

Prema Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

This day, the Sanathana Sarathi, the Eternal Charioteer, starts out on the campaign against Falsehood, Injustice, Viciousness and Evil—the Minions of the Spirit of Selfishness. The Army is the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Sastras; the object is the welfare of the world. When the drums of Victory resound, Humanity would have achieved Happiness and Peace.

Noble qualities form the path for the Aspirant:

More than all the previous Yugas, the Kaliyuga offers multifarious paths through which man can acquire discrimination or viveka. If it is education that is needed, there are as many schools and institutions as you need, and, if it is wealth, that one is after, there are various avenues by which, with effort, it can be honourably earned. In spite of this, however, we do not find any increase in human happiness or peace. Indeed, there is much more misery than in previous ages!

What then is the reason? The reason lies in human behaviour, in man's way of living itself. Human life is undoubtedly the highest in evolution and to give it meaning, spiritual endeavour is essential, endeavour that is pure and holy. For this way of life, character is all-important. Character makes life immortal; it survives even death. Some say knowledge is power, but it is not true. Character is Power. Even the acquisition of knowledge demands a good character. So, every one must yearn to attain flawless character, without any trace of evil.

Note that Buddha, Jesus Christ, Sankaracharya and Vivekananda, great Sages and Saints and Devotees of the Lord, all these are treasured in the memory of man even unto this day. What quality made them all memorable for all time? I say, it is the character of each one of them.

Without character, wealth, education, social status, all these are of no avail. It is the fragrance of the flower; it gives value and worth. Poets, painters, artists and scientists may be great, each in his own field, but without character, they can have no standing in Society.

Doubts will certainly arise whether all those who are now greeted with respect by Society have the character which we consider essential to greatness. But, I am speaking of a Society and a character, which cling to certain unchanging values. Ordinarily, society attaches varying importance to certain qualities from day to day and fashions in character change with the vagaries of society. But the basic nature of a flawless character is eternal; it is the same, whatever the vicissitudes of society. In that sense, it is immortal, being associated with another immortal entity, the Atman.

Among the qualities that make up a flawless character, Love, Patience, Forbearance, Steadfastness, Charity—these are the highest, these have to be revered.

The hundred little deeds that we indulge in every day harden into habits; these habits shape the intelligence and mould our outlook and life. All that we weave in our imagination, seek in our ideals, yearn in our aspirations, and leave an indelible imprint on the mind. Distorted by these, we form our knowledge, our picture of the world around us, and it is to this picture that we get attached.

Man's present is but the result of his past and the habits formed during that long period. Whatever be the nature of the character that he has come by, it can certainly be modified by modifying the accustomed process of thought and imagination.

The wickedness of no man is incorrigible. Was not Angulimala, the dacoit, turned into a kind-hearted person by the Buddha? Did not the thief Ratnakara become Valmiki, the sage? By conscious effort, habits can be changed and character refined. Man has always, within him, within his reach, the capacity to challenge his evil propensities and to change his evil habits. By selfless service, by renunciation, by devotion, by prayer and by ratiocination, the old habits which bind men to earth can be discarded and new habits which take us along the divine path can be instilled into our lives.

To discuss the nature of this character, its ways and vagaries, and to inform about the process of reshaping it, this is the purpose of all spiritual literature, poems, epics, books and periodicals. The Sanathana Sarathi has just this aim in view; it does not seek either the exhibition of erudition or the acquisition of name and fame.

But, it has to be said, that the mere reading of a book or a journal will not vouchsafe viveka or discrimination. That which is seen, heard or read must be put into practice in actual life. Without this, reading is mere waste of time. If anything is read to pass time, it passes with time and nothing remains.

The Study of Books and One-Pointedness

Books are available in plenty and at very cheap prices. Vedas, Sastras and Puranas can be got and read by every one. There is also no dearth of Gurus. Vidyapeeths abound and are ostensibly granting the boon of knowledge. Facilities for training the mind are plenty and within reach. But yet, from nowhere is heard the note of content at having partaken of the nectar of Jnana.

When I see the heaps of books that lie around everywhere, I feel that the wisdom inside the book cannot succeed in penetrating the heavy binding and emerge into the light. God is hidden by the mountain-ranges of lust, anger, envy and selfishness. So too, the Sun of Wisdom is hidden by these huge heaps of books. Though these books have spread to all corners of the earth, we cannot say that culture has increased or that wisdom has increased; man is still not far from the ape. An attractive binding and title, a beautiful picture, these are what the reader seeks, viz, transitory pleasure and momentary contentment. Only those who, by means of discrimination, select the books they read and practise what they read can realize the Truth and enjoy everlasting Bliss. Only these live lives worth while. So, those who seek the highest path and who revel in thoughts of God should strive to read only the life histories of saints and sages and books which help the contemplation of the Divine. Aimless reading of books all and sundry and whatever comes to hand will make confusion only worse confounded. It gives no profit; confers no peace.

More than all cultivate one-pointed steadfastness, ekagrata, in whatever you do. Samadrishti is Shubhadrishti.

The Lion, though it is the King of the Forest, while walking through the wood, turns back for every few steps, for, it is afraid of being pursued. Fear in the mind makes the vision falter. Violence within the heart distorts the vision and distracts the sight.

Man must have Samadrishti, equal sight. All creation must appear to his eyes as equally auspicious. He must look upon all beings with as much love and faith as he has in himself. For there is nothing evil in creation, no, not even an iota. Evil appears as such only through faulty vision. Creation gets coloured by the nature of the glasses we wear. By itself it is eternally pure and holy.

SadhanaØ the way of life

There have always been, there are and there will always be teachers who reveal to man and who instruct him to attain the heights which he can reach by the fullest manifestation of his physical, mental and intellectual powers, through one-pointed steadfastness. The mind of man revels in external objects and in purposeless observation and criticism of the outside world. How then can it be trained to be steadfast?

Each one should ask himself the question; Mahatmas and Mahapurushas were also persons like me; they were also embodied beings. When they could attain perfection, I can also succeed, if I follow their method. What profits me if I spend my time in discovering the faults and weaknesses of others?

Therefore the first sadhana is, search for the faults and weaknesses within thyself and strive to correct them and become perfect. The unceasing toil of each succeeding day has as its aim and justification this consummation; to make one's last days sweet and pleasant. But, each day, too, has its evening. If the day is spent in good deeds, then the evening blesses us with deep sleep, invigorating refreshing sleep, and the sleep about which it is said that it is akin to Samadhi.

Man has only a short span of life, here upon earth. But, even in this short life one can, by wisely using the time with care, attain Divine Bliss. Two men, in appearance the same, ostensibly of the same mould, grow under the same conditions, but one turns out to be an angel while the other stays on with his animal nature. What is the reason for this differential development? Habits and the behaviours formed out of these habits, and the character into which that behaviour has solidified. Man is the creature of character.

The Real Nature of the Life of Man

To a superficial observer, the life of man appears as an endless round of eating and drinking, toiling and sleeping. But, verily life has a much greater meaning; a much deeper significance. Life is a sacrifice, a yagna. Each little act is an offering to the Lord. If the day is spent in deeds performed in this spirit of surrender, what else can sleep be, except samadhi?

Man commits the great fault of identifying himself with the body. He has accumulated a variety of things for the upkeep and comfort of the body. Even when the body becomes weak and decrepit with age, he attempts to bolster it up, by some means or other. But, how long can death be postponed? When Yama's warrant comes each has to depart. Before Death, position, pride and power, all vanish. Realizing this, strive day and night, with purity of body and mind and

spirit, to realize the Higher Self, by the service of all living beings. The body must be preserved as a vehicle for this service. But remember, you are not this body; this body can not be you. Tat Twam Asi. Thou art That. This is the highest and holiest Mahavakya; you are the indestructible Atma Tattwa. If it is for the sake of that Atma Tattwa that you have this body and so in the attempt to realize Parameshwara here and now, you must be prepared to offer this body, at any moment, as a sacrifice. Utilise your authority over this body to foster the welfare of the world. This body is but an instrument, an implement given by God. Let it serve its purpose.

But, until the realization of the purpose for which the implement is given, it is your duty to watch over it vigilantly and protect it from injury and disablement. During winter, woolen clothes are worn to withstand the rigour of the cold gales. But when the cold subsides they are discarded. So, too, when the cold gales of material life do not affect us in the least, the material body is no longer essential. One is conscious of only the incorporeal body.

When the rains come, earth and sky are one in the sheety downpour. It is indeed a beautiful inspiring scene, a scene by which creation itself is teaching you to become One, in unison with it. There are three lessons that can be learnt— the impermanence of created things, the role of Man as the servant, and God as the Master. This creation is the wherewithal of the Puja, Man is the worshipper, and God, the worshipped. The game called Life is played with these.

Man must be happy that Purushottama has placed around him newer and newer materials for serving Him and gets done through him Puja in various forms. He must pray for newer and newer opportunities and exult in the chance that his hands receive. The attitude gives immeasurable joy. To lead a life suffused with this joy is indeed bliss.

Whatever is done from sunrise to sunset must be consecrated, as if it is the worship of the Lord. As care is taken to pluck only fresh flowers and to keep them clean and unfaded, so too ceaseless effort should be made to do deeds which are pure and unsullied.

If everyday, this vision is kept before the mind's eye and life is lived accordingly, then it becomes one long unbroken service of the Lord. The feeling of I and Thou will soon disappear; all trace of self will be destroyed. Life then transmutes itself into a veritable Hariparayanam. "I am the sevaka. This world is the offering. God is the master who is worshipped"—when one attains this stage of thought, feeling and action, all difference between mine and thine will disappear.

Identity of Bhakti and Jnana

There is no distinction between Bhakti and Jnana. Just as Saguna becomes Nirguna, Bhakti too becomes Jnana. I will not agree that Karma, Bhakti and Jnana are separate. I do not even like to classify one of these as first, the other as the second and next as the third. I will not accept a mixture of all the three or even a samuchchaya, a merger of the three. Karma is Bhakti and Bhakti is Jnana: A block of Mysorepak has sweetness, weight and shape; the three cannot be separated, one from the other. Each little part of it has sweetness, weight and shape. We do not find shape in one part, weight in another and sweetness in a third. And when it is placed on the tongue taste is recognized, weight is lessened and shape is modified, all at the same time. So too, the Jiva, the Atma, and the Paramatma are not separate; they are one and the same.

Therefore each individual deed must be full of the spirit of Seva, of Prema and of Jnana. In other words each group of life's activities must be saturated with Karma, Bhakti and Jnana. This is verily the Purushottama Yoga. It has to be acted in practice not merely spoken in words. Sadhana should be done constantly with ever expanding heart full of Bhakti and Jnana. The sweetness of nectar of the Lord's name is the charm of life: the internal joy derived from the Name is akin to the external joy of the outer life.

When one performs a kriya as an offering to the Lord, his good, the higher good and the highest good Swartha, Parartha and Paramartha, all become one. First I and you become we. Next we and He become identified. The Jiva (i.e. the Individual soul, I) should accomplish identity, first with the Creation (i.e. the Prakriti, You) and then with the Paramatma (i.e. the Supreme Soul, He). This indeed is the significance of the mantra, Om Tat Sat.

Today, yesterday and tomorrow Om Tat Sat is, was and will be. 'He' and 'I' are there always. The Sadhana is also there always. Just as the sun is inseparable and is never apart from his rays, under no circumstances should any aspirant be without his sadhana. It is only when the sadhaka adheres to his sadhana in such an incessant manner can he be said to be one with Om.

The duties of Life

The blemishes of the heart have to be washed by the moral life and the doing of one's duty. A time may come when man becomes tired and weak but, he should then pray thus: Lord, things have gone beyond my capacity. I feel further effort is too great a strain. Give me strength, O, Lord!

At first, God stands at a distance watching man's efforts, like the teacher who stands apart when the student writes out answers to his questions. Then when man sheds his attachment to Bhoga and takes to good deeds, and Seva, God comes encouragingly near. For, He is like Surya Narayana, who stands waiting outside the closed door, like the servant who knows the rights of the master and his own limitations. He does not announce his presence or bang the door. He simply waits. And when the Master does but just open the door a little, the sun rushes in and promptly drives out dark ness from within. When His help is asked for, He is present by the side of man, with hands extended to render assistance. So, what is wanted from man is only the viveka to pray to the Lord, the Jnana to remember Him.

Sadguna is Jnana

Jnana means understanding but, it is not just an intellectual feat. 'Eating' does not mean the placing of food on the tongue. Eating is worthwhile only when the food is chewed and swallowed and digested and assimilated in the blood stream and transformed into muscle and bone, into strength and vigour. So too understanding or Jnana must permeate and invigorate all the moments of life. It must be expressed through all the organs and senses, through all the Karmendriyas and all the Jnanendriyas. To this high stage man must reach.

Mere accumulation of learning is not Jnana. Only Sadguna is Jnana.

In order that one might do seva, a little Bhoga too has to be gone through. Such Bhoga is a part of yajna. To make this body-machine function, the fuel of Anna has to be used. Anna is not yajna, but it makes yajna possible. Therefore, eating food is not to be laughed at as catering to greed, as Udaraposhana. It is part of worship.

Puja is not merely the plucking of a flower and placing it on top of the image; the gardener who toiled to nurse the plant that gave the flower is also a worshipper. It is only when food is given that the body can function. Even the means for a sacrifice is yajna.

All Karma done for the sake of three entities is sacrifice, viz., to utilise the world for the worship of the Lord, to establish peace and justice in society and to control and co-ordinate the functions of the body. The first is called Yajna, the second Dana and the third Tapas. All human acts must subserve these three needs.

Truth is God

For attaining this stage, an ethical life is the foundation. This ethical life is based upon discrimination between Truth and Falsehood. Just as the pearl is retained while the shell is discarded, the Essence which is Truth must be accepted and the non-essential rejected. Then again, individual exertion and Divine Grace should both be existent. One should also constantly practise the great lesson that the Body and the Atma are separate. This is a highly beneficial exercise. Such viveka or discrimination is necessary for all aspects of life secular as well as spiritual. It is indispensable for realizing the Truth, the Truth that persists in creation, Existence and Destruction—the Truth which is God Himself.

To serve this supreme Lord purity in diet has to be observed. As regards food, the question is not how much, but of what quality. Of course quantity too cannot be overlooked. But, why is food necessary at all? It is needed for acquiring the strength required for Seva. In order Sevayajna may yield fruit, food is needed and such food must be pure. Attention has to be paid to this aspect of food.

In this way, each one should pay constant attention to his habits and to the traits of his character. And then, the attachment to the body will fall off and the task of securing atmananda will be made easy.

Man has all these various duties to perform before he actually attains realization; for it is only through such spiritual life can he acquire purity and through that pure nature alone is it possible for him to realize the Soul Supreme. Without getting himself engaged in them it is no use crying in agony that he has not been able to know the Paramatman.

In this material world, one cannot appreciate the value of spiritual endeavour if he has had no experience in such a spiritual life and its purity. It may be said that one can undertake spiritual endeavour only after appreciating its value but, this is like saying that one would get into water only after learning swimming. Swimming can be learned only by getting into water, with a float attached to the body. In the same way, with some float attached to the mind plunge without fear into spiritual sadhana. Then you will yourself understand the value of spiritual endeavour. The nature and conditions of the spiritual path are known only to those who have journeyed along the

road. They know that the path of Sathya and Viveka leads to Paramatma. Those who have not trodden that and those who are not aware of its existence cannot explain it to themselves or to others.

Paramatma alone is real. Paramatma is Truth. Paramatma is Love. Meditate on him as Truth, as Love. It is possible to realize Him, in whatever form you meditate upon. Be always in the company of his devotees. Through this satsang, viveka and vairagya will be implanted and increased. These will strengthen the spirit and endow you with inner Peace. Your mind will then merge in Paramatma.

In everything that you do, use all the strength and talent with which you are endowed, speaking and acting truthfully. At first, you might fail in this and you might encounter difficulties and sufferings. But, ultimately, you are bound to succeed and achieve victory and Bliss. (I remember here the true statement, Satyameva Jayathi, Nanritham) By your behaviour, through your way of life, you can realize the Truth, you can realize Paramatma.

A Sanyasin's Stay at Puttaparthi

Two years ago, it was my privilege to have with me 75 days at Puttaparthi an old and learned sanyasi, called Amrithananda. He had accidentally seen a picture of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba at Bangalore, on his way to Sringeri for Navaratri. He was captivated by the sweet beauty of that picture and he expressed a desire to have his Darshan. He came to know that I was coming to Puttaparthi the next day and so, he sought me out and accompanied me. His plan was to stay for not more than 3 days and then proceed to Sringeri.

Swami Amrithananda was 85 years old; he had taken sanyasa from His Holiness Sri Sri Narasimha Bharathi of Sringeri, during the Kumbhabhishekam celebrations for the Sankaracharya and the Saradadevi temples at Kaladi. He had later spent many years of study and austerity at Sringeri and, as per Sri Sri Narasimha Bharathi's command, he spent many years with Ramana Maharishi at Thiruvannamalai. From there he had gone to Rishikesh, Dwaraka and Puri and had spent many years in the Himalayas, engaged in japa and dhyana. He was a great sadhaka and seeker, eager to have the Darshan of great souls and to prostrate at their feet. He had practised yoga too and his scholarship had won him the appreciation of pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Bala Gangadhar Tilak.

I was naturally very much interested, in this great person; for he could quote instantaneously from the Vedas, Upanishads and Sastras. He had also a large repertoire of stories and anecdotes of his stay with Gandhiji and Vinobhaji and with almost all the famous religious leaders of our land.

Swami Amrithananda was, as I said, anxious to proceed to Sringeri for Navaratri but, within a day or two of his arrival, he felt that Puttaparthi was just the place where he would, like to spend that year's Dasara, with his usual special Japa etc. He described the magnificent scenery from the bathing-ghat at the Chitravati as reminding him of Rishikesh itself. He felt elated and exalted by

the Bhajan and, in spite of his old age, he sat through the two sessions every day and never failed to derive supreme pleasure out of it.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba gave him Darshan practically every day and I came to know that Swami Amrithananda asked Baba a large number of questions on yoga and on advaita, to each of which Baba gave him convincing answers. After each such interview, the Swami used to come to me, with a happy smile, and tell me, "Wonderful! This Baba explains Advaita as no one else has done so far." "Oh! I have never met any person who could explain yoga so clearly to me." I remember, one day, his coming to me with unusual joy and he could not but share that joy with me. He asked me to sit close to him and he patted me on my back. He said, "Even if you are offered a palace as a present do not accept it; remain here at Prasanthi Nilayam. He is Siva Himself."

I was indeed thrilled. "For 32 years," he said, "I have traveled all over the Himalayas just for this Guru and now, at last I have won my race. A girl in that Bangalore house first told me about Sri Sathya Sai Baba whose picture I saw at Bangalore. My namaskarams to that girl. Having had His Darshan, I know I have no more birth. But if I take on another Birth, I shall not forget that girl and the timely direction she gave me. I owe a great debt of gratitude to her."

That was what the 85 year old Sanyasi said that day, with tears of joy streaming from his eyes. He told me that Baba had Himself referred during the interview about the Ganapathi Homa he had performed 78 years ago for 41 days; Baba revealed the elaborate mantram with which the Homa was done by him; Baba assured that, at last, on that day, he had realized the fruit of that Ganapathi Homam; and Baba vouchsafed him a vision far which he had wandered, struggled for years and years.

No wonder Swami Amrithananda decided to stay on. I know he discussed with Baba the scheme he had, to construct a Veda Pathashala in the North; he understood from Baba that his asthma was the result of some mistaken yogic practices which he had gone through at Skandaguha at Thiruvannamalai; he clarified some points in the Ramana Gita, (in which incidentally Swami Amrithananda's name occurs as Amrithananda-yathindra.)

When finally the Swami had to leave Puttaparthi, I accompanied him as far as Bangalore. All along the journey he was speaking in glowing terms of the Avatar he was privileged to meet and congratulating me on my great luck and dilating the great opportunity for self-realization that I had come by. I also came to know that there was a deeper, meaning to his joy. For he revealed to me that Baba had given him an assurance that, wherever he might go, in whichever place he might his last days, He would vouchsafe His darshan before his death.

I am sure that when after about 10 months Swami Amrithananda shoved off his mortal coil at Thirukkazukunram, he must have had that supreme Darshan and he must have closed his eyes with the sweet beauty of Sri Sathya Sai Baba encased within the lids.

—N. KASTURI

The Fact About Babaji

Be reasonable. And let not the Sword of Reason and Discrimination rust away in the Sheath of the mind. Let us not build the edifice of our faith and belief on the sandy foundation of hearsay. It is high time we wriggle and struggle out of this dull and cloudy atmosphere of vain gossip and vague ideas and behold the Sun of Truth vis-a-vis. And for Truth, experience is the last word. One may very well get it confirmed by a reliable authority. Let alone the experience of that which is beyond the mind and the senses, through hard "sadhana" and by perfect realization. But, to deny the bare truth lying before the Five Senses of Knowledge (Jnanendriyas) amounts to nothing less than defying one's own self. In short, it is diffidence.

ŪMiraclesŪversus BabajiŪ infinite ŪshaktiŪ

Indeed, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa had warned us against miracle mongering and the mongers as well. Sadhakas have been instructed not to visit them, yea, to shun them like dung. But then, whom did the Paramahansa mean by the term miracle-mongers? Definitely He meant such of those SADHAKAS whose aspirations and efforts were solely bent upon bagging up occult powers which could only prove fatal and suicidal in almost all the cases. Hence it is, that there has got to be the necessary struggle or the Sadhana before the misdirected aspirant gets hold of them; and secondly, these powers have a very small sphere of activity comparatively, and never last long as they come and go indicating thereby that it is no more than a passing stage in the spiritual development of the person—and a stage not worth paying any attention to. But take ye the case with Babaji. Good Lord! there is no comparison whatsoever. If the above set of magical powers are the outcome of Sadhana, Babaji's creations are instantaneous fructifications of His 'Sankalpa'—His mere Wish. He wills it; and it's done. The supernatural powers are manifest in Him in full, even from His very birth, nay, their manifestation is limitless both in their quantum and quality, in extent and in variety. They are there for aye. They are limited only if we can call Krishna's "Leelas" as not boundless; they are impermanent only when we say that Madhava's "Shakti" is transitory. Whoever will dare say that?

Babaji is the creator Himself

Indeed, who else is Swamiji than the Siva Himself in Jiva's form; and who else is He than the Madhava manifesting Himself through His Maya's attire?—"Proof," comes in the voice of challenge and here is the reply: It's quite simple. God is the Creator, the Preserver, the Destroyer, etc., and if Babaji is God, ipso facto, He must possess those qualities too. Surely, He does. Take a simple instance Swamiji waves His hand, say for a sweet, Laddu, and there it is as real as reality, perhaps even better. It satisfies all the five senses: sweet for taste, solid for touch, coloured for sight, with fine-smelling ghee which has gone into its formation, and it is there with sound too, only if one could produce it. It lasts as long, and partake of it with as many as you can. Take anything; be it a ring, a pendent, a necklace etc., it is as pure as gold can be, and if one is careful, more permanent than the possessor himself. Then wherein does the reason lie for your suspicion? Even if this be pronounced as no better than a product of 'Maya', 'Mantra', and 'Tantra,' so are all our things of this world; and so can we be branded too. Where is the end to such doubting? This Aspect of Creation is poles apart from, and has nothing to do with, the street-juggler's magical coins which only seem to be but will never be there, to be passed on from hand to hand. Or else, showing these, why should the juggler be a beggar himself? In truth, He commands the Five Elements to combine, and there turns out the desired, the willed for,

object. Much more than all these, there is, one Mr. R. who is a standing example bearing testimony to the life-giving power of Bhagavanji. His has been a case of the soul re-entering the same old body which it had once left: It is as if He has brought him out of the Bowels of Death and has lengthened the fatal thread—strange and incredible almost, yet true and factual!

He is the Preserver

No less prominent in Him is the Protective Aspect of Lord Vishnu. Indeed this “Vishwa-vyapak” has the whole universe for His Body with the so many “Jiva-koties” for His Limbs. Such being the case He could sense out, so to say, any sort of jeopardy to the devotee in no more a time than we would, an ant-bite on our physical selves. His ears are ever up and ready, nay His whole Self, tense, wary and vigilant to catch the weakest wave of the distressful tone of some bhakta in great misery, in peril of his life, be he far, far away in a forlorn jungle, or on the sandy expanses of a hot desert, or even on the stormy and angry ocean. Quick as a wink He flies to the spot of danger in His Subtle Form and to his utter happiness, the devotee is freed and saved from the dreadful jaws. If we could believe in the ‘Gajendra Moksha’ of the ‘Bhagavata’, what sort of reason prevents us from fixing our faith on to this super act of saving? If there lies a difference between that illustration and this incident, the fault is not with Bhagavanji, but with us, the bhaktas, for not being as great as the Gajendra.

And there have been many such occurrences. It is no rarity to see Swamiji going in trance to save His devotees from the disabling and highly dangerous paralytic and heart attacks, from fatal accidents and dreadful diseases and even from desperate suicides. To cite one out of the many instances: It was about the end of July (57). One evening, we (Swamiji and His ‘Bhakta-brinda’) were at ‘Vasishta Guha’ near Rishikesh. Then, Ganga Bhavani was quite, in Her mood, so to speak, flowing swift and strong. About ten miles off the Guha, the Cave, was a ‘Sadhu’ seated on a stone, lost in meditation, just on the bank of the River. Deep in ‘dhyana’ he tumbled into the water and off the current carried him along. For him, it was all like in a dream, until after a while later he regained his consciousness only to notice his own self caught in a perilous situation. Coming to a conclusion that it was all over with him and would soon have to face fatal sheers, he began his prayer to the ‘Paramatma’, the Soul Supreme.

It was this body that was beheld floating along the River, near about the Cave, by a few of our party, but none of them did say it out then. The prayer must have reached its place, and Bhagavanji was off into that mood, away from normalcy. He had His palms one over the other as if enclosing something, and He was not out of that state of mind until sometime after we returned from the Cave. Then, He began saying that S-- had seen it but revealed it to none. We heard Him narrating the accident, and Mr. S--could only confirm it. It was to protect the Sanyasin's heart from water that Swamiji had kept his palms closed. The Sadhu was saved on to the bank somewhere near Rishikesh ; and that after about a thirty mile float!

If this does not mean Preservation, what else does? But then, one or more of the following three conditions must be fulfilled before the S O S of the victimised person draws Swamiji's attention. He must either have something from Babaji in the form of a ‘Raksha’ for self-protection, or he should call, on the Lord heart and soul whenever danger threatens him. In case the person in distress fails to qualify himself in either of the two ways, he should at least be a man of truth and sincerity. It does not matter if he is no devotee. And in calling upon Bhagavanji no particular

Name is essential: Rama, Krishna, Jesus, Allah, Sai, be it any. All Names and all Forms being His and His alone, He is only too ready to answer the cry of the one in disaster and to avert it. Speaking on the physical plane, the Sadhu in the afore-penned illustration was no devotee of Babaji, nor had he ever seen Him; and he only prayed to the Parabrahman, the 'Nirguna' and the Absolute Over-soul. All the same, wasn't he saved of his life?

His Oceanic Psyche

“You need not chant and worship only this particular Name and Form of Mine. Take up any, but only that for which you cherish real love, lest you should be guilty of having duped your own self. And never commit self-deception.” This have we heard Him say many a time. Then again He would say, “how could I tell anyone not to go here, there and elsewhere, to the different places of worship, but come down hereto Puttaparthi alone? It is I who am in those places too, and it is to Me that the pilgrims go, wherever it be. What broader mind can there be, O Reader? Infinite is the Sun of His Mind and so are the rays emanating from it in, the form of so many great ideas. Such breadth of His outlook, naturally, doesn't limit itself to this or that one religion in particular. He embraces all religions as His own and He maintains, as did the Paramahansa Sri Ramakrishna, that the difference between them is only one of approach, but to the self-same Goal—As many religions so many paths.”

The Apad-bandhava

Many more are the supreme qualities that we could gather from the Sanyasin's incident if we would only dive a little deeper into the matter. He alone is our nearest and dearest when we plunge ourselves headlong into a peril. Man mostly proves himself to be too frail and feeble, and even selfish to think of saving one of his brethren in danger at the expense of his own life. But this selfless 'Apadbandhava,' our real Kinsman at the time of despair, is ever on the lookout, and ever ready to stretch out His Invisible Helping Hand, is only too willing to leave the body to its fate when it comes to saving His dear devotee.

Babaji the All-knowing and the All-pervading

Moreover, how could He come to, 'see' things, far far beyond our mental grasp, unless He is Omniscient? To speak of the plight of a Bhakta traveling high-up in the north to the foot of the Himalayas, from the near-about of the Cape, amounts to nothing less. And to be Omniscient, He must be Omnipresent too; for, unless He is everywhere and All-present how could He come to know of whatever is happening in those places? That He is 'Sarvajna,' the All-knowing one is further revealed by those endless reserves of knowledge within Him, gushing out as the Oral Ganga, whenever He proposes to speak. Indeed, this copious streaming out is very much akin to the flow of the Ganges, for, like the Sacred River it has its origin in the Holy Head of the 'Prathyaksha Siva,' in the form of so many great ideas, and it runs down through and through the ears and hearts of the eager throng, be they holy or contaminated. And while the holier fill their hearts with its 'Theertha,' to serve them as so many bathing-ghats for their ideas to be plunged in and rendered purer still, the less holy ones misuse it by misinterpretation and so on. All the same, the water is as pure as purity itself. Pundits only gaze at Him aghast, classifying the sermon within themselves as referring to so many Upanishads, the Vedas and other sacred texts.

(To be continued)

—RAJA

The Apparent is Not the Real

In all predominantly agricultural countries man has enjoyed a considerable amount of leisure. The feverish hurry which clouds thought and misdirects action was blissfully absent in these societies. Absent too was this ugly competition which almost strangles life ere it begins. The result of all this was that though happiness eluded them as much as it does modern highly industrialised society, they had at least a certain amount of contentment. Added to this, education, as we understand it today, had not cut at the root of faith. Man still believed that whatever may be his endeavour, there was a Power which governed all his actions and that the final determinant factor was that unknown and almost unknowable force which he called God. Myriad were His names and forms and a part of the leisure at his disposal was spent in the contemplation of this indefinable force called God.

Admittedly, this blind and unreasoning faith brought in its train innumerable superstitions which played havoc with his life. Equally the pursuit of the true, the eternal and the permanent ground of all things and all beings has been retarded by the frittering away of man's energies on mere externals. But, in spite of all this, the faith in God remained unshaken. In prosperity man gave thanks to Him for His bounty and in adversity he took refuge in offering prayers: to Him for relieving his misery.

Contrast this with our modern civilisation. Animal comforts have no doubt made life more bearable. But with the vast increase in wants, man continues to seek new sources of satisfaction and yet he remains permanently discontented. The thirst for pelf, power and position has become insatiable. Competitive life has drained his energy and killed the joy which can come only with the satisfaction of desires which never abate. Increasing wants and desires have only resulted in disappointment, frustration and despair.

Hence it was that our ancients cried from the housetops that that alone is true which stressed the eternal and imperishable ground of all things and beings. They exhorted us to bring to bear all our wisdom and all our energies in an attempt to pierce the veil of appearances and come face to face with Truth. Again and again they posed the question whence did we come and whither are we bound ? Many are the systems they devised to answer this query and finally arrived at the unshakeable conclusion that so long as man is tied down to the finite, the Infinite will ever elude him. The thick and almost impenetrable mist which veils reality will continue to delude him into the belief that what is apparent is also real.

To lift us out of this illusion various methods, tested and found satisfactory by experience, were prescribed by our sages. The Jnana, Karma and Bhakti margas were the main roads to that freedom which transcends all bondage and that peace which passeth all understanding. It is futile to waste our energies on an examination as to which of these is superior. All roads lead to Rome and according to each one's gift, temperament and inclination, each one of these paths should lead to the goal.

But, it has been said that while the hard and thorny path of Knowledge has often bred intellectual arrogance in the aspirant and a corresponding imperviousness to the all-embracing character of life and its manifestations and while Karma demands an almost insuperable capacity for non-attachment, that of Bhakti alone is within easy reach of the vast majority. Nor need one cavil at this, for, did not Sankara, the greatest thinker of all time, deign to compose a whole series of invocations to Devi in humble supplication and prayer? Did he not admonish us to surrender ourselves to Her Divine Grace? So it has been with all our great saints and sages through the ages. Kabir, Tulsidas, Surdas and a whole host of saints stand as resplendent examples of those who reached His Lotus Feet through total surrender.

In our own times, even ardent advocates of the path of Jnana, do not brush aside lightly the value of Bhakti marga. During the last month, the learned head of the Kamakoti Peetam has been appealing to the thousands who flock to him, to surrender themselves to His Grace with abiding faith. The millions who own allegiance to Sri Sainatha of Shirdi know the charm of that beloved name. In equal measure., thousands flock to Puttaparthi all through the year and especially during Navaratri and Sivaratri, to catch a glimpse of Sainatha and to obtain His blessings. Fortunately, the many places of pilgrimage, Srirangam, Kanchi, Madurai, Tiruchendur and Chidambaram in the south, Benares, Muttra and Pandharpur in the north, to mention only a few, continue to be centres where vast multitudes gather to pay homage to the Lord.

Besides, even in Western countries where religion has ceased to count for little, where churches are deserted and where man is too preoccupied with things material to pause to consider the primal cause of all life, it is being increasingly felt that a little less of materialism and a little more of devotion to matters spiritual might result in easing not merely domestic and national tensions, but might even be a solution to international discord. It is being openly admitted by some of the greatest, scientists that there is a veil beyond which they cannot see nor ever hope to see with their limited equipment. Here, both science and formal religion must stop. For, beyond it all is the field of His Grace.

It is therefore our foremost duty to learn by the experience of those who have found that multiplication of wants must necessarily result in equal multiplication of unsatisfied desires and that therefore the purposeless pursuit of perishable things can only produce greater and more perilous forms of discontent. It must be fairly clear that the only solution to this mounting despair among the masses is instruction in the paths which our ancients trod with such benefit—the path which seeks to lay one's all at His feet in total surrender.

—VEERAMANI

Sivaratri

In India Sivaratri is one of the most important festivals; it is the most important as it is the only one that is supposed to be the 'Festival of Austerity'! Sivaratri has the greatest importance in North India.

Usually among the South Indians Sivaratri finds more importance with the 'Saivaites' and Gokulashtami among the 'Vaishnavaites'. But in the North where there is no such marked

difference between the two, Sivaratri is celebrated most uniquely as a 'Day of Great Austerity'. Hence its unique importance.

The legend behind this festival of festivals is that in the ancient city of 'Sreesylam' a thief with the keen desire to plunder a Siva Temple goes there with this intention and he patiently waits behind the 'Lamp of the Lingam.' Crowds come and go and the thief waits for the appropriate time for his plunge into the treasures of Lord Siva. Hours and hours pass on, and lo! he waits patiently. At last everybody leaves the temple and the thief is left alone in the night in the midst of a cyclonic weather! Suddenly an unknown fear envelops this thief and in spite of himself he starts muttering 'Siva, Siva'. The great irony behind this is that the man though he is only a thief, has fortunately reached the fag-end of his Prarabdha Karma and a little Japa proves sufficient for him for liberation, as in the case of Ajamila in the 'Bhagavata'. Now in his great concentration in invoking Lord Siva, the Lord appears and, pleased with His devotee. He liberates him! This is the legend among the Hindus. Hence the greatness of 'Sivaratri'.

Now let us see how this mighty festival of the Hindus is celebrated in different parts of India.

Usually in the South it is celebrated as a day of fast and Puja to Siva and in the night they break the fast and take food (non-cereals) that is offered to the Lord. That whole night is spent in the invocation of Siva in various ways like Akhanda Japam and Akhanda Bhajans etc.

In Malabar this is celebrated more or less similarly with slight variations giving more importance to the, fast and going through the various Pujas and extra-pujas of the Siva temple, with the elaborate evening function called the 'Sivaili', when the Deity (Siva) is adorned on the top of a beautiful and majestic elephant. In an important Siva temple, the Deity, the great Lord Siva is placed on the top of 'Chandrasekaran', a famous elephant of the temple, and is taken along with other elephants in a procession, as 'Pradakshna' round the Abode of God. After this the night puja starts, and people who finish worshipping and witnessing the ritual, first break the fast by taking the 'Abhishekam' of the water of the tender coconut.

But the most rigorous and austere Sivaratri is observed in Benares and North India. Throughout the North, Sivaratri, as has been mentioned before, is, much more magnified and takes a very great importance. In the Government of India, from the President down to the chaprasi (peon), everyone observes this day with great austerity.

Sivaratri reaches its climax in Benares, the Abode of 'Lord Viswanatha', where thousands and thousands of Hindus of all shades, sects and sections throng, practically transforming the ancient City into a 'Sea of Humanity'. Lord Viswanatha, that great 'Sanyasin of Sanyasins', free from all the hydra-headed veils of Maya—that Silent Viswanatha is enveloped, is practically covered with all the 'Vilwa leaves' of India!

Twentieth Century ought to give a most important if not the most important place for Sivaratri in 'Prasanthi Nilayam', where in dwells the Great, Mystic Siva-Shakti-Vishnu, the Avatar of this age, 'Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba'.

Now a slightly different aspect of Sivaratri presents itself in the eyes of a 'Sanyasin'. For 'Sanyasins', every day is a 'Sivaratri': that is for those 'Blessed Few' who have realized Siva—Atma-Jnanis—for them Life itself is an 'Eternal Sivaratri'.

In reality that should be so. The greatness, the aim and the ideal of man should be to realize in his life, 'Siva' that is 'Sathyam'—'Atma Jnanam'.

Sarada Menon

Holy Days at Puttaparthi

At the Prasanthi Nilayam, Puttaparthi, every day is a holy day, for, the devotees are inspired and elevated by the chanting of the Pranava, the recitation of prayers, the Bhajans and, above all, by the Darshan of the Bhagavan and His discourses. Navaratri, however, attracts devotees from all quarter. Besides special Archana and Puja, each day is marked by programmes like discourses, music, Kavi Sammelan, Children's Fete, the feeding and clothing of the poor etc., climaxing in the Mahabhisheka and other ceremonies on Vijayadashami. Every year, on November 23rd, the Birth Day of the Bhagavan is celebrated with great rejoicing. Mahasivaratri, too, is a great day for the eager throngs of devotees, who come to Prasanthi Nilayam to share in the all-night, Vigil and Bhajan, to have the Darshan of the Bhagavan and to make the auspicious day more auspicious, witnessing the unique miracle of Sivalingodbhava.

Ahamkara causes Ashanti

Man creates and develops in himself an abounding variety of selfish habits and attitudes and he causes great discontent for himself. The impulse for all this comes from the power-complex, the greed for accumulating authority, domination and power, the greed for things which can never be eternal and full. In fact, it is impossible for man to attain them, up to the level of satiation. Omnipotence belongs only to Sarveswara, the Lord of All. A person might feel elated that he has become the master of all arts, or owner of all wealth, or possessor of all knowledge or repository of all the Sastras, but from whom did he acquire all these? They must indeed be greater. He might even claim that he earned all this through his own efforts, his labour and his toil. But surely someone gives it to him in some form or other. This he cannot gainsay. The source from which all authority and all power originate is Sarveswara. Ignoring that omnipotence, deluding oneself that the little power one has acquired is one's own, this indeed is selfishness, conceit, pride, Ahamkara.

If a person is a genuine vehicle of power, he can be recognised by the characteristics of truth, kindness, love, patience, forbearance and gratefulness. Wherever these reside, Ahamkara cannot subsist, it has no place. Seek, therefore, to develop these.

The effulgence of the Atma is obscured by Ahamkara. Therefore when Ahamkara is destroyed, all troubles end, all discontents vanish and Bliss is attained. As the sun is obscured by mist, feeling of Ahamkara hides Eternal Bliss. Even if the eyes are open, a piece of cloth or cardboard can prevent the vision from functioning effectively and usefully. So, too, the screen of selfishness prevents man from seeing God, who is, in fact, nearer to him than anything else. Many an aspirant and recluse, many a sadhaka and sanyasi has allowed all excellences won by long years of struggle and sacrifice to slip away through this attachment to the self. For, power without the bliss of God-realisation is a wall without a basement. Mere panditry is of no use at all; the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Sastras are doctrines for living out in daily practice; so, without this practice, whatever the wealth of words, whatever the standard of scholarship, it is all a colossal waste. To bring the teachings of the Vedas, Upanishads and Sastras into one's actual life, one has to scotch the feeling, "I know," and open one's eyes to the real Essence and introspect on it. Then, one can attain Bliss, without fail.

