' Lew Sip Hon, Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry, Malaysia*

Sai Signposts for Western Psychologists

Western psychology is poised for a dramatic change in its content and the contribution it can make to the realisation of a peaceful and productive world. Having wandered about in a spiritual vacuum for over 60 years, there is now a certain hopelessness, which is luckily the forerunner of a wider vision. The teachings of Sathya Sai Baba will without doubt have a dramatic impact on western clinical psychology. In the early decades of this century medically oriented people

main principles of this school is that the Unconscious is a malevolent grouping of forces seeking to rise to the surface and destroy the ego. The Super-ego is postulated as the guardian of the ego. The general effect upon the population of such a belief system might have been detrimental to the natural evolution towards Self-awareness which is inherent in everyone. A dangerous Unconsciousness which requires a Super-ego to erect all sorts of defence mechanisms to guard against the premature release of unpalatable traits does not accord well with one's self-concept. How can a person make any sense out of shadow: which can do nothing but destroy?

The exquisite contribution which Sri Sathya Sai has made in this area lies in a simple sentence, guiding us towards meditation. He says: "Let old memories well up in you, from My subconscious in you, old patterns, old forgotten feeling and thoughts. Now plunge them into the ocean of Light, burn them from the consciousness, so that you may be true emblems of My Being." Just look at what a difference this one simple statement makes! The unconscious is now no longer threatening. It is the source of firewood to be thrown into the blaze to light up the consciousness. Each new log is handed forth by the Lord Himself, by one's very own Essence.

Let us say a thought arises which is not only frowned upon by oneself, but would also be condemned by all of society. Instead of this being a cause for erecting psychological barriers against its intrusion into one's consciousness, it becomes an opportunity to assert once again, "Not this, not this", until all that is left is Light. Who knows what part one is playing in the whole scheme of things when a disturbing thought is presented by the Lord? The world is in great need of transformation. Who is to carry out this transformation? Those whom the Lord selects might well be the agents of transformation for the negative forces which are surrounding our planet. A disturbing thought might come from one's own past behaviour pattern, or even from past lives, but it could also come from forces which are seeking to put out the Light. And so it can be seen that the enemy within becomes a friendly giant who is teaching us how to become God-like-men.

In the hope-filled years of the early sixties, behaviour therapy got into its stride throwing off the bonds inherited from four decades of psycho-analytic thinking. The approach seemed to bring cure for a wide range of behavioral disturbances which had resisted hundreds of hours of traditional psychotherapy. Quite simply, behaviour therapy aimed at modifying those thoughts and actions of the patient which are accessible and obvious, rather than postulating some unconscious determinant of the problem behaviour. However this new approach remained essentially God-less, and it is therefore not surprising that one of its significant failures has been the problem of dealing with depression. While psychologists attempted to modify the negative patterns of thinking which appeared to be maintaining the depressive state, most psychiatrists relied upon the steam-roller approach of pharmacology and electric shock therapy. The situation today throughout the western world can be described as one in which debilitating depression is mounting like a tidal wave which threatens to destroy the very fabric of society. Young people in particular have sought to deal with their depression with drugs, both legal and illegal. The situation is so critical that the Rev. Tod Notts of the Wayside Chapel in Sydney describes the drug menace as being a greater threat to humanity than that of nuclear war.

Into this vacuum of psychological thinking comes the uniquely powerful words of Sri Sathya Sai Baba when He says:

"All the hunger, thirst, joy, sorrow, suffering and anger are but impulses helping you attain the presence of God."

This one statement, taken as words of Truth, provides the seed for a new growth in psychotherapy which will rescue the mental state of western society from its murky depths. For what it says is that every disturbing feeling is not only a signpost towards union with God but also a rocket-blast in that direction. Sri Sathya Sai Baba has said, "Nature is the best teacher." Acting on this advice, if we take the simple example of our shadow, we can see that it provides two pieces of valuable information. Firstly it says, "there is no light here" and the other is, "if you follow me back from whence I came you will be traveling towards my opposite, the light."

Depression, more than any other emotion, can be likened to the shadow, in that it does feel dark when it comes upon us. Western psychology has little to offer other than to stumble around in that shadow or to shunt the person into a less black but more enveloping darkness. With the words of Sathya Sai to guide us we now know that depression is a signal that we have turned the wrong way (away from light). The shadow of depression might be saying to us, "This alienation you are feeling from everybody else is not real." The shadow points the way back towards the Light. The challenging Truth which lies within the shadow might be saying, "This sense of alienation is telling you that you are ready for a great discovery. Although it seems this person and that is separate and distant from you, the Truth of the matter is that all are connected by a Golden Thread. When you know that there is never any two, that all are One, then you will know the feeling of Divine Connectedness."

Western society, and increasingly the East also is obsessed with buying and consuming more and more products which are advertised as bringing happiness. The dramatic rise in the incidence of depression seems to parallel this increase in materialistic thinking. Sai said that He has come to "Repair the signposts on the Royal Highway to God". Reminding the essentially—Christian West that the words of Jesus Christ are eternally true. Jesus said, "The kingdom of Heaven lies within." Sri Sathya Sai Baba says, "Within you is pure, lasting, unsullied happiness." With these words He pinpoints the critical issue for the treatment of the majority of depressive states. His statement that "A vast Limitless Ocean" of happiness lies within each of us comes as a revelation to any depressed person. Immediately there is a glimmer of Light in a deep dark cave. When the depressed patient realises that this debilitating mood has come upon him because he is ready for an extraordinary inner journey, it gives purpose and meaning to what has previously been regarded as a dreaded affliction. Once he has this information, every negative thought, every disturbing feeling, becomes a signal to remind oneself, 'I have turned away from my Inner Light. Within me is pure, lasting, unsullied happiness. I seek it. I find it. I find it.'

There is one more area of psychology which has dramatic implications for the Western world. The subject is anger. Along with the professional psychologists, other workers came to the

to the release of this powerful force. The Cinema and Television granted increasing licence to the portrayal of violence in both news-reporting and stories of fiction. At the same time the governments and the military leaders of the major nations began to coldly discuss the annihilation of tens of millions of people with nuclear and germ warfare.

Bhagavan Baba has certainly replanted a signpost at this critical hour in world history by stating unequivocally that anger is not to be indulged in nor expressed. Instead it is to be used as an "impulse to help one attain the presence of God." Mahatma Gandhi has demonstrated through his own personal life how the extraordinary energy which lies within (the emotion we call anger, aagaha) can be used for the good. Through studying the Gita he learned how to transform this negative emotion into a powerful force which could be applied in political and other spheres constructively.

The example of Gandhi and the words of Sathya Sai can inspire us towards exploring ways of transforming anger into an agent for the Higher Good. Rather than seeking to smash through the egoistical shell of the other person in an angry tirade, we can use this explosive force to shatter our own shell of illusion and limited thinking. When we do so the realization comes that anger is, in truth "An impulse towards the presence of God."

Western psychologists will, in the near future, realise the error of their ways and begin to question the freedom given to the expression of anger. When this happens they will find in the Sri Sathya Sai Baba multiple ways for bringing about a transformation of this extraordinary energy so that it can be used in a proper way.

The three areas dealt with in the present article (the Unconscious, Depression and Anger) provide only a glimpse of the momentous changes that lie in wait for Western psychology as it enters into its crisis of confidence. The ingredients for a revolution in psychological thinking are almost complete. What remains to be added are the Drops of Essence from the guiding words of Sathya Sai.

Tens of thousands of volumes have been written by Western psychologists in this century, many of which have served to mislead and confuse not only themselves but also a trusting public. In contrast, one single sentence from Sai Baba contains within it a series of lightning bolts of clarifying wisdom to guide psychologists towards a unified theory of human behaviour which will last for a thousand years. He says:

"Assert your Godhead!

Fling into utter oblivion the little self as if it had never existed!

When the little bubble on the wave bursts, it knows itself as the entire ocean!

You are the Whole, the Infinite, the All!"

The signposts have been repaired and replaced by His Grace. All that remains is to follow their direction.

The Chit

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba says, "Every object maintains its inner genuineness. When it does not it degenerates. When fire loses its capacity to burn it reduces itself to cold coal. Sugar can no longer be sugar if it loses its sweetness. This sweetness in sugar, the heat in fire, is identified with God." Thus, the Power which gives each substance its uniqueness is called God. What makes sugar specifically sugar, is God. Its specific character, sweetness, arises because of its chemical composition and structure, its reaction on the human tongue. Salt however is distinctly different from sugar and quartz is different from either salt or sugar. Each separate substance that exists in the world is uniquely different from the other in its composition and structure, its nature and characteristics. Following the principle Baba has enunciated, we call the power that leads to this different organization of each different substance, God. God is this Great Organizing Principle.

This Great Organizing Principle must be intelligent since even the limited knowledge we have through science shows us that the organization in substance is based on omnipresent and omnipotent laws which necessitates an Omniscient Supreme Intelligence, the Chit.

The purpose of Science is to seek the ultimate nature of things with the hope of discovering the Prime Cause. Every discovery of Science only confirms that we are dealing with the manifestation of the Supreme Intelligence, the Supreme Consciousness of which we are co-sharers. The purpose of all philosophic inquiry too is to penetrate diversity and discover the ultimate uniting principle. This leads to the concept of the Advaita School of thought that there is only One Reality which in the phenomenal world appears as Diversity. Both appearances are valid at different levels of significance, just as matter which has different characteristics and individual uniqueness on the gross level is ultimately describable as energy in varying levels of rest. Ultimately then, all substances are energy and consciousness in varying degrees of manifestation. Thus Science and Philosophy both attempt to discover the One Principle, the Chit which is responsible for the Organization. This One Organizing Principle is—God.

As the fundamental Organizing Principle behind everything, God is described as beyond characteristics (gunas), time or change. "God is inherent in every living being and in every non-living thing. No distinction can be posited for all are God," says Baba.

—M. V. N. Murthy

The Glimpse He Granted

It was a bright sunny morning. We had all just settled on the portico for Swami's Darshan. The rustle of His robe and the sweet fragrance announced His Divine Presence. To my delight I was called for an interview with my parents.

I was a most badly behaved boy indulging in 'Modern' behavioral attitudes. I would like to admit that the entire family believed in Swami, except me. When we came to Prasanthi Nilayam in 1980, my brother got admission in the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning and we got Swami's grace for the first time. Swami poured his love on us. Even then, my natural instincts turned lovingly towards the enchanting Person but my weaknesses and worldly habits turned me away from Him. I lacked the moral fibre to transform myself. I was scared that He would reveal my nefarious doings. In fact, I loved and dreaded Swami's Interview. In fact I wanted to get away from Puttaparthi and I wanted to avoid joining Swami's School. But Swami's infinite mercy and grace did not throw me into the jaws of the world.

I went inside with bated breath and beating heart. As usual groups of devotees were taken in by Bhagavan, into the inner interview room. I was relieved when our turn was over and Swami moved to distribute Vibhuti packets. Suddenly He halted. The expression on His countenance changed from motherly Love to fatherly sternness. He beckoned me back into the inner interview room, alone!

My hands would not stop shaking and my heartbeat raced beyond the range of my E.C.G. scale. He was already seated and commanded me to sit at His Feet. I sweated profusely. Then He asked me a question, "Tell me! Do you believe in Swami or not?" (By now it had become a choice between wanting to believe in Swami or not). He then gave me an undeniable and incredible proof of His omnipresence, of which even my own mother did not know. He told me how, utilizing my pocket money, I had gone to a Hindi movie, instead of attending school. He even told me the name of the film I had gone to, the name of the friend with whom I had gone, a Sarabjit Singh and even the amount of money I spent on 'Samosas' during the interval which was incidentally Rs. 10/-. This revelation jolted me into the realization of my aimless derogatory living and opened new vistas of a happy, joyful life, in which I have made and am making sincere efforts to transform myself.

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God is Present

Though no eye has seen, He is everywhere.

To save the worlds from blinding night
He waves two lamps in space-the sun and moon
He stays the million twinkling hordes of stars
Firm on firmament, lest they clash and crash
He holds aloft the big blue dome so far above
With neither prop nor pillar from below.
He rotates our globe, so fast, in silent smooth
With never a jolt or jar, with even pace
He lovingly fans soft soothing breeze
With never a demand for wages and perks.
He has chained the feet of reckless raging seas
Lest they rush on land in ruinous haste.

God is present, now and at every Now
Though no eye has seen Him, what does He do?
From behind the curtain, He directs the Dance
That happens on stage, to the tune He wills.

—Baba

(Translation of a poem He sang during a recent Discourse)

The Teacher and Tomorrow

The human body is the most wondrous machine in the world. It has a bewildering multiplicity of limbs, organs, veins, nerves and cells which co-operate to maintain it under varied conditions. If anyone of these rebel or refuse to rescue another, the body is bound to suffer. So too, a society, community, or nation can be safe, secure and happy only when the individuals comprising it are mutually helpful and bound together in skilful and sincere service. Every generation has to receive education and training in such intelligent cooperation and service. Or else, the world has to face confusion and chaos.

The educational process has not received proper attention from thoughtful persons. The institutions which ought to have been temples of Saraswati (the Goddess of Transformation through Learning) have become in all lands temples of Lakshmi (the Goddess of Wealth). The ideal held before the tender, innocent, unselfish children is a lucrative job, rather than a life of peace, contentment and love. Narrow loyalties, contest and competition are polluting the minds of children. Parents, teachers, and all interested in the progress of mankind have to take note of this situation.

Teaching and learning have both become mechanical routines. They have lost the freshness and joy which vitality alone can give. The value of the teaching process lies in raising the level of consciousness of the learner, in heightening the sense of wonder and awe and in emphasising the unity of one with all. The destiny of a country is decided by the ideals implanted by the teachers in the minds of the boys and girls entrusted to their care. Educators must pay attention not merely to the material and Intellectual progress of the pupils but, even more, to their moral and spiritual progress. Education should help man to live a meaningful life. It should not direct all efforts to provide a livelihood.

Education can claim success only when it results in the student gaining awareness of the Divinity inherent in him and others. No academic degree can confer as much self-confidence and self-satisfaction and lead man as quickly and gladly to self-sacrifice and self-realisation as that awareness. It has to be transmitted by teachers who have attained it through a sense of duty and in a spirit of love. It has to be accepted by students who have cultivated faith in the teacher and reverence for his role. The pot that pours and the pot that receives have to be steady and straight, eager to give and gain. If the teacher has the responsibility to inspire and illumine, the student has the responsibility to respond to the Love and Light, discarding all contrary thoughts. Thoughts that arise from the region of the pleasant (preyas) cannot co-exist with those which arise from the tough challenges of higher life (shreyas). The student must be equipped to prefer the latter to the former.

The higher life, which makes man human and a fit candidate for unfoldment of the Divinity that is his Reality, depends on the cultivation of the Five Cardinal virtues—Truth, Right Conduct, Love, Peace and Non-Violence. These virtues elevate the individual as well as the society of which he is a part. The teacher has to watch every word and gesture of his, every action and reaction of his, in order to avoid any infringement of these virtues. For, the teacher is, for the pupils, the ideal, the example, to whom the parents have entrusted them. Women teachers can discharge this responsibility better than men. Children can be moulded more easily through sweetness and softness which maternal affection implies, rather than by fatherly advice and admonition.

The atmosphere of Love should not be disturbed by any uncharitable remark against any one's faith. Nor should any one be ridiculed or slandered.

Children's minds should not be polluted by fear, hatred or disgust. The doors of their hearts must be open to all. Later on as the impact of society and the state grows, pupils can be led to an understanding of the political and religious forces that will affect their lives.

Students have to be encouraged to "Follow the Master", (the inner voice of Conscience), Face the Devil (the down-dragging antisocial urges), Fight to the End (until one is able to overcome the inner foes of lust, anger, greed, undue attachment, pride and hatred) and Finish the Game (of life on earth). This duty is referred to in the Gita as Swadharma (one's genuine obligation to

Three Stages in Sadhana

Life is a perpetual struggle between the individual and the universe, between the inner nature and the outer world. The purpose of this struggle is to satisfy wants which are unlimited and insatiable. However, these wants can be reduced to three basic urges in man: to exist: to know and to enjoy. Correspondingly, the world around him displays these three characteristics: it exists (*asti*): it makes its impact felt (*bhati*): It gives delight (*priyam*). This striking conformity between man and the outside world presupposes a single, common reality characterised by eternal existence, self-awareness and eternal bliss (*sat, chit, Ananda*).

Spiritual practice or *Sadhana* requires that man has to rise above these three basic externalising urges, since the satisfaction derived from the external world is fleeting and impermanent. Life in the external world is characterised by three attributes: limitation, contradiction and impermanence. In order that man should have everlasting bliss which happens to be the very nature of his being, he should transcend the external world, his body and mind. By this process he would discover his own self, the Atman, which is part of the Absolute Reality, Brahman. It is in this sense, as Vivekananda says, religion is realisation: "No one is born to any religion: he has a religion in his own soul. Each life has a current running through it and this current will eventually take it to God."

The true path of this current is a yoga, a gradual unfolding of self, a dynamic process of transformation of consciousness. This process involves three stages. It is interesting, to note that Bhagavan Baba has very clearly described the stages of unfoldment in two pithy, epigrammatic sayings

1. You are in the Light: the Light is in you: and you are the Light.
2. The one you think you are, namely the body, the physical person: the one others think you are, the mental you: the one you really are, namely the Atma, the Spirit, Reality of your personality.

These correspond to the Upanishadic prayers referred to in the Brihadaranyaka and Katha Upanishads

1. Lead me from the Unreal the Real lead me from Darkness to Light. Lead me from Death to Immortality, and,
2. Arise, Awake, Realise the Truth with the help of the illumined seekers.

The 'Unreality', 'Darkness' and 'Death' correspond to the 'physical', 'mental' and spiritual' states of consciousness and the final realisation is the transcendence of the process.

The first stage marks the spiritual aspirant's entry into the spiritual path. The Upanishadic prayers 'Arise' and 'Lead me from the Unreal to the Real' call for our exercising the faculties of reason and will in a new way—in discrimination and detachment. The first stage in the aspirant's journey is beset with the difficulty of knowing what is real, although he knows what is not real. Anything that is fleeting, transitory and impermanent cannot be real. Sense objects and experiences are unreal in this sense. The aspirant, as Bhagavan Baba says, has to forget the world around him and its tantalising pleasures—the one he thinks he is, namely the body, the physical being. This delusion that one is the body is *Adhibhutam* and this has to be destroyed. It is only then the aspirant can claim that he is in the Light.

This is the stage of purification or 'purgation'. Intense desire for realisation becomes effective only when it is expressed through prayer, japa, worship, self-enquiry, seva or service and meditation.

The second stage is indicated by the Upanishadic prayer, 'Lead me from Darkness to Light' and 'Awake'. In the first stage the aspirant has risen above the attachment of worldly pursuits, but he is not 'awake'. He is drowsy with sleep and the intoxicating sense pleasures. He is groping in darkness of ignorance, like a sleep-walker walking with unsteady steps. He is not yet conscious of his 'inner self' which is not the ordinary ego, but the *Pratyagatman*, also known as the *jivatma* or the individual self, or 'kshetrajna' or the knower of the field. This stage leads to the awakening of the "I", after a long practice of meditation with intense aspiration. Therefore, this stage indicates a movement from darkness to light. It is also called '*Prajna-loka*', the light of the '*Prajna*' or what Ramanuja calls '*Atmavalokana*' or perception of the Atman. This is the stage reached after the awakening of *dhi* or *buddhi*, as the Gayatri prayer proclaims. Bhagavan Baba says this is the stage where the light is in you, i.e., we are conscious of the "I"—the *Pratyagatman*. We are conscious of the *Adidaiva*—aware of the divine forces that prompt our action. In other words, at this stage we are conscious of the Ishwara principle or the Saguna aspect of God with all His various contributory attributes prompting our actions. This awareness of the attributes of God energises and activates the aspirant's actions. Moreover, this is also the stage where we give up our *jivabhava* the one others think we are or the mental we, which is in other words, darkness. At this stage we become aware that we are part of the divine, 'a spark of the fire, a wave of the ocean'. We see the Light as within us.

The third stage is indicated by the Upanishadic exhortations 'Lead me from Death to Immortality' and 'Realise the Truth with the help of the illumined seekers'. It is at this stage that the aspirant needs guidance of a Guru. The advent of the Guru is marked by the disappearance of darkness (the meaning of the word 'Guru' is one who removes darkness). The aspirant is, at this stage, entering a wholly unknown territory and the chances of getting stuck or losing one's way are more here than at the earlier stages. Immortality cannot be experienced without the experience of the Infinite in the finite body. This stage is the terminus, the ultimate destination

have to pass beyond the limit of the limitless: limit is death. Beyond it, unaffected by it, is immortality.' This stage may also be called the Adhyatmic stage when the aspirant realises that Atma is the universal, eternal Brahman itself. This is achieved when delusion or *Moha* disappears, when we know that our Reality is the Light itself.

—Dr. N. R. Shastri, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning Prasanthi Nilayam

'Its not Enough

How can I speak about Sai Baba who has influenced the world so greatly, already, in His lifetime? You already have indicators of the fact that, the Messiahs of the past, the great spiritual giants, have been recognised after their deaths. But in the lifetime of this great leader, Sai Baba, so much has been achieved. That in itself is an important point.

I would like to share with you my own feelings of the importance of His ministry. I believe, first of all, we should recognise Him to be a Person who manifests in the world, great, new and wonderful things. We live in a world of destruction, where people are constantly destroying things and one another, destroying the planet and its ecology, destroying their own mind and body. But here is a Person who is constantly manifesting new life, beautiful and creative things. As I have looked at the ministry of Sai Baba, I realize that for the past thirty years or so, His ministry has been going on across the world showing great concern for humanity, a concern for the needs of men and women, boys and girls.

You meet so many people everyday, of whom you may say, "They are self-sufficient. They do not need my ministry. They do not need me to do anything for them. It is enough for me to sing together when I gather with my friends and the religious groups." *It is not enough. Your task is to follow the teachings of this great spiritual giant, whose birthday we celebrate today, and the greatest birthday present you could give Him is to be like Him—to be manifestors not just of material things, but manifestors of things for all-time, for the planet to enjoy; for the rest of human history. That is your task. We are confronted today by so many varied problems.*

And on this birthday celebration, leave this auditorium, not just as people who have heard some birthday messages, beautiful singing, which I have seldom heard before in my life, the harmony and the enthusiasm, the celebratory note and the beautiful play that we will see shortly. It is not enough, unless you go out into the world and transform this city of Sydney, this nation of Australia, and the whole world, into one little human family. That is what it is all about.

On the occasion of Sai Baba's 61st birthday, is it not the great point of His ministry and His life, that *He has given the world Unity, Harmony and a sense of Divinity.*

Truth and Faith

"Sathyam, Jnanam, Anantam Brahma" (Truth, Wisdom, Beginning-less and Endless Brahma). Brahmam manifested first as Space, Akasa; the Akasa concretised as Vayu, the Atmosphere; the Atmosphere revealed the Fire characterised by Warmth and Energy; Fire yielded water; from water, solid matter, earth was produced. Plants grew on earth and fostered man with food. This chain links man with Brahmam and persistently draws man up to his distant source.

The gross body of man sustained by food encases the subtle mental and the subtler intellect enclosing the still subtler, Ananda, the deepest delight, the innermost urge in man. The progress from the gross corporeal body, which depends on food through the incorporeal sheaths of Prana, Mind and Intellect until the Ananda core is the summum bonum of human existence.

Living beings concern themselves mostly with only the food sheath, the breath sheath and the mental sheath. They do not have the capacity to transcend the vagaries and volitions of the mind and the memories stored therein. They are prompted more by instinct and impulse, rather than by intellect, which enables one to discriminate and discard what is harmful and hollow. Man alone can exercise this faculty and decide on a course of action which can lead him to Ananda.

But, man seldom uses this faculty or benefits by it. He gets lost in a maze of multiplying desires and earns, instead of Ananda, frustration and despair. The Bliss (Ananda), for which he is equipped and entitled, eludes him. Ananda is Divine. Caught in the turbulence of the worldly stream, he ignores and forgets his inherent hunger and the need to acquire the awareness of the Divinity within.

The destiny of a nation or community is dependent on the moral fibre of the people. Their character must be deep-rooted in Faith and in Truth. Truth must be revealed as unity of Thought, Word and Deed. Jesus emphasised in his teachings the importance of Faith and the damage and the danger of hypocrisy. Joining both palms together and offering namaskar is an act of dedication of one's *thought* and *speech*. The greeting "Salaam" too is a symbol of surrendering all three.

Christ proclaimed that God is all powerful and omnipresent, the One without a second. His teachings have to be interpreted, understood and followed from the universal point of view. This concept of God should not be narrowed down in an exclusive attitude of mind. There is great need, in a world broken into racial and religious units, to cultivate a broad outlook and large-hearted attitudes. Narrow loyalties cause friction and conflict. This is the primary message of Jesus. It grew in him by stages. He looked upon himself, at first, only as a Messenger of God. Later, sensing closer relationship with God, he announced himself as the Son of God. As the

and he could assert, "I and my Father are One."

Jesus advised one of his foremost disciples, Peter, to live in love, for Love is God. Man can experience God only when he becomes the embodiment of Love, which doesn't seek anything or expect even gratitude in return, Love which becomes Sacrifice and Service, spontaneously. When Peter listened to such exhortations from the Master, he found a new joy welling up within him and a new meaning in the word joy. J meant Jesus and the letter directed him to love Jesus first. O meant others who must be loved next. Y meant yourself who ought to be loved only last. But, look at the human condition today. Man loves himself first, others next and Jesus last!

When God occupies the mind, the objective world or nature which is only the product of the mind loses its validity and man, the wave on the ocean, lapses in his source. The individual self and the omniself merge in Unity. Every religion seeks to present this basic truth about God, Nature and Man. Every creed is in essence highlighting this fact and the path of Love as the means of merger. So one must respect all creeds and faiths. They are beacons of light guiding pilgrims along the many paths to the Universal Absolute.

The three major paths are known as Karma, Bhakti and Jnana. There are many rivers in this land which act as channels for carrying life-blood to the valleys and plains, like the Godavari, Krishna and Kaveri. Of these, Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati have symbolised, since ages, the three spiritual paths to God realisation. The Ganga represents selfless activity (Nishkama Karma) or Karma Yoga. The Yamuna proclaims the glory of Divine Love, of the path of Bhakti. Saraswati which flows under ground, unseen, represents the Jnana Marga or the path of relentless inquiry into the Reality. The goal of the inquiry is the discovery of the One without a Second, (Advaita Darshanam, Jnanam) of the unity that appears as Diversity. The junction of these Three Rivers summarises for every child of Bharat, his three duties to himself disinterested service to fellow-men as an inescapable obligation, dedication and devotion towards God and achievement of constant awareness of the One that manifests as many.

The body is the temple of God and therefore it has to be maintained unsullied by disease, and distress. It has not been offered to man for catering to one's selfish vagaries. Jesus sanctified his body by sacrificing it for saving others. He was conscious of that supreme purpose and duty. With faith in the one-ness of humanity, he stood against opponents and critics and confronted their onslaughts. Every saint and prophet who strove to uplift the downtrodden and open the eyes of the blind to the splendour of God and Grace, had to be ready and willing for the ultimate sacrifice. One has to expect trouble and welcome the chance for sacrificing all that one clings to, while one is upholding Truth and Righteousness. Faith in God is the bedrock that can save man from downfall.

When Rama was exiled into the forest, he paid no consideration to the privations he had to encounter there. He was so devoted to Dharma that he was unaffected by events. He allowed the vicissitudes of life to flow along, without harming him. The Pandavas are examples to illustrate how calamities and crises can be overcome by faith in God and the equanimity it confers.

Likewise, Jesus demonstrated and preached the power of faith and, ultimately, invited on himself the supreme sacrifice of life itself. When his disciples started abusing his tormentors, his voice warned them to desist. "All are one, my son! Be alike to everyone." By a vision he granted to Paul who was reviling him, he transformed him into a penitent disciple, full of faith and ardour.

It is only when we look upon the universe as permeated by God that we acquire the strength to fight the forces of evil. Many persons who engage themselves in prayers and pilgrimages for years wonder why they have not been able to realise God. It is unnecessary to go round the world searching for God. God is in search of the genuine devotee. The devotee who is conscious of the omnipresence of God will find Him everywhere. He must have the firm conviction that there is no place where God is not present. That is the real mark of devotion. Meditation and prayer have value as means of purifying oneself. But they do not lead to God-realisation. Unwavering faith in God grants inexpressible Bliss. One should not give way to doubts which undermine faith.

The power of Love is infinite. It can conquer anything. Once white Lord Buddha was journeying, he was confronted by a demoness who threatened to kill him. Smilingly, Buddha said: "You are not a demon; you are a deity! I love you even if you behave like a demon." Hearing these loving words, the demoness turned into a dove and flew away. Love can change the heart of even an inveterate enemy. It is this kind of Universal love that should be cultivated by everyone. There are people professing different faiths in the world- Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Zoroastrians and so on. There should be no difference or distrust amongst them, for all of them uphold Truth and Dharma.

It was to promote unity among people of different faiths that Guru Nanak started community bhajans which generate vibrations of harmony and peace.

Today, the world is bedevilled by conflict and violence. Peace and prosperity can emerge only when people turn to the path of love and morality and lead purposeful lives. Regard yourselves as embodiments of Love and dedicate your lives like Jesus to the service of your fellowmen.

—*Bhagavan's Discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium on 25-12-86*

Unity

Bhagavan has highlighted the awareness of Unity as the consummation of all spiritual Sadhana. The generality of mankind is caught up in the confusion of diversity which is really non-existent. He says that unity alone can eliminate enmity and fill the heart with purity and prompt man towards charity, which is the only path to divinity. The medieval mystic Meister Eckhart struck the same note. "All that man has here, externally in multiplicity, is intrinsically

variety that confounds us is, as Swami said in a written message he gave, simply manifestations of the divine consciousness in man. "You appear as the smiling flower or as the twinkling star."

Modern science has come to realise the basic unity which Bhagavan wants us to be aware of. For example Fritjof Capra writes, "The oneness of the universe becomes apparent at the atomic level and manifests itself more and more as one penetrates deeper into matter down into the realm of subatomic particles. The constituents of matter and the basic phenomena involving them are all inter-connected, interrelated and interdependent; they cannot be understood as isolated entities, but only as integrated parts of the whole."

Our century seems to have an idee fixe. It keeps harping on one word-Science. Twentieth century man is convinced that science can solve all his problems and demonstrate the non-existence of God.

Admittedly, science in this century has achieved the exceptional, from the discovery of the atom to space travel. And yet, we can all see that the countries in which science has led to progress and the spread of information are those which are the most troubled. There, where skilful surgeons can substitute the diseased heart; there, where all physical ills can be cured; there, violence has been unleashed and mental illnesses multiply as though destiny were making a plaything of human arrogance. The sad part of it all is that while some are engaged in prolonging the life of man, others make haste to destroy other lives, monstrously and unjustly.

Science, however, continues to pride itself on having made life more comfortable, easier and pleasurable. This is true to a certain extent. We cannot deny the advantage of household appliances which make life easier for the housewife today, that television brings news and information right into the living room, that aeroplanes allow us to travel thousands of kilometers in a few hours. Humanity as a whole is grateful to Fleming for inventing penicillin, to Barnard who led the way to open-heart surgery and also to Freud who revealed to the West that there was a part of the human mind, the unconscious, which motivates a large part of their actions.

Today we can truly say, "Science is not enough". It is not enough for reasons which are scientific, but above all for reasons which are spiritual. Albert Einstein expressed great bitterness over the fact that his research served to construct powerful and lethal weapons. Hiroshima is still a blot on the scientist's conscience.

The world has been living for many years in the shadow of the H-bomb and the N-bomb. Nuclear power stations, like prehistoric monsters, are a constant threat to our lives. Mothers in the West live in terror that their children might end up as drug addicts or as members of armed gangs. Once, small towns were considered safe and gracious centres of urban living, but today the menace of drugs has shattered even their tranquility. All this is due to means of transportation which have made possible the deadly spread of the arms and drugs trade.

Parents who have brought up their children with moral principles are confounded when faced with the fact that mass media can destroy in a short space of time, their long years of effort. A great French scientist of our time who became a convert to Christianity during his lifetime, said, "Avant de rendre la vie plus longue, rendons-la plus humaine" which means, "Let us make life more human before we try to lengthen its span."

The absence of physical labour has not granted happiness but has created isolation and mental anguish. All this for one reason only—that science has tried to cross out God and human values. What is however revealing is that truly great scientists have never separated science from

Einstein, however, clearly spoke about the "Cosmic religious experience" and wrote, "Knowing that there exists something which is impenetrable, knowing that manifestation of the deepest intellect and of radiant beauty are accessible to our mind only in the most primitive forms—this awareness and this sentiment are to me true devotion. In this sense and only in this sense am I one of the most deeply religious men."

In his book, "As I See the World" Einstein goes on to say what he firmly believed. "It is difficult to find a deeply scientific spirit of research without its own characteristic religious experience." Religion to him was an ecstatic admiration for the laws of nature. He said, "They reveal a mind so superior that all the intelligence poured by man into his thoughts is, when compared to this mind, nought but a reflection of absolute nothingness." It comforts one to read such words pronounced by the most famous scientist of our century.

All this proves, once again, that truly great scientists see beyond the object of their research to the mainsprings. To illustrate this I would like to refer to a great thinker and philosopher, Pietro Ubaldi who died in Brazil in 1972. In his work "The Great Synthesis" ("Le Grande Sintesi ") he declares that a genius is one enlightened, on par with St. Francis of Assisi and Joan of Arc. Only those who have reached a certain level of "purification" receive that flash of genius. Mr. Ubaldi firmly believes that the Theory of Relativity was one such flash of genius, just as much as the voices which spoke to Joan of Arc. Both "flashes" emanated from the same source.

All this clearly demonstrates that science is a unit of spirituality. If we ponder over it we realize that any in-depth study, whether scientific, philosophic or literary, calls for long periods of retreat and reflection in which it is very likely that the voice of God makes itself heard. Sartre's biographies reveal that certain periods of his life were very like those of a great ascetic.

We can therefore say that every great scientist instinctively knows that there is a Supreme Being, Absolute, behind every human discovery. As for science which has tried to explain the existence or nonexistence of God, I would like to quote from Giacomo Dacquino's "Devotion and Psychoanalysis" ("Religiositae Psicanalisi"), "The transcendental, by its very nature, cannot be scientifically observed. Those who claim to psychoanalyse God are being anti-scientific. 'Psychoanalysisism' is a kind of monomania which considers all phenomena of life, even those of a religious nature, comprehensible by the intellect. This mania ignores the very existence of metaphysical reality."

Blaise Pascal, French mathematician, physicist, and philosopher of the 17th century, said that a man without faith in God is worse than an invalid because he is without the vital essence of life. All this goes to prove that it is not pure science which drives a wedge between man and spirituality but the use that is made of its applications.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba has always declared himself in favour of scientific progress—and we should say that out loud. What is necessary is that, with His guidance, we should learn how to take from science that which can elevate man to the Absolute, which Baba is.

Our attitude towards religions needs orientation towards the perspectives of the One Reality. The Beauty, the Delight, the Power and the Significance that can be experienced through our sensitivity and responsiveness will open our eyes to the all-pervasive sat-chit-ananda that underlies everything in this Universe. The quest for this dimension is part of the adventure that life is. To recognise and to experience that mystical sense of the One Reality that is the fact of the fact, the life of the life, the soul of the soul, the sum of all apparent contradictions and the unity of all diversity is the essence of religious experience. All the inexorable laws of matter, space and time, the precision and pure reasoning of mathematics, the gleams and flashes of beauty revealed to the poets and artists, the amazing intricacies of the life sciences, and the sublime, intuitive insights of the sages and seers, testify to the unseen presence of this One Reality that breathes life, meaning and significance into everything. There is a spiritual unity that binds all religions in a holistic synthesis everything, relative or absolute, objective or subjective, scientific or speculative, material or spiritual, macro or micro is brought together in this spiritual unity and converges towards the One Reality.

—*Asutosh Verma, II B. Sc., Whitefield Campus*

CHARITY

The Urge and Urgency

Let us remind ourselves how little social consciousness we have in our society. The prevailing social conditions under which a large section of our society lives need no description. Slums in every city are taken for granted. We do not feel answerable to the sub-human level of living of these people. We do not feel either social responsibility or moral obligations towards them. We live our lives in total Indifference towards their lives. Under these conditions, Bhagavan is asking us to get out of our shells and look at these people a little more closely, know these people a little more Intimately and be a little more responsible towards them, help them, care for them and love them.

There could be a question: Why should we care for these people? Why should we be concerned about their lives? How does their life affect our lives? Bhagavan gives the answer We are all, in fact, just one Atman—only in different bodies.

I feel we live our lives at three different levels—physical, mental and emotional. Let us first take the physical level. Science is very near to prove that things in this world are dependent upon each other for their very sustenance. This is a theory, which is called "Chaos Theory". Here are two statements of this theory:

"Plucking of a flower may destroy a star out there in the cosmos.

the next three months."

These are, perhaps, extreme statements, popular translations of scientific truths. But, they tell us about the interdependence of two things in this Universe—small and big, near and far. The theory has not yet been completely established. The things involved are extremely large in numbers and complex in relations. But, it indicates the kind of relation, balance and harmony that exist in this Universe. In a way it says that we cannot live our lives independent of other lives. This is about the physical world.

Now let us consider the mental world. It must be said that mentally we live in a space of vibrations, vibrations that are created by thoughts, thoughts of all of us put together. A reputed thinker has warned us, "It is foolish to think of what we think we think." For, our thoughts are not only ours. But, what we are thinking this moment is the cumulative effect of what we are ALL thinking at this moment. Our thoughts are being continuously interacted upon and modified by others' thoughts. All our thoughts TOGETHER create a space of vibrations in which we all live our mental lives. Another interesting thing is that a thought created once remains in this space of vibrations forever. An action will be over in a period of time. But a thought created once remains there forever and therefore has the potential to interact and modify any thought that may ever come into existence in future. As thoughts are continuously coming into this space of vibrations, no two moments are the same. This is what we call a Catastrophe in mathematics. Every thought brings in an abrupt change in this space of vibrations; there are no smooth transitions in this space. This is what we mathematically say, "Change is continuous, but continuously non-differentiable." Therefore, we can say that we cannot think independently of others; we are together shaping each others' lives and each others' future.

We shall look into our lives at the emotional level. It is said an anguish cry from an empty stomach somewhere in Africa is capable of disturbing the peaceful sleep of thousands around the world. Whether we know it or not, whether we believe it or not, IT IS A FACT. Why is there so much fear, anxiety and restlessness in the lives of all of us? The reason is: we live in a world of hunger, disease and cruelty and do not feel responsible for all this, answerable to all this. To my understanding, this is the answer to the question.

Why? We have to realise that we are being constantly interacted by others at the physical, mental and emotional levels. And, therefore, we have a moral obligation to care for the lives of all these people. We have to bring their lives at least to a more comfortable social level and then try to raise their consciousness, because they too affect the lives of all of us.

In fact, of all the five Kosas, it is only the Annamaya Kosa that separates us. All other Kosas—Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vijnanamaya and Anandamaya—link us together. These other Kosas are not confined to this body; they prevail and spread out all over. They pass through us and bind us together. For example, take the Anandamaya Kosa. No one in this world can be in Ananda, (not the temporary happiness—but in permanent Bliss) if any one is in distress anywhere in the world. Once we understand the bonds that exist between all of us, we will understand why

the standard of life of these people. They must be provided a living worthy of human beings. Bhagavan says, we have to care for them and love them. Thus Bhagavan raises the level of the pathway from a social duty to a Spiritual Sadhana.

The question now is, how can we love people? How to learn to love people? St. Francis of Assisi says: "We learn to walk by walking. We learn to run by running. We learn to love by loving." This is the only way we can learn to love. We have to open our hearts, go out to the people, know them closely, and learn about their sufferings. That is the only way to know them as human beings. Bhagavan is giving us the precise technique of doing it by asking us to help them. Help is precisely the starting point of love. Our nature is such that we cannot love someone who is superior to us, who is better off than us. Then in this process of helping we will closely involve ourselves with their lives. We will learn about their sorrows and joys. We will share their moments of sadness and happiness.

If removing their poverty was His sole aim, Bhagavan could do it perhaps with a wave of His hand. But it is not the purpose behind this Pathway of Charity. We learn a great deal ago expand our hearts while helping others. This is the real purpose. In this process of helping we learn the secret of human bondage, the secret of life, the secret of the whole creation. When we know that what we are doing is not helping others, but helping ourselves, we try to know our true identity. Then we will serve with utmost humility and reverence for those who give us a chance to help them. We dare not look down upon them; we treat them with utmost respect and regard, for we understand that we are not different from them, only we have been put into different social backgrounds.

May Bhagavan give us the wisdom to understand His teachings in the correct perspective and may He give us the strength to follow them in the true spirit.

*—Dr. C. Jagan Mohan Rao
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Guidelines for Goodness

This land was the nursery of spiritual, moral and ethical ideals as well as stalwarts who embodied those ideals. But, It has become a wilderness where injustice, anarchy, falsehood and corruption are staging their devil dance. In order to overcome this calamity and restore the reign of basic human values—Truth, Right Conduct, Peace and Love—we have to rely on the young, who are in schools and colleges. But, they are receiving education only in profitable skills and secular subjects. They become adult citizens with no knowledge of Indian culture, Indian philosophy and the heritage of Indian social ideals.

Vedic scripture under three headings—Karma Kanda, Upasana Kanda and Jnana Kanda. These are three paths that lead from one to the next. Karma is activity, action, deed. The Veda insists on rites, rituals, ceremonies, etc., but not as mere reward oriented acts. Such acts are resorted to by birds and beasts. Man, who is endowed with the Intelligence to pick and choose, to benefit from the past and prepare for the future, must utilise every Karma of his to purify his mind from the dross of low desire. Karma has to be for him an act of worship, an offering to God, a fulfillment of duty. Sri Krishna has declared (Gita 12-18), "He who is the same to foe and friend—because he has no preference or prejudice—, He who is unruffled by honour and dishonour, who is unaffected by cold and heat, by pleasure and pain, who is free from attachment, such a man of devotion is dear to Me." India is described as the Karma Kshetra, the land where action is sublimated into a holy uplifting Sadhana The only reward one must look forward to is the victory over selfishness achieved by the development of detachment. Selfish desire, to appropriate for oneself the gains of actions, breeds pride, greed and hatred. Karma as dictated by duty and the higher impulses is the primary step in the journey to one's Reality.

The Karma path can be hailed as the Primary School stage which equips one for the Upasana or Bhakti marga, the High School and the College, the Jnana path. Jnana alone can help the awareness of Reality. But, present day education has only a means of livelihood as its aim. It is job-oriented, not Truth-oriented, God-oriented. Life has to be lived in love, peace, and bliss. Therefore, even while in schools and colleges, boys and girls have to know about the ever-peaceful, ever-blissful, ever-lovefull Atma. The body, the senses, the mind, reason and intellect are all ' unreal ' in the sense of temporary existence. Raising the standard of life is not as urgent or as important as raising the level of consciousness.

Accumulation of things is high lighted through education today. But, giving up is equally needed. Renunciation is not a loss; it is highly profitable, for you acquire joy thereby. For, renunciation means freedom, surrender to God and love. God is love. He can be known only through the expansion of Love. When students leave schools and colleges and involve themselves in families, societies, communities and countries, they must set examples of simplicity, humility, and mutual service. They must anchor their lives in Dharma and Jnana. Practise and preach. Mere preaching will invite ridicule. Cultivate goodness, avoid evil. Now young men relish listening to evil, watching evil and talking evil. Parents discourage them, when they visit temples, pray or meditate, or read spiritual books. They themselves do not know the value of these practices and habits. These are really positive gains; worldly knowledge and interests are negative attainments.

You must learn to master your senses, instead of being enslaved by them. Your mind, reasoning faculty, passions and emotions must be the tools you handle and not the instruments that handle you. The Sanskrit word for man is manava, which means, he who behaves as if he has no ignorance. That is to say, he is aware, who he is, where he has come from and why.

The ancient Indian Dharma based on the Veda and embodying the highest and the most lasting wisdom has to be learnt by you, observed and practised. So, teachers and parents must imbibe it

and calm. You must learn, more than anything else, discipline and patience. Life is an exercise in the sadhana of 'give and take.' Do not derive delight from 'taking' only. 'Give' and you get the right to 'take'.

I have established schools and colleges, because children receiving true and total education are the hopes for the new era. These colleges are not aimed at providing 'degrees' for students, to be used by them as bowls when they knock at door after door, begging for jobs. Students must stand on their own legs; they should not long for crutches. You must return to your villages and relieve your parents from the hard toils of ploughing, sowing, guarding the crop, and harvesting. Be grateful to the parents for the love and care, service and sacrifice they have bestowed on you. Do not be proud that you have achieved a degree and seek a comfortable chair at home to spend your time in idleness.

Limits and bounds are essential for smooth social life. So, you should welcome discipline, and not crave for lives that do not honour limits for every facet of behaviour. One reason for indiscipline is the superior role of money in educational Institutions. They have become business houses, temples of Lakshmi, the Goddess of Riches, instead of remaining temples of Saraswati, the Goddess of Learning. The University at Prasanthi Nilayam does not charge fees for teaching or for laboratory and library facilities or for games, etc., from the first standard right up to the Ph.D. course. Education is elevated as an act of service to the rising generation. Learning in this atmosphere, the students will become in later life enthusiastic for service. One must be eager to serve others, not eager to be served by them. The sage Vyasa declares that service is a holy act.

Man may desire something good. That is due to the inner prompting, the Iccha shakti. But he cannot fulfill that desire, unless he proceeds according to a plan which can guarantee success. The desire has to be developed into a deed. This requires Kriya shakti or the power of the motive to create. Above all, realisation depends on Jnana shakti, or the force and clarity of knowledge, the self-confidence that flows from the mastery of the situation. This is a gift of grace from God, God installed in the heart. Whatever one plans and executes must be sublimated as an offering to God. Or else, it will degenerate into barren gymnastics. God is omnipresent. The Gita asserts that His hands and feet are everywhere; so are His eyes, head and face. No one can deny God or ignore Him, when a person denies God, he is denying himself. You must foster faith in God and know that He exists in all. That faith will plant in you, humility, courage and reverence.

Like the electric current which activates the mike, the fan, the bulbs, the unseen God can be inferred through His manifestations and brought closer to the consciousness. In a glass of water, sugar lies at the bottom and so, the water tastes bland. But when the water is stirred well, the sweetness pervades all over. Now, consider the heart as the vessel of glass. Worldly desires and designs form the water. The Divine Atma is the lump of sugar. With your intellect as the spoon, if you perform the vigorous Sadhana of stirring, you can recognise the manifestation of Divinity in every drop.

purpose and the fulfillment of education (Vidya).

—**Bhagavan's Discourse at Sathya Sai Gram, Muddenahalli, while declaring open the Smt. V. Boggaram N Block at the Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Trust College Campus—8-2-1987**

Question and Answer

Do you know for certain and can you answer me
Why were you supplied with a pair of shining eyes?
“To look at all I see,”
No! No!
To visualise the One on lofty Kailas Peak.

Do you know for certain and can you answer me
Why were you offered these ears, left and right?
"To gulp every sound around"
No! No!
To listen in delight when His Glory is sung.

Do you know for certain and can you answer me
Why were you given this special thing, tongue?
"To pour my words into others' ears"
No! No!
To thank the Lord and praise that Saviour Supreme.

Do you know for certain and can you answer me
Why were you fitted with a couple of hands like these?
"To carry my meal from plate to mouth"
No! No!
To fold and worship the All-merciful Almighty God.

Do you know for certain and can you answer me
Why were you granted the feet you stand upon?
"To saunter through alleys, lanes"
No! No!
To circumambulate the Holy Shrines, the House of God.

Do you know for certain and can you answer me
Why were you chosen for the big brain boon?
"To pile and possess a fortune soon"
No! No!
To discover and decide this life is a four-day play.

Do you know for certain and can you answer me
Why were you presented with this body we see?
"To take and trot it round the globe"
No! No!
To fulfill its purpose by Service to all who need.

—English version of Poems sung by Swami

Sadhus in the Presence

The monks and renunciants who had gathered on 2, 3, and 4 January in the Divine presence of Sri Sathya Sai for their Annual Conference went through a busy programme of discourses on spiritual topics which provided wholesome pabulum for the thousands who listened to them.

Swami Karunyananda gave a brief resume of the origins of the Sadhu Parishat and its career of usefulness for 22 years. The founder, Malayala Swami was a realised soul, eager to save erring mankind by spreading the illumination gained by ascetics and mystics, he said.

Swami Poornananda spoke on the Gita dictum "Jnanad eva thu kaivalyam (Liberation can be achieved only through successful inquiry)". Success in the inquiry, into the reality of oneself and the Creation of which one is a part and participant, cannot be attained by mere scholarship or logic or rituals. It can be won only through reflection and meditation. The goal of Aham or the I consciousness, is, he emphasised, the experience of Aham Brahma Asmi, I am Brahma, the Cosmic Consciousness,

Swami Nirmalananda explained that the awareness of the I as Brahma is the result of Brahma Vidya, which lays stress on the process of negation in order to explore the Reality: "I am not the body; neither am I the mind or reason—I am the Indweller in the body, which is destined to merge in the Omnipresence". Swami Ramakrishnananda pointed out that one should develop detachment (Vairagya) in order to negate the sheaths which enclose the Atma in the body. Detachment, unconcern, disinterestedness will reduce cravings and desires and atrophy the down-dragging qualities resident in man.

Swami Sarveswarananda spoke on the responsibility of the individual to discover his own faults and to get rid of them. By sincere effort, man can elevate himself to a divine status, he said. He exhorted every one to take refuge in Swami and vow to proceed until that status is reached. Sadhu Ms, Santhi Bai said that one has risen up to the human level, in order to rise higher through softness, gentleness and tenderness. The tongue is soft and tender. So, she said, it is able to survive unto the last, though surrounded by rows of hard sharp teeth which drop away more than once.

be born as humans in order to engage themselves in Sadhana and merge in the Source from which they journeyed out He quoted the axiom, "Change or be chained" and drew attention to the fact that man alone can willfully and voluntarily transform himself, while other species cannot. Sadhu Gayathri Bai elaborated on three types of Tapas (Asceticism): physical, verbal and mental. Cleanliness, sense-control, celibacy, etc., comprise physical Tapas. Words spoken without even a tinge of harshness, but with love and sympathy, compassion and kindness bespeak the verbal Tapas. Keeping the mind, free from agitation and anxiety, free from despair and distress, constitutes mental Tapas. These three stages lead the aspirant to Prasanthi, she said. She advised listeners to react to all that happens with a "Let it go" and not with a "Let us hold on, to it".

Swami Atmananda dilated on the five hall-marks of every being that has become: It exists, it can be known, it attracts (Asti, Bhaati, Priyam) and the last two, it has a name, it possesses a form. He spoke on the Upanishad declaration that name and form do change and so, are not real, while the other three do not change and so, they indicate the Truth. Swami Brahmananada brought to the notice of the gathering the universal outlook, that has inspired millions of this land through the centuries, that is enshrined in the daily prayer, "Lokaassamasthaa Sukhino Bhavantu (May all the worlds be happy). Swami Ramakoti Rama Krishnananda expounded the Bhagavata principle of devotion and dedication.

Sri Saradapriyananda talked on the message of Kenopanishad. How did Prana enter the body to operate it? Who is the Person that speaks through the tongue, sees through the eye, and hears through the ear? These questions pester man, the thinker. The Upanishad gives the answer. The Atma is the Witness, the senses, mind, reason etc. are activated by its mere presence. Swami Prasannananda declared that the Gita considered Karma as most effective means of purifying the mind of man and so, he exhorted his companions to take up service activities.

The Conference provided a unique experience to the hundreds of monks. They were thrilled by the impact with the Avatar and enthused to adopt the Message, He exemplifies. Every one felt the urge to share with impoverished rural folk their knowledge of spiritual texts, their understanding of the mysteries of God, Nature and Man their evaluation of different Sadhanas and their wealth of peace, joy and love. Swami Vidyaprakasananda encouraged this resolve when he spoke on the need to practise and deepen faith thereby. Others like Swami Bhakthirasananda and Swami Areshananda confessed like Swami Bhoomananda, the President of the Parishat, that Prasanthi Nilayam and Swami have been enshrined in their hearts and that the resurgence of Universal Love will be translated into the Sadhana of Seva.

—Editor

Salvaging at Salvador

killing over 2000, injuring about 10,000 and destroying or making uninhabitable 80% of the buildings over 5 storeys. At the largest Sai Baba Center, a neighbour's wall fell on the roof over the altar where a life-size photo of Sai Baba inspires many devotees. The windows were broken. The roof caved in as a steel beam was twisted to uselessness, but Swami's photo remained intact. It was as if Swami took the blow for all His devotees, but remained unaffected, because when we took a final head count, not a single devotee had been killed or seriously injured, though there were some close calls.

The damaged worship room and altar seemed to hold another message for the devotees; work, serve and forget about devotional singing for the moment. And work we did. Many of the devotee doctors and nurses worked around the clock as three major hospitals were down. Guatemalan Sai Centres rallied with help. "They sent loads of foodstuff and clothes. Our ladies were cooking hot vegetarian food which we loaded in pickup trucks to serve to the rescue crews, and later they met with government representatives who suggested that we feed the clean-up crews who had been brought in from cities and towns in the interior. This we did for 15 days, serving hot vegetarian meals 'to' as many as 600 workers a day. We also took drinking water to the children's home, old people's home and the 'blind centre' until service was restored. Guatemalan devotees sent more foodstuffs and such necessary items as candles, matches, plastic containers for water and plastic sheets. They had lived through a similar quake in 1976; so their experience in selecting the right kind of help was invaluable.

As soon as we caught our breath, so to speak, we took a survey of all devotees and discovered that ten families had lost their homes. By coincidence there are 10 study Circles in San Salvador, so each study circle adopted a Sai family without shelter. The help needed was different in each case. Some needed help to move or find another dwelling. Others needed some tin sheets and wood to build a shelter. Another needed help to clean up the debris and strong hands to rebuild, and some wanted moral support and a few foodstuffs to tide them through difficult moments. Others were taken into someone's home. But all were grateful to Sai for the chance to serve or be served.

Man creates these disasters by his ignorance of Divine law, but at the same time it is God's Grace that permits us to unite in serving others and grow in love through these experiences.

—*John Behner*

An Assignment and the Sequel

The following relates to the second year Awareness Course Class being taught at the Institute of Higher Learning. This particular course explores various themes under the general subject of Science and Spirituality. One day, an assignment was given in class to write an original essay,

an underlying Unity can be inferred from recent discoveries in Science itself.

This Note was read out in the Class:

From Astronomy we know that the Earth is just one of the lakhs of individual objects such as the planets, moons, asteroids, comets, meteors and the Ions star that together make up the family of celestial objects we call the Solar System. Yet, the Sun with its family, is only one of the 10,000 crores of similar star systems that make up the Milky Way, which is our own Galaxy. And now we know that the Milky Way Galaxy, itself, is only one of some 10,000 crores of similar island universes, each of which are made up of a vast number of stars like it. Even so all of this visible Universe is now believed to be only a minute fraction of the total matter making up the whole physical Universe. We see how incomprehensibly large this Universe Is. And we also know how very old it is. It has existed many millions of times longer than the whole history of mankind, from the most ancient civilisations to the present time. In this fantastically vast Universe, the Earth is just an infinitesimally small speck. And on this Earth, all of life occupies only the top few meters of its crust and the waters covering it and the small mantle of air above it. The total biomass makes up less than a billionth of the Earth's total mass, and of this, mankind accounts for something less than .0001 %. We as individuals are one of some 300 crores of individuals like us, that make up this gigantic family of mankind. What inconceivably huge numbers seem to separate us from the total Universe! And yet the birth and development of the Universe is intimately connected with our own birth and development and destiny. Actually, we are not yet finished with these vast numbers... we can still go further. We are each made up of several lakhs of crores of individual cells, each of which have a life of their own as well as being part of the whole; and every one of these cells, in turn, is made up of hundreds of crores of the macromolecules that comprise life; and some of these giant molecules may contain millions of electrons, protons and neutrons, in the atoms, that make them up. Yet each of these particles, in turn, owe their existence to the momentous events associated with the birth of the Universe.

And, the students were asked:

Now, what do you make of all this? Take a moment to think about all this and let your intuition speak forth in a few pages. There are no right answers and wrong answers in this... All that is wanted is a sincere and honest effort to communicate what you feel, whatever that may be and however it comes through. Allow some original contribution to come forth.

About 30 minutes of class time was available for writing the essay. The students had no forewarning of this; they only expected an objective quiz to be given some time on the general scientific knowledge that had been discussed in class. Here is the remarkable essay written extemporaneously by one of the second year students, Rahul Kini

Looking behind maya

Time is engulfed in Eternity, and Space in Infinity. The infinite vastness and the innumerable dimensions of Creation inspire in us a sense of unprecedented awe; they will continue to do so

of the Cosmos boggles our imagination: it will continue to do so until we transcend the realm of thought and imagination, and realize that mind is but a false entity.

The diversity that is so conspicuously inherent in the Creation is an offspring of the mind; it is also a concomitant of the mind; it is born and it dies along with the mind. What existed before Creation, what exists as the substratum of Creation, and what would exist even after dissolution is an eternal, immutable Unity, call it Divinity in Western parlance or Brahman in Eastern parlance. The wise Parmenides emphatically declared centuries ago: "WHAT IS, IS!" This 'Being' is always engaged in an act of becoming... or so it seems!

With every stride that Science and Technology has taken in modern times, man has put his foot that much further into outer space. His insatiable quest for knowledge as also his irrepressible curiosity have led him to explore his own Solar System and speculate about the existence and nature of other such systems. But then, this kind of 'search' outside himself can never usher man into the presence of the ultimate Reality, for the vastness of the Creation is determined by the vastness of human consciousness and the duration of the Creation is conditioned by the duration of human ignorance.

Here what is required is an inward journey leading to man's innermost core, and not an outward one leading to the most distant planet! It is only then that intuition dawns, and all at once, the entire mystery of creation is solved and dissolved!

Divinity cannot be conceptualised, much less predicated. Hence, Unity lies in transcending diversity and Divinity lies in transcending the mind.

There is no stepping down in your God-ward march. It is a continuous journey through day and night, through hill and dale. Where the road ends, God is attained and the pilgrim finds that he has travelled from himself to himself...

No matter where you go, always know that I will be there, inside you, guiding you every step of the way. In the years to come, you will experience me in different manifestations of my form. You are my very own, dearer than dear to me. I will protect you as the eyelids protect the eyes.

—Baba

The Paradox Resolved

A Conference held at Bellagio, Italy, in July 1972 on the need for a supra materialistic approach to the human problem reported:

us at least some notion of where we may be going and some sense of the value of our place in the changing world in which we live.

What we need may be a new faith or a new religion or a new interpretation of existing ones. The major religions of the past have played a liberating role, not only in individual terms, but also socially. They have helped move men from mutually antagonistic tribal societies toward larger communities of the faith and have helped create larger social and political units as well. Perhaps the time is coming, or has come, for some new spiritual awakening which may once again have wide political and social consequence and thereby enlarge man's capacity to survive."

A paradox of the present situation is that we have today all the technology and material requirements for building up a genuine cooperative global community. In fact, it must be noted that since 1945 when World War II ended, there has been a tremendous proliferation of International Organisations starting with the United Nations and its specialised agencies. There is today no aspect of the political, social, economical or educational life of man which is not covered by one International Organisation or other. And, in the field of international communication the progress is astonishing with Satellite Communication. Today any message from any part of the world can be broadcast to every part of the world. The world, it has been said, has been reduced to the unity of interdependence. All International Organisations are based on the reality of this inter-dependence.

At the same time, the political barriers and what is more the intellectual and the ideological barriers remain. Suspicions have continued to grow. National self-interest continues to dominate discussions and pollute the ground for a genuine cooperative world community.

There are obviously no easy solutions, but we can see that the urge to build new bridges of understanding and cooperation on the basis of the recognition of a Divine purpose underlying the Cosmic process, is manifesting itself among large groups of men in different countries.

In Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's Mission to unite mankind, the process of transformation is taking place at two levels—one is the individual level and the other at the level of the nation or the community. At the individual level spiritually earnest people in many parts of the world are being influenced by His Message and Life, to transcend their own narrow loyalties and to develop a respect for people of all religions and cultivate a genuine sense of unity with all human beings regardless of race, religion, language or ideology. At the national level, leaders of various countries are increasingly being influenced by Bhagavan's Message to transcend narrow national and sectarian loyalties.

The entire emphasis in Bhagavan's Message is on LOVE as the supreme quality that every human being should display in the realization of the Divine that is within him. For centuries humanity has been divided by cults of hatred of one kind or another. Wars have been waged In

this is the supreme relevance of the Message of Bhagavan Baba today.

Speaking at Nairobi to a gathering predominantly of Africans, as long ago as 1968, Bhagavan Baba said, "I have come to light the lamp of Love in your hearts, to see that it shines day by day with added lustre."

Those of us who have been privileged to receive the Grace of Bhagavan and to serve Him In whatever field that may be assigned to us, have a great responsibility in furthering His Mission. We have to exemplify in our own lives of His Message of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema and thereby create, in the communities in which we live and work, the atmosphere for a new way of living based on these spiritual values.

—*V. K. Narasimhan*

What is Dharma?

The word

The word 'Dharma' defies definition and translation. The lexicographer attempts to exhaust its implications and involvements by means of a tiresome list of words, each of them indicative of a fragment of its meaning. Duty, righteousness, justice, morality, virtue, law, custom, usage, ordinance, charity, ideal, goal, prescribed code of conduct, equity, piety, propriety, decorum, characteristic property—every word reveals but a facet of Dharma. Swami writes, "The common man takes it to mean the giving of alms, feeding and providing lodging and shelter to pilgrims, adherence to one's hereditary profession or craft, law-abiding nature, discrimination between right and wrong, pursuit of one's innate nature or the freaks of one's mind, the fruition of one's fondest desires."

Prof. P. V. Kane in his monumental study "The History of Dharma Shastras" discussed the connotation of the word as used in Veda and Upanishad texts and concluded that "the word passed through several transitions of meaning and ultimately the most prominent significance came to be: "the privileges, duties and obligations of a man, his standard of conduct as a member of the Aryan community, as a member of one of the castes, as a person in a particular stage of life."

Four sources

The texts lay down the sources which have the authority to prescribe the privileges, duties and obligations' mentioned above. Manusmriti says, "Vedokhilo Dharma Moolam" (The entire Vedas form the basis of Dharma). Also 'the precedents and practices of those that know the Veda' and 'the behaviour of good and virtuous men' (Achara of Sadhus) and, surprisingly, 'behavioral ideals that one feels happy about' (Atma Santushti).

The first

The Vedas are replete with nuggets of universally applicable axioms on moral order and harmonious living. The Atharvana Veda acknowledges that Dharma upholds, supports, and fosters the Earth, our common home. It marks out six facets of this fundamental Dharma. The very first is Truth. Rituals which are often held by the "orthodox" as the very sap of Vedic religion are however placed last among the six. The remaining four are (1) Brhad (Great, Mighty) Rta (Eternal law and order that govern the worlds, that reduces chaos into Cosmos, and produces symmetry, balance and beauty), (2) Ugram (Unswerving) Diksha (consecration) for the attainment of divinity, (3) Tapas (Continuous effort, Austerity) where one's life is transformed into (4) Brahmacharya, the journey towards Brahmam, the Cosmic Consciousness.

Swami has drawn our attention to another meaning of "Dharma"—that which is worn, as an equipment, as an armour against defeat in the journey mentioned above. The scriptural assurance, "Dharmo Rakshathi Rakhsithah" (Dharma protects those who promote Dharma), adorns the official symbol of the educational institutions which He has established as contributory to His Avataric Task of reinstating Dharma in the heart of mankind.

The second

The second source of Dharma, according to the Dharma Shastra of Manu, is "the precedents and practices of those who know the Veda." The epics and Puranas abound in examples of heroic adherents of Dharma. Rama is Dharma itself in human form. His mother, Queen Kausalya, says, while being reconciled to her son being exiled for fourteen years, "May the Dharma which you are revering today protect you."

The five brothers, the Pandavas, are upholders of Dharma as described in the Mahabharata Epic. Their inveterate enemies, the Kauravas, are their own cousins. They resort to dark and devious designs to extinguish the Pandavas, which culminate in the 18-day battle of Kurukshetra, in which the cousins were totally destroyed. Queen Gandhari, the mother of the wicked Kauravas was approached each morning by Duryodhana, her eldest son, for blessings to win the day's battle. But, she was so imbued with faith in the axiom, "Those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword" that she could utter only one sentence, " Son! Where there is Dharma, there victory is certain." The epics demonstrate, through the fate and fortune, conduct and career, trials and travails, the supreme vitality and validity of virtues comprising the concept of Dharma rooted in the Veda.

The third

The third source of Dharma, according to Manu is "the Achara of Sadhus" (the behaviour and conduct of the good and virtuous). It is indeed a difficult assignment for men to choose Sadhus whose Achara can be observed, evaluated and followed, as Dharma. Swami warns us, in His treatise Dharma Vahini, "The simple spontaneous disciplines of the Vedic Age gradually became complex and confused by the overgrowth of rituals and formal rules. With the passing of time, it was declared that Dharma consists of Yajna and Homa, that Heaven can be gained only by the

was shifted from Gods to Yajna!"

Swami describes and warns "Educated persons immersed in Vedic and Shastric knowledge are afraid to stick firmly to Dharma, for it is laughed at by their cynical friends. They have yielded to the crooked arguments of critics and sold their heritage for trivial returns." Buddha, therefore, had to prescribe a Dharma rid of ritual and metaphysics.

When men turn their loyalty towards the codifiers of Dharma, as applied for the moral elevation of family relations, property ownership, social responsibilities, administrative norms, professional standards, etc., they meet discrepancies and differences which cause conflict and confusion. For example, Narada, the author of a smriti bearing his name declares, "If there is a conflict between Dharmashastra and usage (vyavahara), the usage is to be followed, since the usage can be directly cognised." Manu recommends the giving up of a course of action, even if it is held as Dharma when it is hated by the people (Loka Vidvishtam). Kautilya differs from all other codifiers. He allows divorce on account of mutual hatred between husband and wife (Parasparam Dwesham, Mokshah)!

The reason for such dilution and diversity lies in the very objective of the codification. "They deal with practical Dharma or Achara Dharma which relates," as Swami asserts, "to temporary matters and problems and physical needs, man's passing relationships with the objective world. Dharma is elaborated in a variety of forms known sometimes by the person who codified it (Manu-dharma), sometimes by the group which followed it (Varna-dharma), sometimes by the stage of life to which it is applied (Grihasta-dharma). But these are subsidiary details, not the Fundamental Norm."

Swami has undertaken the task of making the world know this Norm. He reveals in the treatise Dharma Vahini, "The Eternal cannot be expressed by the evanescent. The objective codes of Dharma, related to worldly activities and daily life, though important in their own sphere, have to be followed, with the full knowledge and consciousness of the Inner Basic Atma-dharma. Then only can the internal and external urges cooperate and yield the Bliss of harmonious progress. "

The fourth

The fourth source of Dharma is, according to Manu, behaviour patterns that confer self-satisfaction (Atma Santushti). Here, we tread on slippery ground. The argument is that when the pattern adopted is not moral, the person will be pestered by fear of punishment here and hereafter. The Gita declares that even a modicum (Swalpam) of Dharma can save man from intense fear (mahatho bhayam). Hence, no person can derive tushti except by accepting Dharma. Nevertheless, allowing persons to choose paths of action which pleases them and gives them tushti is too pragmatic. It sounds very much like recommending honesty because it is the *best* policy. The Atmadharma on which Swami lays great stress can transform Dharma from an instrument for satisfaction to a Yoga for Realisation.

What exactly is this Atma-dharma? The Gita exhorts us to uplift and save ourselves by the Atma itself. The strategy by which this exercise can succeed can well be named Atma Dharma. Swami identifies it with Swadharma, the Dharma one owes to oneself. He says, "the True Dharma of the individual is to taste the Bliss of merging with the Absolute and attain true liberation." Become aware of the Atma as one's Reality as well as the Reality of every Being. The body one carries about is a cocoon spun by one's own effort, from which one has to escape into the vastness (Brahman). "With faith in the Atma as the core of your personality" says Swami, "you can engage fully and freely in worldly activities, observing the Dharma prescribed for their regulation. Build your style of living on the Atmic plinth; then your progress is assured."

Knowledge and action

Rene Guenon, the famous French philosopher, writes in his book on the Crisis of the Modern World, "The eastern doctrines, and likewise the ancient doctrines of the West, declare unanimously that contemplation is superior to action, just as the unchanging is superior to change. Action, amounting merely to a transitory end momentary modification of the being, cannot possibly contain its principle and sufficient cause within itself; if it be not dependent upon a principle outside its own contingent sphere, then it is something purely illusory." What is meant to be conveyed by this passage is, In short, the need to have knowledge of the Atma through contemplation and utilising that knowledge as the guiding principle motivating actions in the objective world of change and chance. In other words, Atma Dharma must fashion, feed and foster the contingent Dharmas of caste, profession, status, stage, etc. The fundamental and the derived must both be respected as such.

The Gita ideal

The name Atma-dharma is a clearer and more direct appellation for the Dharma Amritam of the Gita (XII 20). He who adheres to it with total faith is, Krishna declares, exceedingly dear to Me. The Amrita Dharma is the unchanging, universal basic Dharma, which is Immortal and Universal. So, Atma Dharma never loses sight of the unity of all beings and the need to jettison the heavy load of diversity in order to rise and merge with the One. The refined outlooks, the attitudes mentioned by the Gita as components of the Amrita Dharma emanate from one's awareness of the Atma in him as well as others.

For example, the very first of them (XII 13) is "absence of hatred towards all creatures," a consummation that can become a permanent gain only when one is conscious of the Atma, that is the motionless mover in all that moves. Swami has said, "True Dharma is immersed in Atmic Bliss, in the Inner Vision, the steady Faith in the identity of one's real Nature with the Absolute (the Wave and the Ocean), the realisation that all is Brahman." Other components, too, are those which originate from illumination: freedom from possessiveness and egoism, from exaggerations of joy, hatred and fear, equanimity and serenity (XII-13 to 20).

"Saturate your thoughts, words and deeds with the Inner Dharma of your Atmic Reality—Sathyam (Truth), Santham (Serenity), Prema (Love) and Ahimsa (Non-violence)," Swami commands us. Individuals are really particularised personifications of the Absolute. So, they and their groups, communities and conglomerations benefit only by translating the Atma Dharma in their own lives and in their involvements with others. The codifiers of contingent Dharma—Manu, Narada, Brihaspati, Parashara to mention a few have lit beacons to reveal the steps to achieve peace, harmony, and prosperity. But, the beacons were lit by tamps which drew their flames from the Vedas. "Vedokhilo Dharma Moolam" This statement asserts that the roots of Dharma are the Vedic announcements, emanating from the Rishis and realised sages, on the Atma and Atma Dharma.

Therefore, whatever we think or speak or act, Swami has declared, "as long as the Atma Dharma is the base, and Atma Tattwa (the Atma Principle) the root, it is Dharma, beyond doubt."

—*N. Kasturi*

Together! All Together!

Bharatiya culture represents blossoming of the Fundamental Truth, which is unaffected by Time, unspoiled by history, not destructible even by a cataclysm and not amenable to an iota of addition. The Veda is the basis of this Truth. The Upanishads originated from the Veda. The Bhagavad Gita gives us the essence of the Upanishads; the Brahma Sutra axioms summarise the same. Imbibe the Upanishads by listening (Shravanam); reflect on the epigrams of the Brahma Sutras (Mananam); digest and assimilate the Gita (Nidhidhyasana). All three have to be valued as sacred scripture and not treated as forms of literature. Devaluation of these texts has brought about stagnation.

It is asserted by many that the Gita is a unique treasure of the Hindus which they should hold for themselves alone. But, how can Gita be so limited? This is a narrow and restricted view. It has to receive worldwide acceptance, for it helps solve problems as and when they arise. It acts as the breath of life to all people and all faiths. In fact, every text everywhere that reveals God to man is a Gita. Considering the Holy Quran as belonging to Muslims, the Holy Bible as a Christian Text and the Granth Saheb as a scripture for Sikhs, differences have become wider and the path to God has been split.

The Sadhus of this country have to consider ways and means to carry the message of the Gita to the common man in all lands. You have to transcend the usual method, " Arjuna said, " "Krishna said " and elevate the Gita into what it really is a Divine Dialogue between Iswara and Jivi, God and Man. The recitation of the Gita is now being encouraged as an end in itself. But that is only a method of spending time beneficially. The Gita is a Path, a Goal, an Achievement. Its purpose is gained by practice and experience.

The voice of God as Message to Man, is a gift of Grace to all men. But it is interpreted by men along the lines his temperament dictates. The pure, clear message gets contaminated thereby. Later, when the Message is presented in a variety of forms, it produces confusion and conflict. Those who profess to preach and teach religion must avoid such consequences and concentrate on arousing spiritual hunger and satisfying it. There are many who try to cater to people's taste by means of irrelevant stories which tarnish the main spiritual theme. The message can succeed in capturing people's hearts only when it is experienced by the speaker and when his aim is only to inspire others to share his joy.

The world's progress depends on the wisdom and altruism of those whom the people trust and follow. The leaders and guides should accept this responsibility and duty. They must be aware, all the time, of the Indweller and instruct others about the same.

The Cosmos which is Brahman is the effect produced by an act (Karma). Every act is an expression of the power of Will; in the individual, this power is projected through the body. Sadhana is the method by which that projection is purified and sanctified. It must be so purified that the temporary features (like the names and forms) fade away and only the never changing natures (sat, chit and ananda) come into consciousness.

Being in the world and bound by the distractions it presents before our sense, one cannot renounce it and become free. How can a person standing on a rock succeed in pushing it aside? He has to come down the rock and try. He must free himself from the bonds of attachment to worldly things and thoughts.

At present, since education has spread widely and since education has meant only book-learning, people have become cynical. They doubt even the simplest statements and revel in wild discussions. The exponents of our culture speak about God being One and Only, of His Omniscience, Omnipotence and Omnipresence. At the same time, they speak of rivalry between the various aspects of the Divine. Thus, they sow the seeds of doubt in men's hearts. The Brahman principle, the Cosmic Atma, is known by different names and pictured with different forms but, like gold in a variety of jewels. All is Brahman, Atma, OM. "This Atma is Brahma (Ayam Atma, Brahma)" declares the Veda.

Sadhus, by the very act of renunciation, have placed themselves beyond caste and creed. While engaged in the service of humanity, care has to be taken against mentioning or emphasising these divisive features of society. God is Almighty. It is sacrilege to ascribe human weaknesses to Him. Myths and legends about the mystery of God contain symbolic meanings, which are ignored. They yield their inner truth only to those who seek.

Now, rural folk have become clever enough to ask, what benefit society derives from those who don the ochre robe. They expect exemplary lives and sincere, unselfish service. In fact, the sadhana of service is superior to the sadhana aimed at one's own liberation. Worship God In His manifestation as mankind. Every one is a child of God, whatever the colour, caste, creed, the

(abhimatham), the fulfillment of your vow (vratam), the fruit of humanity's faith (manava matham). Service to man is worship of God.

This Sadhana of Service should not be polluted by the spirit of competition among the Sadhakas or even by dejection when obstacles loom large. God's grace will certainly be your support when you are on the march together to reveal the Atmic spring of strength, to people suffering from weakness. "Together"! That is the key to success. The Upanishad also teaches the same lesson. Saha naavavathu; Saha now bhunakthu; Saha Veeryam Karavaavahe. In other words, the exhortation of the Upanishad is;

Saha

*Together, all together, we shall toil and travel;
Together, all together, we shall steadily grow.
Together, all together, we shall feed and foster
Fortune and friendship, full vigour and virtue
Together, all together, the knowledge we have gained
We shall brighten, and brighten, till it enlightens all
Together, all together, we shall snare as friends
The fortune we have earned the vision and thrill
Together, all together, we shall acclaim Peace
Till we raise its praise into worshipful deeds.
Together, all together, we shall intone the Pranava
OM, OM, OM, OM—we shall together sing.*

Sadhana for sadhus

You have in you both the talent and the desire to uplift your fellowmen. This country needs your service urgently today. God welcomed the urge to 'become' the Cosmos. Ekoham Bahusyam (I am One; I shall become Many), He said to Himself. You must also feel the urge to blossom and expand. Derive Ananda in the process, possess it and share it, in order to increase it. The Upanishads proclaim the message of courage, of strength. Give up the idea that you are weak and helpless Na ayam Atma balaheenena labhyah (The Atma cannot be gained by the weak). Believe that you have in you the strength and skill you need. Those who can sing Bhajans can, as a beginning, lead villagers in Nagarsankirtan and teach them to sing in groups. Those who can speak on spiritual topics can gather the people, when they have returned from the fields, and explain to them, in simple language the mystery of God, Nature and Man. Persuade them to give up habits that undermine their health and peace. Promote in them the qualities of mutual aid, truthfulness and non-violence.

—Valedictory Discourse Sadhu Parishat 4-1-1987

Worry is a self-inflicted subtle pain in the mind of man. It is the result of unfulfilled desire for satisfying some whim or fantasy. Worry buffets its victims between hope and despair; they drift like rudderless boats on rough stormy seas. Worrying is, in most cases, a barren exercise a futile struggle with oneself.

Worry reveals lack of faith in God and in our own Divine essence. Swami says, "A person with faith in God overcomes obstacles much more easily than one who has no faith." Human beings have the precious gift of the higher spiritual nature, which ensures peace and joy. A man may be poor, unable to live in comfort but he can have more peace and joy than others who are busy collecting worldly goods. Swami says, "If you live on the body level and for yourself alone, you will be entangled in food frolic and fun, hate, envy and greed. Forget it, ignore it, overcome it. Then, you will have peace, joy and calm. On the spiritual path, every milestone is a monument of victory."

When worry disturbs us, the best antidote is prayer. Swami says, "Have faith in the Lord and in His abounding Grace. Try to earn it, by using the intelligence He has, endowed you with and by responding positively to the Voice of God, the Conscience within." Prayer can be either silent pleading meditation or singing aloud His Glory and Mercy or repetition of His Name with a rosary or without. Prayer can quiet fragile emotions, restore nerves to normalcy, tranquillise emotions and vitalise faith in the Lord. Swami says, "Constant dwelling on the name of the Lord gives unshakeable peace which can boldly comfort the ups and downs of life."

When one is always engaged in problems of self-aggrandizement, one has to suffer perpetual worry—so, it is better to use the time one can spare and the skills one possesses for serving others, for Jan Seva. Let the mind be occupied with the welfare of some one else. Visit someone less lucky; cheer him with words of comfort. Write letters to friends or relations. Avoid all negative thoughts. The worry will soon fade out.

Swam says that we can master and maneuver our brains by means of hard work and self-discipline and escape from worry. Analyse calmly the situation that causes worry and discover that worry will not help in defusing it. "Face the issue the devil, boldly," says Swami. When the problem overwhelms us, we can surrender it to the Lord. Swami has said, "A person with faith in God can overcome obstacles much more easily than one who has no faith." Let Him be our first and last refuge.

—H. S. Rastogi, Moreno Valley, U.S.A.

"You May"

While I was in Prasanthi,

My heart to open and see
That inside dwelleth He,
In Divine presence was born
Each beautiful glorious morn
Like a rose without a thorn,
This Heaven on Earth to adorn.
I was kept, oh so spellbound;

My every doubt Swami drowned,
For a new life I have found.
With His Grace it doth abound.

Though I had to come away,
To Baba each day I pray,
At Thy Lotus Feet I'll stay
If Thou but say, "You May."

—*Devotee*

'Swami is a child amongst children, an elder among grown ups and a loving mother to all.' It was the third or fourth time we were graciously called by Swami to visit Puttaparthi to have his darshan. Loving Mother Sai graciously called us for Interview. Swami was joking and talking and discussing some matter with my parents. My two sisters, and a brother (all younger to me) were looking at Swami. Sometimes he also used to talk to us and crack jokes.

While Swami was talking to my youngest sister who was only about 4 ½ years old at that time, she suddenly got up and said to Swami, pointing towards me, 'Swami, my brother always beats me. He is very short tempered. Tell him not to beat me.'

Then Bhagavan got up from His chair and putting His arm around my brother and me said, 'See Swami is in everyone. Isn't He in your sister?' Then we said, 'Yes Swami.' Then Bhagavan said, 'So if you beat your sister you are beating Swami. Isn't it?' We said, 'Yes Swami.' Then Baba asked us, 'Would you like to beat Swami?' Then we said, 'No, No Swami.'

Then He said, 'She is a very small sister of yours. Why do you beat her?' Do not beat her. Never beat her. Will you beat her?' We said, 'No Swami.' Then Swami remarked, 'Good Boys.' And gave us prasadam.

This was one of the happiest days of my life. Swami lovingly told this great Truth to me like a mother telling her children. She is the most loving mother on earth.

*—Ravi Shankar
IX Standard Sri Sathya Sai
Higher Secondary School,
Prasanthi Nilayam*

Known by None

Why does the sun on its daily round
stick to same schedule of rising and setting?

Why do the stars that beautify the sky
hide, beyond sight, soon as sun is on?

Why does breath, breeze around, and never a halt
serving and saving all lives upon the globe?

Why does each river chuckle adown the land

Why does Nature parade deluding Maya masks
and challenge the brave to peer the unseen Truth?

Why has mankind, closely knit, split as broken bits,
high-low rich-poor, we-they, caste and creed?

Who has ordained that things be such?
That Person is no other; He *is this* Person!
This Person is no other; He *is that* Person,
The Lord and Master of All, known by none.

—*English Version of Poem sung by Swami during a few discourses.*
(Ed.)

One-ness

The Divinity in me shines brightly
a part of the Eternal WE
untarnished in the sun of Purity.
Truth, Love, Peace,
Righteousness and Non-injury
gild everything in Unity
Bathed in God's glory,
all in diversity
reach Ultimate Reality
and know they BE ONE.

—*S. P. (Australia)*

Bon-Sai

Just a tiny three feet maple or a pine tree in a tub. Japanese artists had striven over this, three-hundred years for perfection, pruning, teeming its wild branching struggles. Looking at this now valuable work of art I see only its beauty, touched may be with a trace of melancholia. Nothing remains of the struggle between the once wild tree and the patient artist who had finally won his way to a laurelled perfection.

You too must have spent centuries perfecting my untamed form. And your patient work still goes on, curbing my wilder inborn passions, giving my soul a handsome shape. It makes me

finished product at the hands of the best perfectionist of all, bearing on me the sign of Your insignia.

—*S. Sen*

Fluffy's Feline Faith

A lovely cat lived with me until 20th January 1987 when she passed on, aged 27 years and 10 months. She was keenly interested in Sathya Sai Baba right from the very first time I was given a packet of Vibhuti in the autumn of 1982. I had noticed that she was lethargic; so I held out a Vibhuti covered finger, to my surprise she leapt to her feet instead of remaining curled up as usual, and licked my finger again and again as though she would never stop, purring very loudly as she did so, which was also unusual. Three days later when I picked her up for a cuddle her fur was exuding a lovely delicate smell of Vibhuti. She remained full of life even during her final illness. Soon after her first taste of Vibhuti she joined me when I was sitting by Sathya Sai Baba's photograph to start the day with a little Vibhuti. Fluffy sat on my knee and, instead of facing me as usual, she faced the photograph, and this was consistent whenever she joined me after that. As my finger curved white I was amazed when her head shot forward and her tongue took all the Vibhuti, I took some mere for myself and wondered if she would lean forward again, but she did not—she knew she had taken hers; so allowed me to have the second finger full of Vibhuti. Whenever books came about Sathya Sai Baba, Fluffy used to scrabble at the parcel to get inside, and sometimes she lay on it—she used to ignore other parcels—when the book was unwrapped she wanted to rub her nose on the pages, not letting me see it for half an hour or so. Not long ago a parcel came which I was sure had nothing to do with Baba, so when she started to be interested in it, I told her it was not what she thought—but she was right, it was a book on Sathya Sai Baba from an unexpected source.

In September 1985, she had a heart attack, and when I came in the next morning, the Vibhuti container was beside her with the lid off; this mystery has never been solved, as the container is a light, unstable plastic tube, which cannot be easily opened. She is clearly very blessed as she had five illnesses in her last two weeks, but never lost her interest in life and departed, purring on my eiderdown in front of Sathya Sai Baba's little table in my room, with His photo, Vibhuti, sand he walked on and so on, right beside her.

—*Paulette, Hatfield, U.K.*

God with Us

—*Sir George Trevelyan, Bt., M.A.*

write about him. I have no doubt about what is claimed for him. This is indeed a Divine Manifestation.

It is to be expected—of that I am sure. The world situation demands it. The emerging Vision of Wholeness makes it acceptable to our understanding.

We grasp anew what the ancient wisdom always knew—that the Universe is Mind; a vast continuum of Life, Intelligence and Love poured out by the God-source. Our planet Earth is a living creature of which humanity is integrally part. Indeed humanity is becoming the brain and nervous system of the integral being of the Earth. To quote lines from Evelyn Nolt's poem "*The Glory that is Earth.*"

O Earth, living, breathing, thinking Earth
On the day we treasure you
As you have treasured us
Humanness is born

And throughout all Light
A Radiance leaps from star to star
Singing: A son is born
HUMANITY.

In our time we stand on the threshold of a new birth and awakening. Beyond turmoil and disaster is the cleansing which will lead into a Golden Age. Something quite new for the universe is coming from this planet, this seed for free consciousness channelling the Light and Love of God.

Thus the heaven world now watches the planet with intense interest. Each human being of free choice can turn to God, attune and receive the transforming flow of His Love. This is happening, and the dark events of our time are only the shadow of the necessary cleansing. They are not the real news, though they fill 90% of what the media gives us. The real News is that God is taking over. No longer dare we exclude God from our affairs. Here is the factor wholly ignored in our politics and economics. At this time of turmoil and crisis, we must expect him to show his hand and in some way to appear.

The holistic world-vision teaches us to see the Oneness of all life. God is the Life-force everywhere. God, of course, knows everything for he IS all knowledge! The world of Spirit is Divine Thinking and the human mind is a droplet of this Divine Mind. As Swami said, "You are all God. The only difference is that I know it and you do not yet know it." Of course, God, when he so desires, can manifest in human form. Since it is hard for some to grasp the Oneness Vision, we may expect him at this time to appear. That must happen in a period like ours. The ascended Masters are the Hierarchy of great human beings who have achieved full God

could choose to manifest for the redemption of humanity and this appears to have happened.

You cannot and need not prove these spiritual ideas. But you can live them and watch life in the light of them and then inner certainty comes through the joy and glee experienced in the soul. God manifests in joy, love and enthusiasm (the word means "possessed of a God"). We feel this flooding through our veins, despite surrounding gloom and fear. Indeed the Satanic forces strive to bind us down to the time-scale of guilt and regret about the past and fear of the future. But God operates in the immediate ever-fleeting NOW. Learn to attune to the higher self in the "NOW moment" and we find the gateway to God. So let us rejoice in His presence, in Sathya Sai Baba. The image of him as a human being is the external picture of an absolute love and knowledge which surrounds and interpenetrates us everywhere.

Let us accept this tremendous event and look forward to any changes which open the doors to the New Age when the planet will be cleansed. Indeed, having found God, there is no place for fear. "Look up, for your redemption draweth nigh."

You must realise, by constant contemplation, that the world is the Body of God. And, you are a cell, in that Body. The prosperity of the world is your prosperity; feel so, act in that spirit; think in those terms. That is real spirituality. The Sadhaka cannot cut himself away from the world and escape into solitude, for, the world will follow him into the deepest cave or the darkest forest. The Sadhaka can claim progress only when he has established in himself Faith in the One-ness of Humanity.

—Baba

When a child is born, worry too is born with it—worry that it should grow up healthy and pure, learned and good, famous but humble, bringing a fair name to the parents and elders. I would advise you to postpone the celebration of the birth of a child, until the day it brings Satkirti (good fame) to the lineage and the country. Also, celebrate the accumulation of wealth when it is spent justly and with love, on beneficial and deserving purposes. A tree is justified by fragrant flowers bringing forth sweet fruits.

—Baba

Become Heroes!

All four types of the afflicted mentioned by Lord Krishna in the Gita—the anxious, the curious, the indigent and the wise flock at Prasanthi Nilayam, seeking Bhagavan. The anxious pray for succour and cure. The curious gather to listen to His Message and observe His Divinity, seeking confirmation of what they have heard or read of His Love and compassion, power and

see Him and serve Him wherever they find themselves. Such enlightened souls offer themselves totally at the Lotus Feet and leading lives, in harmony with the Will and Word of Bhagavan, achieve the summum bonum of human existence. Bhagavan has announced that He has been searching, for such dedicated Bhaktas, who find gratification in complete surrender (Prapati), with even more intense ardour than the Bhakta evinces to secure Bhagavan.

Total surrender, with nothing held back, is the culmination of the nine forms of devotion which the scriptures demarcate. It is named Atma Nivedana (Offering Oneself), Sharanagati (Taking Refuge) and Prapati (Surrender, Relief from Burden). Many texts on spiritual sadhana have elaborated this concept and analysed the requisites for its actualisation. The Ahirbuddhnya Samhita, for example, identifies five credentials for success.

The very first requisite is "Decision to adopt favourable means (Anukoola Sankalpam)." The Avatar in our midst now is, fortunately, easily available and mercifully generous. He has proclaimed that He has assumed Name and Form in order to save mankind by leading them along the path of Truth, Righteousness, Peace and Prema. He is, for us, the uniquely shining Example. "My Life is My Message," He asserts. "I am Love, I speak Love, I confer Love. I accept universal unselfish Love," He announces. Therefore, we have to decide to tread that path and practise that Message.

The second is "Giving up contrary feelings." (Prathikoola Varjanam) Kama and Rama do not reside together in one heart. One must cast aside worldly attachments and hatreds, envy and egotism in order to cleanse the heart and install God therein. When Kama (desire for the pleasant) occupies the heart, its minions—anger, greed, pride, pomp, and hatred also troop in and hold sway. Once I prayed to Swami during an interview, "I need your grace (Anugraha)." Swami said, "My Grace? It is always on you, bangaru, if the grahas that control you are right." "By graha, I don't mean the astrological planets Rahu, Kethu, etc.," He added. "I mean likes and dislikes, pride, egoism and the like," He clarified. I understood that these iron curtains have to be removed by means of Sadhana so that Swami's Grace might reach and revive us.

The third qualification is Faith. Faith that the dedication will be rewarded by God by being saved (Rakshishyathi ithi viswaasam). Swami during another interview, told me, "When doubt enters the front door, faith disappears through the back door." One must develop unshakeable faith that the Lord will protect us whatever the danger.

Next, one should feel certain that Swami is one's guardian and protector now and forever (Gopthraha Varanam). There are many who call upon the Lord for saving them from imminent disaster after resorting to sundry methods for rescuing themselves. If only they have knowledge enough and faith enough to call on the Lord as their first-resort, they could avoid periods of pathetic suffering. The elephant, as mentioned in the Bhagavata, struggled with the crocodile's jaw at its foot for a 'thousand years'. At last, body exhausted and ego deflated, it prayed God for help and God rushed from Heaven to where the elephant was. Swami asked me once, all of a sudden, "What do you want?" I replied, "Swami! I want your Blessings, I want nothing else."

My Blessings are with you under all conditions. Accept me as the charioteer of your life, I shall take you safely across."

The fifth qualification one must earn to acquire the state of surrender is "restless yearning to offer oneself to Swami" (Alma Nikshepa Karpanyam). "Lord! I must be totally yours. I do not crave for anything other than you. I cannot endure any longer this agonising pain of separation from you." This cry has to make one restless and expectant.

Dedication or Surrender is easier and more quickly fruitful than the spiritual exercise of Devotion. Devotion is subject to erosion or evasion through the influence of diverse occurrences and experiences, but surrender eliminates the ego of the person and so saves him from being tossed about by elation or despair. For after the Surrender He takes full charge. His raised Palm assures: "Don't fear." Swami declares: "If you take one step towards Me. I shall take a hundred towards you. If you shed one tear drop, yearning for Me, I shall wipe a hundred from your eyes."

Lord Krishna has proclaimed that He will bear the burden of those who surrender to His Will and that He will save them from error and fear. The devotees have only to think, speak and act in the unfailing consciousness that "He is verily his mother, father, kinsman, preceptor, knowledge and wealth." He will adore Swami's Presence in all things seen and experienced.

The person who surrenders has no obligation any more to observe rites, vows, fasts, vigils, etc. Nor need he seek holy places or auspicious days and hours. Others may be bound by prescribed rules and regulations, attracted by the benefits promised or scared by the punishments declared inevitable for breach of rules. The Bharadwaja Samhita invites every one to the Path of Surrender—every one without distinction of class or caste, rare or sex, temperament or attitude, age or stage, wherever they be, whenever the urge emerges.

The Ramayana includes so many instances of total surrender to Rama that it is hailed as Sharanagati Veda (Sacred scripture of Surrender). Acceptance of the surrender of Vibhishana, the brother of Ravana, is the brightest gem of the garland of such incidents. Draupadi and Arjuna are shining examples of "Surrender" as delineated in the Mahabharata Epic.

We have today the rare good fortune of taking total refuge in the Avatar. Sri Sathya Sai Baba, come in human form, with the power, wisdom, graciousness and love, of God undiminished. Surrendering to Him can make heroes of us, zeros.

*—English Version of the Article written by Dr. S. B. Raghunathacharya, M.A., Ph.D.,
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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 unreal. If the eye does not help you to visualise God in everything it sees, it is far better to be blind. If your ear drags into filthy cacophony it is far better to be deaf. The senses should not be encouraged to plunge you into sensual muck. They must serve your real interests and sublimate your appetites. They must help you to dwell on God.

—Baba

Round the Fireplace

It was a beautiful evening on the Blue Mountains. After the bhajans, the spacious hall of Bhagavan's mansion in Ooty was slowly becoming empty. Devotees going out unwillingly, were looking back at the door through which Swami had gone into the drawing room. Inside, we, the fortunate ones who accompanied Swami to Ooty, were anxiously waiting to be called in.

The call came within a minute or two. We trooped into the drawing room where Swami was sitting on His chair looking at the flames trying to escape from the dry logs in the fireplace, near Swami's chair. After we quietly sat around the Divine Feet, Swami looked at the students and placed a question before them. 'Who will tell me the qualities of a flame?'

There was absolute silence for some moments. But the Divine Master tempted the boys to answer, saying, 'Whoever answers me correctly will get a nice present from Me.' He circled His hand. The temptation proved effective.

Four students spoke simultaneously. Swami had to restrain three of them. The lucky one who was permitted to speak was ruminating in his mind the qualities of the "Five Elements" which Swami had explained the previous day. He said, "Swami, fire has three qualities—form, sound and touch." Swami quipped, "You are only repeating what I had said yesterday. That is not your own answer." Again silence reigned.

After a few minutes, during which Swami looked at every glum face around Him, He started giving an altogether new exposition about the characteristics of the Flame.

"The first quality of the flame is: when the wind blows, it flickers. The second characteristic is: when drops of water are thrown on the flame, it crackles. The third characteristic of the flame is: it emits smoke. The fourth is: when a strong wind blows, it subsides. There is one basic quality which the flame has: to give light to one and all, without any discrimination.

without any discrimination. When the wind of fickleness blows in the mind of man, the Flame of Divinity appears to flicker: when the drops of water of raga and dwesha (likes and dislikes) fall on the flame, it restlessly crackles. When man is immersed in Tamas (inertia), the flame emits thick smoke of desire and attachment and when the strong wind of worldly desires blows on the heart, the Divine Flame appears to have subsided."

—*B. N. Narasimhamoorthy*

Siva Siva Siva

Siva Siva Siva—can you not chant
And forever be freed from worry and want?
Siva Sai Lord, don't you want to gain?
Then, chant the Lord's Name, 'twill cleanse the brain.

You trot around the globe with your pride aflame
But, poor little mind! Have you no twitch of shame?
Wallowing in worldly whirls which drag you deep
Who, do you hope, will wipe when you weep?

Siva Siva Siva—can you not chant
And forever be freed from worry and want?

To pass the time whenever the chance comes by
You're ready with greed, foul gossip to imbibe.
But, when one narrates the sweet grace of Sai
Dear ears! 'Its a pity, you close and move away.

You desert your job, film after film to see
And never cry 'Enough', whatever the number be;
In the temple of God, you can't stand a tick
What is wrong with you, Eyes, do they soon get sick?

Siva Siva Siva—can you not chant
And forever be freed from worry and want?

You deem it good fortune to spout in glee
On juicy topics and news of low degree;

O Tongue! You don't! Does it tarnish your fame?

Like an insane hound, you roam the globe around
And all the while, you howl and bark aloud;
Can't you stay a silent second midst holy saints?
O Feet! Is it so hard for you to foil the faints?

Siva Siva Siva—can you not chant
And forever be freed from worry and want?

Has God in His Mercy shaped you as Man
To give you full licence to ruin the span?
His purpose, from now on, you must comprehend
O Hands! Keep busy worshipping until the end.

What can you earn as fruit from the songs you sing
From polished praiseful speech, what the earning?
The greatest gift, the sweetest sacred fruit
You can gather in plenty, along the hoary holy route.

Siva Siva Siva—can you not chant
And forever be freed from worry and want?

Rendering in English of a Poem sung by Swami at the close of the Shivaratri Discourse, 1987

Sivoham

The vain search

Ananda, sheer delight, is man's real nature. But, alas, man in his ignorance and perversity devotes all his skills, resources and time to acquisition of Ananda through his outward bound senses, rather than discover it by using the inward probing intellect and intuition. What he attains by his struggle and search is, at best, a pseudo-Ananda, a fleeting modicum of pleasure, and an indistinct image visible in a murky mirror. It is not the everlasting Bliss of Atma, indiminishable by the blows of fortune, ecstasy beyond even imagination. The delight one gathers from the objective world has to be continuously renewed and replenished, for it fades away soon. Therefore, man becomes a bondsman of Desire, which presents before him an unending series of targets.

beginning nor end. The mind, the senses and the body undergo decline or development every moment and finally disintegrate and die. Man places faith in the instruments of exploration and experience that are superficial and so, he deprives himself of the supreme Ananda, inherent in the Atma. Like the sun hidden by clouds, embers covered by ash, the retina overlaid by cataract, the sheet of water veiled by moss, the consciousness of man coated thick with likes and dislikes; how then can the splendour of the Atma shine through?

The well-guarded treasure

The body of man is a receptacle designed to keep safe a precious treasure. Legends announce that cobras guard hidden treasures. The name of the cobra that prevents access to the priceless treasure hidden in man is Aham, the fascination for oneself and for one's belongings. In order to reach and recover the Ananda Treasure, man has first to destroy the Aham snake.

The river is a part, a portion of the sea; it earns fulfillment when it returns to the sea and merges in its source. Fishes are of water. They live in water and die when deprived of water. The baby is a part of the mother. It cannot survive apart from the mother. The branch is a part of the tree. Cut it off the tree, it gets dry and dies. Man is a part (an amsa) of God. He too cannot survive without God. He lives because of the urge to know God, to merge in God, his source. In the Bhagavad Gita the Lord declares (15-7) that "all living beings are My Amsa (Part)." I am in them as the Eternal Atma, He indicates.

Man lives for a high purpose, not for submitting as the beast does to every demand of instinct and impulse. He has to install himself as master, not crawl as a slave. He has the right to proclaim, "I am Siva" (Sivoham), "I am Achyuta" (I am the undiminishable Full), and "I am Ananda." As soon as one becomes aware of his reality, the chains that bind him, iron as well as gold, fall off and he attains liberation (Moksha).

The daily glimpse

Ananda is all around us and even within us. It is Ananda that sustains and supports us, but this Truth is hidden by petty selfishness which prods us across the sea of storms in order to gather on the outer shore, the things which apparently give Ananda inherent in them. Man envelops them with a layer of the Ananda within him but, while imbibing it, imagines that the thing itself can confer Ananda on him! Really speaking, it is his own Ananda that he is receiving back. After a term of deep sleep, man declares he had unbroken Ananda. The mind and the senses, even the faculty of reason had no contact then with any object, nor did they have any impact from objects. So, the Ananda was derived, during sleep, from within his own reality.

There are only two entities; the Seen (Drshya) and the Seeker (Drk). Drk is Atma Drshya is the Creation. The Drk is conscious; Drshya is inert. So long as man is immersed in the inert and the Seeker, the Witness, the Atma is neglected or negated, he cannot escape from distress and despair. The meat on the hook, hanging at the end of the rod draws the attention of the fish and tantalises it, but the fish is hooked and has to give up its life. The man who yields to the desire for sensual pleasure has to suffer the same fate. The Rishis knew that the 'seen' cannot last or

(renunciation) was, for them, the genuine Yoga (path to merge with the Divine).

The three skies

There are three levels of Space (Akasa) in man of which two are drshya, the drk is the third. The first comprises the earth, the solar system, and billions of other heavenly phenomena, reaching out to stars whose light, though emanated, has not yet reached this globe. This space is named Bhootha Akasa. The second level subsumes the first and retains it in a miniature form. It comprises the area cognised and imagined by the mind and is therefore named Chitta Akasa. Even this area is a dot when compared to the Space (Akasa) enfolded by the Atma, named Chidakasa. The two other spaces are but tiny fragments to the Seeker, the Atma, the Brahman. The human being has this journey, towards the Ananda that Chidakasa can offer, as the precious prerogative. The journey does not lead outward; it has to be inward, towards one's own Reality. The musk deer runs around frantically in its search for the source of the fragrance that fascinates it. When at last it is too exhausted to continue, it discovers that the source has been within itself all along!

So, too, man expects Ananda in a career, in a job, in business or farming and believes that the satisfaction he derives from these was worthwhile. But, he can soon arrive at lasting Ananda, if his career is converted into Sadhana, his business is transformed into calm serenity and his interest in farming is sublimated as cultivating devotion in the well ploughed weedless mental field. Even intelligent persons are being tempted by the pleasure which external effort can yield, rather than the Divine Delight which internal search can confer.

The role of intuition

The sages who declare the uniqueness of this Delight yearned to discover their Reality and to identify that Reality with the Reality that projects, protects and absorbs the Cosmos; that is to say, to submerge their Truth in the Truth of Truths. This can happen only by Intuitive Knowledge (Prajnana), not by logic or Reason. The Vedic declaration, "Prajnanam Brahma" supports this conclusion.

Once man glimpses this Truth of Truths, he can experience God everywhere in everything and everyone. "Sarvathah Paani Padam Sarvathokshi Siro Mukham" (Everywhere His Foot and Hand, His Eye, Head and Face) is what the Gita states about Him. Investigators do not visualise God in all that they study; they see the apparent, not the genuine. So they are misled into the realm of multiplicity, instead of being led into the all-comprehensive region of Light.

Peace cannot prevail in the individual and society until he develops faith in the Unity of Mankind, inspite of the apparent differences. One has to renounce all thoughts of difference and derive delight from the Vision of the One, in the tiniest and the most tremendous of God's Glory. This is the real Vairagya (non-attachment).

People complain of grief, sorrow, and distress. What exactly is grief? It is a reaction to the loss of something gained or the failure to gain something desired. Therefore, the only way to

mayam). That vision will scotch desire. When the desire is limited to God and concentrated on God, success is assured and each step contributes its Ananda. The Gopis of Brindavan knew this and longed for the Lord, to the exclusion of all else. Pure undiluted Love expressed itself as selfless action. They were simple rural folk, with no knowledge of scriptural texts or of spiritual exercises. Faith, unflinching faith in Krishna endowed them with all the inspiration and instruction they needed. As Krishna told Arjuna, "Shraddhavaan labhathe jnanam" (Possessing faith, one acquires wisdom).

The basic two

During this age of all round moral decline (the Kaliyuga), two Sadhanas are important—Namam and Danam. Namam means the Name of the Lord. It must activate every thought, word and deed and render them sweet and full of Love. It can certainly lead man to the Vision of the Bearer of the Name. The Name, the Sound, is the material which can reveal the non-material, the Jade which is the door to the awareness of the Chaitanya enshrined in it. This is the purpose of the Sadhana—to recognise both the Field (Kshetra) and the master and manipulator of the Field (Kshetrajna) as the Lord.

Danam, the second Sadhana, means charity, caring and sharing. The gift of food to the hungry gives immediate contentment and relieves the pangs of hunger. Annam Brahma (Food is Divine) says the Upanishad. Gifts are to be given without inflating the ego of the giver or deflating that of the receiver. They should be offered with understanding, humility and love.

Love is a quality, essential for propitiating Divinity. People may argue that rituals performed meticulously are effective for the same purpose. But, the scriptures themselves announce that ritual worship and rites can at best contribute only to the purification of one's mind and heart (Chitthasya suddhaye karmah). Or, as the promise reads, the rites might raise the person to Heaven. But, one can be there only as long as his deposit of merit lasts. He has to come back to earth, as soon as the quantity is exhausted by use (Ksheene punyam, marthya lokam visanthi).

Three evils

Love is the most direct means of attaining God. One has to love all, without distinction, for the Lord resides in every one and He is the very embodiment of Love. There are three obstacles which stand in the way of the full free flow of Love from man to God. They are man's Inveterate foes—desire, anger and greed. Fortunately, ancients in India have devised three holy texts which, when assimilated, can equip man to confront and conquer these wily enemies. They are the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Bhagavata.

Three remedies

Ravana is a warning to every one who fosters desire and allows it to vulgarise itself into lust. A spark of lust, if not scotched, is sure to become a calamitous conflagration. Ravana's evil deed destroyed the entire clan and reduced his capital into a heap of ash. The Bhagavata holds forth many lessons to instruct man against the evil consequences of anger and its root, hatred. The brothers, Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakasipu were angry at God Himself. Hiranyakasipu had by

elements. He could transport himself through the hydrosphere as a fish, through the atmosphere as a bird, but, he denied God who has projected the elements and who exists inside every thing and outside too. Of what benefit are powers and skills, in the face of insolence and ingratitude 1 Hiranyakasipu believed that he had eliminated God. He exploded in anger when his own little son dared to praise God. Anger resulted in blind fury, and heaped untold misery on his head.

The Mahabharata epic depicts the disaster that greed can bring about. Duryodhana was so greedy that he was not willing to allow, even those who had the legal right, to own the possessions he had grasped. He who keeps as his own what is not strictly his deserves to be named as a 'thief'. He was so greedy that he refused to yield even a pinpoint of land to his five Pandava cousins, though they had the rightful claim for a vast and flourishing area. Naturally, his greed destroyed him and his clan and subjects. The three texts mentioned can be used to cure the three mental illnesses which impede the growth of Love.

Shivaratri

Today is Shivaratri, the ratri (Night) of Sivam (Goodness, Godliness, Good Fortune). It is an auspicious Night, because the mind can be made to lose its hold on man by devoting the night to prayer. The Moon is the presiding deity of the mind, according to the scriptures. The mind is kindred to the Moon as the Eyes are to the Sun. Shivaratri is prescribed for the fourteenth night of the dark half of the month, the night previous to the New Moon when the moon suffers from total blackout. The moon and the mind which it rules over are both drastically reduced every month on the fourteenth night. When that night is devoted to vigilant adoration of God, the remnant of the wayward mind is overcome and victory ensured. This month's Sivaratri is holier than the rest and so it is called Mahasivaratri.

With firm faith and a cleansed heart, the night should be spent in glorifying God. No moment should be wasted in other thoughts. Time flees fast. Like a block of ice, it melts soon and flows away like water held in a leaky pot, it disappears drop by drop. The time allotted for one's life ticks off quite soon, and the span ends sometime somehow. So, be vigilant. Be warned. Be alert and aware. Seek the shelter of the Lord and transform every moment into a sacred celebration.

—*Bhagavan's Discourse on Sivaratri 26-2-1987*

Son and Father

Baba has a way of being so close, so completely with us, yet the next moment he is so far away. Who could know where to look for him, much less reach him? A sudden smile or chuckle surprises and reassures; then the intense silence is resumed just as unexpectedly.

want?" He asks him; then turns and continues walking as though he isn't interested in the answer. I've never seen Dad look so confounded. Dad is anxious and fidgety.

What would I say if Baba asked me that? A ring? No! First of all, I shouldn't sit here thinking selfishly what I would want. Secondly, that's material. I should want something spiritual.

What a rare opportunity for Dad! I should think of what would be best for him, what would make him happy... Again Baba approaches, with his aura of focussed silence and again stops, Asks Dad "What do you want?" waits for a moment this time; then resumes walking. For a second it looked like Dad was going to say something ...maybe ask a question, but he didn't. He just shifted his legs. He looks troubled.

Yes. I want a ring from Baba. (Come on. Think of Dad. Quit being selfish). Anyway, where do I get this idea all of a sudden that I want a ring! I've never worn a ring in my life! I thought I was above desires like this. I thought I was one who doesn't need to have Baba materialize something for me, in order that I have faith.

For the third time, Baba comes around and stops in front of Dad. This time it looks as though Baba isn't going to budge from that spot, until he gets an answer. He stares at Dad. Dad is really squirming. His eyes are red. What is it, Dad? (I wish I could help you...) "What do you want?" comes the question, slowly, for the third time. Baba's eyes are unblinking, his face stern, even cold. He waits. Dad starts crying. "I... it's so ...it's just that I...Swami, I can't say it..." (Oh, Dad...) Baba's face remains unsmiling, but his eyes soften. What is it that you can't say Dad? "You teach people, a minister?" Baba says. "Yes...?" Dad looks up at Baba,

"To teach properly you must first hear correctly. Then, digest what you hear. If you only hear and then teach without digesting, this is bad. Not good teaching. Understanding and assimilation of the teaching that is heard is most important. First, you must hear correctly, then you can teach correctly. But if there is no correct understanding, there can be no correct teaching. You understand!" "Yes."

Baba looks down and makes three or four fast circles with his right hand, palm down. Suddenly he makes a fist and holds it still. He turns his hand up and opens it. Held in his fingers is a large silver-colored ring. Baba looks at the ring, and then at Dad, who seems totally bewildered. Baba smiles. He takes hold of Dad's large right hand and slips the ring on... With an impulsive, awkward movement that is quite out of character Dad rips off his glasses and wipes his eyes. He looks astonished at what is now on his finger... "A ring I Oh... I It's beautiful I And it fits perfectly! Oh Swami, thank you! Oh, my, it's so beautiful!" His tears flow. (I've never seen him so moved, so happy). "Doctor! It is my pleasure!" Baba says playfully, beaming. Suddenly it's time to go. Baba disappears. Everyone starts getting up.

of a three-headed figure sitting cross-legged on a large rock with a dog and other little animals at its feet. The ring's blues, reds and greens look liquid and other worldly. It feels ancient, not like something that was newly made, nor antique, but truly ancient.

We are walking out amidst the others, who are crowding around, anxious to see. We step outside.

The voice of an older Indian gentleman with white hair and glasses is heard: "Doctor, may I see the ring? He is one of the very few, who is with Baba much of the time... Everyone lets him pass through to get closer to Dad. "Why, of course," Dad says, "Perhaps you could tell me what the image on it means." The man looks at the ring for a moment, and then says, "Yes. That is the God Dattatreya."

"Datta... Could you please repeat that...?" Dad gets out his pen and quickly scrawls on a scrap of paper he materializes from his pocket. "Certainly *Dattatreya*. Dattatreya is the embodiment of the Divine Guru, the spiritual teacher. The three heads represent the faculties of right hearing, right understanding, and right teaching (1) Dattatreya is God Himself in the form of the Guru. Notice that on your ring he is seated in the pose of Sai Baba of Shirdi, Swami's previous incarnation" "Yes, I see that. What do the animals represent!"

"Animals?" The man takes a closer look. "Oh yes. Yes, here." "Perhaps they symbolize man's lower nature," Dad suggests. "Yes. That would make sense. And so Dattatreya sits with them at his feet to symbolize mastery over the lower nature of man." He pauses, studying it. "It is a beautiful ring, in my years with Baba I have never seen one like it."

Dick was examining the ring. "Dick, who was that man who was explaining to me what the ring represents?" Dad asks. "That's the top physicist of India."

—*Christopher Curtis Rudolf, U.S.A.*

"Technology—at what price?"

We see existing today many technological innovations which are a result of man's continued quest to develop the quality of life for society through the art of Science and Engineering. In an attempt to improve the physical quality of daily life, man has achieved significant success in the production of efficient and labour saving machines, harnessing the various natural elements and resources for his sustenance, and also has created various unique weapons to protect himself from enemies. With each successful innovation, a new commercial market and economic structure is created. Products are sold, employment is created and profits are made. In due course of time, previous products and technologies are displaced and eventually become obsolete thereby affecting product sales, jobs, etc. This endless cycle continuous technological change or

context, each society progresses from the classification of undeveloped to developing to eventually developed status. Based on the yardstick of technology, one can easily identify and trace the history of today's societies on the above scale of development.

Let us ask ourselves for a moment whether through the ages today, man has really developed. The answer to this question is clear if we just look around our world and see it as it really is:

The air is polluted with poisonous byproducts, gases resulting from various thermo-chemical reactions which are the mainstay in industries and machines. The water is contaminated with toxic byproduct fluids discharged from industrial sewers and effluent pits into rivers, lakes and oceans. Thin land is utilised as a fill or burial site for hazardous substances which cannot be reprocessed or deactivated due to their intrinsic and unstable properties. The noise levels of machines are deafening and pose a threat to health and safety. The various air, water and land pollutants are creating complex diseases and disorders for which a cure is not so easy to establish. The warheads and weapons are so uncontrollable and lethal that one button, if pressed in haste or in error, can self-destruct entire life; on this planet.

With all these factors to consider, what price has man paid for today's technology and does society truly have a better overall life with the many innovations? From time immemorial, our ancients have expounded the four Purusharthas as essential duties of man in life. These are namely Artha, Dharma, Kama, and Moksha. Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has declared that "...Science without Humanity and Commerce without Morality are useless." We who are the practitioners of science and engineering have no one to blame but ourselves. Whether we want to accept it or not, each and every one of our delusions and actions have contributed to the present status. Whatever we create from a concept and develop into reality, we must dedicate ourselves to the benefit of all life and confirm whether our innovations are in accordance with the essential duties of man. This must be our design code and basis. The knowledge of science has been given as a gift to us from God and we must ensure that the technology we derive there from is unbiased and is intended for preservation of life and not its destruction. The world depends on our rationale and prudence, so therefore, we must take full responsibility for our actions in the laboratory, behind the engineer's desk and for the safe function of the products in the plant, office, household, etc. In addition, we must evaluate, establish, and assure that the purpose of our products is not to promote socio-economic chaos resulting in runaway economic competition and ruthless trade wars.

There are a lot of problems today which seem unsolvable. The odds seem to be against us. We must not frown but accept our true responsibility as men of science and take charge to correct the situations. The problems should become mere challenges to our God given gift of intelligence. Functioning within the divine parameters and laws of the Universe together with unshakable faith in Divine Grace, man can, in fact, clothe impossible. There is nothing which is beyond man's reach if we only believe. With Sai's light, guiding our actions, the price paid for technology can be justified.

When the road ends, and the goal is gained, the pilgrim finds that he has travelled only from himself to himself, that the way was long and lonesome, but the God, that led him unto it was all the while in him, around him, with him, and beside him!

—Baba

The Apology

In late summer 1985 I visited a few remaining relatives and friends in Germany. While in Hamburg, I saw an old friend who owns and runs a small goldsmith-shop and studio, close to the city. Since her husband, who was also a friend and colleague had passed over many years ago, she mentioned a few times her concern regarding security in the shop where she spent most of the time alone...

I carried a small spare photograph of Swami with me. I bought a nice little picture-frame and put it in a showcase, next to the counter and said, "SAI BABA will protect you—I believe in it and you must do the same..."

She thanked me for the picture and said that she believed in BABA, even though she knew little about Him, other than what I told her...

14 months passed by. One day, late in November 86, I received a phone call from Germany, from my friend in Hamburg. Totally upset and excited she told me that she has just been held-up in her shop by a young man waving a pistol at her and threatening her life demanding five most valuable rings, from the central showcase... She could not even take a single side-step to press the silent alarm connecting the shop to the police...

The thief took the 5 rings and moving backwards, threatening to shoot when followed, left the shop... The police arrived within minutes after the alarm was activated. But the thief had vanished. What made me feel really sorry for her was, when she said, "You told me, SAI BABA will protect me and I really believed so much in it."—(So did I.) Feeling deeply with her I could only say: "He actually has helped and protected you, you could have been hurt or worse if that man was a violent type..."

After that telephone-call my thoughts went around in circles... I was aware of her predicament, since those valuable rings were not 'insured' as she said she could not afford the insurance. It was a substantial loss for her.

days after the incident, she received a phone-call from a Catholic priest at an outer suburb, asking her, whether her shop had been held-up two days ago? Bewildered about his knowledge of the incident, (the papers did not mention the robbery at her request) she admitted to the happening and, in return, she wished to know where he obtained that information.

The priest told her, a young man came to him, and handed over 5 rings and a gun, telling him he committed a holdup in a jewellery-shop of such and such address, threatening the lady in the shop with the gun to obtain those valuable rings. He asked the priest to return the rings, since "he could not find a peaceful moment since."

Grateful and happy, my friend visited the priest and received the stolen rings.

But SWAMI works even more thorough. A few days later, the young man walked into the shop, to apologize in a real nice way and asked to be forgiven. And, he was...!!

—*Wolram Wennrich Melbourne - Australia*

Weeds of the Heart

Service! I can't do that. I'm too busy. I work full-time job, plus I have a backyard full of weeds to cut and clear. This is what I was thinking while reflecting on all of the bewildering talk about service projects at the Sathya Sai Baba Centre and, at the same time, looking out over my backyard full of weeds and dreading another spring season of hard labor. I decided service projects were just out of the question for me, for what project could I possibly engage in with my limited time?

Oh, but Sai does not let go so easily. At that moment, while in the midst of this dilemma, a devotee friend called and mentioned growing a vegetable garden and donating the food. Wow! What an idea. A light went on inside and I realized the weeds in my backyard were not the problem. It was the weed of *tamas*—laziness and ignorance in my own heart—that was preventing me from doing service.

So off to the phone I went, and I suggested to other devotees that we grow a vegetable garden and donate the food to the Marin Country Food Bank, a nonprofit organization which collects food and distributes it to the needy within the country.

An entire day was devoted to pulling in the garden. The work was toilsome, especially rototilling, for the soil was hard from not being worked for a long time (as was the soil of my heart). But with repeated passes, the ground loosened and was turned into an amiable composition. Soil amendments were added, the seeds planted, and Baba's garden was blessed with

delicious vegetarian dinner and devotional songs.

But the work did not end there, for the garden needed watering daily. And to and behold over a period of time, another phenomenon occurred—weeds grew! As with my heart, the constant watering while repeating Baba's name was a must for the seeds of loving service to sprout. A constant vigilance had to be kept over the weeds of my heart, for, if they were not pulled out quickly by the roots, they would grow fast and multiply, destroying the newly sprouted seeds. Every time I pulled out a weed from the garden, I felt I was also ridding myself of negativity. A clean heart! What a wonderful service project this was turning out to be. It was as if the garden was a mirror of myself.

Eventually, with the help of the Sai devotees, watering, weeding, and harvesting the garden produced more than 500 pounds of fresh vegetables which were greatly appreciated by the Marin County Food Bank. One of the managers asked, "Who is this Sai Baba! I never heard of him before. He seems to do good work! "

From this project, I have learned service is a twenty-four-hour-a-day activity, not a four-hour-per-week project. Service is an attitude of giving, a process of keeping thoughts clean and pure so that one can give freely and spontaneously from the heart in daily life.

There are no excuses for not doing service, such as "I don't have time" or "I don't know what to do." As long as we keep the heart cleared of the weeds of ignorance and watered with the love of Baba's name, the opportunities for service will present themselves to us. Service may be no further away than your own backyard.

—**D. J. Olds Novato, California**

Those attached to God, aspiring for God, aware of God, adoring God have certain distinct marks by which they can be identified. Such people have a compassionate heart. If a person turns the rosary on the fingers, and is intently engaged in watching the tip of his nose, unmindful of the distress that dances around him, we can at best name him a sloth, that is all. Get up, place the rosary in its bag, and activate yourselves in relieving distress—that is the true spiritual path. Do not waste all your years with stone images, pictures or idols. Learn to see in every living, vital, active person, the embodiment of all energy, all beauty, all beneficence, namely, God.

—**Baba**

What If?

What if you looked into the face of God, and He ever so

What if you looked into His eyes and He into yours and
you knew that He knew your totality and depth
than words or thoughts could ever say?

What if He allowed you to walk with Him and talk with
Him and laugh with Him and cry with Him and
have Him with you always?

What if He sang songs to you and rocked you with the
cosmic waves?

What if He showered you with love and joy that saturated
each cell of your being?

What if He told you all of creation came about because
of His love for you?

What if every word He uttered, every gesture He made,
every move, every event- no matter how slight
carried with it the power to transform you into
Being just like Him?

What if you looked into the face of God? Is there more
a soul could hold?

—*Malaika LaMore, Pasadena*

What is Santhi?

Confusion of connotation

Raimundo Panikkar writes in his book on the "Vedic Experience", "Man may possess everything—health, wealth, wife and children, knowledge and skill, power and glory; but still, he can be the most miserable creature, if he is lacking that gift of the Gods, which does not depend on any other gift, and on which all other gifts depend, if they are to be real blessings for man—peace (Santhi)."

Swami says, "The word is taken by each person to mean something different. Many feel that they have Peace when some worldly desire that was vexing them is fulfilled. Absence of anger

entanglements."

The dictionary serves only to multiply the confusion. It tells that Santhi can mean any one of a jumble of states, feelings and rites—calmness, tranquility, serenity, quiet, ease, rest, repose, cessation of hostilities, absence of passion, total indifference, solace, reconciliation, expiatory rite, a propitiatory ritual, felicity, exculpation, preservation, ceremony to remove or overcome calamities. Any or all these do not convey genuine Santhi; so, Swami has named the place where He resides at Puttaparthi, as "Prasanthi" Nilayam. Nilayam means 'abode' and the syllable Pra means "expanding, enlarging, ever-widening."

Santhi and Prasanthi

The word occurs thrice in the Bhagavad-Gita, all three in Chapter VI, designated as Dhyana Yoga. A person "who has conquered his lower self, who takes refuge and rest in the Super. Ego (Param-Atma), who maintains as unruffled balance in heat and cold, honour and disgrace, has attained Prasanthi." (7) "When a sadhaka decides on Dhyana, he must be a Prasantha Atma, with no mental agitations of fear" (14) This serene state of mind is once again described as Prasantha Manas in Verse 27. Swami interprets the word thus: "Prasanthi means, absence of Kama (Desire) Krodha (Anger) Lobha (Greed) and Dwesha (Hatred)" in His analysis of the state, in the brochure "Prasanthi Vahini", He tells us why He has preferred the word Prasanthi to Santhi while writing on that most important aspect of man's fundamental nature. "The Santhi that has pervaded the heart must not be shaken subsequently for any reason; that type of Santhi alone deserves to be called Prasanthi. Prasanthi has no ups and downs; it cannot be a fraction in adversity and full during prosperity."

All or none

Man seeks peace for himself; but he realises soon that his search is vain until all men have peace. All men can dwell in peace only if all beings have peace; this involves peace in space and sky, earth and its interior, meteors and monsoons. The Vedic seers saw this intimate inter-relationship. Hence the sacred Mantras for Peace uttered by them and enshrined in the scriptures invoke the boon for all Creation. Let us consider one such. "Prithivi Santhi (Peace on Earth) Anthariksham Santhi (Peace in the sky) Dyauh Santhi (Peace in Heaven) Disah Shanti (Peace in all directions) Avantara Disah Santhi (Peace in all interspaces) Agnih Santhi (Peace on fire) Aapah Santhi (Peace on all the waters) Oushadhayah Santhi (Peace on herbs) Vanaspathayah Santhi (Peace on plants and trees) Gowh Santhi (Peace on bovines) Ajah Santhi (Peace on sheep and goats) Asvah Santhi (Peace on horses) Purushah Santhi (Peace on man) Brahma Santhi (Peace on Brahman) Brahmanah Santhi (Peace on aspirants for attaining Brahman) Santhireva Santhi (Peace, Peace Itself) Shantir me asthu (May I be Peace) Santhi (Peace)." Yes. Every man has to pray for Peace for all men, nay for Peace to prevail throughout the Universe. Earthquakes, sunspots, tornadoes, tidal waves, heat waves, cold spells do disturb and destroy peaceful existence. Unless man has bolted the door of love and compassion, sympathy and sensitivity in his heart, he cannot sleep in peace when human beings are tortured in any part of the world or babies are starved or animals hunted, birds caged and trees felled by

occurrences. They pleaded with God to establish concord and remove discord.

Concord among men

The Vedas, spoken of as 'blissful words' (Kalyaneem Vacham) have to be spoken to the masses of, men, to "my own people and to the foreigner", for as another hymn in the Atharva Veda says. "The Earth bears people speaking different languages, with varied religious rituals according to the places of abode". Human society has advanced from tribalism to nationalism and also at the same time from arrows to atom bombs; love, born of understanding, has given place to fear based on suspicion. It is useful now to remember the prayer recorded in the Vedas; "May I be fearless of the friend, fearless of the foe, tearless of the known, fearless of the unknown. May our nights be without fear, may all the directions be our friends." The Atharva Veda has this powerful and pathetic pleading for an all-comprehensive unity of hearts. "May there be concord with our own people and concord with foreign peoples. May we unite in our minds, in our purposes, and not fight against the Divine Spirit within us. O Asvins (the Twin Gods) create this concord between ourselves and foreigners." Man is a gregarious animal and the vaster the congregation the deeper his Peace and Joy. Bhooma eva sukham. "Vastness alone is happiness." "Vasudhaiva kutumbakam." The globe is the home of a single family. It is foolish, even suicidal, to dilute this concept or deny it. So, the scripture lays down the prayer "May the bad become good, may the good attain peace, may the peaceful free those bound by grief, may the freed, free others."

Discord in the heart

Swami warns us, "Of course, it is good to pray but Santhi can never be won by that Alone. You should not pray for one thing and practise another. If you cannot patiently put up with others, if you slander others and look down upon them, you yourself will have no Santhi! You will have turmoil instead! And, with the turmoil, the attendant pain and sorrow. "With a mind burdend and buffeted by absurd hatred, blind prejudices and irrational disgusts", Swami asks, "how can man dwell in Peace?" There can be no Peace on earth when discord and dissension have taken root in the heart of man.

Swami has announced that man is basically the embodiment of Love and so; cooperation, tolerance and mutual aid are his fundamental characteristics. Even if he regresses into his animal nature, the animal turns aggressive only in the face of "clear and present danger". No animal kills members of its own species as homo sapiens does. The crown of creation crushes entire populations out of existence and exults over the achievement. The fires of hatred are stoked by exaggerated and systematic propaganda by clever salesmen interested in isms, and schisms. The peace, that a nation (which is the modern version of an armed primitive tribe) attains after an exhausting struggle with the threat, is but a chance to recuperate and threaten again. Optimists proclaim "Nothing needs to be done" and pessimists assert, "Nothing can be done." The voice of those who feel that peace is possible yet through Love, Generosity, Compassion, Understanding are ignored or silenced.

That voice promotes Unity. Swami warns us, "Never nourish ideas of difference, of the names and forms of God as distinct, of paths to God as divergent. Unity must ever be kept before the eye." The Rg Veda, the earliest and the profoundest scripture of man, lays down in the closing hymn the same prescription for Santhi.

"Sam gacchadhvam (proceed together) Sam Vadadhvam (speak together) Sam vo anaamsi jaanathaam (be united in your minds) Samaanee mantrah (have a common plan) Samithih samaani (have a common assembly) Samaanam manah saha chittham (have united minds and thought) Samaanam mantram (with a common purpose) Samaanena havishaa juhothi (worship with a common oblation) Samaanee Aakoothi (have a common aim) Samaanaa hrdayaani (have united hearts) Samaanam asthu vo manah (have your minds united) yatha vah suhaasanthi (so that all may live joyfully together)."

Togetheriness alone can ensure Santhi. Tolerance or Co-existence or even Brotherliness cannot serve to remove fear. Swami has revealed in His writings (Prasanthi Vahini) the condition of the man who has grasped the Truth. "There will never more be another; everything that is, is himself." Fear is inevitable, for both when there are two (Dwithiyaad Vai bhayam). The Bhagavata text identifies the vice of the demonic man (Asura) as "fanatically holding on to the falsehood of mine and thine." "Swa para asad graha asreya." As Swami exhorts us by precept and example, genuine Santhi, free from fear, suspicion, anxiety and doubt, about others, can be acquired only by total identification with all as expressions of the One Divine Will.

The inner agitators

The other source of A- Santhi (Absence of Peace) is inner restlessness, caused by one's own ignorance or incompetence, weakness or waywardness, all of which befog the Light and Love that the Atma radiates. The scriptures warn us against six parasites that continuously agitate our minds and cause ruinous restlessness. These are: lust, anger, greed, possessiveness, pride and hatred. Each one of these has an army of fearful followers. How then can man foil them and rest in his own inner oasis of Santhi?

Sages like Patanjali have prescribed a Sadhana of eight exercises for the acquisition of victory over these parasites and the attainment of the Bliss of Santhi. Swami has in the book, Prasanthi Vahini, clarified the implications of each of these steps, through His annotations and explanations. While dealing with Patanjali's analysis of the eight Angas. Swami introduces His version of their ramification with "This can be explained in another manner" or "I would say that it means more" or "I shall define in another manner" or "But, I explain it this way" or "I am telling you the same thing in a different way" or "I would explain it in the following manner" or "I would say instead." Swami lays emphasis on the real purposes of these Raja Yoga exercises—to recover the Santhi that has been lost and the awareness of Unity which one has to gain.

The eight remedies

1) The first Anga, Vama, involves the practice not only the five traditional virtues, but the overcoming of dual attitudes and feelings. 2) Niyama, the second, is usually defined as having

the Cosmic Consciousness, which sustains and supports all the five. 3) Aasana, or Pose, the third Anga, is generally understood as the pose of the human body during meditation. Swami stresses on mental pose also. Unaffected by the external world, the mind has to be fixed on the One All pervading Brahman. 4) The fourth Anga, Pranayama, taken to mean, the regulation of inhalation, retention and exhalation of breath has proved popular but dangerous. Swami warns, "The control of Prana (vitalising breath) is possible only for those who consider the Universe as unreal." "The genuine master of Pranayama will picture the world as letters written in pencil years ago, indistinct, hazy, misty."

5) The fifth Anga is Prathyahara withdrawing the senses and mind from the external world. Swami has widened and deepened its connotation. He wants the development of 'insight', the conviction that the objective world is a huge pantomime, Maya-born and Maya-sustained. 6) Dharana, the next Anga, implies the concentration of attention on one point. Swami advises aspirants and practitioners: "To whichever place the Chitta (Consciousness) may wander, instruct it to find only Brahman there. Whatever the idea or picture it forms, instruct it to find only Brahman in those creations of your mind-stuff." 7) The penultimate Anga is, according to Raja Yoga, Dhyana, widely practised by aspirants after initiation into Sadhana by their Gurus. Swami, the uncompromising Guru, come to save all who stray, advises us to meditate on Light, until the awareness that we are in the Light is sublimated into the experience that the Light is in us and that experience too is transformed into the Bliss of our merging in the Omnipresent Effulgence. Experiencing the One and Only is the summum bonum of Dhyana the culmination.

8) The last Anga is Samadhi. Swami identifies Samadhi as the culmination of the Ashtanga Yoga. Samadhi is a technical word that has suffered grievous devaluation through indiscriminate use. Swami says, that Samadhi discards even the tiniest trace of Name and Form. The Knower is experienced as Brahman, the Known is Brahman, and the Knowing too is Brahman.

Santhi

The Sadhana of Raja Yoga, as well all other adventures in the spiritual journey towards Santhi, brings us to the conclusion, arrived at while seeking the Knowledge of Truth and Dharma: Knowing the One, visible as the Many, is Truth. Treating the Many as the Visible One, is Dharma. Experiencing the Many as repetitions of the One is Santhi.

—*N. Kasturi*

*Yah Preenayeth sucharitaih pitaram sa putrah
Yadbharthureva hithamichchathi thath kalathram
Thanmitram aapadisukhecha samakriyam yath
Ethath-thrayam jagathi punyakrto labhanthe.*

*He alone is a son who pleases his parents by his virtuous actions;
She alone is a wife who desires only the good of her husband;
He alone is a friend who is loyal in weal and woe;
These three are got in this world only by meritorious souls.*

So says the wise Bhartrhari. There is no doubt that a virtuous son, a devoted wife and an unflinching friend are great blessings in life. But these are primarily valuable from a worldly point of view. The absence of any one of them can cause considerable unhappiness or detract from the sweetness of normal living.

When, however, one is concerned about the deeper values of life and the goals one should pursue, the supreme importance of the guru becomes obvious. Bhartrhari, in praising the greatness of "Vidya" (knowledge), describes it as "gurunaam guruh" (the teacher of teachers). But, here again, he has in mind mainly worldly knowledge. Bhagavan reminds us again that, while secular knowledge has its value, the knowledge which one should seek is "Atma Vidya"—Knowledge of the Self. This is the knowledge about which Prahlada spoke to his unbelieving father. It is the knowledge which Sri Krishna refers to in the Gita as one of the Lord's "vibhutis" (in which can be recognised His glory) "Adhyatma Vidya".

Who is the guru that can impart his Atma Vidya? Where is one to find him? This question has confronted spiritual aspirants all through the ages. There can be no greater blessing in life than to meet the guru who reveals the path to Self-realisation. "Kumbhinsadhavu choppedi gurudu gurudu" says Prahlada. He alone is a guru who teaches about God. All other teachers are more instructors or purveyors of information. The real guru does not inform, he transforms the disciple.

It is supremely significant that the refrain of the last verse in the Arati prayer for Bhagavan hails Him as "Sadgurudeva"—the Divine Teacher of the Supreme Truth. All other attributes ascribed to Bhagavan relate to His divine puissance. But the true significance of His advent consists not solely in the manifestation of His supra-human powers, but primarily in His role as the Divine Guru who has come to awaken in erring and groping mortals the truth about their essential divinity.

If Sri Krishna is adored primarily as the Githacharya and Yogeswara, Bhagavan Baba is for us the Githacharya come again to rescue millions of Arjunas from ignorance and delusion. This

Vikas gurus from all corners of the world came for a training programme in the immediate presence of Bhagavan, could have failed to note the supreme value which Bhagavan attaches to the cultivation of the spirit as the basis for a good and godly life. His discourses to the gurus were so inspiring and illuminating that they felt they were singularly blessed to have the benefit of such a blissful experience. The light which Bhagavan lit in their hearts will spread to many countries and shed its beneficence on millions of children in all the continents.

When, in the Arati song, we say "Jai! Sadgurudeva!" (Victory to the Divine Teacher of the Supremo Reality!) What is the victory we wish for Him? There is nothing He wants from any one. He seeks no earthly dominion or power. What then is the victory that will please Him? It is mankind's response to His divine epochal mission that will rejoice Him. By painful evolution through millennia, mankind has emerged from the animal to the human. The next step in evolution is for mankind in the mass to discover its divinity—which has hitherto been confined to a few resolute and dedicated individuals. Never before in the annals of man has there been such a phenomenon as what we are witnessing today: the experience of Bhagavan Baba as a Divine Presence by persons in different parts of the world, through inexplicable incidents and happenings. If streams of Chinese, Europeans, Americans, Africans and Asians continually pour into Prasanthi Nilayam for "Darshan, Sparshan and Sambhashan" (seeing, touching and speaking to Baba), the common impulse that is animating all of them is a spiritual quest—the yearning to experience God as a personal reality.

This is the greatest "miracle" of Bhagavan—that He has awakened in millions of people belonging to different faiths, races and nations an awareness of the living reality of God as the Supreme Power permeating and sustaining the universe. When that awareness leads, through Sadhana and Abhyasa, to a godly way of life among mankind, that will be the victory of Bhagavan's mission.

It is the privilege and the duty of those, who have been supremely fortunate in living close to Bhagavan and enjoying the benefit of His constant advice and guidance, to exemplify in their lives the message of Bhagavan and contribute in whatever sphere of life they may be operating, to the furtherance of His divine mission. The greatest responsibility devolves on students of the Sai Educational Institutions because they are the young people who will be the builders of the New Society based on the values of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema. Theirs is the privilege and the opportunity. JAI! SADGURUDEVA!

The Lord has endowed man with the body and that is why every limb and every sense is worthy of reverent attention. Each must be used for His glory. The ear must exult when it gets a chance to hear the wonderful talks on God. The tongue must exult when it can praise Him. Otherwise the tongue of man is as ineffective as the tongue of the frogs which croak day and night sitting on the marshy bank. The human body has been given to you for a grand purpose: realising the Lord within. If you have a fully equipped car in good running condition, what is the use of keeping it in a garage? The car is primarily meant for going on a journey. Get into it and

F.F.F.F.

—*Taraka Das*

The first commandment of Swami is "Follow the Master." It is much more than a command. It is an assurance, a guarantee, a guideline, a reinforcement. Following the Master is not simplistic either. The enemies built into our lives—physical and mental illnesses, lack of proper understanding, want of constant vigilance and awareness. We must not and cannot follow the Master mechanically, like a trailer, unintelligently. It has to be deliberate, spontaneous, joyous with every step placed on His Footprints advancing along the direction marked out by Him.

The second command is a corollary of the First, the very purpose of that prescription—Face the Devil. One cannot follow the Master, without facing the Devil who tries to block every step of ours. The Devil dispatches his most insidious Lieutenant, Doubt to prevent our progress. Possessed by doubt, we begin to doubt our own experience of the Master, our own conclusions and convictions. We see foot-steps other than those of the Master and waver in hesitation. The Devil is anxious to nip, when it is still a bud, our attempt to follow, since we are reinforced by the Master Himself once we turn our faces towards Him. Though the Devil and its minions try to lead us away, the Master whom we follow is sure to lead us on. Facing the Devil and foiling its stratagems become easier with the Master's Grace.

Sri Krishna, as the Sarathi (Charioteer) of Arjuna, emboldened him to take up arms on the battlefield and counselled him on critical occasions to face the enemy and overcome them. The Lord had, in his hands, only one weapon—the whip. He used it seldom on the horses and never on Arjuna but His ridicule, repartee and reassurance served to awaken Arjuna's heroism and self-confidence. Swami has declared that He has taken on the role of charioteer for every one of us, so that He may awaken in us the awareness of our innate impregnability. Swami does not wield even the whip. He has come with a disconcerting smile, an all conquering Love and a penetrating probing eye. While following such a Master, we can confidently face the Devil and his ubiquitous throng.

But if the Master's call is sought to be interpreted and by-passed through the devil's dictionary and logic, we are heading for a fall with our eyes open. When we are tempted to ask, "Why did the Master advise me so?" we have immediately to condemn the thought and pray to the Master to help us to keep the tempter away.

and Eve could not "follow the Master", the Lord God and obey His injunction: "You may eat from every tree in the garden but not from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, for, on the day that you eat it, you will certainly die." The reason was, the devil's temptation. They had no strength to face the devil who came as a serpent and, as Eve confessed to God, "tricked me." The Devil has many tricks up his sleeve; his words are soaked in sweet poison. But, the Master whom we follow will surely help us to escape his allurements.

The Bhagavad Gita describes (XVI—8, 12, 14, 15, 16) the nature of men who yield to the devil's allurements and give up following the Master. The devil has succeeded in polluting their brains. "They say that the world is without a presiding God, a basic Overlord who adheres to Truth. They ask, what else is there except lust? They are immersed in lust and anger and entangled in hopes and expectations. They are led away by pride to boast 'I am the Lord, I am powerful and happy I am rich and well born.' The Asura qualities are judged as really beneficial and desirable by the victims. The Gita pictures their fate thus, "Maddened by many thought currents, caught within the snare of confusing values, addicted to lustful gratifications, such people fall into dirty hell."

No wonder, Swami in His infinite compassion has given us another, the Third Commandment: Fight to the End. Perpetual vigilance is the price for progress. The higher the climb the greater the risk. The Master we follow appreciates single-pointed attention to the Message He has condescended to give us. As the Bible advises, "Be alert! Be on the watch! Your enemy, the Devil roams around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Be firm in your faith and resist him, because you know that your fellow believers in all the world are going through the same kind of sufferings." (I Peter 5) Again, "God is our shelter and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. So we will not be afraid, even if the earth is shaken and mountains fall into the ocean depths, even if the seas roam and rage and the hills are shaken by the violence." (Psalm. 46)

"Fight to the End." What exactly is the End, which we have in mind through all the years of Following, Facing and Fighting? Swami has denoted it by another F, the fourth: "Finish the Game." "Life is a game, play it," says Swami. The world is the arena, the gymnasium, the field for playing games. Every game has its own rules; respect them. Do not take to the game with fanatic frenzy. The victor in the game is rewarded by Him who sent you to play it and watched over your conduct until the final whistle. The reward is Himself. The Ocean is the reward awaiting the river which does not stray into the Dead Sea but follows the call of the waves, faces rocky barriers and leaps over precipices, until it achieves consummation.

See the unlimited in the limited

shut Him up in a stone image, but we affirm and realise that He is also the icon. We raise the image to the dimensions of the Absolute, we expand the picture far beyond its frame and through the processes of spiritual discipline we become slowly aware that the picture too can be made a tool for the mind to escape from its limitations.

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

The sixteen modes of worship laid down in the Shastras make the aspirant aware that he is in the very presence of the Divine and that every gesture and movement of his has to be motivated by devotion and dedication to ensure the purification of the mind of man from ego and all its brood of blemishes.

This process is called the cleansing of all levels of one's consciousness: the "chitta shuddhi". The basic consciousness has to be freed from down-dragging impulses. What is the use of cooking a rare and costly dish in a vessel contaminated by dirt? What is the use of planting a precious seed in a rocky soil? The rituals and worship performed without a purified heart are a sheer waste of time. Whereas even a short and sincere session of rituals spent in divine awareness yields much fruit. The great Tamil saint, Thiruthondar, has confessed that he engaged himself in the worship of the Lord's idol in order to cleanse his mind. Be careful and pay attention to that fact do not give much importance to the stone, otherwise, at this very instant, the divine will disappear from view. The material and the form are inseparable but the seeker must dwell on the form which he desires to be manifested in all its glory rather than the material. He must dwell long and deep over the thought that God is found in every particle of the universe and that He is not bound by any limitation of time.

—Baba

For Life and Living

—Kum. Rajeshwari Patel, M.A., Ph.D.,

After Montessori and our own Shantiniketan where are we today? We have strong doubts about efficacy of education to transform the individual. In fact EDUCATION MUST PREPARE FOR LIFE AND LIVING. Education makes one feel conscious of Self. That education has become absent in our society. Sri Sathya Sai Educational System-what does it seek to do? It

substitute with a begging bowl and go from door to door asking for employment.

Swami Vivekananda's father earned a lot of money and spent it so generously. The mother of Swami Vivekananda got anxious. She called Naren to go to his father and ask him what he is going to leave behind. Naren asked his father. The father asked him to look into a mirror to find what it is. What did the boy see? Bright face, shining eyes, full of confidence, a picture of manliness and then he understood what his father meant. With human excellence, basic we can achieve anything.

Once an English Professor asked a class of students: what is the chief characteristic of Romanticism? One student replied, Sir I it is marked by high imagination. Another student said it shows keen sensibility. The Professor kept silent for sometime and said that, "Did not the other periods have imagination or sensibility?" and said 'Romanticism is decent way of looking at things.' The Sathya Sai Educational System is not different from any other. Look at it from one angle. It has the same curriculum, the same paraphernalia. It is not proposed to project a new system of education, it does not, in other words, have a new type as such but it does represent certainly a different way of working.

The great thinkers and educationists in the world wanted education to liberate the human personality from the shackles of its own making. This is what Sathya Sai Educational System envisages.

The Sathya Sai Education System says that the world is what it is because you are what you are, we are what we are. An example. In Bombay, one flat overlooks another flat. Every morning the wife complained to the husband to look at the neighbour's house which is kept dusty. The husband got fed up with this gossip day in and day out. One day he got up earlier than his wife and dusted the window. The wife said to him that day that the neighbour has cleaned the house. Then the husband said it is not the neighbour's house it is our window that was dirty.

Let other young students go into the world and say it is ugly, it is corrupt, it is vicious, but, we should have the moral courage to look into ourselves.

The Sri Sathya Sai Education System realizes training the intellect of man is not sufficient. If the individual's moral and ethical development does not keep up with this development, if the brain moves with jet speed and if our moral self goes at tortoise pace then we will be creating a monster in human form and that is what we have to avoid.

If we sow a thought today we reap an act tomorrow. If we sow an act today we reap a habit tomorrow. If we sow a habit today we reap character tomorrow. If we sow character today we reap a destiny tomorrow. Baba warns students "Your destiny does not depend upon examination marks, it depends upon WILL POWER, CHARACTER AND GRACE OF GOD."

for the welfare of everybody. We pray and work together, HANDS IN SOCIETY AND HEAD IN FOREST. There were two girls running to school. One girl said we will sit here and pray that we would not get scoldings from the teacher. The other girl said we will pray while running.

Jesus Christ said don't think of tomorrow, think of to-day. So let us reform ourselves, that is what our Sathya Sai Education System advises.

It is in the minds of men that war begins. A former Secretary General of U.N.O. U Thant said even in those minds where war begins, if love and compassion have built a defence of peace, battles need never be fought.

Baba says if there is righteousness in the Heart there will be beauty of character, if there is beauty of character there will be harmony in the home, if there is harmony in the home, there will be order in the Nation, if there is order in the Nation, there will be peace in the world.

I can tell that Sai System gave me integrated education. In fact our Awareness courses in the first two years of Degree on man and evolution of society, on different Religions of the world gave us a broad worldwide view.

Do not tell me that you do not care for spiritual bliss, that you are satisfied with delusion and are not willing to undergo the rigours of sleeplessness. Believe me, your basic nature abhors this dull dreary routine of eating, drinking and sleeping. It seeks something which it knows it has lost: inward contentment. It seeks liberation from bondage to the trivial and the temporary. Everyone craves for it in his heart of hearts. And it is available only in one shop: Contemplation of the Highest Self, the basis of all this appearance.

However high a bird may soar, sooner or later it has to perch on a treetop, to enjoy quiet. In the same manner a day will come when even the most willful, the most unbelieving, the most haughty and even those who assert that there is no joy and peace in the contemplation of the highest Self will have to pray "God! grant me peace and consolation, strength and joy."

—Baba

Desire for Deliverance

—Dr. K. Krishnamoorthy

Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning

If the Western heralders of the French Revolution said: "Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains," they said so from the socio-economic and political perspective, little dreaming of any spiritual dimension in which the statement may be even more fundamentally true. On the

when he concludes his discourse to Yudhishtira in the great epic, viz., Mahabharata (Santiparvam)

"Nothing is greater than man's estate."

Bhishma indeed is the greatest patriarchal hero of the great epic, a warrior unrivalled and a counsellor venerated by everyone for his boundless wisdom. This seminal message is either played down or caricatured in the researches of Modern Indologists who aver that the Vedas mirror a primitive religion born of fear and wonder at natural forces; and that the epics are no more than exercises in fantasy creating impossible myths and legends under the caption of 'history'. This 'scholarly' judgement is a result of treating Vedas and epics as books to be understood in the light of our own aids like philology, sociology and comparative mythology. That they are not such museum pieces, but lighthouses of the eternal truth or reality as realised by Indian sages of the unknown past, is becoming clear once again in the divine discourses of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

What is it that makes man's estate so glorious and worthy? Why is it that Masters like Shankara declare in one voice that birth as a human being is indeed a good fortune resulting from good deeds accumulated over several successive janmas or births? The one and only answer known to all Indian scriptures is the possibility of spiritual perfection that a human birth holds forth, a possibility equally open to one and all, irrespective of differences in sex, race, and station in life. It is not a plum held out to make people stick to moral ways, but an actual experience vouchsafed by countless sages and saints in almost every region of India and in every century. The essential nature of man is the Infinite Atman not only immanent in the entire cosmos but also transcending it and unaffected by time and space. That is also termed Brahman. But this inmost truth of truths cannot be realised without a determined and disciplined quest under the guidance of a realised Guru and Grace Divine.

The entire personality of man has been so designed that the senses can only perceive outside objects and the mind which receives the impressions has its own world of instincts and emotions, wishes and fantasies. The intellect can think on logical lines and form concepts. But all these are held in position only by the ego which every one mistakes to be himself at the core. So whatever book learning we may have or whatever achievement in the world to our credit, it does not exceed the purview of what is called Avidya or *Ajnana* from the ultimate perspective of the only Reality, viz., Brahman. As Indian seers have found, such an ultimate state of Knowledge-Consciousness-Bliss (*sat-chit-ananda*) is experienced in faint glimmers by every one even in the course of one's daily life of routine, if only one has the patience to look within himself and reflect on the nature of the real 'I'. The mind which binds man to this world's allurements and attachments also at times leads him to feel vibrations of the inmost Atman's 'peace that passeth all understanding', at least in the first moment when one wakes up from a deep slumber. The Sankhya-Yoga psychologists explain that the entire Nature (*Prakriti*) of which the mind, intellect, ego, etc. are but parts is constituted of three *gunas* or strands—*Satwa* (purity), *Rajas* (activity) and *Tamas* (passivity). All our desires are rooted in mixtures of these three congenial

(Kama) and acquisition (Artha) are the only goals common to all men. But great men suppress their active and idle propensities by their Satwa or ennobling disposition; and achieve selfless good or universal welfare. Such people are the salt of the earth. And what they do is *dharma*, a term comprehending all ethical values.

Man thus has in himself both divine and demoniacal natures in different proportions. The divine in him leads to what we may call divine discontent. No joy on earth or victory will bring him complete satisfaction or fulfillment. It is the very nature of all pleasures and possessions on earth to be fleeting. Nothing short of permanent peace is man's spiritual craving, which he cannot silence, however much he might try to suppress it. God, for the true seeker, is no concept to be discussed, but a reality to be discovered in his own inmost heart as much as in every other person or thing. That recognition alone is true love. The Indian concept of avatar is unique in making God so kind that he even assumes a human form to awaken the hidden light in man, when darkness of ignorance parading as 'knowledge' overwhelms it from time to time. Rama, Krishna and Buddha belong to the hoary past. But we have Bhagavan Baba in the immediate present, kindling this spirituality in everyone that surrenders his ego to Him by his boundless love and grace. A now education is indeed the need of the hour for our recovery of faith in our own spiritual gem of Indian culture. Our undue attachment to the ephemeral should yield place to the ultimate and abiding destiny. Purity of mind leads to dispassion and dispassion to the destined *moksha* or deliverance. Deliverance is not only from worldly bonds in one life, but sorrows unending in the sequence of countless births. One-sided knowledge, starved of the spirit's peace profound and bliss ineffable, can only destroy; it cannot create or attain the ultimate experience. Man is at the crossroads today as never before. Let us hope and pray that his petty desires will be replaced by the one desire for deliverance.

The Dawn

—*Prof. N. Kasturi, M.A., B. L.*

Bliss was it in that Dawn to be alive And, to be young, was very Heaven wrote Wordsworth, when he saw in the eastern sky over France the scarlet fringe of the morning clouds and heard the echoes of cheering mobs shouting "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." He was tremendously enthused at the Revolution that rumbled, shaking the very foundations of human institutions. But the scarlet soon turned into a rain of blood and the cheers were smothered by the boom of canon and the ominous clip-clop of armies on the march. It became patent that Liberty was but a flash in the pan, Equality a will-o'-the-wisp and Fraternity an Utopian dream. Mankind was not ready yet. Man did not have the equipment to earn them and treasure them. The needs of the corporate state buried Liberty; racialism and egoism buried Equality; national pride buried Fraternity. The Dawn disappointed every one; the day did not follow. The Heaven was polluted by hatred. The shining ideals which tantalised mankind for a few moments were soiled by greed, scorched by hate and polluted by envy.

If the springs of action are not pure, consequences are bound to be disastrous. The world has now come to the brink, as a result of dire pollution in the mind of man, a pollution far more insidious and poisonous, than the pollution of the air he breathes, the vegetation on which he lives and the sea and rivers which foster him. He has lost hope and therefore is engaged in weeping 'God is Dead', He has lost courage and desperately runs helter-skelter in panic, frightened at the shadow that is pursuing him. He finds a rival or enemy in every man and arms himself against his own kith and kin. He has no peace; so he swallows drugs to pacify the storm in slop or stupor.

Luckily for mankind, the Dawn is here; the Day is bright. The Lord has assumed human form in order that man can be cleansed, comforted and led into the path of Love which alone can establish Liberty, Equality and Fraternity on earth. Fill the day with Love. Baba commands. When that is done exploitation, violence and falsehood disappear like mist before the Sun. He exhorts us through His discourses, His writings and above all, His own daily life, to cultivate selfless Love and to share it, so that it can grow from more to more. When you love a person with the supreme spiritual love you cannot tolerate his misery or stunt his talents by neglect. You cannot be vindictive or indifferent. You have to encourage him to blossom into his highest potential; this process is Liberty. This is what every human being craves for.

Political, social or economic Equality is a mirage. Baba asks, "How can desire be equalised? Can imagination be moulded into a pattern and emotions made uniform?" Men are not born equal; they come, trailing clouds of glory, ignominy or tragedy. They are born with halts or garlands round their necks, carrying prisons or palaces with them, provided for them as reward or retribution for acts done in previous lives. But, beyond the clutches of both reward and retribution is the Atma which is the real reality of Man. When we are aware of the Atma in us, we can project the idea to others and get to know the same Atma as their Reality too. Thus, Equality is experienced as an indisputable fact. No longer can man revel in superiority and inferiority based on flimsy canons of race, colour, caste or creed, political status or economic power. Every drop in every sea is saltish in taste. The Atma is equally divine, equally eternal in every being. Baba is teaching the world how to build this unique egalitarian human community on the foundation of Love.

Then, we have had for long the target of Fraternity. This was sought in ages past in the cultivation of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. The pages of history are full of grim descriptions of the diabolical wars among the children of God. Children of the same parents are differently equipped and grow up along different ways. Rivalry, competition and conflict have to be recognised now as the natural ingredients of the atmosphere of the home. Identity of language, religion and race does not ensure harmony and sympathy. Fraternity too, as Baba avers, has to grow in the mind. Your brother is no different from you. There is no 'other'. All living beings are cells of the same Divine Body. When the toe is hurt, the eye sheds tears. It is repentant that it did not guide the toe aright. That is real Fraternity. We cannot afford to thrive in an atmosphere polluted by wars. The 'I' must be merged in the 'We'. This can be done only after achieving awareness of the One Atma that encompasses all humanity.

This is the core of the Sai Message. Rejoice that it is booming beyond all horizons, and drawing all peoples into the circle of the True, the Righteous, the Peaceful and Loving.

Bliss is it in this Dawn to be alive
And to be young...O it is very Heaven.

The Effulgent Flame

"Nirmamo Mrshankarah samadukkhah sukhah kshami" That person is dear to me who is free from egotism and is equanimous amidst grief and joy", says Githacharya in the Bhagavadgitha. Such a task seems difficult for people who, in daily life, worship the Lord following the various norms of rituals. As long as one views one's daily duties as different from the injunctions of God, this teaching is difficult to practise.