The Panchanga might indicate that ten units of rain will fall, but even if the calendar is folded ten times and squeezed not even a drop of rain can be extracted. The purpose of the calendar is not to give rain but only to give information about rain and its quantity. Its pages do not contain the ten units of rain. Rain is in the clouds above. So, too, the Sastras can give only information about doctrines, axioms, rules, regulations and duties. The sublime characteristics of the Vedas and the Upanishads and Sastras are that they give instruction in the methods of attaining peace and liberation. But they are not saturated with these essences of Bliss, so that one can collect them by squeezing the texts. One has to discover the path, the direction and the goal as described in them; one has to tread the path, follow the direction, and reach the goal. If, however, the I consciousness produces the pride, 'I know all', a fall is inevitable; the delusion causes death. The

secret of salvation lies in the realisation of this danger; rebirth is inevitable, if this danger is not averted.

Aware of all this, if you get immersed in spiritual practice, the world and its worries will not affect you. It is only when you are far from this truth, that you suffer, feel pain and experience travail. At a distance from the bazaar, one hears only a huge indistinct uproar. But, as we approach it and walk into it, one can clearly distinguish the separate bargainings. So too, until the reality of Paramatma is known, you are over-powered and stunned by the uproar of the world but once you enter deep into the realm of spiritual endeavour, everything becomes clear and the knowledge of the reality awakens within you. Until then you will be caught up in the meaningless noise of argumentation, disputation and exhibitionist flamboyance.

Aspirants on the Bhakti Path

Every aspirant who seeks the Eternal through the path of Bhakti should strive to acquire the following characteristics: He must keep away from the turmoils, the cruelties and the falsehoods of this world and practise truth, righteousness, love and peace. This is indeed the path of Bhakti. Those who seek union with God, those who seek the welfare of the world should discard as worthless both praise and blame, appreciation and derision, prosperity and adversity. They should courageously keep steady faith in their own innate reality and dedicate themselves to spiritual uplift. No one, not even a mahapurusha or avatar can ever escape criticism and blame. But, they do not bend. They hold on to truth. Truth will not yield to threats. The real nature of the mahapurusha or the avatar is realised by those who indulge in criticism or blame only after wading through unbearable trouble and then, they too start to praise. The weakness of ignorance is the cause of this failure. So, let the aspirant keep away from all such waverers and ignorant persons and desist from discussing with them his belief and his conviction. Let him immerse himself in holy books and in the company of the devotees of the Lord. Later, rich with the experience of realisation and courageous on account of that contact with reality, they can mix in any company without danger and even endeavour to direct other minds on to the truth he himself has seen.

Three types can be recognised among those who seek to do good deeds and tread the path of self-realisation. (1) Those who are too frightened by the troubles, losses, and difficulties, to begin the endeavour; they are of the lowest or adhama type. (2) Those who after having undertaken the journey and proceeded some distance, are depressed and defeated by obstacles and disappointments and who therefore give up, in the middle. They are of the middling, or the madhyama type. (3) Those who steadfastly adhere to the path with calmness and courage, whatever the nature of the travail, however hard the road; these are, of course, of the highest or the uthama type. This steadfastness, this faith and constancy is the characteristic of the Bhakta.

Deluded by attachment to this illusory world and attracted by temporal joy, do not barter away the means of achieving permanent and complete happiness. Carry on your spiritual duties with full devotion.

Paramatma cannot be known without faith and steadfastness Only through Prema comes Shraddha; only through Shraddha comes Jnana: only through Jnana comes parabhakti; only through Parabhakti is Paramatma attained.

How then is Prema to be cultivated? It can be done through two methods, (1) Consider always the faults of others, however big, to be insignificant and negligible. Consider always your own faults, however insignificant and negligible, to be big, and feel sad and repentant. By these means, you avoid developing the bigger faults and defects and you acquire the qualities of brotherliness and forbearance. (2) Whatever you do, with yourself or with others, do it, remembering that God is omnipresent. He sees and hears and knows everything. Whatever you speak, remember that God hears every word; discriminate between the true and the false and speak only the truth; whatever you do, discriminate between the right and the wrong and do only the right. Endeavour every moment to be aware of the omnipotence of God. The body is the temple of the Jiva; so whatever happens in that temple, is the concern of the Jiva. So, too, the world is the body of the Lord and all that happens in it, good or bad, is His concern. From the observed fact of the Jiva and the body, know the truth of the unobservable fact of the Lord and the world.

The relationship of the Jiva and the Lord, the kinship between the two can be grasped by everyone who acquires three chief instruments: (1) A mind unsullied by attachment and hatred (2) a speech unsullied by falsehood and (3) a body unsullied by violence.

Joy and peace do not inhere in external objects; they are in you yourself. But people in their foolishness search for these outside themselves in a world from which, today or tomorrow, they are bound to depart. Therefore, awake soon. Try to know the essence of everything; the eternal truth. Try to experience the Love which is Paramatma itself. Discriminate at every turn, accepting what is true and discarding the rest. So long as one has worldly desires in view, he cannot escape sorrow.

Image Worship

There are many who slander image worship but its basis is really man's capacity to see the macrocosm in the microcosm. The value of image worship is testified by man's experience; it does not depend on man's imaginative faculty. What is found in the Virat Swarupa of the Lord is found, undiminished and unalloyed, in the image Swarupa also. Images serve the same purpose as metaphors, similes etc. in poetry. They illustrate, amplify and make clear.

Joy comes to man, not through the shape of things but through the relationship established. Not any child but her child makes the mother happy. So also with each one and with all things. With each and every thing in the universe, if one establishes that kinship, that Eswara Prema, verily, what an overpowering joy can be experienced! Only those who have felt it can understand.

Study

Vedas and Puranas deserve to be read and heard. God's name is to be recited and listened to. For some ailments, medicines are prescribed for external application while for others, they are given for internal use. But, for this universal ailment of Bhavaroga, the cycle of birth and death, Shravana and Kirtan and other medicines are prescribed, for external and internal use. One has to utter as well as hear the Lord's name. An aspirant might win God's grace, and the Guru's grace and the grace of the devotees of the Lord. But all this grace would be of no avail if he does not

secure also another grace, the grace of his own inner consciousness, his Antahkarana. Without this grace, he falls in to perdition, for all the rest are of no account whatsoever.

The grace of God is not easily attainable. The feeling of I-ness, Ahamkara, which makes one say, “I am the Doer,” should be plucked by the roots from the heart. Everyone, be he learned or illiterate should feel an overwhelming urge to know God. God has equal affection towards all his children, for, to illumine is the nature of light utilising that illumination, some can read good books and others can do their daily tasks, whatever they are. So too, uttering God’s name one can progress in the realisation of God, another can even do wicked deeds I It all depends on you how you use the light. But, the Lord’s name is without blemish, always and forever.

The Absorption

It was on Friday, the 8th November, ’57. A pleasant moonlight night it was.

Bhagavan was lying down and some of us were near Him. All of a sudden, a Jyoti, a light, was seen darting through the thick wall. It moved along up to His head and disappeared!..... What could it be? We were eager to know. After a while, Babaji himself revealed it.

Sri Keethamala Swami, the Mahatma of Malabar had attained samadhi and it was the Jyoti of his soul that had reached its destination and become one with the Lord.

—A Bhakta

Experiences of a Bhakta

The emergence of Sanathana Sarathi under the guidance of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba from Puttaparthi as a monthly magazine with effect from Sivaratri 1958, is an epoch-making event of transcendental significance to India and the world. Just at this moment, when humanity is at the crossroads between survival and destruction, when most of its leaders are steeped in rank ignorance, over-weaning self-conceit and fearful antagonisms of a most deadly variety and when the opposing groups are ready poised for a fight to the finish armed to the teeth with the most diabolical weapons and when their heads are so dismally void of everything human, moral, spiritual or godly, the appearance of Sanathana Sarathi is indeed a God-send.

Human society is now a house divided against itself. Increasing numbers are forsaking godliness at an alarming rate. Futile dissensions on artificial grounds like caste, creed, colour, nationality and race are bewilderingly on the increase. Every faculty is utilised to produce more and more brute strength and weapons of destruction. Human society is fast becoming bankrupt morally and Spiritually. In spite of their being endowed with the divine attribute of reason and intellect the humans are misbehaving in a manner far worse than the lower orders of creation by their utter disregard of all ideas of mutual security and peaceful existence which even the animal and other lower orders of creation manifest in such a striking manner. We have a great many things to learn from birds, beasts, ants, bees and the like. We have at the same time to unlearn many of the

bestial qualities that have crept into us. It looks as though a Saviour is immediately needed to save humanity from its impending doom. That Saviour is come as the Eternal Charioteer. Let us gather under His protecting wings and follow the way shown in the pages of Sanathana Sarathi.

Sanathana Sarathi is indeed a thrilling name to conjure with. It is conceived by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba as the right cure for the world's present maladies. Sri Babaji, is an embodiment of Divine Effulgence. So He appears to us, His numerous bhaktas. Verily He has come to us to save us from our present predicament and the ungodliness assailing us from all sides. Sanathana Sarathi is therefore a divine remedy which it behoves us to make use of, unhesitatingly, heart and soul to ensure a safe voyage for us here and hereafter.

In the words of Sri Babaji, Sanathana Sarathi is the Eternal Charioteer. Like Lord Krishna of Dwapara yuga leading the forces of good against the forces of evil in the epic war of Mahabharata as Partha Sarathi, Sri Babaji in this Kaliyuga has chosen to play that role again for the restoration of Dharma in the land. The idea is to reestablish the sanctity of eternal values and guide the erring humans aright to live a life divine. Within every human breast there is indeed a Kurukshetra battle going on relentlessly forever between the forces of vice and virtue ranged on opposite sides, between Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada and Matsarya on one side and their opposite numbers Nishkama, Shanta, Tushti, Satyanishtha, Ahimsa and Samata on the other side. An English poet has nicely brought out more-or-less the same idea when he said that, 'in each human breast there are a tiger, a pig, an ass and a nightingale and the diversity of character in humans is due to their unequal activity.' Let us therefore activate the good qualities in Toto. Verily, it is to make angels of us that Sanathana Sarathi has emerged. This Eternal Charioteer will indeed help us to get the better of our internal foes, engaged in assailing us every minute of our existence and lead us victorious in the battles that continue to be waged in our Hridaya Peetams from day to day.

Sanathana Sarathi is proposed to be published from Puttaparthi, the sacred birthplace of Sri Babaji. The place where Babaji actually stays is called Prasanthi Nilayam. This bhavanam radiates prasanthi all round. Puttaparthi village stands perched amidst hills in sylvan surroundings on the banks of the Chitravati river. This spot will go into history as a very sacred place and will be treasured in our hearts like other similar sacred places of yore namely Ayodhya and Repalle. This village lies in Penukonda Taluk of Anantapur District and is accessible by rail and road. From Kadiri on the Anantapur Madras Trunk road, it is at a distance of 50 miles via Mudigubba, From Penukonda on the Anantapur Bangalore Trunk road it is at a distance of 22 miles. From Dharmavaram R. S. it is at a distance of 25 miles. Buses ply up to Bukkapatnam. From there about 4 miles have to be covered by walk or by bullock-bandies to reach Puttaparthi. Cars and Jeeps can go right up to the ashram. Let all aspiring souls take the earliest opportunity of making a pilgrimage to this holiest of holy places and experience the elixir of life, emanating from Sri Babaji.

My first visit to this place in November '55 continues to me an unforgettable experience. It was indeed the most sacred moment in my life. I felt during those few moments of divya darshan of Sri Babaji that I was face to face with a Super Presence radiating Prema and Anandam. I felt a thrill which still holds me in its fold. Subsequently my heart and soul ceaselessly yearn to be there as frequently as possible and as long as possible. The uplifting of the heart and soul and the

indescribable anandam we get at this sacred place one has only to experience by going there in order to enjoy them. I lack words to explain this experience adequately. I am however fortified in this feeling when I learn from co-bhaktas that they also have similar experiences. These bhaktas include great and learned men as well as ordinary folk like me. His radiant smile and His sweet benedictions are to us a veritable store-house of anandam. We draw solace and peace without limit in His Divine Presence. He feels most happy when He sees His bhaktas happy. He would say that in this Kaliyuga fellow-service is the best form of Madhavaseva. He would urge every one to think good and do good. He would prescribe purity in thought, word and deed. Unless the bhava is pure the resulting thought and the deed which are later editions of bhava cannot be pure. He would also prescribe that what we pray in the solitude of our prayer rooms should be translated into action in our behaviour towards our fellowmen.

In particular, He desires us to take special care of our body which the Almighty God has given us as a boat, to cross the ocean of this worldly life and as an implement to get Mukti. It is therefore essential that we should preserve this body, this boat of ours, in a state of repair always, so that it may be of service to us to the end. A broken or defective boat will be a handicap to that extent. Along with correct moral and spiritual aspirations He inculcates right approach to life and the problems of the world so long as we are here. He would tell us that our moral and spiritual stature grows in accordance with how we make use of the worldly opportunities here at hand which God affords us in serving our fellowmen. These are a few of the many hitopadesams which I have had the fortune of hearing sitting at His feet. We bhaktas incessantly feel the urge to have our moral and spiritual batteries charged and re-charged by spending a few days or at least a few hours in His sacred presence from time to time so that we may lead our lives aright in the work of the world at our respective stations. Babaji would always say "Why fear when I am here?" This is a standing talisman to us. It is a rare treat to hear His discourses, off and on. He is a Jnani par excellence. Surely it cannot but be otherwise. He gives out now and then the quintessence of the accumulated spiritual lore of past ages contained in diverse scriptures to whatever age or area of the world they may relate and He speaks in a language and in a manner which goes to the root of the heart and soul of His hearers. Among His bhaktas are found all classes of people without exception: rich and poor learned and ordinary, sadhus and yogis, ministers officials, non-officials, retired officials, merchants, land-lords and others. His bhaktas constitute a Miniature world which may soon become coterminous with the entire world.

Another unforgettable experience of the bhaktas is to see Him create thing at will in a twinkling. At times He distributes prasadam in the shape of vibhuti and a variety of fruits and eatables which are always fresh and clean as if just prepared. To some of His bhaktas according to their yearnings He gives japamalas, Ramapadukas etc., helpful in meditation. To the musicians who give delectable music concerts at Prasanthi Nilayam on special occasions He gives presents in the shape of beautiful gold chains which he conceives and creates on the spot. Curing of bodily ailments of some of His devotees who crave for such relief is another way in which Babaji shows His love and many a bhakta has secured relief in this direction. These various manifestations which are too sublime and supernatural to be surmised, are far too numerous to be mentioned.

Such is our Babaji, our Kaliyuga, Avatar. He belongs not to Puttaparthi, not only to South India or to India, but to the entire world. The entire humanity is His family which He wants to redeem as Sanathana Sarathi.

Om Santih! Santih! Santhi!

K. Kondala Rao

The Fact About Babaji - II

(Continued from the previous Number)

The All-Powerful Swami

With these in mind it is needless labouring much on the point of His (Babaji's) Omnipotence, for it's almost self-evident. In short, He can transform anything into any other thing just as, as has already been mentioned He can, nothing into anything. In other words, it is His Will or the 'Sankalpa' that is the underlying factor, and all else follow. If one blow of His Creative Breath is able to convert the hardest of stones into the softest and finest of sweets, and render silver a mere waste bit of paper, torn and twisted into a lotus, what else will it not be capable of? These instances can by no means be pooh-poohed as unworthy of any attention. Indeed, it is these that give us the clue to His deeds on a higher and a much larger scale. Just as a small beam of sunlight is enough to convince us, of its magnificent source behind, these 'bits' are there to reveal to us, in their own small way, the infinitely titanic power which is manufacturing worlds from voids and voids from worlds.

The Unique Upadesh

In this connection, it will be of no less interest to make mention of the unique manner in which this 'Sadguru' blesses us with 'Upadesh', in the form of a Sacred Name whispered into our ears: He picks up a piece of paper and goes on casually turning it in the form of a medium-sized needle with some sort of adornment on the top. We wouldn't know what He is up to, unless we have had the experience already. Then, having it enclosed within the two palms, He blows into it, so to say, the nature and form of that which He wills for. Now, there turns out an ivory needle topped with Sri Krishna as the 'Thribrangi' at His flute. With this He writes on the aspirant's tongue the name that denotes the Form he likes most and then whispers it into his ears. It is all just a sort of 'thamash' for Him. Of course, that needle is given to one of the devotees present there and it can proudly be passed on to his successor as a Legacy Divine.

He is Shiva the Great Destroyer

That this Creator and Protector is also, the Annihilator goes without the need for much of an emphasis. Whenever a sincere and a deserving devotee passes away, Bhagavanji at once goes in trance, gives him 'darshan' in His subtle form if necessary, and then blows out the Holy ashes through His mouth, indicating thereby that the bhakta's body has been reduced to ashes. Those near Swamiji's physical body actually witness the 'vibhuti' coming out gustily, rendering the nearabouts smoky for a short while. In case the corpse is buried instead of cremated, then dust comes out in lieu of ashes. Instances are by no means wanting for the fact that many are the devotees who pray to Him that He may make it possible for them to be present by the side of their mothers during their (mothers') last days. Their prayers are of course being granted to their satisfaction. Is it, in the light of these facts, out of ratiocination to infer that He is none other than the 'Mahadeva' the great God Siva Himself? How can He be in the know of and what sort of

relation has He to come in direct contact with, the death of somebody, somewhere, unless He be no either then the Destroyer Himself, bound by the ties of spirituality to one and all in the Universe?

The Twin Qualities of Godliness

If selflessness and desirelessness are two of the most important qualities which go to distinguish God from man they can be very well said to be part and parcel of Babaji's magnanimity. Being the Supreme Self, this 'Sarvantharyamin' (the Indweller of everyone and everything) is too high and immune to the contagion resulting from petty selfishness and worldly desires which go a long long way towards paralysing us, the ordinary mortals and keep us down from endeavouring to top higher and higher peaks in spirituality. If, among desires, 'Kamini-Kanchana' (lust and greed for gold) are the two most dreadful enemies proving to be the Scylla and Charybdis to humanity at large, they have been completely cowed down and enslaved by Sai, the Superb Master. The first of these fellows, although deadly and satanic to us, fears terribly to raise up its ugly head before Him who is an embodiment of the ambrosial nectar (Amritha). (Mind you, these are no figurative fibs penned merely to entertain the reader. These words are purely the outcome of personal experience and rational judgement. No, not a word of it is falsely written.) And to speak of the latter one, viz., greed for wealth, Mammon is ever in His palms, only too ready to present himself forth, at the beck and call of the Master. Such being the case, He is no more in need for, and after gold, than we are after the dust we trample upon everyday.

A Misconception Tackled

This very same argument holds good in smashing to pieces another 'missile' misguidedly hurled at him, that of His being partial to men of wealth and position. The men behind i.e., the throwers are sure to repent and realize as to what height of absurdity they had gone, the instant they come to know the truth about Him. How can anyone be blind to the yeoman's service that is being rendered to the poor and to the lowly by catering to their different needs, physical, and spiritual, through a well-equipped, free and first-rate general hospital with three doctors, each serving with all his or her heart, and who are really worth their salt; a standard high school facilitating a considerable number of poor children from the vicinity and of course, the 'Mandir' which is serving as a balm, soothing and curing these worldly headaches and pains, bestowing everlasting peace on such of those who take refuge and shelter under its roof? (By Mandir is not meant merely the stony structure standing erect by the, 'Chitravati'. It means, and it connotes its Indweller—the Indwelling Resuscitator of Dharma. It means the Sanathana Dharma itself.) 'Hey, Anatharakshaka! If you would only begin advertising Your noble deeds! No. That You will never do, and rightly so!' He feeds Himself; He clothes Himself by feeding and clothing the poor. And, verily, none will go about announcing from housetops "Hi, hear me, one and all. I am feeding myself; I am protecting myself" and so on. Indeed, numerous are His sincere devotees who are by no means well off, be it in wealth or in status. If still, His visits to the rich homes are questioned, the answer is quite simple: catch hold of the branch and the bunches of individual flowers come along with it. This is the principle on which He acts. If a rich and powerful person is made into a devotee, all the other dependants will automatically come into the fold.

S. S. S. B.

According to Bhagavanji, the capitals S. S. S. B. are not there merely to mean Sri Sathya Sai Baba. They are also significant in that they imply His main field of activity. Thus, as He has it,

‘S’ stands for Sanghikam (the field of Social Work);
‘S’ stands for Samskrithikam (the field of Culture; Music, Poetry etc);
‘S’ stands for Sanathanam (the field of Ancient Religion i.e., the Spiritual field); and
‘B’ stands for Block, meaning thereby that He is not concerned with anything outside this sphere.

His Abhaya Hastha

If it was spoken of Jesus that He cured diseases, dispossessed persons of evil spirits and so on, so is it with Swamiji too. The very (act that He shows ‘Abhaya Hastha,’ His Hand infusing fearlessness and courage into us, signifies ‘Fear nothing. I am here to look after you.’ Would we make the best use of this rare opportunity, and resigning everything to him, follow Him every way!

The Hole-pickers and His Reply

It is only when we take the outer physical aspect as the be-all and end-all of the matter that the trouble arises. Our efforts in searching for faults and blemishes even in the Immaculate one will not prove fruit bearing any more than our futile quest in a dark room, for a black cat that is not there. If there are people to pick holes in Him, they must, as Swamiji Himself has said, either belong to the ‘Nastik’ i.e., the Atheistic group, or be counted among such of those who have never seen Him at all, or those who might have seen Him but would not have had their desires fulfilled, for which they themselves must be held accountable. And, perhaps the finest of His replies to them is that at least in that way they remember and think of Him.

The Tree of Faith

If Faith, in this context, can be conceived of as a Tree, our personal experiences will be its Roots and the authority of eminent Sadhakas and well-versed pundits that goes to confirm them, its Shoot. But before the Seed of the Tree of Faith is sown into the Soil of the Heart, it must be checked up if the Field is fertile with Satsang. Once the Seed has been sown, it must be watered and manured by means of Sadhana or struggle. It has got to be carefully protected with the Fence of Vigilance around it so that it may not be destroyed or eaten up by the Herds and Flocks in the form of so many bad, negative and agnostic Bhavas or feelings, including the Six Rogues viz., Desire, Anger, Greed etc. In case the Plant Diseases’ such as Despair and other Weaknesses attack the Seedling, then it is that proportionate doses of D. D. T. (i.e. the Derring Do for Tree growth) and Strength have got to be sprayed on to it. Further, it must be under constant supervision of the Self-critical Eve. With all these plus the highly important Sunshine of His Grace, the young tender Plant is sure to grow into the big Tree of Faith and at last, bear the Glorious Fruit of Realization and final Absorption.

So says Sai: "There is no higher and greater Truth than Me..... Whatever be the path you take and follow, all of ye must in the end come to Me..... Verily (I assure you), will you realize Me in this same Form of Mine."

Oh, Lord ! Pray bless us that the Stalk of our Faith—which is the mainstay of the Lotus of Bhakti in us—may grow up from strength to strength until at last the full-blown Flower of Devotion is held high in all its splendour, above this ‘Samsara Sagara.’

—RA JA.

Sivaratri

The dawn of Sivaratri Day (16-2-58) was held at Puttaparthi by bells and choral voices. For, Baba hoisted the Prasanthi Flag on the Nilayam, and released for circulation the 'SANATHANA SARATHI' to carry His message and His glory to the far corners of the world.

At noon, Abhishekam and Puja were performed while Vedic hymns were chanted. Baba installed for Puja a Sphatikalingam which materialised at His will. In the evening, Baba gave a discourse on the significance of Sivaratri during which, at 9-40 P. M., Nine Lingams simultaneously materialised and emanated From Him.

Later, Gayanapatu Sri Saraswathi Bai performed a katha on Sita Kalyanarn. Vidwans B. V. Raman and Lakshman of Madras (vocal) Vidwan Bhuvaneswaraiah of Bangalore (violin) and Vidwan Palani Subrahmanya Pillai (mridangam) gave a concert. Bhajan continued throughout the night. Mahamangalarathi was offered at 6-30 a. m. on the 17th. In the evening, at the Uyyalotsavam, Vidwans K. S. Chandrasekharaiah of Mandya and Vidwans B. V. Raman and Lakshman of Madras sang Kirtans and Bhajans. About 3000 persons were present this year for the Sivaratri Festival.

Paths to Peace

The first step to escape from the worries and anxieties which are incidental to life, is to take shelter at the feet of a Saint. India is a land of Rishis. At no time in its history was there a paucity of saints. Even in this materialistic age, there are saints who radiate peace all round. Their Ashrams afford comfort and peace to the troubled mind. Saints are dynamos of divine energy; they redeem the suffering and fill them with divine joy.

The second source of peace is a holy hook. Let one make it a point to read a book like 'Srimad Bhagavad-Gita' or 'Yoga-Vasishta' for some time every day, and after the lapse of a few months, one will see the result. Biographies of at saints are storehouses from which one can caw plenty of peace.

Thirdly, repetition of a Divine Name, preferably in the form of a mantra, bestows peace in a very short time. There is no sadhana so easy as repetition of a Divine Name. It requires no paraphernalia. Added to this, if meditation is practised every day at a fixed time, in silence and solitude, wonders can be achieved. Daily meditation means tasting the daily draught of divine intoxication.

Bhajan is also one form of repetition of the Divine Name and invoking the Divine to possess us. Music coupled with devotion lifts us up from our mundane environment to heights of Elysian Ecstasy.

Every soul is potentially Divine. In the Divine there can be nothing ugly or miserable. To manifest the divinity within us to a greater and greater degree means enjoying peace to a greater

and greater extent. Selfless-service, worship, and practices like japa and meditation gradually unlock the doors of peace and joy within ourselves. Full manifestation of the Divine in us means, rolling in waves of Bliss. This is the goal of human life.

The path chosen may vary according to the "Swabhava" of the aspirant. Whatever be the law of his being, whatever be the path chosen, there are two marked and universally accredited external agencies to fan the olivine spark into a flame. They are saints and holy books. These in time lead the aspirant and guide him in the internal sadhana. Remembrance of God at all tunes and meditation at regular and fixed times, can be practised by everyone, whatever the walk of his life.

When once we begin the journey, some day the destination shall be reached. Even as one starts on the path, the poignancy of suffering will be considerably reduced, and as one proceeds on the path, everyday ills of our life are greatly healed. Divine grace is sure to pour on the sincere aspirant in no long a time, and by perseverance one gets immersed in Divine Bliss and eventually one is dissolved in It and becomes one with It.

“Bliss is Brahman, verily from Bliss are all these born and unto Bliss do all these return.”

(Taittiriya Upanishad)

OM TAT SAT

Ramaswamy

An Evening on the Sands

It was nine years ago, on a quiet November day, that I had the first thrill of the “Evening on The Sands.” I had reached Puttaparthi that very morning and, within a few minutes, I could sense, the exaltation among the devotees at Prasanthi Nilayam. Baba had announced that He would be going with them to "the sands" that evening. As soon as I entered the premises, some kind friends congratulated me on my good luck, for, the visit to “the sands” was, it appeared, a rather rare event at Puttaparthi.

Evening came at last and all those who were at Prasanthi Nilayam that day gathered to follow Baba to "the sands" of the river Chitravati a furlong away. Baba came down from His room and spreading joy all around Him with a smile, or a quip or a pleasantry or a kind inquiry, He walked at the head of the little throng. Stepping across the little trickle to which the river was reduced by long months of draught, He trudged along the sands, seeking a place to sit.... and, at last, we all sat around Him, the men on one side, the women on the other, the children on the circumference, playing with their kind.

Truly, it is one of nature's loveliest spots, the river bed near the Prasanthi Nilayam. Hoary hillocks come down from the mountain ranges, as if to slake their thirst in the sacred river and some boulders have already reached the waters. Stony altitudes have here cut off visual contact with the world around; the sky overhead is resplendent with the multicoloured panorama of sunset while all around us the earth is beneficent with bounteous green. As the shadows lengthen, and the cattle return home, birds of a hundred species fly from all the quarters hurriedly to their nests and, with a suddenness that is dramatic, twilight disappears into the night,

leaving us free to commune with ourselves and wrestle with the darkness inside us. Many times have I sat on the sands in the holy presence of Baba since that November Day about which I am writing, but that evening is carved deepest in my mind, not because it was in any way unique for Puttaparthi, but only because, being my first, it made the profoundest impression on me.

Having sat, and having graciously waited until all were comfortably seated, including the older among the devotees who took a longer time to plod through the sands, Baba, in reply to a casual question, began, a discourse on Karma, bhakti. It was in such sweat simple Telugu, full of interesting parables taken from daily life. Bhakti without Karma he said "is like a basement without a wall." Karma without bhakti is "a wall without a basement." To hear him discourse was an indescribable pleasure. I found it impossible to analyse it into separate statements but it was easy to accept it all straight into the heart. I was struck by the universality of His message. He said, "In my view, there are no Nastikas at all; even those who deny God are not forsaken by God." He said "I am the servant of all," and I was really excited by his unbounded love. "You can call Me by any name, I will respond without anger, because, all names are mine! Or rather, I have no name at all." "Even if I am discarded by you, I shall be behind you; you have full freedom even to discard Me." Questions were asked about rebirth, about Pranava, Vairagya and for each question there was an immediate and satisfying answer. I felt that in His presence, all doubts ceased, and contemplation of that scene with Himself as centre stilled all questionings and illumined all shadows.

Then, Baba taught us some songs which extolled the Lord's name and which were saturated with spiritual advice for the practitioner. Afterwards, the discourse was resumed; this time it roamed at random round Shirdi and the devotees who came for enlightenment to "my previous body" and Baba spoke of pictures, now current, of Shirdi Baba as spurious; while speaking thus, He dug his fingers into the sands and there was a picture in His Hand, which He showed us all as "the authentic representation of Shirdi Sai Baba." Conversation naturally proceeded on Baba being the Avatar of Dattatreya and Lo, He dug into the sands again and out came a very beautiful metal image of Dattatreya, the symbol of unity in trinity. He announced that the image would be given to a devotee for worship and we all felt how blessed he must be to receive this unique gift from Baba. In their excitement everyone had now drawn nearer to Baba and He felt that each of them should receive something from His hands. He therefore took out from the sands (what was it this time? We all craned our necks anxiously to see), a thick flat block of sugar candy. He also took a handful of sand in His hands and while pouring it on to a plate it became sacred ash, Vibhuti, which could be distributed to all.

Watching all these, I was overwhelmed by the supremacy of Baba's will and by His all comprehensive love and wisdom. When at last, we rose and followed him to the Mandir, I was a transformed person with eyes a-twinkle with anew light. I must say that, all these nine years, it has been my endeavour to keep that light a-glow, and it has been my good fortune that, wherever I have been, through His grace, I have not been far from the source of that light and of all Light.

N. KASTURI

Baba at Chittoor

Chittoor Town had the privilege and pleasure of welcoming, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, on 2nd March, 1957, when Baba opened the 'Baba Block' (comprising the Ashoka Hall, the Venkatesa Hall, and the Unnamalai Hall) at the B. M. S. Kannan High School. In the evening, at a mammoth gathering of citizens Baba discoursed on the moral and spiritual duties and responsibilities of all Indians at this juncture, more especially of students and young men. The vast audience listened with rapt attention to His message. On the 3rd March, Bhagavan arrived at the same decorated pandal and allowed every one of the thousands who were present to come up to the dais and pay Him personal homage. It was indeed a rare and moving spectacle. That evening, Baba visited the B. Z. High School and the citizens of Chittoor got another opportunity to hear another of His soul stirring discourses. His emphasis on the Universal and practical teachings of Sanathana Dharma produced a profound effect on all.

A Case of Hyperpyrexia

(Medical Report From The Sathya Sai Hospital)

On 30-5-57, a patient named Papi Reddy, age 58, of Karnatagapalli, was admitted too the Sathya Sai Hospital in a run down condition, with dry lips and tongue. It was found that he was under treatment for over two months for fever and dysenteric motion at the Mission Hospital at Chickaballapur, but since he got no relief, he was brought to this place.

Examination revealed no abnormal features, except the rapidity of the heartbeat and the pulse rate and the loose bowels. Temperature ranged, during the 24 hours from 103 to 105 and there was delirium. No malarial parasites were found in the blood and the Widal Test was negative.

He was given a course of quinine and as the temperature did not come down, a course of penicillin was administered. In spite of this, hyperpyrexia persisted.

Mustard knee-baths and sponging were done. Chloromycetin was also given for a few days. But, the patient's condition was worsening. The temperature never came down below 103 and 105 and all hope was lost.

Then we represented the case to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He saw the patient, who was unconscious at that time. He took some vibhuti from nowhere, as He does on all such occasions, and put it in his mouth and smeared it on his forehead. By night, the temperature was reduced by 3 degrees. The patient regained consciousness and his condition was lively. After thus turning the corner, he recovered soon and was discharged on 19-6-57.

Brothers in the profession who have experience of similar cases will realise that this cure was effected only by the intervention of a Divine Force which controls Nature in all its forms, gross and subtle, internal and external. In this Hospital we see the manifestation of this Force,

embodied in the Bhagavan. In subsequent numbers, case histories of this nature, being instances of His abounding grace will be given.

—Dr. V. Brahmam

Baba's Programme

March 1-4.... Chittoor.

March 4-8.... Bangalore.

March 22 Leave for Madras.

March 23 Celebrations at Perambur.

The 108th Akhanda Bhajan of the Sathya Sai Bhajan Mandali.

Laying of the foundation stone of the Sathya Sai Mandir.

March 24 Discourse at the V. M. I. A. Hall, Mylapore.

March 25-29 Stay at Madras.

March 29.... Sri Rama Navami Celebrations at Venkatagiri.

From April 1 Swami will be at Puttaparthi throughout this summer.

Prema Vahini

The Need for Sanathana Vidya

Have not men trained themselves in countless arts and skills and sciences? Have they not devised countless machines? Have they not accumulated vast tons of knowledge? Nevertheless, he has not attained peace of mind, which is so essential for happiness. Instead, with every passing day, this vidya is dragging man into deeper and deeper waters and peace is receding more and more into the distance.

The reason can be stated thus. These arts and sciences have only transitory value; these machines cater for worldly comfort; this knowledge is all about temporary, transitory things. This Vidya does not reveal to one the Innermost Secret of the Universe. There is one secret which if known lays bare all secrets; if that problem is solved, all are solved; there is one knot which if untied, all knots are loosened. There is one science, which if mastered, all are mastered. That key science is Sanathana Vidya.

If a tree has to be destroyed, its tap root has to be cut; there is no use trying to kill it by plucking its leaves one by one. It takes too long a time, besides, it may not work. The ancient Vedic seers knew this Vidya, but, Indians are getting ashamed to claim them as their kith and kin. They saw God through their ascetic endeavours and won His Grace. They expounded the Science which they so boldly discovered. Seekers from other countries perused these books and said that India had blazed a trail for the whole world. This is a well-known fact. The lamp illumines the house but just at the very foot of the lamp, there lurks a dark circle. India does not know or care for that treasure. Can we ascribe this to the play of Fate and keep quiet?

In the past ages Indians performed their daily rites, sat in a purified place, surrounded by sacredness and immersed themselves in the study and the practice of the teachings of the Vedas and the Upanishads. Besides, they recorded their experiences in order to guide others and in order to bring those experiences back again into their own consciousness. But, their children and grandchildren placed those books on the altar and duly worshipped them. Neglect has reduced them to dust or lumber; the palm leaves have disintegrated and rats have eaten into them. But, eager students from the West have sought out this lumber and realising that it enshrines incomparable sources of illumination and priceless pearls of Wisdom, they lift it reverentially above their heads and acclaim it as the precious gift of Bharathakhanda to themselves and their children. They carry it across the seas, with joy in their eyes and thankfulness in their hearts.

Now shall I reveal what the children of India have been doing? They neither open the pages nor peruse the contents nor even concern themselves about them. Only one in a million reads them, but, even he is ridiculed as a fool and as a crank. The books are laughed at as a conglomeration of lies and legends and they argue about the historicity of the books, and their authors. They dismiss the Sanskrit language as “very hard to learn” and pass on the treasure to scholars from other lands. What a sad spectacle is this. It would have been some compensation if they attended carefully to the study of their mother tongue; but, even this, they do not; it is neglect: neglect everywhere.

No. I do not condemn worldly happiness. I feel glad when people are happy. But, please do not believe that this happiness is permanent. I want that you should study all the arts and sciences for acquiring worldly happiness. But, I want all to remember that this happiness is not everlasting. Permanent happiness can be secured only through one Vidya, the Upanishad Vidya. That is the science of God-realisation, that is the Teaching of the Rishis. That alone can save Man and grant him peace. There is nothing higher than that; this is an indisputable fact. Whatever your joy and sorrow, whatever the subjects you have specialised in for a living, have your eyes riveted on Brahma Vidya. If intelligence alone is sharpened, without the growth and practice of virtues, and if mere information is stored in the brain, the world cannot progress and its welfare will be in jeopardy.

But, people now seem to be losing faith in virtues, for, the educational system does not assign any place for spiritual teaching or training. True education does not mar or pervert the beautiful virtues of boys and girls, it does not content itself with filling the brain with cumbersome junk. That education alone is beneficial which gives full scope for the blossoming of all the virtues which distinguish man.

The Objective world is not Real

Actually, men see the shadow and take it to be the substance. They see length, breadth, height and thickness and they jump to the conclusion that they have an object before them. They experience a series of sensations and memories and adding them all up they infer that there are some objects producing them. This mistaking of Appearance for Reality Is misnamed Jnana. How can it ever be Jnana? Can the image of a person ever be “he”? If the image is taken to be “he”, can we call it knowledge? Such is the nature of all knowledge, now; what is cognised as an object, is not real at all; its reality is not cognisable.

The Advaitin believes “Aham Brahmasmi”, I am Brahman. How has he acquired that conviction? Why does he state so! Ask him and the reply is, “The Shruti declares so, the Guru taught like that.” But, learning it from these sources does not entitle him to make that profound statement. If a person is a master of these three words Aham, Brahma and Asmi, does he attain the unity with Brahman? No, ceaseless striving through countless births, loyal performance of scriptural duties, these purify the mind. In such a mind, seeds of devotion sprout and when tended with care and knowledge, flowers bloom, fruits appear and ripen and get filled with sweetness and fragrance. When the fruit is eaten, Man becomes one with the Supreme, the power that permeates all things, all regions and which is eternally present and conscious and blissful.

A person may enunciate the formula, Aham Brahmasmi correctly; etymology may be perfect; but when he is ignorant of the ‘world’, unaware of ‘I’, and completely in the dark about ‘Brahman’, can he ever taste the rare joy of a Jnani? It is not mastery of words and their meaning that counts: it is awareness, experience—these are the fundamentals.

Mud alone is real. The pot-consciousness is born of ignorance regarding mud; mud is the basis, the substance of the pot. How can a pot exist without mud? How can effect exist apart from the cause? The world appears as multiplicity only to the ignorant. To a Jnani, Brahman alone, Brahman upon which all else is superimposed, exists. The Atman alone is cognised by him; there is nothing else. That is the Advaitic experience.

If the world is real, it must be cognised even during the stage of dreamless deep sleep; but we are not conscious of it at all. So, the visible world is as unreal as the dream world. Just as through illusion, a snake is imposed on a rope, the world too is imposed on Brahman. The snake and the rope are not seen at the same time; the entire rope is the snake. So too, Brahman is all this world, all this vast variety of name and form. But, this imaginatively conceived variety is fundamentally false, Brahman alone is true.

The sky might be reflected in a pot of toddy, but, does not defile it. Similarly, in this vehicle, the, body, the Atman dwells pure and undefiled. The fruits of action, good or bad, fair or foul, adhere to the vehicle, not to the Indweller, the See-er.

When such Jnana dawns, the dark shadows of the three types of Karma—the Aghami, the Samchitha, the Prarabdha—flee before it. Yes, even Prarabdha karma can be overcome. For, the will of God is omnipotent and for omnipotence, there can be no limit or exception. When through Sadhana, you win the Sankalpa of the Lord, you can with that Sankalpa achieve victory over Prarabdha also, Do not be discouraged on any score. The sufferings and travails of this world are illusory and transitory. Fix your mind firmly on this great fact and set out bravely on the path of Sadhana, the Sadhana of Devotion.

The Bhagavad-Gita

(A short report of a discourses by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai baba, at Shanti kutir, Royapuram, Madras City, on 26 March, 1958.)

Dr. Vaidyanathan just now quoted Sri Ramakrishna as saying that the best summary of the teachings of the Gita can be got by repeating it quick, as Gitagitagita.....and arriving at the expression Tyagi. But, we get the word 'tagi' when we do so. The Telugu word 'tagi' means 'drink'; so drink the Gita, assimilate it, and then, it will be found that it teaches not only tyaga, or not mainly tyaga, but all aspects of Dharma, both secular and spiritual.

The Gita was occasioned because Arjuna was overcome by illusory attachment or Vyamoha and his illusion had to be destroyed. After the Gita was fully spoken, Arjuna declared that his Vyamoha had disappeared, and so, he decided to do his Swadharma. He took up the arms that he had laid down and engaged himself in battle. It is said that this battle took place in the Dwapara Yuga, but the fact is, the Kurukshetra battle is a continuing battle. It is being fought every day in every human being.