"Swasariro swayam jyotih, swarupam sarvarskshanam" God dwells in man as the Universal protector and as the self-effulgent Flame. If this is recognised, it would be easy to get rid of egotism and attachment. This Effulgent Flame exists in man's mortal body.

Does God exist? What is the path to reach God? Questions such as these have been asked since ancient times. It has been a riddle through the ages. In an attempt to find an answer, the Rishis of yore strove by penance and undaunted use of all their powers and declared, "O men! We have found Him who is the Brilliant one, the Effulgent Being, the Dispeller of Darkness, and the very Embodiment of Power." They also revealed the place where they found Him—not in the external world but inside themselves. "We have recognised His Presence in our body, in lofty thoughts, in our soul", declared the Rishis. Since God dwells in the sarira (body), He is called 'sariri' (dweller in the body). Since He dwells in the deha (body), He is addressed as 'Dehi'. Since He resides in the kshetra (field) of the body, He is called 'Kshetrajna' (the Knower of the body).

We must be aware of the fact that in the body of Manava (man) dwells the Effulgent Flame of Madhava (the Lord), who is the dispeller of ignorance. We must try to see the immortal Being in the mortal frame. We must try to have the vision of Divinity in this body which is made up of the five elements: earth, water, fire, air and ether. A diamond is to be found deep in the earth and not on the surface, similarly the jewel of Divinity is to be sought in the heart of man and not without.

"Angushta mastrena Purushantaraatma" God dwells in man as the size of a thumb, declare the scriptures. The body is a chariot that carries God in a procession through the world. Therefore, one should not neglect one's body, nor should it be made impure by indulging in forbidden acts, that are contrary to Dharma (Righteous conduct). It has been said that the body is

to keep it pure and unsullied. But we are today negligently putting the body to unrighteous, impure and evil uses. Though the body is inert (Jade), the power that resides in it is divine.

The body is the boat that ferries us across the ocean of Samsara. The ocean is infested with sharks and other dreadful creatures. The sharks in the form of lust, anger, greed, attachment, pride and jealousy roam in the ocean of life. The ocean of life is ever turbulent with the waves of sukha (happiness) and dukha (suffering). It is impossible to foretell when happiness or sorrow will happen to us. The easiest way to overcome this dual throng is to discover the unity that underlies the apparent diversity in the world. "Swasariri Swayam Jyoti" We should firmly believe that the self-effulgent One shines in all bodies. It is only after the recognition of this truth that we can cease hating others. All Sadhanas and acts pale into insignificance when there is awareness of the unity of the Atma. The manifold means of sadhana have relevance as long as man is in a state of Ajnana—that he is different from God. All sadhanas seem insipid and unsatisfactory till the sadhaka experiences God as rasaswarupa (embodiment of sweetness). It will be possible to experience the sweetness and sanctity of Sadgunas like Sathya, Prema, Karuna (compassion) etc., only after the expulsion of vices like lust, anger, selfishness, egotism etc. Bhakti is love for God. The word Bhakti is a combination of 'bha' in the word Bhagavan (God) and 'kti' in the word anurakti (love). Other features like Virakti (renunciation) and Mukti (liberation) come in the trail of Bhakti. Love for God should be the very life-breath of man.

*God whom you talk of resides not in some distant land;
Verily He dwells in the body of man.
Sin you talk of exists not in an unknown land;
Verily it is the result of the deeds of man.*

Papa (sin) or Punya (merit) are the consequences of the Karmas done by the body. The deha is indeed a kshetra (a field) and we must discover the Kshetrajna (the Master of the field) after deep search. Seek and you shall find. It is when we knock that the Master opens the door. It is only when we ask that the mother gives us food. So we should ask and ask, knock and knock, seek and seek. But we are now knocking on every door except the door of God. We pray to God sometimes, but we pray to Him for worldly possessions. We go to Kalpavriksha (the wish-fulfilling tree) but we beg for coffee powder from it. We must seek from this tree the gift of spiritual knowledge that brings fulfillment to life.

Devotion increases only by spiritual sadhana. Only by directing the vision inwards do we discover Divinity. How should we hunger for Divinity?

*As a-calf bleats for its mother;
As a wife pines for her husband;
As a man craves for a good son
As a starving man hungers for food.*

to realise union with the Divine. But our prayers are mostly full of hollow pomp and show. We feel in one way and speak in another way. True worship results from the harmony of thought, word and deed. "*Manasyekam Vachasyekam Karmanyekam Mahatmanam*" Great souls are those who have achieved unity in thought, word and deed. Have we this triple harmony? Our thoughts and words and deeds run in different directions. It is said: *Manasanyath, Vachasanyath, Karmanyanyath, duraatmanam*" Thoughts, words and deeds are at variance in the evil-minded. We should try to purify our feelings.

We should endeavour to cultivate the quality of Kshama (forbearance). There is nothing nobler than Kshama.

Kshama is Sathya (truth)
Kshama is Dharma (right conduct)
Kshama is the Veda
Kshama is Ahimsa (non-violence)
Kshama is Santosha (contentment)
Kshama is Everything.

It is only by the cultivation of forbearance that we can realise Divinity. Every little thing upsets our temper and creates tension in us. Anger is another vice that weakens man considerably. An angry man never succeeds in any work. Anger is the cause of loss of wealth and reputation. It alienates a man from his kith and kin. Verily, all is lost for an angry man.

Sri Krishna, time and again, teaches us to cultivate Prema (Love) to counter anger, envy, jealousy and pride.

Prema knows no hatred
Prema knows no selfishness
Prema seeks no reward
Prema ever gives but never takes.

Prematattwa (the principle of love) is Daivatwa (Divinity) itself. God is Premaswarupa (the embodiment of love). He can be realised only by promoting Prema in us. You need neither jape nor dhyana to see God. You have to carry on with the sadhanas till Prema ripens in your heart. How can you see the moon with closed eyes though he is shining brightly in the sky? Japa and tapa, dhyana and bhajan should help to make your vision clear. You can find fulfillment in life by listening to noble teachings, understanding their significance and putting them into practise.

—From Bhagavan's Discourse in Prasanthi Mandir on 6-8-1984

The Universe, a University

—From "*The Greatest Adventure*" by Dr. M. V. N. Murthy

On Guru Poornima, 1981, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba declared! "The true Guru is not the human preceptor. It is the Cosmos itself, *Prakriti*, Creation. The Universe and all its components are to be looked upon as one's preceptors and lessons learnt from each. The Universe is the University for you. You can imbibe wisdom from the sky, the clouds, the mountains, the rivers, the daily phenomena of sunrise and sunset, the seasons, the birds, trees, flowers, insects, in fact, all brings and things in the universe. Approach these teachers with awe, reverence and humility; they will respond with their lessons."

These teachers speak in the language of silence, teach through tranquility. Each of them is a DAKSHINAMURTY—the Divine Teacher, the ageless, tender, vibrant Teacher, who is ever engaged in instructing the ageing and the aged. The attitude of "Awe" is an amalgam of fear and wonder; the attitude of humility arises from an awareness of one's insufficiency. If we approach these Cosmic teachers, prompted by these attitudes, Baba assures us, they open our Inner Eye, the Door of Intuition, and we imbibe the lesson in the silence of the heart. The lessons, Baba says, are not concerned with mere knowledge. Knowledge can be derived from elders, scholars, books and museums, schools and colleges. Nature initiates us into wisdom which involves sound, impartial judgement, clear perception and the ability and desire to use the knowledge for advancing spiritual awareness.

Let us try to guess the lessons that each teacher indicated by Baba can teach us. First, the sky. The sky is vastness, immensity. The sky expands into spaces we become conscious of this each night. When we see a star, we ought to tell ourselves that it is really millions of light years away far, far in outer space! The sky teaches us to think big, to expand our vision, to allow the mind to journey beyond the horizon "*Brhate Karomi*", "I expand myself", say the Upanishadic Sages. We break the bonds of likes and dislikes, of friend and foe, we overstep the limits of "I" and "He". Really speaking, we are heir to all this immensity. The sky is blue, when there are no clouds, when the rain has washed the dust away. Passing clouds, dust storms, whirl and wander with the sky as their stage; nevertheless, it remains pure, blue, unpolluted. This is how the mind should be, steady, stable, unaffected by the clouds of gloom, the gusts of greed and anger. The sky is the invisible sustenance of life. We breathe the vitalising oxygen of the air; fire burns because of the oxygen. The sky is the symbol of God, the unseen Life-giver, the life sustainer. Baba says, "This world is so plentiful, so charming, so rich, so comfortable, so regular in its movements, because it has an unseen master, the Law-giver, God. The unseen is the sustenance of the Seen."

whom the earth, parched and end thirsty, walls. They bring tanks of water from the sea to revive the land and resurrect the dying and the dead. How grateful we feel when we spot the first monsoon cloud, bringing manna from Heaven. We learn a great lesson from the cloud. The cloud gives all of itself, it loses its own identity and dissolves into nothingness. And, as a result of this sacrifice, to and behold, the earth is alive, green and gold. In sacrificing itself, the clouds fulfill themselves. *This is the real fulfillment, when we give others all we have and are.*

Now let us approach the mountains. The majestic mountain ranges and peaks evoke sublime images and ideas in us. A sense of enormous power is patent in the imposing magnitude, the invincible ruggedness. The mountains invite us with a *Call of Challenge*. You are urged to climb to the very crest. The perilous peak beckons us to scale the heights, which demand effort, which need flexing of muscles. When the Everest climbers were asked why they hazard their lives; one of them answered, "Because it is there"! The mountain arouses the unique human thirst to "Reach the top"—in the class room, the office, the social ladder or in the academies of scholarship. *It is the same urge that takes us to the peak of spiritual adventure.* We want to scale the peaks. From there, we get a panoramic overview, a synaptic vision.

The rivers! Our response towards the full flowing river is one of admiration, heightened by gratitude. The river gathers water, drop by drop, from the rivulets and streams and carries the flood along so that it can be distributed all over. It is not content if only a few have the benefit. Rivers are the canalways of the land, feeding and fostering the springs of plenty and joy. When the clouds compete in generosity, the rivers are overjoyed; they leap over their banks and deposit the precious silt on the fields to nurture the crops of future years. *We learn industry, generosity and abounding joy from the rivers.* We have only to sit on the bank and look on.

The daily phenomena of sunrise and sunset! The sunrise is the potent moment, when the hope of another day, fresh and clean and untouched; emerges in the Eastern Sky. Every moment thereafter is ours, to be celebrated the way we wish to. The sunset is the sun's glorious 'Good Night', 'Farewell, until we meet again!' He has the task of awakening other people, as the globe rotates, to bring them to his attention. The sunset is an invitation to the night, to the quiet magnificence of the galaxies, the earth's cousins—the planets and the stars. This is the time when the members of the cosmic family appear to meet and hold conversation with one another, after a busy day when Father Sun was very much around. The stars whisper in twinkles, while the moon monopolises attention.

The seasons! "If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind" is what the English poet sang in England. We in India can sing, "If summer comes, can the monsoon be far behind!" There is a fundamental law of the seasons, their change. The year brings change, continuous change and therein lies hope. "*Eppudoo Ondadu*" says Baba, "*This too will pass away.*" When we are oppressed by the heat, we remember the earth rotates round the sun and rains are not far behind to bring relief. *Neither sorrow, nor joy is permanent; they are like winter and spring.* What makes life worthwhile and exciting is this change. Every day something new manifests in nature in response to the changing season. The tree sheds its leaves, only to put on a fresh garb soon,

appreciate the flowers, because there are periods when they are absent! If we had perpetual Spring, nobody would bother to admire flowers.

Birds! How envious we are when we watch birds. "Hail to thee! Blithe spirit", cried Shelley's heart to the skylark! Man is never satisfied being on the ground. Perhaps it stems from his ancestry; during his evolutionary journey, he had jumped from tree to tree; but to enjoy the exhilaration of the act, he had to become human. Long, long ago, he could fly. Though his wings have been clipped and he has lost his tail, the urge to fly persists.

Baba mentions trees as teachers of profound lessons. How can man forget these friends? Can he conceive anything more self-effacing, more self-sacrificing, more inspiring than the tree? Sever its trunk, axe its branches, hew its body and limbs—the tree would uncomplainingly warm your home and feed the fire in your hearth. Baba reminds us that when you axe the sandalwood tree, it gives its fragrance to the very axe that kills it.

The tree teaches man, austere patience, the art of waiting for the fruit. Baba says, "Everything in its own good time, as the saying goes. A flower blooms, but a long time elapses before it grows into a fruit and is filled with nectarine juice. A child is born; but he takes a long time to grow into a strong, intelligent member of society." We have to wait for the right time, and in the meantime, foster the tree so that it may bear fruits.

Flowers are our teachers, if only we could learn! Who is not thrilled by the sight of flowers? I have often wondered why flowers are so beautiful, why they bloom in such rich colours. Why they have a velvety texture, which man has never been able to simulate? Friends who have specialised in zoology, tell me that moths, insects and even butterflies cannot distinguish colours. So the flowers are so decked, not to entice them through colour. Has God made the flowers so beautiful for His own adoration? Or is it His special boon to us? A Kannada poet has sung of the nameless flowers in the jungle, which bloom for a day, give the joy of their fragrance to whosoever comes beside, then die and decay unsung. *How we wish we were as humble, as dutiful and as innocent as the flower!*

Baba has included the insects too in the list of preceptors for man. What a wonderful lesson of give and take we can learn from the insect bee. It flies from flower to flower to gather nectar for its food. In return it carries the pollen from one flower to another to fertilize the seeds. *Only the human being revels in getting and forgetting, extracting and exploiting; the bee gets and gives.* This is the lesson nature teaches. We have to work for the nectar, and in return serve and help. The human tragedy is due to his ignoring the lesson, "Nothing can be gained for nothing".

In his message for Guru Poornima, Baba said, "*Man*" means "He who marches from the status of self towards the all-inclusive Self, from Atma to Paramatma." Towards the success of that march, all Nature can provide advice and guidance to the very end. The real Guru one must rely upon is Nature which is saturated with God. God does not teach direct; He teaches through Nature which surrounds us. When we teach Om to children, we pronounce it loud and at the

the slate from which we have to learn. Revere the Universe as your Guru.

No Lamp, No Brake

There is the story of a young man who was riding a cycle on a dark night along a crowded road; the policeman on duty asked him to stop and alight, for, he had no lamp on his cycle. The fellow, however, shouted, "Policeman! Keep away. Of course, I have no lamp; but, beware. I have no brake, either!" That is the pathetic condition of every one now. No one has the lamp of wisdom, or the brake of sense-control. How then can they go along the road to Ananda, without causing injury to themselves or others? The cyclist must have both; man too has need of wisdom and self-control. Or else, he is certain to ruin this chance he has got, to save himself.

—Baba

(From "Chinnakatha")

Walk with me again

You stood before me, yet I turned away,
You smiled at me and I looked away.
You showed me the path but I went astray
You walked with me through the fields of grain
When a song was born in the wind and rain.
You walked with me through autumns of gold
And You told me of the dreams they hold.
You walked with me on a winter's day,
You walked with me when I walked away,
I felt I could walk very well alone,
For I was not old, nor sick, nor worn.
Every cloud had a silver lining for me

Every night a bright full moon
And each night had brought with it a new born day.
So had I basked in the sunshine
And danced in the gentle breeze all so gay.
But now I know of a night that long for day;
Some nights now have no full moons,
And some nights know no mornings.
I realize now that I am old and worn
Not in age but in experience of the world

And a smile from you the gentle breeze
So won't you come and walk with me again?

—*L. B*

The Light of my I

This little day is too small for the sun,
For a ray of light can overwhelm it;
Yet, it is day for it receives its portion
And brings gladness to one who has naught.

For one born in the womb of yesternight,
A little day can illumine the bends in the mind
A little smile can kill the day-long fright,
And help him hold on in life's grind.

A little pat can release the flow within,
To wash the shores of endless gloom;
A little look can strike the song divine
And among sands of despair see him bloom.

Will you deny, dear Sun, the Light of my I,
The joy of the day, and the light of my eye?

—*Bejoy K. Misra*

YUGADI UPADESH:

“Who Am I”

The Cosmos is a manifestation of the Divine. They are foolish who, while seeing the handiworks of the Divine everywhere, think that there is no God. Without recognising the omnipresence of God, men seek God somewhere or other. This reflects the dualistic attitude of persons who identify themselves with the body and alienate themselves from God. While God is omnipresent and can be recognised in the divine manifestations of Nature, the body consciousness prevents men from experiencing oneness with the Divine.

the basic importance of purity. The aim of all sadhanas is to achieve peace. Compassion towards all beings is devotion to God.

God cannot be experienced through the ostentatious observance of rituals and worship. Where there is pomp and show there can be no divinity. The bliss of the Divine cannot be found there. As a seed will not sprout on rocky ground, the bliss of the Divine cannot be realised by worship devoid of humility and sincerity.

All sadhanas (spiritual efforts) are not pursued for realising the Atma. There is no need to seek the Atma, which is all-pervasive and present everywhere. Sadhanas are performed to get rid of the anatma (that which bars the vision of the Atma). Man forgets his real nature and loses himself in the consciousness of what he is not. He forgets that he is the Atma in reality.

In the state of deep sleep, one is totally unaware of his name, form, position, etc. But on waking, he realises that the "I", of which he is conscious in the waking state, was present in deep sleep also. The purpose of all sadhanas is to discover the nature of the "I" that is experienced in all the different states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep.

Man identifies himself with a particular name and form and builds up all relations on that basis. But how real and permanent are these names and forms? They are all projections of the mind and have an existence only as long as the mind and body remain. The heart represents the Atma. It is self-effulgent. The light from the heart (Atma) illumines the mind and enables it to see the external world. Without this illumination the mind cannot comprehend the world. The mind is like the moon which receives its light from the sun. It has no light of its own. It shines because of the light from the Atma. When the sun shines, the moon is hardly visible. Likewise, when there is awareness of the Atma, the mind is not perceivable. The Atma is the basis for everything.

Men are naive in imagining that the Atma is in the body. The truth is: the body, the mind, the entire cosmos is in Atma. The Atma cannot be inside anything else. It is the All. It is everything. Those who perform japa, dhyana or puja, conceiving God as separate from themselves, are the victims of dualism. Whatever their scholarship, they are ignorant of their own true nature when they alienate God from themselves. God is the heart of men.

All man's spiritual exercises are at the mental level. By these means, the Atma cannot be realised. The Vedas have declared: "*Yatho vaacho nivarthanthe apraapya manasaasaha.*" "Whence mind and speech turn back unable to reach it." Neither the mind nor speech can comprehend the nature of the Atma. The mind is turned towards the external by the sense organs. It is only by withdrawing it from sense objects that it can be made to develop an "Inner vision" (antarmukham).

The "I" principle is present everywhere. It began with the Divine Itself. The first word was "Aham" ("I"). Even the Pranava ("Om") came after "Aham". Before all creation, "Aham" alone existed. That "Aham" became the many. One who realises the oneness of what he regards as his

names and forms in different bodies owing to time and circumstance. Even the same person goes through many changes in form and relationships in life. But the "I" remains unchanged. It is like an actor wearing different disguises, but himself remaining one and the same. The realisation of the unchanging and universal character of the "I" (the Atma) is the essential objective of the spiritual quest.

The sense of duality arises when the "I" (Aham) assumes a specific form and name. Ahamkara—the ego sense—is the result of this change in form. It is only when one dissociates himself from name and form that he can discover his true divine Self. To forget his essential divinity and identify himself with a changing and impermanent form is the cause of bondage and sorrow. It is the mind that is the cause of this wrongful identification, because of its involvement with the external world and the impressions received through the senses. When the workings of the mind are understood, the reality of the Atma, which is beyond the mind, will be experienced as the One omnipresent, immutable principle.

Duality is an obvious fact of everyday life. All shastras, Puranas and itihisas (epics) have recognised this duality and sought to regulate men's lives on that basis. As long as men are engaged in activity in the phenomenal world in any capacity, the dualistic attitude is inescapable. All scriptural injunctions are designed to regulate men's conduct in the phenomenal and temporal world. The Vedas attach great importance to time. The shastras prescribe duties in relation to time, circumstance, and situation. The science of astrology prescribes what should be done according to changes in time. The Panchanga (almanac) indicates what are likely to happen on the basis of astrological data. During this New Year, Prabhava, the indications are encouraging. Out of the nine grahas, seven are favourably disposed. The moon is the ruling planet for the year. Mars (Kuja) is the Minister. Their influence is powerful in this year. Saturn (Shani) is weak. There will be no scarcity of food and water this year. Food production will increase substantially.

However beneficial the changes may be in the sphere of natural forces, without a change in men's mental outlook and conduct, they will be of no use. Many persons claim that they are observing rigorous austerities (tapes). What is the outcome of these austerities? If their hearts soften and they show compassion towards the ailing and the helpless, only then has their penance any meaning. A compassion-filled heart is the real fruit of Tapas. All the sadhanas performed by a hard-hearted person are utterly futile.

Many undertake meditation as a spiritual exercise and expend many hours a day on it. But, in fact, meditation is implicit in almost every act that is done from morning till night. Meditation (in the sense of concentration) is implied in all the daily chores like eating, going to work, and attending to business, etc. One is meditating while reading or playing or shopping. Without concentration no activity of any kind can be done. When the concentration is on God, it becomes spiritual meditation. Does such meditation call for a specific time or place? There is no special technique for meditation. By giving meditation (dhyana) some special names, they are forgetting its real significance. For instance, if people do not listen with dhyana (one-pointed attention) to Swami's discourse, they will not remember what Swami said. Even listening calls for dhyana. It

dhyana, several stunts are being practised. Instead of spending hours in so-called meditation with a mind restlessly hopping from one thought to another like a monkey, it would be better to concentrate on the performance of one's household, official and social duties with earnestness and dedication. Is that not meditation? Of what use is it to sit in "meditation" for an hour, when you cannot keep your mind still for a minute? Think about God while carrying on your regular duties. Regard all work as sacred offering to the Divine. See God in everything you do. Instead of following this simple and away path, people are engaged in all forms of gymnastics and subjecting themselves to various hazards. Devote yourselves to your duties. Meditation is not confined to any one thing. It should permeate every action you do.

Some aspirants wish to seek solitude (akantam). But being alone is not solitude. People go to Hrishikesh, Haridwar or Tapovanam in search of solitude. Only those who have not understood the real meaning of solitude will resort to such things. There is real solitude (alone-ness) only when the mind is completely stilled. If while sitting alone in a forest your mind is ruminating on affairs of the world, how can it be called solitude? Without curbing thoughts, loneliness cannot be found anywhere. Either thoughts have to be eliminated or all thoughts should be turned towards the Divine.

Many imagine that they are deriving happiness by enjoying the things of the world. They should examine who is "enjoying" whom. In reality, far from their "enjoying" the things they possess, it is their possessions which are enjoying them. The hatred, anger, envy and other evils bred by possessions only lead to disease and misery. Why should the body suffer from ills if really possessions were the source of happiness? Man is losing real happiness by attachment to things which cannot give him happiness.

Those who have faith in the Gita should note that it has clearly declared that this world is ephemeral and "a vale of tears", and enduring peace and bliss are not to be found by attachment to it. The source of lasting peace and happiness is within ourselves. That is the Atma (the Omniself). It is by realising it that peace and bliss have to be secured. One must constantly develop the consciousness that the Atma is every thing—the doer, the deed and the outcome thereof. When the consciousness is broadened in this way, in due course it leads to Self-realisation. If your vision is broad, your destination will also be of the same magnitude. A narrow outlook can lead only to a narrow alley. If you are immersed all the time in the petty trifles of mundane existence, when will you ever understand the Reality which is beyond the physical and the mental? Set your sight on the Supreme. The illumination will come in a flash.

Everyone should develop the consciousness, "I am Atma. I am Brahman." When one says, "I am Brahma" it is evident that there is "I" in Brahma. Who is that "I"? "Brahma" means pervasiveness. In declaring, "I am Brahman", the consciousness of all-pervasiveness should be developed. Brahman is all-pervasive. It is equally present everywhere. You should regard yourself as all-pervasive. Whatever you do, whatever you see, whatever you speak, saturate it with divinity so that you may be aware of your Reality.

you enjoy real bliss. You are not aware at that time of your body, your mind, your feelings, your qualities, or thoughts, but still you exist. That same pure you exists in the waking state, the dream state and the deep-sleep state. In the gross, the subtle and the causal states, you exist. In all these changing states and stages, it is the Atmic Principle which remains, without undergoing any change.

The physical body which performs Japam or Dhyanam or the various other spiritual practices is but a water-bubble. The mind which is based upon this physical body is but a mad monkey. With the help of this mad-monkey mind and this water-bubble body, how can you hope to achieve the permanent Atma? Japa, Dhyana, Bhajans, austerities, sacrifices; these are all methods for temporarily controlling the mind. But there is one practice that will have a permanent effect, and that is enquiry. You should go on enquiring. "Who am I? Who am I?" until you reach the stage where you find out who you really are. The enquiry should go on thus, "Here is my body, here is my mind, my heart, my feelings, my intellect, my memory power...I am not any one of these. Someone has praised me; someone has censured me, but to whom does this pertain? Only to this physical body." In this way, you have to develop a sense of detachment and a sacrificing nature. How can a physical body abuse another physical body? That is inert, and this is also inert. How can inert things criticize or admonish? They cannot. How can they even worship anything? They cannot. But then can Atma criticize another Atma? That is absurd.

One person who has seen God says, 'God exists'. Another person who has not seen God, says, 'God does not exist'. If a person has not seen God, then how can he assert that God does not exist? Here, for example, is Nanjundaiah. The one who sees Nanjundaiah declares that this is Nanjundaiah. If you point out Chakravarti to one who knows Nanjundaiah, saying, 'This is Nanjundaiah', the answer will be, 'No, he is not Nanjundaiah'. A person who has never seen Nanjundaiah, cannot say whether Nanjundaiah is here or not. Only one who has seen another person is able to declare whether that person is here or not. In the same way, only that person who has seen God and knows God has the authority to declare that God exists. One may assert and the other may negate but the object itself remains all the same. For both, God exists because all there is only this one Atma, this one Brahman. Brahman is Atma and beyond that nothing else exists.

Many people aspire for grace, love, devotion and humility. All these are forms of the Atma. God is not different from faith. Faith and God are one and the same Love is God, devotion is God, they are, not different entities. What is the meaning of devotion? Devotion is that which enables the unmanifested divine principle to manifest itself in the inner vision of the devotee. Then for that devotee nothing else will exist other than He. To reach that stage you must discharge your duties keeping the permanent entity constantly in mind. You can cross the vast, deep ocean of worldly existence and enjoy the infinite Divinity that is its reality, with the help of a small boat. That boat is the Name of God. In the beginning of the spiritual journey the Name is the basis, for progress but it should not become a life-long support, depending entirely on it alone.

you are serving, God Himself, while taking a bath or giving one to the children, consider that you are doing the purification ritual of washing God Himself. While serving food, consider that you are offering it to God Himself. When giving food to a beggar, consider that God has come in this form and you are serving Him. It seems that it is a beggar who is asking, but it is the Atma who is really enjoying the food you give. When you are cutting some vegetables for cooking, consider that you are cutting away your desires and ego with the knife of wisdom. While sweeping the floor at home, don't lament, 'O, it keeps getting dirty again and again.' Think rather that you are cleaning your own heart. If you are rolling Chapattis at home, consider what joy it is to roll and knead and expand your heart. In this way, you can consider every activity you undertake as being done for the sake of God. Then where is the need for any separate meditation, separate penance or separate worship?

Consider your heart as Atma. Soften it and make it full of compassion. That is the only spiritual exercise you need to perform. Narasimhan has told you that so many people are coming to Prasanthi Nilayam from different parts of the world. What brings them here? Are invitations sent? Does anyone ask them to come? It is only on account of the love that is here and felt heart to heart. Through love you can accomplish anything in the world. Consider love as the Atma itself. However many scriptures you may read and however many spiritual exercises you may do, if you do not allow your heart to melt with compassion; your life will be a sheer waste. All practices have to be directed towards softening your heart so that it will flow with kindness and love. Develop this feeling of compassion and allow it to flow fully and spread among all the peoples of the world.

—From Bhagavan's Discourse in Prasanthi Mandir on 30-3-87

You and I

—H. M. Saldas

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has been declaring since his teenage. "Do not try to understand my reality, you will only fail but instead try to understand your reality, that is easier, further you will understand my reality also in that process." I believe this declaration is the very essence of Vedanta, which teaches that God is only one without a second.

We are all—men-women, tall-short fat-lean—one physical structure. Doctors can therefore treat or operate on any human being wherever they have learnt medicine and surgery. We are all actively engaged in something or other. The one common feature among all mankind and among all living beings and things is that they exist. God exists. We exist. We desire to exist forever, either in this body or through fame or progeny. This Is-ness is called Sat. Our nature and nurture are both built on the inner foundation of Set.

Though we are all Sat, we feel ourselves different because we have covered the Sat with different cases or bodies. We have also another common feature with all living being, namely, knowledge the desire to know. The capacity to use that knowledge for self-preservation. Even a worm turns when it senses danger to its Sat. It seeks food in order to grow, keep alive and multiply. Instinct is the elementary form of inherent knowledge. It may blossom into reasoning, discrimination, designing and divining. We are, in spite of differences in the quantity and quality of knowledge conscious of ourselves and of outer conditions and circumstances; therefore we are basically Chit.

Another basic quality in us is the longing for a something we have not lost, a treasure we have missed, namely Ananda. The Upanishads declare that we are born through Ananda, that we live for Ananda and by Ananda; and finally merge in limitless Ananda. Every living thing seeks Ananda as far as it can reach it, as liking, affection, attachment, fascination, friendship. But they are all subject to modification. Attraction may lead to aversion. Friendship may lead to avoidance. They do not load from one level of joy to a higher level. They stagnate or cloy. But the inner urge to achieve Ananda of the greatest level is inescapable.

We humans can therefore be said to be really *Sat, Chit, Ananda*, the three qualities of divinity. A single drop of the ocean is as saline as the ocean itself; a single spark from a blazing fire is as hot and light as the source itself. *Poornam Adah, Poornam Idam*. That is full and so this is full. When we are aware of this fullness, we become aware of that fullness also.

This is the reason why Bhagavan has said that when we know our reality we can sense His reality also. We are fundamentally Himself though we have enmeshed ourselves in delusion and distortion.

"The devotion that seeks publicity is not true steady devotion. Devotion that is confirmed in and through practice can alone be the spring of lasting bliss," wrote Bhagavan Baba, in a letter written to Dr. John Hislop in January 1970. Following are extracts from that remarkable letter, whose relevance to Sai devotes remains unchanged by the passage at years:

Spiritual discipline and endeavour are not pomp-oriented; May are practice-oriented. One has to earn the experience of spiritual progress, through practice. Later, that experience is to be revealed only to those nearest to one, those who have earnest and devoted interest in such experiences. I do not like the advertisement of such matters in newspapers, announcing them to all and sundry, as if they are cheap commodities of the market place.

The sweetness of the spirit is not a dish, which can be served over the counter. It cannot be procured from a shop; no firm can supply it to its customers. It is of the nature of Divine illumination; it has to be evoked, from oneself, for oneself. To advertise the experience of this Illumination is to indulge in a paltry pastime.

There are some people who engage themselves in Sadhana, study, and the listening to discourses, for transient mental satisfaction or even entertainment. They feel that, that little is enough effort. But, the task is not over with these... Food has to be cooked, it has to be consumed, and, it has to be digested and assimilated. The body can develop strength only when these three steps are accomplished, one after the other. Similarly, what is heard has to be pondered over, what is pondered over has to be put into practice. It is only when all three are accomplished that Atmananda (Atmic Bliss, the Bliss of the Realisation of the Reality) can be attained.

Instead, if what is accomplished is very little, and what is advertised about oneself is much more, one becomes the target of ridicule. He who puts into practice a single item of spiritual discipline derives much more benefit, than he who preaches about a hundred items! For the pure and the holy, what need is there for advertisement? Advertisement of spiritual experiences is an evil habit, quite contrary to the spiritual attitude.

I do not need name and fame. They are disgusting as spittle. Do not publicise, without filling the heart with Love. Live and act, in the spirit of full fraternity, with love and regard for all, and demonstrate that you have known the ultimate Truth through the spontaneous manifestation of that genuine experience. Any other method will only foster disbelief, atheism.

Those who seek to acquire steadiness of faith must first acquire the strength to bear grief and pain, insult and injury. They should not slide from a term of self-control (Yoga) into a bout of excess (Bhoga) and end up with a period of illness (Roga). Self-control must persist as self-control, until the very end. The Yogi must continue as Yogi, till the end of life. The

evidence true devotion.

When there is no gust of wind, an Iron ball and a dry leaf, both lie unmoved, and in similar manner, upon the ground. To conclude that they, are therefore of the same nature would be wrong. Let but the wind blow a little fast, the leaf will rise and fly far; the iron ball is unaffected. Such is the nature of false and true devotees. When there is no pain or grief, both the false and the true are alike; when pain or discord presents itself, false devotion takes to flight.

Experiences can be communicated among ourselves or to ourselves, or even to those who evince delight in listening and are eager to share; but, if they are announced in public to whomsoever may listen, they may not be seen in true light, and might even be misinterpreted and ridiculed.

Where Divinity is sought after, one ought always to behave in the spirit of Love, devoid of the slightest trace of hate, envy, and anger. Sadhana should first be directed towards the elimination of these traits. When worldly relationships are accepted as the basis of activity, one is inevitably drawn into the mire of separateness and distinction. When one cultivates the inner look, one attains the conviction of the basic equality of all. Observe the trunks of trees (not the branches, twigs, flowers, and leaves), and you will be convinced of the sameness of all trees. Similarly, when one observes only the status and stages, the office and authority, only differences and distinctions will strike the mind. But, in every one, as the very, basis of existence, there is the one and only Soul—the Atma. That is to be, known and realised.

Man derives all the joy and peace that he needs from within himself and not from sources outside himself. So, the best spiritual discipline is to strengthen the inward vision.

Always have the meaning and the purpose of life in view. And, experience that purpose and that meaning. You are That, that is the truth. You and the Universal are one; you and the Absolute are one; you and the Eternal are one. You are not the individual, the particular, the temporary. Feel this. Know this. Act in conformity with this. Some one came to Ramana Maharshi and asked him thus; “Swami! I have been doing intense dhyana for the last 18 years! but I have failed to realise the ideal on which my dhyana is concentrated. How many more years should I continue?” Ramana answered, “It is not a question of certain number of years. You have to continue dhyana, until the awareness that you are doing dhyana disappears.” “Forget the ego; let it melt and merge, with all its layers of consciousness.”

—Baba

The first and foremost postulate for the understanding of the central idea of Bhagavan Baba's teachings is that religions are not rivals of one another but are related to one another. All religions come from the ONE Divine source, obviously varying in degrees of their purity in the process of transmission, as also according to the capacity of those through whom they have come.

The second postulate of Bhagavan Baba's teachings, it seems to me, is that religions have to deal with man and the problems he has to face in life and that he has to provide suitable answers to those problems. Despite the differences of race, creed, colour, sex and nationality and varying circumstances in which, people live and work out their problems, their ultimate destiny is the same, and therefore, religions in their essential aspects cannot be very different.

It is against this background one should understand the advent of Bhagavan Baba who symbolises this recognition of the basic truth of all religious systems of the world. This central truth has been recognised by the scientists of today. As Heisenberg says:

"There is a higher power, not influenced by our wishes, which finally decides and judges. People have used different words at different times for this central power. They called it Spirit or God. There are many ways to this center, even today, and science is only one of them."

The Hindu concept of 'Avatar' has immense meaning and significance and it represents what Heisenberg calls the 'higher power'—that most rare occurrence when Divinity descends into human form, in order to show us the right path to eternal freedom, the path from selfishness to selflessness, from duality to unity, and from man to divinity. We have in Bhagavan Baba the way, the goal and the process—all rolled into one. Baba says that His form is love and He is the embodiment of that ancient wisdom. He says:

"The achievement of the highest bliss through the highest love: this is the teaching of Vedanta (end of wisdom). Vedanta is often a misunderstood school of philosophy. It does not mean the study of profound tomes, or the calculated breathing through trained nostrils of measured quantities of air, or living without an assured abode or source of sustenance. Right living, balanced living, true living is the prescription of Vedanta. The fair face of Vedanta has been disfigured by fanatics and false interpreters. They sought manifold meanings behind the axioms of Vedanta and landed themselves among a medley of wrong meanings. They created confusion where clarity existed. *Vedanta is love, limitless love, the philosophical basis for that love.*"

Bhagavan Baba further says:

languages and a variety of tunes. That should be the ideal. Respect the differences between faiths, and recognise them as valid as far as they do not extinguish the flame of unity. I have not come to speak on behalf of any particular religion. I have not come on any mission of publicity for any sect or creed or cause. Nor have I come to collect followers for any doctrine. I have come to tell you of this universal unitary faith, this path of love, this duty of love, this obligation to love."

"The totality of divine energy has come into humanity as Sathya Sai—to go to each and any one, to wake up the slumbering divinity of every human being. Even if in your sleepiness or in your weakness for sleep, you growl, grumble or groan, kick, criticise, quarrel or cry, I will not forsake you. I will not let your divinity go to sleep. A mother never forsakes the child she carries or lets the child fall down, even if the child works out its resentment and anger on her. I have come to help, to accompany and to carry you. I can never forsake you. I will never fail in my duty to my children—and I shall be very grateful to each child of mine who helps my task..."

This is how Bhagavan Baba expands our consciousness through fostering, cultivation and experience of love. Teaching love by love, for love and through acts of pure, unconditional, selfless love, He gives us the strength, inspiration and faith to reach our glorious height. Let us be His worthy instruments in His task of reconstruction of humanity.

SRI RAMA NAVAMI SANDESH:

The Play of the Divine

*Oh Mind! Ever remember
The nectar-like name of Rama
Which is sweeter than Sugar,
Pleasanter to the tongue than honey.*

Embodiments of Divine Love!

The Ramayana is not merely the story of Rama. It is an epic which proclaims the greatness of three cities—Mithila, Ayodhya and Lanka. The Rama Principle has brought out and demonstrated the significance of these three cities.

Rama is the embodiment of Dharma. Lakshmana is the embodiment of Shraddha (dedication). Bharata embodies Bhakti, Shatrughna personifies Shakti (puissance). Dharma is associated with Shraddha. The protecting cover for Bhakti is Shakti. Hence Rama and Lakshmana were always together as a pair, and Bharata and Shatrughna as another.

Hardly had Rama reached the age of sixteen when sage Vishwamitra arrived on the scene. With his coming, the epic career of Rama (Rama-ayana) began. From then on the destruction of the Rakshasas started. Beginning with the protection of Vishwamitra's yajna (sacrifice), it is one continuous saga of ceaseless action: liberating Ahalya from her curse, proceeding to Mithila, breaking Siva's bow, marrying Sita (the incarnation of Maha Maya), humbling Parasurama on the way to Ayodhya, leaving for the forest as an exile, searching for Sita, invading Lanka, destroying Ravana, installing Vibhishana on the throne, and triumphantly returning to Ayodhya. During all this period, Rama's career was filled with action and adventures with no respite.

The term "Rama" means one who is pleasing and lovable. "Ayana" means movement or journey. "Re" refers to Atma and "Ma" refers to Mind. The Rama Principle means merging the mind in the Atma. "Ramayana" means suffusing the world with the bliss of the Rama Principle. But it is not Sri Rama alone that is involved in this process. Sita is also an epic personality. "Rama" is another name for Sita. The Ramayana is thus a joint epic of Rama and Sita—Rama-Ramayana.

Rarely in the world do we see married couples who are identical—man and wife—in their physical features, their qualities, behaviour, thoughts and capacities. But in the case of Rama and Sita the similarity was complete in every respect. There were no differences in features, qualities or other aspects. The truth of this is evident from what Hanuman experienced. Once Hanuman happened to look at Sita when she was alone. He got a doubt whether Rama himself had assumed a feminine form. Looking at Sita, he thought it was Rama himself. Hence Rama and Sita should be regarded as one identical entity and not as separate beings.

Three cities

The inner significance of the Sita-Rama story will be clear when we consider the role of the three cities in the Ramayana. First comes Mithila. Emperor Janaka was its ruler. He was a Brahmin who had renounced everything. Like water on a lotus leaf, he was completely detached, with no concern for worldly things. Having no children of his own, he brought up with great love a foundling (Sita). There were two powerful entities in his kingdom: Siva's bow and Sita. Once, while engaged in play, Sita lifted the giant bow of Siva with astonishing ease. Struck by this feat, Janaka decided that Sita should be given in marriage only to one who could handle Siva's bow and be worthy of Sita's hand. With this resolve, he invited princes for Sita's Swayamvara. Rama arrived and lifted Siva's bow as lightly as Sita had done. Janaka realised that Rama and Sita were well matched in every respect—beauty, character and powers.

Sita was no ordinary woman. She was the embodiment of—Maha Maya. Rama acquired Maha Maya as his mate. Sita, for her part, sought oneness with the Atma principle represented by Rama. The marriage of Rama and Sita represents the association of the Atma and Maya. It is in this combined form of Atma and Maya that Rama entered Ayodhya.

"Ayodhya" means "invincible". Its ruler was Dasaratha. Dasaratha means one who has made his ten Indriyas (sense organs)—the five organs of action and the five organs of perception—his

sense organs are related to the three gunas—Satwa, Rajas, Tamas. Dasaratha's three wives—Kaushalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyi—symbolise these three gunas (qualities).

When one is influenced by the gunas, he develops desires. The four sons of Dasaratha were the embodiments of his desires. Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Shatrughna symbolise the four Veda—Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharvana. The Rig Veda figures in the Yajur and Sama Vedas to varying extent. It is the embodiment of Dharma. Yajur Veda embodies mantras. Lakshmana was continually engaged in contemplating about Rama and immersing himself in the Rama mantra. Bharata was one who could not bear separation from Rama and who was ever dwelling on Rama's name and form. He was the embodiment of Sama Veda. Shatrughna was one who had mastered all the sciences and used his powers for protecting his brothers. He was skilled in the use of all kinds of weapons. Thus the four Vedas, taking the form of the four brothers, were sporting in Dasaratha's palace.

Soon after his entry into Ayodhya in the company of Sita as Maya, Rama had to enter the jungle of life. These ordeals are the concomitants of those who are associated with Maya. As a result he had to embark on a search for Sita. On the way, he met Sugriva. Sugriva and Vali—the brothers—represent the qualities of Viveka (discrimination) and Dheeratwa (valour). Rama made common cause with Sugriva to overcome Vali. He got the friendship of Anjaneya, who symbolises Dhairya (dauntless courage). With the help of Sugriva and Hanuman, Rama crossed the ocean (of Moha) to enter Lanka. Once again, he encountered the three gunas—Satwa, Rajas and Tamas—in Lanka in the form of Vibhishana, Ravana and Kumbhakarna. He vanquished the Rajo and Tamo gunas and crowned Vibhishana (Satwa guna) as King. He recovered Sita (who now assumed the form of Anubhava-jnana, wisdom born of experience) and reentered Ayodhya with her.

The Ramayana epic carries these significant messages when the symbolic meaning of the characters and events in it are properly understood.

Lanka the sensuous

Here the unique features of Lanka may be noted. Its ruler was the ten-headed Ravana. Although he was endowed with all powers, he was perpetually immersed in 'Moha' (infatuation for women). He had the appellation "Dasagriva"—the one with ten heads. In Ayodhya, Dasaratha was the ruler and in Lanka, it was Dasagriva. Dasaratha had the ten Indriyas (sense organs) as his chariot. Ravana was one who was enjoying the ten senses as a sensualist. Whatever one's scholarship or wealth or strength, if he has no control over his senses, he descends to the depths of degradation. Without control over his senses, a person, who may have conquered the three worlds, will be a slave of his impulses. The bad traits of Ravana were shared by all the people of Lanka. As is the ruler, so are the subjects, says the adage. When the ruler indulges in sensual pleasures, the subjects also do likewise. Lanka was thus immersed in carnal pleasures. The people were not aware of human virtues, much less of divine qualities. Pleasures of the flesh were their sole preoccupation. But at the same time, they carried on ritualistic practices like

beautiful gardens—and seeing the sacrificial fires burning in every home, Hanuman at first wondered whether the ruler of such a paradise on earth could commit the heinous crime of abducting Sita. Later Hanuman realised that Lanka was like the fig fruit, which is very attractive on the outside but is full of worms inside. In spite of all its external beauty and grandeur, Lanka contained within it forces of evil and wickedness. The conversion of such an abode of evil into a kingdom of righteousness by the installation of Vibhishana is the climax of the Ramayana Story.

Transformation at work

The epic theme of the Ramayana is the transformation of the demoniac nature to divinity. During the war in Lanka, an arrow released by Lakshmana struck a child whom its mother was carrying. Lakshmana noticed that the mother, instead of caring for the dead child, was fleeing to save herself. He remarked to Rama that this callous lack of maternal affection revealed the demoniac nature of the woman. Rama counselled patience and told Lakshmana that the woman's heart had been purified by seeing Rama. She had given up all desires and attachments. He asked Lakshmana to beckon her and ascertain whether she was running away for the sake of personal safety or for higher reasons. A monkey was sent to fetch her. When questioned, the woman said: "Ramchandra, it is not as if I have no love for my child. Unfortunately, by the decree of fate, it has passed away, while I have survived. I wish to live so that, after defeating Ravana when Rama takes the Rakshasas to Ayodhya. I shall be able to serve Rama and feast my eyes on him. Some day Rama will bless the people of Lanka and take them to Ayodhya. I shall then be able to render service in Rama's palace. I am keeping myself alive only with this hope. "

Good and evil

The moral of this episode is that there is good in the midst of evil and evil in the midst of good. Likewise, purity prevails amidst Impurity and Impurity exists in the midst of purity. That is why the answer to the question, "Where is the Lord to be found?" is: Out of unrest peace ensues; from peace results illumination; that illumination reveals the supreme effulgence of the Divine; in that effulgence is Divinity. "Thus, peace (Santhi) exists within "Ashanti". But it is said that one who lacks peace cannot have happiness. This is not quite correct. Instead of bemoaning the state of peacelessness, one should strive for real peace with courage and faith. This is the difference between the optimist and the pessimist. Looking at a glass half full of water, the pessimist says, "the glass is half-empty." The optimist says that it is half-full. The pessimist sees only the thorn in a rose stalk, while the optimist enjoys the beauty of the rose. Everyone should develop a hopeful and optimistic outlook. The hopes should be centered not on worldly things but on Self-realisation. Even in the Rakshasa dominion of Lanka there were seekers of the Atma. In Ayodhya, all persons appeared to be virtuous and pious devotees of God. But even in such a sacred land, there were some petty-minded men who were ready to cast aspersions on Divinity itself and find fault with God's ways. It was a washerman's disparaging remarks against Sita and Rama which led to her banishment to the forest.

Recognising divinity

There were three persons who were aware of the deeper meaning of the Rama Principle. They were Hanuman, Sumitra and Vishwamitra. Hanuman was no ordinary person. He was a

aware of the divinity of Rama. Kaushalya, despite her Satwic nature, was not aware of Rama's divine puissance as much as Sumitra. Kaushalya shed copious tears on hearing about Rama's exile to the forest. Sumitra, on the contrary, enjoined her son Lakshmana to accompany Rama and told him: "Wherever Rama is, there is Ayodhya, where Rama is not, that is the real jungle. Rama is verily Lord Narayana Himself. Go and serve Rama and Sita with my blessings." Sumitra explained to Lakshmana how he was an aspect of Rama from the circumstances of his birth.

Among the four brothers there was boundless love and regard for each other. When Rama went to the forest and was in Chitrakuta, Bharata came there to entreat him to return to Ayodhya and reign as the legitimate heir to the throne. Rama refused to return, saying that Bharata should rule over Ayodhya in accordance with the promise given by Dasaratha. The argument between the two was ultimately resolved by Sage Vasishta who told Bharata: "Do not cause any pain to Rama, who is Divinity itself and who has come down to protect the good and uphold Dharma." Bharata pleaded for taking Rama's sandals and administering the kingdom in Rama's name till he returned to Ayodhya.

(Swami related a series of episodes from the Ramayana to show how deep was the love between the four brothers and how devoted the younger brothers were to Rama. Such fraternal love was an example to the world for all time).

The Ramayana is a guidebook on the ideal relations between mothers and children, between husband and wife, between brothers, between the ruler and the people, between the master and the servants and many other human relationships.

(Swami described how Rama showed compassion to the dying eagle Jatayu, which had fought with Ravana when he was carrying Sita away to Lanka and how Rama gave refuge to Vibhishana, even against the fears expressed by Lakshmana, as examples of Rama's supreme benevolence and magnanimity towards anyone who revered him or sought his protection. Rama declared to Lakshmana: "Anyone who comes to me in spirit of surrender, whoever he might be, is mine and I am his. I shall give him asylum. This is my vow." Rama was a man pledged to one word, to one wife and to a single arrow.)

Swami concluded His discourse with a call to devotees to install Rama in their hearts and celebrate Ramanavami for achieving Atmic bliss. Going through the Ramayana epic they should reach the state of "Atma-Rama" (oneness with the Universal Spirit). In such a state there is no room for ego-sense (Ahamkara).

Swami sang poems in ballad form relating the Rama story, with the refrain "Rama, Rama, Rama Sita" which was repeated by the entire gathering.

—*Bhagavan's discourse in the Prasanthi Mandir on 7-4- 1987*

Crores of people have had darshan of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Several other millions yearn to see Him. Thousands have been blessed with interviews. I happen to be one such who had the beneficial grace of Divine Baba: to have shared the joy of His Darshan (vision), Sparshan (touch) and Sambhashan (discussion). When one has any of these experiences one gets a durable sense of satisfaction. The joy is very often an inexpressible feeling of euphoria or calm assurance stilling the agitated mind.

Sri Baba says, "Do not try to analyse me or understand me, merely love me for that will give you a taste of my divinity." But many of us wonder what is inside this reservoir of divine enigma: Baba is in the form of a human being and yet owns breath-taking miraculous powers.

In Islam, Allah (Universal God) is uncreated, has neither beginning nor end and cannot be destroyed. It was a hair-raising experience for me to hear Bhagavan Baba mention during the course of his birthday discourse in 1978: "There's none in the world who has been able to see Me. They are seeing every thing and they are trying to understand everything, but they are not making the slightest attempt to understand what is divinity, which is present within them. When we talk of God we should know that God has no birth. Birth is only for the body. A body which is born has to die but God is above birth and death. He has no beginning, no middle and no end. He is neither born nor can He be destroyed. He is present everywhere in the form of Atma. "

God's love

Religion reunites man with his source (Atma) and creates harmony in society. When you hear Baba affirm the invincibility of the Atma and its ever-present nature, you gain assurance that man can directly experience the infinity of the Creator who is ever-present. And through Sai's words, you also affirm what Jesus said that the supreme law of love supercedes all other laws bound by time, space and other man-made barriers. The Muslims hold that Allah is most beneficent, merciful and most forgiving. And contact with Sri Baba reconfirms the reality of God's boundless love, care and concern for human beings.

During my first meeting with Sri Baba at Dharmakshetram, Bombay, in 1976, I became conscious of His concern for the needy and the poor. In a group interview a renowned music director was also present. Swami asked him where he was staying and he replied that he had a suite in a five-star hotel. When Swami asked how much he paid for the room, he answered, "Rs. 400 a day." Swami exclaimed, "Rs. 400 a day!" The embarrassed music director clarified that he did not pay but the film producer was footing the bill. "It does not matter who pays," added Swami and turned to Mr. Indulal Shah and enquired: "How many chapattis can you get for four hundred rupees?" Mr. Shah replied "1200 chapattis, Swami." Baba looked at the musician and quipped, "400 poor people can eat three chapattis each" and told him not to be extravagant. This was not a speech for public consumption but advice given in a group interview.

When a devastating cyclone and tidal wave struck coastal Andhra Pradesh in November 1977, over 25,000 devotees were at Prasanthi Nilayam for Baba's 52nd birthday. Swami converted His birthday discourse to one of appeal to devotees to go to the relief of the victims and donate whatever they have to help the desolate and uprooted. He asked the Seva Dal to proceed forthwith to the coastal areas and render rehabilitation work along with the doctors. This author was a witness to the instant response of the devotees assembled in the Poornachandra Hall. In less than five minutes after His appeal, devotee stood up making spot announcements of their donations and before the end of the hour, the Sri Sathya Sai Cyclone Relief Fund swelled to Rs. five lakhs and by the same evening it reached a figure of Rs. ten lakhs.

Once, I had the blissful privilege of travelling with Swami from Ooty to Bangalore. Seated in the front, I had a chance to ask some personal questions during the leisurely 5-hour journey. One of the observances in Sai gatherings is the need for men and women to sit separately whether for darshan, personal interviews or prayers. Out of curiosity, I asked Swami why men and women are made to sit separately, as in Islam also there is the separation of men and women although it has been distorted and carried to extremes by fanatics. Swami replied that in the Vedic period too, men and women sat separately for prayers and that when you mix men and women indiscriminately there will be no prayers but mere "hysteria", lacking meditative concentration.

How the Lord responds

During the same car journey, I had put in an innocent question: "Swami, if a devotee sends a letter or telegram to you to your Bangalore address and before it reaches, you leave for Ooty, Bombay or any other place, would this be redirected to you if it is marked urgent?" He said: "The telegram and letters are mere carbon copies. If the thought in these is sincere and need-based, the letter or wire need not be delivered to me. The moment the thought is shaped in the devotee's mind, it reaches me and the necessary beneficial guidance is transmitted."

A 55-year-old friend of mine who is a college principal—once a pronounced leftist—accompanied me to Puttaparthi for Swami's darshan. After the interview, he said that he experienced the affection of his mother in Swami. A year after the interview when I met him, he confessed that he continues to see the milk of human kindness and mercy in Swami as experienced early in his life at the hands of his mother.

This author has been a witness to Baba blessing many Sikhs, Christians, Muslims, Parsees, Buddhists, who fall at His feet and get up with radiance on their faces. Some Muslims come from such far away places as Libya, Iran, Lebanon and Iraq to receive His blessings. Hundreds of Buddhists from Japan, Thailand, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Singapore, visit Him and see in Him the reincarnation of Gautama. Parsees hear the words of Zarathustra and Jews experience God's holy covenant with Moses when they meet Sai Baba. Many Christians from Europe, Australia and North America have felt the Holy Spirit in Sai Baba.

In the Koran, it is pointed out that "God does not discriminate between the original teachings of one religion and the other," (II: 136) but merely confirms the purity of the earlier scriptures.

adaptation to local culture, geography and other environmental factors. Sri Sai Baba emphasizes that the Vedas and Puranas do not belong to India or to any country or even to any one religion. They are for all mankind as the voice of God.

In March 1978, Swami convened a meeting of the Principals of Karnataka Colleges to consider the need for imparting spiritual education and moral values to students. It was attended by principals of religious denominational colleges, representing Hindu, Christian and Muslim faiths. One of the principals was a learned traditional Muslim scholar, Mir Jaffar Ali of Al-Amin College, Bangalore. As I happen to be a Muslim devotee of Baba, he told me that though he had spent a near life-time of 40 years trying to improve the educational lot and character of Muslim students, he was impressed beyond belief by Baba's capacity to instill humility, implicit obedience and disciplined conduct among young men coming from different homes.

During the lunch provided to the conference participants, the students of Sathya Sai College belonging to different strata of society from all over India were spreading the food plates and later removing and washing the plates in the place of waiters and attendants in other college hostels.

Quite early in my relationship with Swami, I learnt that devotion is no substitute for action. He has taught me the Sai credo of how to save yourself: "*It is not merely bhakti that I want, I want action motivated by bhakti.*" This has added a new dimension to my work. Even before meeting Sai, I was used to long hours of hard work, leading to strain and exhaustion, as it was not tinged with devotion. Today, though the pace of work remains uncurbed, the attitude to work and especially towards the result of effort has changed. Swami counsels: "Throw off your present responsibilities and take up this new responsibility (action motivated by devotion) of saving yourself, then you will see the wonder. Even the responsibilities will be discharged smoothly and to your satisfaction."

Baba reflects the viewpoint that the man who remains attached to God but lives and works in the world is a true devotee. Very often religions and holymen are derided for developing what Karl Marx called the "opiate state of mind" which lets man lose control over his action. But such an attitude should be rightly called escapism and not devotion, as thousands of selfless dedicated workers of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Dal have proved over the last 30 years that it is possible for human beings to work selflessly and without even thinking of the rewards under the guidance of a divine force.

Through slow, steady and guarded steps, Bhagavan Baba transforms His devotees and makes them daily, weekly or at regular intervals, according to His will, add a cubit to their understanding of Himself and their own selves better. His divine path gives us a sure foothold. There may be byways and meanderings on the high road to divinity but only the steadfast and patiently persevering devotee could reach the highway to Swami's perennial grace.

inscrutable mystery of the divine master's magnanimity recharging our life-force for service to mankind. In Baba's path, there is no chance of failure: it is a path in which every milestone is a monument of victory. For it is the Path of Pure Love.

The greatness of any individual depends upon the reform of his character. It does not depend upon his power, money or position. Thus, you must try to first increase the good qualities or the virtues in you.

—Baba

Adore God: Abhor Sin

—Prof. D. Narender

"To err is human, to forgive is divine." This is an accepted fact but man tends to take shelter under this and continues to do evil actions. If God continues to forgive and man continues to err, the world will go to ruin. But, still we see that God in His greatest mercy and love to His creation continues to forgive the innumerable sins committed by man. So, it is at this juncture one should understand that such a merciful loving God should be adored, and deviating from the path laid by Him, in other words "Sinning" should be abhorred and looked down upon.

Man has in him numerous weaknesses. But he has his intellect to cover up or compensate for these. At every step that man takes, he tends to fall a prey to these weaknesses. Basically every man is good and has the divine spark in him. But if he has only this divine spark in him and no bad qualities, then the very purpose of creation is defeated. The purpose of man's life is to overcome these weaknesses in him using the power of his intellect. Those who succeed in this test of God, return to Him, while the others are given chances again to prove their worth in this venture to conquer their weaknesses.

The human chariot

Bhagavan Baba has given a very beautiful illustration of this. He says that the human body is like a chariot, the horses are the senses of man, and the reins can be compared to the mind and the charioteer to the intellect. If the charioteer is not alert, he may let the reins go loose from his hands and allow the horses to wander away to the wrong places. Life is a battle where the body (Chariot) moves. If the intellect is alert, the man moves to his destination proper which is God. A slight lapse can bring about one's downfall. So, it is up to man to discriminate, using his intellect. At every step man takes, he is faced with two paths. It is up to his intellect to discriminate and choose the right one. But, man as such is ignorant. It is after falling many a time that a baby learns to walk a bird learns to fly. Experience is the best teacher for man. He may take the wrong path due to sheer ignorance or may be because, he does not know the consequences of his actions. But, once he comes to know that doing wrong can cause only downfall, he starts correcting himself and follows the right path.

Truth is God, so right action, which is nothing but Truth, is also God and it will bring man only success. So, praised be right action which is none else but God. Evil causes man's downfall. It is the cause of all misery whereas God is the only refuge who is capable of removing our troubles or miseries.

Love of God

God is the centre and the circumference of the cosmos and the entire space is filled with His Love. God is all and God is Love. When man responds even infinitesimally by loving God in return, he experiences a sense of completion, fulfillment, joy and peace. By loving God man seeks unity with the transcendental love. By experiencing even a fraction of that sublime love, man cannot fail to love all people, birds and animals. St. Francis of Assisi went through such an ego-shattering experience when he felt one with all living creatures and loved them as his brothers in creation.

Loving God means also surrendering to His Will. By such total surrender man becomes a channel of God's love. His life is raised to such a level of consciousness and awareness that he feels a love that is selfless, impartial and universal. It is the very antithesis of worldly love which is possessive and demanding and which is based on selfishness. The latter can only bring pain, sorrow and disillusionment, driving him to selfish actions leading to sin.

According to an old Indian adage, man's life should be governed by love of God and fear of sin. According to the Bible, man's first, and therefore, original sin was disobedience. Adam and Eve disobeyed God's words and ate the fruit of the forbidden tree. It is very significant that disobedience is cited as the first transgression on the part of man. It is disobedience to the moral law that sets the process of sin in motion. God's words speak to man in the form of conscience. God's voice is always whispering in man's ears when he is tempted to transgress. When man disobeys his own conscience and yields to the pressure of his baser instincts, he commits sin. The baser instincts are the passions like greed, envy, anger, jealousy, lust and desire. Each one is a potential destroyer of human nature and happiness.

To adore God is to abhor sin. There will be no room for sinful urges when one really adores God. If we continue sinning and yet declare that we love God, it is nothing but hypocrisy and deception. A sincere and genuine love of God brooks no trespasses. Love of God cannot be compromised with sin. To err is *not* human, though to forgive is Divine. Man cannot take shelter under this and presume that all his sins will always be forgiven. He has to develop an abhorrence towards sin that will be an armour against temptation and protect him from the perils that flesh is heir to.

—From "*Ten-Fold Path to Divinity*"

From the Mother to Moksha

*When it rains on red earth, the water stays;
When the rain falls on an oyster, a pear/ is born;
Likewise, devotion grows according to one's worthiness.*

Embodiments of the Divine,

We hear in common parlance the terms mother, father, preceptor and God being used in that order. This has a significance of its own. It is the mother that the child sees as soon as it is born. The mother shows the child to the father. The father leads him to the preceptor and the preceptor leads him to God. Everyone should understand the inner significance of the four terms.

We hear from spiritual aspirants the four terms: devotion (Bhakti), wisdom (Jnana), renunciation (Vairagya) and Reality (Tattvam) in the same order. There is a significance in the order in which these terms are mentioned. Devotion awakens wisdom, wisdom promotes renunciation, and renunciation confers the knowledge of Reality. We can reach the mansion of liberation (Mukti) if we walk on the stepping stones of devotion, wisdom, renunciation and the knowledge of Reality.

The Bhagavatam in its very title testifies to this truth. The term Bhagavatamu in Telugu is made up of five letters: *Bha, qa, va, ta, mu*. Here *Bha* signifies Bhakti (devotion); *ga* signifies Jnana (wisdom); *va* signifies Vairagya (renunciation); *ta* signifies Tattwa (the knowledge of Reality); and *mu* signifies Mukti (Liberation). The Bhagavata bestows on us liberation by leading us through Devotion to Wisdom, Renunciation and the knowledge of Reality. Prahlada has given us a dwadasaakshara mantra, a twelve-lettered mantra "Throva vedukukonuta dodda buddhi". This consists of twelve letters in Telugu. It means that the highest intelligence consists in finding the way. What is the way to be sought? It is the way to Divinity. How is it to be found? It is by knowing the source from which you have come. Where have you come from? You have come from the Divine and you have to go back to the Divine.

From God to God

The tenth stanza in the fourteenth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita reveals that we have come from God. The Lord's utterance is: "Mamaivaamso Jeeva loke Jeeva Bhuthah Sanaatanah." This means: "You are an aspect of Me. You are not an aspect of Nature and the five elements. Since you are an aspect of Mine, there is no peace and joy for you till you reach and merge in Me." Just as a child cannot be without the mother, a river must seek the ocean from which it has come, the branch of a tree cannot survive separation from the tree, and a fish cannot live outside its sustaining element, water, man, who has come from God, cannot have real happiness until he returns to God.

One devotee sang in the Kannada language thus: "Having forgotten You, I have come to this world. Leaving the Eternal that You are, I have plunged into this transient, temporary world. What joy can I reap in this clod of earth, as all joys are in You alone." We are born in this world because we have forgotten God. We have to find our way back to God, our destination, retracing

they came into existence," says the Bhagavata. It is our misfortune that we have forgotten this vital message today. To remember the source from which we came is the essential spiritual endeavour that every man should make.

Atma or anna

Man who came to this earth in quest of the Atma is wasting away his time in the frivolous pursuit of 'anna' (material things). Animals are always busy seeking food. Man, who is endowed with intelligence, should not be content to remain like animals. He should strive to reach Reality. Food, sleep, fear and sex are common to birds and beasts. Man's life today is largely confined to these four things. Birth as a human being should be used for realising the Divinity within and not in frittering it away in sensual pursuits. Chaitanya declared: "We have installed today on the throne of our heart vicious thoughts and feelings, instead of making it the seat of the Lord."

Samsara and samskara

It is obvious that most of us have to lead normal family life, but it is not a life in which you should be wholly immersed. It is not Samsara (family) that follows us all through. It is the Samskara, the purity that you have achieved, that stands by you in after-life. Some elders come to Swami and pray to Him to show them the way to God. What is the way? The way is journeying back to the place from which we have come. Suppose you go to a town and stay there in a hotel for a few days, you have to come back home after finishing your work in the town. You cannot live in the hotel forever, mistaking it to be your home. The phenomenal world is like a hotel to which we have come to experience the consequences of our actions in the past. The body is a room in the hotel in which we have to undergo the Karmic consequences. Our time and body should be used for carrying out the mission on which we have come. We are engaged in accumulating wealth gold and other material possessions. It is true that we need money for leading our life in this world. But there should be a limit to the acquisition of those worldly objects. True welfare and happiness cannot be achieved without observing limits in life. An uncontrolled life reduces man to the level of the animal.

Forgetting the primary goal of life men are wasting their time. Time is precious. Death is dangling its sword over every head. Our life span is fast diminishing like water leaking through broken pot, or a melting block of ice. Death overtakes many even before they realise their mission in life.

*"The body is made up of the five elements!
It has to fall one day.
The Dweller in the body is eternal.
Free yourself from the delusion of birth and death,
The Dweller is indeed Divinity."*

This is the truth that all have to realise. Fulfillment in life cannot be found by indulging in eating and drinking.

(Bhakti) Father is the symbol for wisdom (Jnana). The preceptor is the symbol for renunciation (Vairagya). God is the very embodiment of Atmic knowledge. We can reach the mansion of Liberation (Moksha) only ascending the four steps to Divinity.

Mother comes first

Love for the mother has to be fostered by everyone. Today this love is prompted more by greed—desire for wealth and gold—than by spontaneous affection for the mother. Barely one in a million realises that he owes his food, blood and life itself to the mother. Whoever she may be, a mother is verily divine. It is said: *Matru Devobhava Pitru Devobhava; Acharya Devobhava Atithi Devobhava.* (Regard the mother as God, the father as God, the preceptor as God and the guest as God). The mother stands foremost among these four. She is indeed the first teacher for everyone. It is only the mother who strives most for securing the well-being of the child by showering on him boundless affection and love and showing the father. Children today do not care to heed their mother's commands but they hanker after the mother's wealth. What is the use of having children of this kind? They are a curse on the womb that bore them.

“Of what use is a son who does not lift both his hands in prayer to the Lord, who does not proclaim the Lord's name with his mouth till it aches, and who does not cherish the Lord in his heart? He is a disgrace to the woman that bore him.” So says the Bhagavata. This single verse says all that is essential regarding devotion, karma, jnana and renunciation. What are the duties of the hands and the tongue for a true devotee? God has given to each man a single stomach but two hands to work with. If he works hard enough with both hands, he need not starve. There is no dearth of food. One who does not use his hands properly has no right to subsist on others. The Vedas have enjoined the supremacy of action (Karma).

Make the tongue holy

The tongue should be employed for doing sacred functions. One should speak sweet and sacred things and should not cause pain and hurt to others by his speech. It is a sin to abuse others. The Lord resides in everyone. The person who abuses others is in fact abusing the Lord Himself. In an exhortation to the tongue, Jayadeva said: "Jihve, rasajne, madhurapriya tvam, satyam-hitam twam, paramam vada madhuraaksharaani, Govinda, Damodara, Maadhaveti." ("O sacred tongue, you know what is sweet, truthful and beneficent. Utter, then, the supremely sweet words: Govinda, Damodara, Madhava.") The tongue experiences sorrow or suffering in its own home without straying into the homes of others. It discretely decides beforehand whether an edible should be eaten or not. If it is sweet, it shows its consent by sending it down for digestion. But if it is bitter, it spits it out. If the tongue is properly used, it can be the means by which we can attain Godhood itself. Let the name of the Lord dance on our tongue, since remembrance of the Name is the easiest path to liberation in the Kali Age. We should use the tongue for uttering sweet and truthful words. This sacred instrument is often misused. The sins that the tongue commits are four: lying, backbiting, invective, and loquacity. The tongue becomes sanctified if it refrains from indulging in these four sins.

Everyone should treasure in his heart love for the mother, who has borne him, reared him with love and fostered him with care. The person who forfeits the mother's love will not earn any one's love.

Pundarika was one who was devoted to the service of his aged parents. In doing this he was adhering to a self-imposed rule. He would not take any food until the parents had gone to sleep. Once he was massaging the feet of the parents. To test Pundarika's love for his parents, Lord Panduranga came to his residence in a disguise and stood behind him. Pundarika went on with his service to his parents who had not gone to sleep. The new-comer asked Pundarika to look at him. Pundarika said, that he was seeing the visitor. The latter asked him: "In what form are you seeing me?" Pundarika said: "I am seeing you as my mother." Meanwhile Pundarika's guru came there and told Pundarika that the visitor was none other than the Lord Himself. Pundarika said that the parents whom he was serving were also God. The guru earnestly urged: "Don't you realise that the one who has come is verily God?" Pundarika replied: "My parents also are God." Panduranga, admiring his resolve, said: "Pundarika, won't you like to experience a vision of Me even once?" Pundarika replied, "Until my mother goes to sleep, I will not seek your vision. If you are keen that I should see you, please wait for a while. I shall come to you after my mother has gone to sleep." It was such devotion to parents that made the Lord reveal Himself to Pundarika and render service to him.

"Ko-ham" - "So-ham"

From the moment of birth, man is concerned about his future. The child's first cry is, "Kwa, Kwa" "Wherefrom have I come?" If you examine what is happening to you everyday, you will understand why the child cries at the time of birth. Seeing the endless troubles in store, the child cries: "Where am I!" Forgetting the place from which they came, men lose themselves in worldly desires. There are a few like Prahlada who from the moment of birth realise their inherent divinity. They utter "Soham! So-ham!" from the time of birth. But ordinary mortals ask, "Ko-ham? Koham." "Who am I?" They do not get the answer till the end of their lives. They do not realise that the answer is: "I am God." A few earnest seekers start with "Ko-ham" ("Who am I?") and end with the discovery: "So-ham" ("I am He").

Gratitude is primary

Every man is prone to commit mistakes either wittingly or unwittingly. But one mistake he should not commit in any circumstance, that is, to forget what he owes to his mother. Love of the mother can redeem a man's life, whatever his other lapses may be. The greatest gift of the parents is the body, with all its powers. Although the Lord rules overall lives, it is the parents who have endowed the body to the child. Clay and water are gifts of Nature. But it is the potter who makes pots out of them. Hence gratitude to the parents is a primary obligation. Students these days ask: "why should we be grateful to our parents?" They should remember that if they cause distress to their parents now by their behaviour, they should not be surprised if in later years their own children cause them similar distress. This is the law of action and reaction that is always at work. Do not flat conceited because of your youth, your wealth or strength. All these are transient. Adi Sankaracharya warned in strident language: Do not get proud because of companions, wealth or

possessions men are forgetting the eternal verities and that source of real bliss. Whatever things you may possess, whatever amenities you may enjoy, only faith in God will confer real peace of mind. An air-conditioner may cool your body, but only the grace of God can cool the heated brain and the troubled heart. That grace will come to those who are grateful to their parents and render loving service to them. Starting with the mother, gratitude should extend to the father and the preceptor. If you show gratitude to these three, you will realise the presence of the Triune Lord in them and you will reap the fruit of worshipping the Trinity (Brahma, Vishnu and Siva).

Parents' fault

It is an unfortunate fact that today ninety percent of the children are spoilt by the parents themselves. The parents do not exercise timely control over the children. If the wrong actions of the children are corrected then and there, they will grow in the proper way. The parents should show no indulgence towards children who go astray. It is misplaced affection to let erring children go uncorrected.

What use is there in having children who do not behave properly? What did Dhritarashtra gain from his hundred wicked sons? He would not restrain them despite the warnings of Krishna and Vidura. Ultimately the entire family was wiped out. There is no meaning in rejoicing when a child is born. The time for rejoicing will come when the child grows up, earns name and fame and brings credit to the parents.

Every son should see that he makes his mother happy. He should seek from the mother nothing but her love and blessings. Mothers should strive to keep their children on the straight path. Only such mothers and children are worthy of the name. When mothers and children act properly, the nation will develop along right lines. Righteousness will spread from the family to the whole world.

There are parents who question their children when they go to Swami: "What madness has seized you? Why are you going to that Sai?" What form of madness do these parents desire for their progeny? Do they want them to become rowdies and goondas? Do they want them to be crazy about money? What will money give them which can equal the grace of God? What everyone should seek is the grace of the Divine—which is a treasure greater than all the wealth in the world.

God-above all

Nothing should come in the way of your seeking God. You must be prepared for any sacrifice or face any opposition for the sake of God. Prahlada faced the wrath and hatred of his father Hiranyakasipu in adhering to his faith in Narayana. Vibhishana renounced his brother Ravana when the latter stood in the way of his devotion to Rama. If a mother stands in the way of your devotion to God, you must be prepared to give her up, as Bharata did when Kaikeyi sought to separate him from Rama. Mira was prepared to renounce her husband rather than give up her devotion to Krishna. Emperor Bali rejected the advice of his Guru, Sukracharya, when the

did not flinch from any sacrifice in vindicating their devotion to God.

The realisation of God is the goal and destiny of human life. From the moment of birth, suffering pursues man in one form or another throughout life. If in all these ordeals, one has to maintain equanimity and peace, he has to lead a righteous life, with firm faith in God. There is no need to give up the normal duties of a student or a householder. But everything that is done should be done as an offering to God. Thereby every ordinary act becomes sanctified. Love of God should express itself in the form of consecration of every action. This is my message to you on this sacred day.

—Bhagavan's discourse at Brindavan on Easwaramma Day, 6-5-1987

From "I" to "We"

Softly you blow sweet breath of the sea
Gently above, around, through me
Bringing your endless, timeless dream
Of He, the ocean Lord Supreme.

In that still night of time before
My mind stands gazing out from shore
And in a moaning, restless cry
Utters one last reluctant "I".

Till He of vast and endless seas
My mind's narrow confines frees
And sends it sweeping out from shore
To join the depths' unceasing roar.

Where churning, broiling far below
It joins at last the current's flow,
And far beneath the restless sea
Is heard at last the immortal "We"

—B. R.

How do we feel when Swami says or signals,
"Wait, wait," just when we're burning for action!

Do we ever feel as though
we've run to the end of the diving board
and just as we're about to make a joyous dive
the Trainer says, "Wait, wait"!

Let's remember
It's always time for patience.
It's always time for careful weeding of
our thoughts and faults.
It's always time for Namasmarana.
It's always time to act with Love.
It's always time to graciously give way
(tears in private, please)
to someone much more troubled
or even more deserving.

It's always time for the practice of Sai- lence
both outer and inner.

Yes, there's always a lot to do
to channelize rajasic energy—

It's always time to give a smile... a kind
word... a helping hand
to someone who also needs His help.

What if He says inside us, "Are you Ready?"
and we're dismayed to hear an inner voice
beyond our conscious control
say, "No, I'm not."

And He was talking about an Interview.

If we aren't ready to receive—
no matter how well-watered is the fertile soil
if the field is not yet ploughed
we receive nothing.

What makes us ready?
Sadhana...sacrifice...pain...yearning...

"You have to be
questing and quiet."

"Are you ready, jivi?"

—*R. S., Hawaii*

Forest of Desires

In the dense forest of desires
The traveller got entangled.
Seeking sometime the one
Sometime the other pathway
But he failed to get the approach road
Leading to the temple yonder
Behind the trees though its golden crest
Glistened in the sun
Against the blue sky

At every step
The drooping branches obstructed the way.
And the mind distracted
By the melodies of the singing birds
Failed to notice
The huge python
Swinging from the branch of
An old banyan tree
With its mouth wide open
To devour him as one piece.

With a shudder
The traveller drew back
From the reptile
Waved his head
To avoid that frightening cave
Which wanted to make
A snort work of him;
When the thorns underneath
Hidden behind the blooming roses
Suddenly pierced through

The foot-soles.
And bleeding he cried 'Sai'
Before falling down on the ground
Unconscious.
The sun's chariot
Drove to the west
And the Eve appeared
Robed in grey
Spreading vermillion
All along the western sky.
Behind the forest trees
The temple gong struck
And its sound spread
Like the laughter of Shiva
Penetrating through the raised arms of the
forest.
The traveller lifted his head
And looked around
But in the dense hollowness
Of the forest
The sound reached his ears
Like the sound of a muffled drum.
Picking up courage
He got up and started running
Helter skelter.
But finding no way out
Fell down again
With no hope to survive.

It was then
There was a sudden whisper.

A glow-worm hovered around.
And he felt the rustle of a robe
Passing by.
Opening his eyes wide
He saw in the growing darkness
An outline of a human form
Which grew clearer every moment
Till he could see the Lord
Standing by his side
With the Ever Sweet Smile
And Compassion

He could hear the Lord saying,
"Like the glow-worm
The Light is within you,
Try to enkindle it
And be your own pathfinder;
Only then you can cross
The Forest of Desires.
I AM WITH YOU I "

—*B. P. Misra*

Basic values are for all

—*Prof. N. Kasturi*

Swami has demarcated the basic values of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema as the Avatar's Amrita for eliminating falsehood, fanaticism, fear and frenzy from human hearts.

We cannot be cured of suicidal impulses or homicidal compulsions by repetition of the pharmaceutical formulae or even the directions for use! Step by step as we proceed, tick by tick as time floats us towards the sea, breath by breath as we clip the ribbon of Life, Swami would fain lead us back to Himself, our Home, provided we have won laurels in the game we play—Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema. Every one of us can claim to be led. Only, we have to face the temptation to stray away from the values. Men, women; old, young; poor, rich; wise, otherwise; all have to be fully human, genuinely human, divinely human.

Whatever our creed or colour, country or culture, we are equipped with a sense of wonder, a pang of discontent, leas that can kneel, palms that can be folded and raised, eyes that can shed droplets of joy and pity, a face that can smile, a mind with windows that can be closed, a spring of joy and a spark of God encased in the heart.

Swami exhorts all of us to become aware of our innate glory by meant of these instruments and share the Light with others, every day of our lives. The Avatar expects us, grown-ups, besides the growing-ups, to imbibe the human values and promote peace and happiness amongst men. In fact, the grown-ups, who are being invested by Him with this task from as early as 1942, have to dedicate themselves to the practice of human values with no further delay and with deeper faith and earnestness. The grownups are at this moment building the physical, mental, social, economic, political structure for their children and grand children to live in. They are the only models which the growing ups can mould themselves into. Most of the moulding is manipulated by the elders through schools, films and the idiot box, through the spoken and

the foundation, and greed, the floors above.

Man—the immortal self

Swami gave the Bal Vikas programme an part of a campaign to save the children from being polluted and poisoned by elders at home and outside, but this disinfection process has to be accompanied by the parallel programme of preparing the pilgrimage they are born to complete. The modern exponent of altruism, Sorokin, is only echoing Swami's directive when he writes, "Man is an animal and a marvelously complex mechanism. But, above all, man is an incarnation of the rational, conscious mind and a participant in the supra-rational, the supreme, the Creative Power of the Universe, variously called God, Brahman, Tao, Cosmic Mind, Oversoul, Logos. Man's organism and mechanism are only the means used as the rational being and the supra-rational son of God, created in God's image. The brain and other organs are but the tools for man—the thinker and discoverer of Truth, the seeker for the supreme Goodness, the admirer of the sublime Beauty, the inventor and creator of great Values—for man, the immortal Self incarnated in the mortal human organism."

Sorokin emphasises Truth (Sathyam) Goodness (Sivam) and Beauty (Sundaram), and extols the invention and creation of great values. The values which make up the Divine prescription for the self-inflicted ills of mankind are Truth, Right Conduct and Non-violence (goodness) and Love and Peace (Beauty). If only men emerge from the cave of cowardice and throw aside the masks they wear, the rhetoric they parade, the statistics they wield as shield, life would be smoother and sweeter.

We think in generalities: but, we live in details. Swami says, Nitya Anubhavam (the day to day experience) must arise out of and abide within Sathya Anubhavam (the everlasting experience of the never-changing Truth). Hence His command "Let your life journey move forward day by day, with Sathya, Dharma, Nasti, Prema."

Avidya — Maya

—John Grimes

The translation of a word of one language into a word of another language is fraught with danger. This is due to the fact that, though there may be a high degree of conformity, the two words have different connotations which cannot be preserved in translation. Thus, on the one hand, one is led to believe that the translation has succeeded, while, on the other, varying degrees of difference have crept in. For literary purposes, this discrepancy may not be of great harm. But in philosophy, where accuracy of expression is essential, the utmost care must be taken to prevent this alteration. A loose rendering of a philosophical term may create a serious misconception. Unnecessary and unwarranted doctrinal, as well as critical, renderings thus make their appearance, much to the detriment of the doctrine.

Of all the Indian philosophical systems, *Advaita Vedanta* has been given pre-eminence. Any system of philosophy can be correctly understood and appreciated only if it is viewed from the right perspective. Each system makes use of one or more key concepts. The key concept in *Advaita* is *avidya / maya*. In this context, *avidya* (ignorance) is the same as *maya* (principle of appearance).

So important is this concept within *Advaita* that it has been characterized as the system's cornerstone. Critics of *Advaita* portrayed *Advaita* as *mayavada* (the doctrine of illusion). Doing this, the critics have mistaken the means (*avidya*) for the end (*Brahman*), as well as misunderstood the very concept itself. *Advaita* is *Brahmavada* (the doctrine of reality) and the principle of *avidya / maya* is but the means utilized by the *Advaitin* for explaining how the non-dual *Brahman* appears as many.

The common practice among translators of the West has been to translate *maya* as "illusion." This conveys the idea of an apparition, a phantom, a false appearance. However, *Advaita* holds that anything that is perceived is real. It accords reality to objects of erroneous perception, to dream objects, as well as to objects of normal perception. The question is: How real are these objects, and do they have the same measure of reality as *Brahman*, the Absolute Reality?

Advaita admits of three levels of reality, that which is apparently real, that which is empirically real, and that which is absolutely real. The unreal is that which is never experienced by any person at any time, i.e., a square circle. But rope snakes or dream lions are objects of experience, though their reality is very much restricted. They are real to the person concerned at the time they are experienced. An illusion ceases to be when it is recognized as an Illusion, or a dream ceases when a person wakes up.

But the case is a little different regarding objects of normal waking experience. Their reality is not restricted to a person or a time. Dream lions and rope snakes are objects of private experience, while tables and trees are public in the sense that they are perceived by more than one person simultaneously. Further, they exist for a longer time. The empirical world is real as long as the empirical order lasts. However, both the apparently real and the empirically real eventually suffer sublation and, thus, are called *maya* or *mithya* (neither real nor unreal). They are not real because they suffer sublation—but they are not unreal because they are perceived. Thus, they are unique, indescribable bewildering products of *avidya / maya*.

The point to be made is that the English word "illusion" as a translation for *maya* does not adequately describe the concept as it is employed in the philosophy of *Advaita*.

I Know the Hold

You know the hand—
I know the hold.

don't leave the grasp.

You prayed for something good
I overheard it.
Be praying, don't stop
until you get the boon.

You asked for something
in your heart, I know it.
Don't leave me until
I answer your need.

Whatever you like
I know them all.
But do not desert
before I plan.

At your persistence
I may yield at last:
In your despair
You may gain in the end.

Askeither this, or that,
but, never give me up!
To give up half-way
is no devotion at all.

(English version of s poem often sung by Bhagavan since 1948)

—*N. Kasturi*

From the earliest times, the ancient sages had been engaged in the quest for God. They performed severe penances and observed austerities of many kinds in remote forests to discover the nature of God. They had the faith that, by the grace of God, their earnest efforts would be successful. 'Sraddhaavaan labhathe Jnanam' says the Gita. The earnest seeker achieves the Supreme Truth. By persistence even an ant can cover miles of ground. But without making the effort, even an eagle cannot move one inch. Through earnest and diligent effort, anything can be accomplished, however difficult it may be.

The great sages who realised the Divine by their penance have declared that they have been able to see the infinite effulgence of the Supreme Person (Purusha) beyond the darkness of ignorance. This declaration is the first message they gave to the world in the Vedas. "Vedaaham etham Purusham Mahaantham Aadithyavarnam Tamasah parastaath." ("We have known this Supreme Person, effulgent like a thousand suns, beyond all darkness.")The Divine shines in splendour beyond the darkness of ignorance.

When man gets rid of his ignorance, he can experience this infinite Light, this spiritual flame, declared the Rishis. Where did they experience the Divine? Not in the external world. Exploring the five life-breaths and the five sheaths of the human body, they experienced the Light of the Spirit in the heart within. They realised that those who love God can find Him nearer to themselves than anything in the world. To those who have no yearning for God, He is farther than the farthest object. "Dooraath doore anthikecha" ("Farther than the farthest and nearest as well.")

The sages regarded the body as a shrine in which the Divine is the Indweller. The individual is a spark of the Divine. He is not a fragment of Nature or a combination of the live basic elements (earth, water, fire, air and ether). He is an "amsa" of the immortal Omni-Self.

To reach the Divine within, one has to qualify himself to pass through four gates: Shama, Vicharana, Tripti and Satsangam (self-control, enquiry, contentment and the company of the good).

Self-control

"Shama" calls for steadfast faith in God and complete control of the senses and the mind. There are five sense organs and five organs of action, besides the mind, through which these ten function. Once the sense organs (jnanindriyas) are controlled, it is easy to control the karmindriyas (organs of action). "Shama" (sense control) makes one a master of his mind and Indriyas (sense and action organs) instead of being their slave. Such a person transcends the animal nature and can go forward from the human to the Divine.

Birds, beasts and other creatures are concerned with enjoyment of external things. Man alone is gifted with the capacity to discriminate between the transient and the permanent and seek what is everlasting by controlling his senses and giving up attachment to, the perishable

body that enables man to enjoy the pleasures derived from the objects experienced through the senses. Once this truth is realised, the divine nature of consciousness will become clear. Then every action can be regarded as an offering to the Divine. Work will then be transformed into worship. When the identification of the Self with the body goes, action which may seem to be done for personal enjoyment can be converted into actions of dedication to the Divine. When actions are performed in this unselfish spirit, one can experience a sense of liberation and enjoy bliss that passeth understanding. Control over the senses ("Shama") is thus the first stage in the journey towards Self-realisation. This sadhana must be taken up early in one's life. It is the foundation for a godly life. One should not wait till old age to embark on this vital exercise. When death knocks at the door and one is surrounded by one's wailing kith and kin, there may be no time to think of God. Begin the God-ward journey from now on. We create the shackles that bind us to that wheel of birth and death. Free yourselves from them by giving up evil deeds. Divine grace is secured only by purity. Purity is achieved through "Shama".

Vicharana

The second gate you have to pass is through Vicharana (Enquiry)—the process of discriminating between right and wrong, good and evil, the transient and the eternal. In ordinary life, you have to separate the rice from stones, the grain from chaff. Everyone needs to cultivate discrimination by the process of enquiry. Even a monkey knows that it has to remove the rind to eat the fruit inside. Likewise, man has to distinguish between the Atma and the Anatma—the Spirit and matter, the Real and the unreal, good and evil, right and wrong, and follow the right path. "Buddhi graabyam athindriyam" The intelligence grasps what is beyond the sense. We have to transcend the senses so that we may seek the Real and the Eternal and reject the ephemeral and the perishable. The things of the world are subject to birth, growth, decay and death. It is by learning to discriminate between the permanent and the passing, man crosses the second stage in the God-ward journey.

Contentment

The third gate requires "Tripti" (contentment). At this stage, man must learn to be content with what he has and what he gets and look upon whatever he receives as gift from God. When he is satisfied with what he has, he can be happy. When he desires for more, he gets discontented and miserable. There is the story of a man who was bathing in the Godavari when it was in spate. As he was bathing, he saw a stick with a golden handle floating towards him. He caught hold of it and left it on the bank to complete his bath. Meanwhile, the bank caved in and the stick was carried away by the river. After his bath, the man found the stick missing and wailed over his loss. There was no reason for his elation in getting the stick or his grief over its loss. It did not belong to him. It was a chance acquisition and it left him in the manner it had come. The river brought it and the river carried it away. Why claim any right to it? The temporary attainment to the stick was a bondage which subsequently caused grief. If there had been no attachment there would have been no sorrow. Today there are people who are never content with what they have and are ceaselessly seeking more wealth, position or power. They are perpetually harried by discontent. They claim rights of every kind, but have no awareness of their responsibilities. They are consumed by perpetual discontent and insatiable desires. The contented man is the most

It is the man who is fully satisfied with what he has. He who is filled with desires is the poorest man in the world. One who wishes to realise the Divine should cultivate contentment. The great spiritual masters—Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Vivekananda, Tulsidas, Ramadas, Kabir and others—were men who led supremely contented lives. There were numerous occasions when they could not get even food to eat. They regarded such occasions as invitations by God to observe fasting as food for the Spirit (Upavasam). They enjoyed such fasts by contemplation of God. When they were entertained to a rich repast, they considered the feast as a gift from God to make up for the fast they had observed. Whether it was a fast or a feast, they looked on both with the same sense of contented acceptance. They were not depressed by the former or elated by the latter. "Samathvam yogamuchyathe" says the Gita. Equal-mindedness is yoga. The ancient sages practised such equal-mindedness. And this should be taught to our young people and cultivated by them. It is the index of contentment One who has achieved contentment can enjoy the bliss of Divine grace.

Good company

The fourth gate to be passed through is Satsangam (the company of the Good). Youth today are in great need of good company. By associating with people who use bad language, indulge in bad deeds, young men take to bad ways. Students should eschew totally bad company of every kind. You need a lamp to find your way through a dark jungle. Likewise, in the jungle of life, you need the light and guidance of good men to keep you company on the right path and to take you to the right goal. Even a bad person, by association with the good, gets reformed. But a good man, by falling into bad company, becomes bad. If you add one litre of milk to ten litres of water, the milk becomes so diluted that it is valueless. But one litre of water added to ten litres of milk acquires additional value. When you wish to cultivate friendship, ensure that you join a group of good students, who are good in their speech, behaviour and actions. Maintain only formal relations with others.

Once these four gates are passed sense control, discrimination, contentment and Satsang—the road to divinity is clear. Our entire life gets transformed.

*—From Bhagavan's address at the Sri Sathya Sai Institute Auditorium,
Prasanthi Nilayam, on 19-2-1987*

Chaitanya and the Thief

Krishna Chaitanya was once moving about, dancing and singing ecstatically, oblivious to everything, being immersed in the contemplation of the Lord. He entered Navadweep, where the leaders of the town joined him in his bhajan with equal ecstasy. A thief also joined this group. He had been a thief all his life and was an arrant liar. He joined in their dance and thought that as

could easily pick their pockets. While this was his intention, what happened was entirely different. The moment he joined the devout group, he forgot himself and began to sing and dance with the same fervour as the others. After the others had left, he sat apart for a while, watching Chaitanya. A small group of children were listening to Chaitanya's discourse. The thief ran towards Chaitanya and said: "Swami I You are giving advice to so many persons. Please impart some holy name to me." Chaitanya replied: "Tell me first of all who you are and what is your life story. I shall then give you a message." The man confessed "Swami! I am a thief. I have been leading the life of a thief and a liar. My name is Rama, People call me as Rama the Thief." Chaitanya said: "What a pity! I shall, however, give you a message. What will you give me as guru dakshina (offering to the teacher)?" The thief replied: "I shall give you a share in the booty I get from stealing." Chaitanya said: "I have no need of any such thing. Give me as your offering the promise that you will not commit theft in future." He replied: "Swami! I am prepared to offer you anything, but I cannot agree to give up stealing." Chaitanya then said: "If that is so, I shall impart the sacred name to you on one condition. Which ever place you may choose for thieving, you must recite the sacred name 108 times before you break into the place."

Chaitanya then drew the thief near to him. The thief's heart had considerably softened after listening to Chaitanya's words. "Sambhashanam Sankatanasanam" ("conversation with a holy person removes distress.") The thief was getting rid of fear. He neared Chaitanya, "Sparsanam Karma Vimochanam" (The touch of a holy person frees one from the effects of past deeds.) Chaitanya held the thief's head and whispered in his ear three times the mantra: "Om Namoh Bhagavate Vaasudevaaya." The mere sight (darshanam) of Chaitanya destroyed the sins committed by the thief. His words dispelled the worry felt by the thief. The touch of the saint freed him from the bonds of past deeds.

Sinner turned saint

The thief went back with a purified heart. As he was leaving, he saw large numbers of people going to Chaitanya. Many rich persons were amongst them. The thief thought that this was a good opportunity for him to break into their houses. The richest man in the village had taken his wife and children to meet Chaitanya, leaving his house unguarded. The thief broke into the house and entered the safe-room in which all valuables were kept. He saw gems of all kinds. He was resolved not to touch any of the valuables till he had completed recitation of the mantra given to him by Chaitanya. But, before he completed the mantra japa, the master of the house and others arrived there. The lady of the house, who had gone with all her jewels, wanted to replace them in the safe. She saw a stranger in the room engaged in deep meditation. She thought it must be some great sage who had come into the house in their absence and was meditating on God. She called her husband. The stranger continued to be immersed in meditation. He did not appear like a thief. They thought he must be some saintly person who had honoured their home by his visit. All of them began to offer worship to him and prostrate before him. They thought that in the wake of saint Chaitanya other saintly persons were also visiting their village.

Meanwhile, on the completion of the recitation of the mantra, the thief opened his eyes and found to his astonishment a large group of people standing reverently before him. The master of

sanctified by your visit. Please take your food in our home and redeem our lives by doing us this honour."

A great change came over the thief. He thought: "If the mere recitation of the Lord's name can bring me so much honour and respect, although I had come here only to steal, how many greater things may be in store for me if I genuinely recite the Lord's name for its own sake? I may hope for the highest position by the grace of the Lord. "That very moment he decided to give up stealing. He prostrated before the master of the house and his wife and said: "Mother Let me tell you the truth. I am a thief. Let me go to a forest. I shall spend the rest of my days contemplating on God and leading the life of a true acetic."

Listening to his words of truth, the elders present were deeply moved and they arranged to carry him in a palanquin in procession round the village and to leave him in a forest as desired by him. Later, the man went to Chaitanya and reverently requested him to bless him so that he may become a real sage worthy of respect from the people.

—*From Bhagavan's Discourse at the Institute Auditorium, Prasanthi Nilayam*

SRI SATHYA SAI EDUCATION IN HUMAN VALUES:

Core Curriculum for Global Education

—*Robert Muller, Asst. Secretary-General, United Nations*

... Global education must transcend material, scientific and intellectual achievements and reach deliberately into the moral and spiritual spheres.

... Global Education must prepare our children for the coming of an interdependent, safe, prosperous, friendly, loving, happy planetary age...

—*From New Genesis, Shaping a Global Spirituality*

Let me tell you how I would educate the children of this planet in the light of my thirty-three years of experience at the United Nations (UN) and offer you a world core curriculum which should underlie all grades, levels and forms of education including adult education.

The starting point is that every hour, 6000 of our brothers and sisters die and 15,000 children are born on this globe. The newcomers must be educated so that they can benefit from our acquired knowledge, skills and art of living, enjoy happy and fulfilled lives, and contribute in turn to the continuance, maintenance and further ascent of humanity on a well preserved planet.

Alas, many newly-born will never reach school age. One out of ten will die before the age of one and another four percent will die before the age of five. This we must try to prevent by all means. We must also try to prevent that children reach school age with handicaps. It is estimated that ten percent of all the world's children reach school age with a handicap of a physical, sensory or mental nature. In the developing countries, an unforgivable major cause is still malnutrition.

Thirdly, an ideal world curriculum presupposes that there are schools in all parts of the world. Alas, this is not the case. There are still 814 million illiterates on this planet. Humanity has done wonders in educating its people: we have reduced the percentage of illiterates of the world's adult population from 32.4 percent to 28.9 percent between 1970 and 1980, a period of phenomenal population growth. But between now and the year 2000, 1.6 billion more people will be added to this planet and we are likely to reach a total of 6.1 billion people in that year. Ninety percent of the increase will be in the developing countries where the problem of education is more severe. As a result, the total number of illiterates could climb to 950 million by the Bi-millennium. Education for all remains, therefore, a first priority on this planet.

With all these miseries and limitations still with us, it remains important, nevertheless, to lift our sights and to begin thinking of a world core curriculum.

I would organize such a curriculum, that is, the fundamental life-long objectives of education, around the following categories:

- Our Planetary Home and Place in the Universe
- Our Human Family
- Our Place in Time
- The Miracle of Individual Human Life.

Our place in the universe

The first major segment of the curriculum should deal with our prodigious knowledge of planet Earth, Humanity has been able, of late, to produce a magnificent picture of our planet and of its place In the Universe.

From the infinitely large to the infinitely small, everything fits today in a very simple and clear pattern. The list of subjects in this first segment should be as follows, as we use it in the United Nations

The infinitely large: the universe, the stars and outer-space; Our relations with the sun; The Earth's physics; The Earth's climate; The atmosphere; The biosphere; The seas and oceans; The polar caps; The Earth's land masses; The Earth's arable lands; The deserts; The mountains; The Earth's water; Planet life; Animal life; Human life; The Earth's energy; The Earth's crust and depths; The Earth's minerals; The infinitely small: microbiology, genetics, chemistry, and nuclear physics.

At each of these levels, humanity has made incredible progress and knows enormously. Astrophysicists tell us how stars and planets are born and die. We know the physics, atmospheres and even soils of other planets. Thanks to human made satellites we have a total view of our globe, of our atmosphere, of our seas and oceans and landmasses. Our knowledge reaches far down into the microbial, genetic and cellular worlds, into the realm of the atom and its particles and sub-particles. We have an incredible, beautiful, vast picture of our place in the universe. If a teacher wishes to give children a glimpse of the tremendous expanse of our knowledge, all he or she has to do is to have them visit on the same day, an astronomical observatory and an atomic bubble chamber.

All this Knowledge culminates in the United Nations or in one of its specialized agencies or world conferences. It is absolutely essential and in our enlightened self-interest to teach the children about this international cooperation so that they can see that humanity is beginning to work together and that there is good hope for a better world.

The framework allows us to present our planetary and universal knowledge to all people and particularly to children in a simple, beautiful way. We can now give children a breath-taking view of the beauty and teaming, endless richness of creation as has never been possible before. It should make them glad to be alive and to be human. It should also prepare them with excitement for the vast number of professions which have arisen from that tremendous knowledge and its related and consequent activities.

Every invention of ours can be used for good or bad: outer-space technology can be used for peace or for killer satellites, aviation for transportation or for dropping bombs, the atom for energy or for nuclear destruction, and so on. This gives the teachers of this world a marvellous opportunity to teach children and people a sense of participation and responsibility in the building and management of the Earth, of becoming artisans of the will of God and of our further human ascent. A new world ethics will thus evolve all along the above scale, and teachers will be able to prepare responsible citizens, workers, scientists, geneticists, physicists and scores of other professions, including a new one which is badly needed: good world managers and caretakers.

Our human family

There is a second segment on which humanity has also made tremendous progress of late: not only have we taken cognizance of our planet and of our place in the universe, but we have also taken stock of ourselves! This is one of momentous importance, for henceforth our story in the universe is basically that of ourselves and of our planet.

A proper global education or world curriculum would have been impossible thirty years ago because there were no world statistics. Today we know how many we are, where we live, how long we live, how many males, females, youths and elderly there are. This knowledge is being constantly improved and refined.

progress during the last decades, namely, our society and its human-made groupings. We are indeed a species that likes to congregate and subdivide itself into any conceivable group based on physical, geographic, qualitative or ideological aspects. Thus we enter the global age with 150 nations, 5,000 languages, scores of religions, and soon. Other entities are new and rapidly expanding in response to new global demands, namely world organizations, multinational corporations and transnational associations.

The first task of the United Nations and of educators is.. to build bridges, peace and harmony between these groups, to listen to their views and perceptions, to prevent them from blowing each other up and endangering the entire planet, to seek what each group has to contribute, to understand their legitimate concerns, cultures, values, denominators and objectives, and to grasp the meaning of the vast and complex functioning of life from the largest to the most minute, from the total society to the individual, from human unity to an endless more refined diversity.

It is a vast, unprecedented, mind-boggling challenge but it would help if our second great segment of the world core curriculum were organized as follows:

The Human Family; Quantitative Characteristics—The total world population and its changes; Human geography and migrations; Human longevity; Races; Sexes; Children; Youth; Adults; The elderly; The handicapped.

Qualitative Characteristics: Our levels of nutrition; Our levels of health; Our standards of life (rich and poor); Our skills and employment; Our levels of education; Our moral levels; Our spiritual levels.

Human Groupings The family; Human settlements; Professions; Corporations; Institutions; Nations; Federations, regional organizations; Religious; Multinational business; Transnational networks; World organizations.

What will be important in such a curriculum is the dynamic aspect of the relations between humanity and our planet; we now have good inventories; we know the elements of the great evolutionary problems confronting us, but we barely stand at the beginning of the planetary management phase of human history; demographic options, resources management, environmental protection, conflict resolution, the attainment of peace, justice and progress for all, the fulfillment of human life and happiness in space and in time. The U. N. and its specialized agencies offer the first examples of attempts at global management in all these fields and must therefore occupy a cardinal place in the world's curricula. The earlier we do this, the better it will be for our survival, fulfillment and happiness.

Again, what an immense contribution education can bring to a better understanding and teaching of the human family and its components. This is the vast field of social studies where the need for global education was first recognized.

In the same way as humanity is taking cognizance of its correct place in the universe, we are now also forced to look at the correct place in time or eternity.

When I joined the United Nations in 1948, there was very little time perspective. The word 'futurology' did not even exist. Now the U. N. and its agencies have a World Food Plan 2000, a World Literacy Plan 2000, a World Health Plan 2000, a World Employment Plan 2000, a World Industry Plan 2000, U. N. demographers provide us with population projections for the next hundred years and the World Meteorological Organization tries to forecast our climate for the next several hundred years.

Humanity is forced to expand its time dimension tremendously both into the past and into the future: we must preserve the natural elements inherited from the past and necessary for our life and survival (air, water, soils, energy, animals, fauna, flora, genetic materials). We also want to preserve our cultural heritage, the landmarks of our own evolution and history in order to see the unfolding and magnitude of our cosmic journey. At the same time, we must think and plan far ahead into the future in order to hand over to coming generations a well preserved and better managed planet in the universe. What does this mean for a world curriculum? It means that we must add a time dimension to the above layers, each of which has a past, a present and a future

Taken together, our present knowledge and responsibilities on our miraculous little planet are of awesome complexity and magnitude. It will take great vision and honesty to achieve the harmony and fulfillment of our journey in the universe and in time. We have come to the point when the prediction of Leibnitz is coming true. He had forecast that scientific enquiry would be so thrilling for humanity that for centuries we would be busy discovering, analyzing and piercing the surrounding reality, but that the time would come when we would have to look at the totality and become again what we were always meant to be: universal, total beings. The time for this vast synthesis, for a new encyclopedia of all our knowledge and the formulation of the agenda for our cosmic future, has struck. Like the human eye which receives millions of bits of information at every glance, we must see the total picture, meaning and beauty of our planet, of the universe and of our lives.

It is becoming increasingly clear that in this vast evolutionary quantum change the individual remains the alpha and the omega of all our efforts. Individual human life is the highest form of universal consciousness on our planet. Institutions, concepts, factories, systems, states, ideologies, theories have no consciousness. They are all servants, instruments, means for better lives and the increase of individual human consciousness. We are faced today with the full-fledged centrality, dignity, miracle, sanctity of divinity of individual human life, irrespective of race, sex, status, age, nation, physical or mental capacity.

Education of the newcomers is basically the teaching of the miracle of life, the art of living and of human fulfillment within our immense knowledge of space and time. It is to make each child feel like a king or queen in the universe, an expanded being aggrandized by the vastness of our knowledge which now reaches far into the infinitely large and the infinitely small and from

transformed species whose eyesight, hearing, hands, legs and brain have, been multiplied a thousand times by telescopes, microscopes, radio, machines, means of transportation and computers. The objective should be to make us exude a resplendent joy of living, of being witness to the beauty and majesty of Creation and of our capacities. Knowledge, peace, happiness, goodness and fully conscious, meaningful, responsible lives- these must be the objectives of education.

And here I would complete my core curriculum for the individual with the four segments so dear to the former UN Secretary-General U Thant who was a teacher.

- good Physical lives:

knowledge and care of the body teaching to see, to hear, to observe, to create, to do, to use well all our senses and physical capacities

- good mental lives

knowledge
teaching to question, to think, to analyze, to synthesize, to conclude, to communicate
teaching to focus from the infinitely large to the infinitely small, from the distant past to the present and the future

- good moral lives:

teaching to love, teaching truth, understanding, humility, liberty, reverence for life, compassion, altruism

- good spiritual lives

spiritual exercises of interiority, meditation, prayer and communion with the universe and eternity or God

I would like to see this simple sentence by Norman Cousins displayed in all classrooms of this planet:

THE TRAGEDY OF LIFE IS NOT DEATH, BUT WHAT WE LET DIE INSIDE US WHILE WE LIVE

An immense task and responsibility thus behoves all teachers and educators of this planet: it is no less than to contribute to the survival and good management of our planetary home and species, to our further common ascent into a universal, interdependent, peaceful civilization, while ensuring the knowledge, skills and fulfillment of the flow of humans going through the Earth's schools. The pressures for a proper universal, global education are being felt everywhere,

is a potent, invaluable trend of cardinal importance to our survival and future evolution. A world core curriculum might seem utopian today. By the end of the year 2000 it will be a down-to-earth, daily reality in all the schools of the world.

Developing the Inner Vision

Whether we are actively working in the world or have withdrawn from it, the most important consideration is not the work that we do or not do, but how effectively we have been able to uproot and destroy the Vasanas (deep-seated tendencies) which lie hidden in our heart. The removal of these impurities, which have encased themselves so deeply, is the principal objective of all Sadhana, or spiritual practice. This is also the goal of all Yoga, namely, to cleanse ourselves of all trace of Raga and Dwesha, the twin evils of attachment and hatred, which have harboured themselves inside us.

The Gita has shown that if we can root out the entrenched tendencies that cling to our heart, we are free to perform any action without concern for the results. From that point on, we will not be bound by any Karma we become engaged in; in other words, we will be completely freed from the effects of our actions. People who do not understand this truth and end up renouncing all outside activities, become mired in sloth and idleness. But the Gita has repeatedly warned us that there is no room at all for idleness in the world of the Spirit. What the Gita teaches is Anaasakti Yoga, the Yoga of disinterestedness or impersonal action; in which we remain totally indifferent to any personal interest in the work that we do and in the results that accrue from it. It means working with full concentration to the limits of our capacity for excellence, but dedicating all our actions to the service of God and remaining established in God-consciousness.

Karma yoga

Anaasakti Yoga goes even beyond the practice of Nishkama Karma which has been emphasized in the second chapter of the Gita. Nishkama Karma is the stage in which all our actions are performed without desiring or expecting any fruits from our labours. No person will be able to reach the stage of Nishkama Karma as long as his Vasanas, which have arisen from past actions, are impediments to spiritual progress. A person must first remove the bad qualities which are associated with bad actions, by replacing them with good qualities which are associated with good actions. Then when he is firmly established in, the stage of selfless service, wherein he performs only good actions, he can go on to the stage of Nishkama Karma, where he renounces the fruits of all his actions. From there he will rise to the stage of Anaasakti Yoga.

The Gita proclaims that only through good deeds, through Sat Karma, can the bad tendencies be removed and our hearts purified. But it goes further. It asserts that true purity of the heart can be achieved only by dedicating all our actions to the Lord. For example, when food is eaten after having been cooked and prepared in a number of different ways, it is still just ordinary food, and we are subject to the good or bad effects of eating that food. However, if this food before being

gift of the Lord. By the same token, all the many activities performed by us during the day fall into the category of ordinary Karma. But when we perform these same actions, even if they are simple acts, with the intention of making them an offering to God, devoting their results not to our own pleasure but the pleasure of the Lord, then they become Karma Yoga as well as a Yajna, a holy sacrifice. It is only through such Karma Yoga that we will be able to rid ourselves of all evil tendencies and make our hearts pure.

Pure and sacred

What should be the qualities of the actions we offer at the Lotus Feet of the Lord? Before we offer anything to the Lord we must make sure that it is pure, befitting and sacred. Then it will, be a worthy offering to the Lord. For example, if we want to offer a rose to the Lord, we first select a beautiful, fragrant bloom. Then we remove the insects from the flower. Next we remove the thorns and any imperfect leaves from the stem, and in a number of other ways we make our offering as beautiful and pure as possible. Every action we perform should be like this. Our actions must be saturated with the fragrance of love and sacredness and must be good and pure. This is the true Yoga of Action as laid down in the Gita.

It is in the field of action, or Karma, that a man most patently reveals his character and the type of man he is. If we want to ascertain whether a particular person is predominantly Satwic, Rajasic or Tamasic in nature, we need only to observe his actions; they will unmistakably reveal his nature.

The Gita has pointed out the type of actions that should be performed in daily life. The Gita proclaims that the secret of human life is to recognize and follow the path of Dharma, which means engaging ourselves in selfless and sacred actions that promote the welfare of our fellowmen. Only then can our actions be considered Satwic in nature. Once they become Satwic then they may be classified as Nishkama Karma. No ordinary person will be able to perform actions completely without desire. We will have to orient our actions and our desires towards the purpose of seeking and experiencing God. When that sacred orientation becomes the basis of all our activities, then such Karma belongs to the Yoga of Anaasakti. That is the highest level of action and leads us straight on the path to our goal. But involved herein will be the spell of Maya. There are two powerful Shaktis which make up Maya; one is Avarana and the other is Vikshepa. There is no particular form and shape for these two.

Two aspects of maya

Avarana refers to that which veils or covers. How does it cover? If it does not have form itself, by what means does it cover? How can it be removed? These questions cannot be easily answered. Maya is mysterious and inexplicable.

In what circumstances does this delusion exert its influence on us? It is during twilight or in the dark that we imagine we see a snake when there is only a rope there. It is through darkness that the delusion comes and envelops us. In truth, no snake has covered the rope, but the delusion beclouds the mind of man and covers his clear perception. This delusion is Maya. When you turn

delusion disappears and the real object is seen. That which exists will always exist; it will never cease to exist. It remains forever unchanged. There cannot even be the slightest variation in its existence. It is only the delusion covering it which comes and goes. The form that this delusion takes in the mind is Vikshepa, the second powerful Shakti of Maya. Vikshepa is the projection that is superimposed on the unchanging basis in this case the projection was the snake. Another time it will be something else.

Moods, pains, pleasures all come and go. They are something like relatives that come to visit us, but they do not stay permanently. In the same way, this Maya comes and goes as a delusion for human beings. The delusion in our mind which covers the rope and hides it from view is Avarana, the veiling power. The illusion which has been projected by our mind on to the rope is Vikshepa; the projecting power. With the help of the light we see the rope as rope, and the snake vanishes. So these two aspects of Maya have come in the darkness anti have disappeared in the light. Maya has no beginning. But it can permanently come to an end. When the light of wisdom shines on it, Maya will finally disappear; then the One Unchanging Reality will stand revealed. By teaching this great wisdom to Arjuna, Krishna was able to free him from delusion and make him shine with self-effulgence.

Need for inner vision

Then as now, we are developing only superficial understanding and outer, vision. But it is the inner vision that is important; it alone is true and sacred. We lose sight of the One Reality, of our own Truth, because we pay attention only to the impermanent outer vision and forget completely the permanent inner vision. God's mission is to restore this sacred inner vision. This is what He does when He comes as Avatar.

Krishna urged Arjuna to free himself from the attachments and illusions that were confounding him. Krishna said, "Arjuna, you yourself must purify your heart and remove the veil of ignorance that is beclouding you. Take to the path of righteous action, work for the welfare of the world and dedicate your every act to Me, who am your very Self, residing in your heart." There is no royal road for human life other than through Karma Yoga, through the path of action. We will be able to enter into Bhakti Yoga, the path of devotion, only after we have laid a firm foundation through good actions. And only after we have purified our feelings and developed our devotion will we be able to enter into the area of Wisdom and proceed on the highest path of Jnana Yoga.

Anaasakti yoga

Using our intellect to plan out an action whose fruits would benefit someone else, as is the case in the action of an old man who plants a tree whose fruits will be enjoyed by future generations, can be called Buddhi Yoga. In Buddhi Yoga we enquire into the consequences of our actions, and thereby base our actions on the reasoning power of our intellect. Intellect goes far beyond the narrow selfish considerations of the lower mind and the senses. But even here there is still a tinge of selfishness. When we are completely free from all selfishness, totally indifferent to the results acting effectively with full concentration, but without any attachment

superior to Buddhi Yoga. Anaasakti Yoga is not easily accessible to ordinary people. But that does not mean that we should give up trying to attain it. With wholehearted effort and God's Grace, seemingly impossible things can be achieved. If we persist in our efforts then with practice we will be able to reach this high level of Anaasakti Yoga in all our activities.

To succeed in this, the inner vision must be developed. Constantly reflecting on the Divinity that is everywhere is the best way to develop the inner vision that will establish us in Anaasakti Yoga. But inner vision is very rare among men; even the greatest Pundits and scholars are steeped only in the outer vision. Here is a story that illustrates this.

Ashtavakra and the pundits

Once upon a time, King Janaka called an assembly of great scholars. Famous Pundits and logicians came from all over the realm. The assembly was composed of such giants that there was no room at all for ordinary people to enter in. The daily meetings were presided over by King Janaka himself, and of the highly select group in attendance, only the most outstanding and accomplished were given an opportunity to speak and present their views. It was into this magnificent and august assembly that Ashtavakra, young in age, devoid of formal scholarship and twisted in physical form, sought to gain admission. But who would permit Ashtavakra to enter? He did not have any credentials or any recommendation whatsoever. The only help he had was his deep faith in God.

Whoever has an abiding faith in God will not be put to any great difficulties. Temporarily there may be some obstacles, but in the end he is sure to meet with success. For three days Ashtavakra waited at the gate of King Janaka's palace. While waiting, Ashtavakra observed all the world-famous scholars who were coming to attend the meeting. Ashtavakra was not prepared to give up his resolution to join the assembly and participate in its deliberations. He waited at the gate patiently day after day. There was one observant and sympathetic old scholar who noticed Ashtavakra standing by that gate, whenever he entered and exited through it, morning and evening. The kindly old scholar informed King Janaka that there was a young boy standing outside waiting for some days to enter the assembly, although he did not have any of the usual qualifications necessary for being inside.

King Janaka directed his attendants to find the boy and bring him into the assembly hall. Shortly after King Janaka had taken his seat, and the meeting began in the solemn and sacred atmosphere befitting such an august assembly, Ashtavakra entered the hall. The moment they saw this young boy with such crooked form come to take part in the assembly, most of the great scholars who had gathered there began to laugh. King Janaka, who was keenly observing Ashtavakra as he entered, did not laugh. Ashtavakra carefully looked around the hall, and then quite inexplicably started laughing even louder than the scholars who were seated there. This loud burst of laughter from Ashtavakra was quite inadmissible and greatly surprised the scholars; it became a real problem for them. "Why should this uncouth stripling be laughing at us?" they thought. "There certainly is reason enough for our laughter, considering how funny he looks, but there is nothing at all strange about us, so what conceivable reason does he have for all this

impertinence.

"Charmakaaras"

The assembled scholars were eagerly waiting to find out why this strange looking young person who had just come in, was laughing so loudly. One of the scholars was bold enough to speak to Ashtavakra. He asked, "O stranger, who are you? We do not know you. When we looked at you as you came in, your form made us laugh. In response to our laughter you are laughing even more loudly. What is the reason for this? What strikes you so funny about all the renowned scholars seated here that you have not even for a moment stopped laughing." Ashtavakra replied, "Well, Sir, I entered this gathering thinking it to be a sacred assembly convened by the famous Emperor Janaka to discuss the holy scriptures. If only I had known what kind of people were attending this assembly, I would not have bothered to come. I waited patiently for many days and then entered this hall thinking that the greatest living scholars would be assembled here. I looked forward to being in the company of such sacred souls. But, alas, I find nothing but cobblers here, only Charmakaaras, shoemakers, who stitch chappals and work with leather."

When they heard this, all the scholars became furious, feeling greatly insulted by Ashtavakra for using such an abusive word. But Ashtavakra continued in the same vein, "Charmakasra is the proper word to describe you. Only cobblers, only people who work with hides and skins will think about the worth of a particular skin; others will not be bothered about it. All of you are laughing at my skin and have obviously decided that it is not worth much, but not even one of you has made any effort to know about my scholarship. Pundits should have the capacity to look inward. but you only seem to care about the outer covering. If you have not developed your inner vision but are only concerned with the superficial outer vision, then you cannot be considered scholars at all. Then you are only Charmakaaras, shoemakers, cobblers, specialists in hides." Thus spoke Ashtavakra. The scholars hung their heads in shame. King Janaka, who understood very well what Ashtavakra was saying, invited him to take a seat in that assembly, and subsequently bestowed numerous honours upon him.

As was the case then, so is the case now throughout the world. However great we may be, we have developed only the external vision. We do not bother to cultivate the inner vision. When we examine a person we pay attention only to his physical features, his wealth, his status, his education and degrees, and so on. On the other hand when God examines a person, He looks at the purity of his heart, He pays attention to the peace that is within him. It is such inner vision that we must develop.

Whatever be the circumstances we confront, we should not get excited or agitated. We should allow time for the nobler feelings to well up from inside us and manifest themselves. By practising patience and forbearance we will be able to acquire all the other important spiritual qualities, such as mind control, faith, renunciation, endurance and concentration. This will bring a state of inner purity and fill us with abiding peace.

and out. Therefore, both the inner and the outer, the entire place where the Lord is to be found, must be purified and sanctified. Then the indwelling God will protect you wherever you go.

—*From Bhagavan's Discourse on the Gita, delivered of the Prasanthi Mandir*

Education for the New Age

—*Sir George Trevelyan*

What are we educating the young for? Is it just to get qualification to hold down a job? But the jobs may not be there, when they want them. And society itself may have totally changed in coming years. And even the earth may have moved into major changes, as we all realize. When society seemed secure and settled, it was valid enough to train people on a set curriculum of things they ought to know. Now it is different, for there are all the signs of *breakthrough*. The young people of this generation are going to have to shoulder the greatest responsibility ever—that of bringing into birth a New Age. There never was such a generation in which to be alive! These young folk we are teaching need a very special kind of help and encouragement, for some are bewildered and frightened, while some great and clear souls among them have the intuition that they are really on earth for some great purpose.

Somehow we have got to teach them how to move courageously and creatively through change, into situations that may have no human precedent and which we cannot now foresee or even conceive. How do you train for what you don't know? That's our challenge as teachers.

Vision of hope

First we must establish the vision of hope in our age of turmoil. This comes from grasping a world-view called now the *Holistic world picture*. Once understood, this lifts us above the doom and disaster thinking, for we see that cataclysm, in whatever form, is an aspect of a great cleansing of our planet by energies and powers out of the high intelligence of the living universe. Here is the great turnabout in the very centre of our consciousness that has happened in this last generation. 'Holism' thus spelt, implies that the whole is Holy. We recover in our materialistic age the great vision held and taught in the mystery temples of the ancient world and of course in the Orient—that the Universe is Mind, not mechanism: that the human being is in essence a spiritual droplet of divinity housed in a body, and as such the 'I' in us is immortal and imperishable. What a concept in our death-ridden culture, when 80% of every news on radio or television is about death, murder and violence! We grasp through the holistic picture, that life in all its diversity is a great Oneness, and that humanity is integrally part of living nature. We are indeed that point where Nature becomes conscious of itself. The Earth, we see, is truly a living sentient creature, a great being with, in a true sense, its own breathing and bloodstream, gland and intelligence.

The turning point

Humanity has reached an evolutionary turning point. We have in the last three centuries plunged so deep into matter and the sense world that we have totally lost the spiritual worlds. This is not because the kingdoms of the angels and the devas and nature spirits are not there, but because, in the development of our analysing intellects, we have allowed the subtler, more feminine organs of perception to atrophy and go dormant. It is these intuitive faculties that can apprehend the living whole, and they must be re-awakened. That will be a major aspect of the new education.

Now the implication of all this is that the living Earth may literally be shrugging parasite man off its shoulders as an intolerable irritant and our mal-thinking and greedy living may be the direct cause, on a deeper level, of the changes now threatened in earth structure and climate. But the positive picture is that out of the living universe a cleansing operation has been released.

The energy of love

The cleansing of the planet is being brought about by the release of an *energy* which harmonizes life on all levels. This must be called Love, a cosmic power which, to those who are concerned with violence, aggression, getting for self, hate and war, will seem like the Angel of Death riding by. But to those who are attuned to the Light and have grasped the holistic picture, it will be a power of joy, filling the soul, and lifting the heart. It is indeed an energy of the highest spiritual frequency, which will actually raise the vibratory rate in the material world. Those human beings attuned to it will then approach fourth dimensional vision. Those who resolutely and of their own choice reject it, will not rise. We learn to see that humanity itself is one great living organism and we are each cells in that body. Life is a great Oneness. In a deeper sense we hurt ourselves when we hurt others. Look at what we are doing to the animals in torturing them with vivisection, factory farming and blood sports. We drag down and debase our humanity so long as we go on with these barbaric practices.

The new vision inevitably results in change in people. This holistic vision is not just theoretical academic stuff. These are Living Ideas, which are really living beings, strands of the ocean of God thought. Therefore, once we accept them, we shall change. We are stewards of this wonderful web of life. We shall develop the more feminine sensitive faculties protective of life, with a new caring, tenderness, co-operation and love for all life, for nothing is separated from the Whole. We are overcoming the age of separation and aloneness.

The golden rule

Thus directly following on the holistic worldview emerges the *alternative life style*, a form of living in service of Gaia, the Living Earth. We become earth-stewards. All over the country networks of centres and groups are emerging, consciously serving the Whole in growing food organically, alternative technology, conservation, tree planting, healing, meditation, study of the spiritual world-view, new community living and survival techniques. And behind all this is the conscious impulse to apply humanity's Golden Rule:

This maxim is laid down in *every* religion in almost identical words. And how little it has been followed!

Now the very survival of our race and species turns upon our taking a great step in consciousness and applying this maxim in our lives. Here is a central clue for education into the unknown. It isn't somebody's thought-out plan. It is a recognition of a wondrous event, the flooding of consciousness with redemptive love out of the dynamic universe, approaching us as we rise to it. Joy floods with the love. If it fills our heart, we shall be guided safely through turmoil and tribulation.

The way to change

The great planetary problems facing us are virtually unsolvable if we do not take into account the implications of holistic thinking. It is a paradox that this Oneness Vision does reach right down into the most practical problems and offers unexpected solutions. Very many people now realise that the way to start changing society is to change ourselves. We are each responsible for this tiny bit of the universe. It is even said that evolution is taking a new step. The evolutionary drive now turns inwards into the individual human being, who can begin consciously shaping the future by his or her own choice. We may grasp that, in co-operation with the intelligence of the living whole, the human potential is virtually unlimited. The task of the teacher is to guide the pupil into an expanding of consciousness. We become spacemen in a double sense. We are physically shooting our rockets out into space. But also we learn that we need not remain encapsulated in self and the sense world, but can, in imagination and intensified thinking, reach out into the great ocean of Mind. The gateway of entrance is within ourselves and, passing through it, consciousness can expand indefinitely. We lift beyond time and matter into the widths of space, which the soul will enter after death and which we can begin consciously to explore now. Grasp this concept that the human potential is virtually unlimited.

Expanding consciousness

One of the most, notable factors is the development of the adventure sports. The frontiers of achievement in all the sports are being extended even further. Marvellous things are being done, not only in athletics and control of body skills, but in actual exploration of the elements of air, earth and water. You don't need any mystique to enjoy mountains, seas and rivers, but consider this in the light of the concept that the Earth is a Living Creature of which we are the organ of consciousness. Then you see that Earth is awakening to herself as we climb mountains, explore caves, dive, canoe and surf ride, glide or go ballooning. We are really consciously exploring the elements. If once you see this, it adds profoundly to the significance of the adventure sports. Nature herself, through us, is becoming conscious of herself. Those who go in for meditation are creating a stilled centre in which higher consciousness can operate. If then we consciously go in for these sports, we are using the divine temple of the body as a vehicle for expanded consciousness and awakening the Earth itself.

nature through the rituals of pottery, weaving, woodwork, metal work All aspects of the alternative life-style are concerned with conscious stewardship of Mother Earth, to redeem the damage we have done. Here is a huge and endless field for education and training in real competence to cope and create anew.

The human potential

The exploration of human potential becomes the great adventure as we bring to birth a society based on co-operation and caring. Science fiction has got us, used to the concept of levels of intelligence far beyond our earth-bound consciousness. We are really approaching such worlds, but there is much evidence to suggest that the higher intelligence is beneficent and friendly and really concerned with the redeeming of this lovely planet. We have to be ready to move into amazing new worlds. This implies an education of a very different sort, in which throughout our lives we help each other to develop consciousness, so that there can be creative action in moving into new states of awareness, crossing new frontiers of knowledge. The whole of eternity is ours, since we are immortal beings!

In this sense adult education will never cease. 'Unemployment' can increasingly be transformed into opportunity. Indeed, what is called the "transformational journey" becomes one of the chief tasks for the human being.

Of course this is idealistic. And why not?

In these dark and doom-filled days it implies a supreme hope of passing through into anew dawn, in which we have a real part to play. We'll close by quoting a quatrain by James Elroy Flecker:

"Awake, awake, the world is young
For all its weary years of thought:
The starkest fights must still be fought,
The most surprising songs be sung."

Let's sing together!

(From EHV Journal No. 1)

Living in Love

—R. S., Honolulu

To evolve towards the total and permanent joy of Sat-Chit-Ananda we all yearn for, we must work our way through the bonds of the tamasic and Rajasic gunas until, eventually, our entire character is Satwic.

How can we accomplish this? And how can we achieve mental, physical and spiritual strength? By *constant watchfulness*: by *loving, gentle but firm discipline*. Steady, constant discipline in gradually simplifying and beautifying our lives with the constant living of Swami's precepts with which, by His Grace, we have chosen to govern our lives.

First and foremost, we are exhorted to "*Live in Love*." When someone irritates or annoys us, let us remember that we wouldn't even notice his behaviour if we didn't still have the possibility of the same behaviour within us. Let us also remember that, if with his background we are "in his shoes" we would behave exactly the same way. Or worse.

We can't force the petals of a flower to open; the blooming will take place in Gods time. But we can help the flowering of others, even if we are unable to see it in our time or at our desired pace, by *total* forgiveness of so-called hurts, from whomever we have received them.

The writer was once a volunteer attendant in a state hospital, a member of a service committee. One day she was assigned the errand of picking up a patient and escorting her to the religious service of her chosen faith. Unexpectedly, this assignment led her to pick up a patient from the violent ward. While she was waiting for the patient to get ready, suddenly another patient came up to her and began describing in vile and vivid terms just how she was going to murder the volunteer. The volunteer began to tremble with fear. Just then another patient came up to her and requested help with tying her belt. As soon as the attendant's attention was withdrawn from the graphic, loud mouthed patient, there was a sudden silence. The volunteer cast a surreptitious glance at the threatening patient. It was found that the withdrawal of attention had caused the would-be "killer" to shrink away and disappear.

So it is with our bad thoughts, including any unforgiving ones! As soon as, by the Grace of Swami, we are helped to clean our hearts, we will find there is nothing to fear!

Any system of education that does not help to discriminate, between right and wrong, that does not instill the fear of sin and the love of God, train you in the codes of humility and reverence, widen the horizon of your wonder, encourage you to worshipfully serve your parents, and inspire you to dedicate your skills and attainments to the progress of your family, village, community, country, language and nation, stands condemned. The corruption and cruelty that are rampant in this country can be traced to this grave defect. Selfishness, greed, pomp and injustice are prevalent in every field. The nation has no peace and the sense of security is feeble. As science develops and technology advances, humility and mutual love should also develop to the same extent, otherwise man becomes a menace to man. Human sensitivity must be so high that no one can tolerate the misery of others. But when one is not moved by the misery of even one's own parents, how can this trait be cultivated?

—Baba

Look Not Back in Anger

Look not back in anger with hostile, bitter mind
Upon the pain, the tears and injustice so unkind.
The knocks, the wounds, the agony, the slamming of a door
That left us cold and desolate alone, unloved once more.

Remember the joy of a golden morn after a night of pain;
The sweetness of the Earth and Sky after the summer rain.
The clear pure song of the skylark as he soars to the heavens above;
The innocent trust of a baby in his mother's tender love.

Rejoice at the pain and the sorrow, give thanks for the tears and the strife.
These are but tests on the Pathway that leads to the Higher Life.
For what help are we to another's grief if sorrow we have not known?
What comfort in desolation if we've never been left alone?

To the agony of the sufferer, if our life is free from pain?
If we've never learned from the Truth within to know life is never in vain?
So, look not back in anger, but forward with Joy and Love,
Knowing that life's little trials are but God's Gifts from above.

For as we learn to accept them, with calm and tranquil mind,
We know that the Love of Our Father is infinitely kind.

—*M. Yolande Valentine*

Samanvaya and Samarasa

The mind of man, like the waxing moon which grows to fullness and shines brightly, has the capacity to grow and expand till he becomes one with the Divine. But this does not happen today because men's minds are filled with narrow ideas and petty differences which limit their sympathies and aspirations.

Inherently men are large-hearted and they should give no room for the sense of 'mine' and 'chine'. Everyone should cultivate pure selfless love and largeness of heart. Interlopers should not be allowed to get entrenched in the mind and control it. It is like allowing a gang of thieves to enter your house and make themselves the masters. The mind should be the master and not the slave of the senses. If the senses are allowed to hold sway, man becomes their servant and not

should be kept in check and not allowed to dominate the mind.

The triple bondages

Man is subject to three kinds of bondages in life: bondages derived from the past, those arising in the present and those created for the future. There is a story to illustrate the first kind of bondage. There was once a man who was keeping a cow to earn income for supporting his family. In course of time, all his kith and kin passed away and the cow also died. He began to think what for he had striven all these years and he went to a guru to seek his advice on his predicament. The guru asked him whether he had done any spiritual sadhana in his life. The man replied that he had done no sadhana and that whenever he sat for meditation the image of the cow, on which he had lavished great affection, appeared before him. The guru said that this was because of his intense attachment to the cow. The guru advised him to look upon the cow as a manifestation of the Divine and to regard it as an expression of "Sat -Chit-Ananda" (Being-Awareness- Bliss)—the triune nature of the Divine. He told the man that the three qualities- Asti, Bhaati, Priyam (existence, brilliance and utility)—are qualities common to all things, while names and forms are varied. When names and forms are ignored, one can perceive the divine nature of everything. "Meditate on the divine essence of everything" advised the guru. Following his advice, the man meditated on "Sat-Chit-Ananda" and in due course merged in the Divine. There is no point in dwelling on the past and gloating or grieving over what is dead and gone. It is futile to think about past successes or failures, pleasures or pains. The past should not become an incubus on the present.

As regards the present, one should act on the principle that he should conduct himself towards others in the manner he would like them to behave towards him. If he desires that others should respect him or honour him, he should behave likewise towards others. You cannot expect courtesy or regard from others if you don't show courtesy or regard to others. There can be no one-way traffic in life.

Persons with a narrow, self-centred outlook are prone to express doubts about the powers of the Divine. They may ask how Siva, covered with ashes and living in the burial ground, can come to the rescue of the needy, and doubt how Vishnu, reclining on the bed of a serpent on the ocean and remote from the world, can protect mankind in any way. It is such perverted notions that lead men astray in the present. To correct such tendencies one should listen to sacred sayings, ruminates over them and lead a righteous and godly life. To be concerned only about one's own happiness or comfort and be indifferent to the happiness and needs of others is a form of selfishness which creates bondages in the present.

Bondages for the future are created by your actions in the present. When you entertain bad thoughts and indulge in wrong actions, they lead to bad consequences in the future. Peace of mind is lost and one is caught up in perpetual worry. The way out of this vicious circle is to turn the mind towards God and refrain from causing harm to others. Contemplation of God and leading a godly life will confer peace and bliss that is beyond measure.

When a person is ill, the physician prescribes not only medicine for the disease but also a dietary regimen to be observed strictly. Likewise, for the diseases arising from mundane attachments, in addition to the prescribed drugs—the Karma, Jnana, Bhakti and Yoga margas—qualities such as forbearance, calmness, fortitude, love and compassion have to be cultivated as dietary regimen. Without these qualities, the spiritual practices alone will be of little avail. When the two are combined, like the positive and negative ends in an electric cell, the disease gets cured. One who is engaged in the battle of life, needs the armour of spirituality. With it, he can face any situation any where. If instead of wearing the spiritual armour, people are enveloped in ignorance, they will be haunted by fear and anxiety. As long as rice is covered by husk, it cannot be consumed. Like wise, man cannot experience rest bliss until he gets rid of the cloak of ignorance. He must welcome whatever happens as good for him. He must develop the quality of forbearance. Through forbearance and sadhana, gradually the shackles resulting from past actions must be broken. The tendency to cavil at the ways of the Divine will gradually wither away. One will begin to appreciate the lessons to be learnt from every day-today experience. For instance, when a beggar comes to your house and says, "Please give me food," you should not turn him away as a mere beggar, but regard him as a messenger of God. When he is begging for food, he is indirectly conveying a message: "I am today begging for food because in my previous birth I did not offer food to those who begged for it. Please see that by turning me away without food, a similar fate does not overtake you in your next life." You must go to the help of others to the extent of your means.

Harmony and tolerance

Today such a spirit of magnanimity is lacking. It is not realised that without largeness of heart and generosity of spirit, all scholarship and spiritual effort are of no use. That is why the Upanishads declare: "Immortality can be attained only by renunciation and sacrifice and not by wealth, progeny or religious rites." The mere acquisition of book-lore will not lead to self-realisation. Along with studies, one must practise tolerance, equanimity and serenity. These qualities cannot be got through books or teachers. They can be got only through persistent enquiry and discrimination. It would be desirable if this quest is made part of a collective effort instead of being purely an individual pursuit. The lone individual does not constitute a community. If his aspirations are self-centred, they will do no good to society. Hence one should develop those sacred qualities which will promote the well-being of society. The spirit of harmony and a sense of respect for all points of view ("samanvaya" and "samarasa") are essential for accomplishing anything good in life.

While man's physical body is composed of the five basic elements (earth, water, fire, air and ether), his subtle body has five sheaths (pancha kosas) one within the other. The first of them is the Annamaya kosa (the sheath of food or matter). Within it is the Pranamaya kosa (the sheath of life or breath). Within it is the Manomaya kosa (the mental sheath). Within that is the Prajnanamaya kosa (the sheath of Higher Wisdom). The last sheath is the Anandamaya kosa (the sheath of Bliss). Starting with food man must reach the destination of Bliss. The spiritual journey is from "I" to "We". Therein lies fulfillment—the realisation of the One in the many.

You need the inner vision of the Spirit to see God. The physical eye can see only the physical world. Through a process of enquiry, you have to realise the omnipresence of the Creator who permeates and sustains the cosmos. Wrapped up in his ego, man pursues the will-o-the-wisp of wealth, power, position and strength. All these are transient. Man has to overcome the eight categories of pride—pride of physical prowess, material wealth, scholarship, beauty, power and others. God's grace is needed to conquer these evil traits because they have such a powerful holdover on man. When you wish to overcome a powerful enemy, you have to get the help of someone more powerful than your enemy. Sugriva had to seek the friendship of Sri Rama to overcome Vali after convincing himself of the superior powers of Rama. Likewise, to overcome the power of Maya (the delusion which subjects man to the physical and the sensuous), man has to seek the grace of the Divine. Only the Divine (Madhava) is more powerful than Maya. By surrendering to the Divine and developing a heart filled with devotion and love, one can face all the challenges of life.

—*From Bhagavan's discourse at "Trayee Brindavan" on 1-5-1987*

A Time to Pray

Wintertime is ended, Summer now is nigh,
Time for all to look around—a time to wonder WHY.
Why all the Earth is as it is, why people are so sad,
Why pain and misery abound—we can't be all that bad.

But can we? Let us think awhile. Have we done all we can
To feed the hungry, clothe the poor, uplift the stumbling man?
A little niggles prick us there. Well, have we? Think again.
What *have* we done to ease the course of hunger, cold and pain?

What's that you say? They don't live here? They live across the sea?
Hundreds of miles divide them from the likes of you and me?
Your Heavenly Father sends his love, and fills you with his grace,
Does *He* consider just how far it is from place to place?

Let this time be your thinking time and set your conscience clear,
Share your thoughts, and say a prayer for those who are not near,
That man may so be guided to share the worldly wealth,
To feed the starving masses, and bring them back to health.

Your prayers will all be answered, if you will do your part,

So send out now your prayers for PEACE
Send out your thoughts that wars may cease!

—*D.B.*

STUDENTS' CORNER:

I Need the Lord of Lords

Many ask, "Is He Lord"! I say,
"He is Lord of Lords."

When I started to explore the world,
My parents said: "He is your world."

On many occasions I was in the devil's jaw
But He took me out of that evil maw.

Since I am a man, I need something,
But I will never ask to be a king.

I need neither plates of gold,
Nor anything that's bought or sold.

I need His friendship,
To alleviate my hardship!

I need Him to be my Teacher
As well as my divine Preacher.

I will be His honest slave,
Till I go down to my grave.

—*R. Yashwanth, Madras*

Man always craves for bliss. The first requisite for achieving Brahmananda (Supreme Bliss) is a pure heart. Man's heart, which should be white like milk in its purity, is today filled with bad thoughts and feelings. Spiritual sadhana begins with the purification of the heart and transforming it into an ocean of milk. When the heart is filled with satwic qualities, it becomes like a milky ocean. Only then does it become a worthy dwelling for the Lord (Vishnu) whose abode is described as Ksheerasagara (the Ocean of Milk).

By yielding to Tamasic and Rajasic impulses, man today has turned his heart into an ocean of salt (Kshaarasagara). In the saltish ocean, we have sharks and whales. Likewise, in the heart of the evil minded, bad qualities like lust, anger, greed and envy flourish. It is folly to give room for such evil forces. They must be removed totally so that the Lord may find His rightful place in a heart that is pure and holy, filled with Satwic qualities. Each one should perpetually examine whether good thoughts and impulses are growing in his heart or whether bad thoughts are getting rooted. While doing daily worship, one should invoke the presence of various deities through appropriate mantras. Simultaneously, one should call upon the demoniac forces to quit the place.

Internal purity

Both inner and outer purity are essential for man's physical and mental health. Most persons are concerned only about external physical cleanliness. People tend to ignore inner cleanliness in the belief that the heart and mind are not visible to others. But they should realise that the physical body is made up of the five elements and will return to the dust sometime or other. It is the state of the Spirit that is important. Even the body should be regarded as the abode of the Spirit and cared for as such.

To ensure perfect health, it is essential to get rid of internal impurities and take in only wholesome food. Equally for preserving mental health, similar twofold action is necessary. The ills that afflict the mind have to be got rid of by eliminating bad thoughts and purifying the mind.

Actions and results

Man's destiny is determined by his actions. Through righteous actions, the mind is purified and a pure mind results in the awakening of wisdom (jnana). When you offer worship to God in the morning, you must offer your obeisance to whatever work you propose to do. You must pray to the presiding deity of Karma: "Let me do today only pure, purposeful and helpful actions."

The circumstances of one's birth are the results of past actions. Action (Karma), birth (Janma), righteousness (Dharma) and the mystery of life (Marma) are all connected with Brahman. They are like the four walls of a building. The first wall is Karma (action). One should not act as his fancies dictate. Before doing anything, one should consider whether it is proper or improper. Nothing should be done in haste on the impulse of the moment. Only then will one's actions be Satwic and free from Rajasic and Tamasic stains.

to trials like these?" The truth is the Lord neither punishes nor rewards anyone. The devotee has only to do his duty and leave the results to God. If the actions are good, the fruits will also be good. If the actions are bad, the results will be equally bad. Hence, without examining the nature of one's actions, there is no meaning in blaming God for what one experiences.

One devotee is said to have exclaimed: "Oh Lord! Among the millions of beings on earth, how will your eyes fall on me? You are not looking at me at all. Won't you see me?" The devotee heard a voice saying: "Oh devotee! You are immersed in so many activities that you have hardly set your eyes upon Me. You have hardly devoted any thought to Me. Who, then, has forgotten whom? Is it you or me?" People are involved in mundane concerns and are deeply immersed in worldly activities. All their thoughts relate to these actions. They seldom think of God. They worry about some relation or friend in some distant corner of the world, but cannot think of God who is so near to them. And when they are in trouble, they wail: "Oh Lord, hast thou forgotten me?"

It is only when you recognise your own faults that you can begin to understand the ways of the Divine. What we witness today is the tendency to forget one's own faults and go about blaming God for one's sufferings. Every action, however small or trivial, has its reaction. Nothing happens without a cause. Every object has its reflection. The Lord awards fruits according to one's deserts. Good actions earn good returns. Bad actions result in bad consequences. That is why the Lord is described as "Karmaphala pradaata"—the dispenser of the fruits of Karma (action).

How the Lord responds

When Duryodhana sought to disrobe Draupadi, the consort of the Pandavas, she prayed to Krishna in various ways. Although Krishna heard her prayers, He could not respond immediately to her calls for help. The reason is the stern law of Nature. This universal law operates always at all places and at all times. For instance, if a man slips, he falls to the ground. If a stone is thrown up, it comes down. These are the results of the law of gravitation. Whether it is a millionaire or a pauper, if his foot slips, he falls down. That is how the laws of Nature operate, regardless of persons.

Hearing Draupadi's prayers, Krishna thought for a moment whether she had done any action in the past which entitled her to secure protection in Duryodhana's assembly hall. To merit divine help one must have offered something or other to God—a leaf, a flower, or a little sacred water. At the mundane level, there is the simple rule of give-and-take in daily life. Krishna remembered something which Draupadi had done years ago. It was on Sankranti day. Krishna suffered a cut in His little finger while handling sugarcane. Immediately Rukmini sent a maid to fetch bandage cloth. Sathyabhama rushed to bring some cloth to bind the wounded finger. Draupadi, who was standing by, without hesitation, tore a piece of cloth from the edge of her sari and immediately bandaged Krishna's finger. Although what she gave was only a small bit of her sari, it was a spontaneous act of love and devotion. Krishna decided to make that little piece of cloth an

endless!

You feel happy when someone gives you something. But you don't feel equally happy in giving to others. Men desire the fruits of good actions, but will not do good actions. They wish to be saved from the consequences of evil deeds, but will not refrain from bad actions. As you sow, so shall you reap, is a relentless law. You cannot escape from the consequences of your actions, whether good or bad.

The horse and the cart

If you wish to enjoy enduring happiness, you have to fill your mind with pure thoughts and entertain fine feelings in your heart. Through good thoughts and good kindly actions, the heart gets pure and holy. In the journey of life, the body is like a cart and the heart is like a horse. Unless you feed the heart well, the journey cannot proceed properly. The heart has to be fed with good fodder in the form of good company (Satsangam), righteous action (Satpravartana), and good thoughts. And whatever is done should be as an offering to God. There is a story to illustrate how God is pleased when actions are done in this spirit.

"Krishnaarpanam Asthu"

There was a woman devotee, who was a worshipper of Krishna. Every morning she used to clean the Krishna shrine in her house with cowdung and throw the remnants of the cowdung outside, saying: "Krishnaarpanam Asthu" ("Let this be an offering to Krishna.") The priest of the local Krishna temple noticed that every morning, after he had washed and decorated the idol of Krishna with garlands, when he was offering Arati to the deity, a small lump of cowdung used to fall on the face of the idol. He was deeply distressed over this strange phenomenon and told the village elders about it. They also witnessed the phenomenon in the temple and sent a vigilance squad to find out who was throwing cowdung at that time. In one street a scout found a woman throwing cowdung outside her house, uttering the words, "Krishnaarpanam." It was found that at the same time she was throwing the cowdung, the apparent desecration of the idol by cowdung was taking place in the temple. The Lord is not concerned as to what is offered to Him He accepts whatever is offered with a pure heart. In His eyes there is nothing good or bad in itself. When the woman devotee offered the cowdung as "Krishnaarpanam" (offering to Krishna), it reached the Krishna idol. The village elders went to the lady and reproached her for her unbecoming conduct in offering cowdung to Krishna. They did not consider how the cowdung thrown outside her house reached the idol in the temple. They thought only of the cowdung as such and did not reckon with the power and intensity of the devotion behind the devotee's action.

The elders summoned the husband and other relations of the old woman to hold an enquiry. The woman pleaded before them: "I am incapable of hurling cowdung on the face of my Krishna. I am ready to lay down my life for Krishna. How can I do any action of desecration? I do everything as an offering to Krishna." The elders told her not to throw the cowdung and not to utter the words, "Krishnaarpanam Asthu." At the instance of her husband and other relations, she agreed to this course.

much the priest and others tried to open them. The village elders realised that they had done a grievous wrong to a great devotee and pleaded for pardon from her. That moment the temple doors opened.

The ways of devotees can be understood only by devotees. Others cannot understand them. Phenomena such as these are happening all the time all over Bharat. It is because of such devotion that Bharat has remained a holy land through the ages.

Mira's devotion

Mira was a devotee who had completely merged herself in Krishna consciousness. After her marriage, she requested her husband to build a temple for Krishna. The Rana built for her a temple in marble. Mira spent all the time in the temple singing bhajans oblivious of the outside world. The Rana, who allowed Mira to carry on her worship of Krishna as agreed to by him before the marriage, got vexed with her complete absorption in Krishna and prohibited her from going to the temple and closed its doors to prevent her from going there. Mira felt "The Rana may bar me from the temple which he has built. But who can bar me from seeking the Krishna who resides in the temple of my heart?"

Mira's thoughts were centred on Krishna installed in Dwaraka. She ran towards Dwaraka through forests and hills, defying storm and rain, singing all the way and calling on "Krishna! Krishna!" Reaching Dwaraka, she entered the temple but found the doors of the sanctum closed. Despite all her efforts, the door would not open. She cried out: "Oh Krishna! Do you think that with the cymbals in one hand and tambura in the other how can I hold your lotus feet? See, I am throwing them away. I shall not give you up and you cannot get away from me. Abandoning everything, I will cling to your feet." Crying in anguish, Mira knocked her head against the door of the sanctum. That very moment, she fell into a swoon. An effulgent flame emerged from her body and merged in the Krishna idol.

Few can understand the ways in which devotion manifests itself among the lovers of God. Human relationships come and go. But the association with God is eternal.

When one offers everything to God, the Lord submits Himself to the devotee. The old woman who did everything as an offering to Krishna was such a devotee. The words "Krishnaarpanam" were on her lips all the time. But they were said with deep and genuine devotion. Merely mechanical repetition of "Krishnaarpanam" will have no significance. Engaging priests in temples to perform worship by offering money is totally wrong. Such worship is a mercenary exercise and does no good to the persons who get it done. The proper thing is for devotees to offer worship wholeheartedly in their own homes. That will do them real good.

—*From Bhagavan's discourse at "Trayee Brindavan" on May 3, 1987*

The first chapter, "The Despondency of Arjuna," is the foundation of the Bhagavad-Gita. His is a special kind of despondency; a state of mind that we all must experience sooner or later as a result of attachment to this outer world, which is frustrating by nature and filled with injustice and suffering. This despondency makes us aware of our mistakes- it intensifies our yearning for an answer to the riddle of our mortal existence and for the ability to transcend it. By humbling our minds and egos, this despondency—Kierkegaard's dread or despair, modern man's existential anxiety—readies us for our journey inward. It brings us from our mind to our heart—from selfishness to selflessness, from loneliness to love, from separation to union. "The Gita which begins with despondency, ends with realization—despondency is the seed and realization the fruit."

What is the basis of our suffering?

"Whoever the individual, however scholarly, he cannot escape delusion and so he is subjected to grief, which acts as a break upon activity. Arjuna, the great hero, capable of great renunciation and great wisdom, is deluded by the awful needs of war, and his grief handicaps his activity too. He confuses the body and the self; he starts identifying the two. He imposes on the real self (the Atma—ever untouched by the characteristics of the moving, changing world) the unreal and ephemeral nature of the world and takes this delusion to be as true. This is the tragedy not only of Arjuna alone but of all humanity!"

(Sathya Sai Baba)

Role of devotion

Can we transcend suffering-overcome the delusion that we are only the body, bound by time and space? The Bhagavad-Gita teaches a number of attitudes and approaches to this consummate human dilemma. The most basic are those extolled in all the major religions those of faith and devotion leading to surrender to God's will, the dynamics of which we in the behavioral sciences are almost totally ignorant. Perhaps appearing simple and naive to the scientifically minded, Krishna's most profound declaration in the Bhagavad-Gita is also the essence of Christ's teachings.

"Fix thy thought on Me; be devoted to Me; worship Me; do homage to Me; thou shalt reach Me. The truth do I declare to thee; for thou art dear to Me. This is My teaching, My grace. This is the path to come to Me. Give up all lesser actions and duties; surrender to Me; do not grieve; I shall liberate you from the consequences of all your acts."

(Krishna)

Let us not get scared off by words like faith, devotion, worship and surrender. There is a mystery much deeper than meets the eye in these few simple lines. We must take the time to inquire more deeply into their inner meaning if we are to appreciate the relevance of this mystery

have mistakenly discounted as primitive or unreal.

Dynamics of love

In my experience, understanding the dynamics of devotion-the miraculously transforming relationship between man and God- leads to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of love, in away which nothing in the field of psychology can equal. Yes, Krishna's declaration may at first appear simple; it seems so because we behavioral scientists haven't accepted the possibility of divine intervention effecting miraculous transformations of consciousness through the devotional process. Since it is beyond the mind's comprehension, the only way of understanding this transformation is through the direct personal experience of devotion and love itself. Devotion and love are the path ...and the goal. This process leads to a whole new inner world of strength and peace and toward the transcendence of the material world and the realization of our inner divinity. Modern mainstream psychology is largely unaware of this extremely subtle inner dimension, at best glimpsed fleetingly in the words and images of mystics and saints. In the Hindu tradition, this *attainable* universal self, whose central attribute is selfless love, is called the *Atma* and is described by Sai Baba as follows:

"The Atma is the unseen basis, the substance of all the objective world, the reality behind the appearance, universal and immanent in every being. It is inherently devoid of attachment, is imperishable and does not die. It is the witness, unaffected by all this change in time and space, the immanent spirit in the body, the motivating force of its, impulses and intentions. It is one's own innermost reality, one's divinity, the real self-the soul."

—*From "Spirit and the Mind," published by Birth Day Publishing Co., San Diego, USA.*

Experiencing the Divine

—*J. S. Hislop*

Before all else, everyone knows he exists. Nobody can successfully- argue that he or she does not exist, for the very argument would be proof of existence. This existence is known to us, not through observation and conclusions, but is known directly, without words or thoughts, as the 'I' sense, the feeling of 'I'. The small baby illustrates this. Just to exist is happiness for the baby. It does not worry about a job or possessions. The baby does not think the matter through and conclude that he or she exists. 'I' needs no proof, 'I' is self-evident. The pure 'I', the mere fact of one's existence, comes first. Second comes thoughts about 'I', such as 'I am this'—or 'I have that.' First there is the realization of existence. The basic, ever-present reality of one's life is 'I', which persists even when all memory has fallen away and the mind is blank. In deep sleep that is what happens. There is no memory to remember 'I', nor are there thoughts. The mind is blank. Yet, when we awaken we do not complain, 'Good grief! For a while I ceased to exist!' No.

we depend upon disappeared, yet it is self-evident that 'I' never ceased to exist.

'I' is the one fact in one's life which persists with unbroken continuity. Time, space, stars, mountains, insects, mind and other people are observed by us. They are modified by various factors and do not have the same unbroken reality as does 'I'. Since 'I' is the primary reality in our life, should we not be giving primary attention to that primary reality? If we are going to build a life for ourselves in the world, should not that life be built on a secure foundation, firmly grounded in 'I', the only reality which will be there tomorrow as it is today? 'Build on a secure foundation' in this context means we do not count on anything in this world to support and sustain oneself, for nothing in this world can be relied upon; at no moment is anything the same as it was the previous moment. Baba advises, "First know the Atma, then venture into the world." Change is the name of the game, and how can one be at peace with that which crumbles away? Only the subtle inward sense of 'being' remains unchanged.

About this 'I', Baba says, "I am always happy. I am always in bliss." Please concentrate on what Baba says—'I' and 'bliss' are equated—they are the same and, furthermore, they are always. Time does not touch them. Baba is saying that his blissful 'being' is always, is timeless. But we also know, we directly observe and experience that 'I', our sense of 'being', is the one and only timeless aspect of one's own life. The question at once arises, is our reality, our timeless 'being' separate from the reality, the timeless 'Divine Being' of Baba? Some philosophers say, "Yes, the Divine and the human are indeed separate even though each 'I' may be timeless in its own right." Baba, however, states and not from philosophical convictions, but from direct immediate knowing—that 'being' is not divided and several, but is One. There is only the one primal all-encompassing 'being', end that is God. Baba says most emphatically that in essence, in the final reality, 'He' and 'we' and 'I' are the same, just as water is water whether it be encountered as fluid, ice or steam. We are the same.

“He" and "I"

Everything which appears to be contrary to the unity of 'He' and 'I' is impermanent appearance and not the permanent reality. Baba says, "There is one, not two. If a second is seen, then Maya (i.e., illusion) is in operation." One such 'impermanent' appearance is the storage of 'bliss' in our lives. We do not say as Baba says, "I am always happy. I am always in bliss." Baba also makes that comment. He says, "You should be feeling happy continuously, just as you are aware continuously. But you are not." Why do we not say the same as Baba since we are not truly different from him? For is not 'Being-Awareness-Bliss' the ever-present reality? In answer to this puzzle, Baba tells us that just as a small cloud conceals the brilliant and, powerful sun, the ego in us conceals our ever-shining bliss. Baba tells us that when we remove that which is of ego in ourselves we will thereby—in a flash, so to speak—realize ourselves as the timeless 'Divine Bliss.' For 'He' and 'I' are one and the same. Baba has said to me a number of times, "You and I are the same, and there is no difference." If, even intellectually, one can see this unity, see that 'I' is no other than 'He', the consequences of that perception are staggering in their magnitude—there will be very great changes in one's life.

really the fact, duality or unity, one can reason it out for oneself, since Baba has said that man has the unique gift of being able to reason things out.

But even before we start to reason, we can know very quickly and directly for ourselves that unity exists, for within oneself there is changeless unity. Here, and now, or whenever one has the freedom to concentrate attention on 'I', the inward feeling of 'being'—not on thoughts about 'I', such as “I am a man—or a woman—or old—or young,” nor on the question, "Who am I" and then trying to think out the answer. In fact, we may by-pass the mind entirely since we know from many experiences of deep sleep that thinking is not essential for our existence. With quiet awareness, or mindfulness and with the breath calm and slow, surface agitations fall away and soon there remains only a calm 'beingness', infinitely deep without depth and infinitely broad without extension, and there is no point of duality or focus. A number of people know this from their own direct experience and one hears them say so, describing what happens in their own words. In this way, one can know quickly and directly that one's own 'beingness' or existence is a total unity without distinctions, conclusions or concepts. There is nothing to stop a person from being aware of himself and deepening that awareness.