Let me explain how. The body is Hastinapura; Ajnana or Ignorance is the blind monarch Dhritarashtra; he has a hundred progeny, viz., all the evil propensities of man that proliferate from Ajnana; Sujnana or Right Knowledge is Pandumaharaja and he has five sons, Dharma, Sathya, Shanti, Prema and Ahimsa. All these children, remember, have their games and gambols their upbringing and their schooling, their joys and sorrows in the same Hastinapura, the body. The numerous delusions and doubts that infest the mind are the 'subjects.' Sujnana or Right Understanding is also present there, as Sanjaya and he can see and hear the Lord, the unknown motive force of all that the body does feels and acts, the Charioteer! The Mahabharata war is being waged continuously in every one, and so every one should study the Gita for guidance and strength.

The Gita is an ocean full of pearls of priceless value for all who seek. These pearls can be won only, by diving deep in the centre of the ocean; learning it by heart or repeating it scores of time or acquiring mastery in interpreting it or expounding it are of no value.

In Bhojaraja's court, a Pandit was once explaining the inner meaning of the Gita, with a great deal of skilful casuistry. Among the thousands who nodded their heads in appreciation, there was an illiterate peasant who was shedding tears throughout. When he was accosted, he gave his explanation thus: I can neither appreciate your scholarship nor understand your argument, but, I see in the picture of Gitopadesam there that Sri Krishna is seated in front, and, turning His head back towards Arjuna, all the time He is relating the Gita to him. I weep, because Sri Krishna's neck is bound to be paining, on account of this strain. Why does not Arjuna realise this and come more to the front?

That peasant has dived deep. He has secured the priceless pearl of Prema. It was this Prema that Krishna taught to Arjuna. It was for instilling this Prema that the Lord vouchsafed the Virat Swarupa to Arjuna. Arjuna knew that there is nothing beside or beyond the Lord.

Arjuna's delusion was destroyed the moment he realised that God exist in and through this entire created world, that He is the basic reality of the Atom, as well as the Universe. The Githa is the Lord's teaching of this knowledge to man, with Arjuna as the disciple. It is free of all story element, savouring of samsara. It is saturated with His Message only. From it, one can understand that He is the 'breadth' of every line, however narrow it may be, whatever the line's length, the 'breadth', by which alone it can be perceived.

Prema, Love, Devotion, Bhakti, all are based on Faith. The Gita instills this Faith by various means – Jnanayoga, Vibhuti yoga, Dhyanayoga, Rajayoga etc. It teaches the essence of all Dharma and exhorts man to engage himself in Karma of an elevating and cleansing character. It tells us that Krishna is the reality within each and prescribes constant exercise in prayerful action, to cognise this fact.

The Sun is not worried by the many passing clouds that intercept its rays for some little time. So too, there is no need to worry about the clouds of envy, greed, selfishness that gather and disperse, but can never sully the effulgence of the Atman.

God is Love, Prema. Just as we see the cool moon only with the help of the cool rays of the moon itself, so too God can be realised only through the Prema which meditation on Him alone can develop.

With this in view, read the Gita everyday not at a scheduled rate of so many slokas per day, as a vratha or as some call it a yajna (a word which is not quite appropriate, since it brings to mind fire, sacrificial oblation etc.) but carefully, contemplating on the meaning of the slokas read, taking if need be ten days, if you must, to have it soaked in your consciousness. In Telugu the word Gita means 'a line', and in this Bhagavad-Gita, the Bhagavan is in every line. In fact, as I mentioned already He is the imminent sustaining force, He is the 'breadth' of every line, by which alone it is cognised, by whose presence alone anything can exist.

Remember the ancient prayer: Asatho ma sadgamaya, Thamaso ma jyothirgamaya, Mrithyor ma amruthamgamaya. The Gita helps you to achieve all three goals. Have faith in this and study it, in order to apply it to daily life.

By persistent study, awareness of the Lord in and through all creation comes upon a person and it becomes easy to follow the Lord's advice. If you desire to select the sloka that represents the essence of the Gita, meditate on this:

*Manmana bhava madbhaktho madyaji mam namaskuru
Mamevaishyasi sathyam the prathijane priyosi me.*

You have heard that those who read the Ramayana keep an empty seat near by, for Hanuman who invariably comes to hear it read. Now, let me tell you this. From this day I advice you to read the Gita with a seat kept by for Sri Krishna. Read the Gita during the early hours of the day, the Brahmamuhurtha, meditate on the Divine form of Krishna and allow the meaning to saturate into the consciousness. Do thus and I assure you, you will, within 300 days feel the presence of Krishna on that pitha. For, the Lord's name is His rupa itself. It has the mystic power. If during the meditation and the reading and the dhyana, you are able to concentrate on His name and form, for even ten minutes, each day, surely the power that will thus be generated can win the Sankalpa, the Grace of the Lord.

- It is no exaggeration to confess that we have not heard in your life time any one else who explains the content and purpose of our ancient scriptures and the records left by our Rishis of their experience of One Brahman, as ably and clearly as Thy Holiness is doing with a view to educate us to resist temptations to control the mind, to purge egoism, lust, greed and hatred and feel our hearts with equal vision, faith, devotion and wisdom.

(From the Address presented to Sri Sathya Sai Baba at Perambur on 23rd March 1958)

A Twin Delivery Case

(Medical Report – 2 – From The Sathya Sai Hospital)

Patient R. Female, age 20, of Pothulukunta, 9 miles away from Puttaparthi. Her relatives came to the Hospital at Puttaparthi, on the morning of 16th July 1957 and enquired whether R. who had delivered a male baby the previous evening could be brought and admitted. The baby had not been separated, they said, from the mother. They were advised to bring the patient soon. Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba was away at Rishikesh at the time. The relatives hurried home and brought R. by bullock cart late that evening and she was admitted.

She was greatly exhausted, with dried tongue and general anasarca. The cord had not been cut and it was dry and shrivelled up, but the baby was alive. It was soon separated and the placenta removed manually, all the while praying to Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

On examination it was found that there was another baby and P. V. Examination revealed breach presentation. Then the membranes were ruptured and a further complication was discovered, the cord was around the neck. The baby was delivered by foot. It was in deep asphyxiated condition, with dark skin and it did not cry. With prayers to Bhagavan, artificial respiration and other methods were tried on the twin and the mother. After three or four minutes the baby cried faintly and the artificial respiration was continued. Then the baby cried again, this time for a longer time. The dark colour of the skin slowly changed to normal and the child was separated and the placenta removed. Immediately there was P. P. H which was controlled. By this time the patient was very exhausted and she showed all the signs of collapse.

All hopes were nearly lost and every one prayed to Baba, while the medical treatments for saving her were gone through. And lo! After some time it happened! The patient began breathing faintly; of feeble pulse could be felt; intravenous injections of glucose and coramin were given; consciousness was regained; throughout the night they were carefully attended on. The twins and the mother kept up the progress and they were finally discharged, on 7th August 1957.

Bhagavan's Grace can alone explain many inexplicable facts of this case: (1) How was it possible for the first baby, to survive when 24 hours had elapsed before the cord was cut (2) When the second baby was so asphyxiated, how could it revive and live? (3) Such survival of twins and mother, after all that the mother and the babies went through, is really outside my experience, in general as well as hospital practice. The prayers in this instance reached Bhagavan, who was physically thousands of miles away. This case is one more instance in which His Healing Hand vouchsafing Abhaya, is felt by the patient of this hospital.

Dr. V. BRAHMAM.

An Avatar's Words

Only an Avatar could say those words. Lesser souls like seers, siddhas, sadhakas, mahatmas, munis, ascetics and aspirants would not have the courage or, even if they mustered enough courage to utter them, the words would not have the ring of authenticity.

About four years ago, I happened once to go to Puttaparthi, by the night train from Bangalore. I reached the place by 10 A.M. when I peeped into the old Mandiram near the village on my way to the new Prasanthi Nilayam, a furlong away, I was shocked by the heavy cloud of sadness that hung over it. For, the brother-in-law of Baba, (as we with our limited family outlook do prattle in delusion), Sri Subba Raju, Baba's 'sister's' husband, who was also his 'maternal uncle,' had passed away the previous evening and was buried late at night. I had known him as a good and active worker at the Prasanthi Nilayam, with a kind enquiry always on his lips, and so I was overwhelmed with sorrow. I also felt great anguish when I thought of the bereaved lady and her only son, a sweet little boy. With a heavy heart I moved towards the Nilayam, half apprehensive to meet there the stricken 'brother' and 'nephew' and doubting all the time whether the words I might use would be enough to express my sorrow and convey my sympathy.

When I reached the Nilayam I could not stop my tears, for, right underneath the portico, on the knee-high wall facing the garden, sat Baba with all the 'relatives' standing in a semicircle in front of him. The bereaved lady was evidently inside the Nilayam, for her lamentation could be heard outside. Dark despair lay thick on every face and all were eagerly watching Baba's lips, waiting for his words.

Since I had not yet heard those words which only an Avatar could say, I had foolishly manufactured, on my way to Prasanthi Nilayam a sentence of consolation, in the conventional style, to be spoken to him. But luckily, before I could commit that sacrilege, Baba looked at me with a bewitching smile, and seeing my tears, he said, "Why? What is this? Don't you know me? If there is no birth and no death, how am I to pass my time?" and, then, he laughed!

"How am I?" "Birth and Death" "Passed my time" What a profound utterance, and before what an audience and against what a background!

I saw before me not Baba with a physical body 28 years old but the avatar of the Lord, Himself. Who else could have the courage? Who else could infuse into those words that true ring of authenticity? Ponder over this, brother reader; that is my prayer.

N. KASTURI

Baba at Madras

A large number of Sai devotees at Perambur are conducting Bhajan every week and on Sunday, the 23rd March, they had the unique pleasure of having the Bhagavan Himself in their midst, on the occasion of 108th Bhajan! Baba laid the Foundation Stone of a Prayer Hall for this Bhajan Group, in the presence of a vast gathering of Bhaktas. He also visited at noon, the place where the feeding of the poor was arranged. In the evening, Baba gave Darshan to the thousands who had assembled in the premises of the New Railway Hall, Perambur. The Sai Devotees of Perambur had organized an inspiring programme of Veda Parayanam and Bhajan.

On the 24th March, Baba gave a discourse on Bhakti at the Y.M.I.A. Grounds Mylapore. Baba defined Sanathana Dharma as that Dharma which emphasises Truth, Justice and Love. He explained the characteristics of the path of Bhakti, which secures all these. He spoke of the three types of Bhaktas, Artha the Artharthi and the Jijnasu. He gave a number of practical hints on meditation, japa and namasmarana and laid special emphasis on Truth, as a necessary discipline. He spoke of the need for rigorous Atmavichara, but since the first step of Atma Vichara was to feel and realise that another has joys and sorrows equal to our own, He said that this was easy.

The discourse was so sweet and simple that the next day the Gokhale Hall, Georgetown was filled with a record audience long before 6 P.M. when Baba was scheduled to address the Y.M.I.A., on 'Bhakti and Karma'. Baba distinguished between the different types of Karma and advised all to have sincerity and earnestness and the overpowering urge of Love in every act. If Karma is done with Bhakti, the joy is its own reward.

On 26th March, Baba discoursed at Shanti Kutir, Royapuram, on the Gita; a summary of the discourse is given as a separate article, on page 9.

Dhyana

Dhyana is the most vital part or "Anga" of any type of Sadhana. It is the highest form of Bhakti because the real surrender of the five pranas and the five senses, along with the intellect and the ego is affected in perfect Dhyana. The total surrender of the body, mind and senses constitute Atmanivedana. On the path of Jnana also, hearing about the Reality, reflection and meditation are the three gradual steps. In ashtanga Yoga beginning with Yama, Niyama etc, Dhyana is next only to Samadhi. No less a personage than Bhagavan Ramakrishna Paramahansa said that one who has advanced in Dhyana is very near Realization of God. In the Sixth Chapter of the Bhagavad-Gita Lord Krishna tells Arjuna that the Dhyana Yogi ranks higher than the ascetic, higher than the one learned in spiritual lore and higher than the achiever of mighty deeds. Finally, He exhorts Arjuna to become a Dhyana Yogi. A great Saint has said that if every one meditated for half an hour every day, the World would be different from what it is.

Apart from the other advantages and the wonderful results, meditation gives one, joy and peace.

Generally we are aware of the three states of existence: the wakeful state, the dream state and the deep sleep state. When our meditation is perfect the experiences of these three states are obliterated and we remain in our pristine pure state or rather we are ourselves, without the super impositions. When meditation becomes ripe, the distinction between Dhyana (the sense that you are meditating), Dhyata (the meditator) and Dhyeya (Object or idea meditated upon) will be lost or will disappear and pure Bliss alone remains. This is the goal of all spiritual endeavour. This is “Parama-artha”. We are now in human body result of merits in past births and it behooves us that we should gain the object of life in this very birth. The supreme and sublime object is to realise God and to attain to Godhood.

Spiritual texts declare that practicing penance is better than pilgrimage, vow, sacrifice and charity; and worshipping God is better than penance and meditation is the best of all types of worship.

Sri Sai Baba says, “For Dhyana, meditate on me either as with form or as formless. If formless contemplation is hard, then think on my form..... think of it night and day, with such meditation the mind attains “laya” (absorption).

The Guru is God in flesh and blood, the visible God present before us. We have met him, spoken to him, enjoyed his Grace and therefore it is easy to carry on “Guru-Upasana”. Puja, Stotra and Japa are steps each higher than the other and Dhyana leads to absorption.

Those who take up Mantra-Upasana will do well to adjust the repetition of the Mantra with rhythmic and pleasant breathing. Breathing is intimately connected with the mind. If breathing is harmonious, the mind is peaceful. If breathing is slowed down, mind’s activities are lessened. Psychologists tell us: “the fewer the thoughts, the greater the peace.” Banish all thoughts, peace alone remains. In Mantra-upasana concentration is on the sound. Coupled with conscious rhythmic breathing, this yields very quick results. “Your very nature is Bliss,” says Vedanta, “the mind is veil that covers and hides your real nature. Tear this veil that covers that hides your real nature.” Tear this veil by means of constant meditation and then you shine in your self-effulgence; then you are the limitless Ananda.

—C. S. Ramaswami

Baba at Venkatagiri

On 29th March, 1958, Sri Rama Navami day, at 5.00 P.M. Sri Sathya Sai Baba visited the High School at Venkatagiri town. The teachers presented an address of reverential welcome and Baba, during His discourse, gave the students valuable advice and

instructions on the acquisition of knowledge and the development of character. He graciously blessed the School and the students by the grant of five scholarships to be awarded each year, to the students of each of the 4th, 5th and 6th classes. At 8.00 P.M. Baba gave an inspiring discourse to the vast gathering that had assembled at the Palace Quadrangle, on the Meaning and Significance of Sri Rama Navami. On the morning of 30th March, Baba opened a new Block of Buildings constructed for the Poor House, Venkatagiri. In the evening, He gave another of his fascinating discourses, in the Palace Quadrangle. The subject was 'Sanathana Dharma'. On the 1st April, a group of Sastries and Pundits had a discussion with Baba on the Vedas and the Sastras. A large number of devotees, who were also present on the river bed where this discussion took place, benefited much by Baba's pronouncements on the various points that were raised.

A poem on Sri Sathya Sai Baba

O My life, my love, my Light!
Lead me from darkness to light,
From untruth to Truth,
From death to immortality!
When first I saw Thee, I felt
I saw my Master in flesh and blood.
He in Thee shines like the Sun
He in Thee shines like the Moon
Both are one for the light is one.
I crave not for wealth or fame
I crave not for pelf and power
All that I need is Thy warm love
That can transform me into a child,
A child, indeed, of truth and love,
A child that plays about Thy feet,
A child of universal love and mercy
A child that sings always of Thee.

K. Vaidyanathan

Life's Pilgrimage

A Pilgrim visiting a new place first chooses a dwelling room for himself, dumps his luggage there, arranges for his lodging and boarding, and then, without any worry starts out to go round the holy places he has come to see. So too, Man, the Pilgrim who has arrived here on the earth, should, before embarking on his tour, fix up a dwelling room in the Lodge Abounding Grace and thereafter, he can fearlessly wander about in the fields of *Samsar*. *Samsar* does not attach itself to such a *Bhakta*; it for him, like water on the lotus leaf. Even then, duties have to be performed, for, otherwise human life would be impossible! Therefore, one must constantly pray to the Lord for strength in the discharge of these duties. Remember, as long as one lives, one cannot escape from Action.

(from a discourse by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.)

Reader! Please note:

“Sanathana Sarathi” is a monthly, for the present, and the articles published in it are purely religio-philosophical. Contributions of articles especially from those who endeavour to put into practice what they speak and write on spirituality are readily welcome. Anything that smacks of “public news or comments on public news”, personal attacks, rude phraseology, or even non-devotional sentiments can find no place, in here. The Editor enjoys in full the right, wherever he feel it necessary, either to curtail, or to supplement or even to withhold publication of the articles received. No unpublished article will be returned unless after special request.

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Editor,
“Sanathana Sarathi”

Prema Vahini

Life is a Journey depending on Samskaras

Men are immersed in many activities and they are engaged in various undertakings. This is a well-known fact. They are so many in number that sometimes one may feel that the span of twenty-four hours is too short for his daily activity. Drinking, eating, reading, walking, sitting and besides, dreaming, hating, boasting, praising, weeping, laughing, moping, hoping—all types of activities go on without end. They fill up the span of life. These activities are all intimately attached to the mind. This makes life a mere collection of Samskaras, which make an impact on character and personality.

There are two types of activities, good and bad. The effect of both on the life of man has to be considered. The acts of a boy during that tender age fade away like the writing of that boy on a slate. When the events of one's own boyhood are thus consigned to oblivion, how can the events of the past life be retained in the memory? Leaving this point aside, it will be wrong to infer that only such events as are remembered have happened, or have shaped character. The acts and activities that have transpired and that have been thrust back into forgetfulness by subsequent events have left a trace of their consequences in the mind. The residue is there. When you try to bring back to memory at bedtime the events of the day, everything that happened from the insignificant to the significant will not answer the summons. Those which are meaningful, those which are deeply embedded inside, these alone can be recalled.

When such is the case with the happenings of a single day, when we forget all events that are not associated with joy or pain, what shall be said of the events of last week or month or years? Only the chief events are registered clearly. The rest turn hazy and recede and disappear. These few are the Samskaras.

Performing innumerable deeds, gathering vast experience and knowledge, learning a wide variety of lessons from a wide variety of activities, man retains as his capital only a mere four or five of them, strong, deep-rooted, vital.

Engrossed in the business of life, man earns just the Samskaras

A merchant calculates the debit and credit at the end of a week or month or year and draws up the balance sheet, to arrive at one figure—his earnings. So too, in this business of life, everything ends in some bit of net earnings, after all the giving and taking concludes. At the very end of life, it is the small quantity that will come into the memory. Those experiences that persist to the very last moment, the two or three that well up into consciousness when one recalls all that has happened in life, these are the real sustainers, the genuine achievements.

This does not mean that all other acts and all other experiences have been a waste. Forgetting them means only that their work has been accomplished and their value realised.

When business is done with thousands of rupees, one's heart freezes if a loss of a few thousands is sustained; the heart leaps in joy, when a few thousands are gained. Such is the story of the business of life. If at the point of death, one yearns to cater to the tongue, it is proof that throughout life the tongue has been the master. If at the point of death, the woman remembers the child and seeks to fondle it, the Samskara of child-love has been predominant, all through life. It proves that all other experiences have been thrown into oblivion.

Thus, of the Samskaras of life, some one or other, stronger than the rest, stands out to the last. Life is like that; this has to be learnt. The net result of all this living and toiling is that which comes to memory at the last moment of life. Therefore, direct the entire current of life towards the acquisition of that Samskara which you feel best for the last moment. Fix your attention upon it, day and night. The feeling that dominates the moment of death works with great force in the coming life. This truth must guide man for the journey of this life too, for Samskaras are the wherewithal for this journey, as well as for the journey after this.

Therefore, from tomorrow, keep always before the eye of memory, death which is inevitable, and engage yourself in the journey of life, with good wishes for all, with strict adherence to truth, seeking always the company of the good, and with the mind always fixed on the Lord. Live, avoiding evil deeds, and hateful and harmful thoughts, and do not get attached to the world. If you live thus, your last moment will be pure, sweet and blessed. Disciplined striving throughout life is needed to ensure this consummation. The mind has to be turned over to good samskaras. Everyone must examine himself rigorously and spot out his defects and struggle to correct them. When man realises his own defects and uncovers them, it is like being reborn. He then starts anew, from a new boyhood. This is the genuine moment of awakening,

Life is eternally stalked by Death. But, man does not tolerate the very mention of the word "Death". It is deemed inauspicious to hear that word, though, however insufferable the word, every living thing is every moment proceeding nearer and nearer that event. Intent on a journey and having purchased a ticket for the same, if you enter a train, whether you sit quiet or lie down or read or meditate, the train takes you willy-nilly to the destination. So too, each living thing has at birth received a ticket to Death and has come on a journey; so, whatever your struggles and safeguards and precautions the Place has to be reached some day. Whatever is uncertain, Death is certain. It is impossible to change that Law.

Man has taught the eye, the ear and the tongue, the luxury of constant novelty; now, he has to teach them the opposite tendencies. The mind has to be turned towards the good; the activities of every minute have to be examined from that standpoint. Each such deed is the stroke of a chisel, by which the rock of human personality is being shaped. A wrong stroke may spoil and disfigure the rock. Therefore, even the tiniest of acts has to be done with great care and devotion.

For a drowning man, even a reed is some support. So too, to a person struggling in the Sea of Samsara, a few good words spoken by some one might be of great help. No good deed can go to waste; no, not even a bad deed, for, that too has its consequence. So, strive to avoid the slightest trace of evil activity; keep your eyes pure, fill your ears with the words of God, and the stories of Godly Deeds, do not allow them to listen to calumny. Use the tongue for uttering good words and kind and true words. Let it always remind you of God. Such constant effort must grant you victory. It is to earn these holy Samskaras that one has to maintain the flow of high thoughts and feelings, uninterrupted.

The hands should be used to perform good deeds. Have the Lord's name within, and the practice of Swadharma without. With the hand busy with Seva, let your mind be engrossed in all this—there is no harm. When the rains pour on the mountain peaks and the water hurries down the sides, no river emerges there from. When however the waters flow in a single direction, first a brook, then a stream, then a torrent, and finally, a flooded river is formed, and the rains reach the sea. Water that runs in one direction reaches the sea; water flowing in four directions gets soaked and lost. Samskaras are of this type. Of what use are they, if they merely come and go this way today and that way, the next? The holy stream of good samskaras must flow full and steady along the fields of holy thoughts and finally abide in the great Ocean of Bliss at the moment of Death. Worthy indeed is he who reaches such a Goal!

Twenty hammer-strokes might not succeed in breaking a stone; the twenty-first stroke might break it. But, does this mean that the twenty blows were of no avail? No. Each of those twenty strokes contributed its share to the final success; the final result was the cumulative effect of all the twenty-one. So too, the mind is engaged in a struggle with the world, both internal and external. Needless to say success might not always be your lot. But, man can attain everlasting bliss by letting himself be immersed in good works and by saturating the mind with the love of God. Infuse every moment of life with that love. Then evil tendencies dare not hamper the path. Since his mind ever dwells with the Lord, he will be drawn automatically towards good deeds only. The object of all Sadhana is the destruction of the mind and some day, some one good deed will succeed in destroying it, just as the twenty first blow broke the stone. For this triumph, all the good deeds done in the past have contributed; each little thing counts; no good deed is a waste.

While struggling in the spiritual field, you should take on Parameswara Himself as your protector. To instill courage in the child, the mother persuades it to walk a few steps and turn about, but she will not allow it to fall. If it totters and is about to lose balance, she hurries from behind it and catches it ere falls. Easwara too has His Eyes fixed on the Jivi. He has in his hand the string of the kite which is man; sometimes, he may give it a pull, sometimes, he may loosen the hold; but whatever He does, be confident and carefree, for it is He that holds the string. That faith ever present, that feeling hardening into a Samskara, will fill you with Premarasa.

The string is the bond of Love and Grace. The kite or Jivi is thus bound to Easwara. You must do and earn auspicious Samskaras in order that the bond of Love and Grace may exist and get tightened.

The Samskaras make or mar the Jivi; they are the steps which take all Jivis to the goal. Samskaras make the Jivi wade through loss and grief. Through good Samskaras alone can man attain the Lord So, every Jivi has to be wholly engaged in Satkarma. Satkarma is the authentic Puja. It is the best form of remembering the Lord. It is the highest Bhajan. It spreads love, without distinction and difference. It is service done as the duty of the Jivi.

Be engaged in such Karmas. Revel uninterruptedly in the thought of the Lord. This is the royal road to the goal you have to reach.

Sandeha Nivarini

I

Bhakta: Swami, can we ask you freely about any topic concerning the spiritual path, which we do not know?

Swami: Certainly. What is the objection? Why this doubt? What am I here for? Is it not for explaining to you things you do not know? You can ask me without any fear or hesitation. I am always ready to answer; only, I want earnest inquiry with a desire to know.

Bhakta: But some elders say it is wrong to vex the Guru with questions. Are they right, Swami?

Swami: That is not correct. Whom else can the disciple approach? Since the Guru is everything to him, it is best that he consults him in all matters and then acts.

Bhakta: Some say that we should reverentially carry out whatever the elders ask us to do without raising any objections. Is that your command also?

Swami: Until you develop full faith in them and know that their words are valid, it will be difficult for you to carry out their orders reverentially. So, until then, it won't be wrong to ask them the significance and the validity of their orders, so that you may be convinced.

Bhakta: Swami, whom are we to believe, whom are we to discard? The world is so full of deceit. When those, whom we believed are good, themselves turn out to be bad, how can faith grow?

Swami: Well, My boy! Where is the need for you in this world or any world to grow faith in others? Believe in yourself, first. Then believe in the Lord, Paramatma. When you have faith in these two, neither the good nor the bad will affect you.

Bhakta: Swami, faith in the Lord too diminishes sometimes. What is the reason for that?

Swami: When one is deluded by the mere external world and when one does not attain success in such external desires, faith in the Lord diminishes. So, give up such desires. Desire only for the spiritual relationship; then you won't become the target of doubts and difficulties. The important thing for this is faith in the Lord; without that, you start doubting everything, big and small.

Bhakta: Until we understand the Reality of Paramatma, it is important, they say, to be in the company of the great and the good and also to have a Guru. Are these necessary?

Swami: Of course, the company of the great and the good is necessary. To make that Reality known to you, a Guru too is important. But, in this matter, you should be very careful. Genuine Gurus are scarce these days. Cheats have multiplied and teachers have retreated into solitude, in order to realise themselves undisturbed. There are many genuine Gurus but they cannot be secured easily. Even if you get them, you must thank your destiny if they vouchsafe to you more than one single Sadvakya; they won't spend time telling you all kinds of stories! There should be no hurry in the search for a Guru.

Bhakta: Then, what in the world is the path?

Swami: Why, it is just for this that we have the Veda, Sastra, Purana and Ithihasa. Study them; adhere to the path they teach and gather the experience; understand their meaning and the trend of their message from pundits; follow them in practice; meditate on the Paramatma as the Guru and as God; then, those books themselves will help you as your Guru. For, what is a Guru?

The Guru is that through which your mind gets fixed on God. If you consider Paramatma as the Guru and do Sadhana with unshakable Love, the Lord Himself will appear before you and give Upadesha just as a Guru. Or, He may so bless you that as a result of the Sadhana, you may meet a Sadguru.

Bhakta: But, nowadays, some great big persons are granting Upadesha to all who ask; are these not Sadgurus, Swami?

Swami: I won't say they are or they are not. I declare only this: It is not the sign of a Sadguru to grant Upadesha to any and every person who comes to him with praise, without considering the past and the future, without discovering the qualifications of the pupil and testing whether he is fit.

Bhakta: Then Swami, I have committed a blunder! When one great person arrived at our village, and when all were receiving Upadesha from him. I too went and prostrated before him and asked him for it. He granted me a good Upadesha; I repeated the mantra for some time, but, soon, I came to know that the great person was a cheat. Since that

day, I lost faith in the Name he gave me; I gave up Mantra. Was this wrong? Or, am I right?

Swami: Do you doubt the right and wrong of this? It is very wrong. Just as the Guru, as I told you now, examines the qualifications of the disciple, the disciple too has to critically examine the credentials of the Guru before receiving Upadesha. Your first mistake was that you did not pay attention to this but hastily accepted Upadesha. Well, even if the Guru gave it without the necessary qualification, why did you break your vow and stop repeating the Name? That is the second mistake: casting the fault of another on the sacred Name of God. Before receiving Upadesha, you should have taken time and known his genuineness and developed faith in him. Then, when the desire to accept him as Guru emerged, you should have received the Upadesha. But, once you accept, you must repeat it, whatever the difficulty; you should not give it up. Otherwise, you commit the wrong of accepting without deliberation and rejecting without deliberation. That wrong will be on your head. You should accept a Name when you are still afflicted by doubt or a Name which you do not prefer. Having accepted, you should not give it up.

Bhakta: What happens when it is given up?

Swami: Well, my boy. Disloyalty to the Guru and discarding the Name of God—on account of these, your one-pointed endeavour and concentration will wither away. As the saying goes, “The diseased seedling can never grow into a tree.”

Bhakta: But if the Guru grants the Mantra though we lack the merit?

Swami: Such a Guru is no Guru. The result of his wrong act won't fall on you. The evil of that wrong will devolve on him only.

Bhakta: If the disciple acts according to the promise made to the Guru, irrespective of what the Guru may turn out to be, and honours him as before, can he realise the goal?

Swami: Certainly, what doubt is there? Don't you know the story of Ekalvya? Though Dronacharya did not accept him as his disciple, he installed an image and took it as Dronacharya himself; revering as such, he learnt archery and achieved mastery of all arts. Finally, when the Guru, blinded by injustice, asked for his right thumb as his fees, he offered it gladly. Did Ekalvya take to heart the injury done by the Guru?

Bhakta: Of what avail was that offer? His education was all a waste, that was all. What was the net result of his achievement?

Swami: Though Ekalvya lost all chance of using his skill, the character that he earned by that training was never lost. Is not the fame he acquired by his sacrifice enough compensation?

Bhakta: Well, what is past is past. Hereafter at least I shall hold fast and try not to discard the name. Please grant me upadesha yourself.

Swami: Your attitude is just like that of the person who, after having witnessed the Ramayana being enacted throughout the night, asked some one at daybreak how Rama was related to Sita! I was telling you that the Guru and the upadesha will come when your qualifications ripen. It will come by itself. There is no need for you to ask! Really speaking, the disciple should not ask for upadesha on his own. He cannot be aware of his being ripe for it. The Guru will be watching for the proper moment and he will himself bless and help. You should not get upadesha more than once. It is not repeatable. If you give up one upadesha and take up another, whenever you feel like it, you will be like a married woman gone astray.

Bhakta: So, what is my fate now? Is there no way to save myself?

Swami: Repent for the mistake committed, but continue meditating on the Name you received. For Namasmarana, apart from Japa, you can use as many names as you like. For Dhyana, the Name got by upadesha alone should be used, remember. Don't change that sacred Name; transform yourself by persistent yearning and effort and proceed.

Bhakta: Swami! Today is indeed a great day; for all doubts have disappeared by the message you gave. As you said, Upadesha created the doubt; Your Sandesha dispelled it. If permitted, I will return now to my place and when I come again, I will bring some new doubts to be cast away in Your Presence in exchange for Peace and joy. If you so command, I shall come next month.

Swami: Very good. That is exactly what I want—that persons like you should rid themselves of doubts, should grasp the real significance of life and welcoming the Sandesha with faith and steadfastness, dwell in constant remembrance of the Name of the Lord. Whenever you come, whatever comes, learn from Me the method and means of ridding yourself of grief and doubt and worry. Never suffer from grief; for with that pain inside you, you will not be able to do any Sadhana. Whatever Sadhana you do will be like rose water poured on ash. Very well, go now and come later.

Obsessions Regarding Destiny

A good many Hindus appear to be still labouring under the mistaken view that they are predestined to a certain kind of life and that any thing that they may do or may not do, will not make it better or worse. This is otherwise known as the fatalistic theory. This is a very pernicious view, as ill founded as it is illogical. It is irrational and enervating. It is absolutely untenable, from a scientific point of view. It has also no religious basis. It has done untold mischief to Hindu Society. It has acted as a devilish spell undermining and debilitating many people and rob them of all initiative, ambition and zest for life. It has killed dynamism and encouraged inertia and passivity. It has arrested the growth and

development of those who have fallen a prey to it. It has made the lives of those people drab and colourless.

Such folk foolishly regard whatever may befall them as something inevitable and inescapable, and that no effort on their part is called for, to better their lot beyond going through the routine of their lives in an effortless way. No wonder that in nearly all cases such persons prove to be failures in life and become pathetic specimens of humanity.

There is no warrant for this faulty view of life. It connotes a diseased mentality and a defeatist outlook. I have a feeling that it is this vicious theory that is responsible for keeping a large number of Hindus in a state of physical and mental torpor. It has frozen all ambition and the higher urges in life. This explains why and how many Hindus have missed material prosperity. But, it cannot be said that material prosperity rightly acquired is inconsistent with spiritualism and godliness. Those who are materially well off can also be very pious and godly. So these injurious fatalistic conception should be given the go-by by on thinking men.

The inexorable rule is that every person is the architect of his own career. The teachings of the various religions, including Hinduism, proclaim that whatsoever a man soweth, that he shall reap and that every soul shall be recompensed according to its earnings. There is thus no iota of a doubt, that there is nothing like an inflexible destiny. Man with a free and unfettered will is the master of the situation always. He will be what he wishes to be, he can be what he strives to be.

This does not mean that there is no law of Karma. The law of Karma is as true as any other physical law. It is comparable to the law that action and reaction are always equal and opposite it is equivalent to saying, "As we sow so we reap". A frown begets a frown. A smile generates a smile. A kind word is met by a kind response. Suspicion engenders suspicion. Hard work begets corresponding fruits. Idleness repays us in its kind. The world is like a mirror. It faithfully reflects our own moods and performances in every plane of effort. We cannot escape the consequences of our actions in the visible and the invisible planes. Let us all therefore aim at noble thoughts, kind words, good deeds and selfless service and reap a rich harvest of them. Good Karma obliterates the effects of bad Karma.

In life we often find that our successes or failures are nearly in all cases traceable to a certain chain of circumstances of our own creation. The cumulative effect of these actions some times results in success and some times in failure. By introspection and careful planning we can avoid failures in the future, if we are guided by our past experience. In this way, success or failure depends upon our own circumspection or lack of it, and not on the whims caprices of what is called predestination. This theory of predestination is a fallacious and misleading untruth. The accumulated Karma which is our own acquisition through our own choice in the past is no doubt there influencing us and our career. But it is not a fixed entity. It is a variable product to which we continuously add or from which we continuously delete, in proportion to the good and the evil that we go on doing from hour in our lives. The accumulated adverse Karma can be liquidated by intensive practice

of goodness and godliness. But for this redeeming effort, the bad Karma against the person would continue to be a dead weight. The story of Mrityumjayaya is a classic example of how man can be a master of his fate through supreme effort in the right direction.

To those who are weak and feeble at heart past Karma looks a formidable and fearful hurdle. Strong and heroic souls challenge its supremacy. Man has the divine spark in him. There is no limit to his development. He is part of Paramatma Himself. Like a tiny seed developing into a huge banyan tree, every human being can work himself into a mighty stalwart, through determined effort. Shelly has declared that what one man is, the whole of mankind can be. Let us not therefore be overawed by the law of Karma as something insurmountable. It should on the other hand provoke a spirit of challenge in us to get the better of it.

Life should be regarded as an adventure. Every one should aim at worthwhile ambitions and goals, for individual achievement. Many years back I came across a beautiful Persian poem translated into English which brings this out vividly. It deserves to be reproduced here.

If you think you are beaten, you are.
If you think you dare not, you don't.
If you like to win but you think you cannot,
It is almost certain you won't.
If you think you will lose, you are lost.
For out of the mould we find
Success begins with a fellow's will
It is all in the state of mind
If you think you are outclassed, you are.
You have got to think high to rise,
You have got to be sure of yourself before
You can even win a prize.
Life's battles don't always go
To the stronger or the faster man;
But soon or late the man who win's
Is the man who thinks he can.

No one should therefore take shelter under the false conception of predestination and remain inert and passive. In the world around we find many stalwarts who are self-made men. Let us strive to build up our lives as best as we can, undaunted by any adverse past Karma, which we suspect to be dodging us.

K. Kondala Rao

The Little Boy at Uravakonda

The little town of Uravakonda, nestling under the many-hooded serpent hill that forms its chief landmark, was not its old self at all, since that little boy came and joined the school. He was the brother of the new Telugu Master, a precocious lad, wiser than the masters, able to peer into the past and peep into the future! He sang, he danced, he wrote puranic and social dramas and took roles in them; he even composed poems in 'impossible' meters!

Even as a child in his native village, Puttaparthi, he had, it seems, a unique Divine power of getting from nowhere and from nothing, fruits, flowers, sweets and countless other objects, by a mere wave of the hand. He seemed to be in constant communication with the higher powers, for he had a wayward look and an unearthly listlessness, which added to his innate charm. When he was scarce a toddler, he used to tell his mother that he was being fed by an old man, a person no one had seen! At the tender age of seven, he was the hero of a Bhajan group of children of his age, and he had taught them songs in praise of a certain Avatar, about whom no one had any information! The songs were on Sai Baba and whole village wondered who this Baba was and how this child came to know of him.

Uravakonda was indeed fortunate that the little boy accompanied his little brother and joined the school. For, its name has there by become a candidate for immortality. The fame of the boy preceded him to the town. Authentic stories of his remarkable talents and divine accomplishments were no everybody's lips, long before his arrival. The teachers of the school heard with dismay that when a teacher at Bukkapatnam had ordered this same little boy to stand upon the bench, the punishment had recoiled on the teacher himself! He could not rise from his chair; that item of furniture had stuck fast to him! What a wonderful boy, they murmured among themselves. They gathered round the Telugu Pandit, eager to have more stories of the miracles of his little brother. Every teacher was anxious to be assigned some work in the class to which he was admitted, some out of curiosity, some out of veneration and some out of an anxiety to prove it all wrong.

His name was Sathyanarayana Raju, and he was addressed by everyone lovingly as 'Sathya'. He soon became the pet friend of the entire school, the cynosure of all eyes. He was the leader of the School Prayer Group, the hero of the school drama, the pillar of the school athletic team, the inspiration of the school scout troop. He solved sums, explained lessons, distributed sweets to his classmates. The entire town loved him. Jutkawallahs thrust fruits into his hands, for he had told one of them once, where his horse was to be found hiding! He was always on the lookout for the poor, the neglected and the stricken. He loved to assuage their sorrow, this little boy of thirteen summers! Seeing him fair, slim, sweet, smiling and singing with charming, fearless, reassuring eyes, many a person was reminded of the Divine Cowherd of Brindavan.

On the 8th day of March, 1940, when Sathya was just a few month's older than 13, an incident happened that threw Uravakonda into unspeakable grief. A big black scorpion stung the boy and he was rendered unconscious. The distracted brother did all that everyone advised him. Medical men Allopathic, Ayurvedic, Homeopathic—all tried their specifics. Decoctions, drugs, balms, poultices, pills, pastes, all were tried, in vain. For,

this was no ordinary patient! Some friend suggested that Puja be offered to the patron Goddess of the town. So, a volunteer ran towards that temple. Sathya, meanwhile was in what the doctors called delirium; in that state he asked why they had sent a man to the temple; he even said that the coconut had broken into three halves! And, lo, it had! So , this was no ordinary unconsciousness, either. After three days of this ‘Leela’, during which he was both aware and unaware, by which he showed that he was above the common dust, beyond the Visha of Vishaya, he was again his old self, full of song and smiles.

March, April, May....May 23, 1940! A date to remember in the annals of Uravakonda! That date, the little boy, Sathya declared the truth he could no longer contain within himself; for, history whispered in his ear, that the moment had arrived. He told his astounded brother that he was no other than Shirdi Sai Baba himself! thereafter, every Thursday, he became manifest as Shirdi Sai Baba; He gave every one the sacred Vibhuti, taken from nowhere by a wave of the hand, and also, fruits, flowers and sweets and spoke of their past and future. Uravakonda became a place of pilgrimage. The good news of Baba’s manifestation spread far and wide. People from Puttaparthi, Bukkapatnam, Kamalapur and other places who had occasion to tend and admire the divine boy rushed to Uravakonda, to bask in the sunshine of Baba’s grace.

Five months passed. About twenty happy Thursdays went by. Sathya was still attending school, for, his people thought that the only road for a prosperous and stable future. But, one could see that he was more and more reluctant to follow the routine of school and home, and eager to break loose the bonds and reach out to the four quarters.

On 20th October, 1940, when Sathya was barely fourteen years old, the day of Renunciation and Fulfillment came! He came home from school, cast his books aside, and standing outside the doorstep, announced, as Prince Siddhartha had done centuries ago from outside the city gate of Kapilavastu, “I am no longer yours. I go out to the World, to which I belong. I must carry out the work for which I have come”.

To the consternation of the household, he hastily got down the steps and, slowly proceeded to a garden a little away from the din and bustle of the town; He sat upon a rock in that garden, serene and calm, shining divinely effulgent, like the Sun after an eclipse, in perfect Peace and Joy. The era of Redemption had begun!

A large crowd of admirers, schoolmates and teachers and others soon gathered round that rock. Baba who was sitting in it was no longer the Sathya they knew. He started singing, asking them to join the chorus,

*Manasa bhaja re Guru charanam,
Dusthara bhavasagara tharanam.*

He taught them other songs too which, instilled Faith, Hope, Courage and taught Truth, Love and Justice.

Three years ago, while returning by car from Hyderabad, the Bhagavan Himself showed us the serpent hill, the school where he studied, and that immortal rock upon which He sat that Day, Monarch of Himself and Mankind, Master of the Eternal Message.

We bowed in silence before that holy spot. As we moved away, I sensed a sigh, emanating from that Rock; for, how could it bear separation from Baba, who had crowned its million-year long Tapas with the vision of the Lord, entering on his Divine Mission?

Kasturi

A Case of Post-Delivery Eclampsia

(Medical Report – 3 – From the Sathya Sai Hospital)

Patient X 20 years; First para; from, Yelamulapalli Village. Delivered at 7 A.M. on 29 – 10 –57; suddenly became unconscious, with tongue caught in between the teeth and bleeding, and severe continuous fits.

The patient was admitted at 12 noon, the same day, with the Blessings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The tongue was found to be deeply and badly bitten. She had frequent convulsions. The lower extremities were swollen. The usual treatment I.V. Saline with 50% mag. sulph. solution was given and repeated in the evening and at night. While still unconscious, patient passed large quantities of urine.

By the next morning, patient was a little conscious, and we were able to open the mouth and push the tongue inside. It was found bitten in its middle third, to about 1 ½ to 1 ¾ inches. The injury was dressed but in about a day, the tongue was so swollen that it filled the oral cavity. Temperature ranged from 102 degrees to 104.

The patient was maintained with I.V. Glucose and Saline and Nasal Feeding, for about 10 days. By the grace of Baba, the swelling of the tongue went down and the patient could swallow fluids and talk a little. Urine was clear, the edema of the lower extremities was reduced, and she was discharged on 13–11–57.

This case is one more instance of the benign Grace of the Bhagavan that pervades the Sri Sathya Sai Hospital. The Hospital Staff know and feel that they are but instruments in His Hands. He is the unfailing Guide.

Dr. V. Brahman

Sadhana

Ordinary men have attached themselves to some, one Karma for other and they spend their time in its pursuit. They kill Time by this means. But, those who are Bhaktas need not attach themselves to any such Karma for this purpose. Still if they sit quite, Time will prove a burden to them. When physical and mental activities diminish, the demon of Tamas, ever alert to seek an inlet and enter, gets a foothold and begins to drag him into the wrong path. Tamas is no ordinary force. It is as powerful as the gravitational force. It can slyly exert its pull and bring down anyone, however great. So, one should never give it a foothold. When the Bhakta gives up physical and mental activities and remains inert, Tamas gets a nice chance to get hold of him. To avoid this, Bhaktas should engage themselves in Sadhana and keep awake.

(From a discourse by Sri Sathya Sai Baba)

Do Not Lose Heart

Brothers! Do not lose heart!
The Night is long.....But, the day shall dawn!
Saints and Sages show the way.
Remember the promise that Sai gave;
“Look to Me, I shall look to you”
“Think of Me, I am with you”

Self and self hold sway
And keep at bay
The righteous holy way!

Lead kindly Light,
Lead, lead us on to the Right;
Thou art the Guide and the Light!

We cannot for long prosper
On the tears and tragedy of others;
All are children of the Lord.
Let not power blind your eyes,
Let not prosperity deafen your ears.
Never treat anyone with disdain
Or cause him pain.

Feel His presence and pray to Him.
We know not when we reach the journey's end!

V. Venkateswaralu

Reader! Please note:

“Sanathana Sarathi” is a monthly, for the present, and the articles published in it are purely religio-philosophical. Contributions of articles especially from those who endeavour to put into practice what they speak and write on spirituality are readily welcome. Anything that smacks of “public news or comments on public news”, personal attacks, rude phraseology, or even non-devotional sentiments can find no place, in here.

The Editor enjoys in full the right, wherever he feel it necessary, either to curtail, or to supplement or even to withhold publication of the articles received. No unpublished article will be returned unless after special request.

From July, 1958, the magazine is sent to subscribers who pay in advance the sum of Rupees Three only, by M.O. addressed to the Editor. Those whose subscription amount reaches before 16th of any month, will receive the ‘Sanathana Sarathi’ of the subsequent month and eleven issues thereafter.

No commercial advertisement will be published in this magazine.

Permanent change of address should be intimated before the 10th of the month, mentioning also the subscribers number and the Old Address.

THE EDITOR
“SANATHANA SARATHI”

Prema Vahini

Sanathana Dharma is the Divine Mother of Humanity

Sanathana Dharma is the mother of all religions, all ethical codes and all Dharmas of this world; and Bharat Desa is the home where the Mother was born. Oh! How fortunate are the Bharatiyas! How sublimely splendid is this Bharat Desa!

The world in its entirety is the Body of the Lord of the world, and this Bharat Desa is that Body's unique organ, the Eye. Without the eye the body is not master of itself, is it not? Again, it can be said that Bharat Desa has been beautified by the two eyes, the Vedas and the Sastras. On account of this it can be declared without doubt that the Samskara attained by the Bharatiyas has not been acquired by the people of any other country. Sanathana Dharma which teaches the truth of all religions and tolerance of all religions is the Dharma of all mankind. Born in various areas, flowing through various paths, the rivers at last reach the ocean; so too, born in different lands, practising different ways of Dharma, people reach the Ocean of the presence of the Lord, through different modes of worship. Sanathana Dharma is the central location in which all these various paths, moving in different directions, converge. Followers of the different religions can practise this Sanathana Dharma, by being truthful in speech, by avoiding jealousy and anger, and by acting always with a loving heart. All those who so practise Sanathana Dharma and, without faltering, achieve it, are entitled to be called 'Bharatiyas'.

The Hindu religion is the only religion that has achieved and maintained the foremost position among all religions from earliest times and established itself permanently. The only people who have survived without being destroyed, throughout the historic age, are the Hindus. In this religion, more than in any other, people have practised lives of love, equality and gratitude. The Hindus have earned their Dharma through the discovery of philosophic principles and through the Vedas. They have drunk deep the essence of the Vedas which are without beginning and without end. A land so holy is a veritable spiritual mine to the world. Just as the bowels of the earth reveal in each area mines of different metals, in Bharat Desa is found the mine of Sanathana Dharma, the essence of all the principles of all the Sastras, all the Vedas, and all the Upanishads.

As if by good luck of the Bharatiyas along with the emergence of the mine of Sanathana Dharma which is as a home to them, from that moment and for that very purpose leaders, thinkers commentators, apostles and teachers have been originating in this land itself. Also, from this, very Bharat Desa arose seers selfless Karmayogis, wise men, realised souls, and Divine personages connected with this religion. It is through these persons that spiritual wisdom guaranteed by experience flowed all over the country. In this way loaded with essence, Sanathana Dharma progressed throughout the world. But, to whatever land it spread, the original home is Bharat itself. Look at the world today; machines, cars; engines of some new type or other come to light in one country and are exported to others. But, their original home cannot be forgotten. Such cars and engines are manufactured only on the basis of its experience. Nothing can be done without that basis. So too Sanathana Dharma arose. Bharat Desa and people of other countries benefited from its waters through the great Personages and the books they composed

Hence, the basis of the original home cannot be ignored. That is impossible. But it is a matter of some concern to see today, in this Bharat Desa the birthplace of those holy persons who nursed and fostered this sacred Dharma, new modes being accepted as one's Dharma, and the Sanathana Dharma itself being assigned and kept aside for people of other countries, by the persons who have not even tasted the sweetness of the Dharma, who have not grasped its meaning, and who have smothered it in empty disputation. The reason for this is, of course, the absence of proper guides who could show the way. But even when there are such guides, people yield to these modern modes and get attached to them. These are really like bazaar pakodas. They attract by their smell, and are bought by persons who do not discriminate. Though their Swadharma is the pure Sanathana Dharma, the fascination exercised by outward show is absent and so it gets neglected. Truth has no need for such decorations. Taste is the important thing. The basic reason for this is the fact that men today are motivated by mere whim and fancy. It has become the habit to reject the reality and accept the Dharma of another. This is a great mistake. It is against Dharma for Bharatiyas to be attracted by external forms and by outward show. No other Dharma has, or will have Truth and Highest Love, above and beyond that contained in Sanathana Dharma. Sanathana Dharma is the veritable embodiment of truth. It is the Heritage of all. There can be no boundary for Holiness. Holiness is one, without a second; is it not?

Those who have attained Liberation in this life by adherence to this Sanathana Dharma, who have earned the grace of God, who have understood the nature of Truth, who have achieved realisation are all Bharatiyas. Bharatiyas have adored those who have reached that holy stage, without distinction of caste creed, or sex. The holiness of that stage burns to ashes all such limitations. It is only until that stage is reached that it becomes impossible to consider everything as equal. So, it is necessary to determine boldly on the realisation of Sanathana Dharma. This is the birthright Bharatiyas.

If we examine history since its very beginnings, we can know in detail what great personages were born, in which sections of the Hindus. Incarnations, Divine personalities and Jeevanmuktas like Rama, Krishna, Balarama, Janaka and Parikshit, Rajayogis like Viswamitra all arose among the Kshatriyas. Brahmarishis great Pundits, Sastric Scholars Vedic Rishis, originated in the Brahmin section. Sudras predominate in the epical books, like Bharat and Bhagavata. Among the great devotees of the Lord, members of the lower castes form a large number. To attain holiness without, being affected by the world, and to reach Paramatma, each one's Sadhana is important; other things like caste will not be a hindrance at all. But, one should deserve the Grace required for it; one should become regular and disciplined in practice.

Such holy Bharatiyas, however, now bring endless disgrace on the Hindu religion. By neglecting the principles of life of the above mentioned great personages, not studying them and following their instructions, by modifying their way of life to suit the changing times and (as the saying goes "The hour of ruin brings wicked thoughts") by becoming slaves to name and fame and the craving for power and position and an anxiety to promote the well being of their wives and children through selfish means. Still, there is no dearth of persons who love all in equal measure, who are devoid of selfishness, who

are engaged in the promotion of the welfare of all, who have dedicated themselves to the service of mankind and who sacrifice everything. But they are suppressed; they are not appreciated or placed in positions of high authority for fear there will be then no place for the wicked, the crooked and unjust.

However broad and deep the ocean, when the earth quakes underneath, the waters part of themselves, and when the commotion subsides, they resume their original position. So too these good men keep away without being caught up in it during the earthquake of injustice, unrighteousness, selfishness and ostentation; and as soon as the hullabaloo subsides, they re-enter the world. Evanescent authority and self-glorification cannot be permanent. "To grow is only to decay" it is said. The present peacelessness is decay not growth. For, see how the Bharatiyas who from the beginning, grew up in righteous ways with pure feelings, with self-control and reverence for the good name, who were fed on the breast milk of the Vedas, Sastras and Upanishads, who welcomed and honoured even races driven out of their own country and vouchsafed to them Love in equal measure, today, for love of power and self, accuse their own brethren, one person impatiently envying the prosperity of another, deceive their own brothers maddened by selfish greed, keep at arm's length their real well-wishers, pursue only each one's selfish end, multiply bad qualities hitherto unheard of in the Hindu fold, follow wrong paths and ways of life, and become the target of conflict and restlessness, on account of the absence of fear of sin, fear of God, discipline, reverence and faith. The fall is indeed incredible.

Hindu Brethren! Children of Bharat! Followers of the Sanathana way! Where have the manly qualities of old gone? Truth, Tolerance, Morality, Discipline when would you accept? Arise, Awake. Establish once again Rama Rajya, resplendent with mansions of Sathya, Dharma and Shanti. Love your Bharatiya brethren. Practise the Sanathana Dharma. Quench the burning flames of Ignorance, Peacelessness, Injustice and Envy with the waters of Love, Forbearance and Truth. Develop the feeling of Mutualness. Sweep away all jealousy and anger. Remember the rule of the holy personages, the characteristics of the most eminent and of the reign of God. Each one should realise his own faults, and understand there is no use in searching for faults in others. That is mere waste of time; it also breeds quarrels. So, give up that trait. If this opportunity is missed, what else can be done? Do not yield to dejection, but say 'Finis' to all the unrighteousness of the past. Repent sincerely and tread the path of Prayer to God, Good Deeds and Brotherly Love. Establish the eternal Rama Rajya.

The 'Sanathana Sarathi' has been started to win this Rajya; its army will help this effort by word and deed. Draw that chariot forward! Gird up your loins and begin Narayana-sarana... Bharatiyas are all the children of one Mother, Her name is Sanathana Dharma. Redeem the debt due to the Mother. He is no son who forgets the Mother. He cannot be good who says the Mother is bad. Her breast-milk is the very breath of our life...The giver of this Life, the Father of all is Paramatma.

All are the children of the same parents. So, without blaming and accusing each other, without wishing evil for one's kith and kin, understand that your other brothers have the same attachment to the objects they love that you have towards the things that you love. One should not find fault with what another loves; nor should one laugh at it. He should,

on the other hand, try to love it. These are the characteristics of the Truth and Love, of Bharatiyas.

Sandeha Nivarini

Bhakta: Namaskaram, Swami.

Swami: Happy to see you. You seem very tired and in this summer, travel is even more exhausting. Take rest for a little while we can converse thereafter.

Bhakta: When there is no peace of mind where can rest be got?

Swami: Well my boy, rest is for the sake of peace of mind. Once you have that peace, where is the need for rest? There is need for a bandage until the wound heals; after that, what is its use?

Bhakta: Swami, just now my mind is restless. I cannot decide upon anything. I do not know what the reason is. What shall I do?

Swami: Well, no effect can take place without a cause. You do certainly know the cause of your present condition...Well, nothing else need be done: At such times of mental pain, do namasmarana for a while sitting in a lonely place; or sing Bhajan songs loudly in a raised voice; or, if that is not possible, spread the bed and sleep for some time. Thereafter you can think about all this.

Bhakta: You have told us that in this world, each one has some dearly loved thing or other, and that if any harm comes upon that thing, peace of mind cannot be had...How then can I have peace of mind, when something happens like this...another person either disrespecting my dearly loved thing, or finding fault with it? What am I to do then?

Swami: Well. A good person who has understood what is Atmavichara will not blame like this the things that others love. Nor will he even associate with such men. For he would argue within himself, that when he blames another's Ishtam, he will feel as much pain as he himself feels when his own Ishtam is blamed. Therefore, be at peace with yourself, realising that those who abuse like this are people ignorant of Atmavichara. Engaged as you are in Atmavichara, you have nothing to do with ignorant persons who do not know Atmavichara...Well. Let it go. What has really happened to cause all this? The whole trouble will end, if what is inside comes out.

Bhakta: The world knows well how You are vouchsafing courage and daring and guiding men to do good spiritually, physically, and mentally; how You have rendered educational and medical help. You have never done any harm; nor caused harm to any

one in any form...How to suppress the persons who invent and spread all kinds of silly stories about such as You? Do they gain any thing by this?

Swami: Oh. So, this is the story! Well don't you know that good and bad are of the very nature of the world? If all are engaged in selling, who will be the buyers? With regard to God, fault finding has come down from the beginning of time; it is not new; only, present day persons might manufacture some new tales. Well, why should you take to heart such abuse? Take it that they are only remembering Swami by this means. Premasmarana and Dweshasmarana are two types. Of these, Dweshasmarana is Avidyamaya; it is related to Rajoguna. Premasmarana is Vidyamaya; it is related to Satwaguna. Avidyamaya results in Dukha; Vidyamaya results in Ananda. Their results are indicated there itself. Now, why should you suppress? You asked about the gain isn't it? They don't need any gain; finding fault with others has become their habit; they do it as their duty. As the saying goes, 'What does the moth care or gain, whether the sari costs a hundred tankas or is cheap? To gnaw and tear is its nature'. The moth tears equally a costly sari or a rag. Does it know the value of things? Its work is such. So be at peace, realising that the work of these faultfinders is the same as the work of these moths.

Bhakta: Swami! What You said is the truth. We can take it that ignorant persons, when they behave like this, are of the brood of moths. But, when people who are well educated, who are great, who know, when these are devoting themselves, to spreading such stories, how can it be endured?

Swami: Learning means Atmajnana; it is not the knowledge of things related to the world, which trains for a living, and is useful as basis for a living. To compare Atmajnana with such Vidyas is a great mistake. Great men are those who do not abuse others, who search for the reality with good intentions. Spiritual matters cannot be understood by those without the power of discrimination, who are puffed up with the authority they have; or by those who are unaware of any Atmajnana. So consider those whom you described as educated and great as belonging to the brood mentioned above and, without yielding place to such ideas and worries, engage yourself in strengthening your belief.

Bhakta: Many Asthikas in this world are changing into Nasthikas on account of such people, isn't it. Swami? Is there no weapon to put down these persons, who without any regard for their own learning and without any effort to know the reality, abuse the Mahapurushas?

Swami: Why? There is. "A load of rags is placed on a ragged saddle," is the saying. The words of such persons will be listened to only by such persons; no real Asthika will associate with them. Even if they do, they will move far away as soon as they understand that those stories are fictitious. So, the weapon to put down these persons is in their own hands. Haven't you heard the story of Bhasmasura? Placing his hand on every one's head, he reduced them to ashes; finally, placing it on his own head, he himself was reduced to ashes! Similarly, accusing others, they themselves will be finally accused by their own words.

Those who find fault with the Lord are of four types:

1. Persons who have no interest at all in matters related to God.
2. Persons who on account of individual spite cannot endure another's greatness.
3. Those who have neither personal experience nor contact nor knowledge of anything and so merely manufacture stories based on hearsay to which they have become enslaved.
4. Persons who come with some worldly desire, and who accuse the Lord, as an excuse for the failure caused by their own destiny.

Only these four types of people clamour as you say; the others will not shout or jump about like puppets. Even if they do not have personal experience, when they hear such stories, they will just analyse them within themselves and arrive at conclusions, for their own satisfaction. They won't abuse others.

It is not the correct path—to disbelieve one's own mind and give room therein to another's words. Besides, there is no profit in discussing with those who do not know the Reality. As a matter of fact, Reality does not admit of any discussion at all. To argue with those who do not know either but who are in the intermediate stage is like seeing the trunk and believing it to be the entire body, as in the story of the Blind Men and the Elephant.

Well. Note this I It is not good to spend time in this type of conversation. Abuse and fault-finding are natural and common. Knowing this, those who aspire to become true Bhaktas should search only for bases on which to build their Ananda. All the available time should be used for holy purposes, it should not be wasted. You have nothing to do with the good and the bad in others. Instead of wasting the time, it should be utilised to discard the bad and develop the good in you.

Ask me about some Sadhana or Sandesha which you need and seek something that is worthwhile. Hereafter do not bring near me such stories of faultfinding indulged in by others. You too should not take in such things.

Bhakta: All this happened because we too have the same human nature. But now that I understand the subject from your answers, courage and joy have entered into me, driving away the doubt and sorrow I had. Through the talk of such men, even the little faith, devotion and earnestness that men have, are being reduced. That was the reason for my asking you these questions. Otherwise, I have also nothing to do with such topics. Pardon me, hereafter I won't talk on these lines to you.

Swami: Very good! During the little time available, if you don't think of some good subject, but merely recollect the ignorant prattle of others, it is as if you too joined in blaming those persons. That is harmful to Bhaktas. Whatever others may say, you should not give up your faith. Once you are firmly established in that, you will not be in want any day. One word following another produces anger and pain. Bhakti Marga is designed for suppressing, not developing these qualities

You tell me that devotion and faith disappear because people listen to such accusers...but for how long? As soon as the truth is discovered, wilt they be trusted again? Will their words be valued again?

The talk of those faultfinders is as the sound of bronze. Cheap metals make more sound; gold which does not make sound is very valuable. True Bhaktas will be mute. They will follow the path of Silence. Their tongues will be fully engaged in the repetition of the essential greatness of the Lord. It is best they have no respite for any other word. So, do not permit the words of the bronze voiced persons to enter your ears; but fill them with the name of the Lord, which is the Pranavanada Itself.

Next month, if you get any problems regarding such useful topics as Sadhana or Anushthana, come here and have them solved. But do not bring with you bundles of such doubts!

Bhakta: I am indeed blessed this day. On account of them, You have vouchsafed to me the light of wisdom. Seeing all this, I feel that the saying, 'All is for our good' is true. Hence forward, whatever any one may say, I will be patient and won't take it in because 'All is for our good'. Namaskaram. Allow me to take leave.

Horsley Hills

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba spent a week, from 21st to 28th May, at Horsley Hills, near Madanapalli. For the devotees who were with Baba, it was a most fruitful week; for, every day was devoted to spiritual discussions and Bhajans. Bhagavan probed into the spiritual ideals and aspirations of everyone; He inquired about the religious studies of each person; He explained the significance of the Ishtadevata of all; by his lucid analysis and clear exposition, He solved all doubts and instilled Faith, Hope and Courage. To the children in the camp, He taught prayers for both morning and evening, dedicating all their deeds to the Lord, asking to be punished for unworthy deeds and promising to strive always to remember the Lord.

The Saint of Puttaparthi

Saints are born, now and then, in this land, to inculcate and to infuse the spirit of Godliness in human beings.

Some men are born great, some achieve greatness in this world after strenuous efforts and some men have greatness thrust upon them. Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba belongs to the first category, since He manifested Divinity, when he was only sixteen years old, without prior study of the Vedas or Upanishads and without Tapas or Yoga

practice whatsoever in His present birth. His teachings comes spontaneously as water from an artesian spring.

Often times, we dig a well, on the off chance of finding water at a shallow depth, or at a great depth. Similarly, in the spiritual field, Yogis and Mahatmas practice Asanas and Pranayams, so that they may meditate with concentration on God Almighty. Some others study the Vedas and the Upanishads and the Puranas. Very few of these are able to attain God-realisation. Even among these few, the number of Saints who help humanity to advance in the spiritual path can be counted on the fingertips.

Among leaders in the spiritual field, there are different types, such as Yogis, Mahatmas, Rishis, Siddha-purushas, Sadgurus, Seers, Saints and Avatar-purushas. Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is a unique combination of several of the qualities to be found in the Siddha-purushas, Saints, Sadgurus and Seers etc. Besides, He is a composer of Divinely melodious songs; He is a fluent speaker, making all religious subjects clear by means of simple illustrations, parables and anecdotes; He is the potent force behind the journal, Sanathana Sarathi.

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba was born at Puttaparthi on 23rd November, 1926. Puttaparthi is 20 miles from Penukonda on the Bangalore-Guntakal Rly. Line and 22 miles from Mudigubba on the Pakala-Dharmavaram Rly. Line. It has the sacred river Chitravati on one side, the Bukkapatanam Tank on other, and hillocks all round.

Swamiji was known by the name, Sathyanarayana, in His younger days. Like other children He had the normal education till his fourteenth year in 1940, a scorpion stung him severely and He became unconscious. This was the occasion for the manifestation of His inner greatness. When persons nearby questioned Him about the transformation, He nearly opened both His empty palms, and made gesture of throwing. And lo! jasmine flowers strewn on the floor by those empty palms formed by themselves the letters, 'SAI BABA'! Everyone was wonder struck at this miracle and He is being addressed from that day, as Sai Baba.

At His will or Sankalpa, Baba brings forth any thing from empty nothing or changes one object into another by a mere wave of His Hand, He produces in a trice, objects such as idols, Saivite, Vaishnavite or other. He produces and gives sacred ash (Vibhuti) to his devotees by a wave of His empty Hand. Similarly, He obtains solid objects such as rings with a picture of Sai Baba embossed on them, lockets, talismans, precious stones etc., liquids such as Amrutham, drugs etc. He 'takes' also medicines and with these He has cured even the 'incurable', diseases of some of his devotees.

Once while seated in the midst of His devotees on the bank of the river Chitravati, He suddenly disappeared within a split second, He was on the top of an adjacent hill, from where He showed the Third Eye, emanating a resplendent brilliance, astounding all His devotees. On another occasion, He took His devotees to a tamarind tree on a hillock nearby, and asked them to pluck from its branches whatever fruit each desired and each one got the fruit he wanted. From that day, this tree is called 'Kalpavriksha' by the

devotees. Once, He plucked a custard apple from a tree and threw it to a devotee standing near. But, by the time it reached his hand, it had been transformed into an apple, in the twinkling of an eye.

On the sacred Sivaratri night every year, He delivers a religious discourse and sings songs and during the discourse, Siva lingams (ranging from one to nine in number, of sizes from one to three inches, of material ranging from gold, silver, panchaloha) emanate from His mouth. During festivals like Sri Rama Navami, Sri Krishna Janma Ashtami, Vaikunta Ekadasi etc., He takes the devotees to the riverbed and after Bhajan and religious discourses, usually performs the miracles of taking out images etc.

Swamiji teaches the universal religion of Love and emphasises the Oneness of all religions. He lays stress on the purification of character and selfless service.

Every day at the Mandir, at 4.30 A.M. the sacred Mantram, OM, is chanted by the devotees. Bhajan is held both in the forenoon and after dusk, lasting each time about an hour and a half. Swamiji is always busy giving interviews individually to His devotees and solving the problems that trouble them, either physical, mental or spiritual.

Besides the Prasanthi Nilayam, an Arogya Nilayam called Sri Sathya Sai Hospital, is being conducted by the Swamiji. This was opened in October, 1956, by the then Chief Minister of Andhra State. There is provision in this Hospital for the treatment of inpatients too. There are six beds for males and six for females and an able medical staff.

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has absolute control over time, space and matter, they are bound by His Sankalpa. He can also read into our minds and tell us the past and the future. Last but not least, when His devotees are in distress and call on Him from afar for His help, Swamiji falls into a trans wherever He is, and goes to succour His devotees and renders help. The combination of all these noble and miraculous qualities makes one conclude that He is undoubtedly and Avatar Purusha.

May we have the benefit of His spiritual teachings and guidance for many many years more.

An Engineer Devotee

Thy Holy Feet

(A poem on Baba by an Argentinean Devotee)

Ah! Who and What art Thou, Radiant Dream?

A Presence,And yet, a Spirit Eternal;

Oft like a child, brimful of impish gaiety

Luring one and all, With Thy haunting ways;

Sacred and dearly loved! We stoop low

Before Thy Holy Feet, so delicately cast
As if made to tread lightly over tired hearts,
To tune the hidden melody of the soul—
Forgotten and rapt worldly thoughts.
Thou comest to trick the Golden Key,
Long rusty in its forgotten sanctuary.

‘Mamitha’

Reader! Please note:

“Sanathana Sarathi” is a monthly, for the present, and the articles published in it are purely religio-philosophical. Contributions of articles especially from those who endeavour to put into practice what they speak and write on spirituality are readily welcome. Anything that smacks of “public news or comments on public news”, personal attacks, rude phraseology, or even non-devotional sentiments can find no place, in here. The Editor enjoys in full the right, wherever he feel it necessary, either to curtail, or to supplement or even to withhold publication of the articles received. No unpublished article will be returned unless after special request.

From July, 1958, the magazine is sent to subscribers who pay in advance the sum of Rupees Three only, by M.O. addressed to the Editor. Those whose subscription amount reaches before 16th of any month, will receive the ‘Sanathana Sarathi’ of the subsequent month and eleven issues thereafter.

No commercial advertisement will be published in this magazine.

Permanent change of address should be intimated before the 10th of the month, mentioning also the subscribers number and the Old Address.

THE EDITOR
“SANATHANA SARATHI”

Prema Vahini

Sarvantaryami is One and Only One

The Vedas, the Sastras, and the messages of the Rishis, all have proclaimed uniformly and without any possibility of doubt, from that day to this, that Paramatma is Sarvantaryami, present and immanent in everything. So too questions like the relationship between 'He who is served,' 'he who serves,' and 'the wherewithal of service, viz., 'Prakriti', have also been the subject of endless discussion. Every Asthika has heard the Bhagavata verse in which the great Bhakta Prahlada states out of his own experience that Paramatma, the Sarvantaryami, need not be searched far and wide and that He is very near the seeker himself.

'He is here, He is not there, give up such doubts;
Listen, Oh! Leader of the Danavas!
Wherever you seek and wherever you see.
There...and there...He is!'

People speak of the Lord as having a particular nature or characteristic, as having a particular form and so on. These statements are true only to the extent that imagination and guesswork can approximate to Truth; they are not the fundamental Truth. Such conceptions are valid as far as practical worldly knowledge goes; they cannot be considered as valid knowledge of the Absolute. For, it is impossible to see the Poornam or speak about it.

In spite of this, however, Bhaktas and aspirants have been framing, each according to the stage of his own inner progress, some form or other of the Divine as the basis of their devotion. They worship Paramatma as existing in some Ayodhya or Dwaraka and nowhere else; as found in places where some image or picture exists and nowhere else. They worship that form itself as Poornam. Of course, it is not wrong to do so. Only, Bhaktas should not proclaim that their belief alone is the Truth, that those names and forms which they have ascribed are the only names and forms of the Divine and that all other forms and names are worthless and inferior. It should be realised that the names and forms which are the ideals of others are as dear and sacred to those others as such names and forms are to oneself.

When a form is idealised like this, it really becomes a symbol of the Universal; but, how can a mere symbol of the Universal ever become the Universal itself? Conscious always of this, every one should acquire, without giving room to senseless hatred, the vision that all forms of the ideal are equally valid and true. Without this, it is impossible to realise the Poornam. All these gross forms of the ideal are fully saturated with the subtle Divine Principle. The taste of the vast ocean is to be found, complete and undiminished in every single drop of its waters; but, this does not mean that the drop is in the ocean. Though we recognise the 'drop' and the 'ocean' as separate entities, the nature and taste of both are identical. Similarly, the Sarvantaryami Paramatma and the gross form and name which Paramatma assumes and through which He is realised are not separate entities' they are identical.

When this All-pervasive All-inclusive Pure existence is described, the matter and method depend on the principles of the speaker and the tastes of the listener. When the individual name and form imposed by the Bhakta are transformed into the Attributeless and the Formless, it is referred to as Brahman; when this same Brahman appears with attributes and forms, it is referred to as Rama, Krishna, Vishnu or Siva. Do not the followers of even other religions agree that when the devotee attains the Ecstasy of Mystic Union, all distinction between him and God disappears? The Yogis, philosophers of other lands and other faiths, too, accept without demur that this distinctionless experience can be earned through Parabhakti. Even if some little trace of difference is retained, it is due to the individual's own taste and desire and not anything specially basic. It is only when name and form come in that it is named differently as Prakriti, Paramatma and Bhakta. When name and form are absent, doubt and discussion whether it is masculine, feminine or neutral will not arise at all. Then any description fits. For something that is above and beyond imagination, any name and form can be ascribed. In fact, It has no attribute and no form. It is All pervasive, Omnipresent. When this Subtle Omnipresence is systematically worshipped through a gross form and as having attributes, the devotee will clearly realise its nature through the Sadhana itself. To vouchsafe the knowledge of this Sadhana and that Truth, and to bless the Bhaktas with that Bliss, the Attributeless Paramatma incarnates in this world, assuming name and form, and gives scope for all embodied beings to have concrete experience and joy. Through these experiences, the Incarnations facilitate the realisation that Paramatma is Sarvantaryami and Sarvabhooth-antaratma, All pervasive, the Inner Atma of everything in Creation. Lord Krishna showed in his own form the entire Creation. Until he saw with his own eyes how Lord Krishna had contained in His gross form the entire Creation, even Arjuna failed to understand that Krishna was Sarvantaryami.

Love, Lover and the Loved, all these are One, and the same. Without Love, there can be no lover. Even if there are both Love and the Lover, without the Loved, Love has no function. In all three, Love is the chief ingredient. That which is saturated chiefly and uniformly in everything, that is Paramatma. So there is no difference between these three. In all three, Prema is discernible as the Sarvantaryami; therefore, can it not be realised that everything is Paramatma-swaroopa? Certainly, it can be realised without fail. Everything is suffused with Prema. So, we can unhesitatingly declare the Paramatma as Prema-swaroopa. In the entire creation, for all living things, Prema is manifesting itself in various forms. The nature of Prema cannot alter, though it is known under different names like Vatsalya, Anuraga, Bhakti, Ishtam etc., according to the direction in which it is canalised. But, whatever the form the essence cannot alter. On the basis of this knowledge and experience, the conclusion becomes clear that Paramatma is Sarvabhooth-antaratma, the inner Atma of all created things.

That which teaches the highest knowledge of this Unity is known as Advaita; that which teaches the principle of the Lover and the Loved, the Jiva and the Brahman is known as Dvaita; that which teaches about all three, Love, Lover and Loved, Prakriti, Jiva and Brahman, is known as Visishtadvaita. But, these three are one. The child that is born changes into the student; the student changes into the householder; but all three are one

and the same person, isn't it? While the manners and the attachments change in various ways, he remains the same. From milk, butter and buttermilk emerge. Milk, which contains all, is Advaita. Butter, which contains the two categories, is Dvaita; after that is separated, the buttermilk which remains is Visishtadvaita. But, though their tastes differ the colour of all these is the same, always. This, which is the same, in all, is the Nirguna Brahma.

Seeds for the Bhakti Sprouts

The attitude of the worshipper and the worshipped is the seed of Bhakti. First, the worshipper's mind is attracted by the special qualities of the object of worship. He tries to acquire for himself these special qualities. This is the Sadhana. In the early stages of Sadhana, the distinction between worshipper and worshipped is full but, as the Sadhana progresses, this feeling will diminish and, when attainment is reached, there will be no distinction whatsoever. Whatever may be the object of worship one has grasped and loved and sought by sadhana, one should have firm faith that Jivatma is Paramatma. There is only one wish fit to be entertained by the Sadhaka; and, that is the realisation of the Lord, Easwara Sakshatkara. There is no room in the mind for any other wish. That is why Kunti Devi prayed thus to Lord Krishna; 'Let us have always, O, Jagadguru, distress and misery, if only You grant us Your Darshan, the Darshan which destroys rebirth.'

The Bhakta who desires the Supreme and seeks to attain It should have this mental attitude. Then, regardless of joy and sorrow, without any worry about one's own satisfaction he will engage himself in Sadhana firmly, uninterruptedly, and with conviction, and after understanding the Reality, he will have full contentment.

From this point of view, there is no difference between a Jivanmukta and a Bhakta; they are both beyond Ahamkara, Prakriti with its three attributes, and Varnashrama Dharma. The hearts of such will be full of compassion and the urge to do good to the world. It is their Brahmananda which impels them to act in this way. Such a Bhakta will have no desires, for desires are the products of 'I'-and-'mine' feelings. Only after they are uprooted, a person becomes a Bhakta, isn't it? So, there can be no room in him for desire. He is a Bhakta of Amrita-swaroopa, Immortal Nature. For one with that Amrita-swaroopa, there can be no appetite except for the sweetness of Ananda.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Sandeha Nivarini

3

Swami: Oh! When did you arrive? You were not visible anywhere outside. Are you well?

Bhakta: It's two days since I came. I see here a number of people everywhere outside. I hear the incessant confusion of voices. Coming from my place to avoid that

confusion, I find here too crowds everywhere. Therefore, I entered inside. There, it is fine, blissful, and quiet. That is why I was in the Hall inside. It is as quiet inside as it is restless outside.

Swami: What is special in this? It is natural. Where there is jaggery, there gather the ants...and between outside and inside, this is the distinction! That is the characteristic. That is how it is.

Bhakta: Swami! I do not understand what You say. If You tell me in detail, I shall listen and be happy.

Swami: You yourself said, didn't you, that there is an outside and an inside. Well. Those are what we call 'Bahyaprapancham' and 'Antaraprapancham', the external world and the internal world. Now, which is the internal? Give me your idea.

Bhakta: You want it to come from my mouth itself? It would be so good if You speak.

Swami: Well. Making the questioner himself give out the answers is the Sanathana method of teaching. If those who question, themselves give the answers, they would clearly understand the subject. The lecturing style is different. In olden days, all the Rishis enabled their disciples to understand Vedanta only by this method. So...come on! Speak! Let us see.

Bhakta: Do you ask me to speak of the objects I have seen with the eye?

Swami: Not only the eye. Tell me all that you have experienced and known through all the senses of cognition, the eye, the ear...etc.

Bhakta: Earth, sky, water, sun, moon, wind, fire, stars, dusk, mountains, hills, trees, rivers, women, men, children, old persons, animals, birds, coldness, heat, the happy the miserable, fishes, insects, disease...like these I have seen many.

Swami: Enough, enough, that is enough! This is the "Prapancha"...Did you see it only today? Did it exist yesterday? Will it exist tomorrow?

Bhakta: Why do you ask me so, Swami? It has existed like this for ages isn't it? Who knows for how long it will exist, or since how long it has existed?

Swami: 'Since how long it has existed!' you said isn't it? That is what we speak of as 'Anadi', Beginningless. This external world is beginningless...When there is 'external', there must be 'internal' also, is it not?...Well, have you ever seen a cinema?

Bhakta: Ever seen! Why, Swami, the cinema too is a part of the Prapancham, isn't it? I have seen many.

Swami: What did you see? Tell me.

Bhakta: I have seen many wonderful 'pictures'; I have heard numerous experiences of joy and sorrow.

Swami: 'I have seen', you say. The screen is one, the 'picture' is another. Did you see both?

Bhakta: Yes.

Swami: Did you see the screen and the 'picture' both at the same time?

Bhakta: How is that possible, Swami? When the pictures are seen, the screen is not visible; when the screen is visible the pictures are not seen.

Swami: Right! The screen, the pictures, do they exist always?

Bhakta: No. The screen is permanent; the pictures come and go.

Swami: As you say, the screen is permanent and the pictures come and go. For this 'permanent' and 'impermanent' we use the words, Sthiram and Asthiram, Nityam and Anityam, Ksharam and Aksharam. I shall ask on another subject: Does the picture fall on the screen or the screen fall on the picture? Which is the basis for what?

Bhakta: The pictures fall on the screen; so, for the picture, the screen is the basis.

Swami: So too, the external world which is like the picture has no permanence; it changes. The internal world is fixed; it does not change. The external has the internal as its basis, its substratum.

Bhakta: But, Swami! I heard you say Ksharam-Aksharam, Nityam-Anityam.

Swami: Yes, my boy! You were speaking now of pictures, do these have names and forms?

Bhakta: Haven't they? It's only because they have names and forms that the story is understood. Then only do we recollect Ramayana and Bharatham. There is no formless name and nameless form.

Swami: Good! That is well said! Where there is form there must be name; where there is name, there must be form. Both these are connected with each other. When we say, "Avinabhava Sambandha", it is to this relationship that we refer. Have you understood now the meaning of 'prapancham'?

Bhakta: I have grasped that it is identified with name and form, but...Swami...I would like to hear you describe how it originated.

Swami: You should not fall into the tangle now. If we engage ourselves in describing that, it would be like getting into a mango garden and without eating the fruit we have plucked, calculating the number of trees in the garden, the number of twigs on each branch, the number of fruits on each twig, and what the total price of all the mangoes would be if the price of one mango is so much. Instead of senselessly wasting precious time in the collection of this information, we should, like the person who eats the fruit, find out what is of primary importance; and understanding that thing first, attain contentment and joy. Leave that alone. What did you say is the nature of this Prapancham? This Prapancham has another name too, do you know?

Bhakta: I said that the Prapancham is identified with name and form. I have heard that it is known by another name, Jagat.

Swami: This Nama-Roopa Prapancham, this Jagat is like Indrajala or magician's art, real only as long as you see it. So too the world is real only so long as you experience with your Indriyas or senses. That is to say, anything not experienced in the wakeful stage 'is taken as nonexistent. Under such circumstances, we say 'Sat' for existence and 'Asat' for non-existence. Therefore, what do you say of this world? Is it 'Sat' or 'Asat'?

Bhakta: It exists in experience in the wakeful stage, and so it is 'Sat'; it does not exist in the deep sleep stage and so it is 'Asat'.

Swami: Oh! Sat, Asat, did you say? When these two words are added, we get Sadasat, isn't it? This is what is spoken of by us as Maya, do you know?

Bhakta: Is that Maya similar to magic?

Swami: Is it not? 'Indrajalam idam Sarvam'; all this is the magician's work. That is what the Rishis have been saying since ages.

Bhakta: Then, there must be a performer of all this Indrajala, isn't it?