The same insight, that unity exists, is quickly arrived at by using one's power of reason. First we identify facts, then reason out the implications. If indeed the statement that 'I' and 'He' are the same is the truth, and duality is just appearance, then it is of the most vital importance to know this, for the course of one's life depends on that knowledge.

Creation as energy

Swami states that the entire creation and every creature therein is nothing but congealed and conglomerated energy. This is a statement with full modern scientific validation by Einstein and others who demonstrate that energy is mass and mass is energy. Baba informs us that energy bubbles up into creation and creation dissolves back into energy and that energy is eternal.

When we take our habitual stand in duality, as is the case with me now, one may say, "I am talking." But that is clearly untrue. "I" is not doing anything—'I' is merely witnessing. Words come from my lips because of the movement of lungs, air, mind and intelligence and they, in turn, are functioning because of energy. When I think, energy is in play and when intelligence is active, intellectual energy is involved. Intellectual or physical, the same principle is there—the principle of energy. Swami thinks, and instantaneously an object appears—pretty strong energy! If one chooses to debate this analysis and claim, “never mind about energy; I am the consciousness behind all that action, and therefore it is 'I' who am doing that action," in such a case, one would thereby have recognized that he is neither body nor mind nor intelligence, but is the consciousness, the inner motive force, and thus one would be declaring that 'I' is the Creator, that 'I' is 'He'. Action occurs because of energy, and energy is universal. That which is universal, present everywhere at all times is personified as 'God'. In one mode, 'energy', which is universal is personified as 'God'. In another mode energy is personified as 'me', as 'I'.

solid thing about us—the body. The body experiences pleasure and pain as 'I'. Universally the body is experienced as 'I' and we suffer or enjoy on account of what happens to the body. So how can the body be said to be unreal and to be appearance only? Yet, the body is not as it appears to be. The appearance of solidity comes about because of the rapid vibrations of clusters of energy. The body is nothing but tiny clusters of energy vibrating with ferocious intensity, with vast distances between the clusters of energy. Thus, when we say, "I am the body," we are really saying, "I am energy." This energy is universal; vibrating clusters of energy create the appearance of stars, flowers, animals and carrots. And, energy clusters projected by the stars bombard and affect our body's energy systems. Baba has clearly said that energy is eternal and that the Divine is that motive force which causes everything to happen.

Thus, by direct knowing, by the deepening of awareness, or by the power of human reason, one can appreciate Baba's statement that 'He' is 'I', and that 'He' is the universal energy, the motive force which moves intelligence, mind, body and the entire creation, that God is the Reality, the Universal.

The touch of Sai

Regardless of how we come to perceive it, we do come to perceive that differences, although apparently real relative to each other, exist only as the Maya of the Lord. Then, upon consideration we can see that it is better to hold to the Lord rather than hold to the Maya of the Lord. For Maya is His illusion, but He is real. This perception which is born to us is like a great storm in the field of our intelligence. It tumbles everything around and changes everything. Our intelligence, our mind, our interests are not as they were before. Our perception of ourselves of God and of the so-called outer world can never again be as before. Something of grave, even desperate importance is happening to us. It has happened from time immemorial to individuals who have the interest, and it is happening here and now, to each individual who has been touched by the genius of Sri Sathya Sai. This gigantic implosion in consciousness is so vast that our thinking mind may not grasp the implications and may for a while just feel the discomfort of change. The person may complain, "I am having so much trouble since I encountered Baba." But God, the Indweller of each heart, the Universal Energy and Consciousness, has seen fit to move us; the time has arrived, our destiny is ripe and, we must employ our wits, our reason, our common sense and grasp the implication for daily life of this revolutionary insight which has come unto us.

We now perceive that appearance may and does distort our perception of reality, and we are no longer content with appearance. We perceive that 'I', apparently separate from all else, is in fact 'you', 'we' and 'He'. 'I', the apparently separate individual, is in fact the universal. There is no separate person finally, there is only 'I'; there is nothing other than 'I' and 'I' is just the witness name for the non-dual reality.

In the face of this absolutely devastating perception, what are we to do about the relative existence of name and forms? Because our apparent life continues day to day. One great change in daily life is implied and from that, Baba assures us, all else will adjust itself and make itself

everything which appears to be the contrary is Maya, illusion. This Maya, this illusion is transcended by constantly recollecting that God is the only Reality, that there is nothing except God. Even when we are working on the job, or are at ease at home we must keep in the background of our awareness that remembrance of God, who is the only Reality, who is our Reality. Baba tells us, "See the Divine in yourself and see the Divine in others and turn away from all else. That is the essence of Sadhana."

To help us recollect the Reality amidst the turmoil of appearance, amidst the complexity of experience, the Lord in the guise of Avatars and wise men has from time immemorial suggested various Sadhanas, various spiritual practices. These spiritual practices are revealed in Baba's discourses and writings, and these should be receiving our concentrated and constant study.

GURUPOORNIMA SANDESH:

"God and you are one"

Embodiments of the Divine Atma!

"Antarbahischa tathsarvam Vyaapya Narayano sthithah" "Pervading the entire cosmos inside and outside remains Narayana," says the Upanishad. Where can you search for the One who is all pervasive? When everything in the world is permeated by the Divine, it is dangerous to claim something as "mine" or "thine".

It is not possible to realise God by Sadhanas, Yajnas or Yagas, Dhyana, or good deeds. All these are only aids for achieving purity of mind and heart. This truth has been clearly enunciated by Sri Krishna in the 11th Chapter of the Gita in sloka 53. (" Neither by the Vedas, nor by austerities, nor by gift, nor by sacrifices, can I be seen in this form as you (Arjuna) have seen me.") What, then, is the purpose of these Sadhanas, which are being performed by earnest and knowledgeable aspirants? All these Sadhanas are intended to help man to get rid of the veil in which he is enveloped by attachment (Raga) and hatred (Dweshha). The inner meaning of all spiritual disciplines is to make man realise his true nature.

Sat-chit-ananda

Man inherently is the embodiment of Sat-Chit-Ananda (Being-Awareness-Bliss). Sat is the unchanging state which is unaffected by the processes of Time (the past, present and the future). Chit is the capacity of Awareness which enables one to know the outer and inner truth about everything. Ananda is that state of unalloyed bliss which is pure and permanent. When Sat, Chit and Ananda appear as different and distinct aspects, how are they to be experienced as one whole? Although they appear to be distinct, their unity can be illustrated by an example. The flame of a lamp has three features heat, light and the red colour. Although these three features are distinct, the flame is one.

the macrocosm? Such a doubt arises out of a sense of weakness. One should not give way to this. On the surface of the vast ocean, there are endless number of waves produced by the action of wind on the water. The water in the ocean has the qualities of coolness, transparency and wetness. Every wave arising from the ocean has these three qualities. Likewise, every individual being who has issued from the infinite Sat-Chit-Ananda has the three aspects of the Divine. There is no need to succumb to the apparent contrast between the Infinite and the minuscule finite. All things are permeated by the divinity that characterises Sat-Chit-Ananda.

The term "Daiva" (Divinity) means wholeness or immanence. Divinity is immanent in the whole of Creation (Prakriti), which cannot exist otherwise. The energy that is present in every object in creation is derived from the divine (Sat-Chit-Ananda). Divinity represents the unity of Sat-Chit-Ananda and Prakriti. In modern parlance, this may be stated as Matter + Being is God.

Four obstacles

Recognition of this basic unity calls for earnest and continuous striving. In the pursuit of this fundamental quest four major obstacles have to be overcome. They are: Avidya pratibandhakam, Prajna pratibandhakam, Kutarka pratibandhakam, and Viparyaya Duragraha pratibandhakam. Avidya pratibandhakam is the impediment that arises out of the feeling that one is too weak and powerless to seek the Divine. As long as this sense of weakness remains, man cannot understand the Omni-Self.

Prajna pratibandhakam is the obstacle that is created by self-conceit. When one feels that he knows everything and is unwilling to learn from elders he becomes unfit for undertaking the spiritual quest. The third obstacle, Kutarka pratibandhakam, is faced by those who are caught up in illogical reasoning and false arguments. They give farfetched interpretations to the pronouncements of sages and engage themselves in meaningless controversies. The fourth obstacle, Viparyaya Duragraha pratibandhakam, is caused by ignorance of one's inner Reality and a refusal to make the effort to understand it. It arises out of a feeling of arrogance that one knows everything and has no need to learn from others. The cause of this arrogance is Maya (delusion). Maya is present when- one sees the unreal as Real and the Real as unreal. This is the basic characteristic of ignorance. Such persons view the world (Jagat) as Jagat (as a physical phenomenon). But those who have attained the inner vision see the Cosmos has the manifestation of the Lord of the Cosmos (Jagadeeshwara) The Cosmos is the vesture of the Divine The scientists admit that matter is composed of energy. Without energy nothing can exist in the cosmos. Prahlada and Hiranyakasipu represent the two opposing views regarding the cosmos. Hiranyakasipu viewed a pillar as only a pillar Prahlada saw in it the immanence of Narayana.

Today we have an ever-growing number of people who are unaware of the nature of Divinity. No special Sadhanas are required to experience Divinity. Nor all the religious rites performed by many are done for the sake God. God cannot be seen in an exclusive way. When one realises his own true nature and rids himself of impurities like attachment and hatred, he

in a person.

Power of maya

In every man there is the combination of the Mayatattwa (the Deluding principle) and the Brahmatattwa (the Divine principle). Without the Deluding principle, the brahmatattwa cannot be experienced. Without the Brahmatattwa, the power of Maya cannot be manifest. On the surface of the vast ocean, countless waves are seen. There must be a force that causes these waves. It is the power of wind on the water of the ocean that produces the waves. Without the force of wind there can be no waves. Maya can be compared to this wind. The water in the ocean can be compared to the form of Sat-Chit-Ananda. The Jiva-tattwa—or the individual selves—are the waves of the ocean. So, for the individual selves, Maya is the primary factor. They are merely reflected images of the Divine. The images will remain only as long as there is the mirror (of Maya). When the mirror is removed, the One alone remains. Our body is like a mirror. As long as the body consciousness is there, the notion of separate individuality will persist like the image in a mirror. When the mirror of body-consciousness is removed, the image (the individual consciousness) will also go. Only the permanent entity—the Atma—will remain.

To recognise the illusory character of the world does not mean giving up all actions or family ties. Actions should be done in a spirit of detachment. Relationships should be maintained without deep attachment. It is not renunciation of action that is required. Renunciation in action is what is necessary. That means that actions which have to be performed as obligatory duties should be done properly. Thereby the mind is cleansed of its impurities. This is the purpose of actions done in the proper spirit.

Sixteen and five

Today is Guru Poornima day—the day of full moon dedicated to the worship of the Guru. On this day, the moon shines effulgently with all his 16 aspects (Kalas). On your part you have to shed 16 aspects that are undesirable in man. These 16 comprise the following: eight types of pride' (pride of physical strength, of birth, of scholarship, wealth, penance; beauty, youth and power), six kinds of enemies (desire, anger, greed, infatuation, arrogance, and envy), and the Rajo and Tamo gunas. It is only when these sixteen evil traits are eliminated that man will achieve fullness. These evil traits are preventing man from realising his essential divinity.

Man has also to contend with afflictions from five causes (Klesas). These are: Avidya, Abhinava, Asthitha, Raga and Dwesha. `Avidya' (lack of true knowledge) renders a man feel weak and imbecile, incapable of recognising his' inherent divine nature. "Abhinava" makes a man attached to Samsara (worldly concerns) and to forget his real destiny. He allows the mind to dominate him. As a result he is subject to sorrow and depression. "Asthitha" is the trouble that arises out of excessive greed. When the desires are not fulfilled, there is distress. When they are fulfilled, self-conceit (Ahamkara) grows. In this process, genuine human qualities wither away. "Raga Klesa" is the distress: caused by the insatiable desire for houses, vehicles, wealth, etc. "Dwesha Klesa", is the feeling of bitterness that arises when one does not get what he seeks from others. In due course he becomes a low and pitiable creature. The scriptures have declared that

men, the one who indulges in slander is most despicable. The crow is mean because it does not relish good food and prefers only rotten things. The donkey carries only dirty clothes and is always dirty. The slanderer has a foul tongue and is the meanest among human beings.

The greatest sin

The greatest sin man commits is to forget his divinity and, failing to recognise his true nature, considers himself as a distinct individual and fills his mind with desires and hatreds. We should not look upon human existence as something pitiful or weak and powerless. Man is the embodiment of the Divine- Sat-Chit-Ananda (Being-Awareness-Bliss). The Divine in him is always radiating light and bliss. But, because of the barrier of bad thoughts, he is unable to experience this bliss.

The Divine is not something different or separate from one's self. Although one is identical with the Divine, the dark cloaks of attachment (Raga) and hatred (Dweshya) envelop his divine essence and prevent him from recognising his inner Reality. The only truth man has to discover is the truth about himself. All the Sadhanas that are practised are intended to remove the veil that conceals this Reality in man. But all Sadhanas or enquiries that may be carried, on for any length of time will be of no avail if the mind is not pure.

Sai Words and Sai Path

*All the scriptures you study diligently
will reveal that the Sai path is the truth.*

*Exploring the purport of all the Vedas
you will find the true path in Sai's, words.*

*All the sciences and scriptures will
testify to the truth of Sai's words.*

*Chanting the Gayatri full-throatedly
will prove the truth of Sai's message.*

*Of what avail is all your striving
If the mind remains polluted?*

It is only when the mind is cleansed that one can develop the proper vision. In our daily prayers we say, "You are the mother, you are the father, you are the guru and you are the friend." Who is this "you"? Instead of saying, "You are mother, father, guru and friend," it is enough if you say, "You are I." You have to attain the stage when you can say: "You (God) are I." This is the essence of all truths. This is the root of everything. This is the goal proclaimed by all the scriptures.

Recognise that God and you are one. There will then be no need to describe God as father, mother, guru and the like and confound oneself. We should strive to reduce the bondages created by such relationships as mother, father, etc. We should aim at realising the basic Unity that underlies and sustains everything. That is the significance of the statement "Eko vasi Sarva-bhoothantaratma." (He is the one Indweller in all beings).

How meaningful are such expressions as "My people" and "your people"? How long can these relationships last? They are all momentary. The only relationship that lasts forever and does not change is the association with the Atma. Instead of seeking this permanent association, man hankers after relationships based on the impermanent body due to the power of Maya. Despite all their knowledge and study, people are groping in this dark chamber (of Maya). Until you get out of this darkness and seek the light, you will be wrapped up in sorrow.

"Mamaivaamso Jeevaloke Jeevabhootha Sanatanah" ("The Eternal resides in every being in the world as a fragment of Mine") says the Lord in the Gita. We have to develop the faith that it is the same Lord who dwells in all beings as a spark of the Divine. You are not the body. You are not even a separate spirit. You are a fragment of the Divine. This is the great truth that everyone has to realise fully. Without achieving this conviction, there is no use in performing any sadhana or worship for years: Once this conviction is obtained, the vision of the Divine is experienced automatically.

True devotion

The nation today needs to develop the sense of unity. Narrow loyalties such as linguistic fanaticism, provincialism, caste loyalties, and sectarianism have grown to such an extent that they have totally driven out devotion to-the Divine. It is this devotion that has to be cultivated, because it is the basis for real unity stemming from a recognition that the Divine is in everyone.

Embodiments of Sat-Chit-Ananda!

You have been listening to my discourses for years. If you are merely content to listen, it is sheer waste of time. You have to ruminate over what you have heard and try to put into practice the teachings. Sravanam (listening), Mananam (revolving in the mind) and Nidhidhyasanam (putting into practice what has been learnt) are the three stages in the spiritual journey. Repeating parrot-like what one has heard has not even the merit of enjoying the sweetness of the words. Claiming to be devotees and going about as devotees, few are caring to find out what is true devotion. Bhajans and japas and performance of yagas and yajnas (sacrificial rituals) are not the real marks of devotion. They are merely exercises in washing away one's impurities. All the nine kinds of worship are also designed to achieve purity of mind and heart. But purity should find expression in action just as clothes that have been washed have to be worn. Without purity in action, the real nature of the Self cannot be recognised.

By being merely endowed with the human form, men do not become really human. The evolution from the animal to the human has taken millennia. The world is peopled today by billions of human beings. But how many of them display genuine human qualities? Man is still going through the birth-pangs of real human-ness. Only when human qualities are manifest can man claim to be truly human. In that human-ness there is divinity. It will wear the mantle of Truth. It will be the embodiment of Dharma (Righteousness), Prema (Love) and Santhi (Peace). It is only when men display these qualities that they can be regarded as human. If mankind is able to achieve at least this level of human-ness, it would be sufficient.

Today we are celebrating Gurupoornima. The day is usually observed as an occasion for offering worship to the Guru (the religious or other preceptor). There are eight different types of gurus, who impart spiritual instruction of different kinds. Among these, the really important guru is "Vihita guru" the preceptor who removes the doubts in the minds of the disciples and reveals to them the process of Self-discovery and Self-realisation. The guru should destroy the darkness of ignorance (about one's Reality) and illumine the mind of the disciple. The illumination must result in the perception of the One Reality that is beyond name and form and attributes.

Oneness in vibhuti

Swami often gives to devotees the sacred ash (Vibhuti or Bhasma). Many persons smear their foreheads with this ash. What is the inner significance of this ash? When any object that has a name and form is completely burnt, it is reduced to ashes. The name and form are gone. All things are one and the same in the final state as ashes. When Vibhuti is given, Swami wants the recipient to understand this basic oneness (Advaitam). The devotee should get rid of his Ahamkara (egoism arising from the feeling of separateness) and sense of "mine" and "thine" (Mamakara). These two are based on name and form and when they are destroyed, the underlying unity of the Divine can be realised.

People constantly talk about Advaita, non-dualism, but hardly live up to their professions in practice. One must practise what one preaches or professes. Today there are not many gurus who live up to their beliefs or teachings. Their actions belie their words. No purpose is served by going in search of gurus. There is a guru in each of us. It is the Atma principle. It is the Eternal Witness functioning as Conscience in everyone. With this Conscience as guide, let all actions be done.

There are three types of Maya which prompt men to action—Swechcha, Parechcha and Ayichcha. "Swechcha" is the kind of prompting in which one decides to follow a particular course of action and is prepared for the consequences, for better or worse. "Parechcha" is the situation in which one is encouraged or prompted by others to undertake actions whose consequences have to be borne by him. "Ayichcha" is the state in which every action is regarded as the will of the Divine and all consequences, whether gain or loss, pleasure or pain, are regarded as gifts from God. Real freedom consists in submitting to the Will of the Divine and not acting according to one's caprices or fancies. What is the freedom that people want? Is it to

at to flee from one's divine nature and indulge in demoniacal acts? What kind of freedom is this?

The yugas and the avatar

In this context I shall tell you today the inner meaning of the different yugas—the Treta Yuga, the Dwapara Yuga and the present Kali Yuga.

In the Treta Yuga, the divine elements were on one side and the demoniacal elements were on the other. At the time of the Rama avatar the divine elements were in Ayodhya and Kishkinda and the demoniac forces were in Dandakaranya. The two elements were in separate regions. Rama waged war against the Rakshasas in Dandakaranya and protected the Rishis. This is the inner meaning of the Rama avatar in Treta Yuga.

In the Dwapara Yuga, the divine and demoniac elements—namely, the Pandavas and the Kauravas—were in the same kingdom. In such a situation, Krishna gave His army to the Kauravas and without wielding any weapon Himself, gave His support to the Pandavas in the great battle of Kurukshetra. He used others as instruments.

But today, these divine and demoniac forces are battling in each human being. This is the mark of the Kali age. In Treta Yuga, Rama fought the battle in person. In Dwapara Yuga, Krishna played the role of a witness, using others as His instruments. He did not engage in the battle Himself. In Kali Yuga, because the two opposing forces are inside each individual, the Lord plays the role of a witness and as the conscience. Man has to use the power of discrimination given to him to fight the evil forces within him. He has to foster the divine elements in him by his own efforts and listening to the voice of his conscience. The freedom to choose has been given to man for this purpose. This freedom is to be used to discriminate between right and wrong, good and evil and to foster divine qualities. This is the unique feature of the Kali age. In this age, each individual has to fight against the demoniac forces himself and vanquish them. When this is accomplished man's inherent divine nature will manifest itself of its own accord.

The many from the one

Embodiments of Love! Realise that no special sadhana is needed to experience the Divine in you. You must rid yourself of impure thoughts and actions. Sanctify every action you do and make it a sadhana. The Divine is not a created object. It is self-effulgent and present in everyone.

Here is an illustration to indicate the relationship between the Divine and the individual.

On a hill, there is a big boulder. A sculptor sits on the boulder and sculpts out of it an idol of Krishna. The pieces of rock chiselled out of the boulder in making the idol are cast away. The Krishna idol is duly installed in a temple for worship. No one bothers about the pieces of stone left on the hill. But mutely they proclaim the truth: "That thwam Asi". "We are the same as the idol that you worship in the temple." The stone idol of Krishna and the broken pieces on the hill have come out of the same rock. They were one at the beginning. Later one part became an idol

This basic truth has to be understood. Whether you worship it in one form, or walk over it in another form, or use it for building a house, it is all the same substance.

Likewise, everything is basically divine. It has the three divine elements derived from Sat-Chit-Ananda, the qualities of Asti (existence), Bhaati (luminosity) and Priyam (utility). These three are common to every object in creation. When form and name are given to them, each acquires five qualities. The Universe, which is called Prapancha, has this fivefold characteristics. If name and form are removed, only divinity will remain. We cannot change the appearance of the universe. But by a change in our vision, its divinity can be recognised.

From dualism to advaita

Turn your minds towards the Divine—towards the eternal, unchanging, effulgent and pure Sat-Chit-Ananda. See the Divine in everything. Realise that there is only one Divinity immanent in all things. Do not waste all your life immersed in dualism. What is it you have gained from all the pujas you have done and all the discourses you have listened to? If you have not progressed in the slightest extent from the state of duality, you have gained nothing from your experience. At least from now on, try to go forward towards a higher consciousness. Proceed from dualism (Dvaita) to Visishta-advaita (qualified Monism) and reach the stage of Advaitic Consciousness. Do not stay put in the stage where you are like a milestone. Having performed sadhana, read the scriptures, met saintly men and listened to the discourses, you should realise the fruits of spiritual experience.

—*Bhagavan's Discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium on 11-7-1987*

Good and Evil

One who returns more good for less good is a good man.

One who returns less good for more good is selfish.

One who tries to be even in the exchange of good is a practical person.

But the one who returns good for evil is a saint.

One who returns less evil for more evil is ordinary.

One who tries to be even in returning evil is wicked.

One who returns more evil for less evil is a devil.

But the one who returns evil for good for him there is no name.

Being in the same car with Bhagavan when He goes on a journey, however long or short, is to be blessed with a continuous cascade of delight. Baba does not like to travel alone or even with one or two. When He enters the car at Prasanthi Nilayam waving His hands towards the devotees struggling to swallow their sobs, there would be only one or two with Him, seated in the car. The over-sensitive but under understanding devotee would be sad, when they find the car filled to the brim and Baba caught in the crush. So, though seated alone in the back seat when the car moves out of the Nilayam, the passengers whom Baba has chosen as the group of men to accompany Him would have gone in advance, waiting to pop in and fill the empty spaces. The same tactics are employed while returning to the Nilayam, the crowd that collects in front of the Nilayam to receive Him sees only Bhagavan alighting—the others drop off, on the road, as the Mandir comes into view.

Baba will not encourage people to utilise the chance of nearness in the vehicle for winning advice or answers for personal problems. He prods each one to ask about Sadhana and to place before the group the impediments they encounter while engaged in Sadhana. On one occasion, the doctrine of Karma was analysed under His supervision for a distance of over twenty miles! It is not an iron law, He said. "If it was, why should Grace intervene?" He asked. "Grace can mollify its rigour and enrich its harvest of joy. Jnana can soften the blow. Though one cannot call back the bullet into the revolver, one can give up shooting and escape from ruin," He said. "And, repent, so that the mind is cleansed of hatred," He added.

Bhakti and vibhakti

Another day, He asked everyone to speak on Bhakthi and what he meant by it. When all had finished, He clarified the issue. "When you have freed yourselves of Vibhakti, Bhakti manifests." "Vibhakti means separation, division, partition, multifariousness. Bhakti means love of God. You cannot love God without loving the living and the non-living." Baba explained. Some one amongst us queried, "Swami! In the Gita, it is said that if a person has no other thought except the thought of God, He will feed Him and guide Him forever. Does it mean that man has to think of God only and of nothing else?" Baba replied, "Krishna did not insist on man thinking of Him only and of no other. What he meant was, you have to give up the thought of the 'other'; there is no Anya, other, any one different. All are one. When you have discarded all thoughts of 'the other' the loving God loves you as His own," He said.

Songs on the way

Or, when He senses that the depth of each one's confrontation with his inner realm is too shallow for exploration. Baba may ask them to sing a song by turns. No one can struggle out of the assignment. If a person is too nervous to venture into music, he can get away with a Vedic hymn recited in the XV century B C. style. Colonel Joga Rao and Goginnee Venkateswara Rao chose stanzas in Telugu from the famous classic, the Bhagavatha by Pothana. Baba seldom excuses Himself when every one else has complied. In fact, we fall in enthusiastically with the

outskirts of our destination come too near.

I was scared at the prospect of having to listen to my squeak. Baba was willing to undergo. He was in no mood to make me an exception. On the first occasion when I faced the ordeal, I filled my lungs with courage, cleared my throat of cobwebs and crooned a semi-sacred jingle which I heard a clown sing, during a morality play when I was a boy of ten. Though it was greeted with muffled peals by my companions in the car and an approbatory pat on the shoulder from the Master, I resolved then and there to equip myself with a four-line Bhajan song on Rama, for subsequent occasions when I may be pressurised to perform. In spite of being ready with this innocent ammunition, I had to recite that clownish doggerel many times because Baba was delighted with its quaintness and pathos.

The Lord recalls

During the hours when we were on the move Baba invariably drew our attention to the hills that changed colour from blue to brown and brown to bitter black, the clouds with silver or golden frills, the moon as the hub of a wheel of argentine aura, the stars shimmering under the velvet dome, the frightened sheep fleeing from the hoot of the horn, the happy kids hurrying home from school. He advises us to picture the Painter while gazing on the beauties in Natures gallery. He may, if we are lucky, reminisce on His childhood years and relate with gusto to us—a juveniles gang—stories about His toddler troupes, conspiring to teach the elders of the village the ideals of simple living, service of the sick, fellow-feeling, fair wages, etc. through the lampoons and lilt that He spun for the purpose, or about the Bhajan group led by Him which vibrated cholera away from many a panic-stricken village, or about the Scout troop of which He was the chief, which collected good turns by the dozen every hour during Fairs and Festivals around Uravakonda. Each time, a new bunch of stories used to emerge and keep us enchanted.

Or, Baba may bless us with long lessons of serene silence. This happens more often, when we are in an aircraft. When He is quiet, our minds give up the gallop. The heart is warmed with waveless, aimless Love. The senses are held captive by the melody, the charm, the flavour and fragrance, the softness and sweetness that permeate everything, everywhere. The breath regulates itself into rhythm. Thoughts settle into patterns of peace. The physical frame tingles inexplicably. The vehicle purrs in joy. When Baba decides to resume contact, we are automatically aroused into fun and philosophy.

Food from Mother Sai

Baba derives the sustenance His physique needs from quenching our thirst and hunger. When He wills a journey by road, He loads the car with hampers heavy with breakfast, lunch or dinner besides snacks and fruits in plenty. He scans the countryside on both sides to spot out a sheltered nook encircled by blossoms and He finds one quite soon. The carpet is spread; jugs of water are brought; hampers are opened, baskets are emptied; plates and cups are handed out, Mother Sai squats in the centre. With exclamations of appreciation, He places pieces of each item of food on the pates held before Him by us—the children. Devotees dare not say 'Enough ' or ' No' on the bases of their digestive efficiency, allergic alarum, dietary prejudices, etc. They

decides the measure and menu for each. He prohibits, persuades and recommends. "You have a touch of diabetes," "You are over eighty," "This pickle is popular in your state," He comments as He fills the plates. One day, on finding that my plate had three 'idlies' He took one of them off, saying that even two were too many for me. I had an absurdly exaggerated appetite for 'idli' and His warning frightened me into instant compliance. Baba explained to me later the pulse component of idli can easily foster arthritis in aged bodies. He helped me to understand that, since each living being is playing a role in His cosmic drama, He loves to see them as fit and strong as the role demands. Bhagavan too shares the breakfast or lunch with us; He loves to watch us enjoying the food He gives. Even while inside the car, He takes out one by one-luscious apples from the bag He keeps near Him, and slicing them with care, He tempts us to eat in plenty. Once while motoring from Bombay to Bangalore, He listened to a few songs from Dikshit and at the end, distributed such pieces to each. The skin could not be chewed by me and swallowed, since I had a set of artificial teeth unused to tough tasks. I dared not spit the stuff through the window for fear the denture might follow the skin. Swami recognised the embarrassment; the next slice He passed on to me had the skin removed!

—*From 'Loving God,' published by Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust,
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Power of the God within

Praying to God is a wonderful act, but appealing to God for help without seeing the power of the God within, makes you needy and dependent. Another way of pleading is to ask your family or friends to rescue you from difficult situations, etc.; these are just excuses for not taking responsibility yourself. You have the power of greatness within and you can change your life with that realization. You could create a wonderful future for yourself, or you could put off the duty to accept responsibility and stay stuck in a dependent position and dream about a better life and future that may never come.

When you choose to accept responsibility and get yourself out of that fear of never-quite-making-it, and when you are willing to risk failure, you will release the power of God within you and your whole life will begin to change. You will attract, to you people, places and things that are in harmony with you and your prayers. Whatever obstacles that were in your way will become tools to help you create whatever you need to experience: health, happiness, peace, freedom, satisfaction and love. You will no longer be a victim of circumstances.. You will feel much more in control of your life. You will no longer have to feel that you are holding on for dear life, waiting for the next thing to happen to you. You can allow your life to happen through you: In accepting the power of God within, you are accepting your self, and in accepting your self you are loving your self, and consequently your life will be a reflection of that love.

— *M. H.*

Everything was unusually quiet; we were speeding towards the City of Kano in Nigeria, late in the night on the 22nd of December 1980. When we were just entering the City, suddenly I saw a crowd standing in the middle of the main road, about 100 metres away. Can they be armed robbers? The Nigerian driver managed to stop. He tried to reverse as fast as possible before we could be seen or trapped but it was too late. The crowd came shouting at us to stop. Then only the news headlines in the morning paper I had bought on the way flashed across my mind. There was widespread disturbance in the city and a number of people had been killed on the previous day.

I told the driver to stop, because running away may cause unpredictable damage to the car and life. I had a picture of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Baba, with the car documents and the passport. I collected them in my hands. The Blessing Palm of Bhagavan appeared to infuse some strength into me. Within seconds we were surrounded by the people who were fully armed.

Two of them, with two heavy iron crowbars, came and stood on either side of the car and brought their instruments to rest on either side of the bonnet making two deep dents on it. An elderly man who came shouting at me with a volley of questions both in Hausa and in English, cooled down when I told him that I had come to receive my wife and children, who were expected to arrive at the Aminu Kano International Airport on the next day. He waved his hands, indicating to the others around the car not to do any further damage.

We were driving slowly only to face another crowd at the junction 75 metres away. They also stopped us in spite of the shouting and waving of hands from those who had allowed us to proceed. This group examined the empty boot of the car thoroughly.

After this, they told us not to proceed on our journey, because they knew that the other groups waiting all along the roads will not permit any car to pass. They advised us to go to the Central Hotel or to the Daula Hotel to spend the night. Since these hotels were also far away from that place, an old man volunteered to take us to a safe place. His face was painted white. We hesitated to give any answer. Without waiting for any reply from us, he simply pushed the driver to one side and took the wheel. Before we could realise what was happening, he turned the car from the main road and we were moving into the bush through narrow lanes and villages.

Finally the car stopped under a (Margosa/Neem) tree, in front of a Hausa pattern mud house. The man who was driving appeared to be the owner of the house. He got down from the car. Although it was midnight, the area appeared to be fully active and awake. Even children were around the car and were curious to find out more about us.

I took out the licence book with Baba's picture and started sending an S.O.S. to Bhagavan. In this way I could shut out torturing thoughts presented by the unexpected train of events.

there was nothing to worry.

The man who went inside the house, brought out two mats and requested us to relax under the tree. We thanked him for the kind gesture and told him to give a place for our driver to sleep somewhere inside.

Soon afterwards, a man came out from one side. He was commanding the respect of all the people present there. He spoke a few words with the owner of the house. Then he came straight to us and said: "You appear to be worried. Would you like to spend the rest of the night at the police station?" We gladly accepted and he offered to take us to the police station. He took the front seat and asked our driver to drive. The crowd that came with him were marching in procession in front of the car and were removing all the obstacles on the path to allow our car to pass.

This procession continued through the bush roads for about a mile and took about 30 minutes. At the police station the man introduced us to the officer in charge who was standing outside with a gun in his hand. We greeted the officer and turned round to thank the man who brought us safely up to that place. But the man was not there; we also never had any chance to meet him again.

The police officer pointed to a human body lying in the darkness at a short distance and said that he had to shoot him only a few minutes back. He was trying to run away in spite of the order to stop and surrender.

Our driver slept in the officer's room and we managed to relax inside the car till 6.00 a.m. next day. We hurried out early in the morning and were shocked to see burnt cars and charred human bodies, some of which were still burning on the roadside.

The morning papers carried the news of a foreign reporter who was killed by a poisoned arrow on that night. The two dents on the bonnet of my car are there to this day; I treasure them as marks of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's Grace that protected us all through.

No boy can join college, the moment he steps into school. Several stages have to be reached and got over—the Primary, the Middle, the Secondary, the Higher Secondary, and the Intermediate. So too, we have in the spiritual path, the stages of Work, Worship, Wisdom and finally, Sacrifice. Sacrifice is when the ripe fruit falls from the tree, sacrificing its affection and attachment, weaning itself away from its support and sustenance. Work is for the physical level; worship for the mental and wisdom for the spiritual. You have to pass through the three stages, each one of you. When I say, you, there are three you's! The one you think you are—namely the body, the physical person; the one others think you are, the mental you, your passions, emotions,

Awareness

—V. K. N.

When Bhagavan uses a word He invests it with immense significance. In His discourses He explains the inner meaning of the word and dilates on the nuances of its interpretation and application. "Awareness" is one such highly meaningful word for every Sadhaka and student.

Swami once asked me what I understood by the word "BABA". I replied that I understood it to mean "father" and, with reference to Swami, it meant the Divine Father. Swami said there was more to it than the simple answer I gave.

He explained that the four letters in the word mean: B for Being (Sat), A for Awareness (Chit), B for Bliss and A for Atma. Thus the term BABA carries a profound truth: Being + Awareness + Bliss—which in Sanskrit represent Sat-Chit-Ananda-indicate Brahman Itself.

In one of His discourses Bhagavan said: "Awareness is Life". On another occasion He said: "Awareness is Bliss". These statements show what importance Bhagavan attaches to Awareness as a discipline for the Sadhaka and as a guiding principle for a meaningful life.

When I first learnt about Awareness from a lecturer many decades ago, I treated it as merely a suggestion to be alert and intelligent in daily life. But after coming to Swami, I discovered that it is a term charged with immense spiritual power and that living in "Awareness" of one's spiritual identity can completely transform one's way of living and lead to the realisation of the Divine within.

Oneness with the divine

Swami said: "Awareness is the realisation of your oneness with the Divine. This is the Awareness you must cultivate." Swami also explained that to discover the Divine in you means also the recognition of the Divine in every one. "Do not imagine," Swami said, "that this is so very difficult. What it calls for is continuous conscious attention and action."

One of the problems that profoundly interested me in this connection was how to experience the omnipresence of God—because, as Swami has said often, "There is only one God and He is omnipresent." It is remarkable how, in strange and unpredictable ways, the truth of Swami's statement comes home to us when we sincerely and whole-heartedly seek to know the presence of the Divine in something or other. This search has often made me remember Prahlada's

your Narayana? Prahlada coolly and firmly replied, "Do not have, oh father, any doubts as to whether Hari is in this place and not in the other. Wherever you search for Him, you will find Him!" ("Chakri sarvopagathundu; endendu vedaki choochina andande galadu". "The Lord permeates everything in the Cosmos: wherever you search for Him, He will be there.")

In one of His memorable earlier discourses—anyone going through the eleven volumes of "Sathya Sai Speaks" will feel that every one of the discourses is memorable—Swami exhorted devotees "to see God in a stone, but not worship *stone* as *God*." I did not understand the full meaning of Swami's advice till I was compelled by circumstances to realise that I must respect even a stone as one in which Divinity is immanent.

Lesson from a stone

The incident happened some years ago, when I was coming to Prasanthi Nilayam by car from Brindavan. We were about 15 Km. from Prasanthi Nilayam. After skirting a steep hill, we were just going down a slope when I noticed a stone on the middle of the road. As the stone did not seem very big and the car was going at some speed, I thought that nothing would happen. But I had to learn a lesson not to be over-confident about my driving and not to treat lightly even a stone on the road. A nut which was jutting out from the petrol tank hit the stone and flew off, emptying in a trice all the twenty litres of petrol in the car.

My first thought was to blame myself for my folly in ignoring the stone. I was immediately reminded of Swami's warning to me not to drive fast and not to make long journeys in the car because of my age. I breezily assured Swami that it was a greater ordeal to drive the car in a crowded city for a few yards than to drive a hundred kilometres on the highway. The incident with the stone was a clear lesson to me that one could never be too careful in a city or on the highway.

Divine grace

Stranded on the road, with no prospect of reaching Prasanthi Nilayam unless the car was towed by another vehicle, I could only think of Swami to come to my rescue. Miraculously as it were a bus turned up which was going to Kothscheruvu. I got into it and got off from it at the Puttaparthi turning to catch another bus going to Prasanthi Nilayam. Again a bus appeared soon and I was able to reach the Mandir within an hour of the breakdown. Bhagavan, the All-Knowing, immediately arranged to send His driver in a jeep for towing the car to Prasanthi Nilayam. Everything happened so swiftly and smoothly that I could experience the grace of the Divine every moment.

When I met Swami later I was deeply sorry for having ignored His advice and Warning and I confessed to Swami that I 'deserved the punishment I had received. But Swami, in His boundless compassion, assuaged my feelings by saying that such accidents happened at some time or other to cars and I should not blame myself over-much.

important it is in every moment of our life to be vigilant and fully conscious of our actions and not take anything for granted.

Sadhana and awareness

Bhagavan often tells us to make the Universe our university and try to learn something from every object or experience. This is the purpose of awareness—whether in Spiritual Sadhana or in daily life. “Sradhaavaan Labhate Jnaanam,” says the Gita. The man with 'Shraddha' achieves the Highest Wisdom. "Shraddha" is usually translated into English as "faith". But, it seems to me that "faith" does not bring out the full meaning of "Shraddha", which combines a number of qualities like concentration, earnestness, perseverance and awareness. It signifies total involvement In what you do.

"Awareness" is thus a basic requisite for the spiritual sadhaka. But even in ordinary daily life, if Awareness is cultivated as an attitude and a conscious discipline, it can transform many of the things we do in a casual and indifferent way into meaningful and purposeful actions. Awareness in daily life would call for total comprehension of the implications of each action, continuous concern for others, avoidance of waste, scrupulous economy in the use of food, energy, time and money—qualities which have been frequently commended by Swami in His discourses to students as well as others. Even in simple things like closing a tap, switching off lights or fans when not required, parking a vehicle so that it does not affect the use of the road by others, avoiding the throwing of litter haphazardly, and in innumerable other actions, full awareness of what one is doing and concern to do it properly may make all the difference to our life and the lives of others.

Above all, those who have the privilege of coming close to Bhagavan in any capacity should continuously strive to learn from His words, gestures and actions how to transform their lives. Swami has said: "My life is my message." We must pledge ourselves in return "Swami, we shall make Your message our life."

In the present crisis in human affairs, Bhagavan Baba's Avataric mission has global significance, far transcending what any prophet or spiritual leader has attempted in the past. Apart from His "miracles", which have drawn to His native village-now grown into perhaps the most important place of pilgrimage in India, if not the world, spiritual aspirants from all parts of the world, the primary purpose of His advent is to awaken in humanity as a whole, irrespective of race, creed, nationality or language, a consciousness of the spiritual oneness of mankind. In this respect, Bhagavan Baba is essentially a "Sathya Bodhaka", Teacher of the Supreme Truth.

Since the Supreme Truth taught by Baba is not something new, He says, "I have come to repair the Ancient Highway." As a part of this process, He has to clear the ancient teachings of unwanted and harmful overgrowths. Swami referred to this aspect of His Mission in His extempore Telugu poem with which He prefaced His Divine discourse on His 54th Birthday (28-11-1979). He specifically declared that one of the purposes of His Advent was to clear the misapprehensions created by the various commentators on the several scriptures from time to time and to give the inner meanings which are more important than the outer (or literal) meanings. Not infrequently do the commentators observe the "letter" and kill the "spirit" of the texts. In Swami's words, many commentators give "Apaarthas" (wrong meanings) and "Naanaarthas" (multiple meanings) and create "Anartha" (havoc) by making confusion worse confounded. Bhagavan stresses that He is not "Baahyapriya" (i.e., not fond of outward appearances or surface meanings), but that He is "Bhaavapriya" (particularly fond of the inner feelings). In other words, He attaches more importance to the inner or implied meanings than the apparent or superficial meanings of the scriptures.

The new insights which Bhagavan has provided in the understanding of the Bhagavad Gita may be seen as an illustration of this aspect of His Mission.

Message of the Gita

There are various views regarding the central message of the Gita. According to some commentators, the Gita's thrust is on Karma Yoga (Path of Action), while others argue that it is on Bhakti Yoga (Path of Devotion). Yet others assert that the main focus of the Gita is on Raja Yoga (Path of Meditation/Contemplation), while a few others declare that the Gita gives pride of place to Juana Yoga (Path of Knowledge). There are other commentators who dub all these viewpoints as partisan, and claim that the Gita underlines the harmony or integration of all the Yogas.

Bhagavan Baba, who is above all a great synthesiser, says: "Why all this wrangling? The Gita is a Kalpataru (a wish-fulfilling tree). It confirms whatever faith or viewpoint with which one approaches it." Swami says about Himself, "I am only a mirror. Each of you will find your own reflection in Me."

Having reconciled as above the different conflicting viewpoints on the central theme of the Gita, Baba propounds what He calls the "Aapaada Masthaka Drishti" (literally meaning the "Foot-to-Head View"). Just as a man's body is encompassed between his feet at one end and his head at the other end, Swami says the central message of the Gita can be found encompassed between the first and the last words. According to this approach, the first word of the first Gita sloka being "Dharma", and the last word of the last sloka being "Mama", the central teaching of the Gita is "Mama Dharma" (My Dharma or Swadharma). Thus, Bhagavan tells us that the teaching of the Gita is centred on Swadharma.

What is Swadharma? The meaning ordinarily attributed to this word is "the discharge of the duties or obligations enjoined on a person, by virtue of his or her station in life; including Varna (whether one is a Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya or Shudra), and Ashram (whether one is a celibate, a householder, a recluse or a renunciate)." In this context, the Gita declares, "Swadharme Nidhanam Shreyah, Para Dharmo Bhayaavahah" (Gita III. 35), which means even if a person encounters death in the performance of Swadharma, it is good for him or her, whereas attempting to do Para Dharma (alien Dharma) is fraught with fear.

Bhagavan Baba gives a homely illustration as well as an interesting story to bring home to us the principle of Swadharma enunciated in the Gita. The illustration is this: Suppose Sambar or Pulusu (pungent sauce) is poured into your eyes or nose instead of into your mouth, what will happen? Apart from the fact that the eyes or nose cannot know the taste, unlike the tongue, the eyesight may be impaired or lost, or in the case of the nose, it may lead to suffocation and even death. By this simple illustration, Baba drives home the lesson that the principle of Swadharma versus Paradharma is applicable even to the organs of our body.

The dog and the donkey

The story related by Baba in connection with this principle is briefly as follows: A washerman was maintaining a donkey to carry clothes, and also a dog to keep watch over the clothes at the "dhobi-ghat" (place of washing clothes). One day, for some reason, the washerman was angry with the dog and gave it a good beating, besides denying it any food. That day the dog accompanied its master as usual to the dhobi-ghat, but because it resented the treatment it had received from its master, it refrained from barking at some culprits who came from behind the bushes to steal the clothes which were spread out for drying in the sun. The donkey noticed this and out of a sense of loyalty to its master, it began braying very loudly with a view to drawing the attention of its master to the presence of the thieves hiding nearby. The washerman, who was already tired after washing the clothes, became annoyed with the donkey's braying, rushed at it in a fit of anger and gave it a hard beating with a heavy rod. The lesson of this small story is that because the donkey took upon itself the Dharma (duty) of the dog, it came in for severe punishment, although its intention was good.

"Atma dharma"

The ordinary meaning of Swadharma, based on one's station in life, is superficial, according to Swami because it is connected with the psycho-physical system of human beings who identify

Atman (Self) and not the body, the true meaning of Swadharma is "Atma Dharma". Thus Bhagavan indicates that the main teaching of the Gita is Atma Dharma.

This interpretation by Baba serves as an eye-opener for all spiritual aspirants, because it is the delusion of identification with the body (Deha-atma Bhranti) that is responsible for all the evils in society, and for our being caught up in the wheel of Samsara (cycle of births and deaths). It is for this reason that before commencing His divine discourses, Swami invariably addresses His audience as "Divyaatma Swaroopulaara!" (Embodiments of the Divine Atma!) It is for the same reason again that in the second chapter of the Gita, Krishna at the very outset gives Arjuna a strong dose of "Atma Tatwa" (the nature of the Self, the ever-abiding reality in man). The entire edifice of the Gita has been erected on the firm foundation of this "Atma Tatwa".

The Swadharma or Atma Dharma thus interpreted by Swami has for its basis the Upanishadic dictum: "Atma Eva Idam Sarvam" (All this is verily Atman). Swadharma, in this comprehensive sense, encompasses all the "Jati, Mata, Varna, Ashram Dharmas" (i.e., the Dharmas of all races, religions, castes and stations in life) as well as all the human values, namely, Sathya (Truth), Dharma (Righteousness), Santhi (Peace), Prema (Love) and Ahimsa (non-violence). The characteristics of a person following this Swadharma, alias Atma. Dharma, are delineated in a number of Gita verses. For example, Verse 32 of Chapter VI says that he is the best among yogis, who feels the pleasures and pains of all beings as his own. Again in Verse 30 of the same chapter, Krishna declares, "He who sees Me (Atman) in everything, and everything in Me, is never separated from Me, nor am I ever separated from him."

It is no exaggeration to say that the practice of Swadharma as interpreted by Swami, will not only lead to individual self-fulfillment but also result in universal welfare and the establishment of the reign of Truth and Righteousness on earth.

The Mistaken Identity

—*Ratanlal*

Most of us suffer in life because of our mistaken identity. Bhagavan Baba has been advising us all along in His talks and discourses to find out our true identity, and discover what we truly are through the direct path of Self-enquiry. Self-enquiry is considered as the direct path because it directly questions the very existence of the unreal I. All that we have to do is to give up the wrong notion of the I.

Normally when a person is asked the question, "Who are you?" the answer is, "I am so and so, I am tall, I am short, I am worried, I am happy, I am this or that." It is the ego which says, "I am this or that," thereby limiting the infinite Self to the finite mind-body organism. The body is gross and the mind is subtle and due to its subtlety it reflects the light of the Atman and considers

being inert by nature, is moved by a higher power and instead of merging in its source, it uses the divine power by which it appears sentient to satisfy the physical and mental desires.

Liberation from the “I”

The ego, considering itself to be autonomous, doubts the very existence of its source. Forgetting its basis, "the Self", the ego, identifying with the body, limits the Self. Thereafter it goes through many spiritual practices to liberate itself from the self-created bondage. Reality is nothing but the loss of ego, which mysteriously arises between the pure intelligence and the insentient body, and identifies itself erroneously with the individual body. When the identity of the ego is sought, being a non-entity it vanishes. Liberation is liberation from the individual I and not for the individual I. The Self is like the infinite space or sky. In relative parlance we speak of the Indian sky, the Pakistani sky, the Chinese sky and so on, but in fact "the sky is just sky." Individuality is a myth of the imagination. It arises when the unlimited Self is identified with the limited body. If we seek the source of the ego, it disappears. Individualising the indivisible is like drawing lines in water.

Atma is the basis of relativity and It also transcends it. Atma is that from which everything arises and into which everything merges. Atma is eternal. It remains unaffected by any appearances or disappearances in it. It is the Witness in everyone and is unaffected by joys and sorrows or pleasures and pains experienced by the mind-body complex. Whatever appears to exist is not apart from the Atma (Sat-Chit).

You know that "YOU ARE". You cannot deny your existence at any moment of time. For, you must be there to deny it. This pure existence is understood by stilling your mind. Mind is an outward going faculty of the individual. If that is turned within, it becomes still in course of time, and then "I AM" alone prevails; "I AM" is the whole Truth.

The ego and the self

The enquiry into "Who am I" has to be continuous throughout our waking life unlike other practices. It cannot be restricted to half an hour in the morning and half an hour in the evening. In this practice, one has not to run along with the thoughts but to run against them. At any moment of the day when any thought occurs, or reaction sets in, or there is a desire to give expression to one's opinion, or comment upon anything, or pronounce a judgement upon anyone, one should immediately revert back and try to find out to whom such ideas pertain. By doing so, one will be able to distinguish between the ego and the enduring background of silence which is the Self. The false I rises and sets into that which neither rises nor sets; the Self is constant illumination. Take no notice of the ego and its activities, but see only the light behind. The ego is the thought-I. The true-I is the Self. The state free from thoughts is the only real state. Everything arises with the rise of the I-thought or the waking I. Try and hold on to the I-thought, then the other thoughts will disappear. By this practice the mind will get habituated to being harboured in its own source. The best occupation for the mind is to find its own source and not to stray away from it.

worldly life. In course of time the queen wondered as to what was the purpose of life. What is the difference between human and animal life? If it is merely to enjoy the pleasures of the senses then there is no difference at all. The queen pondered over these questions for sometime, and then embarked upon the process of Self-enquiry. In course of time she got enlightenment. She became quite indifferent to the worldly life she had been leading, and the king noticed it. The king enquired from the queen about the reasons for her indifference to the pleasures of the world. The queen told him that she had been practising Self-enquiry. Thereupon the king too decided to abandon the palace, the kingdom, his wife and family and go to a forest to pursue this enquiry. The queen was ruling the kingdom in the king's absence; but after some time she wanted to find the progress her husband had made. She went in the garb of a sage to meet him. The king was very happy to meet a sage and welcomed the sage with due ceremony. The sage enquired from the king the reasons for his stay in the forest and the nature of the Tapas he was doing. The king replied, "I have left my kingdom, palace and family. I have renounced everything except the absolute basic necessities of life like a thatched hut and a water jug." He said he was doing Tapas to seek his true identity. The sage said: "You have not given up everything." The king said: "All that I have is this hermitage and I shall set fire to it, that will be the end of all my belongings." The sage said that even that is not giving up everything. The king said that "besides that all that I have is this physical body. If you think it proper, I will jump from a high cliff and end it." The sage said that the innocent body had done no harm. "Therefore you need not kill it. What you have still not given up is the one which claims that he has given up everything. That is the ego with its sense Of DOERSHIP." This opened the eyes of the king to his true identity.

Bhagavan says that there is no meaning in reading tons of books without putting into practice even a fraction of what one has studied. Bhagavan has given two examples to illustrate how the Self is experienced. The Self is always there and all that is needed is to remove the cover that envelops It. It is like fire that is covered by ash. As soon as the ash is blown off or removed the fire reveals itself. Another example He gave was that of a piece of white cloth which gets soiled by use. It is given to a dhobi for washing. When it comes back, we say the dhobi has whitened it. But in fact all that the dhobi had done was to remove the dirt from the cloth. Thereby it regained its original whiteness. Likewise we have to remove the impurities in us or the cover that hides the Self to experience It.

We pray to Bhagavan that by His grace and our efforts we are enabled to discover our real nature and experience oneness with the Self that we really are.

Medicos' Service in Sathya Sai Taluk

A comprehensive free medical checkup programme for the rural population in Sathya Sai Taluk was carried out by doctors and paramedical teams from all districts of Andhra Pradesh during July 8 to 10, with the blessings of Bhagavan. In all 88 doctors, including 29 lady doctors,

Pamudurthy and Bandlapally. In addition, three animal health camps were organised at Puttaparthi, Jangarajapalli and Brahmanapalli.

The medical check-up was done by specialists in medicine, Surgery, Gynaecology, Paediatrics, Dentistry, Ophthalmology and E.N.T. At Puttaparthi and Bukkapatnam, the check-up included heart diseases, while in Puttaparthi X-Ray and Pathology tests were also conducted.

Altogether 13,671 patients were examined at the five centres. Skeletal and Dental fluorosis were found to be common. Cataract was common among the eye patients.

22 Veterinary doctors and 21 paramedical personnel served at the animal health camps. Besides the medical personnel 53 Sai Seva Dal members including 34 ladies, rendered various services at the camps. Bhajans and film shows were held in the five centres during the evenings.

The Human Destiny

Most people in the world do not know the true significance-of- life. Many do not even seem to care about it. One in a million may be concerned about knowing the purpose of life. This concern is the fit it step in the journey towards the ultimate goal. Most young men are content, to regard eating, sleeping, dressing and rearing a big family as the main aims of living. All these doubtless are necessary to some extent. But they alone cannot contribute, to peace of mind or, fullness in life.

The phenomena, of the external world are what the eyes see, the ears hear, and the mind cognises. All these are sensory phenomena. Beyond the senses (Indriyas) is the mind and greater than the; mind is the Buddhi (the intellect). The intellect is governed by the Atma. The human destiny is to realise the Atma.

Among the sense organs, the most powerful is the mouth (which has the; powers of speech and consuming food). When the mouth is under the control of the mind, all other senses can be controlled. Speech should be restrained as much as possible. Then the attention of the mind should be, directed towards the Buddhi (which has the power of discrimination). When the Buddhi is turned towards the Atma (the indwelling Spirit), it begins to recognise the all pervading Spirit.

Bliss of the spirit

The inextricable connection between the phenomenal 'world outside and the world of consciousness inside eludes the understanding of ordinary people. Immersed in the desire for enjoying worldly pleasures, they do not attempt to discover the boundless joy to be derived from the inner Spirit. This is because all the sense organs are open only to experiences from outside.

the inner vision and enjoy spiritual bliss.

Is it the body that derives joy from looking at a thing of beauty? Or is it the Atma? What is it that relishes the food that is consumed? The body or the Spirit? What is it that enjoys, fragrance or is moved by companionship? Enquiring in, this manner, it will be found that it is the Atma that, is the enjoyer and not the physical body. The body by itself is gross and is incapable of experiencing joy. It must be realised that the Spirit transcends the mind and the intellect and pervades the entire cosmos. The Spirit is the basis for the cognition of the external world and experiencing the inner world.

Para vidya and apara vidya

The Vedas and Vedangas, music and literature, physics and chemistry, botany and biology—all these different branches of knowledge are related to the phenomenal universe. They belong to the category of "Apara Vidya"—the lower knowledge. People devote their lives, mainly to these studies. Only knowledge of the Spirit is "Para Vidya"—the Supreme-Knowledge.

"Apara Vidya" (worldly knowledge) is pursued mainly for earning a living: But even worldly knowledge exists to point, the way to spiritual awareness. Without spiritual knowledge, all other knowledge is valueless.

Every man has to enquire every moment about the purpose and goal of life. Eating, drinking, sleeping and passing on cannot be the meaning of human life. All these are common to, birds and beasts. What is the uniqueness, of man? He is endowed with faculties which can enable him to rise above the animal to the human and the divine level.

States of consciousness

Speech, (Vaak), Mind (Manas) and Breath (Prana) are manifestations, of the Atma. Each is related to a state of consciousness. They are Jagrati (the waking state), Swapna (dream state) and Sushupti (deeps sleep). In the Jagrati state, man is awake and experiences the outer, world through sight, hearing, speech and other senses. The phenomenal universe is, what one experiences through the five sense organs. The experience in the waking state is known as "Vishwa" because the experiences are the subtle form of the cosmic principle. "Vishwa" has 24 constituent elements: the five organs of action, the five sense organs, the five basic, elements and the five Pranas (vital airs) and the mind, the Buddhi (intellect), the Chitta (sub-conscious mind) and Ahamkara (ego-sense). In the dream state, only the four internal senses (the mind, the Buddhi, the Chitta and Ahamkara) function. They constitute the Antahkarana (the psycho-somatic agency): In this state, the experiencer has an effulgent form (Tejas) and is known as "Taijasa". "Sushupti" is the state of deep sleep. In this state, Prajna alone remains (the Principle of knowing). Hence the experiencer in this state is called "Prajna" (the Knower).

"Vishwa", "Taijasa" and "Prajna" are all different names for the Atma (in the different states of consciousness), according to the different forms assumed by the Atma in the various states.

"Prajnanam Brahma" (declares the Upanishad). Jnana, Vijnana, Prajnana, Sujnana and Ajnana are modifications of one and the same principle of Consciousness. Prajnana comprehends all that is experienced by the Antahkarana through impressions received by the sense organs, the eyes, the mouth, the ears, the nose, etc. Prajnana is immanent in Antahkarana as the principle which absorbs and interprets the messages received through the senses. The eyes, for instance, are like the bulb in a lamp. The bulb cannot emit light. It needs the electric current to make it burn. Likewise the eyes cannot see by themselves. It is Prajnana which sees through the eyes. The same thing applies to the ears and other organs. They all need the power of the inner current to do their work. All the sense organs are insentient by themselves. It is Prajnana that animates them and makes them instruments of the Consciousness (Chaitanya).

Sat-Chit-Ananda

The universe contains innumerable objects. In all of them, the one unchanging, eternal principle is the Atma. That is Prajnana. That is Brahman. It is the power of this eternal principle which sustains the evanescent and ever-changing objects in the universe. "Asti", "Bhaati" and "Priyam" are three indices of the Divine (Existing, shining and pleasing). Sat-Chit-Ananda are the attributes of the Divine. Sat indicates permanence. Chit indicates omniscience. Ananda is the state of unalloyed bliss. These three attributes of the Divine are changeless and have no form or name. When these three get associated with objects which have name and form, we have the Prapancha—the quintuple phenomenal universe. The cosmos is permeated by the Divine. Even if you are unable to see it, the Divine is present in everything. All our senses function because, of the Consciousness that operates in every being. Without that consciousness man would be an insentient creature.

The different states of consciousness are mutually exclusive. You cannot experience in one state what you have gone through in another. For instance, in a dream you may weep over the death of a person. But when you wake up, you don't weep for the person who died in the dream. What happened in the dream is true only in the dream state. In the waking state it is unreal (Mithya). Likewise we do not lament in a dream over a person who died in the waking state. Each experience is real only in its state of consciousness. But the one principle that is common to all the states of consciousness—waking, dream and deep sleep—is the Atma. Atma is not bound by the limitations of time, space and circumstance.

The body is impermanent. But it is the abode of the indwelling Spirit. It is a shrine and when it moves, the Divine moves with it. Hence the body should be cared for in the same way in which an iron safe which is of little value in itself, is safeguarded for the sake of the valuables kept in it.

What is it that binds man to the illusory world? It is not family or property. These can be given up when one wishes to do so. But what are most difficult to renounce are attachment (Raga) and hatred (Dwesa). As long as these are dominant in man, he cannot realise his true self. And as long as man remains unaware of his true self, he is in bondage. For a man in bondage, there is no freedom from suffering or worry.

trivial and temporary things. Together with academic studies, they should cultivate spiritual sadhana. Even in academic studies, they should not confine themselves to merely transferring to the memory what is contained in books. They must digest what they have studied and put their knowledge to practical use in the service of society. Try to absorb what is contained in the books and make this knowledge a part of your life. Just as water stored in a reservoir is used for irrigation through canals, the knowledge acquired by you should be diverted to useful channels for the benefit of society.

Rights and duties

Today everyone talks about his rights and "fights" for them. But they are forgetting their duties and responsibilities. Rights and duties are like the positive and negative ends of a battery. They go together. When duties are discharged properly, rights will be secured of their own accord. How can rights be ensured without the due performance of duties? Recognise your responsibilities as students. That will make you deserve your rights.

This country has inherited a glorious culture from ancient times. You must preserve this culture, while adapting it to suit modern conditions. Most of our Students are totally ignorant of our spiritual and cultural heritage. This ancient culture laid stress on Unity and sought to raise the human to the divine level. It aimed at promoting religious and social harmony. Today unity and tolerance are absent and our society is riddled with conflicts. The country lost its freedom in the past because of divisions. We should regard Bharat as one nation, with one heart, and proclaim the Truth to the world with one voice.

Students! Develop largeness of heart. The heart is not a physical organ. It derives its name "Hridaya" from the fact that it is the seat of compassion (Daya). Develop compassion for all. Go forward from the narrow feelings of "I" and "mine" to "We" and "Ours".

It is not easy to comprehend the formless, attributeless, infinite Divine. The truth of the Divine has to be discovered and experienced by each one. The Divine is omnipresent. You must lead a life of truth and godliness based on this conviction. Strive to make the nation an upholder of truth and righteousness. This is the foremost duty of students today.

—From Bhagavan's discourse at the Sri Sathya Sai Institute Auditorium, Prasanthi Nilayam, on the, Commencement of, the New Academic Year, 22-6-1987

The Bliss of Self-Control

—D. V. Krishna Rao, Hyderabad

Spiritual aspirants have to realise that control of desires is the primary step in sadhana for achieving purity of mind. All devotional exercises are designed to reduce worldly desires and

because the multiplication of wants has become the dominant feature of our life.

Swami, often states that devotion appears to grow when desires are fulfilled and it declines when desires are not realised and people turn away from God. Bhagavan has pinpointed the link between desires and devotion in, the case of most people whose worship is related to the realisation of specific wants. Prayers are offered to seek worldly favours from the Divine. The whole science, of modern economics is built upon the basis of how to meet the insatiable wants of people. Material satisfaction is almost the sole concern of economics.

How do wants grow from day to day? "Dhyaayatho Vishayaan pumsah Sangastheshu -upajasyathe. Sangaath sanjaayathe Kaamah" says the Gita. Constant thinking about material objects generates association with them. Such association gives rise to desire for enjoying them Krishna has revealed thus the origin of desire for, sensory objects. The more one is involved with things, of the world, the more the wants grow. To get the wants satisfied one has not only to use all one's natural and acquired skills, but has also to reckon with opposition from others. In this conflict of desires peace of mind is lost and depression and bitterness set in. The effort involved in controlling desires is very much less than what would be needed to satisfy them. The gain from keeping desires in check is truly limitless.

It is obvious that all wants are not of the same undesirable nature. It is only desires which are prompted by ostentation, conceit and infatuation that result in the individual's anti-social behaviour. In seeking light on Karma Yoga, Arjuna asked Sri Krishna: "Oh Vasudeva! Even though man does not wish to commit sin; what is it that impels him to sinful actions?" The Lord replied: "Kaama esha Krodha esha Rajoguna Samudbhavah Mahaasano Mahaapaapmaa. Viddhi enain iha vairinam" "The Rajoguna is the cause of Kama (lust or desire), and Krodha (anger) which are all-consuming and highly sinful. Know this as your worst enemy." The characteristic of Kama (sensuous desire) is that however much you may indulge in it there is no satiety. It is the source of all evil. Hence impulses arising from Rajoguna are to be regarded as opposed to all spiritual endeavour.

True renunciation

To begin with, we have to get rid of desires arising out of Rajo and Tamo gunas (desires prompted by passions and dark impulses). Bhagavan has declared: "It is the giving up of low desires that its true renunciation and real yoga."

Some desires are natural, such as the basic requirements for daily existence. Moreover, with the progress of society and the advancement of civilisation, it is natural for man to expect some other amenities, in addition to the basic necessities of life. Education, medical aid, scientific equipment for domestic needs fall into this category: If these things are sought, even while one is committed to a spiritual life, they should not be, regarded as superfluous luxuries. But accumulation of things which are destructive of human values and impediments to spiritual discipline should be totally avoided.

excesses of any kind. "Athi sarvathra Varjayeth", says Swami. Avoid excess of any kind. Even a good thing, when indulged in beyond limit, produces harmful results. "Sukham alpam bahukleso vishayagraahinaam. Anantam Brahmanishtaanaam iti Vedanta dindimah" says Adi Sankara. "Sensual pleasures are trivial and momentary and end in great misery. Those immersed in Brahman experience endless bliss, is the assurance given by Vedanta."

Desires cause agitations in the mind and disturb even the discriminating power of the intellect (Buddhi). In a mind bereft of peace, discontent takes root. "A mind without peace is like the sky without the moon," says Baba. Uncontrolled desires convert man into a demon.

Unchaste devotion

Sensual pleasures are illusory and transient. They seem to give happiness at one moment, but result in grief later. This has been the experience froth ancient times. Only devotion to the Divine confers perennial bliss." "Hrishikena Hrishikesa Sevanam" "Serve the Supreme Lord of the Senses through the senses" is the scriptural injunction. Only thus do the senses redeem themselves. To use them for going after mundane objects is to abuse them. Bhagavan IS the supreme wish-fulfilling Tree (Kalpataru). To seek from Him petty favours is to convert the Kalpataru into a Kamatars (a tree fulfilling petty wants). A devotee who prays for trivial sensual favours has been condemned by Sri Krishna as a "Vyabhichara" bhakta and his devotion as "Vyabhichara bhakti" (unchaste devotion).

Without control of desires, the senses cannot be controlled. And without sense-control the mind cannot be stilled. Only when the mind is restrained can man achieve real peace and joy. An Unrestrained mind is the enemy of the Atma. Arjuna was able to enjoy all pleasures because of his devotion and dedication to Krishna. Duryodhana, on the contrary, in pursuing worldly gains, lost everything.

Bhagavan explained, in His historic discourse on the occasion of His sixtieth birthday celebrations in November 1985, that the "Ceilings on Desires" programme of the Sathya Sai Seva Organisation is not intended to collect money for offering to Swami, but to encourage devotees to reduce their desires in all possible ways as a spiritual sadhana and practise the strictest economy in the use of food, time, energy and money. Everything that is saved by the practice of economy should be utilised for the welfare of the community.

Curbs on desires

Moreover, all things which one receives or enjoys should be regarded as gifts from God and should be used for right purposes and should not be misused or wasted. Control on desires is not for achieving economic goals but for developing devotion to the Divine. Limiting desires will serve to reduce one's acquisitive propensities and diminish the urge to accumulate wealth without limit. As a result, traits like ostentation and the arrogance of wealth and pomp will gradually disappear. The mind will be increasingly directed towards higher values and spiritual aspirations. One will then be filled with peace and love towards all beings. Moreover, with the giving up of improper desires and evil habits, one's physical and mental health will improve and

giving up one bad habit, a man can bring up well two good children." With Bhagavan's grace, we must constantly practise control of the senses and turn our minds and hearts from mundane desires to the realisation of the Divine Within us.

—*Translated from the July '87 issue of Telugu Sanathana Sarathi*

Diamond is first just a dull piece of stone, a hard pebble. Only when it is cut by a skilful artisan does it become a multifaceted flame of fire! Allow yourselves to be so treated that all your dullness will disappear and you will emerge as a resplendent diamond!

—**Baba**

Light the Lamp in your Hearts

On the evening of June 22, Bhagavan formally inaugurated the new wing of the Institute Students' Hostel. After lighting a lamp in the new building, Bhagavan went round the dormitories.

Later, Bhagavan addressed the students and staff in the hostel-dining hall, which had been specially decorated for the occasion. In the course of His discourse, Bhagavan said:

A lamp has a unique power, which is not possessed by any other object. It dispels darkness. For this reason Bharatiyas have always worshipped lighted lamps. Before commencing any auspicious or religious function, the ceremonial lamp is lit. Another notable quality of the lamp is that the flame goes upward—the path of the Brahman. The sinful path leads downwards.

The light of the lamp, however, can only dispel the darkness outside but cannot remove the darkness that envelops the heart as a result of attachments and aversions carried from previous lives. Not all the blaze, of light which filled Lanka when Hanuman set it on fire could remove the darkness from Ravana's heart. Because his heart was filled with lust and hate, no light could penetrate it.

Even as a lamp needs a container, oil, wick and a matchstick, to light it, for lighting the inner flame, one needs a container in the form of renunciation (Vairagya), the oil of devotion (Bhakti), the wick of mental concentration, and the matchstick of true awareness (Tattwa-jnana). Even if any one of these four is lacking, the light of the Self cannot be lit.

The world today is immersed in fear and suffering. The only way to get rid of fear is to cultivate non-attachment (Vairagya). Where there is no attachment, there is no fear. Only through non-attachment and renunciation can one acquire the competence to experience inner

the forest. What is called for is renunciation of all evil tendencies. That is Yoga. In the Gita, three paths have been indicated. "Matkarmakrit Matpa-tamo Madbhaktah" ("Who works for Me only, who looks on Me as the only refuge, and is devoted to Me," says Krishna). Here, "who works for Me" (Matkarmakrit) does not mean doing service to Krishna. The "Me" represents the Cosmic Being. Because everything in the universe is permeated by the Divine, one is enjoined to do service to all as the primary duty. All actions have to be done in society. You have to serve your country. The individual, the community and the world are the triune aspects of Divinity. To ignore any one of these is to court failure in the purpose of living. The goodness of the individual promotes the welfare of society. Social well-being is the basis for national welfare.

Curbs on desires

The cultivation of renunciation (Vairagya) calls for the practice of certain restraints and disciplines. There should be curbs on desires. One should give back to society what one has been able to acquire by the use of the knowledge and skills received with the help of society. True sacrifice consists in sharing with others one's wealth, strength and qualities, which are in fact derived from society.

One should not be remiss in discharging one's duties and responsibilities. The proper fulfilment of duties is part of the spiritual discipline necessary for getting enlightenment. No room should be given for doubts. Many are haunted by doubts of every kind. While doubts remain, there can be no liberation from bondage.

Students should strive to lead exemplary lives. No one can give up completely all social relations or actions. Hence, one should dedicate all actions to the Divine and thereby develop the sense of detachment. To remove the chaos and violence prevailing in society today, you have to, become Karma-yogis and devote all your knowledge, abilities and energies to the transformation of society. It is not wealth that is important. Character alone counts. Sensual pleasures (Bhoga) can only lead to disease (Roga). Sacrifice (Thyaga) leads to Yoga (communion with the Divine).

I have lit the lamp in the hostel today as a symbol of the spiritual light that has to be lit in the hearts of all of you. Spiritual enlightenment is as vital as academic knowledge. All other branches of knowledge are like the rivers which merge in the ocean (of Spiritual Knowledge).

During your educational career, develop purity of character and cultivate right habits. Even in ordinary routine actions like sitting, do not be sloppy and indifferent. If your back is bent when you sit, the Sushumna nadi (which runs through the spinal column) gets bent and this will produce harmful consequences including loss of memory power. Discipline is vital. Avoid unnecessary talk and purposeless association with anyone. Having come for study, you must concentrate on your primary duty. Strive to make your parents happy by your conduct and performance and see that you bring credit and good name to the Institute. Only then will your life be an example to others.

In the Indian concept of Purusharthas—the basic goals of life—Moksha figures as the ultimate goal. The other three are Dharma, Artha and Kama. Bhagavan has explained, the significance of the Purusharthas in many of his discourses, pointing out how they are the foundation for a life of righteousness; leading ultimately to oneness with the Divine.

Moksha is equated with the concept of liberation. The common view is that the individual is caught up in the wheel of Samsara and that escape from this endless cycle of birth and death lies in seeking Moksha as the goal.

This idea of liberation would make it appear that the concept of Moksha is a world-negating concept. To regard the vicissitudes of life as a bondage and to escape from them as the primary object of life would mean that liberation consists in escaping from the problems of life and renouncing all contact with the world. Bhagavan has presented a concept of liberation which involves not a flight from the world but a renunciation of attachments to the things of the world. Moksha is Moha Kshayam—the removal of delusion (Moha). What is this delusion? Swami explains that the primary delusion from which the individual suffers is identifying what is eternal, in him—the Atma—with what is perishable, namely, the body. It is the identification of one's self with the body—and all the desires and aversions to which the sense organs of the body are subject—that is the Moha (delusion) from which the individual has to free himself.

How does the delusion arise? It arises from the fact that the mind, which is to serve as the master of the sense organs, becomes a slave of the senses and pursues objects in the external world which attract them. As long as the mind is preoccupied with the external world, the desires and hatreds arising from involvement with the external world cannot be got rid of and it is these which constitute the bondage for man.

Man, however, is endowed with something above the mind, namely, the Buddhi, which gives him the power of discrimination to choose between right and wrong and to seek the Truth. It is the failure to use the Buddhi in the proper way that makes man, who has evolved from the animal to the human level, to remain at the animal level instead of rising to the divine level.

The problem, therefore, of liberation turns into the crucial question: "WHO AM I?" It is not easy for most people to embark on this inquiry as long as, they are caught up in the affairs of the world and are so deeply involved in the pursuit of their acquisitive aspirations, that they have no time nor the inclination to pause and think about the real meaning of life.

Only the experiences of various kinds, the fluctuations of fortune and the hard knocks of fate, induce people from time to time to reflect on the purpose of life. But, very often, when the troubles are overcome by some means or the other including momentary prayers to the Divine, the interest in the basic aim of life is forgotten.

Bhagavan's mission is primarily to remind all mankind that the search for the true meaning of life is the primary obligation of every thinking human being. He has come to re-affirm the ancient Vedic truth that the universe is permeated by God and that the goal of human existence is for the individual to realise the oneness of this Divinity and achieve unity with the Divine.

This achievement is not an intellectual exercise or an adventure in metaphysical speculation. It is an experience which has been realised by seekers and sages in the past and which can be realised today by the earnest aspirant.

Bhagavan points out that there is no single path to this realisation. Human beings are in different stages of evolution and function in different ways. Hence, the paths are many but the goal is one. The significance of Bhagavan's message to the world today consists in His affirmation of the variety of methods open to the spiritual aspirant, while the goal is only one.

Bhakti and jnana

Bhagavan Baba has pointed out that these different paths are really different stages in the journey of the soul towards the goal of mergence in the Divine, Righteous acts, such as service to fellowmen, compassion to all living things, performance of religious rites, meditation, japa and the like, are all steps towards the cultivation of Bhakti or the love of the Lord. But Bhakti itself must lead to Jnana, namely, the realisation that the Divine and the devotee are one. This culmination of knowledge or Jnana is expressed in the statement in the Gita, where the Lord says: "Bahoonam Janmanaamanthe Jnaanavan Maam Prapadyate Vaasudevas-sarvamithi Sa Mahaatma sudarlabhah" (VII-19) "At the end of many lives, the Jnani realises *Me* knowing that All is God. Such a great soul is very rare to find."

While the realisation of union with the Divine is not a consummation that comes easily to every devotee or spiritual aspirant, Bhagavan emphasizes that what is important to every devotee or aspirant, irrespective of their individual capacities; is to recognise the supreme opportunity provided by human birth to strive for the, understanding of one's essentially divine origin and destiny and to make use of all the instruments given by the Divine, for the purpose of discovering the Divine. It is in laying stress on this universal destiny of humanity that Bhagavan is supremely relevant to the world today.

Spiritual transformation

While scientific and technological advances have conferred on man enormous power to manipulate the forces of nature for good or ill, Bhagavan points out that without a corresponding development of the moral and spiritual qualities of man, these enormous powers may prove destructive and disastrous. To a world steeped in materialistic pursuits and aspirations, Bhagavan reveals, not only by His illuminating expositions of the eternal verities, but also by His innumerable manifestations of the omnipresence of the Divine, that all human activity must be based on the conscious awareness of the immanence of God in everything in the entire Cosmos. In awakening this consciousness in the minds and hearts of millions of people all over the world, Bhagavan is effecting spiritual transformation of a kind unknown in the history of mankind.

When the divine mission of Bhagavan reaches its fulfillment, we will find mankind, or at least the vast majority of mankind, liberated in the highest sense, of the word—liberated from narrow attachments and petty hatreds and jealousies. Such a liberated world will be one in which Love is the primary impulse inspiring all human action and the world community will consist of cooperative human beings living in harmony with one another because they have discovered their oneness in their common divinity.

It may seem utopian to suggest such a development in human affairs in the context of a world torn by conflict, suspicion and fear. But it should be remembered that large groups of spiritually oriented persons, dedicated to the service of the Divine, are active in many countries not only carrying the perennial message to the mass of the people but also exemplifying in their lives the transforming power of the Divine. The inspiration for all these people comes from the message and mission of Bhagavan, which is relevant to the individual, the community and the world.

Can there be any greater goal for man to strive for than the complete state of spiritual liberation, which is also a state of ineffable and enduring bliss? This is the, destiny to which Bhagavan Sathya Sai Baba beckons everyone.

—From "SAI CHANDANA", Published by Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning

Letters from the Lord

—Prof. N. Kasturi

The Divine pen writes letters to persons distracted by doubt or despair, or defeated and demoralised by disaster. These letters carry His Love and Mercy into their hearts and heal the wounds that fester there; they shed sunshine and laughter to brighten joyous occasions. Invariably, they feed and foster the springs of spiritual striving and help in the growth of Love.