Swami: Certainly, there is. That magician is God. He is endowed with countless auspicious attributes. The Maharishis have formed a name on the basis of each attribute and a form on the basis of each name and attained realisation meditating on those forms, making the Attributeless Attributeful and the Formless Formful? Is it not their experience that is being proclaimed through a thousand tongues? In the Sastras, Vedas and the Upanishads have they not declared how they have realised God in their Dhyana Samadhi, each in his own way, according to his attitude and devotion and worship; how each has been blessed with the Vision of the Lord and the actual consummation of Union with him?

Bhakta: Yes. Swami! I have understood that. But you said that name and form are based on attributes. Kindly explain this to me.

Swami: Certainly. We must now pay attention to such important topics only because the others are beyond your powers of imagination. Listen carefully. Since the Lord pleases all, He is known as Rama. So also He is Premaswaroopa, the embodiment of Love; He is Bhaktavatsala, full of affection to His devotees; He is Krupasagara, Ocean of Mercy. In each such name and form, He has vouchsafed Sakshatkara to Bhaktas and blessed them with Sayujya. The Formless God assumes all forms in order to bless Bhaktas.

Bhakta: I am hippy. I am indeed so happy, Swami! Through Your Grace, I understand quite clearly. Just one doubt: The Formless Paramatma, you said, has countless names. Are all names and forms equal? Is there any difference?

Swami: What a question! All names and forms are certainly equal. Whatever name and form are worshipped, the Lord is of that Unique Real Swaroopa only. It is possible to realise Him through that name and form. But, the Bhakta should pay attention to one matter. In whichever form the Lord is worshipped, the favour prayed for the purpose must be one.

Bhakta: What type of purpose, Swami?

Swami: Mumukshutwam. Desire for Liberation. The Lord alone should be loved, nothing else. Love That. Meditate on That. That should be concretised. Finally, resolve that you be merged in That. That type of acute desire alone one should have.

Bhakta: True, Swami! I have understood well. As you said, I have heard many stories from the Bhagavata and the Ramayana of people who asked the Lord all kinds of favours and brought about their own ruin. Hiranyaksha, Ravana and Bhasmasura and others are remembered for their ways from that day to this. You have said it clearly. It is something which Bhaktas should carefully consider.

Swami: Well! There is no use simply nodding the head for everything, relishing them as 'true', 'true'. If it is firmly fixed in your heart that this is true and this is good, thereafter it is necessary to put it into practice. If you say that it is true so long as I speak and forget when you go away, this listening itself is useless. The food that is eaten is to remove hunger, not for being kept on the tongue, away from the stomach. Then hunger will start again. So also, hearing and not acting accordingly, is useless.

Bhakta: So far, you have told some important things, (1) The External World (2) The Internal World (3) Bhagavan, the Lord. Are these then separate entities, like cause and effect? Or are they connected one with the other?

Swami: Think about it yourself! For this I have already sent the reply in 'Prema Vahini'. It must have reached you today itself. Look into that. Look closely at what is said there of the relationship between 'he that serves', 'He that is served', and 'the wherewithal of Service.'

Bhakta: Swami, You said also Ksharam, Akaharam, Nityam, Anityam. Are there any other names too?

Swami: These two are known as Purusha, also. They are said to be Chetana and Achetana. They are referred to as Jiva and Jada also. The Kshara Akshara Purushas are named in another context as Para and Apra-prakritis. If you contemplate with a clear intelligence you will find that only names change; the Thing does not change.

Bhakta: Then, Swami, just as Kshara Akshara have as synonym Purushas, has Bhagavata, the Lord, any such synonym?

Swami: Why? Bhagavan is well known by the very appropriate name, Purushottama, since He is the Highest of the Purushas.

Bhakta: Oh I How sweet I What a sweet name I Did the Purushas originate from the Purushottama?

Swami: Here comes the big problem. Once before also you asked, did it originate? We must use correct words. Otherwise, we get wrong meanings. We should not say, 'originating' from Purushottama. In Him they shine. I told you before that these Purushas are indicated by the words, Para-Apara Prakriti, Jiva-Jada. This word Prakriti gives the sense of Swabhava and Shakti, isn't it?

Bhakta: It does. I understand Purushottama is one, His Prakriti is the second.

Swami: No. You are mistaken. Think again. Is there any difference between a thing and its nature? Is it possible to separate and see the nature apart from the thing? Still, you said 'two'.

Bhakta: Its a mistake, Swami. It is wrong. No one can separate them. The two are one.

Swami: In current speech we say; sugar is sweet, the sun gives light, it is hot etc. Sweetness is in sugar, light is in the Sun. They are not separate; they are one. Sweetness cannot be known unless sugar is placed on the tongue; without seeing the sun, light and heat cannot be known. Thus, Bhagavan has two characteristics; when we speak of them as two, they are referred to as Purusha and Prakriti; but they are really one. Prakriti in the Bhagavan (this is what is known by the name Mahamaya) is unmanifested and inseparable, like sweetness in sugar. Avinabhava sambandham means just this relationship. By mere willing, this Maya envelopes Bhagavan and manifests in the form of Cosmos or Brahmanda. This is what is called Samashti-Viswaroopa, or Absolute-Full-World-Form. It is this Absolute that expresses itself as Jagat, through the power of Avidya according to the Divine Will.

Bhakta: What is this, Swami? It was all so clear so far, but this word Avidya newly used has upset my train of thought! I didn't understand anything. Please explain.

Swami: Don't be in a hurry! Have you heard the word, Vidya? Do you know its meaning?

Bhakta: Certainly. Vidya means study!

Swami: Vidya means knowledge, Jnana. When 'A' is added, it becomes Ajnana, Ignorance. Though one, Ignorance takes multifarious forms.

Bhakta: Yes, Swami. How did this Avidya come about? Where did it come from?

Swami: You know, don't you, of light and darkness. Do they both exist at the same time?

Bhakta: There can be no darkness when there is light nor light when there is darkness.

Swami: When there is light, where does darkness exist? When there is darkness, where does light exist? Think Well.

Bhakta: This subject is very difficult, Swami! Still, I shall reply as well as I can. Pardon me if I am wrong. Darkness must be in light; light must be in darkness; how else can it be?

Swami: I will ask another small question. Answer me. This light and this darkness; are they Independent, or are they dependent on anything else?

Bhakta: They are dependent on the Sun. When the Sun rises, it is light; when the Sun sets, it is darkness.

Swami: Well, my boy, Vidya and Avidya are dependent on Bhagavan. Vidya has another name, 'Chit'. I shall describe to you all that, if you come next month. This is enough for today. Go and come. If all is eaten at the same time, it won't be digested. It would lead to bad health. What we have heard, what we have eaten, requires time to get digested and assimilated. That is why I have given a month's interval. If within that time all this is fully digested and practised, I shall tell you the rest gladly. Otherwise, you can imagine what that day would be like.

Bhakta: Namaskaram. I am indeed blessed. To digest what is heard, and what is eaten—the power to do this should be vouchsafed by You alone. When everything is the Lord's, how can this alone be ours? But, I shall use the power and knowledge. You have endowed me with, as much as possible, without any waste. Beyond that, it is all my Destiny and Your Grace. I shall take leave with your permission.

Swami: Placing your burden on Destiny and keeping quiet means diminution of effort. With effort and prayer, Destiny can be attained. Without Effort and Prayer.

Destiny and Grace are not gained. Start the effort! Well, my boy, go and come gladly again.

The Divine Prince of Parthi

It was in the early forties that the fame of the Divine Prince of Parthi began spreading in Anantapur, Mysore, Bangalore, Masulipattanam, Hyderabad, Salem, Trichinopoly, Madras and other places. Even as a child, Baba showered His tender affection on His schoolmates and teachers, relatives and neighbours. He used, very often, to distribute fruits, sweets, sugar-candy and countless other objects to the children who gathered around Him for games or Bhajan. Some times, when a pen or pencil was lost at school by friends, He would recover them and restore them by a mere wave of His hand. He excelled His fellows in acting and reciting. His teachers were bewildered at His unique performance in many activities. In fact, He was the hero of the school. He was the Beloved of the poor, the rich and the suffering.

By the age of fourteen, the little Divine Prince captured the hearts of the thousands of devotees who flocked round Him. The silent grace of His lotus eyes spoke lofty messages to those hungry souls. Supreme love radiated from Him to one and all. With the courage of a spiritual Lion He received the thousands who worshiped His sacred feet. Tenderer than a flower, His heart quickly responded with affectionate compassion, whenever devotees came to Him. Then very often, He distributed the sacred Vibhuti, Vighrahas, sweets and fruits to the Bhaktas. Need we say that He could command the laws of Nature? Yes; birds and animals understand His Divinity and respond to His Love.

Healing the sick-curing ‘incurable diseases’ and saving lives was part of His mission for Lokakalyana. He had the highest love and patience to listen to the various sorrowful stories of the fallen, the deserted and the homeless. With love, more tender than a mother’s, He nurses these unfortunate persons. No wonder the Divine Prince of Parthi—fair, sweet, charming and fearless reminds everyone of the Divine Gopal of Brindavan, and His Divine sport.

The Divine Grace of ‘Bala Baba’ as our Prince is known, acts as a healing balm to suffering souls. The nectar of His love quenches the thirst of thousands of souls. One could realise life’s fulfillment here. The purpose of Life’s striving could be achieved by meeting this beloved Gopal of Parthi, the Supreme Architect who has come to play the role of the World Teacher. He has taken the Sarathyam in teaching His children how to live the right mode of life for progressive ascent to the ultimate goal. Towards this end, He has come with the dynamic powers of Siva, Rama, Krishna, Maruti and Dattatreya. So, He has been acting on the world stage, God in human form, crystalised Satchidananda, the Absolute moving on Earth! The marvelous life of Baba has been revealing the transcendental play of the Supreme, the mysterious formative act of the Divine, and the meaning of His unbounded Compassion, illimitable intelligence, infinite

Energy and unsurpassed Joy. Let us worship Him with the flower of virtue, the chandan of viveka, and adore Him with the garland of renunciation of the fruits of action.

DR. S. Lakshmi

Baba's – Discourses

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba left Puttaparthi on 15th June for Bangalore, where the devotees had organised the annual Akhanda Bhajan, at the Vasavi Dharmasala.

The Bhajan was inaugurated by Baba at 8-30 A.M. on the 14th and continued with uninterrupted enthusiasm and devotion for full 24 hours, at the end of which Baba vouchsafed to everyone, the opportunity to pay homage and receive blessings. On the evening of the 15th Baba spoke to a mammoth gathering of citizens and devotees on the inner meaning and significance of Japam, Dhyanam and Bhajan. His Upadesham was full of practical suggestions for the Sadhakas. On the 18th, Baba left Bangalore for Mandya, 60 Miles off on the Mysore Road. The devotees there had arranged a grand Bhajan in the august presence of Baba, after which Baba spoke for about an hour on Bhakti, to the great joy of the vast gathering. The next day, Baba proceeded to Mysore City, where He spent the day at the Sri Sathya Sai Mandir, Sayaji Rao Road. Returning to Bangalore the same night, Baba paid flying visit to Madras. He reached Puttaparthi on 25th June.

On Guru Poornima Day (2nd July), Baba addressed the Bhaktas at Prasanthi Nilayam and gave them the blessing of His Upadesham. He spoke on the need for a Guru to lead the aspirant along the right path and elaborated on the various steps in the progress of the Bhakta, towards God-realisation. On 5th July also, Baba gave Upadesham to the Bhaktas at Prasanthi Nilayam. That day, He spoke on Arpanam which is the result of real Vairagya, which can come only after Anubhavam. He also emphasised the importance of Sadhana and Shraddha. These bare statements of facts cannot, of course, convey the delight of the listeners who were privileged to be at these gatherings, but they are given here, to evoke in the minds of our readers' memories of the delight they themselves experienced when they heard the discourses of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

The Authentic Voice

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has often said that He was endeavoring hard to postpone the announcement of His Avatar-hood, until at last, the call became irresistible in his fourteenth year. Even during His childhood, His Divine powers broke through and astounded all who experienced them. He could see forward into the future and back into the past. He could read people's minds like the pages of a book. He could create anything

out of nothing. Above all, words of profound wisdom—the Authentic Voice—itself fell from those lips, when He cared to advice or admonish anyone.

Nothing more clearly illustrates this aspect of His Avatars-hood than the advice he gave to different Sanyasis, at two different times, one, while He was a ‘young lad of fifteen’ and the other sixteen years later. Strangely enough, the advice He gave them both are identical. These two instances reveal that only an Avatar can penetrate so deeply into personality, admonish with such love and compassion, and grant boons with such assurance and authority.

In the summer of 1951, the town of Bukkapatnam adjacent to Puttaparthi was all agog with celebrations in connection with the visit of a Sanyasi called Digambaraswami. He had lost the use of his legs and was being carried about by the more devoted among his followers, in kind of cradle; but, he had a great reputation for scholarship and spirituality. His Bukkapatnam admirers were eager to pit him against our Bala-Baba at Puttaparthi and watch the reaction of the sweet little Divine Child and the hefty hero who would not talk! So, one evening they carried him into Puttaparthi village and seated him in the house where Baba was! Baba gave the Digambaraswami Upadesham and a towel (!) “If you have cut off all relationships with society and social decencies—and I do not say it is wrong—then, your place is in some forest or mountain cave,” said Baba to the naked ascetic. “On the other hand, if you have the craving for the comforts of social life do not have this show of non-attachment.” These were the words that fell from the lips of the ‘teenaged boy’ and, He continued, “I know your problem. You are afraid you won’t get food, regularly, if you retire from the company of men, isn’t it?” said Baba and, mark these words “Well! I assure you I shall give you food, regularly wherever you are, in the Himalayas or in Dandakaranya!” That was the Authentic Voice. Only an Avatar could have declared so.

Sixteen years later, Baba had occasion to meet another Sanyasi. He was a profound scholar in Eastern and Western philosophy, and a noted practitioner of Raja Yoga. He was more than seventy years old, and engaged in establishing and fostering centers of a certain religious organization. After his interview with Baba, this Sanyasi spoke about it at a meeting at Puttaparthi itself, and so, it is best to give here a summary of what he himself said then. “It is wonderful! Baba told me about a rare and elevating Yogic experience I had, years before He (Baba) was ‘born’! He rebuked me mildly for running about with the delusion, that I am doing great good to the world by my activities. He said that, if only I continued my Yogic Sadhanas, from the stage to which that early Experience has elevated me, I would, from whatever retreat I was in, do more good to the world than by my present efforts. This was an advice no one had so far blessed me with; and, it struck me as the most correct and timely, for my spiritual development. And, turning to me, while I was leaving His Presence, He said, “Wherever you are do not have any worry! I shall look after you and give you sustenance!” The self-same words He spoke sixteen years ago! The Authentic Voice.

Who but an Avatar could give that assurance and, honor it as Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba does?

THREE SONGS

1. “O Bird of Time! What is your age?”

“I have no age, yet, I am the Creator of Time.

I have wrought such a mystery in the minds of all people

That they say, I was, I am, and I will be.

He who knows me, knows God, who is my Creator too”.

2. “O Ocean! Speak out Thy Love to God.”

“Numberless are my servants.

Some are engaged in pearl-making,

Some in making gems of the rarest kind.

I have employed innumerable monster-fishes to guard my treasure.

On the day when my Lord invites me,

I will have all my ornaments for him

And be ready to deck my Beloved God with them”.

3. “O Hills! How long will ye stand mute and serene?”

“We are raised by God, to keep off People from quarrelling.

The moment they learn to realise

That they are brothers and sisters,

We will be called off, to become His Throne on Earth,

When the Earth itself will turn into a Paradise.

DR. K. Vaidyanathan
From “Songs of Devotion”

Thou Divine Stealer

Come! O' Come! O' Lord to one and all
Thou Divine Stealer of hearts and souls
With a melodious patter of Thy lovely feet
Moving like the soft breath of the fading wind
Thy Face aglow with a Divine luminous luster
Cleaving the happy but low murmur of the crowd
Waiting in a breathless whispering silence
Just for a 'Darshan' of a frail little figure
Clad in a robe of shimmering burnished gold
Or may be a blood red robe of splendour
Casting all around a hushed magical spell of enchantment.

‘Tharaki’

Sadhana

A piece of charcoal takes on the colour of fire and becomes hot, only when it is placed in contact with a glowing cinder and vigorously fanned. The burning cinder is Paramatma, the charcoal is the Jiva; fanning is the Sadhana (From a Discourse by Baba.)

Reader! Please note:

“Sanathana Sarathi” is a monthly, for the present, and the articles published in it are purely religio-philosophical. Contributions of articles especially from those who endeavour to put into practice what they speak and write on spirituality are readily welcome.

Anything that smacks of “public news or comments on public news”, personal attacks, rude phraseology, or even non-devotional sentiments can find no place, in here. The Editor enjoys in full the right, wherever he feels it necessary, either to curtail, or to

supplement or even to withhold publication of the articles received. No unpublished article will be returned unless after special request.

No commercial advertisement will be published in this magazine.

As readers are aware, the Subscription Amount of Rupees – Three per year has to be sent to the Editor by M.O. If the M.O reaches the Editor, before 16th of any month, will receive the ‘Sanathana Sarathi’ of the subsequent month and eleven issues thereafter.

Permanent change of address should be intimated before the 10th of the month, mentioning also the subscribers number and the Old Address.

Editor,

“SANATHANA SARATHI”

Prasanthi Nilayam

Puttaparthi

Prema Vahini

For a Sadhaka, Today is His: but, Tomorrow?

Yama is as Omnipresent as Siva! Yama is associated with the Deha, or Body; He cannot affect the Jiva. Siva is associated with Jivi; but He will not allow the body to subsist for any length of time. The body is the essential vehicle for the Jivi to understand its real nature. Still, who knows when it becomes the target for the attention of Yama, the Master of the Deha? Who knows when this body will get entrapped in the coils of Yama's ropes? The Jivi, burdened with this easily destructible body, must grasp the above mentioned caution and be all eager to merge in Siva, whatever the moment, that very moment! No single moment that is passed by can be turned back. People usually delay doing some things, today's till tomorrow, and yesterday's till today. But, the tasks of Sadhana are not of such nature, for them, there is no yesterday and no tomorrow. This very moment is the moment! The minute that has elapsed is beyond your grasp; so, too, the minute that is approaching is not yours! It is only that Jivi which has engraved this understanding on its heart that can merge in Siva. Without assimilating this truth in the heart, Jivi is immersed in aims of today and tomorrow, based on the assumption that the body is important; it thus lays the foundations for worldly attachment; and so, it is born again and again with body and continues to have the Darshan of Yama! It is the right of the Sadhaka to have Sivadarshana and not Yamadarshana! He will not wish for it, nor even contemplate it. Only those who have this relationship of the Deha and the Jiva are Men. And those who have realised this principle will not flag even to the slightest extent in their Sadhana. These days, man is content with visualising and experiencing evanescent worldly joys. He has no rest. Spending the nights in sleep and the days in eating and drinking, he grows and grows, until, in his old age, Death pursues him. Then, he cannot decide where to go or what to do; all his senses have weakened; no one, nothing can rescue him; so he ends as obedient meant to the jaws of Death!

How sad it is that this human life, precious as an invaluable diamond that cannot be priced at all, has been cheapened to the standard of a worn-out worthless coin! There is no use repenting, after wasting time without profit, without meditating on God or practising any Sadhana to realise Him. What is the use in planning a well, when the house has caught fire? When is it to be dug? When will water become available? When is the fire to be extinguished? It is an impossible task! If, at the very start, there was a well ready, how helpful it would be on such critical occasions! Beginning to contemplate on God during the last moments is like beginning to dig the well. So, if from now on, one equips himself by the contemplation of God off and on, it will stand him in good stead when the end approaches. Start today the Sadhana that has to be done tomorrow! Start Now the Sadhana that has to be done today! One does not know what is in store next moment; therefore, there should be no delay in engaging oneself in the Sadhana that has to be done. Physical stamina is also necessary for this Sadhana, and so, the body has to be tended, though over-tending causes damage. To the degree that is essential, it should be looked after with great care.

Path for a Bhakta to become a Mukta

This human birth is very difficult to attain. It cannot be got for a song. The body is as a caravanserai; the mind is its watchman; the Jivi is the pilgrim. And so, no one of these has any kinship with the others. The pilgrim is bound to Salvation City, Mokshapuri. For a trouble-free journey, there is nothing so reliable as Namasmarna, the Remembrance of the name of the Lord.

Once the sweetness of that name has been experienced, the person will not have exhaustion, unrest or sloth. He will fulfill his pilgrimage of Sadhana joyfully, enthusiastically and with deep conviction. Still, for achieving this Sadhana, Sadbhava or Righteousness is very important. Without fear of sin, righteousness cannot originate; love of God, too, cannot develop. This fear produces Bhakti which results in the worship of the Lord.

Stupidity is the root cause of man's downfall. It is like sheepishness! When one rolls into a pit, all fall into the same pit. That is ruinous. Avoiding this, it is better to think about the good and the bad, the pros and cons of whatever is done and then jump. Death will not leave off any one, whatever he be. It continues to threaten all, that, if it is another's turn today, it is yours tomorrow. Look at the blossoms in the garden! When the gardener plucks the flowers, the buds exult that tomorrow is their turn to be gathered into his hands, and their faces are so full of joy when they unfold in that hope. Do they feel any sadness? Do their faces droop? Are they any the less bright? No. The moment they know that the next day it is their turn, they make themselves ready with great gusto and excitement. So, also, one must be ready on the path of Sadhana, enthusiastically remembering the name of the Lord, without worrying and feeling sad, that one's turn is tomorrow or so, because some one died today. The body is like a tube of glass. Inside it, the mind is ever changeful and restless. Seeing its antics, death keeps laughing. The bird Jiva is in the nine-holed pot. It is a wonder how the bird has a body; how it came into the pot, and how it rises up and goes. The Suras, the Munis and Naras of the Nine Khandas and the Nine Dwipas are all undergoing the sentence of carrying about with them the burden of the body. Now, of these, who are the friends and who, the enemies? When egoism dies out, all are friends; there are then no enemies. This lesson has to be remembered by all.

Man is experiencing joy and misery through the ear. Therefore, avoiding the cruel arrows of hard words, one should use words that are sweet, pleasant and soft; and, with that softness, add the sweetness of Truth. To make the word soft, if falsehood is added, it would only clear the way for some more misery. A person who has become a Sadhaka should use very soft, sweet, true and pleasant words. Such persons can be recognised by their good qualities themselves. Thus, of those who have become Sadhakas, the manas (mind) is Mathura, the Hrudayam (Heart) is Dwaraka, and the Deha (Body) is Kasi. At the seat of the tenth gate, it is possible to realise the Paranjyoti the Supreme Effulgence. All efforts are of no avail if the heart is not pure. Look at the fish! Living as it does perpetually in water, has it rid itself of its foul smell to any extent? No. The Vasana of Man will not disappear even if he is immersed in many heart-purifying Sadhanas, so long as the heart is full of the illusion of Egoism. Such a man, if he is desirous of getting rid of the feeling of 'I' and 'Mine', must worship Han. He must become a Sadhaka, without likes and dislikes. Vikaras like these cannot co-exist in the same heart, with the Sadhu nature. Light and Darkness can never co-exist at the same place, at the same time, isn't it? He whose heart is ruled by the group of Six Passions can have only Ahamkara, as his Mantri! Those who have such a Mantri are worse than foolish men, however great they claim to be as Pundits, Sadhus or Sanyasins.

"Can a donkey carrying perfume become an elephant?" Can an ass change into an elephant, simply by carrying a bundle of sandalwood? It can appreciate the weight and not the scent! But, the elephant pays no regard to the weight; it inhales the sweet scent, isn't it? So too, the Sadhaka or the Sanyasin or the Bhakta will take in only the pure truth, the pure essence of good activities,

of Godliness, and of the Sastras, Vedas and Upanishads. On the other hand, if for the sake of mere scholarship, learning and disputation, one goes on arguing, he will know only the weight of logic missing the scent of Truth! The onlookers may praise them as the embodiments of the Sastras and the Vedas; but, where even the essentials are lacking, how can there be an embodiment? For those in search of the essence, the burden is no consideration. If mere reason is employed, nothing worthwhile is gained. Love (Prema) is the one big instrument for the constant remembrance of the Lord. To keep that instrument safe and strong, the Sadhaka needs no other appliance than the scabbard of Viveka, Discrimination.

There are many in the world who utilise their vast learning in disputations and believe that they are superior; this is a great mistake. If they are really so learned, there will not be so much disputation at all. They will assume silence as the honourable course, because, those exalted in learning will have experienced the essence of the Vedas, Sastras, and Upanishads. They will see that the nature of that essence, its core, the purity of the Godhead it proclaims, are all One, however one may realise it. They know that God appears in whatever form He is taken to have, and that He manifests in action any one to the feelings which he associates with Him.

Of these two, what is important is the acquisition of single-mindedness, equanimity, free from Vikara, i.e., likes and dislikes, and not the acquisition of argumentativeness. Why have we all these Sadhanas, all this Japa, Dhyana, Bhajan etc? Is it not for acquiring single-mindedness, one-pointedness? Once that one-pointedness has been earned, human effort becomes unnecessary, its inner significance will then be revealed to him. So, those eager to become Sadhakas, to attain salvation, should not yield to arguments and counter-arguments, they should not be enticed by wiles of bad feeling. They should see their own faults and not repeat them again, they should guard and protect the one-pointedness they have acquired, with their eyes fixed on the goal they are after, dismissing as trash whatever difficulties, defeats and disturbances they might encounter on their path. One must dwell on such subjects as would give enthusiasm and joy, and not waste valuable time, building up doubts regarding all things, big and small. Whatever else is unimportant, these two have to be attended to as essential: (1) the conceit that one knows everything. (2) Doubt whether it is or is not. These are the two chief enemies of the Sadhaka. What does it matter who these enemies are? One should decide for oneself that one is firmly fixed in one's Reality. If that is pure, everything is pure. If that is true, everything is true. If you wear blue eyeglasses, though Nature is resplendent with many colours, you see only the colour you have worn, isn't it? If the world appears to you as with differences, that is due to the fault in you only. If all appears as one Prema, that too is your Prema only. For both these, the feeling in you is the cause. It is only because one has faults within him, that he sees the world as faulty. When there is no knowledge of fault in oneself no fault can be found even by search, for should they not know which are the faults?

Now, a question may arise whether the Lord Himself has faults, because He too searches for faults? But, how can it be said that the Lord is searching for faults? He searches for goodness only, not for faults and sins. Those are based on the standard of the Gunas of each. The Lord will not examine the wealth, the family, the Gotra, the status, or the sex. He sees only the Righteousness, the Sadbhava. Those endowed with such Sadbhava, He considers as deserving His Grace, whoever they are, whatever they are.

Therefore, develop Sadbhava, Goodness and Righteousness. Live and Act in Joy and Love. These two are sufficient; salvation can be attained without fail.

Sandeha Nivarini

4

Swami: Oh! You have come! I was watching for long whether you have come or not. I knew you are a person who comes punctually. Glad to see you.

Bhakta: Whatever else I may disregard, will I disregard Your command, Swami? In fact, I am eagerly looking forward to the sixteenth of every month to meet you. What greater happiness can I get? What better food can I take?

Swami: Very good! Such Shraddha and Bhakti are great helps in Man's true Path. Better than losing sleep and rejecting food in the fruitless pursuit of evanescent worldly pursuits, how much more joyful it is to attain the true, the meaningful and the holy goal! 'Leave that aside now. What do you want now? Speak, let me see.

Bhakta: Swami, last month You said something about 'Chit' and You were pleased to say that You will explain more about it this month. Since then, I have been counting the passing days in order that I may know about it from You. The day has come at last. Please tell me about it.

Swami: Have you understood what has been told so far? Understanding does not mean mere mugging up. By practice and experience, have you realised in thought, word and deed, and with full equanimity, the true nature of the World, that the World is Unreal?

Bhakta: It is only by understanding that, isn't it, Swami, that one can ever be immersed in thoughts of Sai, the Lord, giving up all other activities and duties? Had I not understood that much, I would have wasted this precious time.

Swami: Good, my dear boy! How sad will the ryot be, if the seeds he has planted do not sprout and yield harvest! So too, if the seeds of True wisdom that I sow do not come up as good saplings and give good harvest, I too am affected. On the other hand, if they grow well and fructify into a harvest of Ananda, how happy I would be, That is My food. This is the Seva you should do to me. There is nothing higher than this. Without flinging away the good words and true, spoken for your sake, if you practise them and derive joy therefrom, the essence of that joy is my food. If you thus act according to My words and put them into practice. I will gladly tell you more, whatever may be the Dumber of things you ask. When what is said is allowed to deteriorate without being put to use, if people come and ask me to speak and speak again, what is to be said? If all start practising, as you are doing, the World will not have any troubles; Untruth will not manifest itself.

Bhakta: Swami! To practise the Divine Words too the Lord's Grace is the basic need just as for everything else. Without that, nothing can happen. It is ever-present, as You said. Just as

the Sun is hidden by fog, Grace can be obstructed by the darkness of 'I' and 'mine'. But these can be overcome by Practice and Discipline. That is why if we understand well the meaning of what we hear and follow, it is so easy. This is my experience; I do not know of others.

Swami: True. True. What you say is correct. You have understood it well. Without grasping the meaning, if various interpretations are given, that distorts Reality. And if a wrong sense is imputed, it falsifies Reality. But, if it is clearly understood, practice becomes easy. Now consider this. Are all born at the same time? Do all die at the same time? Similarly, the highest Wisdom will dawn, in this person or that, at different times. If you go on singing, song after song, you learn music. So also, if I speak and continue speaking, all will understand the Reality. It is not my mission to keep silent because people are not understanding. To such, it must be communicated once, twice and more times if necessary.

Bhakta: Swami, we are like lumps of iron; the Lord is like the magnet. Both are related to each other. But if that lump of iron has to be changed into an article of use in God's hands, it has to be heated in the fire of anxiety and beaten by the hammer of pain, so that it may obey and respond. So, in order to shape lumps of iron like us into instruments, You have to take much trouble. You have said that this is Your Mission. Now please tell me about the 'Chit' which You mentioned last month.

Swami: Yes. 'Chit' has also another name, Shuddha Satwa; i.e., Pure Consciousness. It is as opposed to the Impure Consciousness as Vidya is to Avidya. Impure consciousness is inherent in the Pure, as much as Darkness is inherent in Light. Since many words are spoken, don't get confused my dear boy! Vidya-Avidya, Jnana-Ajnana, Shuddha Satwa-Malina Satwa, all indicate the same idea, not different ones. I shall ask you another question Have you heard the word, the opposite of 'Prakriti'?

Bhakta: I have heard the word, Swami. When I studied grammar I learnt that the opposite of Prakriti is 'Vikriti'.

Swami: What does Vikriti mean?

Bhakta: Vikriti means, Vikaram, changed, transformed...derived. Agni is the original; Agni is the derived word. So, too, Jama is derived from Yama, Janna from Yajna, and so on.

Swami: So also, the Lord's Prakriti is known as Vidya, and its derived or lower form or Vikriti is known as Avidya. For Vidya or Shuddha Satwa, Avidya or Malina Satwa is the lower form.

Bhakta: How is that, Swami? Vidya is effulgent in the Lord and Avidya is apparent only because of Vidya. That is to say, the Universal Cosmic Principle is in the Lord, and this Universal Principle itself appears as Individual different from individual (by the external characteristics of name and form, the appearance of Individuals is caused). This Avidyashakti or the power of Ignorance also manifests as an inseparable entity. For, the Lord is the only Existence. Therefore, that One Existence is the Basis or Foundation for the Universal and the Particular, the Totality as well as the apparent Parts. This is Your meaning, isn't it, Swami?

Swami: That is why the Lord is referred to as Sathya and Brahman. This Sathyam is Akhanda or Indivisible. It is Advaita, Non-dual. It is Anantha, without End. In the Upanishads, this Sathya (associated with the unmanifested Maya Shakti) is called the Puma. 'Adah' and the Sathya (associated with the manifested Maya Shakti) are called the Poorna, 'Idam'. This is the secret of the Upanishadic mantra, Poornamadah Poornamidam

Bhakta: Oh, what fine teaching! Just like giving unto the hand a fruit peeled and ready to eat! This manifested total cosmos or Puma arose out of the Puma of Unmanifested Indivisible Reality, this is what you spoke of, is it not?

Swami: It is on account of this that we say Vasudevassarvamidam, Sarvamkhalvidam Brahma etc. The words Vasudeva, Brahma are different but there is no difference in meaning at all. Did you understand?

Bhakta: It is all like nectar, Swami. But so far you have not told me, who I am?

Swami: This is enough now. Next month I shall solve your doubts, with illustrative examples. Grasp well what has been told. Practise; don't forget and lay aside. Meditate on it. Well, you can take leave now.

A Festival of Joy

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba left Puttaparthi on 25th July, and reached Gudur Town on the 26th. At 6-30 P.M. that day, He addressed a huge gathering that had spontaneously assembled round His residence to have His Darshan. He introduced Himself as a Mendicant, seeking offerings of Love! He appealed for the fuller manifestation of the Divinity in Man and said that in order to achieve this, everyone should cultivate Brotherhood and practise Self-control. Baba also sang a few soul-stirring songs and the entire audience joyfully joined the chorus.

Leaving Gudur about 11 A. M., on the 26th Baba reached the Village of Pedur in the Kovur Taluk, shortly after noon. Here amidst a happy cheering audience, He gave Darshan to all; He also opened the new premises of the Sri Ramakrishna Granthalaya, erected by the villagers. He then proceeded to Chinthathope, about four miles away, where the villagers welcomed Him with Bhajan, reminiscent of Prasanthi Nilayam itself! Later, Baba reached Kodavalur where thousands were awaiting His arrival to have His Blessings. It was indeed a most touching spectacle, the vast gathering packed in the compound of the Rice Mill, perched on roofs and trees, beating time and singing the Namavalis. Baba spoke to them for about an hour, on the basic discipline of spiritual life, for, as He said, the spiritual path alone can give joy, contentment and peace to all. He then left for Cherulopalem and after a short stay, He arrived at Gandavaram, where the people had made elaborate arrangements to accommodate the vast audience of villagers and to accord a grand reception to Bhagavan. Baba sang a few Bhajan songs here too and He also spoke a few words to the assembly.

During His stay at Nellore, Baba very kindly visited the houses of a large number of devotees and gave Darshan to thousands of people who gathered wherever He went. He also moved out into the villages of Vidavalur, Mudegunta. Tallupoodi, and Muthukur and in every one of these places, He vouchsafed Darsan to all those who had collie, eager to see Him and receive His Blessings.

The highlight of the programme at Nellore was the Public Meeting, which Baba addressed on the evening of the 28th, at the V. R. College Maidan. Though the meeting was not heralded by handbills, the entire area was overflowing with an eager assemblage of men and women, long prior to the arrival of Baba at 7 P. M. For ninety minutes, Baba held this unprecedented large Nellore gathering entranced in the silence of ecstasy, listening to His Message of Love. He began with an exhortation for Vichara and an emphasis on the need for discrimination. He said that it is the duty of Man to develop the capacity for Viveka and Vairagya, which he alone possesses. He explained how Sathya and Prema can be built securely only on these twin bases. He spoke of the storm and stress of life today and of the role of each one in promoting Brotherhood, Peace and Goodwill. He called upon the students to remember their ancient heritage and appealed to them to develop a strong and sturdy character. His discourse was interspersed with stories, which moved many to tears, and songs, which awakened the heart-strings into sweet and joyous melody.

On Tuesday, the 29th, Baba granted an interview to representatives of the Press at Nellore. He was asked a number of questions mostly religious and philosophical, as well as on the activities at Prasanthi Nilayam, Puttaparthi, for all of which Baba graciously gave clear, convincing and copious answers.

From Nellore, Baba arrived at Venkatagiri Town on August, the 1st. Next day, He gave Darshan to the public of the place and after Bhajan, spoke on the importance of what He called the 'small things' of life that collectively make up character and shape one's destiny. He declared that vigilant effort is called for in order to keep oneself pure and straight and true. He assured every one that His Grace was on all who strove to tread the Higher Path. Baba returned to Puttaparthi on August 4th, after what, to all the thousands who saw and heard Him during the ten days, was a veritable Festival of joy.

Divine Grace

Beloved Seekers after Truth, Namaste! Patanjali in one of his aphorisms has described that Bhagavan's Grace is essential for liberation from the bondage of Samsara, a product of Avidya. Avidya means Ignorance, the absence of knowledge. Its origin is in the Sankalpa of the Lord Himself. Sri Bhagavan the omniscient wishes Leela; Avidya, the reverse of Vidya provides Him with ever-lasting sport, out of its inexhaustible store. Sri Bhagavan is the seer (Drashta) and this world of names and forms is the seen (Drishyam). In other words, it is a big show, this enactment by Avidyamaya and Bhagavan witnesses it and enjoys it. For, He wished it and it is going on from time immemorial. He is the Master of both Vidya and Avidya. He is the Paramatman. He is the only Sat (Existence) without a second. He is the one independent reality; all else is dependent on Him. All this is therefore His Leela only.

Now, let us consider what we are and what our relationship is with the Paramatman and the World surrounding us. If we try to examine ourselves awhile, we can know that there are two different entities which constitute our individuality. One is the material body, the Kshetram ; the other is the soul, spirit (Chaitanya) consciousness, the knower of this body (Kshetrajna), in other words the Jivatman, firmly rooted in the ego-consciousness. Though this soul, (Jivatman) is a different entity from the constituting elements of the material body, emerging from out of the Primordial Nescience (Moolaprakriti), the Jiva, viz., the pure 'I' consciousness, which is ever united with Paramatman forgets its inseparability and its real nature under the influence of Avidya, the inscrutable power of the Lord and, so, it identifies itself with the Body, feels one with it, and enjoys all the dualities of life, such as pain and pleasure, sorrow and happiness etc.. thinking all the while that it is the doer (Karta) and the enjoyer (Bhokta). In fact, the Jiva, the Ever-pure Soul is neither the doer nor the enjoyer. Under the sway of Ignorance, it has identified itself with the body, and become a prey to Avidya, and so, it is experiencing the troubles and tribulations of life.

"Is there any hope of escape, from the clutches of this dreadful Avidya?"-This is the question pertinently asked by every one of us. The Bhagavan's immediate response is, "Yes, there is." "Those who unreservedly take refuge in me can cross this world of Maya," is the Bhagavan's assurance. He clearly states that He would grant, to those who are ever devoted to Him only, who are eagerly desirous of re-union with Him, the equanimity of mind or Samachittatvam, by which they can reach His Proximity (Sannidhyam). He declares in His infinite (compassion that He is the saviour of steadfast devotees from the ocean of Samsara, the Kindler of the light of knowledge (Jnanadeepam) in their hearts. In His Divyopadesam, He assures complete release from bondage to such Bhaktas who, leaving renounced all Dharmas, take unconditional refuge in His lotus Feet.

Oh! Seekers after Truth! What more do we require? We have the fullest assurance from the Lord. So, lest us try hard to obtain His Grace. We should renounce all desire for earthly enjoyments, take unconditional refuge (Sharanagati) without any reservation, either of body or mind, much less of individuality (i.e., feeling as a separate entity from Bhagavan), and throw all burdens upon Him (Atmarpanam or Bharanyasam). Then the Lord takes possession of the heart, which hitherto was the seat of the Ego, (Ahamkara) and after removing by his Grace all dross, (Mala, Vikshepa, and Avarana Doshas), He makes the body a toy in His hands, suitable for His play, or an instrument, with which He carries out His programme of Viswa Kalyanam, the wellbeing of the World. This is the Path, the Sadhana Marga, laid down by the Bhagavan. But, He is kind enough to prescribe different grades of Sadhana to suit people treading different walks of life and endowed with different tendencies and temperaments. For instance, a rigid course is prescribed for Sanyasis, a milder but effective course for Grihastas and a preliminary course for beginners and all lay people. But, uniformly to all, He prescribes firm belief in God, unflinching devotion to His Lotus Feet, pure Love towards all, unswerving fidelity to one's Dharma, (duties pertaining to various stations of life), unshakable faith (Shraddha), sincerity, patience, truthfulness, and good conduct. Besides, one should earnestly take up the Namaskirtana, Japam, worship of Divinity in his chosen ideal, contemplation of His Glory, and meditation on His name and form, regularly and at the prescribed time. If a Sadhaka follows this course of Sadhana, having complete, reliance on God, He will lead the seeker, step by step to the final Goal. He will never allow him to fall, or go astray. Regarding the seeker's relationship with the

world, since we are all children of Immortality, the One Bhagavan, it behooves us to be in friendly relation with all His creation.

A humble message to my brethren, the devotees of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sainath, and to those with an unbiased mind and broad vision: Behold! Here is the Eternal Sat, incarnated in flesh and blood as Sri Sathya Sai to vouchsafe Eternal Bliss and Immortality to real seekers of Truth! Arise, Awake, Perceive, Love, and Realise! I proclaim this after having had full experience for eight years with the Sakara Bhagavan of Puttaparthi. He is the Infinite Ocean of Love. I can tell you out of my little experience that He can turn a durachari into a sadachari, by a glance or touch. Can we forget the sweet saying of our Bhagavan? If the child takes a few steps forward the mother would at once come and take up the baby into her bosom?" Therefore, take complete refuge in Him and He will look to the rest. For, it is all His Play! It is all His Will! He knows what to grant, when to grant, and how! Glory to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Om Tat Sat.

Doopati

Atmananda

Aspiration for joy or happiness is inherent in every being. But, the happiness which the finite mind experiences is imperfect, relative, conditioned and fleeting. Further, the type of joy an individual is capable of experiencing is an index of his spiritual advance. The pleasures which cultured men enjoy are far more refined and of longer duration than those enjoyed by an uncivilised person. The delight yielded by literature, music, painting or sculpture is certainly of a higher type than the pleasure derived from sensual enjoyment. The pleasure born of reading religious books and hearing spiritual discourses is evanescent and limited. While hearing, the mind is temporarily lulled but it soon reverts to its original state. The Bliss of the spirit, however, is self-sufficient and ever-lasting and so, it is superior to all other kinds of happiness or joy.

As discerning individuals, we should pursue the path which leads to Atmic Bliss. While sense enjoyment or intellectual pleasure depends on some external object, Atmic Bliss is not so dependent. It transcends the physical, the mental and the intellectual states. A man may be rich or powerful; he may be learned or famous; yet, if he has not experienced this Atmananda, he should be still considered imperfect. He has not reached the goal, as he has not found repose in the Self.

To reach this state, one should have two things: Abhyasa and Vairagya, the Practice of Meditation and the Cessation of Craving for sensual enjoyment and worldly pleasure. Abhyasa and Vairagya act and react on each other. As Vairagya increases, Meditation improves and as Meditation advances, there is less and less desire for worldly pleasures.

By the process of Meditation, when we go deeper and deeper into ourselves, we shall at last be absorbed in the Divine Source and be fixed in the Bliss-Ineffable.

Is this path incompatible with the life of a householder or of a businessman? An emphatic "No" is the answer. But, on one condition While doing the work that has fallen to our lot, we must feel that the Supreme Power is working through us using us as Its instruments. All our spare hours

should be devoted to a rigorous discipline for weaning our mind away from the longing for worldly things. This is easily attained by constant repetition of the Divine Name. Above all, and this is most essential, we ought to set apart some time in the early hours of the day, and before retiring for the night, for meditation.

It is the duty of every individual to live this life, not for any ideal lesser than this—the Experiencing of the Bliss Absolute, the Atmananda, for as the Shruti says, “Anandam Brahma.”

C. S. Ramaswami

To the Feet of the Guru

Trample, trample, trample ascending
Trample again, O trample hard
Let all the Ego die!

Let it wither, all that is 'I'
And, only 'You' remain!

As every one of the thousand hoods
Turn by turn, of Kaliya was tread
By Feet Divine of Govinda,
Let my Being vomit all the venom.
Let the reptile Ego perish for ever,
And dying, conquer Death.

Trample ascending, trample unending,
Trample hard, O Lord,
Let all the Ego die.

Let perish all my Falsities.
May Thee alone triumph
Where 'I' was coiled once.

—Kuvempu

Prema Vahini

Manava and Danava. The Differences in Character

Manavas or Men are full of Prema or Love. Their hearts are springs of Mercy. They are endowed with True Speech. Peace is the characteristic of the mind of Man. That is the innate quality of the mind. In order to search for Peace there is no need to go anywhere else. As gold and silver lie hidden under the earth and pearl and coral under the sea, Peace and Joy also lie hidden in the activities of the Mind. Desirous of acquiring these hidden treasures, if one dives and turns mental activities inward, then, he becomes full of Prema or Love. Only those who have so filled themselves with Love and who live in the light of that Love can be called Men. Those devoid of Prema are Danavas, Monsters, Sub-humans. That holy quality of Love will not remain unmanifested off and on; it will be ever present, without change. It is one indivisible. Those saturated with Love are incapable of spite, selfishness, injustice, wrong and misconduct; but, in those who have no Love, the above qualities are always above everything else. Danavas are those who trample on Love and consider inferior qualities as important, while Manavas are those who consider those inferior qualities as snakes to be destroyed and Love alone as the quality to be fostered. Bad conduct and bad habits distort the humanness of Man. Hearts filled with the nectar of Love indicate genuine human in man. By Prema or Love is meant Love which is unsullied, unselfish, devoid of Impurity and continuous.

Between Manava and Danava, the difference is only Ma and Da! But, the letter Ma is soft, sweet and immortal in symbolism, while the sound Da is merciless, lawless and burning. Are they men, who have no sweetness in them and who endeavour to suppress the craving for immortality? Theirs is the nature of Danavas, though the form is human! For, it is not the form that is primary; it is the character. How can those with human form be called men, if they have no kindness and no rightness, and if they have the nature of Danavas? No, they cannot be called so. Now, the sentences in my discourse are not addressed on the basis of form; they are based on the qualities of men. Among men, there are Danavas in plenty! They both look alike but, their qualities make them distinguishable as Manava and Danava. The Manavas engage themselves in the soft and sweet deeds of kindness, rightness, love and truth and they are witnesses to the possibility of realising, and manifesting one's immortality. Their good nature is resplendent on their faces as Ananda; but without that goodness, even if he is infatuated with joy his face will indicate only the destructive fire of the Danava; it will not have the Grace of Ananda.

Today's words are only the works of Yesterday

During Treta Yuga, when Narada asked Sri Ramachandra about the nature and characteristics of His Dasas and of the Sadhakas or spiritual aspirants, He answered as below:

“Listen. O Narada! Men who are my Dasas are full of Love; they always stand by Dharma or Righteousness; they speak the Truth; their hearts melt with mercy; they are devoid of wrong; they avoid sin; their nature is well-founded; they will renounce everything gladly; they eat in moderation; they are engaged in doing good to others; they have no selfishness; they are worried by no doubts; they will not lend their ears to

flattery. They are eager to listen to the praise of the good nature of others. They have beautiful, strong and holy character. Sadhakas are those who endeavour to acquire such qualities and possess such a character. Now, I shall tell you about those who are Priya to Me. Any one who is engaged in Japa, Tapas and Vrata, who has Samyama or self-control, Niyama or Discipline, any one who has Faith, Patience, Comradeship, Kindness, and Joy as well as unalloyed Prema towards Me, is Priya to Me.

Now, about My real Bhaktas. Whoever, with Viveka and Vairagya, and Vinaya and Vijnana with discrimination and renunciation, with humility and wisdom, are aware of the knowledge of Reality, whoever are always immersed in the contemplation of my leela. Whoever dwells on My name at all times and under all conditions, and who sheds tears or love whenever the Lord's name is heard from any lip, they are My genuine Bhaktas."

Thus answered Sri Rama to Narada. So, the Lord will protect in all ways and at all times those who worship Him in complete and uncontaminated Bhakti, just as a mother protects her infants, a cow saves her calf from danger, and the eyelids guard the eyes, effortlessly and automatically. When the infant grows up into an adult, the mother will not pay so much attention to its safety. So too, the Lord does not pay much attention to the Jnani. The Saguna Bhakta is like an infant of the Lord. So, it has no strength except the strength of the Lord. For the Jnani, his own strength is enough. Therefore, until one can rely on one's own strength, one must be an infant in the Lord's Hands, as a Saguna Bhakta, isn't it? No one can become a Nirguna Bhakta, without having been a Saguna Bhakta. So, Bhaktas should grow up like infants in the lap of the mother and thereafter, become Jnanis who can rely on their 'own' strength and be free. Still, both have the same source of strength, the Mother. Those indeed are really fortunate who grasp this secret of the path of Devotion, who develop one pointed Bhakti and strengthen the traits of their character, who transform themselves into infants in the lap of the Lord and who get everything done by him as He wishes.

Therefore, those who yearn to be Dasas, Bhaktas, Priyas and Ananya Bhaktas should take up the corresponding path and name and act and live accordingly; the Bhakta should develop the above said characteristics of devotion; the Priya should follow the Prema of the Lord; the Ananya Bhakta has to surrender completely to the Lord. Mere reading and rolling on the tongue are of no avail. Ananda is the result of Action only. This Ananda is not dependent on castes or race or sex. Even in those days, when Sri Rama came to Sabari, she asked him in the following manner, while Sri Rama was gladly partaking of the feast of roots and fruits, selected and reserved by Sabari for him after herself tasting every individual item. "Lord! I am but a woman, in addition, I am of feeble intellect. Above all, I am lowborn. How can I praise You? I do not know what to do or how!" Then, Sri Rama smiled and said, "Sabari! My mission is only the kinship of Bhakti. I have no kinship of race or caste. Of what use is it to have status, wealth and character, with out Bhakti? Like the cloud that does not bear rain, which wanders about in the sky, these people without devotion are at the mercy of the winds, however much of status in caste, wealth, power, and fame they may possess. Bhaktas reach me through nine paths; any one of them takes them to Me." Then, Sabari prayed and Sri Rama responded.

“Sravanam Kirthanam Vishnohsmaranam Padasevanam
Vandanam Archanam Dasyam Sneham Athmanivedanam”

If the devotee sincerely practises any one of these paths, He can attain Me. I am bound by these nine forms of Bhakti. That is why You have been able to so easily obtain this opportunity of seeing, touching and speaking with Me. an opportunity which even Yogis find too difficult to get, You have realised Life’s purpose today. See! Today’s Words are only the Works of Yesterday!

Bhakti is of two Kinds

Those who follow the above said Nine-fold Path are of two kinds. (1) The followers of the Hard Path. (2) The followers of the Safe and easy Path. These are sometimes referred to as (1) Bhakti and (2) Prapati. That is to say, the practice of the Markatakisora or the young of the monkey is Bhakti and the practice of the Marjarakisora or the young of the cat is Prapati.

Devotion has to be un-intermittent, uninterrupted, like the flow of oil from one vessel to another. Though the two kinds are basically the same, the practices are different. Without Prema nothing can be acquired in this world. It is only when there is Prema the Anuraga or Attachment, in its turn, produces the desire to protect and guard. In both the above kinds, Prema is equal, no doubt; but, in actual manifestation, there is difference. In the Markatakisora Marga, the child has to rely on its own strength to protect itself, wherever the Mother might jump about, it has to attach itself fast to the mother’s belly and should not release its hold, even if pulled apart? So, the Bhakta too has to stand the test at the hands of the Lord. And hold on to the Lord’s name at all times and under all conditions, tirelessly, without the slightest trace of dislike or disgust, bearing the ridicule and the criticism of the world and conquering the feelings of shame and defeat. The example of this type of Bhakti is that first among devotees, Prahlada.

The Prapati Marga is not of this type; it is like the way of the kitten, the Marjarakisora, ‘Sarvabhara Samarpita’ attitude. As the kitten simply continues mewling in one place, placing all its burdens on the mother-cat the devotee puts complete trust on the Lord. The mother-cat holds the kitten in its mouth and removes it to more elevated places or transports it safely through even very narrow passages. So too the devotee places his entire burden on the Lord and surrenders fully to His Will. Lakshmana is the witness of this path.

The discipline of Prapati is much superior to the discipline of Bhakti. The characteristic of Prapati is complete self-surrender, in all aspects. To serve Sri Rama, Lakshmana renounced all obstacles in his path, like wealth, wife, mother, home and even sleep and food. And, this, not for a day, month, or year but for full fourteen years. He felt that Sri Rama was his all, his happiness and joy, that He would grant him everything that he needed and that his life’s purpose was only to follow Him and serve Him, and surrender his will to Him. So, if all burdens are placed on Him and if He is followed ceaselessly

and unforgettingly, He will certainly provide everything. This is the nature of the Prapati type of devotion.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Sandeha Nivarini

5

Swami: Well, my boy, I am glad you have come. Are you reflecting the answers I gave last time and practising what has been told with firm conviction? Are you deriving Ananda therefrom?

Bhakta: Swami, will any Bhakta like me allow your words, nectar-like words, to go to waste? No one aspiring to attain real Ananda will throw away the ambrosial words that you confer in Your Grace. I do not know about others but I am reflecting upon your answers night and day and practising them with courage and conviction. I am awake all the time waiting for the next chance to meet you.

Swami: It is this alertness that devotees should cultivate. To attach oneself to the flimsy, paltry foolishness of the world and to run after them and worry when they slip out of the hands or jump about in glee when you get them, all this is Avidya, Maya. But your counting of days, waiting for the chance, keeping awake for the opportunity of hearing the words of the Lord and imbibing their essence, that is Vidya Maya. If Bhaktas fall into this maya, they will attain fulfillment, without fail, some day or other. So, since this Vidya Maya has illumined you, you are fortunate. Develop this, that is to say, this dwelling on the thoughts of God; don't give it up or reduce it for any reason, to any extent. You will become holy without fail. You will reach fulfillment and attain the goal.

Bhakta: Swami! Last month, You said You will explain to me who 'I' am. If I understand that also, I can be rid of the little delusion that I have and, without the slightest trace of doubt, meditate on You and be Blissful. What greater fortune cars I have?

Swami: Well, my boy! To speak about the real nature of 'I' is very easy; but until it is experienced, full contentment is impossible. For me to tell you to my satisfaction and for you to grasp its full meaning, it needs some time. This month, even the allotted hours of the day are not enough for me! Though it is like this, I am using all the time for the Ananda of Bhaktas only; I have nothing of my own. Being useful for my Bhaktas, that is my selfish purpose. Throughout last month, I went to Nellore, Gudur, Venkatagiri and the villages around. Afterwards, I went to Bangalore and returned. What little time was available I used for 'Premavahini'! This month, I visited Hyderabad, Rajahmundry, Samalkot, Chebrolu, Nuzvid etc. So there is no spare time. Next month, I shall tell you about who 'you' are to your full satisfaction. For the present, try to grasp the meaning of this song in folk dance style; you will understand who this 'you' is, to a large extent. It is possible you will get Vairagya to a large extent through this. Later, you will understand

the meaning of what I have to say more clearly and with greater ease. Do not merely read this song but think well on the meaning of each word. The song will certainly turn your brain!

Bhakta: All right. Give me at least that. I shall satisfy my desire; I shall drink the nectar and digest it.

Swami: Listen, carefully.

- 1 Thai! Thai! Thai! Thai! Thai! Dummy
See the Tamasha play of this puppet doll.
O Jiva, listen to the long long tale
Of its past, its future, behind and front!
- 2 It rolled at first In mushy mire
Of mother's womb, its prison dark.
It came with a whimper, but all around
They smiled in joy and feasts galore,
- 3 'O Tragedy! I am born again',
It knew and wept, both loud and long.
But all the while, they caressed it
And laughed to raise a laugh!
- 4 In Its own dirt it wallowed day,
Without a sense of shame;
It rose and fell, at every step,
Acting daily a childish play.
- 5 It runs and skips with gangs of chums
And learns a hundred tricks and trades;
It grows so tall and thick and broad;
From year to year, very fast and fair.
- 6 It moves In pairs, and bills and coos
In rosy rainbow style;
It sings in tunes unheard before,
And quaffs the cup, unique and strange.
- 7 'Tis Brahma who makes these dolls in pairs
And dolls and dolls in millions,
But this our puppet does not know
When It plays with dollies:
Thim! Thim! Thim!

- 8 This Maya Doll like the Holly Bull
 Has the Tamas rope in nostril hole;
 Lust and anger are the scorpion whips
 Which whack the back of the Slave.
- 9 It gloats with glee, when others stop
 Before it shuddering low;
 It doles them pain; but cannot near
 A microscopic share!
- 10 It swears and shouts and waves its arms
 And frets and fumes with blood-red eyes;
 It is indeed a wondrous sight—
 Possessed by Devil Ire!
- 11 It scans and spells, it scribbles and swots,
 It does not know the reason why,
 It runs in panic trying to glean
 Fodder for belly, willy or nilly.
- 12 Ah, did you see this queer little dummy,
 With so many books in its tummy,
 Turning and twisting in jealousy green
 When a learned doll encounters it?
- 13 And, you should hear its secret cluck
 When a shameful sensual urge,
 A wicked lurking greed
 Is satisfied in sin!
- 14 It proudly pats; what?, its own back!
 For beauty, brawn, vitality.
 While all the time and step by step
 It moves towards senility.
- 15 totters and blinks through wrinkles and folds;
 and when the children cry.
 ‘Old Ape’ ‘Old Ape’
 It gapes and grins a toothless grin—
 Its bones do clatter so!
- 16 Unto the last, it is lost in fear,
 Wear and tear and many a tearsome fray!
 Of what avail, O Dummy Doll,
 your gasp and groan.
 You needs must meet the Doom.

- 17 Aha! The Bird I It shakes its wings!
It files out, brrrr, from out the cage of skin.
Empty, it tightens; vacant, it straightens;
O, drag it out of sight; it bloats and stinks.
- 18 The elements join their parents five;
The doll's desires are dust and ash;
Why weep, you fools, when one of you
Falls on the crowded stage?
- 19 Uncles, cousins, aunts and friends
March in gloom until door of room!
The Maya Doll, alas, forgot its kin,
The Divine Name, Redeemer True!
- 20 O Jiva, do not lean upon this slender reed;
Just a sneeze! This frail skin boat
Endowed with thrice three leaks
Will plunge you, middle stream!
- 20 This puppet weeps, it sleeps and wakes,
When the string is pulled by unseen Hand
The Lord it is, who stands behind,
But the Dummy swears, It is I, I, I.
- 22 Dharma, Karma are the hardy strings
He tightens or He loosens.
Unaware, the puppet swaggers
Criss-cross, on the planks.
- 23 It takes the world as stable,—
This silly strutting Dummy!
A twinkle! He winds up the show!
Exit the pomp and pride!
- 24 O Jiva, you have waded
Through ant and snake and bird;
Seek and find without delay,
The road to lasting Bliss!
- 25 Bless your luck! You now can see
Sai Krishna, He has come!
Be kin with him and you will know
Your what and why and how.

25 A million words so clever and nice,
Can they appease your hunger's maw?
Light the Lamp of the soul instead,
And, freed from bondage, run out and play.

26 This song that tells of Dummy Doll
Makes Jiva sad and wise! I know;
But, Jiva! see the Leela grand of
Sathya Sai Nath
And.....Know Thyself!

Bhakta: Ah! I have understood! I have clearly understood that 'I' am not the Body, the Buddhi, the Manas, or the Chittam. When I am not any of these 'I' must be only the Atma, and if 'I' am the Atma, then 'I' the Paramatma and so everything is Paramatma! All this I have understood! Believing out of ignorance that 'I' am this body and this intellect, this Deha and this Buddhi, we are experiencing all these miseries True, true. We are passing through all that you said now, one after the other, as beads in a string. Oh! What a truth? What a truth! Listening to this one song is enough; the brain, as you said, turns into Vairagya...Swami! I felt very disappointed when You said first that You had no time to spare. But that was due to my ignorance. Though I knew that our Swami will never disappoint any one or cause trouble, I felt as if You have conferred even more Ananda now, than what I thought I would get. How is Your kindness to be described! They sing of you, "For a single drop of tear, Sai will melt"; and they say you can never bear to see us suffer: this is proof of the truth of these. Shall I take leave?

Swami: Very good. Go and come again. I too have no time to spare. I have to see and send those who are going to their places.

—SRI SATHYA SAI BABA.

Prema Godavari

The devotees at Hyderabad had the fortunate chance of receiving Baba's Darshan on 26th August. He blessed the Grahapravesam Ceremony of 'Kausalya Bhavan' by His Presence, on the 28th. That evening, He discoursed to the assembly at the same building. Referring to the Firestone Co. that was to occupy the Bhavan soon, He said that man too was a firestone, with the spark of Divinity in him but, very few are able or willing to cherish and nourish the spark of viveka and vairagya that the firestone emanates with every blow of fate. On the 30th, He laid the foundation stone of the Sathyaprema Saivihar and started for Rajahmundry on the 31st.

Crossing the full-flooded Godavari, He reached the town at 4 P.M. on the first of September. The citizens of Rajahmundry assembled in thousands at the Town Hall to welcome Him. Baba called upon everyone to cultivate uprightness and equanimity and

take repose in Namasmarana. He visited the Gowthami Jeevakarunya Sangha and blessed the inmates and workers. He also paid a visit to the Saibaba Pracharaka Mandali, where special puja and Bhajan were performed. At Mirthipadu, on 2nd September, He spoke to a large gathering of ryots on the holiness of their avocation and requested them to avoid mutual hatred, faction and bickering, developing instead a sense of brotherliness and charity. On the 3rd He visited the villages of Thoredu, Biccavole, Kattamooru and Samalkot, before reaching Peddavaram, where he gave a discourse to a huge gathering of people. His message, here, was on strength, physical, mental and spiritual. It was indeed a miracle that in spite of the incessant rain and floods, Baba held back the inclement weather at all places where He stayed and spoke! His stay contributed in no small measure to allay the panic caused by the floods. Prema Godavari made the people forget the Purna Godavari!

On the 7th He crossed the floods back to Kovvur and proceeded to Tatipaka in the Delta area. He was at Chebrole on the 8th morning and the same evening, He reached Nuzvid, 50 miles away. There at a meeting which He addressed at 7. P.M., He elaborated on the duties and responsibilities of the Guru and the Sishya, and on the need for a liberal and universal outlook. On the 9th morning, He started towards Venkatagiri, where He had agreed to perform the Opening Ceremony of a New Building for the Girl's High School. He arrived at Venkatagiri at 4-30 P.M. (An account of the School Function is given on the last page of this issue)

Prayer

O Adorable Lord of Mercy and Love!
O the Indweller of my bosom, the Indweller of all beings!
Salutations and Prostrations to Thee.
Thou art Satchidananda,
Thou art Omnipresent, Omnipotent, Omniscient!

Grant me an understanding heart,
Equal vision, balanced mind, faith, devotion and wisdom,
Grant me inner spiritual strength
To resist temptation, to control the mind,
Free me from egoism, lust, greed and all its brood;
Fill my heart with Divine virtues,
O Sanathana Sarathi!

My heart throbs to have Thy glimpse again,
Grant me my boon, to serve Thee, Adorable Lord!
Ever at Thy Lotus Feet,
The Prasanthi Nilayam;
Else there lies no redemption to my soul.

Let me behold Thee in all these names and forms;
Let me serve Thee in all this names and forms;
Let me ever remember Thee, sing Thy glories,
Let me abide in Thee for ever and ever!

This is the ardent prayer of this humble Bhakta;
From Parsurama Kshetra—
Prostrations unto Thee, O Puttaparthi Baba.

Yogiraj .V. S. Bua

Little Great Things

1. 'Tis' not the chain that matters
But every link that makes it;
The Atom power is greater
Then all else put together!
2. You'd care for every penny
If pounds you needs must gather;
To live a life that's worthy—
In little things be faithful!
3. To those with trouble burdened:
A little understanding
With speech that's kind and gentle
Brings cheer with hope and enlivened!
4. A helping hand that's willing
A timely little action
A little smile that's cheery
Are deeds by far the greatest!

'Venu'

He is Karuna

Whenever I picture Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba as Premaswaroop, three examples of His abounding Love occur to me. Every word, every gesture, every look of His is suffused with His Prema and His Karuna. Every Bhakta (and indeed every one who has seen Him) knows that He cannot endure any one standing in sun or rain, that He pours out His heart in sympathy with the distressed, the weak, the downtrodden and the afflicted and that it is this overwhelming Prema of His that binds all to Him, in silken bonds of affection. But if I am asked to give some outstanding instances of this Prema, I feel like giving these three.

- 1) Some years ago it was, when the car-road direct from Prasanthi Nilayam to Bukkapatanam did not exist; the Sri Sathya Sai Baba High School, Bukkapatanam, held its annual celebration of Baba's Birthday on the 23rd November, as usual. Baba too blessed the boys by His Presence. After Bhajan, Baba discoursed to the students and He wanted all the boys to go over to Puttaparthi and share in the celebrations there with the assembled devotees, as well as in the feast that had been arranged. While returning from the School to Karnatapalli by car, Baba saw the boys walking in the sun along the road to Puttaparthi. He could not bear the sight of the children trudging in the sun, even for the distances of two miles! So, He stopped His car and asked that they should all sit in the shade of the trees, promising to transport them all by car to Karnatapalli! So His car, as well as three others belonging to some devotees, were put on this special assignment, while Baba waited on the other bank of the Chitravati for all of them to join Him, and the Bhaktas at Prasanthi Nilayam wondered why Baba took such an extraordinarily long time to finish the High School function and return to them! It took full three hours for the cars to bring over the three hundred and odd school children and Baba started His walk over the sands of the river, only after the teachers had assured Him that not a single boy had been left behind. Probably (why, most assuredly) no one, not even the children would have minded that short walk of two miles. But, He, in His Mercy, did.
- 2) It was Dasara at Puttaparthi, a few years ago, the forth day, I believe. At about 9 P.M. Baba sent word to a band of young men that they must assemble in the Hall for some urgent work, and within a few minutes, there were double the number, eagerly awaiting His orders. Every one wondered what that could be! Well, Baba came and explained that the buntings and flags with which the Nilayam and the garden were decorated since the first day of Dasara had faded slightly and become dull in colour and so they have to be replaced by fresh ones, to be prepared and fixed during the night! The work engaged us till the smaller hours of the night and Baba was with the party all the time, attending to every details. Some one dared asking Him the reason for the extra attention upon the 5th day of Dasara and the reply he got was this: "Don't you know that tomorrow your Bandhus come for the feast?" and this we knew! For, the next day was the day the poor, the Daridranarayanans were coming to

the Nilayam to receive Prasadam and Vastram from His Hands! But, who could imagine that His Prema was so great, so deep, so all embracing as to celebrate the arrival of the poor by this 'de novo' decoration? When some one told Him that the feeding of thousands of people and the distribution of hundreds of saris and dhotis should be published in the papers, He turned towards him and said "What! Do you publish in papers the news that your friends and relatives came to your house?"! We have, every one of us, to learn the lesson of those flags.

- 3) Baba travels by car whenever He moves about as every one knows, but every one may not know this expression of His Prema, while traveling. He knows all the places on all the trunk roads where the wayside baggers stand with out stretched hand especially the disabled and the afflicted. So, long before the location comes, He is ready with His Gift and when the person is spotted, He stops the car, calls him towards Himself in His own sweet voice and places the aid lovingly in those hands! Oh, how He scans the area and searches for the familiar hand and face if by any chance he is not visible at the accustomed place!

Verily, it has been truly sung, "Karuna indeed is He; He is indeed Karuna". In the Viveka Chudamani, the Guru is described as Ahethukadayasindhu; His Grace is showered on all without interruption and without cause! Such is our Master, our dearly loved Baba.

N. Kasturi

God, Man and Nature

God being perfect, He can create only perfect things. So Jesus used to say 'Be ye perfect as thy Father in Heaven is perfect'. Let us look at every object of Nature in its birth, growth and dissolution and we will be able to find it perfect at every stage.

Even a blade of grass with its freshness, lusciousness, quivering beauty when the breezes slowly and gently move on it, is a perfect sight for poets.

The sea shells, the species of fish the plants and trees, the birds of the air, the lilies in the field and a host of to her flowers and fruits—all these are objects of perfection.

In the Upanishads, it is said that God creates the world and enters into everything He creates. He is said to be omniscient and omnipresent. He is also said to be omnipotent. So every object in Nature is potentially divine.

To look into the Divinity of every object or the soul in everything requires a special training or Sadhana. The Indian sages, saints and mystics are able to see the 'soul of things'. They declare with great joy that God is not only imminent, but also transcendent. Hence they are happy beyond words. They proclaim with ecstatic joy that

the world is created in Ananda, it is maintained in Ananda and finally it is absorbed in Ananda.

God is Ananda. So if one wants to seek God one can go to Nature. Every object in Nature from the Sun to the sand has a message inside. He who is able to hear the message and see its soul is called a Rishi or a Seer.

We have Seers in all parts of the world. They are perfect beings, because they have the perfect wisdom and knowledge. They think in terms of the world and humanity and not in their own terms.

But have we such seers in plenty? No, instead we have scientists and politicians, who are carried away by the tempting knowledge of Laws that govern the Universe—the forbidden fruit which God wanted Adam not to taste. The Satan in Man, the will to disobey, the Ego, the passion for domination—all these are responsible for his fall from Paradise or perfection.

How to regain that perfection? He has constantly to look within. He must develop a spirit of self-enquiry and know the law of creation. He must become aware of the glory of God and His great compassion. He must daily and hourly think of his existence as a part of God's existence on earth. Emerson said, 'God is Man, playing the fool'. He meant that man does not understand himself, instead of realising his greatness by 'self control, self-knowledge and self-reverence' he is yielding to external temptation by his own greed and desire. 'What does it avail, if a man gaineth a Kingdom by losing his own soul?' said Jesus.

Nature is the very a manifestation of Divinity. In Hindu philosophy the Universe is said to be God-manifest. 'Sarvam Vishnu Mayam Jagat'.

We should not be guided by our senses in our estimate of things in the world. The Tamil poetess has declared 'things that are small in size are not small, and things that are big in size are not big'. Each object has to be weighed in the mind as to its role in creation.

If one studies thus in all humility, one will see the wisdom of God's creation. Every object obeys His laws and Nature particularly, apart from Man, obeys His laws very faithfully and so Nature is always fresh, good and happy.

So let us learn from Nature all that is beautiful, good and happy. Unless we approach Nature with a reverential attitude, we cannot imbibe lessons from Nature. So one has to be humble and receptive to the gentle influences of Nature. Such are the sages and seers. They are called the 'very salt of the earth'.

To understand Nature aright we have to seek the help of sages, saints and poets who revere Nature and learn from her lessons which are universal and happy. They teach us peace which is the true condition of happiness. Real peace is a condition of

enlightenment and it has to be secured by ‘Sadhana’ or spiritual practice. It is possible only by withdrawing oneself from one’s ego and by living in the realm of the spirit and God, which is beyond time, place and causation.

K. Vaidyanathan

Swami, the Incarnation of God

It is my great fortune to perceive God in Lord Sri Sathya Sai. When I first heard of his greatness three years ago, a thought entered into my mind immediately, that He should send word for me, if He is really the incarnation of God. I still do not find reason for the formation of such a thought in my mind. In this way, reason often fails us and we fail too, unless we realise that there is something beyond it, which we call faith.

A call came from Him, unexpectedly! (I now regard it as a divine dispensation) I hope one can understand the effect it had upon me. Things often happen in a strange way. The intellectual attainments of a person, it seems, do not take him a long way, in this direction, because of their material aspect.

For one reason or other, I could not go to His Lotus Feet for a long time. At last when I went there, I went with an open mind. It was there I first came to know my strength of mind. I was indifferent to several great things that were happening there because of my natural inclination to have my own personal experience of His greatness. I was so indifferent I could go on with my habit of reading books undisturbed. I could think of anything else, except the ways of my Lord. Oh! I was unaware of the silent revolution that was taking place in me. So I left the place, in spite of my Lord’s reluctance to give me permission.

My second visit is of no consequence, because I stayed there only for a few hours.

After a few days, again I had a great longing to have his Darshan. The urge was irresistible I went to my Lord, for the third time. It was during this visit that my attitude towards Him was completely changed. I was quite transformed. Deference displaced indifference. It happened within a few seconds, on a hill-top where I followed the Lord, before Mahasivaratri.

Though the difficulties one may confront in explaining the things of mind and spirit are pronounced to be very great, I feel it my duty to reveal to the world that I know of my Lord. What a boon! He granted my prayer. I realised the Eternal truth, in a much desired way. The truth is that He is Paramatma.

Because of that knowledge, today, I cannot avoid falling prostrate upon His lotus feet whenever He gives the opportunity. It was here I came to know that a man is in constant danger of falling a victim to the promptings of Avidya. It was here I came to

know that man is a mere instrument in the hands of God. It was here it became known to me that man knows God, only through Bhakti based on the performance of Karma in a detached way.

Challa Appa Rao

Baba on Education

Declaring open the New Building of the R.V.R.K.Y Board Girls' High School, at Venkatagiri on the 9th September, Baba discoursed on the ideals which educationists have always to keep in view. He spoke of the sacred role of the mother and the home in the development of the individual and wanted that every girl should grow up into a kind generous-hearted God-fearing woman. The Sastras were only the dykes and bunds that regulated the raging waters of selfishness and greed and so they have to be considered as useful for social and individual welfare. He pleaded that there should be a harmonious co-operation in this task of education between the home, the school and society.

Dasara, 1958

Readers are informed that Dasara will be celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam, Puttaparthi this year from October 12 to October 22, both days inclusive.

Editor.

Good Thoughts

1. Our daily duties are a part of our religious life just as much as our devotions are.
2. To be angry is to revenge the fault of others upon ourselves.
3. Let first things be put first work before play, duty before enjoyment and others before self. This is an excellent rule which cannot lead astray. To make a right beginning is half way to victory.
4. Character is not ready-made, but is created bit by bit day-by-day.
5. The secret in success is constancy in purpose.
6. Time hastens; therefore do today whatever kindly deed you may.
7. The wear and tear of rust is faster than the wear and tear of work.
8. Work is stimulus, to work and loafing is stimulus to laziness.

9. Every duty which is bidden to wait returns with seven fresh duties at its back.
10. Our anger and impatience often prove much more mischievous than the things about which we are angry or impatient.
11. Down in their hearts wise men know this truth, the only way to help yourself is to help others.
12. Kindness has the effect of balm; it soothes suffering, softens pride, dissipates selfishness and exorcises bad temper.

K. Kondala Rao.

Reader! Please note:

“Sanathana Sarathi” is a monthly, for the present, and the articles published in it are purely religio-philosophical. Contributions of articles especially from those who endeavour to put into practice what they speak and write on spirituality are readily welcome.

Anything that smacks of “public news or comments on public news”, personal attacks, rude phraseology, or even non-devotional sentiments can find no place, in here. The Editor enjoys in full the right, wherever he feel it necessary, either to curtail, or to supplement or even to withhold publication of the articles received. No unpublished article will be returned unless after special request.

No commercial advertisement will be published in this magazine.

As readers are aware, the Subscription Amount of Rupees – Three per year has to be sent to the Editor by M.O. If the M.O reaches the Editor, before 16th of any month, will receive the ‘Sanathana Sarathi’ of the subsequent month and eleven issues thereafter.

Permanent change of address should be intimated before the 10th of the month, mentioning also the subscribers number and the Old Address.

Editor,
“SANATHANA SARATHI”
Prasanthi Nilayam

Puttaparthi

Prema Vahini

Vanaprastha:

After being a householder and experiencing the sorrow, happiness and joy and learning the true significance of all these, man has to retire into the forest, when he reaches the age of 45 or 50, leaving the house he has built and the place where he lived. If his wife is alive then, he has to take her consent and entrust her to the care of the son or her parents or take her also with him and treat her like a brother himself being immersed in Brahmacharya. There is a great change even in diet. He has to eat roots and fruits and drink only milk. Things should not be baked full but only up to a third. Rice should not be used much. If it is not possible to arrange diet for oneself on these lines, he can visit the village near by and collect food by begging. But, he has to bring the food into the forest and eat it there, in his own habitation. He has to give to his dependents the same food that he takes, for they cannot prepare food they prefer, or get it supplied. If they do not relish it, they have to be content with milk and fruits only, for, he must not change his routine for satisfying others. However troublesome it may be, the discipline should not be modified, or given up. This is to be specially noted. He cannot have any worship, or almsgiving or any such duties. Even if he gives food or articles to others, it cannot be regarded as alms or Dana. He cannot also receive as Dana anything from others. He must have the same pure Love towards all in equal measure. Discarding old clothes once a year, he must don new clothes, in the Aswija month. The Chandrayana vrata is the most important of the Vanaprastha vratas. During that month, he must eat for the first fifteen days, every day a morsel less and for the remaining fifteen, a morsel more every day. He has to take only congee on the New and Full Moon days. In the rainy season, he must do Tapas standing in the rain; in winter, he must wear wet clothes while engaged in Tapas. Performing such asceticism systematically, he has to bathe three times a day. The various Upanishadic statements are to be studied, their meanings understood and experienced. If such a Vanaprastha falls victim to any disease, the diet routine has to be cancelled and he has to live on air and water. He shall walk on and on, in the north-eastern direction until he dies. On the other hand, if he has no bodily disease and if he is hale and hearty, he will experience, after he has adopted the above disciplines, the spontaneous Dawn of True Knowledge. By means of this Knowledge, he will attain Moksha.

Many argue how this discipline can result in the Dawn of Knowledge. Are these not mere bodily limitations, they ask? Knowledge can arise only by the realisation of the Principle. How can something that does not contain the Principle which guarantees self-realisation be called Knowledge, they argue. But this is based on a big mistake. Through these physical regulations, Vasanas or traits are destroyed and concentration is established. The Upanishadic statements serve to foster and strengthen this one-pointedness, step by step, the experience of the Upanishadic vakyas alone will bring about the Dawn of Knowledge. Are not Upanishads the very Knowledge itself? With that Jnana-swarupa as companion, realising it in one's own experience, what need is there to search for Knowledge elsewhere? To establish Jnana firmly in the heart, one-pointedness is essential and this can easily be gained by the abovementioned bodily disciplines and Tapas. External control helps internal control in many ways. To succeed in external controls is by comparison more difficult than to achieve success in controlling the internal! A turn of

the steering wheel in one's hand in any direction makes the wheels of the car, which are not in one's hand, move in the same direction. The wheels will not turn in another direction, when the steering is turned in one. The introspective wheels are based on the extrospective steering itself!

It is the natural basis. Sometimes, when the steering is turned in one way, the wheels may drag another way, but this is due to the giving up of the natural characteristic. The internal wheels, if they have no air, which is the true essence, may behave as if there is no relationship with the steering. But, they cannot go beyond the bounds of steering. The steering in the hand is related to the wheels below. If there is no such relation, the journey becomes impossible. The connection is inevitable. Therefore, for him who has struggled with the external tendencies and conquered them, the internal tendencies become easily controllable. The external tendencies have name and form and are attracted by becoming objects of experience. So, to overcome them is a matter of some difficulty. But, internal tendencies have no form, though they may be endowed with name; they are also experienced as Ananda: and so, they can be overcome more easily. They can be tamed with greater ease. The bother is more for external conduct and behaviour. These are associated with taste, form and heaviness. The internal tendencies have no form, taste or weight. Pure water has no form, taste, or heaviness. Impure water is different in all three. So, to clarify impure water is indeed difficult; but, pure water can be given any form required, with very great ease.

Similarly, the difficulty is all about purifying the mental behaviour, which is spoiled by the delusions of the world; there is no need to set right the mental behaviour which is free from such delusions. Delusion-less behaviour is necessarily pure. It is without any trace of defect and doubt. Why should such be set right? Therefore, if men first control and conquer the external delusion, as much as possible, the internal tendencies will easily move in the direction of Atmananda. Yoga and Tapas is only another name for the path of the control and conquest of these external tendencies and delusions. The rules of Vanaprastha are but methods to succeed in this Yoga or Tapas. When man subdues delusion of all types in the Vanaprastha stage, the journey ends in Moksha. But, we cannot say that Moksha has only this one path. Through whatever path Grace is obtained, that Path may be chosen. Liberation is achieved by these rules and observances of Vanaprastha and it can be secured by following this Path. It also makes a man delusion free. It gives him one-pointedness.

Mukti is of Four Kinds

Worship, with fixity of consciousness and purity of feeling and free of all extraneous thought, becomes itself Bhavasamadhi. As a result of this Bhavasamadhi, the Lord appears before the inner eye of the devotee, in the form which he has chosen for worship. The vision is not merely a matter of imagination; it is a 'face' experience. Without difference of location, he can abide in the presence of the Lord, in the self-same place. This is called Salokyamukti. Besides being always with the Lord, as in Salokyamukti, Bhaktas realise all that they see as the glory of the Lord. The experience is referred to as Samipyamukti. Existing ever with the Lord, witnessing always the glory of the Lord, and becoming suffused with God-consciousness is Sarupyamukti. This is the final fruit of

Bhakti Sastra. But, at this stage, there is yet a trace of differential feeling. So the Advaita Siddhantha will not admit is as the highest. Simply because the Bhakta has Sarupya or same Rupa as the Lord, we cannot take it that he has powers of Creation, Preservation and Destruction, which the Lord possesses. It is only when all trace of difference disappear, and unity is attained that the highest stage is reached. This is what is called, Sayujya. This comes of Divine Grace, won by the Essence of the Sadhana of each; it cannot be claimed as the fruit of effort. The Bhakta will aspire for this merging or Aikyam. He wishes to serve the Lord as he pleases and to experience the joy of the Form which he has attributed to the Lord. But, the Lord out of His Grace, gives him not only Salokya, Samipya and Sarupya but also, Sayujya! Bhakti-marga results also in the attainment of Brahmajnana. Even if the Bhakta does not crave for it, the Lord Himself vouchsafes it to him. The Sayujyamukti is also referred to as Ekantamukti.

Sandeha Nivarini

Bhakta: Namaste, Swami.

Swami: Subhamastu.

Bhakta: With Your Grace, everything is Subham; without it, everything is Asubham.