No occasion is too routine or trite or too grand for Him to play His role as a teacher. Writing to a bridegroom and a bride, He tells them of the rites as well as the duties of both: "You are not just boy and girl; meeting and dating. You are Siva-Shakti, hyphenated, as truly as I am, the right half and the left half of the same body. May you be ever in the shade of joy and contentment; may you both float as one on waves of ecstatic love; may you sway merrily on the flower-decked swing of faith, held by the ropes of courage and confidence; may the boat which you are boarding this day be loaded with happy comradeship and festivity, health and wholesomeness; let it reach, safe and smooth, the Lotus Feet of the Lord. Row it forward, both of you, with the oars of surrender and service; let its sails be filled with the breeze of Grace."

twenty-two years ago (in 1958)! It illustrates His omnipresence and His omniscience, as well as the vastness of His Love-attributes that He has decided to demonstrate in this Avataric form, in order to draw into the crucible of transformation the peoples of the world.

I had returned to Bangalore after a long and arduous pilgrimage to the holy shrines on the Ganga, to Bodhgaya, Dakshineswar, Kamarpukur and Puri. I was urged to take my mother and wife on this pilgrimage by Baba Himself. He had blessed us the day we started north and assured us that we will have Him with us during our journey. He said, "On three railway tickets, four shall travel!" Baba, we knew, is the stowaway in every ark which breasts the deluge of delusion; He is the companion of all who progress on the road of pilgrimage.

The name and the form

When I had finished the assignment He had given me, I wrote to Him at Kodaikanal Hill where He was staying at that time, expressing our gratitude and informing Him that all three of us had clear and tangible `visions' of Him at Rishikesh, Varanasi and Gaya. In the reply I received, Baba wrote, "Your letter reached me at Kodaikanal in time, but since we came down to Madras that very day, I could not reply to your letter. I reached Madras on the 25th, around midnight (the letter is dated 26th). I am happy that you have returned full of joy after visiting the holy places with your *matru devi* (venerable mother). How can delay, disappointment or danger cross your plan when *Swami* is ever with you? My name is not distinct from my Form. The Name recalls the Form, as soon as it is pronounced or heard. When the Form is seen, the Name comes into the consciousness that very moment. So, when the Name is ever dancing on your tongue, the Form, too, has to be before you and beside you. What need is there to mention this in your letter as a gift from me? I *have* to manifest the Form, whenever and wherever my Name is remembered with faith or sung with devotion.

Sadhana and grace

"You might say that those `visions' were boons of Grace from Swami. No, I always say, `*Sadhana* first, *Sankalpa* later'. That is the correct order. My *Sankalpa* or Will confers bliss only after assessing the depth of the yearning in the devotee. The *sadhana* (discipline, spiritual striving, steady practice) is the essential prerequisite. You were a professor and so you can understand this easily. You must have evaluated the written answers of your students. You evaluate and assign them marks only after careful scrutiny of what they have written, don't you? I, too, measure and weigh the sincerity and steadiness of the *sadhana* you have imposed on yourselves and I frame my *Sankalpa* accordingly. Of course, many are not aware that the misery in which they find themselves can be negated by *sadhana*.

"At Kodaikanal, thousands had gathered for the evening bhajans. They were having darshan for the first time in their life. It was their `right' to get that darshan that took me to this Hill Station. For, as you know, I had not planned to come here. It all happened so suddenly."

Now I wish to quote from a letter written to a devotee who, due to desperate financial, straits, desired to flee the country and proceed to Malaysia, but who planned to commit suicide when the steamer ticket and travel documents were stolen by pickpockets in the harbour area at Madras. This letter was written when Baba's age was 23. "Pattabhi, dear devotee! Baba is writing to you; see, He is blessing you. Dear child! What madness is this? What a letter have you written, and left at home! It is foolish to be hasty. Think over your affairs calmly. Slow deliberation always reveals the true and the beneficial. Think of the crores, of people in the world who are in conditions far worse than yours. Remember, you have me to guard you and guide you. How many of them have this fortune? Consider that. Are you the, one and only victim of poverty and indebtedness? The step you are contemplating cannot give you rest or peace. It is not right. It is not manly to run away from responsibility. Listen to me! Go back, be at your place at home. Be bold; face the world with courage. Courage will set you free. It can conquer all obstacles. Give up your foolish plan to escape." And Pattabhi went back, recovered self-confidence and made a success of himself.

Advice to residents

When He is absent from Prasanthi Nilayam for long, Baba writes letters to be read aloud to the residents: Often, they are sharp reminders of the need to respect the boundaries, the lines He has drawn for adherence. "Blessings to all at the *mandir!* Tell them to fulfill the duties assigned and carry out the responsibilities fixed. The daily schedule of *puja, dhyana, bhajan, sankirtan* and study, should be followed punctually and with faithful devotion. People should move among others with love and reverence. Of what benefit is *sadhana* if it is done without controlling jealousy, envy, pride, anger and malice? However long you may live in the *ashram*, these vices will yet undermine whatever merit you acquire. The proof of the rain is the wetness of the ground. The proof of *sadhana* is the subjugation of the senses. Give up irrelevant and impertinent talks and activity; cultivate self-examination, self-discovery; develop the inner eye, the inner disciplines. Make the best of this chance acquired as a result of the good done in many previous lives. Of course, Swami's Grace and Love are ever with you, but to earn them more and more, *sadhana* has to be done every day, with greater and greater enthusiasm. The residents of Puttaparthi and of Prasanthi Nilayam have to lead the way for mankind, so they have to lead pious, humble and disciplined lives."

—From "*Sathyam Sivam Sundaram*", Part IV.
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Endless Blindness

The Mother Cat, it is said, carries its newly born kittens, still with unopened eyes, from house to house, depositing them in seven different homes. By the time the seventh house is reached, the kittens open their eyes and can see well and clearly. Man changes home at every

Sri Sathya Sai Education in Human Values

Learners All

—Bea Flaig

Bhagavan Sathya Sai Baba has introduced a new concept in education. He has replaced the limited view of education as preparation for earning a living with the unlimited education for life—that is, learning to meet life's challenges with equanimity and love. Education, He emphasizes, needs to promote human qualities and morality so that men do not remain merely human in form and appearance.

As I become more and more involved in Sathya Sai Education in Human Values, layers of understanding begin to unfold. A major awakening came when I clearly realized that Baba was saying we have within us the seeds of morality, just waiting to sprout. This is our innate human quality. That change in my thought process made it so simple. I did not have to teach values to the children nor to the teachers I was training. Instead, we were to embark on a learning process together, awakening that which is latent in all of us. This is true "education for life".

As Sai devotees, we can easily understand that the Sathya Sai EHV programme provides this kind of education because we know its source. But what does it mean for educators in general.

A common agenda

First, we may say that EHV is a programme which develops the child's character through a scientifically and pedagogically sound system and that its effectiveness is long-lasting, as it reaches the child at all levels of his personality. Then we may say that it is inter-disciplinary, interwoven into all subject areas as well as into the daily lives of the students and that character development through EHV does not discard the three R's but enhances them. Finally, we may say that as the five basic human values—Truth, Right Action, Peace, Love and Non-violence—are experienced, we learn that there is a common agenda in this world. We begin to celebrate our diversity and at the same time rejoice in our unity.

These fundamentals of the programme can be seen in action by looking at some of the experiences of New York City school children who have been part of the EHV experience. The children, who come from diverse backgrounds, are achieving a better understanding of them and others.

Bhagavan Baba says that through EHV we will encourage children to gain knowledge that will lead to wisdom. This can be illustrated by the story of Daniel, a nine-year old boy, who was helped by an EHV lesson on perseverance. A week after the lesson, he tackled the problem of looking for a misplaced toy, and after much effort he was successful in finding it. In a story he wrote about the incident, Daniel concluded, "Don't cry! Try!"

Another example of EHV's capacity to enlighten children is related by a first-grade teacher. One time when the children in her class were drawing pictures, she overheard an interchange between two children. The first child, Mary, asked another for a crayon but was refused. Mary then called out, "Remember, sharing is caring!" Needless to say, Mary had remembered that week's lesson, and her little friend received an added reminder.

Baba says that EHV "will raise the level of moral life and brighten lives." This is because EHV encourages children to act in ways that bring out the best in them and to avoid behaviour that is detrimental. Values become for them the essence of their life. The case of Paul, a sixth-grade student, is worth noting here. He tells about the time he was escorting his little sister to school. She was dawdling, taking her time, and Paul was getting worried that he would be late. "I was about to yell at her and pull her by the arm," Paul said, " when all of a sudden the word PATIENCE flashed across my mind and stopped me. Instead, I told her nicely to hurry up."

The teaching components used in EHV each have a special contribution to make to the overall programme.

Stories and mottos

Stories have a great power and offer, the child a source of positive role models. For example, when John, a fourth grader heard the story of how a woman with cerebral palsy ran the New York City Marathon on crutches he was so moved that he wrote her a letter. In it, he said, "You inspire me to have self-confidence."

Quotations penetrate deeply into the child's memory as in the case of Judy, another student, who remembered EHV by "all those wonderful quotations." She says, "They kept me going through junior high school. 'Good, better, best—never let it rest, until the good is better and the better is best.'"

Group activities help the child experience and reinforce the values. For some, the discussion activity remains paramount as in the case of Linda, who had been in my sixth grade class. She recalled a discussion on optimism, three years later. When Linda visited me, she told me how she had used this outlook to face more easily a big problem that had recently confronted her.

EHV brightens the lives of parents, too. Mrs. C., the mother of a fifth grade student, stopped me one day and asked what was happening in the class. She was delighted with the, change in her child. "My son was so sweet last night," she said. "He asked how he could help me, and then, after dinner, he told me how wonderful the meal was. He's never done that before!"

Spirit of service

Baba says EHV will encourage children to serve others. Teachers using the programme tell how much more caring the children in their classes are becoming and how much more conscious these youngsters are of the environment, even picking up papers from the floor without adult prodding. EHV, children are also reaching out into the community, getting involved in service projects and intergenerational activities.

It is an exciting and rewarding time to see this revolutionary change in education begin. The Sathya Sai EHV programme will help us, children and adults alike, to withstand the challenges of life with equanimity and joy. And as we move through this process, we will learn that "Those who bring sunshine into the lives of others cannot help but bring it to themselves!"

Integration of Humanity

—*Dr. Sara V. Pavan, Sydney*

Our planet is now in the grip of unprecedented changes which are constantly threatening its very survival. These negative forces cannot be allowed to continue unchecked. To halt this trend, people across the world have already started thinking and acting in a positive direction, beyond their own traditional boundaries and beliefs, helping in integrating the family of humanity. The Universe is a 'living organism' with its intrinsic 'mechanisms' operating through its constituents, perhaps with some degree of elasticity or forgiveness.

Throughout the Universe there is order, where there is compliance with this mechanism, which we may refer to as 'Natural Laws', 'Universal Laws' or 'Dharma'. Everything that is manifest is 'Nature' and Nature is God Itself. Therefore, these are 'God's Laws'. Sri Sathya Sai Baba constantly reminds us, "Nature is, the preacher and your own life is your Teacher."

There is continuity in everything, both in the manifested physical and in the un-manifested spiritual 'worlds'—one forming the basis for the other. Nothing has come from nowhere. The body, for example, is matter and will re-cycle back into the elements of nature. The soul, which is the spirit within, is 'Energy' or 'Universal Consciousness', and this too cannot be destroyed. Hence, the 'Soul' also gets re-cycled, until it becomes one with 'Pure-Consciousness'. It is, as Sri Baba says, like the one electric current (God) flowing through many diverse appliances (matter in many forms or static manifestation), making them function (dynamic manifestation). Matter and Energy are so closely inter-related that they are inter-changeable.

Everything that is manifest must one day disappear. That is the way with nature. That is TRUTH for all times. But, what never dies is the spirit within everybody, the life-force that animates them into inimitable dynamic manifestations or 'whole' persons. This spirit (Atma) is immortal and is ONE with the WHOLE of Creation (Paramatma, God principle). However

souls.

However, humanity, with its selfishness and attachments together with pride and self-aggrandisement displayed through institutions and power-bases, has distorted the Truth of UNITY into creeds and warring factions.

Truth alone can set us free from all dualities. The most pronounced negative forces such as fear and anxiety can drive even apparently sane people into insane actions. We do not realize how powerful these negative forces can be. We are essentially a part of the Whole. When we understand this Truth, we become free. True Love has no fear, no bargaining and no rivalry. Love is not an emotion. It is a great force on its own. Love alone should be our means as well as the end. Selfless love is the highest value and must be experienced. Every person is God and is of God. All children manifest this beauty and purity until they are exposed to the polluting influences of adults, those negative values that are already harming them, those 'complexes' that have made each person a personality. We must honestly get rid of these `complexes' that we have added upon ourselves. Only then we would, become persons. The earth itself becomes heaven for those who have humbled themselves to Truth—and experienced the Bliss—of Love and forgiveness.

We are fortunate to live in a New Age of Consciousness, beyond mere religions and rituals. There are distinct signs that the destructive forces will fade in the light of this strong positive energy. A great spiritual force is at work to awaken humanity to experience its innate divinity and reveal its infinite potential.

As Bhagavan Baba says: "The world is the mansion of God and each; country is a room in it." All people belong to one family, although they live in different parts of the world and live differently. We share far too many things in common and we cannot destroy our great purpose through parochialism, nationality or religion. We do know this intuitively, but lack the courage to live accordingly.

May all people of the world realize their family hood, through their own personal experience of those common spiritual values emphasised, by Baba, and become privileged participants in the inevitable birth of the `Golden Age' for all to rejoice.

STUDENTS' CORNER

Gloves and Grace

—Priya Kumar

I am a 14-year old Grade 9 student at the Highland Junior High School in Toronto, Canada. Recently, I had, I hope, the good fortune of experiencing Bhagavan's Grace. I told it to my

Centre of Toronto. One of them suggested that I should share the episode with the readers of "Sanathana Sarathi."

On Sunday mornings I deliver 35-40 newspapers in my neighbourhood. These are morning papers so I have to deliver them before 8 a.m. But Sunday, February 15, 1987, was an extremely cold morning. The temperature was - 23 C. There was also a chill wind, which made the temperature seem even worse. As usual, I started out with my load of newspapers in a shopping cart accompanied by my pet dog, Snowball. Snowball is fluffy, white Samoyed, an Arctic breed. But the weather was so cruel that I thought even my Arctic companion was not enjoying the walk. His breath was freezing on his whiskers and I had some fun breaking them off.

Very soon the fun ended as the cold began piercing through my padded coat and gloves. Since I was pushing the metal bar of the shopping cart, I felt more cold in my fingers and they began to hurt. Rather carelessly I had worn my thin gloves instead of the thick ones. I could have turned back and gone home for the second pair of gloves, but foolishly I did not and continued on my round.

I was about half-way through my route when the pain in my fingers became unbearable. I feared my fingers could get frostbite. I thought of returning, but I would have had to walk the same distance back! Also, the papers had to be delivered before 8 a.m. and I was running out of time. I felt like crying. I wished my father or mother would drive by so that I could get a ride. I wished I had the other pair of gloves so that I could save my fingers. All the while, I was praying to Baba to somehow help me. But nothing seemed to work.

I realized that it was impossible to continue any further. Reluctantly, I decided to return home. I thought, I would deliver one last paper that was in my hand and then return home. I was about to walk up to a house to deliver that paper, when, to and behold, barely a few feet from where I stood, I saw a pair of beautiful jet-black gloves! I jumped with joy!

Then I thought; if they had been lying there overnight they would be frozen stiff and could be useless. Anyway I picked them up. To my utter surprise, I found they were not frozen! In fact, they were as though they had just been dropped there! I wore them over my gloves and they fitted me perfectly!

I looked around to see whether there was anyone who could have accidentally dropped them there. But the street was deserted. The neighbourhood was still asleep on that cold Sunday morning. Who could have walked through there so early in the morning, I wondered. In any case, anyone accidentally dropping the gloves in that weather would at once miss them! It was so very cold!

I said, "Thank you Baba!" finished my paper route and returned home to get ready to attend my Bal Vikas class.

our visit, during the morning darshan Baba had come to where my mother and I were sitting, had materialized Vibhuti and put it in my mother's palm and on my forehead. Now I know what He meant when He gave me that Vibhuti!)

“You are Divine”

—H. H., Geneva

When earthly joys appear complete,
some signal comes for earthly strife
to burst upon us, unawares,
and catch us in a net of cares.
But Sai is here to show us how
the tree that's bending every bough
with fruit that's never been so sweet
is just the tree inviting folks
to wreak their havoc and their jokes.

Sai Himself will never crumble,
though storms may rumble.
He does not wilt,
no matter who may tilt
with stick or stone against the green
of His eternal Tree of Life,
where ripens golden fruit serene.

He melts alone for hearts who yearn
for truth and love; to them He'll turn.
All bitterness He trades for bliss,
and never tires of saying this
"Pain and pleasure, praise and blame
in the end are all the same,
for all are one, and all are Mine
O Child of God, you are divine!"

Since light and love are what we are,
why should we wait to know delight
or stint a waiting world of light
when we, like flower or shining star,
can breathe out beauty near and far?

There are two duties to be done by man the one along the Dharmamarga for this world and the one along the Brahmamarga for eternal liberation. The Dharmamarga is the left hand, and so it can be left. Why, it will leave of itself after the fruit becomes ripe. That is why it is called 'left'! Leave it and do not grieve over it. But hold on to the right, the Brahmamarga; for it is 'right' that you should do so.

—**Baba**

The Winning Smile

Once it happened that Krishna, Balaram and Satyaki who were quite little boys at that time, scarce four or five years old, strayed into a thick jungle, all alone, when darkness fell, and there was no way of reaching Gokulam! Of course, as you must have guessed already. It was a stratagem of Krishna; even at that age, he would do nothing without a deep purpose behind it and the purpose would invariably be teaching some one some good lesson. They decided to spend the night, just where they were: Krishna put fright into them with his descriptions of ghosts; ghouls and demons roaming in search of human prey. He proposed that two shall sleep for three hours at a stretch while the other one kept watch.

It was Krishna's duty to keep awake and be on the lookout from 1 to 10; Satyaki was to be vigilant from 10 to 1 A. M. and Balaram was to start his part of the duty at 1 and keep on till 4. Satyaki sat up at 10 and Balaram and Krishna laid themselves on beds of dried leaves and slept soundly. Meanwhile a demon did actually present himself before the little Satyaki. He fell upon the boy, who resisted heroically, dealing and receiving hammer strokes with fists with a good number of clawing and biting in between. The demon had to retreat at last, leaving Satyaki badly mauled, but happy. The two brothers were sound asleep; they had not been disturbed in the least by noise of the encounter. Satyaki had met blow with blow: and dealt injury for injury. At 1, he awakened Balaram and stretched his body on the heap of leaves, as if nothing happened. The demon invited Balaram too for combat and had to retreat humiliated, because Balaram too was as fierce as he, and his blows were even more terrible than Satyaki's. Balaram too curled himself into the bed at 4 A. M., after waking up Krishna who was to keep watch in Brahma-muhurta, the auspicious period when Gods are to be propitiated, that is, until dawn.

The demon came roaring like a wounded tiger, and, advanced ferociously at the little Divine Boy. Krishna turned his sweet charming face at him, and rewarded him with a lovely smile. That smile disarmed the demon; the longer he came under its influence, the weaker became his vengeance and venom. At last, the demon became as docile as a lamb; when the other two awoke, they were surprised at the victory that Krishna had won by the weapon of Love. You cannot destroy anger by anger, cruelty by cruelty, hatred by hatred. Anger can be subdued only by forbearance: cruelty can be overcome by non-violence, hatred yields only to charity.

—**Baba** (*Chinna Katha*)

A Place called Prasanthi

*Show me a place in this 'infinite' world
Where the eucalypts reach for the sky,
Where coconut palms, are in long rows
And Ashok trees line every side.*

*Crows come to roost in the branches above
Sounding like seagulls down by the shore;
With mynah birds squawking at dusk each
day
As we all sit awaiting the Lord.*

*From the crowd there is silence everywhere,
All anticipate That which will come,*

*Some travelled half way around the world,
To catch a, glimpse of Him that is One.*

*All eyes are on Him as He glides on the
sands*

*Taking letters and talking to many,
Some are then chosen for interviews,
For those, no disappointments, not any.*

*My Life is My Message, a message of love,
Words for mankind, that will never cease
May we always be at His Lotus Feet
At Prasanthi, abode of the Highest Peace.*

—Terry Gallagher.

STUDENTS' CORNER:

Yearning for Sai

My soul awaits Sai.
He is my help and shield.
My heart rejoices- in Him.
I trust in His holy name.
Sai! Let Your love rest on me
Even as my hope rests on You.

I need only say, "I am slipping"
And Your love instantly supports me,
In the midst of all my, troubles
You console me and make me happy.

When Thou art near me, O Lord,
I am lifted on to heights sublime.
One look of Thine, my Lord,
In me raises a new surge.
Thy gentle, caressing touch
Fills me with Love Divine.

In Thy dear presence knowing.
My soul yearns for Thee, my Lord:

Thy beauty fins my head with joy.
Thou art my only solace, Sai.

Thoughts of Thee are my constant
companion
I call upon Thee night and day
Thy love is like a running stream
One dip leaves Me sparkling clean,

I turn to Thee in right earnest
And seek in Thee my final rest
Make me verity Thine own
And pure like You alone!

Dear Sai! Let my words reach your ears
Spare a thought for my tears,
Come, O Lord, and save this helpless one,
Besides Thee, for me there is none

GOKULASHTAMI SANDESH:

The Avatar as the Ideal

*Men seek a good time, position and good life
But will not cultivate good thoughts, wisdom or right conduct.
Do you know why legs have been given
Is it to roam aimlessly in alleys and bylanes?
No. It is to take you to the shrine of Lord Siva.
Do you know why you have been endowed with eyes?
Is it to gaze on all kinds of things?
No. It is to behold the Lord of Kailash.*

Embodiments of Love!

What the nation needs today is idealism. Society and the world need the inspiring examples of ideal leaders. There are, no doubt, individuals who are exemplars in their particular fields. But it is rare to find any one person who is an ideal in every respect. It is possible for God alone to be such an ideal. Lord Sri Krishna stands out as a unique ideal figure, exemplifying the highest qualities in every respect-social, political, ethical and spiritual.

That Krishna was a war-monger and not a lover of peace has long been a matter for discussion. But Krishna was: essentially a lover of peace. The ways of the Divine are not easily intelligible to all.

Today people worship God as God but do not try to understand the ideal human qualities displayed by an Avatar. It is only when the human ideals exemplified by Sri Krishna, when He incarnated as man and lived and moved amongst men, are recognised that human life can be rendered meaningful. It is worth examining in what manner Krishna displayed these marks of human excellence.

The great Mahabharata war was on. Each of the Pandava brothers was involved in separate encounters. Dharmaja was engaged in a fierce battle with Karna. The Pandava forces could not withstand the missiles coming from Karna: Dharmaja was under great strain. The Pandava, forces were fleeing. Dharmaja retired to his tent in great anguish, unable to bear the reverses in battle. At that moment Arjuna entered his brother's tent. On seeing him, Dharmaja flew into a rage: Burning with anger, Dharmaja burst out at Arjuna that all his prowess and the power of his mighty bow, Gandiva, had been utterly useless. He went on railing at Arjuna. Unable to suffer these accusations, Arjuna lifted his Gandiva and was about to strike Dharmaja. At that very moment Krishna appeared there.

Krishna tried to pacify Arjuna. He said: "Arjuna! It is not mete that you should raise your arm, against you elder, brother. The primary trait of brothers is to show respect towards elders and earn their regard. Forgetting your duty, you have allowed yourself to be provoked by words and resorted to wrongful action." Krishna advised Arjuna strongly in this manner. He requested Dharmaja to withdraw and gave proper advice to Arjuna on how he should conduct himself. Assuaged by Krishna's appeal and accepting his wise counsel, Arjuna retired to his tent.

Example in humility

Proceeding next to Dharmaja's tent and seeing the agony he was experiencing, Krishna bent down and held Dharmaja's feet. Krishna told him: "Dharmaja! It is not fitting that an elder brother like you should behave in this fashion. It is not right that you should blame your younger brother Arjuna in such strong language. You may have used these words only in a fit of anger. You Pandava brothers, who have been an example to the world in brotherly love, should not allow discord to mar your unity. The Pandavas are looked upon as an ideal for the world. You, should live up to that reputation. Therefore, you must go immediately to Arjuna and seek his forgiveness."

Listening to Krishna's loving words, Dharmaja was in tears. "Swami," he said, "for you, the prop and sustainer of the world, to hold my feet makes me feel ashamed." Begging Krishna to forgive him, Dharmaja went, forthwith to Arjuna and appealed to him to forgive him.

Those who look at these actions as acts of God may consider them too trivial and small for the Divine to undertake. "Why should the Almighty Lord, Krishna, demean Himself in this way," some critics might ask. But the ideals which the Divine seeks to exemplify for mankind are revealed only through such small incidents.

Out of His abundant love for His devotees, the Lord does many, things some of which may not seem right. All of them are done entirely out of concern for the well-being of the world. They are intended to serve as guidelines to society.

No war-monger

To set an example to the world, the Lord engages. Himself in apparently trivial activities and teaches the lessons to be learnt from them. God sets an example in humility and reverence. On, occasions, the Lord (in human form.) can be harsh and relentless. He will declare the truth without mincing words. Here again, Krishna provides the example.

Dharmaja wanted to performs the Rajasooya Yajna after getting the approval of the citizens and the ministers and priests. Dharmaja sought Krishna's blessing for the performance of I the Yajna. After listening to Dharmaja's proposal, Krishna smiled and said, "Only a supreme sovereign ruler, whose suzerainty is accepted by all rulers in the country, can perform such a Yajna. You are not such a sovereign emperor. There are quite a few powerful rulers like Shishupala, Jarasandha and Dantavakra, who do not recognise your power. As long as there are such kings, you are not qualified to perform the Rajasooya Yajna."

Krishna thus wanted to dissuade Dharmaja from proceeding with his plan. At all times, Krishna never hesitated to tell the truth, without regard to persons, place or, circumstance. He told Dharmaja that if he wanted to perform the Rajasooya Yajna he should first conquer these powerful rulers.

Misinterpreting the purport of Krishna's advice, some people characterised him as an instigator of wars. Krishna did not call on Dharmaja to go to war. All that he told him was about the qualifications required for performing the Rajasooya Yajna. Then, Dharmaja took counsel with his brothers and effected the conquest of Shishupala, Jarasandha and others. Krishna's actions in the field of Statecraft should be properly understood.

Role at Rajasooya

When the Rajasooya Yajna began, each of the brothers was allotted a specific function. Krishna also approached Dharmaja respectfully and pleaded for some function to be assigned to him, saying: "As the world sees it, you (Dharmaja) are the Overlord and I am a subject. Hence, please assign to me some task in this Yajna." Dharmaja was distressed at this request, coming as it did from one whom Dharmaja regarded as All-Knowing Omnipresent Lord. Dharmaja said: "I owe everything to you. You are the ruler and I am only your servant." Krishna replied: "What you have said as a devotee is true. But from the worldly point of view, as a king you have to respect the obligations prescribed for the king. You must distinguish between your obligations to God and your secular duties as a ruler."

This distinction is as true today as it was in olden days. Individual Freedom and Fundamental Law are distinct things. What relates to affairs of State should not be linked with one's personal concerns.

Krishna urged that he should be allotted a specific task. Dharmaja said, "Krishna, you take up any assignment that you like." Krishna retorted: "For taking up any assignment of my choosing I need not ask you. I wish to do what you would like me to do."

The argument between the two went on for a long while and ultimately Krishna said he would like to be responsible for receiving the scholars and priests who would be attending the Yajna, washing their feet and doing all honours to them.

Here is an illustration of how Krishna set an example in the elimination of the ego. Why should Krishna, who was such a great and powerful personality, take upon himself such a humble task as washing the feet of pandits? The moral is clear. One who aspires to be a leader should show qualities of leadership in every field. It was to serve as an example to the world in every sphere that, Krishna undertook many tasks and never considered anything as too small or trivial.

Out of his boundless love for the Pandavas and on account of his deep concern for the preservation of their unity and brotherly love, Krishna did several things which cannot be easily understood.

Envoy of the Pandavas

Before the Kurukshetra war, Krishna was sent as the envoy of the Pandavas to negotiate with Duryodhana and the Kauravas. The love that subsisted between the Pandavas and Krishna was not based on mere kinship or political interests. It was a unity of hearts. The Pandavas were devoted to Krishna as much as Krishna loved them. They had no option but to send Krishna as their envoy to the Kauravas.

When Krishna reached Hastinapura, the Kaurava capital, he found that elaborate arrangements had been made for according him a grand welcome. (The Kauravas apparently, in their narrow-mindedness, hoped to win over Krishna to their side by this show of extravagant hospitality). When Krishna alighted from the chariot, Duryodhana, Dusshasana and others greeted him and invited him to stay in their palatial guest-house and accept their hospitality. Even at that moment Krishna taught them the proprieties governing affairs of State. He said: "Dusshasana, I have come as an envoy. It is only after completing my mission as envoy can I accept your hospitality. Till then I cannot be your guest."

After giving this lesson in political proprieties in unmistakable terms, Krishna proceeded to the house of Vidura. Vidura was deeply agitated on seeing Krishna and asked him: "Krishna, you are all-knowing and can see, the shape of things to come. How, then, did you agree to this mission? How did the Pandavas agree to send you here? The wicked Kauravas are capable of doing harm to you by all kinds of foul means; knowing all this; why did you come here?"

Krishna replied: "Vidura, it is not as if I do not know this. But in the interests of the people and the welfare of the world, I have to undertake such missions. No one can understand my purposes. My sole concern is the preservation of Dharma. I wish to see that no rift develops among the Pandavas and that complete harmony and unity prevail amongst them. Any differences among the Pandavas will be disastrous for the world. For promoting the welfare of the world, I am ready to undertake any mission, however trivial or hazardous.

People come first

Krishna then went to the assembly Hall of the Kauravas, As he entered, Duryodhana and Dusshasana welcomed him and invited him to take the special elevated seat that had been arranged for him. All the sages and other worthies in the hall rose as Krishna entered. Bhishma, assisted by Drona and Dhritarashtra, approached Krishna and requested him to take the pre-eminent seat intended for him.

What Krishna said on that occasion is an object-lesson to the world. He said: "Oh King! I shall take my seat only after all the people here have taken their seats. Until then I cannot take my seat."

When all had resumed their seats, Krishna continued standing and said: "I must first complete the ambassadorial mission on which I have come." He turned to Dhritarashtra and said: "Oh King! As stipulated by you, the Pandavas have returned after spending 12 years in exile in the forest and living one year incognito. Today you have to fulfill the pledge you gave to them then that you will return their kingdom to them. It is your duty to honour your word." Krishna argued with Dhritarashtra that he should keep the pledge he had given to the Pandavas. He told the king: "The Pandavas are the very embodiment of Dharma. They entertain no feelings of enmity or hatred towards anyone. When I was about to leave for Hastinapura, Dharmaja, clasped my hands together and entreated me to inform you that if he had committed any lapse, wittingly or unwittingly, he wished to be forgiven by you. If necessary, he was ready to come in person and seek your forgiveness at your feet. This is the noble and righteous attitude of the Pandavas towards you and your people. It is not proper to have any ill feeling towards the high-minded Pandavas."

On listening to Krishna, Dhritarashtra said: "They are the progeny of two brothers. Are not all of them equal in your eyes, Krishna? This is one family and one kingdom. Is it proper for you to view the Kauravas in one way and the Pandavas in another way?"

The bond of love

Krishna then explained clearly to Dhritarashtra the truth of the situation, without reservation or mincing words "Dhritarashtra! There is nothing in common between the Kauravas and the Pandavas. The Pandavas are the very embodiment of Dharma. I am moving with them as their lift-breath. Let me tell you what binds me to the Pandavas. A body has many limbs. In my body, Dharmaja is like the head. Arjuna represents my two arms, Bhima is like my stomach. Nakula and Sahadeva are like my two feet. Krishna is the heart of this body. My relationship with the Pandavas is like that of the heart to the rest of the body."

The moment Duryodhana and Dusshasana heard these words, they became indignant and their eyes turned red with anger. When one is puffed up with pride of physical prowess, one has blood-shot eyes. For the evil-minded Kauravas this kind of reaction was natural. All the elders in the Assembly were in agreement with Krishna. Dhritarashtra, however, wanted to retire to take rest for a while. His real intention was to have a talk with Krishna in private, away from the presence of his sons. He retired to his private chamber. Krishna came there. Holding both his hands, Dhritarashtra pleaded with Krishna: "My sons are wicked fellows. My infatuation for them has blinded my vision. The Pandavas are undoubtedly righteous. Their adherence to truth and justice is exemplary. I am unable to see a way out."

Give no quarter to evil

Krishna spoke to Dhritarashtra in strong terms: "Dhritarashtra! Fondness for sons is a good thing. But excessive attachment to them is likely to prove harmful and dangerous. Don't we try to get rid of urine and faeces from our body?" Dhritarashtra said: "These are inanimate things, but how can I get rid of my sons who are my flesh and blood?" Krishna said that what is evil should be cast away without any compunction: He declared that those who are wicked—whether it be a son, a wife or one's parents—should be given up without any hesitation. "Strive your best to

persuade them to return to the right path. But when these attempts fail, they should be abandoned."

After these talks, Krishna realised that his mission of parleys for peace would not succeed. He did not go back to the Kaurava Assembly Hall. He mounted his chariot and returned to Vidura's residence.

Meanwhile, the Pandavas were in great agony, contemplating how Krishna would fare at the hands of the wicked Kauravas. Without taking food or drink, they were brooding over what might happen to Krishna and were anxiously awaiting his return.

On seeing Krishna back, alighting from the chariot, the Pandavas rejoiced beyond words. They did not ask how his mission had fared. All they were concerned about was the safe return of Krishna. That was enough for them. They had no thought about their future. Their love for Krishna was so great that they felt boundless joy to see him safe. Dharmaja was the first to embrace Krishna. Then all the brothers hugged him and bathed him with their tears of joy.

Sahadeva, the youngest of the Pandavas, then spoke in a choked voice: "Although I did not like Sri Krishna to go on this mission to the Kauravas, I did not speak out because of my youth and because it would have been inauspicious to object to a journey when one was starting on it. The safe return of our brother-in-law makes me feel richer than a billionaire. I do not care whether there is peace or war or whether I lose my, life. It is enough for me if Krishna is safe and well"

How the Divine works

Such was the love the Pandavas bore towards Krishna. "Yad bhaavam tad bhavati" "As one feels, that he becomes." The Lord's love for the devotee is as intense as the devotee's love for the Lord. Having regard to the well-being of the devotee and the good of the world, Krishna performed actions whether big or small, solely for the good of others. He was indifferent to praise, or blame. His sole purpose was protection of devotees and fulfilling their wishes whether small or otherwise. In His view all things are equal.

Correcting the defects among men, directing them on the right path, the Lord in His human incarnation seeks to raise humanity to the highest level by all methods. Ordinary people may question whether it is proper for God to do certain things and not certain others. From a mundane point of view, things may appear trivial or big. But in the Divine calculus there are no such differences because He views everything with the same Divine love. He does not examine whether one is great or small.

A lesson to Arjuna

Once Arjuna was in a greatly despondent mood. He was disgusted with life and wanted to commit suicide that very night. The All-knowing Lord, Krishna, decided to avert this. He went to Arjuna's residence and told him that he wanted to discuss some urgent matter with him and therefore he wanted to dine with him that day. When Subhadra, (Arjuna's wife) and others were

engaged otherwise, Krishna called Arjuna to a private chamber. As soon as Arjuna was inside, Krishna bolted the door. He then took firm hold of Arjuna's feet. Arjuna immediately burst out "Swami! What unworthy act have I done? Why are you acting like this?" Krishna said: "With all your titles and achievements, it is utterly unbecoming of you to entertain thoughts of suicide. You are the foremost among the Pandavas. You acquired the Gandiva (from Siva) after going through severe penances and ordeals. You should be the master of your senses and not their slave. Today you have been overcome by your mind and your senses. This is unworthy of you. Give me a pledge that in no circumstance in the future will you think of suicide. Your life is mine and my life is yours. The divine is the indweller in all beings. Hence I am present in all, beings. If you contemplate suicide, you will be guilty of attempting on the life of your dear Krishna."

Arjuna said: "Swami! I was ignorant of the subtle truths you have revealed. Please forgive me. Henceforth, in all my life I will not think of any such act."

Nothing high or low

In this manner, Krishna, in His love for the Pandavas, was prepared to go to any length and do even any menial act to protect them. The Lord is omnipresent'. His eyes, feet and hands are everywhere. There is nothing low or high for Him. On one occasion He carried even the sandals of Draupadi when He advised her to seek Bhishma's blessings to save, her husbands from destruction. For the sake of setting an example to the world, the Lord does many things in His human incarnation.

On one occasion, Krishna was conversing with the Pandava brothers when Arjuna expressed disagreement with certain statements of Krishna. Krishna assumed an angry pose and left the place. Hardly had He gone out a short distance when Dharmaja, Bhima and Nakula turned on Arjuna and berated him for insulting Krishna, who was their very life-breath. Unable to bear this rebuke, Arjuna prayed internally to Krishna. Meanwhile Krishna returned and told the brothers: "What Arjuna has done is true to human nature. Man is fickle-minded and prone to doubts. The more intellectual a person is, the more he is subject to these traits. Such persons have no firm belief in anything. Because of your intellect, you Arjuna behaved without understanding what has gone before or what is to come. Henceforth don't rely on your intellect. Carry out the will of the Divine."

Surrender

Then Arjuna said, "I shall carry out your directives. ("Karishye Vachanam Thava"). I shall abide by whatever you say." It was then that the Lord gave Arjuna the assurance: "Centre your thoughts on ME, be MY devotee, worship ME always and I assure you, you will reach ME."

Follow the ideals

These days there are many who profess to be devotees but do not conduct themselves .as true devotees. What is called for is adherence in action to what one says in speech. Only then are people fit to earn the grace of the Lord. There is no use merely offering worship to God as God. One should understand the ideals set for humanity by God in His human incarnation and live

upto them. Human values have to be fostered. Without human qualities, the mere human form is worthless. Only by practising human values does a man become truly human.

Man derives his name from the possession of the mind. The mind is a bundle of good and bad thoughts. When man fills his mind with good and pure thoughts, he becomes pure and leads a pure life. Morality is based on good conduct. Sacred, pure and helpful activities constitute right conduct. It is such conduct that is conducive to the blossoming of human excellence.

Men should first of all develop faith in God. On the basis of that faith, they should strive to live up to the ideals God in His human form has given, both by precept and example, to mankind.

Today, despite the enormous progress made in science and technology, men suffer from lack of peace and security. Real peace can be got only through spiritual means. It cannot be got by any other way.

Living in society, you have to understand the interaction between the individual and society. It is a continuous process of give and take. The individual contributes to society and derives benefits from society. This interaction may be understood from an episode from the life of Einstein, the great scientist.

Einstein's example

In the ward in which Einstein was living, there was a girl who was weak in mathematics and was repeatedly failing in that subject, A friend suggested to her that if she went to Einstein, the greatest living mathematician, he would help her to learn the subject well. The girl approached Einstein and he readily agreed to give her tuition everyday. The girl was immensely, grateful and gained confidence from Einstein's offer. The girl's mother, who had observed her daughter going to the great mathematician for tuition everyday, felt that the little girl was wasting Einstein's time by asking him to teach her elementary mathematics. She went one day to Einstein and apologised to him for her daughter's intrusion on his valuable time. Einstein told her: "Do not think I am just teaching mathematics to her. I am learning as many things from her as I am teaching her." Einstein was conscious that people who might excel in some subject might be lacking in general knowledge or common sense and knowledge of worldly matters. Even though he was a great scientist, he did not disdain to learn quite a few things from a young schoolgirl. This readiness to learn from any person or source is the real mark of greatness.

Einstein attached great importance to the kind of associates with whom one moved. He used to say: "Tell me what company you keep and I shall tell you what you are." If you associate with good persons you become good; if you move with wicked persons you become bad.

The human life is a great gift from God. It should be valued as such and used for sacred purposes.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with singing two bhajans: "*Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahi*" and "*Govinda Krishna Jai!*"

—*From Bhagavan's discourse at the Prasanthi Mandir, on 16-8-1987*

The Ascent of Man

*Possessing physical prowess
And intellectual strength,
If one lacks Divine help
He is powerless and weak.*

*Forget not the fate of one
Like the valiant Karna,
Who died ingloriously,
And learn the lesson.*

*Everyone knows the word of God
But of what avail is it?
They profess to 'worship God
But have no understanding of God's message.*

Without getting rid of ignorance, awareness of the Supreme cannot be experienced. Jnana (the, higher knowledge) is the embodiment of the Oversoul (Paramatma). It is self-effulgent. It is only when man is conscious that he is that Knowledge and that Light that he can have the Advaitic experience (oneness with the Divine).

What is light? It is the means by which we are able to see various objects. During the day we see things by the light of the sun and at night by the light of the moon and stars and of lamps. What is it that enables us to know that we are seeing things by sunlight or other sources? It is through the eyes. In the dream state we see many objects although our eyes are closed. Who is the seer, in that state and who is the experiencer of the dream? It is the Buddhi (the Intelligence) that is able to see things by its own luminosity (Tejas). In the Sushupti (deep sleep) state even the Buddhi is not present, but a blissful feeling is experienced. Who is the experiencer of this bliss? That is the Atma (the Indwelling Spirit). "I am the Atma and the Atma is I" is the truth that has to be recognised by everyone. It is the Atma that activates the Buddhi, which enables the eyes to perceive objects. The Atma is the Truth and you are the Atma: It is when this truth is experienced, then alone can man realise the transcendental unity that subsumes everything.

For this purpose, an enquiry has to be made into "Advaita trayam" (three aspects of Advaita). These three are: Bhava-Advaitam, Kriya-Advaitam, and Padartha-Advaitam.

Bhava-Advaitam is the enquiry which leads to the recognition of the common basis of different objects like cloth and thread, namely, cotton. To recognise the One that underlies the Many is Bhava-Advaitam. This involves recognition of the one indwelling Spirit which is common to all beings.

Kriya-Advaitam relates to the performance of actions, with purity of mind, speech and body, in a spirit of dedication to God.

Padartha-Advaitam calls for recognition of the elements that are common to all objects and all living things. The five vital airs (Pancha Pranas) and the five basic elements (Pancha Bhootas—earth, water, fire, air and ether) are to be found in all beings.

The understanding of these three aspects of oneness will lead to a realisation of the basic unity of the cosmos. Failing to see this divine unity, men are caught up in differences. There is only the One Divine in all things. It is shining effulgently in everyone. But like the ashes that cover the fire in a burning charcoal, this light is covered by man's own ignorance of the light within. To see the fire in the charcoal, the ash covering it has to be blown off. Likewise, the light of the Atma in the individual is covered by the sense of separateness and multiplicity. When, through sadhana, this feeling of manifoldness goes, the real nature of the Self is recognised.

Five human types

There are five types of human beings. One is the human-divine (Manava-daivatwam) type second, the human-human (Manava-Manavatwam) third, the human-demonic (Manava-danavatwam) fourth, the human-animal (Manava-pashutwam), the fifth, the debased human (Manava-heenatwam).

The human-divine type consists of persons who are aware of the divinity in them. They recognise that the Atma is the real Self, and regard the body, as an instrument for realising the Divine. They, strive to lead pure and sacred lives, always entertain pure thoughts and engage themselves in acts of charity and righteousness. They concentrate their minds on the Divine and fill their, life with the love of God.

The human-human type are those who, discharge their prescribed duties in life according to the various stages—Brahmacharya; Grihastha, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa—and lead a pure and sanctified life. Such persons strive to adhere to the basic human values of Truth, Righteousness, Peace and Love and thereby live up to, their true human nature.

The term Manava (man) has two meanings. One is: man (not) nava (new)—one who is not new. This means that man has a long history behind him. The other meaning is: ma-na-va, one who is free from ignorance (ma = ignorance, na = without, va = living). True humanness consists in turning away from evil courses and pursuing right paths in life.

Human-demonic type (Manava-danavatwam): This type of human beings follow evil practices not only in matters relating to food and recreation, but engage themselves in acts of cruelty and violence. They lead lives bereft of morality and justice. They are intensely selfish and have no thought of being helpful to anyone. The demonic quality is identified with selfishness and cruelty. If righteousness is the mark of the truly human person, wickedness is the mark of the demonic being.

The human-animal type (Manava-pashutwam): This type of person is concerned only with eating, sleeping and sensuous pleasures. These animal qualities are described in Hindi as “Khana, Sona, Marna” (eating, sleeping and dying.) These persons have no higher aims in life. Hence, they lead an animal existence.

There is one thing which is even worse than this kind of human-animal existence. That is the debased human being, who will go to the extent of subjecting himself to suffering for the purpose of doing harm to others. He will be prepared to lose both his eyes to see that the other man loses one. He will do harm to those who have done him good. This is the most degraded type of human being.

The greatness of a human being does not consist in returning good, for good. It consists in doing good to one who has done him harm.

It is enough if men try, at least to be truly human—if they cannot rise to the level of the human-divine. Men should seek to live as true human beings. Thereby they may go towards the divine.

Whatever studies you may pursue, whatever degrees you may acquire, never fail to live up to our true human estate. Without developing the true human qualities, all learning is like the howling of jackals in a cemetery. Getting by rote all kinds of knowledge without making any effort to put, even a fraction of it into practice is simply an infliction on the memory.

—*From Bhagavan's discourse at the Sri Sathya Sai Institute Auditorium on 23-7-1981*

Samadhi

—*Dr. A. Adivi Reddy*

In His discourses and writings Bhagavan Baba constantly offers new insights into ancient pronouncements which have got encrusted, as it were, with conventional meanings owing to the passage of time and the pressures of tradition. In providing new meanings to these concepts Bhagavan opens up new vistas of understanding, and spiritual illumination.

For instance; the concept of "Samadhi" is traditionally associated with a state of super-consciousness attained by a Sadhaka as the consummation of his spiritual sadhana: It is a state characterised by deep ecstasy or trance- in which one goes beyond the ordinary states of consciousness (viz., waking, dreaming and deep sleep) and remains, for a period of time, in the `Turiya' or transcendental state, immersed in the bliss of Atma Sakshatkara (Self-Realisation), and is utterly oblivious to the external (phenomenal) world around him. In other words, a man in Samadhi is practically dead to the outside world. That is why people used to refer to Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa as a holy man who would die and come back to life about six times a day, because he used to go into and come out of Samadhi about half-a-dozen times in a day.

The inadequacies of this traditional conception of Samadhi will become apparent in the light of the definition given by Bhagavan Baba. He points out that the real meaning of `Samadhi' is contained in the word itself. Samadhi = Sama+Dhi. The word `Sama' has two meanings: (i) sameness or equality, and (ii) the Absolute Reality (Brahman). That the word `Sama' means Brahman may be less familiar to many of us than the meaning of `sameness'. However, we have firstly the authority of the Veda and the Gita for this meaning of the word. For example, Gita declares, "Nirdosham hi Samam Brahma" (Gita V.19). That is to say, "Samam is Brahman free, from any defects or limitations" (caused by space, time and causation), Secondly, we have the authority of Swami Himself who tells us that when we use the word `Samapti' to refer to the completion of a task (whether it be a religious rite like yajna or any mundane work for that matter), we are dealing with the superficial meaning only. The real inner meaning of the word, according to Him, is: Samapti = Sama+Aapti or 'Brahma Prapti' (the attainment of Brahman). As for the second component `Dhi' in the word Samadhi, it means the intellect.

Samadhi, therefore, according to Bhagavan Baba's definition means that a person is in a state of Samadhi when his intellect sees Brahman everywhere and in everything, besides being in a constant state of equanimity under all circumstances. Bhagavan also wants us to appreciate the significance of the use of the word `Dhi' (intellect) as contrasted with the word `Manas' (mind). He compares the mind to a pair of scissors, because just as a pair of scissors cuts one piece of cloth into several smaller bits, the mind too creates duality or multiplicity, whereas the intellect (like a needle used for stitching together different pieces of cloth) seeks to grasp the unity underlying the diversity in the phenomenal world.

The beauty and profundity of Baba's interpretation will be evident when it is compared and contrasted with the traditional interpretation. It will then be seen that the latter represents an incomplete or restricted view of a spiritual experience, while Bhagavan's interpretation reveals a comprehensive and total view. How?

Firstly, the traditional concept of Samadhi being a state of total unconsciousness of the phenomenal world is thus restricted to the unmanifested (Being) aspect, of Brahman (the ultimate Reality), ignoring Its manifested (Becoming) aspect. Baba's interpretation eliminates this dichotomy in keeping with His insistence that Vishwam (universe) is nothing but Vishnu (all pervading, divine Lord), or that Lokam (the visible world) is not different from Lokeshwara

(Lord of the universe). During His recent Gurupoornima discourse on 11-7-1987, He reiterated this point of view by way of an equation: Matter + Being = God. In other words, the 'Being' and 'Becoming' aspects constitute inseparable and integral aspects of the total Godhead, and therefore, any spiritual approach which excludes anyone of them suffers from incompleteness, according to Swami.

The second limitation of the traditional concept of Samadhi is that it is an experience confined to the transcendental state of consciousness only, whereas Swami's version of Samadhi applies to experience in all the states of consciousness.

A third defect of the conventional concept is that it limits as it were the number of people that can attain the state of super-consciousness, while Samadhi as expounded by Baba can be practised by any spiritual aspirant who makes a sincere and serious effort.

A fourth drawback of the traditional view is that it tends to make the practitioner self-centred by being concerned about his own bliss without any regard for the material or spiritual welfare of other beings. There is no room for such narrowness in Swami's version of Samadhi. In this context we shall do well to remember Baba's warning given with his inimitable play on words, to the effect that if you are worried about your own salvation only, saying "Naa Mukti, Naa Mukti" (My salvation, my salvation), without bothering about others, then what you will get will be "Na Mukti" i.e., "no salvation."

In the traditional concept, the state of bliss and equanimity is maintained for a limited period in an artificial situation of isolation from society. But one's ability to maintain equanimity can be tested only in a social situation where one is subjected to conditions that will disturb his tranquility. He alone is a real spiritual hero who can remain in a state of bliss and equanimity even while actively engaged in the world, in accordance with the popular Hindi slogan, "Dil mae Raam, haath mae Kaam" (God in the heart, work in the hand), or as Krishna enjoined in the Gita: "Maam anusmara yuddhyacha" (constantly remember Me and fight the battle of life). Adi Sankaracharya emphasises his point in the following verse of his "Moha Mudgara" (popularly known as Bhaja Govindam slokas).

"Yoga ratho vaa bhoga ratho vaa, Sanga ratho vaa Sanga Viheenah, Yasya Brahmani ramathe chittam, Nandati, nandati, Nandatyeva" (He and he alone enjoys real bliss, who experiences the beatitude, of Brahman, whether he is engaged in Yoga or in Bhoga—worldly pleasures—whether he revels in company or in solitude). Gita (V. 19) too asserts "Thaiva jitassargo esham saamyam sthitham manah" those established in Samya or Samatwa have conquered birth and death, even while here on earth.

In short, we may conclude that while the traditional conception of Samadhi represents a static and limited experience, Swami's exposition of Samadhi is conducive to dynamic and comprehensive spirituality.

Not being content with giving us such a simple, yet profound definition of Samadhi (as the maintenance of Samatwa or equal-mindedness under all circumstances), Bhagavan Baba has spelt out for our benefit the following five areas in which we should practise this Samatwa.

Prakritika Samatwa: Equanimity in the face of variations or vicissitudes created by natural forces, such as extreme heat or cold, drought, floods, cyclones; diseases, geographical differences, etc. Let us note Swami's example in this respect. He puts on the same kind of dress whatever be the season or place. When He visited Badrinath and other places of pilgrimage in the Himalayas along with a group of devotees, He was wearing His usual robe. While all others in His entourage were shivering despite their warm clothing, He was playing with snow like a Divine Child. Also, even when He took upon Himself serious diseases with excruciating pain (by way of vicarious suffering on behalf of some devotees of His), He maintained His usual serenity.

Baba considers it puerile to entertain differences based on man-made boundaries when all men are sharing the same earth, the same sky, the same sun and moon, the same water and other God-given natural resources. When a grand public reception was arranged for Baba at Bombay after His return from an African tour, He gently chided the organisers, saying, "Why all this fuss? The whole universe is My mansion and My African trip is like My going from one room to another." It is this kind of Prakritika Samatwa that Bhagavan wants everyone to cultivate.

Samaajika Samatwa: Equanimity when confronted with the pairs of opposites originating from society,, such as praise and blame, love and hatred, bouquets and brickbats, rich and poor etc. Here again Baba is the exemplar. He has blessed and loved even those who gave Him poisoned food or indulged in calumnies against Him. Like the sun which shines alike on the saint and sinner, His all-embracing divine love extends unconditionally to all, making no distinction whatsoever between the venerator and the vilifier, the theist and the atheist, the scholar and the illiterate, the rich and the poor etc.

Karma Samatwa: The word Karma denotes both action and reaction (or the fruit of action). Hence Karma Samatwa means equal-mindedness toward both these aspects. Baba's life demonstrates to us that He considers no work as too low for Him. As a young schoolboy when He had to do household chores like getting water from a distant well, He did so with equanimity. "There is no credit in doing well the work that you like, but credit lies in liking the work that you have to do, and in doing it whole-heartedly and efficiently," observes Bhagavan Baba. He also advises us to accept gladly as Swami's Prasad whatever be the fruit of action that falls to our lot, good or bad. This Karma Samatwa is dealt with in several verses of the Gita.

Bhakti Samatwa: There are two facets to this Samatwa. One facet is to consider all gods / deities as different aspects of one and the same Godhead, attributing no superiority or inferiority to any of them. "Call Me by any name, worship Me in any form, I will respond provided your prayers are 'heartificial' and not 'art'" assures Baba. Krishna too has proclaimed similarly in Gita Ch. IV. 11 and Ch. IX. 23.

The second facet is to be steadfast in one's devotion regardless of ups and downs in one's life. Swami jokingly remarks that many of His so-called devotees call him 'Sai' if everything goes well with them, but My will not hesitate to call Him 'Raayi' (stone) if some calamity befalls them. He has been repeatedly telling us that the real mark of a genuine devotee is constancy or steadiness of devotion in both fair weather and foul. "Sama Dukha Sukha Kshamee" (same in sorrow and happiness as well as forbearing / fortitudinous) says Verse 13 of Chapter XII of the Gita, while describing the traits of a Bhakta who is dear to the Lord.

Jnana Samatwa: This requires the development of 'Abheda Drishti' (vision of non-differentiation), otherwise called 'Advaita Darshanam' (seeing Non-duality) We should be fully convinced of the truth of the Rig-Vedic declaration: "Ekam Sath Vipraa bahudhaa vadanti" (Existence or Reality is one, sages call it variously). We need to understand that Nirguna Brahman (unmanifested or impersonal God) and Saguna Brahman (manifested/personal God) including the Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu, Maheshwara as well as the three entities of Ishwara (God), Jiva (individual soul) and Jagat (the phenomenal world) these are all different aspects of one and the same Divine Principle which is one without a second. For this, we should develop the insight or intuition to discover the common thread of Divinity running through all existence, the underlying unity behind the apparent diversity.

Another aspect of this Jnana Samatwa, according to Swami, is to consider secular knowledge and spiritual knowledge as two branches of the tree of total knowledge, and to treat them as mutually complementary and not contradictory. In His words, science and spirituality are like the two wings of a bird, or the two wheels of a bicycle, or the two legs of man. He further gives a small illustration to drive home this point. Supposing you sow a pulse (dicotyledonous) seed (like red-gram, bean, groundnut, etc.), you will find that when it germinates, there will be two cotyledons which give sustenance to the sprout in between the two cotyledons. Baba says that secular knowledge and spiritual knowledge are like the two cotyledons which give nourishment to the sapling called human being so that he may fully unfold and manifest all his latent capacities, resulting in his integrated development—physical, mental as well as spiritual.

From the foregoing account of the five guidelines given by Swami, it can be seen that as the Supreme Guru, He teaches us the profoundest truth both by precept and by His own personal example, in accordance with His well-known declaration: "My life is My message." In fact He says, "My greatest miracle is my equanimity."

One in Spirit

To acknowledge and accept our Divinity is NOT egotistical. Rather it is a display of Self-Confidence.

What is Self-Confidence? Put in another way, it simply means confidence in Self—the Self being the Divine Consciousness, not the Ego, self.

Once we have attained the understanding that the Divine Consciousness is within us, all that we say and do is God directed not, Ego-self-directed.

And when we accept that God is within all things, animate and inanimate, that we are indeed all integral parts of the entire Creation, we can truly love all things.

We all know that it is not easy to love someone who is unkind, unpleasant or downright rude. We may find them and their attitudes quite offensive, but we must endeavour to look through the human element of their behaviour which is MAN/ MIND created and seek out the Divine Spark, however dimly it may appear to glow.

We must ensure that the Divine Spark shines brightly within ourselves, suffusing us with the Light of Purity and Love, so that all who see us, see the Divinity. The Spark will soon become a flame if fanned by Love. We need to keep this flame burning at all times and not allow it to be extinguished; it must burn night and day, everyday, to, brighten the lives of others with whom we come in contact.

It's no good just having the flame burning away merrily when we are in our meditation groups or at the weekly meetings, then letting it go out when we leave. That's rather like closing the Bibles and prayer books and leaving them on the shelf till the next week.

Leading a spiritual life means just that—LIVING IT—ITS FOR LIFE, LIFE WITH SPIRIT. For that is what we are, SPIRIT INCARNATE. Let everything that we do and say be of the highest standard possible and worthy of that high honour of serving Spirit. 'Service to Man is Service to God.'

By letting go of the Ego self, we can become more tolerant, more understanding, more loving and more giving of our true Selves, the God Spirit within.

If we attune ourselves to, the Divine Source which IS LOVE, which is GOD, whatever we give is replenished by the Source and the well will never be dry. By limiting our giving we also limit our receiving, for receiving is the result of giving.

God is in us and we are in God; thus we are Perfection. It is only our thoughts which make us less than perfect.

Thoughts are the precursors of action. If we think negatively, we will act negatively and attract external negativity to us. It follows that if we think positively, good positive action and reaction will result.

It all comes back to discipline and awareness. We need to be mindful all the time of how we think and act firming our Divinity and perfection as often as possible won't leave much room for negative thought.

By keeping the flame of Divine Love burning in our hearts and by letting the Light of that flame shine through us, we will illuminate the darkness of hatred, despair, pain and misery until the whole world is brilliant with God Spirit.

Come with me into the Peace,
The Peace that is God,
The Peace that passeth all understanding.

Let your mind be still,
Let the turbulence of thought subside,
The quietness and serenity fill your soul.

Affirmation:

The Light of God is in my Soul,
Its glow dispelling any darkness.
I breathe in Love,
The flame of Love is in my heart,
The warmth of Love pervades my Soul.

I am Love,
I am Perfection,
I am God's Creation.
I acknowledge my Divinity.
I accept God as my true Self.

—S. B., Adelaide, Australia

Perfect submission to His will brings us immediately peace and bliss. This self-surrender is attained only by our ceaseless remembrance of Him and His attributes. Let us therefore consecrate our life to Him and live, in thought, word and deed, for His sake. He is our all in all. Love is the Light of the Spirit. Realise the Light of the Spirit and you are filled with Love. Get the flower, and you have its beauty and fragrance. In colour, see harmony; in light, see joy. In outward forms and in the depth of things; behold yourself. You are the Truth.

—Baba

Experiencing the Present

—*Brian Finlayson, Adelaide*

"Sorry I haven't got time! What time is it! I must be on time!" Our lives pivot around time, we are obsessed with time and possessed by time. More than that, we are deceived by time.

Scientists can determine the duration of time with extreme accuracy. For instance, they know that it takes close to 0.000000001 seconds of time for light to travel 30 centimeters (about one foot).

Those of us who followed the recent interception of Halley's comet by the spacecraft 'Giotto' marvelled at the accuracy in time of the predicted events millions of kilometers out in space.

With all our knowledge about the measurement of time, the nature of time remains an enigma. Why, for instance, does time appear to pass slowly when we are a child and so quickly when we are adult?

Swami is Master of matter, energy, space and time. He says. 'Time is God.' When asked about His Divinity He said, 'I am God and you are God, the difference is that I know I am God and you do not.' From these statements we can conclude that we are God and therefore time—but we are unaware of these facts because we are ignorant of the Truth.

Time as we perceive it is passing time—the result of conditioning in the comparison of events. We are deceived about the nature of time even as we are deceived about the apparent rising and setting of the sun or the apparent convergence of a set of parallel railway lines disappearing in the distance.

Paul Brunton says of time: "The past is but remembrance, the future is anticipation, the present moment is preeminent because of its reality."

What is this 'present moment' of time? It could be described as 'isness' which in turn defines the nature of the state of "beingness, awareness and bliss"—a level of consciousness untainted by the deceptive, erroneous, self-deluding processes of the mind which tell us that the sun rises and sets and that parallel railway lines disappear in a convergence or that our belief about time is true.

The realisation of the state of "beingness, awareness and bliss" is the goal of Swami's teachings. It is the truth of ourselves untouched by modification or consideration of mental process. It is without the concept of passing time but is time as 'isness'. It is what we call 'God'.

So you and I are God, but are deluded by conditioning and ignorance that we are not.

How do we find and experience that 'present moment'? By rising above our considerations of time—our delusion of passing time—by attuning ourselves to the concepts of beauty, integrity, honesty, peace and righteousness, all of these aspects of life are designated by Swami as being essential qualities inherent to the beingness of humanity. They are embraced by the five values.

Contemplation and verification in life of the correctness of these values through action increases our awareness of them until we realise the eternal verity of those values, that we are in truth those values without the bias of self-deception and ignorance and that we too are no less than God—the 'present moment', the Omnipresent and the Omnipresence—Time itself.

Returned with Thanks

Buddha was seated alone one day, and later, some men gathered around him. One among them who did not like his teachings and the effect it had on the people, got up and started a tirade in very vulgar terms against him. Buddha sat smiling listening to all that calumny, without a single gesture of disapproval. The man got frothy in the mouth through rage, his vocabulary was fast getting exhausted, his tongue began to show signs of overwork, but, Buddha only asked him with a smile: "Brother, have you finished?" The man said, "You have no sense of shame: you do not even react when I abuse you. You are thick-skinned; you are, a log of wood." Buddha asked him, "If a person does not accept a gift, what happens to it?" He said, "It remains with the giver." "Well, keep these gifts of abusive words with you, brother! I do not accept and react."

—**Baba (Chinnakatha)**

Every Day a Festival

—**Dr. M. V. N. Murthy**

"Sai is ever full of joy" declared Baba in one of His discourses, "When people speak to Me of grief, I long to experience, it Myself so that I can know, its characteristics. The Son, it seems, went in search of Darkness. He sought to experience it, for people were so worried about it and He wanted to know why. But how could the Sun meet Darkness face to face? My Nature will not tolerate the minutest shade of grief." But we would like to know what the secret of this overflowing joy is?

What is, the Message His Life of *Ananda* conveys to us? Baba reminds us that we are all Divine and so embodiments of Joy. Yet, why do we suffer from the disease of grief? His Life must be full of lessons for us to escape grief and be filled with joy. We have to endeavour to emulate the example He holds before us.

As a help, in this endeavour, let, me recall a few incidents which give the clue to success. The 1979 Summer Course was on for students from all over' India at Brindavan. Sometime during the latter half of the course rumour went round that the cows in the Gokulam adjacent to Baba's residence will be shifted next morning to the new Gokulam erected behind the College buildings, much nearer the farmland where vegetables and grass were grown. The distance between the old and the new cowsheds was less than four furlongs.

Buntings and streamers; floral arches and festoons rose along and across the pathway from the old Gokulam, through the Hostel compounds and from thence along the main road, and further back through the College campus up to the new Gokulam. Throughout the night the whole place was agog with excitement and activity. People had gathered thick at dawn, and both sides of the road anticipating to see something grand.

It will not be irrelevant or irreverent to call Baba *Utsavapriya*, fond of Festivals! Baba says, His Presence is *Nithya Kalyaanam Pachchatoranam*, everyday a Festival, green festoons, atop every gate. First in the procession came the students of the College, chanting Vedic hymns. They were followed by the full contingent of 600 male participants of the Summer Course singing in chorus inspiring Bhajans. There were about 200 Girl students attending the Summer Course, also singing Bhajans. Then came the cows sumptuously caparisoned in velvet and brocade, each cow held by one student chosen from the Summer Course students in order to give every State in India a chance to share in that *Sadhana*, and another student of the Brindavan College Hostel who was as familiar with the idiosyncrasies of each animal. The cows were unprepared for all the excitement which surrounded them and while prancing they stepped on the toes of the unwary. The boys discovered that handling cows needs special skill and extra-circumspection. Swami was of course, next to the cows He loved to tend. He was in the white Mercedes with other cars trailing behind. While Vedic chants rose to the skies, He cut the tape at the entrance to Gokulam in accordance with contemporary fashion. He fed the cows ranged in the open with luscious bananas. Then He led one of the cows inside the New Gokulam. After *Aarati* for Swami, everyone was given *Prasad*.

I have described this occasion in some detail because it sheds light on many interesting features. The procession matched in grandeur the one on the Inaugural Day of the Summer Course when "VIP's", including a Minister of the State Government were participants; the only difference was, the cows were the VIP's that day! And, what was the celebration for? The cows were being shifted from one shed to another. Nothing much to be jubilant over on the face of it. Yes! But, for Baba each occasion is a Festival. He gave a memorable opportunity for students from all over India and even from overseas to participate in a unique ceremony. The cows were, in a sense, only incidental, *nimitta*. The purpose was to show that even an occasion we would dismiss as, prosaic and routine as leading cows along half a mile of road, could be made into one of joy and reverential homage. It was like any other Festival. On Shivaratri Baba distributes *Prasad*, on His birthday *Prasad* is distributed. And even for this festival of shifting the cows from shed to shed, *Prasad* was for all.

For Baba, every occasion has the, potentiality to be enjoyed as a Festival! He sublimates the drab into the Divine, the trivial into the transcendent. The setting up of a diesel dynamo to supply electric power to the College Hostel when regular supply fails, is elevated into the *Shakti Puja* it really is. The cutting of the first sod for the erection of a shed is accompanied by *Bhumi Puja*, for every one has to be made aware of the sanctity of the Earth on which the structure will rise. Deepening a well, re-building of a school, planting of a line of trees, provision of a roadside bus shelter, installation of electric lights in a temple, every one of these is an occasion for rejoicing, and the sharing of Grace. I remember that when Sai Geeta, the elephant, entered a shed built for her, there was a celebration! Some years ago, He visited every one of the 40 flats allotted to residents at Prasanthi Nilayam and made everybody happy.

Baba says, every day is a Festival worth celebrating! Everyday when we awake alive, we receive a gift from God, God gives us one more chance to derive joy. In the morning prayer that Baba has taught us, we begin, "I am now born from the womb of sleep!" Each morning we are born anew! At least we ought to feel reborn. Everyday is worth a celebration, not necessarily by display of buntings and festoons, but by the inner jubilation, the *Nitya Kalyanam* of the heart, the *Pachcha toranam* of the mind. Everyday is a Festival to celebrate the gift of new opportunities for service and *sadhana*, to declare when we prepare to go to sleep, "Thank God! I have lived another day in your Loving Presence." Life is too crowded with joy for tears, regrets and grouses. Life is too precious to be frittered away in whining and wailing.

That is the Message enshrined in the Life Baba lives: Be ever full of Joy! Make everyday a Festival!

—From "*The Greatest Adventure*"

ANANTAPUR CAMPUS NEWS:

"Become Beacon-Lights"

A stirring call to the students of the Sri Sathya Sai College for Women to live up to the high ideals of Sai 'educational institutions and set an example to the world, was given by Bhagavan Baba in a discourse at the College auditorium on July 30.

In the course of His address, Bhagavan said

Students! You have to consider seriously the root cause for the chaos, the injustice, the falsehood and the disorder in which the world is caught up today. The old are lost in brooding over the past and lamenting the passing of "the good old days". The young are concerned about planning their future, their jobs, marriage, family and so on. Both are ignoring their duties in the present. They do not realise that the present is both a product of the past and the seed for the future. If the present is properly taken care of, the future will be good of its own accord. Decide to do your duty in the present. It will pave a royal road for the future. Duty is God. Work is

worship. Make these two mottos the guides for your life and pursue your studies in this spirit. If you are planning to do something in the future, what is the guarantee that such a time will come? Putting off obligations for tomorrow is irrational. Live in the present. Resolve to fulfil your immediate duty.

Show your gratitude to your parents, to those who have nourished and cherished you, to our teachers and to your spouses. This is the primary index of humanness. Today instead of gratitude we have cruelty. People do not hesitate to do harm to those who have done them good. This is inhuman. Instead of trying to do good even to those who have done them harm, how wicked it is to do harm to those who have done good to them?

Eschew separation

You have to develop the consciousness that you belong to one and the same human family. There should be no feeling of separatism on the basis of language, caste or creed. If you have not understood the greatness of your country and have no regard for upholding its stature and honour, of what worth is your education? Book knowledge is of little worth. All the energy expended on studying books will later turn to allergy. What is important is the cultivation of pure and sacred ideals. Acquiring degrees and going abegging for jobs is a pitiable situation. Develop self-reliance and build your life on faith in God

It is the decline of spirituality that has landed the nation in the mess in which it finds itself, with a complete loss of moral values. Parents are not held in esteem. There is little love lost between husband and wife and parents and children. What kind of life is this? The first requisite for children is to have love and regard for parents to whom they owe everything.

Conserve energy

Learning to earn a living is only half the job. The other half is to make life worthwhile and meaningful. Students should take note of the innumerable ways in which energy is being wasted. Seeing bad things, listening to bad things, bad speech, bad thoughts and bad deeds energy is being wasted in all these five ways. The power of sight is a precious gift. Whenever you see, some divine energy is expended in the act of seeing. This will be evident from the fact that blind people are found to have considerable reserves of energy. There are many intelligent persons among the blind. The man with sight walks briskly during the day, but flounders in the dark. Blind people walk at the same even pace during day or night. Deaf and dumb persons also conserve considerable energy because they don't waste it in speech or hearing.

Modern students are growing like the giraffe, which has its head in one place and its heart a long way off. In the case of the giraffe, it is because of its long neck that the head is remote from the heart. But there is no such excuse for human beings. They should be able to observe unity in thought, word and deed.

Recovery of morals

Good conduct is most essential. A people without morals perish. It is the decline in morality that is responsible for the country's troubles. The recovery of morals is the primary need today. Morality cannot be had from books or from the market. It has to come from the heart.

With regard to professional education like engineering and medicine, many students go in for these courses after completing the 12th standard. This is too early a stage for such courses. They may pick up some technical knowledge, but their general knowledge and awareness of conditions in the world are poor. Their command of language is so meagre. Students should have at least a degree before they are admitted to the professional courses.

There is a wide gulf between what you study at college and what you will have to face in life later. After you finish studies, you may get married and will have to adjust yourselves to the customs and attitudes of your parents-in-law and others. Not all of you will be able to go for work. What happens to the knowledge acquired here? You must see that what you learn is of use for the kind of life you will have to lead later. You have to learn how to move in society and how to be useful to society. All that you are, you owe to society and you have to show your gratitude to society by rendering service.

Your first duty is to give happiness and satisfaction to your parents. You should not be preoccupied with your own personal comforts and pleasure. You must set an example to the world as a result of all that you have learnt here.

Women's role

Remember that women have a vital role to play in the world. Our ancients recognised the primary importance of women and gave them appropriate status in every respect. Cultivate humility, which is the hall-mark of true knowledge. Develop self-confidence, without which nothing worthwhile can be achieved in life. Above all, have firm faith in God. People perform all kinds of rituals on the basis of the holy days mentioned in the almanac like Ekadashi. But they do not have firm faith in the Supreme Godhead, who is the eternal basis of everything.

Students! Education in our Institute is merely an opportunity for you to become exemplary human beings. Commercial or worldly motives are totally absent here. My only wish is, that all of you should develop into worthy representatives of Indian womanhood when you go out into the world. Learn to lead a life of righteousness, truth, love and beauty. Become beacon lights for the world.

The eyes of the world are on the Sai educational institutions. You must live up to our ideals without fear or pride. Let your conscience be your guide always. You have my blessings in all your endeavours.

Bhagavan Visits Women's College

Bhagavan Baba visited the Anantapur Campus of the Sathya Sai Institute on July 30, to declare open additions to the building complex of the Sathya Sai College for Women.

Bhagavan was received by the students and staff of the college, on arrival from Prasanthi Nilayam in the morning. The entire campus had been given a thorough face-lift by the students, who had worked hard to make it spotlessly clean. The campus was tastefully decorated for the occasion.

Bhagavan was taken in procession to the newly constructed guesthouse and water tower. After opening this building, Swami proceeded to the new extension to the hostel, with provision for housing 130 students.

Later, Bhagavan declared open the new college building, with lecture halls and laboratories for arts and science students. Swami went in a procession from there to the college auditorium.

After the Principal's welcome speech, Bhagavan delivered His discourse (published separately). The variety entertainment that followed was very much enjoyed by Bhagavan and the entire audience. The programme consisted of scenes from the dance-drama "Parijataapharanam", featuring four characters, Krishna, Rukmini, Sathyabhama and Narada. The dances were in four different styles: Bharata Natyam, Kuchipudi, Odissi and Kathakali. The ballet was followed by a music concert. Three songs were rendered with deep feeling by three pairs of girl students.

Swami returned to Prasanthi Nilayam in the afternoon, after lunch.

A Poet's Prayer

Lord Krishna did not need
anything more than a reed
to blow out his melodies from.
All glory to the singer
calling forth from a hollow flute
such strains the world stood mute
to drink in to its heart's content,
the merest trifle His instrument.

Do not get bloated with pride
in your artifice
that holds the world spellbound

the subtle tremors and quavers
—the marvel of the sound.
Saturate your heart with humility,
You know not from where it, comes.
It could have gone to anyone
and turned him a musician.
Lucky indeed you are the one
the Lord has chosen;
offer all you have at the Lotus Feet
where really it is due.

My poet, you also learn this:

the gift in your keeping
can be taken back any moment
nor can you ever earn
what through sheer grace
has been lent.

You think you can play with words
and make them dance as you choose,
helter-skelter rushing
at your beckoning
waiting for your, command;
you presume you are a darling
of the goddess of speech called Muse.

These words are tricksters
wanton and wayward

filling you with a sense of power,
making the inner voice unheard.
What more can you produce
than the clang of cymbals?

Empty yourself out and keep ready to pray:
"Fill me, Lord Sai, with divine breath
even as you had filled the hollow flute,
so that my verse moving
in an ever-widening circle
may spread the happy tidings
of the King's
Presence right now in our midst"

—*P. P. Sharma*

Unto Sai a Witness

"Death is the denouement of the drama of life," wrote Prof. Kasturi in 1981. That denouement came to him on August 14 at noon, a few minutes after Bhagavan Baba saw him in the Sathya Sai Hospital at Prasanthi Nilayam. He was 90.

Bhagavan Baba, who was overseeing a students' rehearsal in the College Auditorium, abruptly stopped it at 11-30 a.m. and went straight to the Hospital. Reaching the bedside of Prof. Kasturi, Swami called him: "Kasturi!" Prof. Kasturi opened his eyes for a moment and looked at the Lord. Bhagavan materialised Vibhuti and placed it in Kasturi's mouth. Kasturi closed his eyes and a serene peace enveloped him. Swami told those at the bedside to do Namasmarana. An hour later his spirit merged in the Lotus Feet of the Lord. Streams of devotees paid their last respects to him at the hospital.

The next morning his mortal remains were cremated on the bed of the Chitravati river.

For over forty years he rendered devoted service to Bhagavan as writer, editor, companion and tireless propagator of Swami's life and message. Millions of devotees all over the world got acquainted with Bhagavan's life and teachings through the four volumes of "Sathyam Sivam Sundaram" (on the life of Bhagavan) and the 11 volumes of "Sathya Sai Speaks", besides the Vahini Series.

Prof. Kasturi was a witness to the innumerable miracles of Swami and he could bear authentic testimony to the glory and magnificence of the Avatar as few others could. He had

travelled with Bhagavan all over India. Vivid accounts of his intimate experiences with Swami are given in his autobiography, "Loving God", which was released by Swami on Christmas day in 1982.

Kasturi continued to work right upto his last illness, giving of his best to "Sanathana Sarathi", which Swami launched in 1957 with Kasturi as the Editor.

After 1982 Kasturi brought out two books, one on the Lord's mother "Easwaramma", and the other on the essence of Swami's message in a book entitled "Prasanthi".

It could be truly said of Kasturi "Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

—Ed.

Discriminate and decide; dive and declare the depth; eat and judge the taste. That has been the message of the seers of India. Mere axioms without the chance to prove their value to oneself were not thrown at the pupils by the ancient preceptors. The pupil was told then that Divinity was dancing in every cell of his; that he could therefore be fearless. Meet hatred with your innate Prema; meet grief with innate Joy; meet anger with the shield of Santhi, Inner Peace. You are bound to win. Loka is Lokesa; the Universe is the Universal Principle manifested in multifarious Particulars. Man is Madhava in miniature. The human body has been acquired as a gift in return for the meritorious lives spent by you in the past. The nature of man is genuinely Divine, in the past, present and future, for ever. There was never a time when it was not.

—Baba

In Bhagavan Baba's teachings, we have a marvellous combination of the highest metaphysics with simple moral maxims for improving our conduct in daily life. These are not mere copybook maxims, to be read and repeated or forgotten. In Bhagavan's scheme of spiritual discipline they have an important place, because without observing these apparently simple do's and don'ts, no real spiritual progress can take place.

A few of these maxims may be recalled here, although most devotees may be familiar with many of them

Do Good, See Good, Be Good.

We should forget the good we have done to others and the bad others have done to us.

If you cannot oblige, at least speak obligingly.

Treat everyone as an embodiment of God.

Education is not for information but for transformation.

Thoughts, words and deeds should be consistent.