Swami: Good, but have you realised how both these are based on Grace? In one, both subsist; both are conferred by the self-same Grace. Well, let that topic stand by. Last time you got a folk poem to digest and it must have affected your thoughts deeply. Now, in what stage of equinity is your brain?

Bhakta: Ah. Everything appears a puppet show now, Swami. But only off and on. The mind forgets and gets caught by the fascination of the objects. What mystery is this, Swami?

Swami: Well, the mind is associated with all kinds of activities or vrittis. It always follows the trail of the Vasanas, or trails of impulses and instincts. This is its very nature.

Bhakta: That is as much as to say we cannot set it right. Then what is the hope? Ultimately, Swami, have we to get immersed in Vasanas and become degraded?

Swami: There is hope, my boy! No need to get immersed and lost. Though it is its nature, it can be changed. Charcoal has as its nature blackening all that it gets mixed with. But you should not take that as final. When fire enters it, the charcoal becomes red. So too, though the mind is always wandering in the illusion of darkness, when through the Lord's Grace the fire of Jnana enters it, its nature changes and the Satwic Nature pertaining to the Divine comes Into it.

Bhakta: Swami, they speak of something called Antahkarana; what is it?

Swami: The mind is referred to like that. Karana means Indriya. Antahkarana means internal indriya.

Bhakta: So, are there two types, internal Indriyas and external Indriyas?

Swami: Yes, of course. The external Indriyas are called Karmendriyas; the internal Indriyas are named Jnanendriyas.

Bhakta: Swami, please tell me which are the Karmendriyas and which the Jnanendriyas.

Swami : Well, all acts done bodily are by Karmendriyas; they are five in number. Those which impart Jnana from inside are named Jnanendriyas. These are: hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell. Both these are together called Dasendriyas (the ten organs.)

Bhakta: So, what is the work that both these do together? What is the connection between their function and the Manas or mind?

Swami: Well, really, whatever work they do, they can't achieve anything without the meditation of Manas. The Karmendriyas perform acts in the world and receive knowledge and the Jnanendriyas discriminate the good and the bad and offer them to the Atma, through the Manas. If there is no Mind at all, how can these transmit? When we have to reach the other shore of a flooded river, we rely on the medium of a boat or raft. When the Karmendriyas and the Jnanendriyas which are connected with Prakriti desire to attain the Atma, they have to accept the help of the boat, Manas. Otherwise, they cannot attain.

Bhakta: If so, where do these other things you poke about, Buddhi, Chittam and Ahamkaram reside?

Swami: They too are in this only. The Jnanendriyas and Karmendriyas are both together called Dasendriyas. If these, four are distinguished and referred to as Antah Chathushtaya, or the Internal Four Indriyas. Those four are Manas, Buddhi, Chittam and Ahamkaram.

Bhakta: Very nice. That is to say, all are in the same thing. Life is indeed funny. But Swami, what is the function of these four?

Swami: Manas grasps the object; Buddhi examines arguments for and against; Chittam understands the object by means of these; Ahamkaram changes the decision for or against and by attachment, slackens the hold of Jnana. These are the things they do.

Bhakta: Excuse me, Swami, I am asking only to know; where do these exist in the body?

Swami: I am glad; don't worry. Manas is in the cupola, Buddhi in the tongue, Chittam in the navel and Ahamkaram in the heart.

Bhakta: Excellent. So, Buddhi and Ahamkaram are in the most important places! These are the chief causes of all the world's miseries. Then, if we examine it with reference to Your Words, it looks as if there will be no misery when these two places are made pure!

Swami: You have indeed listened to me attentively. Yes, that is right. First, if words are used in a clean and pure manner, that is proof of Buddhi treading the right path. When Ahamkaram is suppressed and conquered, that is proof of the heart being pure. Therefore, be very careful as regards these two. Then, even your Manas and Chittam will come to have good Vrittis. Then only will you be free from pain and misery. They can never happen to you then.

Bhakta: So, among all these, who is the 'I'? Who is the experiencer of all this?

Swami: We have arrived at the right point. 'You' are none among all these! All these exist only so long as the feeling, 'This body is mine' exists. They are all associated with some activities or Vrittis. The Atma which observes all these vrittis, that Is 'You'. The joy and sorrow, the loss and misery, the good and bad of these activities are all related to the body only and so, they are not yours; they will not be yours. You are the Atma. Until this Truth is realised, you sleep the sleep of 'I' and 'Mine'. In that sleep, dreams appear of loss, misery, sorrow and joy. The dreams persist only until you awake and after you wake up, the fear you had while dreaming the sorrow you experienced, all disappear and are no longer true. Similarly, when delusion is thrown off and you 'awaken' in Jnana, you will understand that all this is not 'you'; that you are the Atma.

Bhakta: Then, Swami, for whose sake do these, the Manas, Buddhi, Chittam, and Ahamkaram, do all this work?

Swami: For no one's sake! They are engaged in their own work! The Atma observes everything and its shadow the Jiva, which is deluded by the association of the body-consciousness, plays this drama, through all these Acts.

My Divya Darshan

On the 14th day of March, 1957, I reached Venkatagiri, to attend the Ninth All-India Divine Life Convention. Batches of delegates and bands of Sanyasis, Pundits and Professors were pouring into the town from all directions. The president of the Convention was Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. On the morning of the 16th, we gathered near the Darbar Mantap in the Palace Quadrangle where the gorgeously decorated golden

Palanquin of the Raja was ready to take Bhagavan in procession to the Convention Hall. My heart was throbbing fast to have the Divine Darshan.

Exactly at 8-15 A.M. Sri Sathya Sai Baba entered the Quadrangle. I was thrilled with joy and I prostrated before Him, taking hold of His Divine Feet. Baba touched my forehead and bade me getup. He blessed me with the Abhaya Hastha, as if saying, “Why fear, when I am here?” He did not enter the palanquin but He walked the distance, along with the Sanyasis and others. His Presidential Address was soul stirring and soul elevating, with many a simple anecdote and story, to illustrate the ideas on Bhakti, Dharma and Jnana which lie unexplored in our Sastras. I could not take my eyes away from him. Verily, He is omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient, as God Himself. I see in him Lord Krishna, the Sanathana Sarathi.

On the second day of the Convention, I delivered a speech on the importance of Yoga and gave a demonstration of some Asanas. At the morning session of the concluding day, Bhagavan commented on these and presented me with a Gold Ring, studded with a composite picture of Sri Shirdi Baba and Himself! To the utter astonishment of the entire audience, the ring materialized in His hand, as soon as He waved it in the air! People were more wonder-struck, when by a wave of the hand; He ‘took’ grapes and Vibhuti and gave them as Divine Prasad! Over-flowing with joy, I prostrated and embraced Him in my heart. I had the fortunate opportunity of getting His Holy Darshan daily, till the 23rd March, at Venkatagiri.

From Venkatagiri, I proceeded, as commanded by Baba, to Prasanthi Nilayam, Puttaparthi. The very sight of Prasanthi Nilayam, the Godly Abode of Bhagavan gave me immense Manoshanti. Baba asked me to stay on at Puttaparthi for some days. On hearing this, my joy knew no bounds and I felt extremely blissful in obtaining such a Blessing from the Parandhama Himself. My days at Prasanthi Nilayam were spent in Bhajan, Namasmakirtan, the chanting of Pranavamamtram in Brahma Muhurta and in Meditation. Throughout my stay, I had the chance of having His Darshan every day. Every evening between 4 and 7-15, Bhagavan sat with some devotees on the terrace of the Nilayam and spoke on various subjects, related to Bhakti, Jnana etc and He gave simple convincing anecdotes and lucid examples. He called for queries from us and answered our doubts. When it was time for evening Bhajan we used to disperse and take part in the Bhajan. Baba used to give us also His Divine Prasad, ‘getting’ various fruits and sweets by a simple wave of the Hand.

I gave a Yoga Demonstration and Talk at the Sri Sathya Sai Baba High School, Bukkapatnam, for which Baba Himself presided. I must mention here one more experience I then had of Bhagavan’s mysterious Leela. It was on the concluding day of the Sri Ramanavami Festival, if I remember correctly, that Baba proceeded with the many devotees who had come, to the bed of the river Chitravati. Sitting on the sands, Baba gave a discourse on Bhakti and emphasized that it is only by intensive and undeviating Devotion that one can attain Mukti. Then, with a view to prove the existence of God and to prove that He is the Creator of the Universe, the All-pervading Paramatma, the In-dweller of all that is animate and inanimate, who manifests Himself in the tiniest

and in the biggest, He ‘took’ out from the sandy heap, and icon of Shirdi Baba about 6” high and presented it to a devotee. Then from the very same sand-heap, He ‘took’ silver idols of Rama, Sita, Lakshmana and Anjaneya. These too were presented to a devotee. Lastly, He ‘took’ a lovely little silver kooja, of just a teaspoon capacity, full of Amrita, the sweet Nectar Divine. I might say that all these were made in His mysterious Atelier, the Workshop of His Wonderland.

All these are mine own personal experiences. I know that many will doubt and dub it all as magic, but what magic may produce is illusory and transitory, as every one knows. In Baba’s case, all His creations are permanents! I have still the Gold, yea, God-ring He presented to me, nearly a year and a half ago. Many such objects ‘taken’ and given years ago still exists to bear testimony. And, what does Baba expect from us in return? Bhakti, not necessarily to Him as Sri Sathya Sai Baba but to the omnipotent, omnipresent Lord, by whatever name you have learnt to call on Him, and belief in the existence of the Self and of the Self as Paramatma Itself. Indeed what else can we, mortals, give to the Bhagavan, the All-pervading Sriman Narayana?

O Adorable Lord of Mercy and Love! Salutations and prostrations unto Thee!

Thvameva Maatha cha Pitha thvameva
Thvameva Bandhuscha Sakha thvameva
Thvameva Vidya Dravinam thvameva
Thvameva Sarvam mama deva deva!

Yogiraj V. S. Bua

Sri Gita Nishthas

Blessed Souls, Namaste! Let us taste a drop of Gita-nectar and enjoy divine peace and bliss ever-lasting.

Sri Krishna Bhagavan distributes Truths immortal, not only to Arjuna, but to all thirsty seekers of Sri Gita-nectar, provided only that the seeker shall have staunch faith or Sraddha and be free of jealousy. Consequent on the heart-melting entreaties of Arjuna to remove the clustered clouds of Moha from over his intellect, to solve his doubts and to give him sound advice, Sri Bhagavan begins to teach him Atma-jnana and Buddhi-yoga. He says in the second chapter itself, ‘Vyavasaayaatmikaa Buddhirekeha, Karunandana;’ the well-cultivated intellect gradually assumes the form of Sthithaprajna. This Buddhi-yoga alone will help the seeker to realise his real Self and attain Immortality.

The Lord begins the third chapter with the sloka, ‘Lokesmin dwividhaa nishtaa’ etc., classifying all seekers into two groups with different ‘Nishthas’ or courses of Sadhana, for the attainment of Buddhi-yoga. The first is the Path of Knowledge and the second is the Path of Work. The Nivritti and Pravritti Margas which we come across in Vedic literature are almost the same as these two Gita Nishthas. Rishis like Sanaka,

Sananda and Sanatkumara followed Nivritti Marga while Rishis like Vasishta, Janaka and others practised Pravritti. The paths may appear different, but the goal is One. The courses of training for the mind or Antahkarana may be different, but, the result achieved by either of the paths is the same. The result in both cases is Peace and Immortal Bliss. ‘Tesham Saantih Saasvati, netaresham,’ is the pronouncement of Veda Mata! (It may not be out of place to note here another pair of Paths, described in the Kathopanishad, Shreya and Preya. Sreya leads to final emancipation, but, Preya leads to eternal bondage. So, they cannot be compared to them Nishthas. Praya indicates Sakamakarma while the Gita emphasises Niskamakarama.)

For Sadhakas of both the Gita-nishthas, Brahma-kaivalyam or Paramatma-sayujyam is final goal or truth. The first type prefer Jnana yoga and take up the course prescribed for them. They are required to believe that the Atman in the individual is verily Akhanda Sat-Chit-Ananda and to practice the Sadhana Chatushtayam, (Viveka, Vairagya Samadhi-shatka and Mumukshutva) and then take up Shravana, Manana, Nidhidhyasa and Samadhi. When the Sadhaka reaches the last mentioned stage, Avidya Maya is removed and the realisation dawns upon him that the Atman is verily the All-pervading Brahman. Thus, he becomes a Jivan-mukta or free soul, having nothing to observe or perform, for, as expressed in the Gita, ‘Name Parthashi karthavyam, Thrishu lokeshu kinchana.’ Such Jivan-muktas may work as Bhagavan Sankaracharya did, for loka-sangraham, or, they may not so work, as Sri Suka, since they are not bound by the laws of Karma or of Jagat.

The second type of Sadhakas follow the path of Karma. They like to believe that their Atman is not Brahman, but, part and parcel of the Whole, ever depending on Brahman. They adopt methods of Sadhana, fixed by Rishis of yore, for Sadhakas of their taste. They pursue their Nishthas with zeal and sincerity, and finally attain Sayujya-mukti, union with Paramatman.

Though the words expressing this blessed state may appear different for ordinary mortals, they are really one and the same for realised souls. Does not the Lord Himself pronounce the same judgement in unambiguous terms in the Fifth Chapter of the Gita? Though votaries of different ‘isms’ calling by different names, is not nectar always the same?

Since the Sayujya approach to Sri Bhagavan is through the Path of Karma, Rishis proposed various kinds of Karma and divided this Sadhana into three: Karma-yoga, Bhakti-yoga and Patanjali-yoga. Karma-yoga requires Viswamanava seva, humanitarian service as Nishkama-karma or selfless work, dedicating the fruits of work at the Lotus-feet of Bhagavan. Bhakti-yoga teaches Nava-vidha-bhakti, Sharanagati and Baranyasam. Patanjali-yoga consists of Ashtaanga-yoga, where the Sadhaka is asked to control Prana by Kumbhaka etc further attainment of Samadhi. According to the Hindu sampradaya or tradition, a Guru is needed for each of these Nishthas, but, for the Patanjali-yoga, he is absolutely essential. Patanjali explicitly says, Bhagavadanugrahaadvaa Mahaathmaanaam Anugrahaadvaa’....Sri Krishna also sets apart the third, sixth and twelfth Chapters of the Gita, for these Yogas, respectively.

Bhakti-yoga is being practised from time to immemorial by a greater part of the Sadhakas, for it requires no hard qualification, like birth learning etc. Note carefully the saying of Bhagavan: ‘Apichetsu duraacharo bhajathe maamananyabhaak, Saadhureva(!)’. Even if one is a durachari at the beginning, he shall be treated as a perfect Sadhu, provided, after repenting for his past, he takes complete refuge in Me, and adheres to the Path of Prapati’. O, what an unparalleled compassion! Not satisfied with this assurance, the Lord directs Arjuna to declare the same truth, by taking a vow: Kaunteya prathijaaneehi, name bhakta pranasyathi. Words fail to describe the Love Divine.

O Blessed followers of Bhakti Marga, surely your position is enviable. For, the Lord is there, beside you at every step, giving all help, never forsaking you. O my brethren, devotees of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai, please recollect the assurances given by our Lord at different times and in various connections. Are they not the same as those given by the Lord of the Gita? Why need we wonder? It is the One Almighty Spirit appearing again and yet again for uplifting humanity and establishing Dharma.

—Dhoopati

A Case of Sixth Para, Full Term (Medical Report-4-from Sri Sathya Sai Hospital)

During first pregnancy, before reaching full term, X of Bangalore developed swelling of extremities and fits. As it was a case of contracted pelvis, the baby had to be removed, with the help of instruments, with great difficulty. During 2nd pregnancy, she aborted in the 4th month. In the 3rd, the child had to be removed in the 7th month, dead. Enceinte for the 4th time, she aborted again in the fourth month. At the 5th, she reached full term, but, this time too, there was general anasarca and, under anesthesia, the child had to be removed. The Doctor of the Bangalore Hospital advised her against conception, but, some time later, she was carrying again.

As she neared full term, her fears increased but, she had the good fortune to have a Darshan of Bhagavan at Bangalore. Baba asked her people to her to Puttaparthi, without delay. Baba Himself arrived the next day and that very evening, since the pains started, she was admitted into this Hospital.

For 15 days, she had labour pains and the Lady Doctor, anxious about her condition, prayed for Baba’s permission to remove the child by evisceration. Baba kept on assuring the doctors that all will be well and everyone felt confident of His Grace. The next day, 16-7-58, the patient developed good pains and safely gave birth to a child, 7 lbs, male, all by herself, without any help from the doctor. Completing the puerperal period without complications, she was discharged on 26-7-58. Mother and child are now quite healthy and cheerful at Bangalore.

Learned brothers of the medical profession will certainly be amazed at this case report, which is but a recital of fact. Since we in this Hospital have been witnesses of

many other such manifestations of Baba's Divine Grace, this case serves to further strengthen our faith and enthuse us still more for His Seva.

Dr. V. Brahmam

Baba the Mother

Writing of Sri Sadguru Sai Baba, Hemadpanth writes, "Sai Baba had the peculiar, disinterested and extraordinary Love of the Mother; His joy knew no bounds, when He saw His children beautifully dressed and adorned. He knew the wants of His children long before hand and He took great pleasure in fulfilling them." Every one who has come to Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the present manifestation of that same Mother, will describe Him too in the same words. Every devotee, however old, becomes in the presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, a little child and, just as a child takes refuge in the mother's lap and sobs out to her all its fears and worries, he too pours out his troubles and gets consoled. In the Markandeya Purana, Devi is described thus: Durge smrthaa harasi bheethim asesha janthoh. "If remembered in times of trouble, she destroys the fear of all living things." We all know that Baba need only be remembered and He flees thousands of miles in an instant, to succor and give relief. The sloka continues: Swasthaiah smrthaa, mathim atheevasubham dadaasi. "If remembered by others, who are free from immediate fear She grants the most auspicious understanding." Devotees of Baba will endorse that Baba, as soon as they pray to Him, vouchsafes advice directly or, if they are far away, indirectly but clearly, on all problems facing them, not merely spiritual and mental, or physical but even social and domestic. Let us turn again to the Markandeya Purana. There the Mother is again praised as, Daridrya dukhabhya harini. Just like a loving mother who helps distressed child from out of her secret hoard and saves it from shame and dishonour, Baba too as every one knows is saving many from their own folly and negligence and putting them on the path of honourable living. In the last line of the above sloka, Mother is described by the Purana as, 'full of Mercy.' The poet asks, Kaathwadanyaa sarvopakaarakaranaaya sadaardra chiththaa? Who else has the heart, ever melting, to bestow favours on all? Baba's Heart, too, is ever overflowing with Mercy, not only to those devoted to Him for years, but to those who have had little contact with Him, and even those who disparage Him. His Karuna is the right of all beings and He is never tired of telling the good news to all. He has said so often in His discourses at Puttaparthi and elsewhere, that no one need look upon Him with fear, or even extol Him, in order to earn His Grace, because no one fears his mother or is put to the necessity of praising her in order to win her to his side. The mother's love is spontaneous and independent of any expectations.

In the Tamilnadu, Easwara is known also as Thayumanavar, 'He who became also the mother' because in one of His Leelas, He saved a woman's life and helped her safe delivery. The mother of the woman, who was to attend on her, was held up by a flooded river and the Lord, taking pity on the lonely, forlorn daughter, assumed the form of the mother and attended to the labour, Himself. Numerous are the cases where Baba has, dream, vision, or actual materialisation in some form, even as Thayumanavar, acted in

the similar way and saved His children from calamity. The case report that follows on page 27 is yet another such example of Baba, as Mother.

One must listen to the advice Baba gives His daughters and sons about the choice of life-mates; and, to the daughters, when they proceed to take up residence with their mother-in-law, or when they have new born babies to feed and foster. One common argument that Baba uses to persuade people to postpone their departure from Puttaparthi comes to mind just now. He usually asks the lady of the party, “Why don’t you remain a few days longer in your Mother’s home?” and that settles it! One will realise, then that He is the mother of all Mothers, the Mother who is the Mother in all beings. The tenderness, sympathy and love with which Baba attends to the needs of the cows, the rabbits, the pet dogs, peacocks or deer, the care He takes to avoid any harm to living things is a lesson to every one in the art of efficient mothering. He is verily maternal love, incarnate. “Yaa Devi Sarvabhoothaanaam Mathuru Roopena Samsthithaa.”

There is, therefore, a special significance in the Celebration of Navaratri, at Prasanthi Nilayam. Besides the Birthday of Baba, the only two festivals celebrated on a grand scale at Puttaparthi are, Sivaratri and Navaratri, for, Baba is both Siva and Shakti. During these Nine Days and Nights, He is Saraswati, presiding over Poetry, Dance, Music and Drama; Annapoorna, lavishing Annam and Vastram; Lakshmi, granting boons to all who come; and Durga, slaying falsity, pretence and wickedness, destroying the buffalo sloth and the buffalo stupidity that has overpowered us all. May Baba, the Mother, bless us and give us Faith, Strength and Joy.

Kasturi

O Baba! My Baba!

O Baba! My Baba!
O Sathya Sai Baba!
Out of mystery unseen,
Thou hast come between
Darkness and light to link
Us, to light and ever more Light!

O Baba! My Baba!
O Sathya Sai Baba!
Out of Darkness unseen,
Thou hast come between
Falsehood and Truth to link
Us, to Truth and ever full Truth!

O Baba! My Baba!
O Sathya Sai Baba!
Out of Death unseen,
Thou hast come between
Death and Immortality to take

Us, to the land of Eternity!

K. Vaidyanathan

Reader! Please note:

“Sanathana Sarathi” is a monthly, for the present, and the articles published in it are purely religio-philosophical. Contributions of articles especially from those who endeavour to put into practice what they speak and write on spirituality are readily welcome.

Anything that smacks of “public news or comments on public news”, personal attacks, rude phraseology, or even non-devotional sentiments can find no place, in here. The Editor enjoys in full the right, wherever he feel it necessary, either to curtail, or to supplement or even to withhold publication of the articles received. No unpublished article will be returned unless after special request.

No commercial advertisement will be published in this magazine.

As readers are aware, the Subscription Amount of Rupees – Three per year has to be sent to the Editor by M.O. If the M.O reaches the Editor, before 16th of any month, will receive the ‘Sanathana Sarathi’ of the subsequent month and eleven issues thereafter.

Permanent change of address should be intimated before the 10th of the month, mentioning also the subscribers number(found on the wrapper) and the Old Address.

Editor,
“SANATHANA SARATHI”
Prasanthi Nilayam
Puttaparthi

Prema Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Sat-Sankalpa is the Path for Attaining the Presence

For Maya-constituted beings, there are two Maya gates; the appetite for sex and the appetite of the tongue. These two have to be conquered by every man; so long as they persist, they cause sorrow. All worldly desires are comprehended by these two; so, only those who have mastered these two can be said to have successfully waded through the world. These are the causes of all sins; and, sin is the manure on which Maya thrives. Really speaking, this Maya-prapancha or world has to serve only the purpose of just sustaining the body. Those aspiring for Liberation have to subdue the senses. “Food for guarding the body, dress to ward off the cold”, says the Uttara Gita. If Man, however, gets immersed in these pursuits, he will forget the purpose for which he has come and the goal of all activity and holy endeavour. Instead, whatever activity a person may be engaged in, he must, as automatically as he takes in breath, be contemplating on these lines and should always be aware of this: “I am born to serve God and to realise my true Self.” All acts—wearing, eating, walking, studying, serving, moving—should be performed in the belief that they take one into the Presence. Everything should be done in a spirit of dedication to the Lord.

A farmer clears and levels the land, removes the stones and thorns, ploughs and prepares the field, manures and strengthens the soil, waters and fertilises it, and sowing, transplanting, weeding, spraying and waiting, he reaps the crop, after winnowing and threshing, he stacks the corn. All these various processes are for the sake of the stomach; so, too, one must feel that all the hunger, thirst, joy and sorrow, grief and loss, suffering and anger, food and appetite are but impulses helping us towards attaining the Presence of the Lord. When one has this attitude, sin will never tarnish these activities. The appetites too will vanish, without a vestige of name or form.

The Object of Activity is Good Deeds

The taste of food or of anything eaten cannot be grasped if the person is ill or even if the mind is immersed in something else. So also, even if one is engaged in Namasmarana, Bhajan, Japa or Dhyana, if the heart is full of Tamas, or if it is wayward, no joy can be experienced; joy can never well up under such circumstances. The tongue will be sweet, so long as there is sugar upon the tongue; if there is the pillar of light, Bhakti, in the corridor of the heart, so long as that lamp burns, there will be no darkness. The heart will be illumined in Bliss. A bitter thing on the tongue makes the whole tongue bitter ; when qualities like greed and anger enter the heart, the brightness disappears and darkness dominates the scene and Man becomes the target of countless griefs and losses. Therefore, those who aspire to attain the holy Presence of the Lord must acquire certain habits disciplines and qualities. The usual, accustomed ways of life will not lead to God. They have to be modified somewhat, by means of Sadhana. Look at the crane; it walks about pretty fast in water. But, during that walk, it cannot catch any fish; it must, for that purpose, become slow and quiet and stand motionless. So also, if one proceeds with greed, anger and similar qualities, one cannot secure the fish of Sathya, Dharma and Shanti. Whatever Sadhana a person may or may not have, he must practise uninterrupted Namasmarana. Then only can he master the natural attributes of Greed, anger etc. All the Sastras teach but this one lesson: since the Lord is the universal Goal and this Journey of Life has Him as the Destination, keep

Him constantly in view and subdue the mind which makes you wander from the path. All the good qualities automatically gather around the person who practises control of speech and the constant contemplation of the Lord. See! In the Dwaparayuga the Kauravas, even while experiencing the fruits of their previous Punya, were engaged in Papakarma; the Pandavas, on the other hand, even while undergoing the sufferings due to their previous Papakarma, were thinking and doing only Punya! This is the difference between the wise and the unwise. The Kauravas were slaves of the appetites of hunger and sex and the Pandavas did every act for the sake of the Lord, having Sathya and Dharma as their Charioteer. Those who are overwhelmed in grief can never feel interest in either a feast or a fight; similarly, the real aspirant who is immersed in thoughts of God can never taste or even think of worldly objects of enjoyment.

A Good Character is the Jewel of Human Life

One must realise in this body itself, before death takes its toll, the Eternal Truth and the Relationship between Man and that Truth. The Kathopanishad exhorts: “Uththishtatha! Jagratha!! Praapyavaraannibodhatha !!!—Arise, Awake, Get initiated from the great.” Those who are agitated by doubts about what to accept and what to reject; those who are blinded by illusion, and those who cannot distinguish between darkness and light, death and immortality, all such should approach great persons who can show the path to understand the eternal Truth, the Self-illuminated Basis of all Creation. Then, this world and heaven both will be merged in the same effulgence! For the sake of this realisation, man should have deep yearning and hard disciplined practice. This human birth itself is the consequence of countless good deeds and it should not be cast aside; the chance must be fully exploited. As the Kenopanishad says, ‘Nachedihavedin Mahathovinashtih—the jewel in the hand should not be dropped aside’; when there are many chances of saving oneself, is it not a big loss if no thought is spent on ways of escape? For all those who are really animals in human form, slaves of pride and animal traits, this awareness in time is most important; delay is fruitless. It will be silly as starting to dig a well when the house catches fire. Therefore, the discriminating individual will endeavour by all means at his disposal to understand the underlying Principles, to master the teachings of the great men who practised the spiritual path, and to bring all this, as much as possible, Into the ken of one’s own experience. Without this effort, if one discards the Path and wastes his life, it is an insult to the very name of the species! Instead of being enslaved to the evanescent and the false and wasting precious time in their pursuit, dedicate every minute to the discovery of Truth, the contemplation of the Everlasting Ever-true Lord. Such dedication is the real function of the soul. The spending of time in illusory appetites on the other hand is the drag of the world. One should not fall a victim to the poisonous attractions of worldly luxuries, or the wiles of seductive beauty. One day, all these fascinating senses will vanish as a story unfolded in a dream!

Whatever happens to man, education and the rest to make him grow and become big, these are of no use for his spiritual progress; they bring about only his spiritual downfall. That is why this is Maya-prapancha. Truth, in whatever Maya it is immersed, will only shine more effulgently. For such is the nature of Truth. How can we say that the objective world, undergoing modifications every minute, waning and wasting, with the waywardness of appearing and disappearing is Eternal Truth? So, the characteristic of a Sadhaka is the attainment of Truth, not the search of the Unreal in this evanescent world. In this false world, there can be no Satyachara, true living. There can only be Mithyachara, unreal living. True living consists in the realisation of the Lord. This must be borne in mind by every man, every moment of his life.

Sahaja-marga, Sadhana-marga not the same

The Sadhaka should note the distinction between the conduct of the natural man and the aspirant. Sahaja man is one without Sahana or Fortitude, with a-ham-kara, or conceit, and one who is full of desires relating to the Jagath by which he is trying to have a contented Janma. The Sadhana man is he who is engaged in Sarveswarchintha as ceaselessly as the waves of the Sagara or sea, who accumulates the DHANA of Equality and Equal Love to all who is content in the thought that all is the Lord's and nothing is his. The Sadhana man will not, like the Sahaja man, easily bend before grief or loss, anger or hatred or selfishness, hunger, thirst or fickleness. One should master all the above things as much as possible, and journey through life in fortitude, courage, joy, peace, charity and humility. Realising that the tending of the body is not all important, one has to bear patiently even hunger and thirst and be engaged uninterruptedly in the contemplation of the Lord. Instead, quarrelling for every tiny little thing, losing one's temper, becoming sad at the slightest provocation, getting angry at the smallest insult, worried at thirst, hunger and loss of sleep, these can never be the characteristics of a Sadhaka. Rice in its natural state and rice that is boiled, can these two be the same? The hardness of natural rice is absent in the boiled one. The boiled grain is soft, harmless and sweet. The unboiled grain is hard, conceited and full of delusion. Both types are Jivis and Men, no doubt; those who are immersed in external illusions and Avidyamaya are "Men"; those who are immersed in internal illusions or Vidya Maya are "Sadhakas", and God is immersed in neither, devoid of both. He who has no external illusions becomes a Sadhaka and when he is devoid of even the internal illusions, he can be termed a God. Such a person's heart becomes the seat of God. Therefore, it is possible to deduce that all is pervaded by God. Though, of course, the Lord is situated in every heart, Sadhana is necessary so that they may discover it for themselves, isn't it? It is not possible for us to see our own face! We must have a mirror to show us its image! So too, a basic Marga or Path, a Sadhana method is necessary to become devoid of Gunas.

The Harvest of a Sadhaka

There is, in this world, no tapas higher than fortitude, no happiness greater than contentment, no Punya holier than mercy, no weapon more effective than patience.

Bhaktas should consider the body as the field, good deeds as seeds and cultivate the Name of the Lord, with the help of the Heart as the ryot, in order to get the harvest, the Lord Himself. How can one get the crop without the cultivation? Like cream in milk, like fire in fuel, the Lord is in everything, more or less. Have full faith in this. As the milk, so the cream; as the fuel, so the fire; so also, as the Sadhana, so the Sakshatkara, isn't it? Even if the attainment of Mukti is not directly realised as a consequence of taking up the Lord's name, four fruits are clearly evident to those who have had the experience. They are (1) the company of the great (2) Truth (3) Contentment (4) The control of the senses. Through whichever of these gates one may enter, whether he be a householder or recluse, or a member of any other class, he can reach the Lord without fail. This is certain. Men crave for worldly happiness. Analysed properly, this itself is the disease and sufferings are but the drugs we take. In the midst of these worldly pleasures, one rarely entertains the desire for attaining the Lord.

Besides, it is necessary to analyse and discriminate every act of man for, the spirit of renunciation is born out of such analysis. Without it, renunciation is difficult to get. Miserliness

is like the behaviour of a dog; it has to be transformed. Anger is enemy No. 1 of the Sadhaka; it is like spittle and has to be treated as such. And untruth? It is even more disgusting; through untruth, the vital powers of all are destroyed. It should be treated as scavenging itself. Theft ruins life; it makes the priceless human life cheaper than a pie; it is like rotten foul smelling flesh. Moderate food, moderate sleep, Prema, and fortitude these will help in the upkeep of the health of both body and mind. Whoever he may be in whatever condition he may be, if he gives no room for dispiritedness, if he has no fear at all, and if he remembers the Lord with unshaken faith and without any ulterior motive all suffering and sorrow will fall away from him. The Lord will never enquire at any time the caste to which you belong or the Achara which you traditionally follow.

Bhakti does not consist in wearing Kashaya cloth, the organisation of Utsavas, the performance of Yajnas, the shaving of hair, the carrying of Kamandala or Danda, the matting of the hair etc. With a pure Antahkarana, uninterruptedly (whatever one may be doing) contemplating on God, feeling that everything is the Lord's creation and therefore One, unattached to sense-objects, embracing all in equal Love, dedicated to True Speech, this is, indeed, the characteristic of Bhakti.

Of the various types of Bhakti, Namasmarana bhakti is the best. In the Kaliyuga, the Name is the Path for saving oneself. Jayadeva, Gouranga, Thyagayya, Tukaram, Kabir, Ramdas, all these great Bhaktas attained the Lord through just this one Nama. Why speak of thousand things? Even Prahlada and Dhruva were able to enjoy the Darshan, Sparshan and Sambhashan of the Lord through Nama only, isn't it? Therefore, if every Sadhaka will consider the name of the Lord as the very breath of his life and, have complete faith in good deeds and good thoughts, if he will develop the spirit of service and equal Love for all, then there can be no better Path for Mukti. Instead of this, if one sits in some solitary nook and holds his breath, how can he master his innate qualities? How is he to know that he has mastered them? Ambarisha Bhakti, and Durvasa activities, the combination of these two will result in the fate of Durvasa himself; at least, in the end. Durvasa must fall at the feet of Ambarisha. May you avoid becoming such Trishankus; may you experience the eternal Truth, achieving the genuine State.

The Equipment that a Sadhaka should collect

Every person is apt to commit mistakes, without being aware of it. However bright the fire or light, some smoke will emanate from it. So also, whatever good deed a man might do, there will be mixed with it a minute trace of evil. But, efforts should be made to ensure that the evil is minimised, that the good is more and bad, less. Of course, in the present atmosphere, you may not succeed in the very first attempt. You must carefully think over the consequences of whatever you do, talk, or execute. In whatever way you want others to honour you, or to love you or to behave with you, in the same way, you should first behave with others and love and honour them. Then only will those honour you. Instead without yourself honouring and loving others, if you complain that they are not treating you properly, it is surely a wrong conclusion. Besides, if only those who advise others about "Which principles are right, which are true and good which conduct is best? Etc", themselves follow the advice they give, there would then be no need for giving that advice at all. They will learn the lesson simply by observing their actual behaviour. On the other hand, if Vedanta is spoken parrot-like to others, without any attempt to put it into practice in one's own conduct, it is not only deceiving others; it is even worse; it is

deceiving oneself. Therefore *you* must be, as you want *others* to be. It is not the nature of a Sadhaka to search for faults in others and hide one's own. If your faults are pointed out to you by any one, do not argue and try to prove that it is right or do not bear a grudge against him for it. Reason out within yourself how it is a fault and set right your own behaviour. Instead, rationalising it for your own satisfaction or wreaking vengeance on the person who pointed it out, these are certainly not the traits of a Sadhaka or Bhakta.

The Sadhaka should always seek the truthful and joyful; he must avoid all thoughts of the nature of the sad and the depressing. Depression, doubt, conceit, these are Rahu and Ketu to the spiritual aspirant. When one's devotion is well established, even if these appear they can be easily discarded. They will only harm one's Sadhana. Above all, it is best that the Sadhaka should be under all circumstances, joyful, smiling and enthusiastic. Even more than Bhakti and Jnana, this pure attitude is desirable. Those who have acquired it deserve to reach the goal first. This quality of joy at all times is the fruit of the good done in past births. When a person is ever worried, depressed, doubting, he can never attain bliss, whatever Sadhana he may do. The first task of a Sadhaka is the cultivation of enthusiasm. Through that enthusiasm, he can derive any variety of Ananda. Never get inflated when you are praised; never get deflated when you are blamed. Be a spiritual Lion, regardless of both. One must oneself analyse and correct one's faults; this is most important.

Now, even in matters relating to the realisation of God, one has to be careful. Whatever inconveniences one may encounter, one must try to carry on one's Sadhana, without any break or modification in the disciplines. One should not be changing the Name that one has loved, cherished, and selected for Smarana. Concentration is impossible if the Name is changed once every few days. The mind will not attain one-pointedness. All Sadhana has this one-pointedness as its ultimate aim; so avoiding constant adoption and rejection of Names and Forms of the Lord, one single Name must be used throughout for Japam and Dhyanam. And, one has also to get the strong conviction that all the Lord's Names and all the Lord's Forms are but the Name and the Form which one is repeating in Japam and meditating on, during Dhyanam. That Name and that Form must not give any slightest feeling of dislike or disaffection. Taking all worldly losses, sufferings and worries as merely temporal and transitory, and realising that all this Japam and Dhyanam is only to overcome such grief, the Sadhaka should keep the two things separate, without mixing up that with this, and this with that. He must understand that the loss, suffering and worry are external, belonging to this world, and that Japam and Dhyanam are internal, belonging to the realm of the love for the Lord. This is what is called Pativrata Bhakti, or Chaste Devotion; the other variety, where the Sadhaka selects one Name and one Form and after sometime discards them for another Name and Form, is called Vyabhichara Bhakti, or Unchaste Bhakti.

It is not a fault if it is done in ignorance; but having once known that it is wrong and harmful, and after continuing Dhyanam and Japam with that Nama and Rupa faithfully, if they are subsequently changed, it certainly is wrong. Sticking faithfully to the Nama and Rupa is the highest vow, and the highest austerity. Even if elders advise you, do not give up the Path approved by your mind! Of course, which elder will suggest to you that you should change the Name of the Lord and give up the Name that you adore? Do not consider those who tell you to do so as an elder: consider them as dullards. Again, see that as far as possible, the time and place

of Dhyanam and Japam are not changed and shifted. Sometimes, as while travelling, even if it becomes necessary to change the venue, the time at least should be kept unaltered. Even if one is in a railway train, or a bus, or some such inconvenient surrounding, at the specified time, one must, at least, recall to one's mind the Dhyanam and the Japam done by one self, at the same time in the past.

In this way, accumulating spiritual wealth, one can surely become the master, and attain the Atma.

SRI SATHYA SAT BABA

Sandeha Nivarini

7

(Jewels of Maxims of Life)

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Bhakta: Greetings, Swami.

Swami: Oh, you have come, is it? You didn't come for Dasara!

Bhakta: The number of Bhaktas then would be large I thought and so I was afraid I will not be able to speak to you to my heart's content. Hence, I came now, a few days prior to Your Birthday, so that with Your Blessings I could realise the Ideal which You teach and have both Bhakti and Jnana born in my heart, on the auspicious day of the celebration of Your Advent.

Swami: Good! Very good intention, indeed! But do you mean to say that Bhakti and Jnana will not be born in you on days other than my birthday? Is that your idea?

Bhakta: No, no! That is not so! You come to this world on an auspicious day at a holy moment with an auspicious form, isn't it? My idea is that at least on such a Day I could establish in my heart Your Holy words and make it pure. The day is Holy and the moment auspicious.

Swami: Fine! What is the Sandeha, the doubt, you have today?

Bhakta: I have come today determined to hear and put into practice Your Holy Words, Swami. As the saying goes, 'Even if you go to Kasi, you have Saheeswara by your side!' So I did not bring the demon of doubt with me today when I came. Nor did that demon accompany me! It is all due to Your Grace.

Swami: Very good I Understand that when these doubts do not come of themselves, nor are entertained by you, then indeed the mind is pure. When these two happen, it can be called one-pointedness. When you have none, why should I remind you of doubts? Then tell me, what shall I speak to you about?

Bhakta: Swami, tell me how we should, generally, conduct ourselves. What are the qualities we should possess? Which type of subjects should we try to understand? To receive the Divine Grace and attain Your Holy Presence, what acts should we perform? Please tell me the more important of these, the essential things, the chosen Jewels.

Swami: Oh! It seems, Parvati asked Iswara once, "It is difficult to retain in memory the Sahasranama, the Thousand Names of God; it takes a long time to learn them and repeat them; so, please tell me One Single Name which is the essence of all the thousand". Similarly, you too perhaps find it difficult to grasp all that I write and explain and so you are also asking me to tell you about the MOST important, is it? But you see, Names have their essence, the subjects you ask about are different. Though their objective and final result are one, the practices, the paths of activity, cannot be one. They cannot all be summarised in one word I Still, I am giving you now some selected jewels, maxims of conduct, that are very important. Collect and treasure them well. Experience them well, put them into practice and derive joy therefrom. Wear these jewels and beautify yourself

Bhakta: Exactly what I wanted How lucky I am!

Swami: Then listen carefully, I shall tell you.