The easiest path to Self-realisation is the surrender of the ego: Sharanagati.

Love all, serve all.

Reduce wants, be simple, that is the way to happiness.

Discipline is the first step to Self-realisation.

Do not water and feed the tree of desire.

Intolerance is the product of anger, hate and envy.

Each one of us has to examine for himself or herself how far we have succeeded in practising these maxims in everyday life. These sayings of Bhagavan should always be remembered and practised all the time by devotees and non-devotees. Then we shall be at peace with ourselves as well as with others.

Chitta-Shuddhi is Atma-siddhi; purification of the mind leads to the realisation of the Self. Swami says that we lack a proper understanding of this simple truth and we do not make earnest efforts to practise it. "Atma vidya" (Knowledge of the Self) needs no external aids like the use of the mind and sense organs. The mind-body complex is required for gaining external knowledge. The truth about the Atma remains unintelligible even to intelligent persons because they tend to intellectualise that which is beyond the intellect. At some stage in the spiritual quest, the intellect realises its incompetence to grasp' the nature of the Divine through the intellect. A spiritual aspirant should merely witness silently all that happens without projecting his ego.

Self-realisation

At times some sayings of Bhagavan are not properly understood by people. Bhagavan categorically says that all psychic and other experiences are projections of one's mind and thoughts. Thinking, feeling, willing relate to the mind. Bhagavan often speaks of Self-confidence, Self-satisfaction, Self-sacrifice, and Self-realisation. Some people erroneously think that Self-confidence implies confidence in one's ego whereas in fact it means faith in the

you will be prone to consider the world as independently real. Faith in the Atma and the bliss experienced thereby eliminates the ego and leads to Self-realisation.

Bhagavan says, "Everything is nothing, and nothing is everything." Here what is meant is that everything appearing and disappearing is non-existent and unreal, whereas while we are under the spell of Maya we do not recognise the real that is the unseen substratum of everything. In fact That alone is real. Everything is super-imposed upon the Self. Everything is "nothing" apart from the Self. That which is seen cannot see, that which sees cannot be seen. This is an Upanishadic saying. Atma, which is the substratum of the seer, seeing and seen, cannot be objectified. Self-realisation is simply being oneself. It is not a state in which one knows of anything else or becomes something. The eternal NOW is Consciousness. Past and future are the domain of the mind.

Self-enquiry is a very simple technique of transferring the attention from the object to the subject. When the subject has no objects to perceive and no concepts to think, it automatically dissolves into the Self, the Source.

A great Tamil poet Muruganar composed many verses and a translation of a verse by him runs as follows:

For the Lady Mind, the wedded wife
Of the radiant Sun-God Self,
To forsake the joys of light
And go astray seeking
The deer darkness of the world,
What is it but the frenzied folly of infidelity

Sage Ribhu had a disciple who had embarked on the path of Self-enquiry. In course of time the sage wanted to ascertain the progress the disciple had made. So in the garb of a rustic he went to the house of his disciple and found him watching a procession. The rustic enquired about the procession. The disciple said that the king was seated on an elephant, with a band in front, and his ministers were following him on horses. The rustic asked who was the king and which was the elephant. The disciple replied, "Can't you see the king is above and the elephant is below?" The rustic replied that he could not understand the terms above and below. Thereupon the disciple angrily told the rustic that he would not understand anything until it was demonstrated to him. So the disciple asked the rustic to bend doyen and the disciple sat on his back and then told the rustic. "You are the elephant and I am the king above you." Then the rustic replied that now he understood the meaning of below and above, the king and the elephant, but still what was not understandable to him was the meaning of 'you' and 'I'. On hearing these words the disciple at once recognised that it could be only his master who must have come in the guise of a rustic, and immediately, got up and apologetically prostrated at the feet of the master. When the false notion of I vanishes, then *That* which sustained it alone remains; the triad of seer, seeing, and seen disappears.

"I do not want your praise. I want your transformation," observed Bhagavan Baba, in an inspiring exhortation to devotees to fill their hearts with love and lead a godly life, in His discourse on the last day of the Veda Purusha Saptah Jnana Yajna, in the Poornachandra Auditorium at Prasanthi Nilayam.

There was a record gathering in the auditorium. The Saptah Yajna, which was initiated by Bhagavan on September 26, concluded with the Poornahuti on Vijayadasami day, October 2. From the 27th to October 1, Bhagavan delivered discourses in the evening on themes relating to the Vedas. He explained the significance of the Vedas-Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharvana and emphasised the unique importance of Pranavaapasana meditation on the Pranavamantra "AUM". (Details of the discourses will be published later).

In His discourse on the morning of October 2, Bhagavan laid stress on the need to put into practice at least a fraction of Swami's teachings. Bhagavan said:

Today marks the completion of the Veda Purusha Yajna with the performance of Poornahuti (final offering in the yajna homa). The offering which you have to make in the yajna is that of your bad thoughts, bad desires and actions. This is more important than anything else. People are not doing this now. You have listened to hundreds of discourses over the past forty years or so. But your mind remains where it was. There is little change in your attitudes or actions. The heads are filled with scriptural lore and book knowledge, but no attempt is made to fill the heart with love. Many have been residing in the ashram for years and have been attending various festivals and functions here. But there is no change in their lives. They have not inscribed Swami's message in their hearts.

Curb on desires

If there is no spiritual transformation in your way of life over the years, you would be guilty of having wasted all your energies, time and opportunities. You have been coming to Prasanthi Nilayam for the past many years and have been listening to Swami's discourses. But your desires seem to be ever on the increase, while the spirit of "Tyaga" (renunciation) has not developed to the slightest extent. Should you not try to curb your desires to some extent? Living in the ashram, your thoughts are about Samsaram (the family). This is not true sadhana. Sometime or other you will have to give up your material possessions. Only he is a hero who gives up his possessions before they go from him.

The Saptah Yajna concludes today ("Samaptam"). The true meaning of "Sama-aptam" is realisation of Brahman. To recognise the Omni-Self that is in every being is Self-realisation. Today, people boast about the tremendous progress of science and technology, but if this claim is true, why does ignorance (Ajnana) persist on such a large scale? The fact is much of the progress of science, today is confined to satisfying man's selfish desires and not for promoting the genuine well-being of the world. Is it a sign of true progress if a country arms itself to the teeth to destroy another? Is this an index of scientific advance? It is really a sign of ignorance.

True devotion

Good thoughts, good words and good actions are absent today: How; then, do you expect the Divine to fulfill your desires? Men are behaving in a manner worse than that of animals. How can they be called human at all? Perpetually they are concerned about wealth, family and children. They hardly think of God. There are fleeting moments of devotion, but these are more demonstrative than genuine expressions of faith in God. Such artificial exhibitions of devotion serve only to confirm the atheists in their disbelief. Unless faith in God expresses itself in a godly life, it is sheer hypocrisy. I do not want to know that you have listened to my discourses well. I want to know that you have thoroughly transformed yourselves. It is such transformation that is the mark of true devotion. If the ground is not wet, what is the point in saying that there has been a downpour? Those who claim to be devotees should show in their actions some evidence of their faith. They must live up to their professions. "Sai Ram" in words and dishonesty in thoughts is brazen deception. "Sai Ram" must emanate from the depths of one's being. Whether in the Sai Organisation or elsewhere, there must be sincerity and unity of thought, word and deed.

Develop fraternal feelings towards all. Differences of opinion should be resolved by compromise. If egoistic pride is given up, all difficulties can be overcome. From today make a bonfire of your ignorance and egoism and develop love in your hearts. Live up to Swami's teachings as far as possible and thereby redeem your lives.

The Educational Challenge

—Prof. S. Sampath

We need human understanding and action to bring about the changes needed to guarantee a livable future for all mankind. The motive power for this is organized knowledge; and knowledge is disseminated by the process of education. More than any other factor, education will determine how we survive, what the quality of life is that we are able to achieve, how nations behave towards each other and the extent to which human freedom and dignity flourish in a complex World.

There is no doubt that civilization will gain more from the activities that we promote in our classrooms and halls of learning and through the contents of the books that are written and read, the audiovisual material that we employ and the radio and television programmes that we produce and use than by the forges and factories that we build and operate. The degree of success that we achieve will depend on how well we are able to relate Science and Technology to the non-measurable, non-computable factors governing and influencing human society, such as art, religion, culture and morals—and introduce harmony between the two elements. The challenge before us is the task of integrating all Sciences—physical, natural, social and human and of building bridges across the gaps that exist between processes and purposes and between facts and values.

Human societies have become more difficult to deal with than in the past. Every intervention in human affairs produces unforeseen consequences.

Taking note of the above, Jerome B. Weisner, well known U.S. Science-policy adviser, says: "It is only a more incisive understanding of the human factors, combined with the new capabilities that flow from advances in Science and Technology, that will help us to achieve a world of decency, of increasing opportunity for individual development and of social life based on compassion and co-operation. We are left with only one choice—that of moving on to a higher level of understanding, sophistication and sensitivity in our own use of Science and Technology and in our service to Society on mankind's behalf."

The stakes are high. We have, on the one hand, the prospect of a future of comfort and prosperity in which human beings will be free to develop their potential fully in congenial surroundings. On the other hand, we are up against the possibility of immense tragedy and human degradation.

In the words of Prof. Alfred North Whitehead: "It is the business of the future to be full of hazards, threats and uncertainties. And it is among the merits of Science that it equips man to face the future skillfully and with confidence."

Speaking in a similar vein, the Indian scientist, Prof. M. G. K. Menon, makes this point: "While Science, with some amount of wisdom, can create a brilliant world of the future, all the wisdom in the world, without Science cannot hope to solve the complex problems of today."

To quote Whitehead again: "The twin-purpose of education is to inculcate in the pupil 'intellectual vision' and to impart to him 'knowledge of technique' to make him know well what he does."

This emphasizes, in elegant and simple terms, the importance of Values in Education. If these Values take root in the System, the products of our Universities will be seen to have the following attributes

They will want peace with justice in a world that acknowledges the rule of law and in which no nation or individual need live in fear.

They will want freedom, man not being born to have someone's foot over his neck or hand over his mouth freedom on the home-front and a world in which freedom looked upon as a good and easily available commodity.

They will want the dignity and work of every individual to be recognized and safeguarded.

They will want every person to be given an opportunity to achieve the best in him, dissenting from conditions such as disease, ignorance and poverty that stunt the growth of individuals.

They will subscribe strongly to the tenets of equality before the law and equality of opportunity to all.

These attributes are not exhaustive but illustrative of the bounties that can flow out of a well-organized system of education. These have deep roots in the tradition and culture of the people concerned. There is an intimate connection between an individual's attitude towards these aims and deeper feelings which are 'universal' and 'eternal'. The seeds of conflict are present here—emphasising the need for discussion and inculcation of Values.

The fact that millions of men and women have sacrificed their lives defending freedom does not ensure survival of freedom if we cease to pay our tithes of devotion to it. Unlike the Pyramids, the monuments of the spirit will not remain unattended but call for nourishment in each generation by the allegiance of believing men and women. Every individual, in his home-life, place of work, public behaviour and in the recesses of his heart must see himself as a builder and maintainer of the value-system that we all cherish. To convert this dictum into reality is the over-riding responsibility of the educational system that we build and operate.

(From the paper presented at the National Symposium on Value Orientation)

THE CHANCELLOR SPEAKS:

Teaching Values by Example

"Human values cannot be learnt from lectures or text-books. Those who seek to impart values to students must first practise them themselves and set an example," declared Bhagavan Baba, Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, in His valedictory address to the National Symposium on Value Orientation in Higher Learning held at Prasanthi Nilayam from Sept. 24 to 26. The Symposium, in which Vice-chancellors and educationists from all over India participated, was the first of its kind organised on a national basis. The valedictory meeting was held in the Poornachandra Auditorium, which was filled to capacity with devotees, besides the educationists.

In the course of His discourse, Bhagavan said:

A society without values will cease to be human. The more human values are cherished, the better will be the growth of society, the nation and the world. We cannot rest content with an educational system which is confined to academic achievement. It has to promote simultaneously human virtues. The main problem of our education is how to adapt the spiritual and cultural traditions we have inherited from the past to the needs of daily life today.

The relationship between the individual and society has to be rightly understood. Why should the individual serve others? What claims has society on the individual? When we

(Swadhenam), Knowledge (Jnanam) and Power (Shakti). These four help to make society go forward.

Values in Vedanta

How are human qualities to be promoted in society? Society is made up of individuals. No man can be an island to himself. Living amidst fellow human beings, man has to sow the seeds of love, rear the plants of harmony and offer the fruits of peace to society. Thereby his humanness is manifested. In the Ashtanga Yoga (the Eightfold Yoga), this figures as the first among the different disciplines: Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi. Yama calls for the observance of the following practices: Ahimsa (non-violence), Sathyam (truth), Astheyam (non-stealing), Brahmacharyam (celibacy), and Aparigraha (non-acquisitiveness). These are the five human values to be cultivated, in the language of Vedanta.

Ahimsa does not mean, as is commonly understood, not causing harm to others. It really means that one should not cause harm to anyone in thought, word or deed. This is the most important human quality. Only when this has been developed, will one be qualified to practise and experience Truth.

Truth does not mean merely telling the facts as one sees or knows them. Truth is that which does not change with time. It must be spoken with complete purity of mind, speech and body.

"Astheyam" means refraining from stealing what belongs to others. Even the thought of taking another's property should not arise in the mind. Nor should one tell others to commit theft. This is the third human value. The fourth is Brahmacharyam. Observance of Brahmacharya means that whatever, one thinks, says or does should be filled with thoughts of Brahman. To be ever immersed in the consciousness of Brahman is Brahmacharya. All thoughts, words and deeds should be dedicated to the Divine. When the thoughts, which are the prelude to action, are centred on God, they are unlikely to go astray.

"Aham" (the Ego) arises from the Atma. Thoughts are produced by the ego and give rise to speech. Hence all actions are based on the Atma. All thoughts, desires and speech emanate from the Atma. When all these are sanctified by dedication to God, the consciousness of oneness with Brahman ("Aham Brahmasmi"—"I am Brahman") ensues. That Brahman is Prajna (constant integrated awareness).

The acquisitive mania

The fifth practice is "Aparigraha". This is usually interpreted as not accepting other's property as gift or gratuitously. This is not the correct meaning. It really means performing actions without expecting any reward, without any acquisitive motives and in a completely selfless spirit. Today because all actions are done out of self-interest and desire for acquiring wealth, they lack true human quality. Even worship, religious ceremonies, pilgrimages and the like are done with some kind of expectations and not in a spirit of disinterested devotion.

becoming demonic beings. They are not content with having what they need for essential purposes. They wish to accumulate enormously for the future. They are filled with worries and discontent. Thereby they forfeit their happiness here and in the hereafter. Birds and beasts are content to live on what they can get. Man alone is afflicted with insatiable desires. Birds and animals have no desire to hoard or to exploit others. But man is a prey to these vices. He forgets his natural human qualities and behaves worse than animals. When these tendencies are given up, the inherent divinity in man will manifest itself.

Values and faith in God

Human virtues cannot be acquired from others. They cannot be nourished by the mere study of books. Nor can they be got readymade from teachers. They have to be cultivated by each person and the resulting joy has to be experienced by him.

The world sorely needs today human values. Attempts are being made to promote these values in the educational field. But they cannot be promoted through materialistic, worldly or scientific means. Without developing devotion to God no human quality can grow. The first requisite is faith in God. Doubts are raised whether God exists or not. Those who affirm that God exists and those who deny are equally incompetent to say anything about God if they know nothing about the nature of God. To assert the existence of that which does not exist is ignorance. To deny the existence of that which exists is folly. God is omnipresent. There is no need to search for Him anywhere. Everything that we see is a manifestation of God. Wherever we are there is God. There can be no greater folly than to deny the existence of God when the whole cosmos bears witness to His handiwork. Everything in creation must be viewed as a manifestation of God. Only with this basic faith can one develop one's human personality.

Sathya and dharma

Human values cannot be promoted merely by repeating the words Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa. The Vedas declare: "Sathyam vada, Dharmam chara" ("Speak the truth; adhere to Dharma and right conduct "). In practising Dharma, there should be no "marma" (secret desires). Actions performed with such secret motives result in bondage. Truth and right conduct should be adhered to with pure intentions. Both of them are rooted in the eternal. A righteous life leads to peace. Love is to be experienced in the depths of peace. Love should find expression in nonviolence. Where love prevails, there is no room for doing harm or violence to others. All these basic values have to be demonstrated in action and not limited to preaching.

Many educationists and Vice-chancellors are present here today. Their vision is turned outwards towards the external physical world. I am concerned with the Inner Vision. It is not possible to reconcile the physical and the internal spiritual vision. The heart cannot be transformed by lessons in a class-room. The world cannot be changed by mere preaching. Only through action and practical example can the impulse for change be intensified. When one leads a disciplined and regulated life, the lesson will be learnt without any teaching. The people will follow of their own accord. This applies to human values. Only when they are practised by teachers and elders, will students practise them.

Those who seek to impart the values of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa to others must first try to practise them themselves whole-heartedly. To imagine that values can be instilled by teaching is a mistake. Such learning will have no permanent effect. Educationists must take note of this fact. If transformation is to be effected in students, the process must start from a very early age.

To propagate human values, it is advisable to keep as far away as possible from the powers that be. It is not possible to promote sacred values through the help of governmental authorities. Some well-intentioned leaders may formulate commendable schemes. But there is a frequent change of men in the seats of power. What, then, happens to human values? It is essential to be self-reliant and stand on our own legs. Only when you are untrammelled and independent can you propagate these sacred values freely and effectively. Educationists should try to set up an independent body for the formulation and implementation of educational policy, free from control or interference by the Government. Only then will the movement for the promotion of human values succeed.

If there is unity among educationists, any undertaking can be successful. Today unity is lacking in colleges and universities. Students and teachers are at loggerheads. How, then, is national integration to be promoted? When there is no unity or harmony at home, how can there be national unity

Those in power operate under their own compulsions. They can take over properties and enterprises, but they cannot promote values. They may occupy temples and take over temple properties, but they can exercise no control over God. Governments may exercise control over men, but they have no hold over men's qualities.

Educational institutions must promote the spiritual outlook among students. When students acquire spiritual values, human values will grow in them of their own accord. Human values are not things to be implanted from outside. They are within each individual. They have to be manifested from within.

Human values are in everyone. What we need are persons who will provide the stimulus and the encouragement to bring them out. If the feeling that the divinity that is present in everyone is one and the same, is promoted among all, human values will sprout naturally in every person. To have this sense of spiritual oneness is the prelude to experiencing the highest bliss.

Educational institutions should teach students to adhere to Truth and to discharge their duties as a sacred obligation. Students should not allow success or failure to ruffle their minds unduly. Courage and self-confidence must be instilled in the students.

Bend the twig and bend the tree, says the proverb. The moulding of character must start with children at the earliest age. Begin developing human values from the primary school. Some are concerned about our living in a "secular state". Secularism really means equal respect for all faiths and beliefs. There should be no hatred towards any faith. Other creeds and beliefs should

educational institutions were religious institutions. Sai educational institutions are based on equal respect for all religions. They are wedded to unity and harmony.

Whatever studies you may pursue, do not give up your faith in God. To give up God is to give up life itself. Life is God. Truth is God. All that you do as an offering to God will be an expression of human values.

The educationists and Vice-chancellors who have assembled here have come to some decisions as a result of their high-minded deliberations. They are firmly convinced that human values have to be promoted. Whatever their limitations, they should strive to the extent possible to implement their decisions. The Divine is installed in their hearts. It is enough if they follow the promptings of the Divine. They are bound to achieve their objectives. If faith in God is strengthened, all values will develop in due course. Sublimate your lives by remembering, worshipping and adoring God.

—(*From Bhagavan Baba's valedictory discourse to the National Symposium on Value Orientation on 26-9-1987*)

A Memorable Dasara

The Dasara celebrations began on September 24th, with Kalasa Sthapanam in the Prasanthi Mandir. On September 25th, there was Narayana Seva in the vast Hill View Stadium.

Besides serving food to over ten thousand men, women and children, Bhagavan distributed dhotis and saris to the aged and the infirm. Bhagavan invited the educationists who had come for the National Symposium on Value Orientation to share in the service of distributing clothes. Scores, of students of the Sathya Sai Institute helped enthusiastically in the serving of food and the distribution of clothes. A large band of Seva Dal members arranged for the orderly seating of the thousands who had gathered for the Narayana Seva.

The Vedapurusha Saptah Jnana Yagna was inaugurated by Bhagavan in the Poornachandra Auditorium on Sept. 26. Bhagavan came to the Yajna stage without any ceremony, while the Ritwiks came in a procession from the Mandir, headed by a Nadaswaram party and over a hundred students of the Institute chanting Vedic hymns.

Bhagavan as Veda Purusha initiated the Saptah Athirudra Homa at the specially prepared yajna kunda, where three Ritwiks officiated in the performance of the yajna. Recitation of the Vedas, Devi Puja, Linga Archana, Surya Namaskar and reading of the Ramayana formed part of the daily programme from September 26th to October 2.

Bhagavan gave every morning darshan to the thousands of devotees who filled the Poornachandra Hall and overflowed beyond it.

In the afternoons, discourses on different aspects of the Vedas by pandits from Andhra Pradesh were organised by the Sri Sathya Sai Ghandikota Subrahmanya Veda Shastra Parishat, which was established by Bhagavan last year in memory of the late Sri Ghandikota Subrahmanya Sastri, who passed away on Vijayadasami day.

Later in the evening, meetings of the Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha were held in the Poornachandra Auditorium in the divine presence of Bhagavan. On five days, from September 27 to October 1, the meetings were addressed by pandits and by students of the Sathya Sai Institute. Two of them spoke each day on the message of Bhagavan and their experiences with Swami. The speeches were greatly appreciated by the audience.

The Yajna concluded on October 2 with Poornahuti and the adoration of Bhagavan as Veda Purusha, by the Ritwiks. Bhagavan came in procession to the Poornachandra auditorium, with Sai Gita heading the procession, followed by a Nadaswaram troupe and a large number of students reciting Vedic hymns.

Swami then went round the auditorium showering His blessings on all the devotees by sprinkling the sacred mantra-charged yajna-teertham on the entire gathering.

After the Poornahuti, Bhagavan delivered His discourse on the significance of the yajna and the need for devotees putting into practice Swami's teachings.

The celebrations concluded with the jhoola festival in the evening. Bhagavan was resplendent in His immaculate white robe and gave blissful darshan to the vast gathering.

Srimathis Suseela and P. Leela, accompanied by the Institute students' orchestra, entertained the audience with devotional songs for nearly an hour. The function concluded with Arati to Bhagavan.

Silence, Speech and Sadhana

—*"Bharadwaja"*

The most significant aspect of the Sai scheme of education is the integration of spiritual discipline with academic studies. This integral approach is built into the entire structure of education from the primary stage to the university.

"Krama Sikshana"—discipline—is the foundation of the entire edifice. Discipline is fundamental because Bhagavan Baba considers education not as a process of acquiring information but as a process of training the mind. A properly trained mind—which has the ability to concentrate on anything— is capable of acquiring any knowledge or skill it desires. An

anything that is worthwhile.

The training of the mind is simultaneously a spiritual exercise and a vital element in the educational process. From the spiritual point of view, control of the mind and the senses is the first step in the spiritual journey. Swami constantly refers to "Indriyanigraha"—control of the Indriyas.

The Gita says:

*"Indriyaanaam hi charataam yanmano anuvidheeyathe
Tadasya harathi prajnaam Vaayurnaavam Ivaambhasi."*

—Gita II-67

"The mind, which follows the wandering senses, carries away the intelligence (power of discrimination) like the wind which carries away a boat on the waters."

Control of speech

The senses have to be brought under the control of the mind, which itself has to be guided by the Buddhi (discrimination). Among the senses, Vaak (or speech) is particularly important because it is through speech that one's thoughts and feelings find expression. The Gita prescribes, in fact, the form of penance ('Tapas') that has to be performed by everyone as a normal observance with regard to speech (Vaak).

*"Anudvegakaram Vaakyam Sathyam Priyahitham-cha yath
Swaadhyaayaabhyasanam chaiva Vaangmayam tapa uchyaathe."*

—Gita XVII-12

"Speech which causes no excitement, and is truthful, pleasant and beneficial, and the practice and study of the Vedas, these constitute the 'austerity of speech'."

In the very next verse, the 'Tapas' relating to the mind is indicated.

*"Manahprasaadah Saumyathvam Mounam aatmavinigraha
Bhaavasamsuddhirityethath thapo Maanasamuchyathe."*

—Gita XVII-16

"Serenity of mind, pleasing appearance, silence, self-control, purity of thought and feeling, these are called austerity of the mind."

In a sense, these two stanzas go together, because speech is related to thoughts. Without serenity of mind, silence and purity of thought and feeling, —speech cannot be unagitational, truthful, pleasing and beneficial. "Out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh," says the Bible. One's mental state is revealed in speech.

Hence control of the mind is intimately related to control of speech. Bhagavan Baba has urged the importance of silence, on the one hand, and restraint in speech, on the other. Silence, in Swami's view, has both spiritual and physical significance. Spiritually, silence is practised in meditation as a means of turning the mind inwards. It is noteworthy that the Radhakrishnan report on university education, submitted in 1949, recommended silent meditation daily before the classes started as a part of the academic discipline in all colleges. While this recommendation was hardly implemented in any of the educational institutions for decades, it was introduced as a regular practice in the Sathya Sai colleges from their inception. Every day at the beginning silence is observed by all students and teachers when they assemble for prayer in the morning. The uplifting effect of this silent meditation has been experienced by students in general.

Apart from this observance at college, Bhagavan Baba has enjoined strict maintenance of silence when students and devotees gather in the Mandir or in the auditoria for bhajans or other functions. The purpose of this rule is to ensure the maintenance of a pure atmosphere in these places and to see that there is an attuning of the entire gathering to a common spiritual mood. It is remarkable, for instance, what pin-drop silence is maintained by gatherings running into tens of thousands in and outside the Poornachandra Auditorium when Bhagavan is delivering a discourse.

Besides the basic spiritual objective in observing silence, Bhagavan Baba has commended it to all people, especially students, as a method of conserving energy and not dissipating it on useless and undesirable talk. He reinforced his plea by pointing out that deaf and dumb persons, who were naturally obliged to get on without speech, had more energy than those who wasted their breath all day in speaking.

Silence has other virtues to commend it. "Mounena kalaham naasti", runs a Sanskrit saying. By practising silence, quarrels can be avoided. The poet Bhartrhari recommends silence for the ignorant in an assemblage of scholars. ("Mounam apandithaanaam".)

"Watch your words"

Next to silence, which is quite a difficult thing to practise even as a spiritual discipline, the second best is restraint in speech to the maximum extent possible. Bhagavan Baba always commends restraint in speech as the index of a cultured person. Kalidas, in describing the great qualities of the Raghus, says: "Sathyaaya mithabhaashinaam" ("For the sake of truth they observed moderation in speech.") Shakespeare makes Polonius give the following advice to his son Laertes: "Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice."

Bhagavan has warned that the tongue is prone to four kinds of vices: Uttering falsehood, indulging in scandal, hurling abuse at others, and excessive talk. A constant watch has to be kept on the tongue to see that none of these vices are allowed. In His well-known comment on what the W-A-T-C-H calls for watching, "Watch your words" comes first. A slip of the tongue may cause irreparable harm. One can never be too careful in the use of words or in speech.

Shakespeare's "Tempest", tells Prospero:

"You taught, me language, and my profit on it is I know how to curse."

That was all the benefit Caliban could derive from the power of speech.

At the other end, we have Sir Galahad who declared

"My strength is as the strength of ten Because my heart is pure."

The educational process may be defined as the conversion of Calibans into Galahads. The proper use of the divine gift of speech is one of the vital elements in that process.

ONAM SANDESH:

Redemption through Renunciation

*The day when devotees hail the Lord with adoration;
The day when people fraternise with the poor and the distressed;
When the servants of the Lord are treated to, a pleasing feast;
When the Great Ones come and relate the glories of the Lord;
That day alone is a sacred and memorable day;
All others are days of mourning.*

Embodiments of Divine Love!

The mind is ever in quest of peace, without which there is no happiness. From times immemorial man has been engaged in striving for peace. But peace has eluded him because he has pursued wrong, paths for achieving it. He has considered the satisfactions derived through the sense organs—seeing, hearing, etc.—as the source of mental peace. He has taken the wrong road by surrendering to the demands of the senses. For the sake of enjoying sensuous pleasures man has been ready to adopt wrongful, unfair and unrighteous means. In seeking his individual happiness and pleasure, he has not hesitated to destroy the peace and pleasure of others. In this process, both the individual and society have lost peace and happiness.

As a result of the growth of self-centred desires, selfishness and egoistic conceit have developed in society. Consequently, the basic human relationship that should exist between man and man has been totally undermined.

The, human heart is essentially, like the milky ocean. The Puranas have declared that it is in such an ocean that the Lord has His abode. The human heart that should be an ocean of milk has been turned today into an ocean of brine. The quality of milk is whiteness. White symbolises the

peace will be enshrined. In the salty ocean dangerous creatures like whales and crocodiles will roam freely. Likewise in the heart that is not pure qualities like selfishness and pride will be dominant.

Need for restraint

In the heart of man today, selfishness and conceit have grown to inconceivable heights. Everything in the world should be governed by certain bounds. "Nassreyo Niyamam Vinaa" (There can be nothing great without restraint). Without discipline and restraint man will ruin himself. The sun and the moon, the stars and the planets, wind and weather are all subject to certain laws. Nature itself observes certain Divine laws in its functioning. All things in Nature obey their respective rules of conduct, including birds and beasts. They have control over their sense organs. But man, endowed with a sacred birth and having intelligence and reason, fails to observe restraint. Birds and animals have no prescribed rules of conduct (samskaras). But these rules are the guideposts for man. What accompanies man in his final destiny is not "Samsara" (worldly achievements), but "Samskara" (his good acts). Today man is giving the go by to such Samskaras.

Animals live and die without change in their original nature. Man is different. By practice and discipline, man can change his nature—from bad to good or good to bad. All man's thoughts, feelings and actions are determined by habit and perseverance. Even a person who is cruel in early years can turn into a votary of peace and love. Ratnakara, who was a highwayman, became the sage Valmiki.

Through association with good people, through good conduct and good thoughts, one can cultivate virtue and goodness. Above everything, man needs today the company of the good (Satsangam). For physical health, one needs to get rid of the impurities inside the body, and take in pure things. Likewise, for mental health, man needs to eliminate all impure thoughts and, desires from the mind and acquire good thoughts and good feelings by association with good people. Everyone must send out a prayer: "Oh deities, come and dwell within me! Oh demons, flee from me!"

Prahlada and Bali

Prahlada was a great devotee of God. Hiranyakasipu did not believe in God. He asked his son, "Where is your Narayana?" Prahlada replied: "There is no place where He is not. You can find Him wherever you search for Him." Hiranyakasipu pointed to a pillar and asked Prahlada: "Is your God in this pillar?" Prahlada replied unhesitatingly: "Yes. He is in it." Hiranyakasipu shattered the pillar with a club. Immediately Lord Narasimha emerged from it. What is the inner meaning of this episode? Our body is like a pillar. It is only when the delusion pertaining to the body is destroyed that the Divine within will manifest Himself: Today, everyone is promoting the body consciousness by fostering the desires prompted by the senses.

Prahlada, who was an ardent devotee of Hari, had a son, Virochana, who was an atheist. Virochana's son, the emperor Bali; was a great devotee of God. The Onam celebration is in commemoration of the greatness of Bali. Emperor Bali was a highly righteous ruler. A great

people with his own good. This was the characteristic of rulers in ancient times.

During Bali's rule, the land was prosperous and the people lived happily and harmoniously. Bali was popular throughout the realm. When his fame and reputation were growing, Bali was affected by a tinge of ego. Egoism brings in its train the downfall of the individual.

Love of the people

There is no real ground for any man to feel inflated about himself. When the Lord's feet, eyes, head and hands are everywhere and everything in the cosmos is permeated by the Divine, how can any man feel proud about his possessions or achievements? He is only an instrument of the Divine. Man should strive to recognise the Unity that underlies the apparent diversity which he sees everywhere. Prahlada saw divinity in everything. He realised that the Divine pervades everything inside and outside.

The Onam celebration is an occasion for people to remind themselves of the all pervasive nature of the Divine. Onam is celebrated by Keralites by wearing new clothes after a ceremonial bath and partaking the delicacies prepared for the festival. But the Onam celebration should not be confined to these activities alone. It should be remembered that emperor Bali was an ideal ruler whose sole concern was the welfare and happiness of his subjects. When Bali gave away his entire kingdom to Vamana as a gift, the people felt intensely unhappy over the absence of such a beloved ruler. It was to make them happy that Bali got from Vamana permission to return to the world once every year to see the people and rejoice in their happiness. Onam is the day when Bali is believed to honour his pledge to the people and when the people show their love and reverence to a great, benevolent and righteous ruler.

Growth of selfishness

In ancient days, there was immense mutual love and regard between the rulers and the people. Today such relations do not exist. The people are wasting their lives in selfish pursuits. The rulers, for their part, are also preoccupied with their own selfish ambitions and desires and are concerned only about achieving or retaining power and position. Selfishness has grown excessively both among rulers and the public. Unless this process is reversed, man cannot find peace or happiness. There should be control over desires. Peace will grow in proportion to the limitation on desires. All man's worries, difficulties and problems increase with the growth of desires. Man is the architect of his own happiness or misery. Only good actions can produce good results. When the individual is good, the family is good. When families are good, the society is reformed. When society improves, the nation improves. When the nations improve, the world is transformed. Hence, the transformation must begin with the individual. How can this transformation be brought about? There are two impurities within man which have to be cast out: Selfishness and conceit. But that is not enough. Pure qualities like love, forbearance and compassion have to be imbibed. Life has to be divinised.

What is the kind of existence people lead today? They are engaged in talking ill of others. They indulge in carping criticism. They are filled with envy: They gloat over trivial

dehumanises them. There should be unity in thought, word and deed.

The joy of giving

We are witnessing today the unchecked growth of selfishness all round. This evil has struck deep roots, growing from generation to generation. There must be a total eradication of this selfishness. Real peace can be secured only by renunciation and sacrifice. There is a supreme joy in giving. In renunciation lies the elimination of fear. As long as desires remain, fear and insecurity will dog us. Enquire into the joy that is to be derived from sacrifice and the grief that is the ultimate outcome of sensuous pleasures. Whatever you enjoy through renunciation will become a kind of yoga. Self-conceit in the performance of actions and attachment to the fruits of one's actions have both to be given up. There should be no sense of egoism in doing one's work. "This is my work. I alone am entitled to its fruits"—this attitude should be given up. If you plant a tree, what is the guarantee that you will live to enjoy its fruits? Your progeny may enjoy the fruits. Your duty is to do your allotted work: "Karthavyam yogam Uchyate"—"Doing one's duty is yoga."

Bali's example

Emperor Bali stands out as an example of purity and sacrifice. He rejected the advice of his preceptor, Shukracharya, when the latter opposed the grant of three feet of land to Vamana on the ground that Vamana was Lord Vishnu Himself and that offering the gift that He sought would result in the ruin of Bali. Bali declared: "When the Lord Himself has come seeking a gift from me, what greater good can happen to me than that of being the donor, with the Lord as the recipient?"

Realising that Bali would not heed his advice, Shukracharya resorted to a device to block the gift Bali was about to make, by turning into an insect and filling the mouth of the vessel through which water was to be poured by Bali while making the gift. Vamana, who was aware of this stratagem, cleared the block by pricking the mouth of the vessel with a poker. As a result Shukracharya lost one of his eyes.

One must be prepared to make any offering to God, including one's life itself. Such was the greatness of Emperor Bali. He was prepared to make any kind of sacrifice for God. He lacked nothing in the world—wealth, power, position. But all these he was ready to give up to honour his word. It is rare to find persons who, possess, everything and still have the spirit of sacrifice. The affluent are seldom generous. Often they are mean and greedy.

Because Bali stood out as an ideal renunciant, he achieved undying, fame. Prahlada and Bali belonged to the lineage of Asuras. But both were great devotees of God. Their lives are an example to all mankind.

The ruler and the people

There is a story to illustrate the ideal relations between the ruler and the ruled.

While the queen was applying the oil to the king's head, the king noticed in a mirror that the queen was in tears. He asked her the reason for her shedding tears. The queen said that while applying oil she had noticed some grey, hairs on the king's head and the thought that the king was getting old had made her sad.

That very moment, the king also felt that he had enjoyed royal pleasures long enough and it was high time he repaired to a forest to devote himself to matters of the Spirit. The king and queen summoned the ministers, entrusted the reins of government to them and betook themselves to a forest to lead the life of ascetics. When the people heard about the decision of the royal couple, they felt that they could not live away from such noble rulers and decided to go to the forest en masse. They approached the king and prayed to him: "Why have you given up the kingdom? Is it because of, any lapses on our part?" The king told them: "I have ruled the kingdom long enough. Now that I am old, I wish to devote the rest of my life to thoughts of God." On hearing these words, the entire people wailed in anguish. They decided to perform penance in the forest. Brahma appeared before them and asked them what they wanted. As they were utterly unselfish, they prayed to Brahma to give their king long life. Brahma granted their prayer.

The people went in joy to the king and said that Brahma had granted him long life and therefore he should return to the kingdom to rule over it for many years.

The king started to go back to the capital. But the queen declined to accompany him. She said she would continue to stay in the forest. The people mistook the reasons for the queen's decision. They thought that perhaps the queen was angry because they had prayed only for long life to the king and not for the queen. The queen was cast in a different mould. She was not concerned about herself. She performed a severe penance. Brahma appeared before her and asked what she wanted. She asked: "Is it true that you have granted the king long life? Of what use is it, if the king alone has long life, while the subjects are short-lived? I pray you should grant long life to the people also." Brahma was so pleased with her selfless concern for the people that he granted long life to the people and the queen also.

Kerala's spiritual heritage

Kerala is a very sacred region. It is a land of great natural beauty. Its luscious vegetation endows it with a charm all its own. This beauty is a Divine gift. God is Beauty. Beauty is God.

Keralites must revere their land as one sanctified by three avatars—Narasimha, Vamana and Parasurama. Kerala has been known for its unbroken tradition of devotion to God. While the vicissitudes of politics may have caused some changes, essentially Keralites have been adhering to the spiritual way of life. Even those who appear externally to be atheists are believers in the Divine deep in their being. Keralites should try to preserve their spiritual heritage whatever the challenges they may have to face. This is a great treasure which they have to guard and cherish. They must live up to their ancient ideals and promote faith in them by precept and practice.

"Onam" at Prasanthi Nilayam

An unprecedented gathering of Keralites from all parts of India—including over five thousand from Kerala—participated in this year's Onam festival at Prasanthi Nilayam and received the blessings of Bhagavan Baba.

The participants in the festival, who had started streaming into Prasanthi Nilayam from September 1, gave the Prasanthi Mandir and its environs a gay and festive look by putting up flags, buntings and festoons in the Kerala style.

The Poornachandra Auditorium was filled to capacity on September 4th when the cultural programme started with an invocatory dance by Bal Vikas children from Quilon dist. Students from Ernakulam rendered an English song in praise of Baba. This was followed by a dance drama entitled "Messengers of God" presented by Bal Vikas children from Calicut. The "Messengers" were Christ, Buddha, Zoroaster, Guru Nanak and Hazrat Mohammed. Master Sanjeev from Trivandrum rendered two Karnatic kirtans with amazing proficiency. He was accompanied on the mridangam by Jayakrishnan. A group dance in the Kuchipudi style on the childhood leelas of Krishna by children from Quilon and a Kerala folk dance by a Bal Vikas group from Ernakulam concluded the programme. Bhagavan congratulated the children on their performance.

On September 5—Onam day—Bhagavan was greeted by the blowing of conches as He came out of the Mandir in the morning. As He went round the darshan line in the Mandir compound, a students' troupe from Kerala played band music, while another group presented "Panchavadyam" and a group of young girls in typical Kerala costume, staged the "Tiruvadirai Kali" dance around a lighted lamp. Bhagavan went round the serried ranks of devotees giving ineffable joy to all of them.

In the evening, a large gathering assembled in Poornachandra Auditorium to listen to Bhagavan's Onam message (published separately). Sri T. N. Natarajan, Kerala State President of the Sai organisation, welcomed Bhagavan. Mr. Justice Balakrishna Eradi spoke on the significance of Onam.

Before Bhagavan's discourse, there was a speech in English by a Bal Vikas girl student from Ernakulam on Human Values and mono-acting by a young boy from Calicut on "Humiliation of Ravana". The eight-year old youngster played by turns the roles of Narada, Ravana and Vali in fine style. Two devotees from Alleppey rendered some Ashtapadis from Jayadeva's "Gita Govinda".

This country is suffering from social, political, and economic ills, because those who are responsible for laying down guidelines for educational progress have not endeavoured to

to live the good life, the godly life, teaching him various skills and tricks, only makes him a danger to himself and others. There is unending controversy about the language which should be the medium of instruction; but, no one seems interested in the language of the heart, which uses the vocabulary of Love and the idiom of self-examination and self-sacrifice. Schools and colleges are engaged in stuffing facts and fancies into the heads of the pupils; they do not equip them to face the fortunes of life, to bring the best that is in them and place them at the service of the community.

—Baba

Value Orientation in Higher Education:

National Symposium Hails Sai Institute Scheme

Unanimous appreciation of the pioneering role of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning in imparting value orientation to higher education through its Awareness and Foundation courses and other curricular and extra-curricular programmes including self-reliance and social service activities, was expressed by participants in a National Symposium on Value Orientation in Higher Education held at Prasanthi Nilayam from Sept. 24 to 26.

The participants, consisting of Vice Chancellors, educationists and scientists from all parts of the country, had ample opportunities to study in depth the working of the programme of education in Human Values in the Sathya Sai Institute, under the inspiration and continuous guidance of the Chancellor, Bhagavan Baba.

The symposium was inaugurated by Bhagavan Baba on the morning of Sept. 24th in the Institute Auditorium. Prof. S. N. Saraf, Vice-chancellor of the Institute, welcomed the participants and others and briefly alluded to the emphasis that is placed in the Sathya Sai Institute on the development of both the intellect and intuition leading to the blossoming of human excellence.

Prof. G. Ram Reddy, President of the Association of Indian Universities, and Vice Chancellor of the Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi, who was the chief guest at the inaugural function, said that while the government's National Policy on Education had underlined the urgent need for a concrete programme to inculcate values in the educational process, these were practised in the Sai Institute. He urged that in the promotion of human values among children, the family and the teacher had vital role. Unless the teacher himself practised the values that he preached, he would not carry conviction. From his experience of the Sai Institute, Prof. Ram Reddy felt that "it would be good if students, teachers and Vice Chancellors are exposed to the discipline and value systems" of the Institute.

Bhagavan Baba then delivered His discourse (published elsewhere).

presenting vividly the message of slokas in Adi Sankaracharya's "Bhaja Govindam". The scenes were well designed to bring out the moral of each stanza-the evanescence of wealth, youth and position, the need to get out of the endless wheel of birth and death, the futility of practising rituals and doing pilgrimages without compassion for the poor or genuine devotion to God, and the preoccupation with grammar rather than the goal of life. The rendering of the slokas and the acting were excellent. Bhagavan was the inspiration and the guiding spirit for the performance.

On the 25th, the symposium participants carried on their deliberations on the "Position Paper" prepared by the Sai Institute and the various papers submitted by the participants.

That evening there was a ballet on the childhood leelas of Krishna and the Gopikas' complaints to Yashoda about the child Krishna's pranks. The cast for the ballet included students at all levels from the primary class (Krishna and Balaram) to a Ph.D. student, who played the role of Yashoda. The dances and songs were pleasing and impressive.

On the 26th, the valedictory session of the Symposium was held in the Poornachandra Auditorium, which was filled to capacity with devotees from all parts of the world who had come for the Dasara celebrations. Dr. E. C. G. Sudarsan, Director, MATSCIENCE, Madras, presided.

Dr. Jagadish Narayan, Secretary of the Association of Indian Universities, presenting the report on the Symposium and its recommendations, observed that the participants had been immensely impressed with the variety of educational, creative and constructive programmes being carried out in the different campuses of the Sathya Sai Institute, which were conducive to the promotion of human excellence, based on fundamental values.

The Symposium agreed on a number of recommendations for consideration and implementation by educational institutions with regard to the adoption of "a self-consistent and universal system of values" as the basis on which syllabuses and courses of study are to be constructed. It urged that the pioneering work of the Sai Institute should be made known throughout the country by the use of various media as well as by visits to the Institute. Value education should cover the entire educational system from the primary school to institutions of higher learning.

Prof. Sudarsan in his address stated that science was more value-oriented than it was thought as it was based on close observation, discipline and appreciation of nature's bounty. He pleaded for binocular vision where science and spirituality are served as an integrated whole.

Bhagavan Baba, in His valedictory address, called upon the Vice Chancellors and educationists to develop unity among themselves and strive to impart value orientation to the educational system by precept and example. (Details of Bhagavan's discourse are published separately).

His Children

Our wonderful Lord is so great
There is none whom He will hate
By following him, we His children
Shall surely prosper in life's long run.

His powers are so great
His word makes our fate
In difficulties, He gives us a foothold
And our faith increases a thousandfold.

As a token of love, He gives us many things
From small sweets to large rings
These we accept with a lot of joy,
All of us, each and every boy.

It is Him we adore forever,
Our faith in Him shall never waver
This is the promise we shall take
And prove that it is not a fake.

—*Gopi Krishna, IX Class, Prasanthi Nilayam*

Gratitude

I saw A Man...
His Voice was sweet, like Nectar,
(When it flows!)
And, when He spoke, the words fell, soft,

Like dew-drops on a Rose;
His step was firm where'er He walked...
His Foot-prints... shining-bright,
And, tho' gentle was His Touch,
He was A Man of Might!

And, like A Halo round His Head,

He wore His coal-black hair;
And Love, just like a sweet Bouquet,
Was offered everywhere!
He brought a new un-clouded
View Unto my human-eyes,
And, tho' I knew not whence He came,
I knew The Man was Wise!

The graceful Robe, around His Form,
Caressed Him...

Like a Flame,
And then, I learned from a passer-by,

declared: "Prajnanam is Brahman". "Prajna" is the principle that is present equally in the body, the Antahkarana and the Atma. Hence it may be regarded as "constant integrated awareness". It is this constant integrated awareness that is the source of all values in man. This Prajna is permeated with love. Truth is the echo that resounds from the love-filled Prajna. All actions that arise out of this love-filled Prajna are reactions, constituting Dharma. Santhi (Peace) is a reflection of this Truth and Dharma. Thus Truth, Right Conduct and Peace emanate from the Prajna that is charged with Love, as Resound, Reaction and Reflection. The proper understanding of the source and nature of Truth, Right Conduct, Peace and Love is Ahimsa (the attitude in which one cannot think of causing harm to anyone). Hence man should embark on any activity from Prajna.

Head-heart-hand

"Truth" (Sathya) does not mean mere statement of facts as one sees them or hears about them. Truth in its real sense transcends the limitations of time, space and circumstance. It is difficult to practise this transcendental truth in ordinary life. Vedanta described it as *Rta*. It is the basis of human existence. It is on this basis that all the facts about the phenomenal world should be properly understood. One should not act on the impulse of the moment immediately a thought occurs. The rights and wrongs of the idea should be examined and only when the heart approves of a certain course should action follow. This is the process of cultivating values. What the mind (*head*) thinks, should be examined critically by the *heart* and the right decision should be carried out by the *hand*. This should be the primary product of the educational process.

We are discussing education in Human Values. What seems to be necessary is not EHV but 3-HV: Head-Heart-Hand (values). The hand should carry out what the heart has approved of the ideas emanating from the head. This triune process has been described in Vedanta as "Trikaranasuddhi"—the purity and harmony of thought, speech and action.

Creativity and science

Activities arising from "Trikaranasuddhi" find expression in two ways: one through artistic creativity and the other, through scientific exploration. Of the two, artistic creativity is supremely important. The aesthetic feeling is based on creative imagination. A sculptor who desires to carve an image out of a piece of rock has to have the figure he seeks to carve in his imagination. This imagination (Bhava) finds creative expression ("ichcha shakti") in the sculpture. If the creative imagination is absent, no sculpture can come out of the rock.

Hence, imagination and the creative impulse have to be properly understood. Both of them are rooted in "Prajna," the Divine source of all creative activity. As against this aesthetic creativity, we have the urge for scientific enquiry. This is primarily concerned with objects in the external world. Experimental research has its vision turned outward. But even that has its basis in the Inward Vision (Antardrishti). This relates to the *subject*. Science has been making remarkable progress in recent decades. The world undoubtedly needs the discoveries of Science. But if it forgets the base and is preoccupied only with the superstructure, it will be the source of much disorder and trouble. It may cause all kinds of diseases. Science has been divorced from spirituality and faith in the Divine. Many imagine that science can create a heaven on earth. But

pleasures? This hedonistic attitude is undermining all human values.

Integration a way of life

Research is going on endlessly. Science is continually seeking answers to various questions. But how many of the answers are correct and satisfying? Progressively, the climate of peace is being destroyed by science. If peace is to be ensured, science has to be promoted on right lines. This calls for unity among the people. Service to society must become the fundamental purpose.

Everybody talks about the need for world unity. But real unity must begin with the individual and the family. From the home, it must spread to the village, the nation and the world. National integration comes to the fore whenever there is an attack from outside by China or Pakistan. But when the external threat passes, integration is forgotten; integration should become an essential part of our being. It must become a way of life and cherished as an important value. It is vital to perceive the unity that underlies the apparent diversity. Bodies are many, but life is one. Beings are many, but Bliss is one. Religions are many, but Truth is one. This is the kind of oneness that has to be experienced in the depths of our heart.

Prajnana (higher knowledge) subsumes Vijnana (secular science) and embraces also Sujnana (right knowledge). Prajnana, Vijnana and Sujnana together contribute to the fullness of man.

Life is an exacting master. Hence the need to be always careful in everything one does. This is the ABC of life: Always Be Careful. One should always remember the supreme sacredness of human life. Man can experience real bliss only when he recognises the Truth, Peace and Love that emanate from Prajna and moulds his life on the basis of that knowledge.

Human values for all

Human Values cannot be practised by studying books or listening to lectures. They have to be cultivated by individual effort. Students! True education consists in sanctifying everything you utter and every thought and action of yours. Humility is the bed-rock. Cultivate humility as the first step. Bend the body. Mend the senses. End the mind. This is the key to immortality.

Human Values are essential not for students alone. Everyone has to practise human values as the mark of a true human being. When a human being declares that he is a man, it is only a half-truth. He must also declare that he is not an animal. To give up animal qualities and practise human values will make a man fully human.

The educational process will not be complete unless, together with specialisation in specific subjects, one acquires general knowledge and develops common sense. Many famous scholars who had significant scientific achievements to their credit have been lacking in general knowledge and the common sense required in daily life.

Education without transformation

Today we have made prodigious progress in various fields of knowledge in mathematics, physics, chemistry, the bio-sciences. But no attempt is being made even to approach study of the

must go beyond these to an understanding of the Divine. Only that is true education. The task of education is to develop man into an ideal and exemplary person. Notable discoveries have been made over the years and great scientists have been produced. But how far have human values been promoted and what is the transformation that has taken place in mankind? There is no answer to these questions.

The promotion of human values must become an integral part of the educational process. It is because students today have not acquired human values that they are behaving often like demons.

Leading Vice-chancellors and educationists have assembled here today for this national symposium. If they dedicate themselves to the task of giving value orientation to education, considerable progress can be made in this crucial sphere. To restore the supremacy of human values in all fields of national life, an association should be set up by leading scholars and educationists in the country. This association should have no links with the government. It is only if it is autonomous and completely independent that it can achieve its objectives. There are eminent educationists in the universities, they have many good ideas, but they have no freedom to implement them. They should be given the freedom to try out their ideas. Authority should be commensurate with obligations. Vice-chancellors will then be able to promote human values among teachers and students. If all educational institutions jointly strive to instill human values in students, Bharat can become an ideal nation and an example to the world.

Science and spirituality

Today educational institutions are growing in numbers, but there is no growth of a broad outlook among the educated people. Education should serve to enlarge the vision and broaden the outlook of the people. Everyone should be made to feel that his or her welfare is bound up with the nation's well-being. Everyone should feel proud about Bharat's ancient culture and its spiritual heritage. Spiritual knowledge and scientific knowledge should go together. There should be no dichotomy between science and spirituality. True bliss can be experienced only when both, science and spirituality are combined. Development, of science and technology alone will not help people to get rid of bad thoughts, bad desires and bad deeds, because science by itself is not competent to sublimate life. Only spirituality can promote ethical values, the spirit of tolerance and equal-mindedness.

The science of the Spirit is essential for developing human values. Devotion to God is the first stage in the spiritual journey. Instead of developing devotion men are immersed in the "deep ocean" of worldly life. When the Ocean of Milk was churned, the first thing that emerged was the Halahala poison. Amrita, nectar, came later. When the ocean of worldly existence is churned, Vairagya (renunciation) will emerge first. The nectar of bliss will come later. Vairagya is renunciation of attachment to the physical and the material. Students should start with cultivating the spirit of mutual regard and harmony. This will lead to good behaviour. When students in one educational institution grow in this manner, they will serve as an example to the rest of the world. Students should shed narrow and parochial loyalties and prepare themselves to serve society and the world. Whatever conclusions are arrived at by the educationists and Vice

"Messengers" for spreading them to the world.

—*Address of Bhagavan Baba, Chancellor, at the National Symposium on Value Orientation, Sri Sathya Sai Institute Auditorium on 24-9-1987*

"Why fear when I am here?"

In the Treta Yuga, when the Devas were filled with fear owing to the atrocities perpetrated by the mighty Ravana, Lord Narayana's first words were: "Bhayam Tyajetha"—("Cast off all fear! ") In the Dwapara Yuga, when Arjuna was plunged in gloom and grief on the Kurukshetra battlefield, Lord Krishna's assurance was: "Yogakshemam vahaamyaham" ("Despair not, I shall take care of your well-being"). Today, in the Kali Yuga, when the whole of mankind is precariously poised on the brink of a major, multidimensional catastrophe, the Sai Avatar has rushed to the rescue declaring: "Why fear when I am here?"

"Why fear when I am here?" If we give this statement some deep thought we realize that it is not only a strength-giving assurance, but also a thought-provoking question! As an assurance, it enables us to develop steadfast faith in God. As a question it enables us to analyse the causes for all our fears and sets us thinking about the possible remedies. Before we delve deeper into the matter, let us analyse and be clear as to what the 'I' and the 'here' in the statement stand for, what they really signify.

Now, does this 'I' stand for Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba—the physical projection of Divinity? Well, if you want to be emotionally devotional, then perhaps, the answer is Yes. But if you want to be spiritually truthful, the answer is No. The 'I' does not refer to an external guru, a physical protector. The 'I' is symbolic of one's own true self, the Self with a capital 'S'. It is this 'I' that guides, guards and protects every individual.

When we sing the bhajan, "Mandirame aavo Madhava...", it is not that Madhava 'enters' our heart. He is ever there as our Overself. Bhagavan has given a small illustration. A lady, thinking that her precious diamond necklace is either lost or stolen, bitterly weeps. She searches all over the house desperately hoping to find it. At last she does find it. But where? Standing in front of the mirror, she finds it round her own neck! Likewise, we have only to be conscious of the truth that Divinity is within us using the mirror of self-confidence.

The 'here' in the statement therefore refers to the innermost core of our heart. The sense of proximity implied by the 'here' is not physical proximity between Manava and Madhava. Neither is it mere psychic or emotional closeness between the Divine and the devotee. Both of these are subject to intermission.

The Devotee and the Divine

There is a beautiful little story related by Bhagavan, to illustrate the spiritual relation between the devotee and the Divine. Once in a royal Durbar, a learned pundit was describing in a very pedantic manner how Lord Vishnu rushed from Vaikuntha to save Gajendra—the lordly elephant who was held by the jaws of a crocodile. At this juncture, the king interrupted him with a question. "Tell me, sire, how far is this Vaikuntha?" The learned Pundit did not know the answer; nor did any of the other scholars in the palace. All were nonplussed. But the servant who was fanning the king from behind the throne offered to furnish the answer, if his impertinence

was pardoned. The learned pundit was shocked at his effrontery, but the Maharaja allowed him to speak. "Your Majesty," he said, "Vaikuntha is as far as the cry of an elephant could be heard!" Yes, the residence of the Lord, the true Vaikuntha, is within hearing distance of every cry from every grief-stricken heart. The illiterate servant knew in a flash the omnipresence and the compassion of the Lord.

Why fear?

What are the causes of fear? First, there are the external forces that cause fear in man. These are the three Ds, namely, death, disease and disaster. How do we overcome them? Two steps suggest themselves. First, we should all develop unflinching and steadfast faith in God's omnipotence and compassion. We should develop that kind of faith which stood Prahlada in good stead when he was threatened by death and disaster. Secondly, we should develop the firm conviction that whatever calls us is bound to be for our own good in the long run. As Bhagavan says, only when a sugarcane is battered and crushed that its sweet essence comes out. Similarly, only when man is crushed, so to say, by misfortune and calamity does his true worth shine forth in its manifold splendour.

Internal fear is of four kinds. Fear of failure, fear due to guilt, fear due to emotional insecurity and fear due to lovelessness. Fear of failure arises when we go about some task with some desired result or fruit in view. We are constantly afraid that our effort may go up in smoke, that the desired fruit or result may elude us. The best way to overcome this fear is to practise 'Nishkama Karma' i.e., performing our work with optimum involvement and total detachment regarding the results. Effort, when dissociated from the fruit, always leads to success and confers peace of mind. Fear due to guilt can likewise be counteracted in two ways. The first is to ensure that we do not under any circumstance go against our conscience. The second is to have firm faith in the merciful nature of the Lord. Lastly, the fears due to emotional insecurity and lovelessness: The only panacea for these is the cultivation of selfless love. Fear and love, like right and wrong, are mutually exclusive. Once we cultivate Love, fear has but to flee.

Bhagavan says there are three kinds of love: Swartha Prema or self-centred love; Ananya Prema or mutual love and Parartha Prema or other-centred love. Swartha Prema is like a bulb. It illumines just a small room. Being self-centred it entails the fear of failure. Ananya Prema is like the moonlight. It no doubt spreads wider, but it is not clearer. It entails the fear of non-reciprocation. Parartha Prema is like sunlight. It is all-pervasive, bright and clear. Since it is love for love's sake, it entails no fear whatsoever. Hence we should all cultivate Parartha Prema, selfless love.

Thus, "Why fear when I am here?" is an utterance of our Lord which is both light-giving and fruit-bearing. When we ask the question, 'why fear?' and sincerely seek an answer, our intellect gets clarified, our faith gets intensified. Then, the Lord sweetly responds from within declaring, 'I am here!'

— *Rahul S. Kini, Prasanthi Nilayam.*
(From the speech delivered at Poornachandra Auditorium during Dasara celebrations)

Some people raise the question, "How can we make a living if we adhere to Truth?" Well, you cannot escape death, whatever way you spend your days. It is far better to die, adhering to Truth, than die, sliding into falsehood. Do this duty to yourself first, then consider the rights of others. Falsehood looks easy and profitable; but, it binds you and pushes you into perdition. Purify your feelings and impulses; do not worry that others are not doing similarly. Each man carries his destiny in his own hands. You will not be bound, because others are not freed. You should strive for your salvation, at your own pace, from where you started when you were born into this chance. Two people may have two acres each in the same village; but, they reap different quantities of grains, depending on the skill and attention they bestow, and the quality of the soil, the seeds, and the manure they use.

—Baba

Where Transformation Begins

—R. S., Honolulu

Swami has more than once said that there are two characteristics of the snake that are typical of humans: its crooked gait and its biting.

Yes, back-biting is so ingrained in most of us humans by ages of mistakes that it is difficult to get rid of. Even Sarada Devi (the wife of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa) had to pray earnestly and repeatedly that she see only the good in people!

Yet a true shedding of the obstructing veils of ego can only occur when we fully realize the truth of the psychological law that we only see in others what is within ourselves. Instead of wanting to transform others, we can begin our tiny role in the transformation of the world, with Sai's Grace, by being and becoming totally transformed ourselves so that we can achieve peace for ourselves and harmony for society.

However, only our egos think that *we* can achieve anything. No matter how much we strive, permanent change only evolves through the Grace of the Lord. Prayer and Sadhana, especially seva, Namasmara and Dhyana, are our greatest means for activating the Divine Grace to effect this Transformation.

One means of cooperating with the Transformer, the Doer of all, is to humble the ego at any and every opportunity. This does not mean treating with lack of respect, either oneself or others. As in all things, Swami's life is our Guideline. Have we ever seen Him treat anyone without respect, even when He feigns anger? Love is the life-blood and respect—or reverence for life—is the enlivening oxygen of Creation.

How else can we cooperate with God, we may ask? Here are a few of the successful techniques for cooperating:

We can strive to speak less and, before we speak, to consider earnestly: *Is this vocalizing loving, useful, necessary?* For every word not spoken with Love and helpfulness, is an expression of ego.

We can vigorously and always "Sai Ram" each negative thought as we throw it out of the mind, so that it can no longer add to the burden and distress of others. For everything we think,

say or/and do adds either to the dullness or the brightness, the ugliness or the beauty of the environment.

We can pray and strive for detachment as we learn to laugh at our Ahamkara (false self, or ego) and to identify with our True or Real Self, or the Divine Spark within.

Swami once said in a discourse: "*What is Liberation, but liberation from selfishness?*" Let's be happy that we help each other as we help ourselves, by the Divine Grace that multiplies our efforts a hundredfold

DASARA SANDESH:

The Perennial Quest

Embodiments of Divine Love!

That which the eyes cannot see, but which enables the eyes to see—*That is* God. The Divine cannot be grasped by the mind or described by speech. The Divine transcends all proofs. It is One. "I am One-let Me become Many" The myriad forms in the Cosmos emerged from this thought (Sankalpa) of the One. To discover the One in the many, the sages prescribed for mankind the Karma, Bhakti and Upasana paths and indicated in pronouncements like "Tat-Twam-Asi " (That thou art) that the process is one of Self-realisation. They declared that the individual should realise that the phenomenal world is in fact a reflected image of himself. But, man, forgetting his true Self, identifies himself with the sense organs and indulges in many wrong actions for the sake of the pleasures and pains experienced by the senses.

Every man seeks to achieve unalloyed happiness (Ananda) through some means or other and engages himself in ceaseless efforts for this purpose. But pure happiness eludes him because he does not know its real nature and where to find it.

Ananda (bliss) cannot be found in the phenomenal world or in material objects like houses, wealth and vehicles, or got from kith and kin. When the bliss that he is seeking is his own true nature, what is the use in seeking it elsewhere? True happiness consists in realising one's Reality. Men today are keen to know all about everything except themselves. They are able to see everything except their own true selves. They are caught up in the delusion that the world is different from the One that sustains it. Although what they are seeing is the manifestation of God, they declare that they cannot see God. This is the result of ignorance. All that is seen, the act of seeing and the seer are all Divine. When the unity of this triune aspects of Divinity is understood, real bliss will be experienced.

Man today is prey to endless desires. They do not confer happiness, because desires multiply even as they are satisfied. Far from bringing happiness, desires only lead to misery and frustration. Desires are born out of delusion. It is only when the delusion is destroyed that the Self can be realised.

Narada's query

Even a sage like Narada, who had mastered all the Shastras, was subject to delusions and went to Sanatkumara to find out how he could experience supreme bliss (Brahmananda). He said to Sanatkumara: "Master! I wish to know all about delusion (Bhrama) and how I can have vision of the Brahman. Confer this benediction on me." When Sanatkumara asked Narada how he was qualified to receive this message, the sage recounted his mastery of the Vedas and scriptures and proclaimed his ability to expound them.

Sanatkumara smiled and asked whether he knew anything else. Narada replied: "When I have mastered all the scriptures and recognised that the Divine is the basis for all of them, what else is there to be known? What is the unknown mystery about the Brahman?" Sanatkumara said: "Dear Child! If with all this knowledge, you have not been able to experience the Divine, you must enquire into the reason for your failure." Sanatkumara explained: "God cannot be realised by intellectual enquiries or study of scriptures. Bhakti (devotion) alone is the means. Pray to God with deep devotion. You will have the vision of the Divine."

Total surrender

Man today has achieved eminence in the intellectual sphere and in scientific and technical knowledge. But he cannot realise God through these accomplishments. The Divine is attained only by those who have pure, selfless devotion. The Lord responds only to such pure one-pointed love and total devotion. What is to be cultivated by seekers is such total devotion. Today people tend to remember G when they are in distress and forget Him when they are sappy and comfortable. Indulging in such part-time devotion, men aspire for the fruits of full-time devotion. How can they get those fruits? They have to develop the feeling of total surrender to the Divine and dedicate every action to the Divine.

What is the inner significance of the Yagas and Yajnas we are performing now? The purpose of performing these ceremonies is to realise the omnipresent Divine through various activities, rituals and media. The devotional path of Bhakti has nine forms of worshipping the Lord. Sravanam (listening to the stories of God), Kirtanam (singing His glories), Vishnusmaranam (remembering His names), Padasevanam (service to the Lord's feet), Vandanam (prostration), Archanam (worshipping the idol), Dasyam (Service), Sneham (cultivating friendship), Atmanivedanam (self-surrender). If any one of these forms of worship is done in full faith, The Divine can be experienced. The primary requisite for realising God is pure and intense love.

Ego is the bar

What is happening today, however, is excessive growth of egoism (Ahamkara) and attachment (Abhimana) among the people. As long as egoism exists, experience of divinity is impossible. Egoism and envy have to be totally uprooted. Those who cannot bear to see others happy have nothing good in store for them. It is in deriving joy from the happiness of others that pure devotion manifests itself. We have to preserve and promote what is beneficial in our hoary culture, while adapting the ancient traditions to contemporary conditions. This is one of the primary obligations of Sai Institutions.

In the 18th canto of the Bhagavad Gita the Lord has declared: "Ishwara dwells in the heart region of all living things." This means that one must see the Divine in every being. When you speak about anyone, or love anyone, you must consider you are speaking about God or loving God. Develop this sacred attitude. If, on the contrary, you regard Divinity as different from yourself and lead a life based on differences, you will be wasting your life. Pujas, Japas and Dhyana have their place in worship. But you should not confine yourself to them. You must go beyond them to the stage of God-realisation. You must progress from rituals to Upasana (meditation), and from Upasana to Jnana (Self-knowledge). That is, you have to proceed from Dvaita (dualism) to Visishta-advaita (Qualified Non-dualism) and to Advaita (Non-dualism). Without having the Advaitic experience, you cannot understand the true nature of the Atma.

Life of the spirit

You have been listening for years to discourses about the Atma and the Brahman. But no attempt has been made to live the spiritual life. Of what avail is it to immerse yourselves in material pursuits and sensuous pleasures which are trivial and transient? You must strive gradually to bring the senses under control without which neither real peace nor enduring bliss can be got.

Love of God is the sure means for achieving perennial, Divine bliss. The essence of the study of Shastras, Puranas and Vedas is to develop love of God. If that love is not there, all these studies are worth nothing. Spiritual exercises lacking in love of God are like fruit without juice.

Ways of the Divine

The Divine is totally free from likes or dislikes (Anugraham or Aagraham). All that the Divine (as Avatar) thinks, speaks or does is entirely for the well-being of the world and for giving joy to mankind. The ways of the Divine have to be understood properly. Sometimes people may feel that Swami is angry and harsh. This is totally wrong. Swami appears to keep aloof from some persons when He feels that they are pursuing wrong paths which may adversely affect their future. This is intended solely to correct the erring devotees. Not realising this, people subject themselves to various worries and doubts.

Only a clean mirror can reflect the correct image. If the mirror is not clean, the reflection will be likewise. Similarly to experience the Divine a pure heart is necessary. Purity of the heart results from purity in thought, word and deed. Whatever is done, whether it is a bhajan or any other act, should be done with a pure mind and with complete concentration.

Today the terms charity (Dana), righteousness (Dharma) and sacrifice (Tyaga) are freely bandied about. But there is a grave misconception about what constitutes charity or sacrifice. When one parts with some money to someone who has come to him seeking assistance, the money that is given should not be regarded as charity or sacrifice, but as the discharging of a pre-existing obligation. No one will come seeking help unless he has a claim derived from the past. The person offering "help" is really discharging an old debt. If help is denied, it amounts to

backing out of an undischarged obligation. Likewise, the wealth of Jnana which we have got is a gift of the Divine. It has to be offered to Him in the form of service.

A great devotee once prayed: "Oh Lord, I am offering to You the heart which You have given to me. I cannot run to your shrine to offer worship. Please accept my prayerful offerings from where I am. All that I have has come from you. There is nothing I can call my own."

Students! Young people today are taking to wrong paths and corrupting the sacred and precious life that has been given to them. Of the 84 lakhs of species of living beings, no species is afflicted with the disease of insatiable desires as much as man. There is a limit even to the wants of birds and beasts. But man, who is regarded as the highest being in creation, behaves worse than demons. Man, who ought to enjoy the greatest bliss and peace, is the victim of sorrow and worry, because of limitless desires. Every one must ceaselessly strive to reduce desires. Renunciation (Vairagya) does not mean merely giving up attachment to house and other forms of wealth. Real renunciation consists in giving up all bad thoughts. It amounts to yoga. There is no need to leave hearth and home and betake oneself to the forest, to get rid of bad thoughts. Self-examination and Self-punishment are as important as Self-realisation. If bad thoughts arise in the mind, you have to declare to yourself: "Alas, these thoughts have come because of the wrong kinds of food I have been consuming. Let me observe a fast so that I may get rid of these bad thoughts." This is the best way to punish the mind. This is the process of self-correction one must adopt to bring the mind under control.

Here is a story to illustrate how no one can avoid punishment for violating Dharma, for whatever reason. Dharmaja, the eldest of the Pandavas, was the very embodiment of Dharma. But, on the suggestion of Krishna, while making the statement, "Ashwathama hathah *Kunjaraha*", (Ashwathama is killed—the elephant), he lowered his voice while uttering the word "kunjaraha". It was a piece of trickery. (The intention was to make Drona, father of Ashwathama, give up the fight on hearing the words "Ashwathama hathaha" from the mouth of Dharmaja, while the addition of the word "kunjaraha" was intended to make Dharmaja's statement appear truthful, viz., an elephant named Ashwathama had been killed in the battle. The word coming after announcing the death of "Ashwathama" would not be audible to Drona as it was said in a low voice). For this offence on his part, Dharmaja had to spend a brief spell in Naraka (hell). This shows that Adharma should not be mixed even to the slightest extent with Dharma. Otherwise there is no escape from the consequential punishment.

Merely by praising Rama as the embodiment of Dharma one does not become righteous. Righteousness should be shown in action. One should rejoice in following Dharma and should not feel weighed down by it. Today many who call themselves devotees do not manifest any of the marks of true devotion. They profess that they are offering everything to Swami. If that is the case, where is the place for ill will among devotees? You retain all your bad feelings and offer to me your sweet words. Offer to me all your bad thoughts and take from me my good thoughts. When those bad thoughts are surrendered to me, they will not lead to wrong actions. When they are with you, they will harass you. In a circus, the lion will do no harm when it is with the Ring Master. But it will be dangerous to others, when they are near it.

Everyone should understand how he should conduct himself in daily life, what he should do and what he should avoid and try to live accordingly. One should not cause any displeasure to others or hurt their feelings. As far as possible, you must practise self-restraint and feel satisfied with what you have. You must try to give satisfaction to others and make them feel happy. It is wrong to indulge in gossip or comment about other persons' actions or affairs.

Once a devotee approached me with a question regarding Adi Sankara's statement: "Brahma Sathyam. Jaganmithya " (Brahman alone is true; the world is a deception), The devotee wanted to know how the world that was so real to him and in which he had all his experiences could be called "Mithya" (delusion). He asked me: "Swami! There is the pronouncement: Brahma Sathyam. Jaganmithya. I want to know what is real and what is unreal?" I told him

"Leave Brahman to Brahman and the world of delusion to itself. First of all, try to find out the truth about yourself. Why bother about Brahman and Jagat when you do not know what you are. Find out whether you are real or not. You are real upto the moment of death. You need not go as far as that. Just consider what happens when you are fast asleep. In that state, are you real or unreal? You are not aware of your existence in sleep. In that state, are you real or unreal? You are not aware whether you are alive or dead. It is neither Real nor Unreal. Mithya applies to this state of Sat-Asat, Real-Unreal. When you know yourself and recognise the Mithya that you are, you will view the Jagat as Mithya."

Another devotee came with him, who said to me: "Rather than lead the kind of life I am leading, I would prefer to end myself (Atma-hatya)." He said he was being oppressed by many doubts. I told him: "What is it that suffers from doubts? It is the mind. You want to commit Atma-hatya, put an end to your life, for the faults of the mind. This means you are punishing the body for the offences of the mind. You will be committing a grievous wrong if you punish the innocent body for the crimes of the errant mind." The devotee felt sorry and prayed to be forgiven.

These are the kinds of mistaken attitudes prevalent today. The true spirit of enquiry is absent. The intellect is being developed, but not good qualities. Realising one's inherent divinity, one should strive to nourish divine virtues. For this, the start must be made with getting rid of bad qualities. Then there will be room in the heart for good thoughts. God will not reside in a heart filled with fraud and falsehood. These must be expelled from the heart. Purifying the heart is the highest form of worship. Only then can the Divine be experienced and the bliss of that experience can be shared with others.

—*Bhagavan's discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium, on September 27, 1987*

Pranavopasana

*Hearken to the Pranava that emanates
from the heart of the Cosmos!
Fill your ears earnestly with Its reverberations
Know that It is the wish-fulfilling
Tree that fulfils all desires
Forget not these wise words of good counsel.*

"Vedaanaam Sama Vedosmi" "Among the Vedas, I am the Sama Veda," proclaimed the Gitacharya (Sri Krishna). "Saarnnaa Udgith Rasah". "The essence of the Sama hymns is Udgitha," declares the Chandogya Upanishad. Udgitha means the Pranava. The essence of the Sama Veda is Pranava ("Om"). Pranava is its very life-breath. "Omkaaram Sarva Vedaanaam". The scriptures have also declared that Omkara (the sacred syllable Om) is the supreme mantra in the Vedas. From this it will be realised how supremely important the Omkara is in the eyes of the seers and what great significance is attached to It.

The single syllable "Om" is preeminent among the letters of the alphabet. It symbolises the Supreme Omni-self (Paramatma). The Sama Veda is the embodiment of Pranava.

Music in Sama Veda

The sage Vyasa first taught the Sama Veda to Maharishi Jaimini. From Jaimini, it was taught to a succession of disciples and in the process it developed many branches (Shakhas). Out of the one thousand branches which stemmed from the Veda, today only three have survived among its practitioners. The others have been lost by the ravages of time. These three branches are "Kowdhima", which is followed by Nagar Brahmins in Gujarat; "Raayanani", with its adherents in Maharashtra; and "Jaimini", followed by a section in Karnataka. There are no big differences between the Kowdhima and Raayanani Shakhas. "Haa", "Hoo", "Raa", "Ni" are important syllables for the Kowdhima Shakha. For the Raayanani Shakha, the main syllables are "Aa Aa", "Oo-Oo", "Raa" and "Nee", the sounds being lengthened during recitation. The Jaimini Saakha is a short one, but is more important than the others. It is broad-based and has a wider appeal because of its accent on the musical form. There are two versions of it: "Aryini" and "Gaanam" (song). There are four kinds of songs in these hymns: Graameena gaanamu (village songs); Aaranyaka gaanamu; Oohagaanamu and Oohyagaanamu. "Graameena" or village songs are songs which used to be sung by villagers in their daily activities or during festivals in group dances. They enjoyed themselves in singing such songs. "Aaranyaka" songs were sung while taking cattle to the forests for grazing. The songs were sung with full-throated voices in an uninhibited way. Singing the praise of the Lord, sitting under a tree, they derived spontaneous delight from these songs. "Oohagaanam" resembles the cinema music of our days. Here the singer expresses in the rendering the mood of the song—either grief or joy—by artificial modulations of the voice to produce the impression of grief or joy as conceived by the singer. It lacks genuine feeling. "Oohagaana" is the type of singing in which the singer gives free vent to

his emotions and enjoys the singing as much as he seeks to communicate his joy to others. The Sama Veda has given to the world these four kinds of music.

The Pranava mantra ranks higher than all this music. It is all-pervasive and ever-present. There cannot be a single moment when we are not listening to this Pranava. Nor can we dispense with it even for a second. The Pranava is present in every living being. The Pranava is the primordial sound on which all sounds are based. The Pranava has been equated with the Brahman (the Cosmic Self). The Gita has declared "Om" as the monosyllable representing Brahman. Even as "Om" is all-pervasive, the Brahman is also all-pervasive. The Vedic dictum, "Ayam Atma Brahma" ("This Atma is Brahman") points out that the Atma and Brahman are one and the same. Hence, "Om", "Brahman" and "Atma" signify the same entity.

States of consciousness

Every human being experiences four states of consciousness in daily life: Jagrata (the waking state), Swapna (dream state), Sushupti (deep sleep) and Turiya (the highest state of consciousness). The waking state is a state in which one sees and experiences the phenomenal world through the five life-breaths, the senses, the mind, the intellect and the ego. There are also the five sheaths for the body. All these together account for the experience of the phenomenal world in the waking state. Without the Atma the waking state or experience of the phenomenal world cannot exist. Hence the Atma in this state is known as "Vishwa". It is also called Vaishwanara or Viraatapurusha. Krishna is stated to have revealed to Arjuna His "Vishwaroopa", cosmic form. This really means that Krishna showed to Arjuna that the Divine is present everywhere in all things at all times. The entire cosmos is a projection of the Divine. The Atma that appears in the waking state as the phenomenal cosmos in its gross form, appears in the dream state in its subtle (sookshma) form. The objects and forms that are experienced in the dream state have a reality only in that state. They have no existence in other states. All the joys and sorrows experienced in the dream state are unique self-created experiences of the Atma. If ten persons are sleeping in one room, their dream experiences are unique to each person and have nothing in common. This means that each person creates his own dream state and experiences his dreams. There is a light that shines in a dream state. This is known as "Tejas". The Atma as the experiencer in this state is known as "Taijasa" ("the effulgent"). Apart from dreams, the presence of "Taijasa" can be demonstrated by a simple example. When we close our eyes, we say it is dark and we cannot see anything. Who is it that is able to experience this darkness? There is some entity which experiences darkness when the eyes are closed and describes it as dark and black. That entity is described as "Taijasa" because it is present as an inner light during the dream state.

In the third state of "Sushupti", the experiences of the waking and dream states are absent. It is the state of deep sleep. All the senses are merged in the mind and nothing can be seen or imagined. In this state Prajna (integrated awareness) alone exists. It is because of Prajna that one is aware of this state. All the sense organs are totally inactive. Only the breathing process remains. It is because of Prajna that one is aware of the continuity of being and experiences a feeling of bliss. With all the senses stilled, the Self alone is conscious in the form of Prajna manifested in respiration. Hence the Vedas have declared: "Prajnanam Brahma". (Prajnanam—

Constant Integrated Awareness—is Brahman). Prajna is the state of unchanging and permanent bliss described by the Upanishads.

Prajna is the permanent entity that exists equally in the waking state as the body, in the senses as the Antahkarana (the Inner Motivator) and in the deep-sleep state as the Atma. It is for this reason that it is characterised as Constant Integrated Awareness. It is not different from Brahman or Atma. A doubt may arise that neither Brahman nor Atma is visible. But by understanding the Pranava, the identity of Brahman and Atma can be experienced.

How do we cognise the Pranava and hear it? It is not perceivable. It is like something to be absorbed. All that is seen in the visible universe, all that is heard in the realm of sound, all the multifarious experiences of the heart—all of them are subsumed by the Pranava. Even in the state of deep sleep, the process of breathing in and breathing out goes on ceaselessly. That which sustains the breathing process is Omkara, which thus proclaims Its identity with the Brahman and the Atma.

The fourth state is Turiya. This is the state of complete ineffable Bliss in which the Universal Consciousness alone is experienced. It is beyond description: Like the four states of consciousness, the Omkara has also four constituents. These are: A-kara, U-kara, Ma-kara and Adhiratha (the humming sound—mm...). A-kara is the first and foremost sound of Omkara. It is the first letter of the alphabet. In the waking state, it is regarded as a manifestation of the Viraatpursha and is personified as "Vishwa", the ruling power and sustainer of the phenomenal world. "U" is the syllable representing the dream state. It is the second sound of "Omkara". It has the form of "Tejas" or effulgence. It illumines everything and dispels every kind of darkness. The third sound is "Ma". It represents the state of "Prajna" (Integrated Consciousness). It reveals the inner meaning of everything. It is known also as the unifying entity, the Inner Controller (Antaryami), the Suthraatmaka (the Atmic coordinator). These different names indicate that the Atma is the Indweller in all beings. It has no form. "Ma" thus signifies this profound truth. After the "A", "U" and "Ma" are combined, the fourth sound emerges. That is the sound that is heard in the Turiya state. It is the vibration: "mm..", known as "Adhiratha".

Because Omkara has four sounds, it is viewed as the four-faced Brahma. It is also described as "Shabda-Brahmam", the Brahman in the form of sound. The Shabda-Brahmam contains Gana-Brahmam (the Brahman as music). The Shabda-Brahmam pervades everywhere. The all-pervasive character of Shabda-Brahmam is first among the eight cosmic powers attributed to the Divine.

It is only when the unique spiritual significance of "Omkara" is understood and experienced and when it is realised that all that one sees or hears emanates from the Pranava, will one be able to understand the inner meaning of the Sama Veda. The cosmic power of sound can be known when the Sama Veda and Pranava are properly understood. This knowledge cannot be got by external exploration. It has to be got from within. When the source of all light and sound—the Pranavaswroopa—is within one, of what avail is it to search for them outside? The first requisite

is to acquire the faith that the Lord, who is manifest in Cosmic Sound, is present within as Pranavakara (the form of Pranava).

For nourishing this faith, it is necessary to abjure impurity in speech. No room should be given for speaking bad words or listening to bad talk. Excessive speech has to be eschewed. Idle talk, slanderous gossip and back-biting should be totally given up. There is great energy in the power of speech. It should not be wasted in any way. This is the supreme discipline that has to be cultivated in daily life.

This is the great message of the Sama Veda. It proclaims the divinity and delight that are inherent in words and sounds that are sacred and pure. Nothing that we say should cause pain to anyone. Whoever indulges in such speech is less than human.

In uttering mantras, their meanings should be understood. Otherwise, the japa becomes a mechanical ritual. Human life itself is one long mantra. It is also a Tantra (a technique). It is also a Yantra (a complex device). Such a sacred gift should be utilised worthily.

Only one or two Vedas are prevalent today. We must resolve to restore them in all their fullness and glory by realising the nectarine value of their message. We must recover faith in the Divine and make devotion to God the sheet-anchor of our lives. Without devotion all education is valueless.

Devotion and sacrifice

Embodiments of Divine Love! Man needs primarily two qualities. Devotion to God and true spirit of sacrifice. Without sacrifice there can be no devotion. Sacrifice is the key to immortality. Man is caught up in the coils of selfishness and self-centredness. How long will these attachments last? Why sacrifice the lasting bliss of a divinely oriented life for the petty tinsel of worldly possessions? Devote yourselves to the service of mankind in a spirit of dedication and sublimate your lives.

Your job is no doubt important for earning a living. But you must be prepared even to sacrifice it for serving the nation and upholding Truth, with faith in God. All possessions and relationships are transient. Only two things are permanent: Righteousness and a good name (keerti). A good name is got only through one's good actions and not as a gift from others. Avoid everything evil and cultivate the company of the good, and be good in thought, word and deed.

Realise the omnipresence of the Divine in the form of Omkara, as proclaimed in the Sama Veda. Practise Omkara Upasana with the consciousness that the Divine is omnipresent and achieve merger in the Divine as the goal of human birth.

—*Bhagavan's discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium, on October 1, 1987*

Baba Literature for the Blind

As many as thirty one books, including seven of the Vahinis, four parts of "Sathyam Sivam Sundaram" (the life of Bhagavan), seven volumes of Sathya Sai Speaks and six volumes of Bhagavan's discourses at the summer courses in spirituality held during the years 1973 to 1979, are now available in English Braille for the use of blind persons, thanks to the efforts of Mrs. Doris McLaughlin, Braille Coordinator, Palo Alto, California.

In addition to the above books, the following books on Bhagavan Baba are also available in English Braille: Conversations with Sathya Sai Baba by John Hislop, The Greatest Adventure by Dr. M. V. N. Murthy, Sai Baba, the Holy man and the Psychiatrist by Dr. Sandweiss, Sathya Sai Baba—the Embodiment of Love by Peggy Mason and Ron Laing, and Mr. Howard Murphet's three books on Baba: Sai Baba, Man of Miracles, Sai Baba—Avatar, and Invitation to Glory.

The Braille project has been sponsored by the Sathya Sai Baba Society, Tustin, California. Mrs. McLaughlin reports that all current work is being done on computer and hence can be reproduced easily. Books transcribed earlier are being reproduced by the Thermoform process by Therese Briand of La Selva Beach, California.

The Sathya Sai Society desires to make the books available to any blind person wishing to study Bhagavan's writings and speeches. Requests for the transcribing into Braille of a particular book should be sent to Mrs. D. McLaughlin, 1626, Madrono Avenue, Palo Alto, California, USA 94306.

The books now available in English Braille can be either purchased at the cost of reproducing them or borrowed from the free lending library which has been established at the Sathya Sai Book Centre of America, 305 W, First Street, Tustin, California, USA 92680.

Books available at Sai institute

The following books transcribed into English Braille available at the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Prasanthi Nilayam, Andhra Pradesh, are not available in U. S. A.: Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume I, VI, VIII, X, Summer Showers in Brindavan 1972, Bhagavata Vahini, Gita Vahini, Ramakatha Rasa Vahini, Parts I and II, Sathya Sai Vahini, Upanishad Vahini, Chinna Katha, Garland of 108 Precious Gems, Path Divine, Parts I/ and II and Saints of India Parts I, II and III.

Love That Unites

—N. Kasturi

The philosopher Teilhard de Chardin speaks of Love as the property of all organised matter. "Love—that is to say, the affinity of being with being—is not peculiar to man. It is a general property of all life and as such, it embraces in its varieties and degrees, all the forms successively

adopted by organised matter. In the mammals, so close to ourselves, it is easily recognised in its different modalities, sexual passion, parental instinct, social solidarity, etc. Further off, this is to say, lower down in the tree of Life, analogies are more obscure until they become so faint as to be imperceptible.

"If there was no internal propensity to unite, even at a prodigiously rudimentary level—indeed, in the molecule itself—it would be physically impossible for love to appear higher up, with us, in the `hominised' form ...Driven by the forces of Love, the fragments of the world seek each other so that the world may come to being. This is no metaphor and it is much more than poetry ...Love, in all its subtleties, is nothing more and nothing less than the more or less direct trace marked on the heart of the element by the psychic convergence of the Universe upon itself. Love alone is capable of uniting living beings in such a way as to complete and fulfill them." The vision of Teilhard de Chardin, the mystic of modern times, is much the same as that of Meister Eckhart of many centuries ago. It is also the same in its essence as the truths the Rishis of Vedic times proclaimed. When godly men speak, their words may be many but their understanding is indivisibly ONE.

Push and pull

Our individual soul has been separated from the Supreme Soul. But the alienation has not happened due to estrangement. Fullness of Love has caused it, as it may seem. In fact, paradox lies at the very root of the Universe, its Nature and Behaviour, as Science is discovering every day. The separation is only for the sake of a Game of Love in which we run around trying to get 'back' home. There is really no 'wandering', for how can we wander away from Him, who is all-pervading? There can be no 'separation' too; for how can He who is indivisible separate us from Him, and divide into the many? But he sets each little fragment of His vast Cosmic Mind to imagine itself clothed in an amazing infinity of forms and colours and shapes and then He plays the Game of illusion wherein they `wander' around Time and Space, through alternating moods of agony and ecstasy.

"Who could have breathed or moved if the skies were not filled with joy and love?" asks the Upanishad. Indeed! For the need to give love and to receive it is the reason that caused Him to devise this exuberant absurdity of Maya, of the `multitudes' that seek Him with the tribute of love, joy, the emotion with which He plays at hide-and-seek with Himself. Love is the source of Joy. To love is to be joyful. We long to live because we love the world, in spite of all the contradictions it presents to us or even on account of them. Why? Because our varied moods of love and joy for the million things of the world are faint echoes of God's first Desire, to give and receive love and confer joy.

It is true that agony and agitation rather than love and joy seem to be the keynote of existence in the world. But that is because we have forgotten our truth and strayed into frail falsehoods. If only we remembered that we are inseparable parts of the Vastness, that is Eternal and All pervading, Time and Space would be as harmless to us, as the shadows that the sun casts. They leave us unscarred.

Since God's game, Maya, fosters this illusion of separation, we must strive and struggle to realise ourselves as no other than the Supreme Self. The first step in breaking through the belief in our separate identity (ego) is to help another. The association that service creates brings an understanding of the problems of the other. Understanding grows into sympathy and sympathy inevitably flowers into love. Love wishes to become one with the loved. Only in love can we realise our one-ness with all, and from that stage realise that there is only ONE, and so, recover peace and quiet at last.

This stage of returning to the source of Infinite Love has been called Brahma Vihara, the Journey to God, by the Buddha who insists that he who aspires to reach this stage: "shall deceive no one, entertain no hatred for anybody and never wish to injure through anger. He shall have measureless love for all creatures. Above, below and all around him, he shall extend this love." Where then, is the place for anger or hatred for there really is no 'other' apart from ourselves? Such passions only prolong the agony of dismemberment. Give Love a place in your heart, for when it is fostered there, its warmth will expand the membranes of your individuality until they fall apart and you are able to rest on the sea of Infinite Love.

Give and gain

The emotion of love, however, in moments of absorption is so exalting, that it is no wonder that the Bhakta resolutely declines to accept the truth that he himself is God, there being no other, and insists on trudging never-endingly towards Someone who waits over the farthest horizon.

"In love, loss and gain are harmonised. In its balance sheet, credit and debit accounts lie in the same column and gifts are added to gains. In this wonderful festival of Creation, this great Ceremony of the self-sacrifice of God, the lover constantly gives himself to gain himself," writes Tagore in one of his essays. Since Creation dawned in a longing for love, it is love alone that fills the world, whether it is love thwarted that brings pain or love fulfilled that gives joy. Love that is selfish is love that is foolish, for then we are persisting in the belief that we are distinct entities apart and against every other in the world. But love that serves others is a ritual of great power, for it repeats that First Divine Act when the emotion of love surged in the Cosmic Being. And it is ordained that we too must sacrifice our selves to regain Him.

The path of seva

This is the path of Seva, Swami says, "The fulfillment of man's life on earth consists in filling himself with the love of God and channelising that love into acts of service, service of all who are embodiments of God." There is really no 'other', no 'neighbour'. Everyone is oneself, for all belong to an indivisible Whole. Service uplifts us, satiates our hunger, and expands our horizons. Service to man is worship of God, in the one who gives and the one who gets, in the helper and the helped.

God has endowed us with this marvellous body, this unique brain, this soft supple tongue, this amazing mind, these hands that can hold the tottering and heal the trembling. These are not given to us in vain, to be neglected or to be misused for hatred, envy, lust or pride. They have

been given in order that we constantly engage in a great yajna, a sacrifice of recognising and loving Him through all we do. Swami teaches us that the yearning men have to serve others is the echo of that primal desire for self-expression and self-expansion which caused the multitudes to arise; and the longing to help and care and draw close to the other is also the longing for unity that drives all beings, when tired of multiplicity. In service therefore man finds the best means of allowing his individuality to flower, his personality to be fulfilled.

Swami says that Seva, considering the served as God, is the highest spiritual sadhana, yielding fruit much quicker and more abundantly than the sadhana of japa and dhyana; for, it enables us to constantly practise in daily life that understanding, which comes only at the culmination of many years of spiritual struggle, that vision of God in the ant, which Thyagaraja saw, that vision of the Divine in the donkey, as Ekanath saw.

Ganga water for a donkey

Swami tells this story: Once Ekanath, the great mystic poet was carrying a pot of water from the sacred Ganga, as it emerged from the Himalayas, to Rameshwaram, at the southernmost point of India. He had made a vow to walk the distance of fifteen hundred miles and bathe the Siva Linga at this sacred spot, on the confluence of three seas. The long pilgrimage was almost ended, he was nearing the shrine, when his eyes fell on a donkey writhing in agony as it lay dying of thirst. Ekanath ran up to it and poured the holy water, without hesitation, into that gasping parched mouth. The animal's eyes gleamed with gratitude as it looked up at its saviour but his companions were struck dumb with shock at this unorthodox breach of the vow, after so long a journey, when it was almost on the edge of fulfillment. Ekanath however exclaimed in great joy, "The purpose is realised 1 Shiva asked and received. Shiva came and accepted."

—*From "Prasanthi", published by Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust*

Independence

To be dependent on one's relatives, on the government, on anything or anybody external to oneself, is a deterrent to spiritual progress. The ideal for which each aspirant strives is true independence—that is, dependence on the *inner Self*. That which is sometimes called independence—dependence on the ego's overdeveloped sense of responsibility, ability, etc.—is not genuine independence, but manipulating, controlling behaviour which is detrimental to the spiritual development of all concerned.

The truly independent person relies solely and completely on his Higher Self for guidance, protection, support, and companionship. He is not dependent on familiar surroundings for his comfort. He is not dependent upon any human source for nurturing, including his own ego self. He does not require the companionship of other egos in order to keep from feeling lonely. He

does not ask for nor accept the advice of others, knowing that only his own Inner Guide can understand his needs and advise him correctly.

The single exception to the rule is Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Because Baba incarnated for the purpose of guiding each one to his own Inner Self, and because He Himself is completely free from ego, His advice may be accepted and trusted interestingly though, He seldom gives advice. His words, designed to stimulate our inner search, are frequently phrased as questions and often purposely ambiguous. He will never cripple His followers by spoon-feeding them, but He insists on each making his own contact with God within himself.

How Baba Helps

As a living symbol of our Higher Self, Baba helps us to better understand the ego's relation to the God within. It is never possible to make an appointment with Him. No one else's influence has any effect on whether He will see you or not. Those who adore Him are willing and eager to surrender their ego at His feet and to merge their human will into His Divine Will. His devotees listen carefully to each word He speaks and hasten to be obedient if He makes a request or suggestion. The slightest contact with Him can transform the life of the one so blessed.

Each of the above statements is equally true of the ego's relationship to the Higher Self. The ego must fall at the feet of the Higher Self, surrender to it completely, listen only for Its voice, and be willing to blend its will with God's until the two become One. Anything less than total surrender is wasteful of the precious time which is allotted us for this incarnation. To listen to others is to follow the will-of-the-wisp into the swamp of human opinions instead of listening to the clarion call of our own infallible Guide.

Baba tells us repeatedly, "My home is in your heart." Jesus told His disciples, "The kingdom of God is within you [Luke 17: 21]." And He said clearly that the greatest commandment was "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind [Matthew 22: 37]." To those who argued that they had too many responsibilities, so much to do that they couldn't take the time it required searching for God within them, Jesus replied, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you [Matthew 6: 33]." "Everyone that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life [Matthew 19: 29]."

Baba tells us that if we take one step toward Him, He will take ten toward us. Jesus said, "Seek, and ye shall find [Matthew 7: 7]." Both adjure us to seek diligently and persistently within us and not to give in to the temptation to try to follow the road map or itinerary of another. Jesus said, "If any man shall say unto you, Lo here is Christ, or there, believe it not ...behold, He is in the secret chambers [Matthew 24: 23, 26]."

Independence, then, can only be inner dependence, dependence on the knowledge which comes from within our Self. Jesus and Baba are true gurus, turning us away from false

responsibilities, false prophets, and everything external to our selves, and teaching us that we are, in fact, the God we seek.

—*Joy Thomas, Cherry Valley, California (From the American Sathya Sai Newsletter)*

Steady and undeviating earnestness is very important for avoiding conflicts in the mind and for overcoming them. One has to be calm and unruffled. Courage, wise counsel, and steadiness—these will make the will strong and sturdy. Lustre in the face, splendour in the eye, a determined look, a noble voice, large-hearted charity of feeling, unwavering goodness, these are the signposts of a developing and progressing will-force. A mind without agitations, a joyous and unblemished outlook—these are the marks of a person in whom Santhi (inner peace) has taken root.

—**Baba**

VEDA PURUSHA VANI:

Foster the Vedas

"When Sri Krishna declared in the Gita that the Lord descends as Avatar to punish the wicked and protect the good, it does not mean that the Avatar's purpose is to destroy evil-doers. Evil refers to bad thoughts. These thoughts are in everyone. It is these that have to be destroyed. Dharma is Divinity Itself. The Vedas seek to promote good thoughts, eliminate ideas of evil, and help mankind to lead the good life. Hence they have to be cherished and fostered," declared Bhagavan Baba, in His discourse during the Veda Purusha Jnana Yajna at Prasanthi Nilayam, on September 30.

Bhagavan said: If the injunctions given in the Vedas and Shastras are followed by mankind, they will be freed from affliction. Most of our troubles have arisen because we have forgotten the Vedas. The earth has always had the power of attraction. But the scientist Newton carried out experiments and discovered the earth's gravitational pull. The earth had the power of attraction before Newton's discovery. Likewise, the Vedic sages had carried out spiritual explorations on the basis of the Vedas. Because their findings were made known in Bharat, it cannot be said that the Vedas are not to be found anywhere else. The Vedas encompass the whole world and are immanent everywhere. Bharatiyas cannot deny the truth about gravitation merely because a foreigner like Newton discovered it. Similarly others outside India cannot deny the validity of the Vedas because the Bharatiyas discovered their truth.

As a matter of fact, many in other countries revere the Vedas. Max Mueller made a thorough study of the origin and content of the Vedas and wrote tomes about them. He studied the Vedas diligently to understand the meanings of the hymns. He devoted a lifetime to these studies. From "Max Mueller" he became known as "Mokshamula".

Vedas and the nation

The tragedy of the present situation in India is that Bharatiyas do not esteem the Vedas as highly as foreigners. Destitution in India has grown with the decline of respect for the Vedas, which had been the fountain-source of its prosperity. The Brahmins as a class must be held responsible for the decline of the Vedas. If they had cared to protect the Vedas in the proper way, the nation would not have fallen on evil days. At least now, they should open their eyes and strive to promote the study of the Vedas on proper lines. In the Sai Educational Institutions students from the primary classes to the Ph.D. level are studying the Vedas. Students are not being given the encouragement they deserve. It is because students are allowed to go astray that the nation is plunged in confusion and chaos. People tend to speak in one way and act differently. It is this dichotomy that has resulted in the public disregard for the Vedas. If those in responsible positions do not live up to their words, how can the people have faith in them?

Embodiments of Divine Love! Every individual should take a pledge to nourish the Vedas on right lines. The welfare of the nation and the prosperity of the world are dependent on the Vedas. Within another ten or twenty years, even the few who possess Vedic knowledge may not remain. Hence, there is urgent need to take concerted measures to provide the resources and the encouragement for the propagation of Vedic studies. The Vedas are not to be used as a means of earning a livelihood. The Vedas are the means of establishing a link with the Divine. They are not to be used for entertaining the public. Those who have studied the Vedas must dedicate their lives to the promotion of the Vedas. Only then would they be serving the cause of restoring the glory of Bharat's ancient heritage.

"Be fearless"

Today all the ceremonies prescribed by the Vedas are being given up. Most people are immersed in meaningless superstitions. How many are adhering to the injunctions of the Vedas? People must be prepared to adhere to them even at the cost of their lives. The Vedas must be considered as their life itself. Only those who have determination and conviction are competent to propagate the Vedas. Be fearless in propagating the Vedas among the people. When you are proclaiming the Truth, why have any fear? Only those who preach falsehood have to be afraid. Is your life in danger? What if life goes? There can be nothing nobler than giving up one's life in defence of the Vedas. It is in such a spirit of dauntless determination that you should undertake revival of Vedic knowledge. You must practise what you profess and then impart the knowledge to others.

Every human being must revere the Vedas. It is the very foundation of life. Every act of daily life has its roots in the Vedas. Whether everyone knows this or not, the Vedas pervade everything. In the Yajna, Sri Narayana Himself appears as the embodiment of Veda.

Yajna is a manifestation of Narayana. Yajna means sacrifice (Tyaga). Sacrifice really means giving up all bad thoughts, egoism, evil qualities, impure desires and wrong actions. Only then will the vision of the Divine be experienced. In an empty mind, you can put anything. But how do you empty a brain filled with all kinds of rubbish. And without emptying it, how can you find

space for pure thoughts? Your hearts are filled with all kinds of feelings. How can you fill them with the nectar of the Vedas? Everyone must regard it as his foremost duty to work for the revival of the Vedas and live the Vedic way of life.

—*From Bhagavan's discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium, on 28-9-1987*

"Expansion is All"

—*Bejoy K. Misra*

If God pervades and permeates all creation, what does it mean to say so? Does the Divine expand? Obviously not. The pervasiveness of the Divine comprehends everything. But there is another significant meaning to it. For the individual, to live a life in God is to expand ceaselessly. A continuously expanding life is the godly life, the life Divine.

If we conceive of God as a straight line running from eternity to eternity, we are dots in it. A straight line is composed of an infinite number of dots. When a dot stretches out by joining with the neighbouring ones, and continues the process infinitely, it increasingly expresses the straight line reaching out to infinity.

Why should the dot absorb its neighbour and expand? Unless it considers that the neighbouring dot has an identical destiny as its own and the common destiny cannot be fulfilled except by mutual absorption, the dot will have no impulse to expand. The utilitarian point of view that, since it is my duty to expand by smiling at my neighbour, I must smile, cannot effect this expansion. It must happen naturally, spontaneously. Love is the key to expansion. This is what Jesus meant when he called upon everyone to love his neighbour as himself.

I have to bear in mind that I walk out of my little home to say "hello" to my neighbour not to make his life better, but to make my life better, to expand. That, according to Swami, should be the basic urge behind all true service. Once Swami Vivekananda declared that to think that one is doing service to others and helping them is preposterous. God alone can do that. We should be grateful to God for having received from Him an opportunity to help ourselves by appearing to help others.

Once, when someone started to fan Bhagavan Baba in a crowd, Swami turned to him, snatched the fan from his hand and whispered in his ears: "My dear, you need do no service to me, for I have come to serve you." This is His Life.

Therefore, expansion of love is the true and meaningful expansion of one's self. One must be able to love so much and unselfishly that one will be able to forgive the evil done to one by another, and wish and do him well. That is what Swami means in the statement "Love lives by giving and forgiving." Love alone can forgive and help even the one who is forgiven to expand.

However, forgiveness to be vital and creative, it must be exercised with understanding. True understanding means accepting another point of view with grace and not forcing upon others one's own point of view. No single point of view has finality about it. Truth can be one and yet have myriad facets. Regarding any subject there can be various levels of perception radically different from each other. To condemn and deny one level of perception is to rule out the possibilities of other levels. This is a narrow way of looking at the truth of any subject.

It may be asked: If the different points of view are radically different from one's own, how can one accept irreconcilable opposites? This difficulty is not as insurmountable as it appears to be. The emphasis should be not on the opinions expressed, but on the right relations between the persons who hold them. Two persons with different points of view can still be friends if there is love and understanding between them. We grow with understanding and experience, and a person who wants to expand, to attain higher levels of truth, accepts the possibility of a higher point of view and does not quarrel with a view contrary to his own. The key is love and understanding. When we keep before us the central theme of our living as continuous expansion, other smaller problems and obstacles get absorbed in it.

The growth and blossoming of all human values lie in this expansion. No one is without some values of his own. Even the worst criminal loves some one and is ready to sacrifice his own good for the one he loves. His perception of the values he cherishes may be so very circumscribed, selfish and wrong that it produces negative effects in society. Society has to find other means of reforming such men, besides the traditional means of punishment.

Values are meant to enlarge the freedom of people, not to bind them by rigid regulations or attitudes. When our concepts of values are rigid, motivated by selfish desires, they turn out to be dogmas, and do more harm than good. They do not protect and promote peace, rather kill it. Where peace is a casualty, the godly life is lost. Over the centuries of human history we have seen, and see even now, how narrow religious perceptions have done great harm to mankind. Where there should be unity, they have created divisions.

Swami has given us a universal theme to work. To express a life in God, while we work from our own levels, we must not quarrel with other levels, but present to them the possibilities of a higher level of perception. One must be ready to relinquish one's own level of perception when one meets with a higher one, though the pains of growth are not small. Every step higher in the spiritual life is a death and a new birth. But without this death and birth life can be utterly fatuous, full of sound and fury signifying nothing. We come here on earth to learn. No one can be free from that obligation. Some who learn willingly transform their pains to joy. Those who must be given blows so that they may learn, transform the possibilities of joy into perpetual pain.

We have to keep seeking continuously and constantly higher and wider levels of consciousness. We have to grow in understanding and in love.

Truth is not a law that one must keep; it is the vision of the essential meaning of life that must enlighten our understanding of all laws. Right living is not mere conformity to Sastric

injunctions; it is expressing the highest truths of life in our actions, thoughts and feelings. Peace means allowing compassion and understanding to permeate our daily living. Love means giving precedence to the other over one's self. Non-violence is not merely non-injury, but non-aggrandizement; it means giving up even one's life to protect other lives. All this must be based on creative understanding and active expansion of love. Without a continuous effort at expansion of our consciousness through love that is truly spiritual, our most meticulous attempts at practising values may generate negative results.

We tend to make life and living a rigid ritual. Life must be a joy to live, not merely a chant to be sung, at a prescribed hour with appropriate intonations!

In a recent discourse Swami observed that all claim to be devotees, but are quarrelling among themselves. This means that we appear to be devoted to God, but do not lead a godly life. We remain dots in the line, brow-beating our neighbour dots! We want that others should acknowledge our presence, without our recognising their presence! This is a complete negation of all basic human values. Love for our fellow beings, understanding their limitations, respecting their freedom while helping them to see higher levels of perception to monitor their own growth is a necessary environment in which all values expand and express themselves. This brings about mutual cooperation, love and understanding which are essential for expanding our spiritual awareness

Bhagavan's visit to Ooty

Bhagavan Baba, who left for Brindavan on October 6, made a brief but highly enjoyable trip to Ooty from October 18 to 22, before returning to Prasanthi Nilayam on October 24.

The visit to Ooty was primarily for the purpose of meeting and blessing the children who had joined the Vidya Vihar at Nandanavanam after the Central School was restarted this year in August. Classes from the first to the sixth standard have been opened this year, with 30 tiny tots in the first standard and 38 in the sixth standard. In all there are 188 students from all parts of India, from five to eleven years of age.

Bhagavan spent a happy time with the children and the staff. One morning there was a smart march-past by all the children with Swami taking the salute. One evening there was an improvised cultural programme in which the children presented episodes from the Ramayana (Bharata's encounter with Kaikeyi) and the Mahabharata (Krishna's Peace mission to the Kauravas) and the story of how Vighneshwara won a fruit as a reward from his parents. The bhajans by the children revealed both their devotion and their proficiency in music. The children took to Swami with so much spontaneous love that many of them could not bear the thought of Swami leaving them. Only the assurance of another visit by Swami could assuage their feeling.

Doctors and the Divine

—Dr. M. Balasubrahmanyam

A devotee from the Far East, who had been confined to the wheel-chair for a number of years, is wheeled in into the "interview room" at Trayee Brindavan. Half an hour later he comes out walking and himself pushing the wheel-chair in front of him.

It was a Gurupoornima day. A mother carrying a twelve-year-old boy, who had never walked since birth, is called in for interview at Prasanthi Nilayam. Swami gives the boy a big pat on his back and he goes into and comes out of the room walking.

Crowds gather around these patients and express their amazement and share their happiness. Some people in the Darshan line start giving their own interpretation of the event.

Doctors in the gathering stand in awe unable to find words to explain the phenomenon. What is their reaction? How can they reconcile their scientific knowledge with all this? They will no doubt accept that the divine force had effected a miraculous cure in these cases. But, perhaps, hardly any of them tries to think and analyse the great possibilities that lie behind this phenomenon.

Swami Himself has offered an explanation for these miraculous cures. When His love and the faith of the, patient click the cure is effected. Is it possible for doctors consciously to take the help of this divinity in their healing mission at least to strengthen the healing process if not to effect miraculous cures? The answer to this question will depend on the doctors' understanding of the inherent divinity of man himself.

The whole and the parts

The bane of modern medicine is that it neglects to treat the patient as a whole person and because of this, physicians are unable to understand and cure many diseases which afflict man today. By reducing the whole human organism to its parts and trying to treat the parts, doctors have lost their ability to understand the coordinating activities of the whole. This whole includes the Self of man, the divinity within him. Because of this fragmented approach, the traditional wisdom of the faith healer, who views his patient as an integral whole, involving besides the body, the person's relationship to the cosmos and the divine powers in it, is often a subject for mockery for modern medical practitioners. They are completely ignorant of the fact that even rituals and ceremonies, however crude they may appear to be, have a place in stimulating the natural healing powers which every living being possesses. While it may be unwise to suggest that the modern physician should adopt these methods to supplement his drug therapy, it will at least be useful to go deeper into these practices and investigate how exactly they assist in the healing process.

Healing and divinity

Indifference to spirituality has become characteristic of modern medical practice, as is the case with most other professions. The modern physician tends to avoid philosophical and spiritual aspects connected with illness and healing. From ancient times healing in our country has been associated with divinity as exemplified by the Ashwini Devas and Dhanvantri, the God of Medicine. This is true of ancient Greek medicine also wherein they conceived of healing deities like Hygieia (Goddess of Health) and Aesculapius (God of Medicine). Similar concepts were held in ancient Chinese medicine, which was greatly influenced by Taoism and Confucianism. All these methods of healing were directed towards treating the patients at a more fundamental level than at the level of the body mind complex.

The validity of this approach has been demonstrated in recent years by scientific studies. Once feelings of hope, anticipation and faith are generated at the deeper level, the body starts combating the illness more effectively, with or even without the assistance of drugs, and heals itself. In these circumstances there is no doubt that the Divine takes charge of the physical body and does the needful. When such a self-healing process is initiated it is impossible to describe exactly in scientific terms, what happens in the organism, and it will not be wrong to characterise it as divine intervention. The modern physician hardly pays any thought to this aspect of his practice and comes to rely more and more on his own treatment. From the patient's side also, the evolutionary state of man now is such that instead of taking the assistance of the unlimited healing potential within himself he almost entirely relies on outside intervention by doctors and drugs.

Disease and the spirit

An obvious flaw in modern medicine is the narrow view it has taken about the origin of diseases, always trying to find a single cause for each ailment, forgetting the contributory factors, especially those concerning the victim's psyche. Though "stress" has been recognised as an important cause of many diseases, its varied psychological and spiritual aspects have hardly received any attention from the practising physician. Nor is there any recognition that spirituality and spiritual practices can have a tremendous influence on the factors affecting health, disease and cures. This has never been a subject of investigation for medical researchers. That bodily ailments are only one of the several manifestations of a state of imbalance in the living organism and that this imbalance can have spiritual dimensions to it is hardly acceptable to the so-called scientific mind of the modern physician.

A little deeper inquiry into the phenomenon of spiritual healing will naturally lead us to a discussion of the nature of human consciousness. While physicists have shown that a consistent quantum theory is possible only with reference to the consciousness of the researcher, the psychologists and psychotherapists have only recently started showing interest in states of consciousness. The understanding of individual human consciousness and cosmic consciousness calls for enquiry beyond accepted scientific definitions and concepts, at least for the present. But it was long known to our ancients that the consciousness in every living being is a projection of the Divine and that the individual consciousness is closely linked to and integrally related to the cosmic consciousness. This cosmic consciousness has been equated in our scriptures with

Brahman or Paramatma or God. That the individual consciousness is capable of contacting the collective consciousness is now accepted by psychologists in what they call Transpersonal Experiences.

Link with the cosmic

That the Self in us can have a tremendous influence on our physical frame was once emphasised by Bhagavan Baba in a private discussion He had with doctors. He told an elderly doctor, "I am three years older than you in age, and see how I look and how you look! "The doctor's immediate reply was," But Swami, you are divine!" Swami retorted: "But the physical body is the same." The implication was that the real "Person" inhabiting the body can have a tremendous influence on the physical system and even counter the ageing process, if only we can learn to respond to the divine force in us. This also explains Baba's powers to influence the physical bodies of other people, because there are no "others" for Him. All that we need is the ability to link our individual consciousness with the Cosmic Consciousness that He is. This is possible only when we develop intense faith in Him. But what is faith? It is not just faith in an external Godhead. It really means faith in one's Self, faith in the infinite potency inherent in every individual.

It is this aspect of the Sai phenomenon that doctors have to consider and give a spiritual dimension to the practice of medicine. However, for "spiritualizing" medicine, the doctor should have a considerable knowledge of the different aspects of consciousness so that he can provide the patient with a spiritually supportive atmosphere to facilitate the healing process. In this process of harnessing the healing power of the Self in the patient, the physician's own level of spiritual development is an essential factor, since otherwise he will not be able to establish a link with the deeper levels of consciousness of the patient, however much the physician may be endowed with qualities like professional competence, compassion and empathy.

Educating the patient

The main effort of the physician in this endeavour will be to educate the patient about the cause of his illness and about the unlimited power of the Self in him and how he can utilize these powers to heal himself. This does not mean that the patient has to become an accomplished spiritual sadhaka before he can cure himself, as this is too much to ask from any patient. It is primarily a question of educating him so that he can develop the required intensity of faith. Thus the doctor has to assume the role of a teacher.

As the impact of the philosophical and existential aspects of life on the physical sciences increases, the time is not far off when medicine will also get influenced by them and an entirely new scientific system of spiritualized medicine is developed. Doctors belonging to the Sri Sathya Sai Organisations have a unique role to play in this development, because they have the Avatar Himself to inspire and guide them.

No longer a Beleaguered City

Besieged by as many as six foes
each powerful enough to subvert a kingdom
sinister enough to work havoc
how can one hold out against
their collective might and stratagems?

The desire to possess and to enjoy
the anger when this is thwarted
the ego which perks up its head
the craving which never abates
the attachment which forges unbreakable
chains
the envy smouldering unnoticed,
the more deadly like an invisible enemy,
—all these lying in wait for us
leering at us as we go past them.

How shall I save myself, O Swami,
from their ever-tightening hold
unless you come unto me.
Pray, walk into this little niche of my heart.
There's nothing of the splendour of your
mansion here.
But once you have stepped in
it will lack nothing
and the mischief-makers battering
at its door, conspiring to take possession,
will know at once that it's no longer
to let or available for occupation
or even for a temporary sojourn.
With you installed within me
I'll be proof against the fearful hosts,
my heart a temple bathed in your glory
no longer a beleaguered city.

—P. P. Sharma

Love

*Love is like a flower,
That blooms in a bower.
It clears the heart of hatred
And makes it a temple sacred.*

*Love is like a tree
Its own needs it doesn't see
Love gives you peace
That will never cease.*

*Love is like a river,
That flows on forever
It removes all pain
'Tis soothing like rain.
Lord! Help me bury the past
And cling to Thee fast.*

—Radhika, XI Standard, Prasanthi Nilayam.

An emphatic re-affirmation of His divine mission and the power of Divine love, which drew lakhs of devotees from all parts of the world to His presence, was made by Bhagavan Baba, in His discourse to the vast gathering that overflowed the Poornachandra Auditorium, on Bhagavan's 62nd Birthday on November 23.

The large gathering this year had been reinforced by over twelve thousand "Active Workers" of the Sai organisations, who had come from all parts of India for a national conference during November 19 - 21.

The heavy programme for the birthday week included, besides the three-day Conference, the Sixth Convocation of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning and the birthday celebrations on the 23 rd.

Large crowds of devotees filled all the spaces around the Prasanthi Mandir from early in the morning eagerly awaiting Bhagavan's emergence from the Mandir to get into the gleaming chariot in which he went in procession to the Auditorium. The procession was headed by Sai Gita, followed by the Institute band, the group of Vedic chanters and troupe of students in gaily coloured Punjabi costumes vigorously performing the Bhangra dance.

Bhagavan was greeted with cheers as He took His seat on the specially decorated stage. Mr. S. B. Chavan, Chief Minister of Maharashtra, took his seat beside Bhagavan.

After invocation, members of the Central Trust offered floral homage to Bhagavan.

Mr. Chavan, in his address, earnestly appealed to Bhagavan to visit Maharashtra.

Bhagavan then delivered His Birthday Message.

Bhagavan's Discourse

Embodiments of Divine Love!

Bharatiyas have been able to win independence, but have not succeeded in achieving unity. Freedom without unity is like an electric wire without the current.

Sanathana Dharma is the great heritage of the children of Bharat (India). It is a culture that is sublime, sacred and ennobling. It has testified to the advent of many Avatars (incarnations of the Divine). Bharat is the birth-place of numerous sages, savants, men of God, warriors and great women who have upheld chastity.

have been covered by some dismal developments and modern trends, but it is bound to shine always. Even today great souls are incarnating in this land. In fact, there has been no epoch in India's long history when such great figures have not appeared.

The Indian Paradox

Today people from foreign countries are looking at India with a myriad eyes. Foreigners are coming to India not only for studying its philosophy but primarily for getting spiritual insight. But Indians themselves are seeking to give up their cultural inheritance. This is the paradox of the present situation.

It is unfortunate that despite the unique greatness of Bharatiya culture, Indians, in the craze for worldly comforts and pleasures, are giving up their glorious divine cultural heritage. Doubtless there is need for having material comforts, but, along with these, only if we preserve our spiritual and cultural treasures will we be able to stand out as an ideal to the world. Unfortunately, even the government is ignoring the nation's cultural inheritance. Whatever their brave words and high-sounding professions about India's greatness, their vision is turned towards western culture. Indians by and large are enamoured of occidental accomplishments and civilisation and are seeking to imitate the ways of the West. This is a supreme misfortune.

When you have the golden Merit mountain, why search for silver and gold?

When you have the wish-fulfilling Kalpataru, why go after other fruits?

When you have the bounteous Kamadhenu, why go elsewhere to buy a cow?

There is an old adage that Bharat is a land which contains all that is good and precious not to be found anywhere else. It is a tragedy that a country which is full of so many things good and great should be looked upon with disdain by Indians themselves and be the subject of flippant criticism and comment.

The Inner Vision

The greatness of India's spiritual and cultural heritage is indescribable. But to enjoy and experience it, one should be duly qualified. One may have scholarship, may be well educated, or eminent in other ways, but if he has no spiritual urge, all these are of no avail. Only those who have turned their vision inwards and experienced the bliss of the Divine are entitled fully to appreciate and understand the greatness of Indian culture.

All Indians are children of one mother and are members of one family, even though they may speak different languages and wear different costumes and vary in their manners and customs. The Bharatiyas should look upon mankind as one family, of which the supreme Lord is only one. Without earning the grace of that Lord, all other acquisitions are of no value. Love alone can bind one to God, because Love is His being One who is the very embodiment of Love can be realised only through love and not by any other means. Human beings are also endowed with love. Through that love man should secure God's love, fill himself with love and lead a life flowing with love.

Men earn wealth by engaging themselves in business or a vocation. This is not permanent. They should endeavour to acquire spiritual wealth which is enduring and everlasting. This wealth has to be got by loving God and earning His grace and love.

Param Prema

Love is like the mariner's compass, which points always towards the north. The thoughts of a devotee filled with love are always directed towards God, whatever he may be doing or saying. Such love has been described as Param Prema—Supreme Love. God responds only to such love. It is not easy for everyone to understand the nature of this love. Love in man, if it is based on ego, assumes undesirable forms. If it is directed towards the Atma it redeems man and sublimates him. Hence everyone should strive for Atmic realisation.

Many imagine that they are engaged in the quest for the Spirit. The very idea of a search for the Atma is misconceived. The Spirit is omnipresent and is the active principle in everything everywhere. There is nothing in the world without the Spirit. But when the spiritual vision is absent, the Anatma (the non-spiritual or phenomenal) appears to exist. Therefore, the quest for the Spirit calls for a change in the vision. Vision does not mean the physical sight. It is the inner vision which seeks to see the One who enables the eyes to see. The spiritual quest is thus an attempt to know the Seer behind the power of sight.

Today all spiritual sadhana is being done through the mind. As long as the mind dominates spiritual exercises, the goal of Self-realisation cannot be attained. The mind is like a thief, who will not allow himself to be caught. There is no use in relying on the mind to realise the Self. When the vision is centred on the Self, the mind fades away.

In their yearning for Self-realisation, aspirants seek to obtain spiritual messages ("Upadesha"). But can mere words like "Namoh Narayanaya" or "Namah—Sivaaya" become spiritual messages? The root meaning of "Upadesha" is leading one to the abode of the Real ("Swasthana"). By merely reciting names, the divine destination cannot be reached. We repeat the names of Rama, Krishna, Govinda, and Narayana. All these names have been conferred by some one and have not emerged seigneurs. Such acquired names cannot be eternal. Anterior to all names is the word "Aham" ("I"). Even the Pranava ("Om") came after "Aham". Everyone has to find out who is this "I". When one utters the Mahavakya, "Aham Brahmasmi" ("I am the Brahman") even there "Aham" is present. Therefore, one has to enquire into and ascertain who this "I" is. When the truth about "I" is known, the Brahman will be self-evident.

The Mahavakyas

Today we are wasting our time on physical and mental exercises for spiritual realisation. The truth is there is only one Divine Spirit that is immanent in everything. There is no dichotomy between the worldly and the spiritual. The phenomenal universe is a projection of the Spirit. All that exist in the Cosmos are like sparks from the Divine flame. All living beings have emanated from the Divine and they have all the qualities of the Divine.

"Tat-Iwam-Asi" ("That thou art"). What art thou? Unless you know what "That" is, you cannot understand the real meaning of this Upanishad declaration. From a seed, a plant has come, which grows into a tree, with branches, leaves, flowers and fruits. All the leaves, flowers, and branches proclaim that they have come from the seed that became the plant. The seed is the basis for everything in the tree. As long as the seed remained a seed, it could not become a tree. It is when the seed gives up its form to become a plant that it can put forth the branches, leaves, flowers, etc.

Man should also realise his essential nature and not be deluded by identifying his true being with the body-consciousness. For all the sorrows and suffering man experiences, it is the body-consciousness that is responsible. As long as this bodily delusion remains the fruit of Ananda (bliss) cannot be got. The seed of bodily attachment has to be given up for the tree of life to grow and yield the flower of Jnana (wisdom) and the fruit of Ananda (Bliss). The Upanishads have declared that immortality can be achieved only through renunciation (Tyaga) and not through rituals, progeny or wealth.

The One and the Many

To boast about one's knowledge, scholarship or mastery of the Shastras is really a sign of ignorance. The wise man is one who knows his true nature. As long as one is filled with ego, he cannot experience the Divine. The actions undertaken to destroy the ego become "Akarmas" (self-destroying acts) Love-filled devotion is the easiest path to the Divine. You must love all. The great quality of love is that it is the royal road to unity. All the diversity and manifoldness that we see in the world have come from the *One*. The One is the basis for the Many. Once we realise the Unity that underlies the diversity, the problems arising out of differences can be resolved.

Unity—The Greatest Need

The greatest task facing Indians today is the achievement of unity. Without unity, even the smallest task cannot be accomplished. Proper human relationships are not to be found in this nation of 78 crores of people. Every individual is wrapped up in his own selfish concerns. Is this the real worth of a human being? Selfishness and self-interest and differences based on caste and creed should be totally eliminated. Every one should deem himself a member of the human family. All caste distinctions are based on physical differences, similar to distinctions relating to age or sex. All bodies are made up of the five basic elements (ether, air, fire, water and earth) which do not have any distinctions of caste. All the elements are common to all beings. It is from a recognition of these basic common elements that we should develop the sense of human unity.

To promote the feeling of unity, we have to participate in service activities. We must utilise the body for cultivating good qualities, pure thoughts, doing good actions, and experiencing sacred feelings. Only through sacred acts can our life be sanctified and made worthy.

Embodiments of Divine Love!

legacy of Bharat is not a product of blind faith. It is the ripe fruit of the spiritual investigations and experiences of sages and saints, which was enjoyed by them and handed down to humanity for its enjoyment and emancipation. This heritage is the butter got by the churning of the Vedas, the Shastras and the Puranas. Bharat should not be regarded as a lump of earth or a mass of flesh. It is nectar itself. It is a treasure-house of bliss. It contains the cream of all the Shastras. Without understanding these truths, it is ridiculous to engage in all sorts of idle talk.

The Ways of the Divine

It is not easy to understand the nature of the Divine. Because the Divine is omnipresent, He can undertake any kind of activity. No one is competent to ask whether God can do this or that, whether He can work through one agency or another. There is nothing that is beyond His power. He can make one weep; He can avert one's tears. He can turn a hedonist into a yogi and a yogi into a hedonist. He can drive away madness or cause madness. He can create, He can protect, He can punish, He can destroy. Only the Divine knows what to do, when, how and in what circumstances, with regard to any particular individual. No one has the authority to tell the Divine how He should act. In the case of Hiranyakasipu and Prahlada, for instance, God punished the former and protected the latter. God deals with a person according to his past actions and according to the requirements of the prevailing situation.

No Self-interest

The Cosmos is the embodiment of the Divine. Differences arise when any one acts out of selfish motives. But the Divine has no self-interest at all. Hence whatever He does is only for the good of others. Every act of His is holy. It is Dharma (righteous action). It is Truth.

When the Divine is the very embodiment of Dharma and Sathya, no one is competent to question the actions of the Divine. Even the great sages, after all their enquiries and explorations, could only say about the Divine: "Not this" "Not this". They could not define what *It is*. It is possible to say what *It is not*, but who has the capacity to declare what *It is*? He is the cosmic stage director, playwright and actor. He is acting even in your form. He is the critic and the criticised. He is the one who weeps and also the one who causes weeping. Such being the nature of divinity, what can anyone declare with assurance about the Divine?

Attraction through Love

There is one thing, however, that is the unique attribute of the Divine: It is the power of attraction through Love. This magnetic power cannot be found in all. The ocean is vast and deep beyond measure. A tumbler of water taken from the ocean cannot have its vastness. It may have the same taste as sea-water but it cannot have any of the ocean's other attributes. Individual human beings may have some Divine qualities according to their past record, their spiritual and other attainments and what they deserve, but these are strictly limited.

You are witnessing today the presence here of thousands and thousands of persons. What is it that has drawn them here? Were any invitations sent to them? Was there any publicity in the

was this which impelled Thyagaraja to sing:

*Is it not because you had
The bliss-conferring Chintamani,
Oh Rama, that all of them
Gathered round you,
With their hearts in unison
To experience perennial joy
From the Source of all prosperity
From the Ocean of Compassion
And the embodiment of Intelligence
That you are, with no equal?*

(Swami sang the Telugu song "Lekanaa ninnu juttukunnaaru" in His own mellifluous voice, filling the entire gathering with ecstasy).

Heart-To-Heart Love

It is because that wish-fulfilling Jewel (Chintamani) of Love is manifest here that these thousands of people from all parts of the world have come here (cheers). Whatever one may say, can anyone point to any person who can attract so many thousands? Elsewhere, even when people are brought in lorries, they choose to run away. Here, even when we try to dissuade people from coming for lack of proper accommodation, devotees will not desist from coming and staying under the trees or in the open. This is love that flows from heart-to-heart. There is no compulsion on any one to come here. It is the cord of Love that binds them. That is the power of the Divine. Some may say that Swami is making a demonstration ("Pradarshanam") of this power or that. It may appear to you as "demonstration". For me, it is simple manifestation ("Nidarshanam"). This is natural for Me. I am doing what is innate for Me. It is the manifestation of Divine love. This is not something all can do. Not all the Shastras and sutras can enable one to act in this way. Only those who have experienced the power of Love can understand this phenomenon. Love is not something that can be bought. It is inherent in you. When you try to experience it naturally, you will realise it.

Chant Rama's Name

Ramadas sang ecstatically:

*Oh devotees! Here is the wonderful sweet
That has been prepared from the Vedas and the Puranas
The sweet name of Rama
Come, all ye, and partake of it!
This Rama lollipop is in many colours
And is the cure for all ills
It costs you nothing.
Come and take it, oh devotees!*

To partake of Swami's love, you have to spend nothing except the cost of travel. But even that expense is a sacred offering. Regard the expenses of your Puttaparthi trip not as expenses but a blessing ("Prapti"). Without that expenditure, you cannot get this grace. We have no right to get anything without giving something. Likewise, unless you make some small sacrifice you cannot have the blissful experience you get here. The Lord's love for the devotee is mutual giving and receiving love.

Develop Firm Faith

Develop henceforth the firm faith that whatever the Divine thinks, says or does is for the welfare of the world and not for Himself. There is not the slightest trace of self-interest in it. Whether you believe it or not, all are the same to me. But what each is entitled to receive varies according to his deserts. ("Praptanusaram") The ocean is full of water. But what anyone can take from it depends on the capacity of the vessel he carries. Likewise the extent of one's "fortune" ("adrishtam") depends on his past record and what he deserves now.

Today what you have to do is to promote good thoughts. Action proceeds from thought. Sadhana is based on Action. Character is the outcome of Sadhana. Character determines what you are destined to get ("Prapti") Hence what you regard as your good fortune or misfortune is based, in the final analysis, on your thoughts. As are your thoughts, so are the fruits. You cannot avoid doing your duty whatever it may be. You have to go on with it. But, even while engaged in the performance of your duties, there can be nothing more rewarding than remembering and meditating on God.

Real Surrender

If, however, while entertaining bad thoughts and bad intentions inside, you behave outwardly as if you had good thoughts, you will be guilty of deceiving God. There is no room here for playing blind man's buff with wealth. You have to cultivate good qualities, not flaunt your wealth. Strengthen your faith in God. Your life must be based on the principle of surrender to the Divine.

There are some who ask: "I have surrendered everything to God. Why, then, am I subjected to so many trials and tribulations?" One who has truly surrendered to God will not raise such questions. To say that "after I have surrendered I am put to suffering" itself shows that the surrender is not real, because where is the place for "I" after surrendering everything? To the person who has completely surrendered, everything that he experiences (good or bad) is a gift from God.

*Oh man! Can you get away from the
Consequences of your Karma?
Whether you take your vessel to a well
Or to the boundless ocean*

You can fill it only to its capacity.

*Karma entitles you to.
Remember this. Oh man!
Wherever you may go,
Whatever you may study,
Whatever penances you may do,
You cannot get away from the decrees of Karma!*

Power of Divine Grace

However, there is one way of getting over the results of Karma. If you earn the grace of the Divine even mountains of sin can be reduced to dust. Only the Divine has the power to confer such grace. A spark of fire can burn down a mountain of cotton. How is that spark to be got in the human predicament? Only through love. Develop love. Serve all with love, ever remembering the Lord's name. Without the name of the Lord on your lips, the mind will be running hither and thither. The mind is the birth-place of unsteadiness. Hence, engage yourselves in action, concentrating your thoughts on God.

Embodiments of the Divine! From this day, when you are celebrating the birth anniversary, there are three things which you have to remember and practise: Eschew criticism of others. Caviling at others is a grievous sin. To cavil at the Divine is an even more heinous sin. Do not discuss other people's faults or lapses. Greet everyone with love. Embark on your duties with dedication. Take up service in the villages whole-heartedly. I have often declared: "Grama seva is Rama seva" (Service to the villages is service to Rama). Ramarajya is the reign of Love. Offer service and receive love.

Keep aloof from govt.

One more thing will have to be borne in mind by everyone connected with Sai organisations. Whatever activities they may undertake, our organisations should have no connection with the Government. Let the Government do its job. Our activities should be confined to what we can do, to the limits of our capacity, without depending on the Government. There is no need to attempt something big. Even a small bit of service done well is enough.

Bear these three things in mind: First our service organisations should keep aloof from the Government. Second, plunging into society, render service. Third, avoid finding fault or talking ill of others. This is real sadhana.

Do not hesitate to reprove those who indulge in back-biting. They should be corrected on the spot so that they may not persist in that vicious habit. They must be told that it is unbecoming of one born as a human being to talk ill of other fellow-beings. One who indulges in such talk will himself get it back tenfold. When you start developing love, all these evil traits will drop away.

Seva and Deva

Henceforth, engage yourselves in social service, remembering and worshipping God and recognising your inherent divinity. This is the way to sanctify your lives.

Be aware of the divinity in you. There is no need to search for God anywhere outside you. The bodily vesture you are wearing should not produce the delusion that you are the body. Shed that delusion and you will realise the Brahman that you really are.

Do bhajans and have the name of the Lord always on your lips. Do not waste even a single moment. By chanting the name of Rama, Hanuman the monkey became all-powerful, the embodiment of peace and the exemplar of all noble qualities. Sita was full of praise for him. It is such qualities that you should all try to cultivate

*—Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan,
"Prema muditha manase kaho, Rama Rama Ram!"*

Global Girdle of Light and Love

Bhajans have pride of place in Bhagavan Baba's scheme of spiritual sadhana. Devotional singing in groups serves not only to concentrate the minds of the devotees on the Divine but promotes also a sense of spiritual unity and harmony among the devotees.

The Akhanda Bhajan that is observed by Sai devotees all over the world for full twenty-four hours in November is an annual event of global significance. Starting from 6 p.m. on a Saturday, the Akhanda Bhajan concludes at 6 p.m. on Sunday. The bhajans start with the lighting of the Akhanda Jyoti (the sacred lamp) that is kept continuously burning for 24 hours.

What is significant about the global Akhanda Bhajan is that while apparently the duration of the bhajan is identical, the time sequence varies from country to country. For instance, when Bhagavan lit the Akhanda Jyoti in the Prasanthi Mandir at precisely 6 p.m. on November 14th, the Akhanda Bhajans had been going on for many hours in countries east of India from Japan to Singapore. This means that as the earth revolves, lamps are lit at different Sai centres according to the local time and by the time the westernmost centre in Vancouver or Honolulu lights the Akhanda Jyoti, centres in the east would have completed the Akhanda Bhajan. Before the bhajans are completed all round the world, there would be a girdle of Akhanda Jyotis lit round the globe in Sai centres as far apart as Fiji in the "east" and Hawaii in the

It was eminently appropriate that the first bhajan that was sung at Prasanthi Mandir after the Omkara and the invocation to Vighneshwara began with the words: "Akhanda Jyoti Jalao Sayee Mana Mandir mey" ("Kindle in the shrine of my heart, Oh Sai, the eternal flame"). The second verse of the bhajan ran as follows: "Koti Surya Sama Teja Swaroopa! Divya Jyoti, Jnana Jyoti, Prema Jyoti Jalao" ("Oh Lord, with the effulgence of a billion suns! Illumine us with the light of Wisdom and the flame of Love").

Prasanthi Mandir showering His benediction on everyone.

The prayer to the Lord to light the lamp of wisdom and love in the heart of every devotee, when it goes up from millions of devotees all over the world, must have an ennobling and unifying effect which cannot be produced by any other means.

The Akhanda Bhajan should make devotees feel their unity with the Divine and, at the emotional level, fill them with love for all mankind. Bhagavan Baba's supreme role in His present advent is to unify humanity by promoting recognition of the inherent divinity present in every one, transcending all divisions of creed, caste, language, nationality and sex. The Akhanda Bhajan is like a beacon and trumpet-call to humanity to jettison the petty divisions of the past and rise to the heights of its divine destiny.

—V. K. N.

GURUDEVA VANI:

How Karma Works

—*Dr. Adapa Ramakrishna Rao*

Many are the blessings that Bhagavan Baba bestows on his devotees, and spiritual instruction is foremost among them. From the private interview to the public discourse, he takes every opportunity to teach and enlighten the seekers that constantly gather around him. He graciously speaks to them on all subjects, from the mundane problem of how to shed weight to the sublime one of how to attain Self-realisation, and gently leads them on to understand the distinction between illusion and reality through apt similes and appropriate illustrations drawn from everyday life.

Bhagavan's explication of the Doctrine of Karma in a recent chat with the teachers of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute serves as an excellent example of this edifying experience at Prasanthi Nilayam. The problem of the ordeals which righteous and godly persons undergo has always perplexed the human mind, and has driven many a confused soul towards agnosticism or atheism. If the universe is in truth the creation of a just God and is being governed by Him, why do the righteous suffer in the world and the wicked thrive and prosper? Why does an omniscient God allow the Unrighteous to inflict injury on innocent people and go unpunished for their misdeeds?

The Doctrine of Karma is the answer offered by the ancient sages of this country to this riddle of the presence and power of evil in a world created by a loving God. According to this well-known law of cause and effect whatever happens to a person in the present life is the result of his deeds in the past. As his soul goes through successive states of existence, good deeds bring

determine his present and future experiences.

Bhagavan explained the way this law operated in human society through a simple parable. He said: "God is fully aware of the suffering of the apparently righteous at the hands of the apparently wicked. He is not indifferent. He is waiting for the appropriate time. He himself is the embodiment of Time. You can see only what is happening now. But God knows the past and the future as well as the present. You think that these are innocent people, and that they are being unjustly harassed by evil-minded persons. You do not know how these apparently innocent people had ruthlessly tortured others in the past.

"Consider this illustration. Let us say, you have five acres of agricultural land in Tamilnadu and that another man has five acres in Andhra Pradesh. Tamilnadu had seasonal rains last year. So you could grow a fine variety of rice in your field and bring the grain home. As drought prevailed in Andhra Pradesh at that time, the other man could grow only millets. This year there are no rains in your village, and so you are obliged to grow millets. As there is good rainfall in his area, the other person is now growing a fine variety of rice.

"Suppose I visit your home now. You will serve me fine rice, because you still have the stock of last year's rice. If I go to the other man's house, he will offer me only cakes made of millet flour. Though you are now growing millets, you are able to serve me rice because you still have some rice left from last year's stock. If I visit your home next year, you will serve me millets, whereas the other man will offer me a sumptuous meal with fine rice. Think for a while why things happen this way. You grew rice in the past and so you are now enjoying it. Now you are growing millets, so you will have to eat them in future."

Thus with a simple, universally familiar situation as an illustration Bhagavan expounded the implications of the complex Doctrine of Karma to us on that occasion.

Devotional Impostors

A clever villager used to enter the village temple in the early hours of the day and sit on, with eyes closed, in the hope that people will honour him as a great devotee. Since he did not get up and go about his business until about mid-noon, the temple priest was hard put to it to close the doors and go home for his daily tasks there. So he struck upon a plan to stop the nuisance. He knew that the closed-eye session of Dhyana was all a pretence. He hid himself behind the Idol of the Deity, and when the villager was well set in his pretence of deep meditation, he said, in an imposing sonorous voice, "Listen! Excellent Devotee! I am mightily pleased by your asceticism and your steadfastness. Come I shall merge you into Myself." At this, the fellow ran fast out from the temple, leaving no trace of where he had gone to!

THE CHANCELLOR SPEAKS:

Spiritualise Education

*Faith in God has declined
Reverence is at a discount
Atheism is rampant
Esteem for the Guru is gone
Devotion has no place
The age-old culture is ignored
Respect for the good has vanished
This is our education today.*

"Nahi jnaanena sadrusam pavitraniha vidyathe" (In the world there is nothing as sacred as Jnana, the highest knowledge). There is nothing more precious in the world than true education. It reveals the divinity that sustains the universe and promotes the welfare of mankind materially, mentally and socially. Only through education do we understand creation and the truth about humanity. Those who realise the nature of the Divine can know the relationship between Nature, society and the infinite potential of man. Instead of being subject to Nature, man can acquire, through education, the knowledge to utilise the forces of Nature. Thereby the highest bliss (Sat-Chit-Ananda) can be experienced.

From Spirit to Nature

In the educational system today, the spiritual element has no place. This cannot be true education. Education must proceed primarily from the Spirit to Nature. It must show that mankind constitutes one Divine family. The divinity that is present in society can be experienced only through individuals. Education today, however, ends with the acquisition of degrees. Real education should enable one to utilise the knowledge one has acquired to meet the challenges of life and to make all human beings happy as far as possible. Born in society, one has the duty to work for the welfare and progress of society.

The knowledge gained from education is being misused today solely to obtain and enjoy creature comforts and sensuous pleasures. This education has served to develop some kind of intellectual abilities and technical skills, but has totally failed to develop good qualities. Society today is steeped in materialism because of the preoccupation with mundane pleasures.

Only in the Institute here can be witnessed the emphasis on the divinity inherent in man. In the old days, when the pupils completed their educational tenure in the ashram of the guru and

message to serve them as guidelines for their worldly and spiritual good. That ceremony is observed today as a Convocation.

Education does not mean imparting of verbal knowledge. The knowledge that is gathered in schools and colleges should be capable of being used for service to society and helping to improve the conditions of one's fellowmen. The place where true teachers and students are gathered should be filled with serene peace and orderliness. On the contrary, we find today that where students gather fear and insecurity prevail. Peace and order are not to be seen. This does not redound to the credit of education. Students, whose hearts should be soft and compassionate, have become hard-hearted and violent. Humility, reverence, compassion, forbearance, sacrifice, and sense-control are the qualities which reveal the outcome of true education.

Science with Discrimination

Science and technology have made astonishing progress, but humanity is going on the downward path. There are undoubtedly many brilliant scholars and scientists in the world today. But science alone is not enough. There must be discrimination for utilising the discoveries of science for right purposes. Science without discrimination, human existence without discipline, friendship without gratitude, music without melody, a society without morality and justice, cannot be of benefit to the people.

Scientists and technologists are doing wonders today in the fields of synthetics, electronics, atomic energy and exploration of outer space. On the one side, we have this astounding progress in science. On the other side, we are witnessing political and economic chaos, national, racial and religious conflicts, provincialism and student unrest indicating the free play of divisive forces. How are we to account for this contradiction—scientific advancement on the one hand and deterioration in human behaviour on the other? The reason is that alongside the growth in knowledge, ignorance is also growing *pari passu*. What is the reason for the decline in human character and the growth of violence and hatred? There is a marked increase in bad qualities, evil actions and cruel traits among human beings compared to the past. If the reasons for this growth are examined, it will be found that it is due to the continued predominance of animal instincts in man. How else can we explain the fact that in 5,500 years of recorded human history, there have been as many as 15,000 wars? Even now, men are not free from the fear of war. It is these wars that have progressively dehumanised mankind and eroded all regard for human values. The constant fear that at any moment one may lose his life in some conflict or other has an oppressive effect on the mind. This is mainly responsible for men losing the zest for living. It is not external wars alone that are responsible for this. The general climate of conditions in which men live also contributes to fear and uncertainty. Men are becoming increasingly selfish and self-centred. How can such egocentric persons derive happiness from society or contribute to the happiness of society? There is a scramble even for buying tickets for a film show or getting into a bus. Immersed entirely in selfish concerns, men have no regard for the interests of others. Every step is governed by self-interest. In whatever he sees, says, or does, self-interest alone is dominant. This kind of selfishness should be totally eliminated among students.

Increasing numbers of persons are seeking education, not for learning but for acquiring the means to gratify their desires. Education today has nothing sacred about it. The students have no steadiness of mind even for a moment. With this instability, how can they pursue studies with earnestness? The authorities also do not offer proper help or encouragement.

At the time when the country became free, there were 30 crores of illiterates. By 1983, this number had gone upto 44 crores. Illiteracy is increasing every day. By A.D. 2000 the number may grow to 50 crores

It is true that schools are on the increase and student enrolment has been going up considerably. But illiteracy is also increasing. Part of the reason for this is that large numbers of those who go to primary schools drop out after 2 or 3 years and lapse into illiteracy. There is no genuine urge for learning. Moreover, the financial provision for education, which was 7% of the Plan Outlay in the First Plan, had come down to 31% by the Sixth Plan. Many schools are not able to find money even for blackboards and chalk-pieces. Even in the universities, the position of Vice-chancellors is becoming difficult owing to non-receipt of grants. As a result, teachers are getting frustrated and discontented.

Government and Education

Problems such as these are continually growing in the educational field. The reason for this is the dependence of educational institutions on the government. Once they are divorced from the government, the problems will be solved. In the past the Goddess of Learning (Saraswati) had no association with the powers that be. Today even Saraswati has been chained to the government. Consequently institutions have lost their freedom.

When a boy at school is asked today what he is doing, he answers: "I am *buying education*." ("Chaduvukontunnaanu", in Telugu) instead of saying "I am learning"—"Chaduvukuntunnaanu". Thousands of rupees have to be paid for getting admission even to the primary classes. What is the benefit that can accrue to the world as a result of education received in this way? The students have no capacity to understand any of the problems of the contemporary world—economic, political, social, moral or other problems. The teachers in old times exhorted their pupils to speak the truth ("Sathyam Vada"). In today's parlance, the exhortation is: "Sathyam *Vudha*" ("Destroy Truth")! Education today does not impart to the students the capacity or gait to face the challenges of daily life. The educational field has become the playing ground of ignorance.

In this state of things, the students cannot be blamed. Students must be enabled to prepare themselves to serve society with pure minds. Today they do not have even a sense of gratitude towards their parents for all the sacrifices they make to educate their children. The students acquire degrees and they go about begging for jobs. They should acquire rather the capacity to stand on their own legs and be self-reliant. They should, above all, develop good character. They should be able to take up any work and acquit themselves well. They should place love of the Motherland above everything else.

Men today are concerned solely about their rights and have no regard for their duties, obligations and responsibilities. Universities today have become factories for turning out degree holders and not real centres of knowledge. Education should serve to develop powers of discrimination and foster the sense of patriotism so that the educated may engage themselves in service to society.

Lacking in love for the Motherland, many today are hankering after foreign things. We should not have aversion to anything. But esteem for things national is essential. Appreciation and regard for one's own country and its achievements is a sacred duty (Dharma). It is not the mark of good education if one forgets one's own country and goes after the exotic.

Degrees Not Enough

Students! It is not enough if you acquire degrees. Along with them you should acquire general knowledge and common sense. There is a wide gap between your learning and our culture. Scholarship without culture is valueless. Both have to go together.

The Taitiriya Upanishad exhorts the student to look upon one's father, mother, teacher and guest as God. Students today have little respect for parent, or God. They lack even confidence in themselves. How can those who have no self-confidence get self-satisfaction?

Education should not be merely for earning a living. It should enable one to lead an exemplary life. The right teacher is one who is an embodiment of love and teaches the student to love all, to cultivate right relationships, and to develop human qualities. Teachers who will promote qualities of mutual love and regard in their students are sorely needed today.

We do not need today a new faith or creed, nor a new system of education. Nor need we create a new society. All we need are men and women who have pure and loving hearts. Their hearts must be filled with sacred feelings. The transformation has to be effected in the minds of people. The mind should be brought under the control of the intelligence (Buddhi) and not allowed to go after its whims and fancies.

You must become ideal citizens. Revere elders and show respect to everyone. Lead exemplary lives. Eschew selfishness and self-interest. Identify yourselves with the well-being of society and dedicate yourselves to social service. Students must develop such noble ideals. They must show their gratitude to those who have helped them. You must realise also that ignorance is preferable to knowledge that is not put to right use. As the proverb says: A docile donkey on which you can ride safely is preferable to a wild, uncontrollable horse.

All degrees, scholarship and punditry have no value if one does not have good qualities. Cultivate virtues. Today good qualities ("gunamulu" in Telugu) are forgotten and only good dress ("guddalu" in Telugu) is being flaunted. When one wears white clothes, the heart must also be pure white. The Upanishad declares, "Narayana pervades everything inside and outside." You

yourself into men of virtue. You have to do right actions for cultivating good qualities.

People talk about morality (Neethi). Morality simply means right conduct. Without good behaviour there can be no morality.

Morality and Service

Your moral life in society must express itself in service to the suffering and the helpless. The devotion and understanding that are implicit in selfless service cannot be found in any other thing. You may not get a job, but engage yourself in social service. Bear in mind the inspiring example of Abou ben Adhem, who loved to serve his fellowmen and thereby earned the grace and love of God.

You are well aware of the deplorable state of the nation. In this situation, remembrance of the name of the Lord should be your main support. Have firm faith in God. An animal which had full faith in God became Nandi, the vehicle of Lord Siva. A monkey by the constant repetition of Sri Rama's name became the adorable Hanuman. Prahlada, the scion of the Asura clan, became divine by his unconquerable faith in God. If such transformations can take place, why should not men become truly human? The fault lies in the perverted thinking of human beings and not in the divinity that is inherent in them.

Sanctify your lives by making every act of daily living holy and purposeful. Students should dedicate themselves to the revival of Bharat's hallowed culture and to the service of the Motherland. You must uphold the good name of the institute wherever you are. Revere your parents and make them happy.

My dear students!

You are flowers in God's garden.
You are stars in God's sky.
You are wonderful beings in God's world.
You *must* possess head of Sankaracharya.
You *must* possess heart of Buddha.
You *must* possess hands of Janaka Maharaja.
Then you are a perfect man.

(After Bhagavan's discourse, which was greeted with thunderous cheers, the Institute band played the National Anthem. The Chancellor and others returned to the Mandir in procession).

**—Bhagavan's discourse at the Sixth Convocation,
at the Poornachandra Auditorium, on 22-11-87**

The True Poet

One poem—that is softer than a snowflake
more delicate than a petal of a rose
One word—so useful that the tide would turn
One sound—that stirred even before the
echo was heard
One love—that caused two and is ever present
One life—with Sai and all comes into focus
He is the true poet and His Poem is Nature's Beauty
a mountain range off the land—
that paints the country
a ceiling with infinite crystals—
that even turns the sun and moon
the heart of the bhaktha—
that loves Krishna
the intense yearning—
to behold Sai Rama
the poetics of bliss and the song ethereal

—*Michael Hollander (From "Advent")*

STUDENTS' CORNER:

From You: To You

O Lord! I have nothing mine own to offer Thee,
For Lord, You alone own everything over here....
I have just one humble Prayer to make,
On my behalf an oath to take

Wherever You send me, whatever you tell me,
It shall be carried out with full faith and devotion;
My sole responsibility is to stork in Thy mission;
As a humble but determined instrument of yours will I work.

I will nor utter anything but your message,
Lord! I will not worry about liberation's passage;
For I have with me the supreme thing in this world,
I have You with me.... now and for all times to come;
Only one desire, O Lord! I have to express:
From You I came and let me come back to You.

"Everything will be All Right"

—Sirikul Charungmathong

How much faith in Bhagavan Baba could sustain a devotee undergoing a long term of imprisonment was revealed in an article from Sirikul Charungmathong, sent from a prison in Bangkok, published in the May 1980 issue of "Sanathana Sarathi". Now, more than seven years later, Sirikul Charungmathong has sent the following article from prison, narrating his experiences in jail and describing how Bhagavan's statement in 1976 that "Everything will be All Right" has proved true from his experiences in prison. In sending this "epilogue" to his earlier article, he says that he is due for release in the second week of December. -Ed.

This badly twisted human frame entered Thy workshop for overhauling and refilling, on 4th February 1977 as ordained by Thy divine will and is ready to be discharged shortly for public service again.

It has undergone severe endurance test for the past ten years. Numerous were the ordeals encountered and so were the timely blessings from Sai Mata that flattened them out. Life went on very smoothly otherwise with some aspects unbelievably better than what they could have been outside. Miracles occurred almost daily and pulled up my sinking spirit. With hundreds of admirers among the seven thousand inmates, this tiny world proved to be a wonderland to me. High prison officials including one commander were among my students. Prison walls and countless gates posed no barricades for my movements inside. Costly and rare dishes constituted my daily menu during later years (I had been consuming and relishing prison food for several years). I slept on an impressive costly Tibetan carpet. Definitely not a prison atmosphere, this workshop of my Lord!

These are in addition to the golden opportunities that came up during the period of my internment, enabling me to read a lot, teach English free, to students and officials who were interested, do 'yoga' exercises daily for a couple of hours and relax in a big way both mentally and physically.

Wonderful Sanctuary

How to leave this wonderful sanctuary after having become a part of it for ten long years, to join the miserable and stupid world outside is my immediate worry. The remark made once by a fellow prisoner to his visiting sister comes to my mind now. Asked when he was going to be freed he had jokingly told her he was afraid of human beings and was scared to go out. These words had sounded justifiable to me. The world outside is certainly not a very safe place to live in.

recalcitrant desperadoes such as murderers, gunmen, rapists, and political prisoners etc., with very long sentences ranging from twenty five to six hundred years! To live among them in close kinship should have been a difficult job. But my experience was different. To me, even these criminals unwanted by the outside world, preached and practised 'love' more than the so called 'elite' outside. Their behaviour was such that one would wonder whether they were really capable of doing the crime that brought them in. Lovable people they are indeed!

The study I conducted regarding human behaviour under the most trying circumstances inside four prisons during my term has enabled me to derive considerable benefits and they are going to serve as guidelines during the last span of my earthly existence (I am 61 now) I have no regrets for having spent such a long time in captivity and I consider it a rare and enviable opportunity that cannot be availed of by all even at will.

"Bhagavan is Charioteer"

Of course painful side-effects were there too. I missed the chance of serving my beloved parents during their old age, both over 90, now waiting eagerly to have a last glimpse of me before breathing their last. I could not provide the education that I had planned for my adopted children. Pitifully among the children is my pet Thai orphan girl I had retrieved from a local hospital when she was only 3 days old. I had hoped to get her educated in Baba's institutions in India. She is now twelve. And lastly, I couldn't save even a little money for my own old age.

In spite of all these handicaps and disappointments I lack no will and courage to live and love. I will live to serve with added vigour and vitality. My beloved Lord will be the driving force behind.

Moreover, mine is not just a repaired machine that will easily break down on the road again. It can withstand many more years of trials and tribulations because Bhagavan is the charioteer of this carriage.

Salutations to my motherly Lord who saw to it that my stay within the prison walls was very comfortable throughout.

Bhagavan's Assurance

During February 1976, I was at Prasanthi Nilayam leading a team of eight persons that included one of my Thai adopted daughters. We had the much coveted 'Darshan, Sparshan and Sambhashana'. We also took part in the Mahasivaratri festival and witnessed the miracles performed by Bhagavan including 'Lingodbhava'. I was lucky enough to be the recipient of a golden ring with Baba's portrait in colour on it, materialised by Him. He had also materialised 'medicinal Vibhuti' for my ailments which I was not aware of until pointed out then by Him.

My visit was motivated by mental agonies that emanated from problems I had in handling bank credits and had hoped to seek ways and means from Bhagavan to remedy them. Even though I had no chance to raise the issue during our interview Bhagavan had told me what the

In the end He patted me lovingly on my shoulder and placing the divine palm on my head assured me: "Don't worry. Everything will be all right."

One year after that I was pushed behind the bars on baseless charges. As I was not good at the local language what transpired behind the scenes in the bank, in the police station and finally, in the court were not clear to me. I lost my case. I had no relatives in Thailand nor friends to help me. My adopted children were too young to handle the issue.

So surrendering to the will of my Lord I accepted the reality. It turned out to be a wonderful experience to be in prison. As predicted by Bhagavan: "Everything Went All right!"

Now with the day of freedom in sight, I do not worry about my professional problems. The bank is no more in existence. After discovering fraudulent activities by the president of the bank, the Government took over the management of the bank changing its name.

This serves as an epilogue to my prison story that appeared in the May 1980 issue of 'Sanathana Sarathi' under the title: "Is this a prison I am in?"

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 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 obtained from sacrifice. Only those who sacrifice are the children of immortality because they live forever.

—Baba