1. Prema, Love, should be considered as the very breath of Life.
2. The Love that is manifest in all things equally, believe that the same Prema is Paramatma.
3. The one Paramatma is in every one, in the form of Prema.
4. More than all other forms of Prema, man's first effort should be to fix his Love on the Lord.
5. Such Love directed towards God is Bhakti; that is the fundamental test, the acquisition of Bhakti.
6. Those who seek the Bliss of the Atma should not run after the joys of sense objects.
7. Sathya, Truth, must be treated as life-giving as breathing itself.
8. Just as a body that has no breath is useless and begins to rot and stink within a few minutes, similarly, life without Truth is useless and becomes the stinking abode of strife and grief.
9. Believe that there is nothing greater than Truth, nothing more precious, nothing sweeter and nothing more lasting.
10. Truth is the all-protecting God. There is no mightier Guardian than Truth.
11. The Lord who is Sathyaswarupa grants His Darshan to those of truthful speech and loving heart.
12. Have undiminished kindness towards all beings and also the spirit of self-sacrifice.
13. You must also possess control of the senses, an unruffled character and non-attachment.
14. Be always on the alert against the four sins which the tongue is prone to commit: (1) Speaking falsehood (2) Speaking ill of others (3) Back-biting and (4) Talking too much. It is best to attempt to control these tendencies.

15. Try to prevent the five sins that the body commits: Killing, Adultery, Theft, Drinking intoxicants and the Eating of flesh. It is a great help for the highest life if these also are kept as far away as possible.
16. One must be always vigilant, without a moment's carelessness, against the eight sins that the mind perpetrates: Kamam or craving; Krodham or anger; Lobham or greed; Moham or attachment; Impatience; Hatred, Egoism, Pride. Man's primary duty is to keep all these things at a safe distance from himself.
17. Man's mind speeds fast, pursuing wrong actions. Without letting it hurry like that remember the name of the Lord at that time or attempt to do some good deed or other. Those who do thus will certainly become fit for the Lord's Grace.
18. First give up the evil tendency to feel envious at the prosperity of others and the desire to harm them. Be happy that others are happy. Sympathise with those who are in adversity and wish for their prosperity. That is the means of cultivating love for God.
19. Patience is all the strength that man needs.
20. Those anxious to live in joy must always be doing good.
21. It is easy to conquer anger through love, attachment through reasoning, falsehood through truth, bad through good and greed through charity.
22. No reply should be given to the words of the wicked. Be at a great distance from them; that is for your good. Break off all relations with such people.
23. Seek the company of good men, even at the sacrifice of your honour and life. But be praying to God to bless you with the discrimination needed to distinguish between the good men and the bad. You must also endeavour, with the intellect given to you.
24. Those who conquer states and earn fame in the world are hailed as heroes, no doubt; but those who have conquered the senses are heroes who must be acclaimed as the conquerors of the Universal.
25. Whatever acts a good or bad man may do, the fruits thereof follow him and will never stop pursuing him.
26. Greed yields only sorrow; contentment is best. There is no happiness greater than contentment.
27. The mischief-mongering tendency should be plucked out by the roots and thrown off. If allowed to exist, it will undermine life itself.
28. Bear with fortitude both loss and grief; try and search for plans to achieve joy and gain.
29. When you are invaded by anger, practise silence or remember the name of the Lord. Do not remind yourself of things which will inflame the anger more. That will do incalculable harm.
30. From this moment avoid all bad habits. Do not delay or postpone. They do not contribute the slightest joy.
31. Try as far as possible within your means to satisfy the needs of the poor, who are really Daridranarayana. Share with them whatever food you have and make them happy at least that moment.
32. Whatever you feel should not be done to you by others, avoid doing such things to others.
33. For faults and sins committed in ignorance, repent sincerely; try not to repeat the faults and sins again; pray to God to bless you with the strength and the courage needed to stick to the right path.

34. Do not allow anything to come near you, which will destroy your eagerness and enthusiasm for God. Want of eagerness will cause the decay of the strength of man.
35. Yield not to cowardice; do not give up Ananda.
36. Do not get swelled up when people praise you; do not feel dejected when people blame you.
37. If among your friends any one hates another and starts a quarrel, do not attempt to inflame them more and make them hate each other more; try, on the other hand, with love and sympathy to restore their former friendship.
38. Instead of searching for others' faults, search for your own faults yourself; uproot them, throw them off. It is enough if you search and discover one fault of yours; that is better than discovering tens of hundreds of faults in others.
39. Even if you cannot or will not do any Punya or good deed, do not conceive or carry out any Papa, or bad deed.
40. Whatever people may say about the faults that you know are not in you, do not feel for it; as for the faults that are in you, try to correct them yourself, even before others point them out to you. Do not harbour anger or bitterness against persons who point out your faults; do not retort. pointing out the faults of those persons themselves, but show your gratitude to them. Trying to discover their faults is a greater mistake on your part. It is good for you to know your faults; it is no good your knowing others' faults.
41. Whenever you get a little leisure, do not spend it in talking about all and sundry, but utilise it in meditating on God or in doing service to others.
42. The Lord is understood only by the Bhakta; the Bhakta is understood only by the Lord. Others cannot understand them. So, do not discuss matters relating to the Lord with those who have no Bhakti. On account of such discussion, your devotion will diminish.
43. If anyone speaks to you on any subject, having understood it wrongly, do not think of other wrong notions which will support that stand but grasp only the good and the sweet, in what he says. True meaning is to be appreciated as desirable, not wrong meaning or many meanings, which give no meaning at all and cause only the hampering of Ananda.
44. If you desire to cultivate one-pointedness, do not, when in a crowd or bazaar, scatter your vision to the four corners and on everything, but see only the road in front of you, just enough to avoid accidents to yourself. One-pointedness will become firmer if one moves about without taking one's attention off the road, avoiding dangers, and not casting eyes on others' forms.
45. Give up all doubts regarding the Guru and God. If your worldly desires do not get fulfilled, do not blame it on your devotion; there is no relationship between such desires and devotion to God. These worldly desires have to be given up some day or other; Bhakti feelings have to be acquired some day or other. Be firmly convinced of this.
46. If your Dhyanam or Japam does not progress properly or if the desires you have entertained do not come to fruition, do not get dispirited with God. It will dispirit you even more and you will lose the peace, however small or big, that you might have earned. During Dhyanam and Japam you should not be dispirited, desperate or discouraged. When such feelings come, take it that it is the fault of your Sadhana and endeavour to do them correctly.

It is only when in your daily conduct and in all actions you automatically behave and act in this manner, and along these lines that you can attain the Divine principle, very easily. Therefore,

hold on to these maxims firmly. Chew and digest these spoken sweets distributed on the Birthday Festival of your Swami and be happy! Have you understood?

Bhakta: Your words are like Amrita, Swami. Yes! Amrita! In all these ordinary dealings of life, man does not know the road; he follows the wrong track; there are no books also to tell him the means of a happy journey; for all such strugglers like me, what you have said is Prana, the very breath! We are indeed blessed! Bless me, that these words get imprinted on my heart and are realised in practice, every day. There is no good in simply listening or reading them. It is only when Your Grace accompanies them that we get strength. I shall take leave, Swami!

Swami: All right! Go and come for the Birthday Festival. There are just seven days more, isn't it? Today is 16th; the Birthday is on 23rd; so there are seven days left. Till that time let this sweetness fill and overflow your heart!

Stray Thoughts on Swami's Birthday

Before I put down anything else, my first duty is to offer to Swami on His Birthday, in all humility, my homage of reverence and affection; and to convey to Him the gratitude of the heart and spirit for the privilege accorded even to this unworthy one, of membership in the ever growing throng of His bhaktas.

Every birthday celebration includes as a part of the festivities, the offering of gifts. True to the time-honoured tradition, Sai Bhaktas from all over the country—from other countries too—bring their gifts, each according to his or her capacity mid intensity of devotion and place them at His Feet on this auspicious and joyous occasion. There are among these gifts many, which are invisible to our eyes, but, which are received by the Master in the folds of His grace— gifts like service, sacrifice, humility and love. The most acceptable among them, perhaps, are lives wholly dedicated to Him and shaped in conformity with the precepts for our guidance, which fall from His hallowed lips, time and again.

It must be confessed, and without the least pretence of humility, that among such lives, that of the present writer cannot be counted. For he, knows—and, who better than he, unless it be Swami Himself—that he has not been able to follow even a, single precept of the Master, with a passable: amount of success; let alone thoroughness. For instance, the very first of the Sadguru's simple lessons for beginners is NAMASMARANA. This, seems an easy enough lesson; but, alas!, how often, during moments of enforced inactivity, as when waiting for trains or buses or in the course of long train journeys, beginning the smarana in right earnest, have I not been chagrined to discover after a few minutes, that the lips were engaged in a mechanical operation and that attention, instead of being concentrated on Swami or a mental image of Him, had wandered away, distracted by the first stray object passing through the field of vision?

Yet another simple lesson of Swami's is the necessity for us to participate in bhajans; and how elaborately and vividly has He not explained that by keeping time with our hands and lifting our voices, the crows of sin trespassing into our hearts are driven away! The bhajans in the Mandir

are indeed thrilling and inspiring; yet, even there, whether the eyes are closed or open, or half-shut directed towards the tip of the nose, the mind starts on roaming excursions of its own, led on thereto by some association of ideas, suggested by the very words of the bhajan hymn! Again unless one is very wary, the bhajan organised and conducted in one's own home is likely to deteriorate into a lifeless routine affair, devoid of that spirit of eager and intensely loving service in the ordering of the smallest details of the bhajan.

I shall refer but to two more among the many such simple lessons that Swami has given to the beginners in His school—and with which I daresay all His bhaktas are familiar. They must be the simplest and easiest, for I too remember them; and even made a great (in my opinion) effort to put them into practice. On one occasion, to the bhaktas gathered round Him on the sands of the Chitravati He gave an admonition—forcible and heart-penetrating—against PARANINDA. A very common failing!, and when a few of us gather, part of our talk—if not the greater part of it—is, in the ultimate analysis only PARANINDA. To one like me, not given to mixing with many people, it seemed a lesson easy enough to follow. But, to my utter shame, I discovered that even if I did not talk evil of others, my own hypercritical attitude towards many and a tendency to note and dwell on the defects and shortcomings in people around me was just PARANINDA—and nothing else.

The fourth lesson which I tried and failed to learn, is enshrined in one of Swami's parables “Think of the ant,” says Swami, “and the divinity in that very small creature. How many great lessons it teaches man for the better ordering of his life, personal and social! The ant pursues the path already chosen and used by its compeers, its attention never deviating, its energy never flagging. Should for any reason the line of communication be broken, the ant patiently, and after many attempts, restores the original line and continues its activities as before, undeterred by any obstacle or hindrance. Again, the ant is no selfish individualist; it lives *with* others and *for* others; it takes no thoughts of self at all.” It should be no surprise, therefore, that one, like me, self-centred, prone to give up anything at the first sign of opposition, and incapable of the sustained attention and the never-tiring energy of the ant, should have failed to learn this lesson also.

Having been such a complete failure at His school, how dare I approach the Sadguru on this auspicious occasion? Other disciples of His would have brought Him gifts of fruitful Sadhana; based on a loyal and single minded pursuit of His precepts and principles. Any Guru other than the divine Dakshinamurti—the Lord of Compassion as Teacher—would disown such an utterly worthless pupil like me.

To whom does one turn when the whole world rejects him? May be to God, if He should be visible! But more certainly to his mother—whose pity and love, in spite of momentary vexations and irritations with the wayward and naughty child, are most readily available. It was so with my human mother—years ago, when I did not know that she too was a manifestation of the Divine. It is so today, with my Divine Mother, with Her infinite pity and tenderness and with Her never failing grace and forgiveness, for I can approach Swami on this occasion, only with the anguished cry of utter failure, beseech Him to vouchsafe even unto this unworthy one His manifestation as the Divine Mother, at whose Lotus Feet I shall place as a birthday offering, my impure sin-laden heart.

May the Divine Mother in the fullness of Her grace be pleased to accept it!

K. Satchidanandam

Pancharatna

The thousands who attended this year's Dasara Celebrations had the rare privilege of listening to Five Discourses by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, each a jewel, all five making up the Pancharatna of Wisdom.

On the 12th Oct., presiding over the Second Anniversary of the Sri Sathya Sai Hospital, Baba spoke of the Tridosha Theory of Human Disease and said that want of Utsaha is the cause of most physical and mental illnesses. He wanted everyone, to develop nerves of steel and muscles of iron. He advised people to eat only just enough to appease hunger and to earn good sleep by hard work. Karma is the best antidote to Tamas, He said. He condemned undue addiction to fasting etc as a means to spiritual uplift. He spoke of moderation and self-control and He asked everyone to pay special care to the eye and the 'ear, as organs of knowledge and the acquisition of joy. Describing how the Hospital was built by the Shramadan of the Bhaktas who carried metal, stones, mortar,. bricks etc all the way up the hill, He said that their sweet love was the prime cause for the miraculous cures that the Doctor had referred to in his Report.

On the 13th, before Hoisting the Prasanthi Flag, Baba spoke on its Symbol (used on our cover page). The concentric circles around the central Lotus Pillar represented Kama, Krodha and Dwesha which the Jivi has to overcome, before establishing himself in Yoga, as symbolised in the central Danda. Guarded by the Ashtasiddhis, the Yogi is able to unfold his heart his Hrudayakamala, and the flame of Jnana jyoti illumines it at last, with the realisation of his unity with Paramatma.

On the 18th Oct., Saturday, Baba gave a discourse on Bhakti. He said that He was happy find more and more people now, anxious to attain Manas-shanti. Formerly, they came to Him more with worldly desires and so, He too was not having discourses on spiritual subjects, immediately after the announcement of His manifestation, eighteen years ago. The aim of life should be the destruction of Vyamoha and the cultivation of Faith. He spoke of the tendency to laugh at everything, as a disease and condemned cynicism as the greatest enemy of Faith. Patience is the greatest Tapas and Contentment is the greatest Ananda. The Upanishads are the experiences of great Sadhakas and the stories of how they achieved salvation. Baba summarised the Kena and Katha Upanishads and promised to speak of the Mundakopanishad another day. But He pointed out that each one's disease was peculiar and had to be diagnosed separately and treatment prescribed by a Guru. "Never forget the goal; wash all the strongly embedded Vasanas with the soap of Sadhana and the water of Prema," He said. He spoke of four main roads that lead to Ananda: the company of saints, the practice of truth, the discipline of contentment and the control of the senses.

On the 20th Oct., Baba spoke of the Mundakopanishad and its teachings. "The Upanishads all speak of Brahma-tattwa, which is the problem closest to every one. They deal with Paravidya, the

Vidya which points out that the Jiva is a bubble that is born in water, subsists in water and dies in water by becoming water again." He said that if one does Sadhana with the help of Satpurushas and Satsang and Study, suddenly as in a flash, the Anubhava will be vouchsafed. "Through Dharma marga, Brahma marga can be realised. The sense of I that separates and causes sorrow should go, and will go automatically, when Jnana develops through Bhakti."

On the 22nd Oct., Wednesday, after Mahabhisheka, Sri T. A. Ramanatha Reddy made a short speech about Bhagavan and this was followed by a thrilling discourse from Baba, which no one who heard it is ever likely to forget. Saying that He did Abhisheka to Shirdi Baba just to give Ananda to all those who were assembled, He declared that the Bhaktas and their Ananda were His prime considerations. He said that He has come to guide, correct and teach all Sadhakas and so, He has no Tapas Dhyanam or Japam to do. He asked people to stick to the Truth that they have experienced and enjoyed, and never yield to outside pressure or criticism. He explained how it is necessary even to improve the physical, mental social, family and financial conditions of the Sadhakas so that they may engage themselves in spiritual work, without interruption and with peace of mind. He gave all, the heartening assurance, that His worldly career will continue for at least sixty years more. He concluded by declaring that, if only every one cultivates Sathya and Prema, Sai can be seen always in one's own heart.

Apart from the Parayana, Puja and festivities in which every one, old and young took an enthusiastic part, these discourses of Baba prodded all to decide to lead better lives, worthy of the devotees of this Divine Incarnation.

Sathya Sai Mata

Baba is addressed as Mata, Pita, Guru and Deva, not because He acts differently, in these four I aspects, but in order to emphasise by means of a separate appellation, a special aspect of the same Prema. The smile on Baba's face when He clasps to His Bosom the two babies, as in the picture printed elsewhere in this issue, is the smile of a happy Mother, the Sivathayi, the Sathya-Sai-mata. We all know how Baba has a special liking towards children, about whom He is never tired of saying, "Do you know how lucky they are?" For, they have had the good fortune to have Baba's Darshan, so early in their lives and they are bound to have His Blessings, for many many years to come. They are innocent and incapable of falsehood, hatred and injustice. They have Baba Himself to be their Teacher, Protector, Guide and Guardian.

Baba spends more time with children than among adults and He has a unique bag of tricks and games and noises by which He can subdue the most recalcitrant child and keep it in good humour for hours. He twists and turns His hands and fingers and when the shadows fall on the wall, the child is astonished and happy to find horses running, eagles flying, dogs barking and deer leaping and in fear. He offers a child a ball of sand the child, which reluctantly and nervously stretches its hand to receive it, is rewarded by finding that by the time it reached its hand it had become sweet, sugary Laddu! He plays about with the toys of children in their midst, becoming one with them; and, He keeps with Himself always an assorted collection of toys

crackers biscuits and chocolates and slates and pencils in order to distribute them among His infant disciples!

Baba advises mothers on bringing up children, the food they can give, the care they must take when they are weaned, when they start teething or walking or the precautions they should take against infantile diseases and defects. He is an expert child psychologist and He can convert, at short notice, a child given to tantrums or melancholia or day dreaming into a joyful co-operative member of a group. He has His own unique way with children, coaxing, cajoling, wheedling, presenting both aspects of the problem in the most attractive fashion and asking them to decide, and, when needed, even by threat of corporal punishment, He makes them abide by His commands. About the education of children at school and their training at home, His advice is invaluable to teachers and parents.

Baba agrees to name the children of his devotees and the names He selects, like Gitalatha and Gitasudha for the babies in the picture are so sweet, and so redolent of the Blessings He has showered on them. He holds a special Fete for children during Dasara. He initiates children in Akshara, writing along with them, the letters of the alphabet, in big scribbles on honey or milk. This of course is only *one* meaning of Akshara; the word means not only "letter" but also "the imperishable" and 'the eternal'. When Baba does Aksharabhyasa, He pays attention to this more important second meaning, too. He makes the child pronounce after Him, a Mahamantra, like 'Om Namo Narayana' or 'Om Namasivaya'. Thus, while initiating the child into secular temporal training, He also gives into the tender, untarnished hand the key to its spiritual destiny. There is a Tamil song on Baba, sung by devotees from Madras, in which He is addressed as "Jnanappaal oottum Sayimatha!" the Sai Mother who suckles Her children on the Milk of Jnana. The care and foresight with which Baba does the Vidyarambha and the Aksharabhyasa in its real Sense shows that this is but a bare statement of fact!

Kasturi

Baba and the Animal World

The picture of Baba holding two huge Alsations, which appears in this Special Birthday Number will be of great interest to those who have read the commentary of Vishnu Suri on the fourth Anuvaka of Sri Rudradhyaya, especially the 17th Mantra "Namah svabhyah svapathibhvascha vo namah." Vishnu Suri explains that svabhyah refers to dogs, i.e., forms of Avidya, the four legs and tail of the dog being the symbols of the activities of the five senses, the illusion of I and Mine being symbolised by the two ears, and the entire animal, representing the tendency to engage Oneself in actions, with a perpetual desire to enjoy the fruits thereof. And, svapathibhyah, according to him, refers to the masters of dogs, the mighty personages, the avatar purushas who hold the Avidya in check and help to lessen and destroy its evil and who facilitate the manifestation of Vidya. In fact, for those who have eyes to see and the wisdom to understand, there is always a deeper meaning in whatever Baba does!

For the generality of Bhaktas, however, Baba's animal pets and the Prema that He bestows on them is just an object-lesson, in the kinship of all creation and the spirit of loving service of all living things. A long chapter can be written on the Prema that Baba bestows on the cows in His

Goshala, how He daily visits the cows and tenderly feeds them with His own Hand, and how they too react, most devotedly to His affection and solicitude. Baba has had as pets under His care deer, peacocks, stags, rabbits etc., but in this article, it is proposed to give an account only of the dogs, who had the good fortune to be fondled by His loving Hands.

Jack and Jill were the earliest recipients of Baba's grace. They were two lovely little Pomeranians from Ootacamund and perhaps, they were in some past birth, attached to some Divine Personage; for, it was noted that they actually fasted on every Thursday and desisted from eating flesh on all days! The Thursday fast of these canine devotees put many a human Bhaktas to shame. They were inseparable companions of Baba and used to sleep, Jack at the head of the bed and Jill at His Feet. Who can say what dreams they had inside their half-shut eyes, while Baba stroked their silken fur with His motherly affection? After some years of Samipya, Jack breathed his last in the lap of Baba. The previous night Jack had gone across the river to Karnatanagapalli, following the foot-steps of a chauffeur and lay under the car, all unknown to the occupants. Jack had a way of volunteering to keep watch over the cars, which in those days, had to be kept on the other bank. Next morning, when the driver started the car, Jack was run over, but he could drag himself along the sand to Puttaparthi and the Mandir, where Baba was engaged in writing letters. Jack knew that his end was near and so, he heroically gathered strength and pulled himself forward until he fell on Baba's lap and with eyes glistening in joy and fixed on Baba's face, he bade farewell to this final interlude in his career. Jill followed him, soon after. Baba had them buried with some ceremony and got a Brindavan erected over their mortal remains. This can now be seen behind the Old Mandir, in the Quadrangle.

Chitty and Bitty succeeded them; they too were Pomeranians, from Kodaikanal and, within a few years, they finished their round of birth and death and a Samadhi at Ootacamund marks the spot where they are laid to eternal rest. Baba has lead other Pomeranians with Him, like Lilly and Billy. He blessed with His care and love, a pair of Cocker Spaniels, Minnie and Mickie and another pair, Honey and Goldie. The very names He gave to these animal devotees reveal the sweetness of His Grace and, the Prema that He bestowed on them.

Latterly, Baba has had a few Alsations in the Mandir like Rover and Rita and, the two proud dogs which have the good fortune to be illustrated in this month's "Sanathana Sarathi" with their Master, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. They are named Tommy and Henry. Maurice Maeterlinck the poet, has said that dogs teach us, by their single-minded devotion and unquestioning obedience, how we have to behave towards the Lord. If their behaviour to us, ordinary folk, is itself so elevated and exemplary, how much more sincere and unselfish they must be, when the Bhagavan Himself condescends to handle and fondle them!

These animal Bhaktas of the Lord are as important for Him, as the human; He can speak to them in the language they can understand; He helps in their promotion, to the hither stages of spiritual evolution; He knows, which among them deserve His attention and His care. We, to whom the animal world is different and dumb, have to learn, just this one lesson, by observing Baba's affection for them: never to harm any living thing, for our sustenance or pleasure; never to lose an opportunity for lessening the suffering or pain of an animal brother of ours.

N. K.

Thirty Three

Joyful news I bring!.Paradox, but, Truth!
Ageless has an age!Birthless has a Day of Birth!
In Human Form, in Leela mood, It came.

Seeking you and me, fainting, faltering, weak,
And, standing at our door, He knocks!
Tell every one, O Brother dear, the blessing One has come!
He has come! and, moved from flute to reins, cowherd to charioteer.

Yea, and blessed with Godly vision full tens of thousands now,
As per earth's reckoning, He is thirty two today, the birthday, thirty third,
Start this day, O aimless wanderer, on ancient pilgrim route.
And, He will be your guide, whomsoever you may choose !
In storm and rain, in fog and snow, have faith in Him.

Bhagavan is He the Lord Himself.
Adore Him in your heart, aspire and pray,
"Bless me, with Faith, and Hope and Strength,"
And, all will be Light, where all was dark.

—Kasturi

Prema Vahini

The prosperity of yesterday, the poverty of today, both are due to the so called 'great'

Every man should so lead his life that no pain is caused by him to any living thing. That is his supreme duty. Also, it is the prime duty of every one, who has had the chance of this human birth, to spare a part of his energies, occasionally to prayer, repetition of the Lord's Name, meditation etc., and must equate Living with Truth, Rightfulness, Peacefulness and to good works which are of service to others. One must be as afraid of doing acts that are harmful to others or deeds that are sinful, as one is afraid to touch fire or disturb a cobra. One must have as much attachment and as much steadfastness in carrying out good works, in making others happy, and in worshipping the Lord as he now has in accumulating gold and riches. This is the Dharma of Man. It is to strengthen this type of goodness that the Lord incarnates Himself in human form. But, the question may arise, how can a non-existent thing be strengthened and developed? Indeed, these qualities are not nonexistent; they are there in man! When these existing qualities decline and wither, the Lord comes with the purpose of promoting them and bringing about the decline of the forces that work in the opposite direction. It is to make clear this purpose that Sri Krishna, in the Dwapara Yuga, while teaching Arjuna, said:

Parithraanaaya saadhunaam
Vinaasaaya cha dushkrithaam
Dharmasamsthaapanaarthaaya
Sambhaavami yuge yuge

That is to say, all incarnations of the Lord are for the protection and promotion of Sadhus. This word, Sadhu, does not refer to any single religion, caste, or family or stage of life, or community or even any single species, like the human! It refers to all religions, all stages of life, all races, and all creatures. The Lord has revealed in the Gita His Universal Mind. It is because of this universal message that the Gita has become so essential and so famous. Why! Sri Krishna Himself has declared in plenty of situations and places, that He is the dutiful servant of His devotees. An example of this is His accepting to be the Charioteer of Arjuna.

If the culture of the ordinary man himself results in such elevation, each one can judge for himself how much more purified and holy will be the character of those who are engaged in spiritual exercises and the incessant contemplation of God! For both these types of people, the quality of their character is the important criterion.

There is great difference between the Brahmanishthas (those established in God-contemplation) of the past and the Brahmanishthas of the present day. First, it is necessary to grasp the greatness of Brahmanishtha itself. It is because this has not been done by the present-day holy men, that poverty has come upon us. In the past, this greatness was realised, and they were immersed in experiencing holiness. The question may arise why such holy feelings do not arise now; but, they are not absent. For fire to increase or decrease fuel is the only cause; there is no other reason. The more the fuel, the

more the illumination! In all humanity, every individual has the undisputed right to feed his fire with fuel! Fire has the power to give light, by its very nature. So, too, in the fire of the Buddhi of the aspirant and spiritual practitioner, the fire which produces the light of wisdom, the fuel of renunciation, peacefulness, truth, mercifulness, forbearance and selfless service has to be constantly placed; the more they do this, the more efficacious and effulgent the Sadhakas can become. Only trees growing on fertile soil can yield good fruits. Those which grow on saline soils will be poor. So, also, it is only in hearts which are unsullied, that such holy feelings, power and gifts can shine in splendour. The difference between the Brahmanishthas of the past and the present is just this: the present-day Brahmanishthas are practising the same Dhyana and the same Pranava as their namesake in the past, the difference arises in the decline in self-control, so far as the field of Sadhana is concerned. When the number of Mahapurushas who engage themselves in unflinching meditation of God in solitary places declined, then many a suffering descended upon the world. Those who exist today are damaging their Brahmanishtha by themselves arranging for the accumulation of all obstacles for the carrying through of their Sadhana, by getting enslaved to mean praise and fame, by becoming entangled in delusion, and by restless endeavour to earn glory and to expand the institutions they have founded. But, those who yearn to establish themselves in Brahmanishtha must seek solitude, and practice Dhyana and Japa at specified times, and acquire one-pointedness through these spiritual exercises, and always be anxious to do deeds that will bring about the welfare of all created beings, ever engaged in performing work without any concern for the fruit thereof. It is only when such men come upon the earth that all suffering will cease. This is the mark of Krita Yuga.

Just as in the world, kind-hearted doctors run medical institutions here and there, and serve the diseased and cure the afflicted, if, here and there, we have also Ashramas of holy personages, who are experts in the treatment and cure of the 'birth-and-death disease', then, people can be cured from the afflictions of ignorance, untruth, immorality and self-aggrandizement. The ignorance produces wickedness and it can be cured only by the medicine of Brahmajnana with supplementary doses of the drugs, Santham, Sama, Dama (Peacefulness, Fortitude, Self-control) etc. Instead of this, the 'great men' of today give those who approach them the medicines they demand, and the drugs their patients relish! They thus become the instruments of their followers and, for the sake of name and fame, they behave like doctors dictated to by the patients! The so called 'great' fall into perdition, even before they taste the Bliss themselves, on account of their weakness and foolishness becoming a prey to the wiles of the greed for name and fame! The main reason for the contemporary poverty is just this. Present-day Sadhus and 'great' men have not understood this fact and do not act according to it.

That holy essence has to be experienced and realised. One's selfish needs have to be sacrificed. There must be constant effort to do good to others. One's desire should be to establish the welfare of the world. With all these feelings filling the heart, one must meditate on the Lord. *This* is the right path. If 'great men' and those in authority are thus engaged in the service of humanity, and in promoting the welfare of the world, the thieves of passion, hatred, pride, envy, jealousy and conceit will not invade the minds of men; the divine possessions of man, like dharma, mercy, truth, love, knowledge and

wisdom will be safe from harm. The police and the rulers can overcome only external foes, they have no power to destroy the internal enemies; they will find the task impossible. They are not the authorities for that. The internal foe, the six enemies that operate inside man, the Arishadvarga, can be uprooted only by the teachings of good men, the love of God and knowledge of the Lord, and the company of the Holy and the Great. Just as when the police and the authorities responsible for apprehending thieves become themselves dependent on them, the world will suffer harm at the hands of wicked men. If the Brahmanishthas and the ‘great’ Sadhus give up the path of world welfare and become the victims of sense enjoyment and ambition to earn name and fame, the world will become enveloped in darker ignorance and Dharma will be destroyed. Now both are as described. Hence, the daily increase of suffering also. The whole world will bask in peace and joy only that day when both these groups realise the right attitudes, and with the welfare of all at heart, ponder over the Omnipotence of the Lord. Both these are two governments for man’s two States. Spiritual elders are the rulers of the internal State administrative authorities are the rulers of external State. If both these groups act and direct properly, both States will function to create happiness. The fault of causing the present misery must therefore be shared by both. It is at such times that the Lord resolves to vouchsafe happiness to all States and to suppress ignorance and injustice. It is to make this clear that the Lord said in the Gita.

Yadaa yadaa he dharmasya glaanirbhavathi Bharatha
Adhyuththaanamadharmaasya thadaatmanam srijaamyaham

O Bharatha, whenever Dharma declines and Adharma raises its head, then I make myself born.

Really speaking, even for the advent of the Lord the prayers of the great act as the invitation. In the external world, when the subjects need any convenience or help, they approach the rulers and inform them of their request. So also, in the internal State, when there is no possibility of achieving and acquiring Bhakti, Charity, Peace and Truth, the great and good men, who desire to achieve them pray to the Lord within themselves. Then, listening to their prayers, He himself comes into the world and showers His grace on them. This fact is well known to all. Why, did not Rama and Krishna incarnate because the Lord heeded the prayers of the sages? Many have read this in the Ramayana and the Bhagavata. Why, even Ramakrishna, though he was Divinely-born, prayed to Kali (for he could not bring it about) to send some one who could preach to the whole world the Dharma that will uproot injustice and selfishness. This is known to all who have read his life history. Thus, prayers should be offered again and again for the realisation of the task. No one should become desperate and give up prayers, if they do not result in the advent of the Lord. In the external State, how often has a person to write and how much he has to wander about for his work to be done and, perhaps at the end, it may not fructify at all!

Now, how is one to know the consequence of the soul’s yearning? Since this cannot be known, one has to pray until the world is established in happiness. The happiness of the world is the sign of His arrival; if this is understood, then it is easy to recognise the

Avatar immediately. It is then that the religion of Sathya, the religion of Daya, the religion of Jnana and the religion of Prema will grow and prosper. So, until these are firmly rooted, people must continue their prayers. That is the responsibility of the people. The roadway laid out by holy men has to be repaired now and then, by either those who travel through it or those claiming authority over it. That is what is called 'Teaching' or Bodha.

It is for the sake of such repairs that the Lord sends occasionally some authorised individuals, sages and divine personages. Through the Sadbodha or good teachings of these, the path opened by the God-men of the past is again made clear and smooth. Thus, when the Lord's Will and the needs of Sadhus, and the teachings of great persons produce their combined effect, the happiness of the world will be assured, and it will be undiminished. If all humanity pray at one time that unrest, injustice, disorder and falsehood might be transformed into peace, truth, love and mutual service, things will certainly become better. Now, there is no other way out. Worrying is fruitless. This is no occasion for despair. It is against the essential nature of man to plead weakness and want of strength. Therefore, giving up the search for other means, men must try prayer, service to others and mutual love and respect. They should delay no longer; they will soon acquire contentment and joy.

People say that the service of Man is the service of God, that Manavaseva is Madhavaseva. That is a true statement. Though the service of humanity is holy, unless it is merged in the bigger ideal, men will not benefit, however huge the service. Mere repetition of the slogan is useless, if service is done without faith in the divinity of man and with an eye on name and fame and the fruits of one's action; whatever actions one undertakes. If one has constantly as a companion the contemplation of the Lord, and if one has faith in the essential divinity of man, then, the statement about Manavaseva and Madhavaseva being the same is justified. Without thoughts of Madhava how can Madhavaseva, originate? All such talk is mere show. I won't agree to that. Instead, whatever is done with the Lord in mind, along the path of truth, and according to the aspects of Dharma, has to be considered as the Seva of the Lord and whatever is done for name and fame and for the fruit thereof shall not be referred to as Madhavaseva.

In fact, those who are immersed in the uninterrupted contemplation of the Lord need not do any other task at all. The fruit of their prayer itself can make the world holy. But, all cannot be thus engaged; and so all must endeavour to prepare for that stage by purifying their mind and diminishing their desires. The Sadhus who have achieved this can realise things for themselves. Others cannot grasp the sameness of Manavaseva and Madhavaseva.

But, this does not mean that one can sit quiet. Grasping it is dependent on each one's destiny, and past actions and on each one's Sadhana. Until that happens, do Dhyanam and Japam so that the mind will become free from the waves of feeling and full of the divine form; also, carry out deeds for the good of others; devote your time to the service of world, irrespective of the results thereof; thus, you can become blessed. Otherwise, though the body may be inactive the mind will be very busy, committing acts on its own.

Such men fall a prey to Karma, in spite of their not doing anything! When a person has his mind fixed on the contemplation of God and the pursuit of Truth, though his body and his senses do acts that are of service to the world, they will not be affected by them; though they do Karma, they are still non-doers of Karma. The lesson of the Bhagavad-Gita is embedded, in this. The heart of the person who does not strive to cultivate his mind with holy thoughts is certain to be the paradise of evil and wickedness. This has to be borne in mind by all those who aspire for salvation, who seek one-pointedness, and who hope to rise to greatness. To realise this knowledge of the Atma caste is not a criterion nor monkhood, nor rituals, nor scholarship gained by study of the Sastras. Brahmanishtha is the only criterion. It is this that the Upanishad text too emphasizes:

Naasramam kaaranam muktheh, darsanaani nakaaranam.
Thathaiva sarvakarmaani jnaanamevahi kaaranam

Jnana alone is the cause of liberation; not Asrama or philosophy.

For the establishment of oneself in the contemplation of the Omnipresent Lord, there are no limitations of time or space. There is nothing like a holy place or a special time for this. Wherever the mind revels in the contemplation of the Divine that is the Holy Place! Whenever it does so, that is the auspicious moment! There and then, one must meditate on the Lord.

That is why it has been announced already before:

Na kaala niyame yathra,
na desasya sthalasya cha
Yathraasya ramathe chiththam,
thathra dhyaane na kevalam

For meditation on God, there is no fixed time or place. When and where the mind so desires, then and there, is the time and place.

The world can achieve prosperity through such disciplined souls whose hearts are pure and who represent the salt of the earth. Everyone should pray, from this very minute, for the advent of such men and try to deserve the blessings of the great and endeavour to forget the sufferings of the day in the attempt to promote the welfare of the world.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Sandeha Nivarini

Viii

Swami: Oh! How is this? You have come so early this time?

Bhakta: You made me come, and so I have come. Is there anything I can call mine?

Swami: That is true; but will even a scrap of paper move without some cause? So too, for you to come so early, there must be some reason.

Bhakta: Nothing else, Swami! Hearing that You are proceeding to Trivandrum on the 16th itself, at the invitation of Sri Ramakrishna Rao, the Governor of Kerala, I felt that I may not get much chance to speak to you if I come on that day only. So, I came now, excuse me!

Swami: That is well done! But why do you ask that I should pardon you? Really speaking, one should not ask for pardon, even when one commits wrong! Then, what is the fun of asking for it, when you have done the right thing?

Bhakta: Why, Swami? Why should we not ask for pardon, when we commit wrong?

Swami: No, you must not ask, either for pardon when wrong is done, or for reward, when right is done! Doing right is but man's duty; it is its own reward. What other reward can there be? The joy of having done one's duty is your reward! Doing wrong is against the duty of man. So, one should pray repentantly, for the Intelligence and discrimination necessary for not repeating the wrong already committed. Beyond this, it depends on His Grace, whether He punishes and protects or pardons and corrects.

Bhakta: That is very fine. Henceforward, I shall do so, Swami

Swami: Let that be. Are you treasuring the gems given on the Birthday and making good use of them?

Bhakta: As far as possible! With my maximum effort, using the quality of Buddhi granted by You, I am putting them into action.

Swami: What do you mean by 'as far as possible'? For Bhaktas like you, what other task is there greater than this? Why is it not possible? You only need Faith and the Will. Then it should not be difficult at all to carry out the Duty.

Bhakta: Swami, You have Yourself said that even when there is Faith and even when one has the Will, putting things into practice may be difficult for want of favourable circumstances and also because the meaning of things may not be grasped clearly.

Swami: Oh! That means that both these, want of favourable circumstances and want of understanding, are bothering you! Well, if you have not understood, ask; and if you have no favourable atmosphere, tell me what is the obstacle?

Bhakta: Doubt is the biggest obstacle; what can be bigger than that? Even after hearing so much, the demon catches hold of me off and on. I do not know why.

Swami: The first reason for that: your not having faith in yourself, born out of the conviction that you are really Atmaswaroopa. The second reason; taking the Divinity in humanity as humanity only and getting lost in the pursuit of sense enjoyment. These demons pounce on you for just these two reasons only. Instead, if you establish yourself in God, understanding the Divinity In man as Divinity itself, this demon of doubt will not attack you. You simply must give up this Adhyasa which makes you mix things up.

Bhakta: There! You use now and then un-understandable words! That makes me even more confused, Swami!

Swami: I will, never tell you un-understandable words. You have no power to understand; so, you feel worried. I use them, really, in order to make you understand their meaning! Now, in what I told you, which is the difficult word?

Bhakta: You used the word, Adhyasa. What does it mean, Swami?

Swami: What? You do not know the meaning of that! “Seeing one form and taking it to be another, superimposing one thing upon another.”

Bhakta: How is that? On which object do we superimpose another? Tell me.

Swami: Well, seeing a rope and imagining it to be a snake; seeing waves of hot air in the sun and imagining them to be horses; seeing a mirror shining in the sun and taking it to be a lamp.

Bhakta: But what is at that I see and what do I take it to be?

Swami: You see Paramatma in this form of Prakriti, and take it to be mere Prapancha, or the world, and you are afraid. It is on account of this delusion that you have become the victim of all these varieties of weakness and you are declining through doubt and illusion. If you see it right, the delusion will vanish; the fear will disappear; the faith that it is Paramatma will be firmly and boldly established in you. To get that firmness, the lamp of Viveka is necessary. How much a man suffers, so long as he sees the rope as a snake! How much is the fear! The delusion! Can it be realised how all that vanished as soon as it was seen in the light? Similarly, these doubts and delusions too will vanish unawares, as soon as you know that Prakriti is Paramatma. Imposing a delusion on a delusion, imagining one object to be another, this is called Adhyasa, my boy!

Bhakta: But, Swami, how can Prakriti be said to be Paramatma? When you ask me to discern this world, which appears as Prapancha to the eye, as Paramatma, doubt is sure to arise.

Swami: That is true. Still, if the reality is reasoned out, even what you now see will appear as Paramatma. Cloth cannot be formed without yarn, isn't it? Yarn is essential for cloth. In fact, it is all yarn. In spite of this, yarn is not spoken of as cloth, nor is cloth called yarn. This is exactly the relationship, between Prakriti and Paramatma. Paramatma is the yarn of which the cloth, Prakriti, is formed. Has the yarn and the cloth become separate? No. The yarn is used in one way, the cloth in another way. But for this reason only it would be wrong to consider yarn and cloth as different.

Bhakta: Yes, Swami. Since Prakriti is formed of Paramatma, It is clear that they are not separate. Now, if both these are the same, which among these is Jiva?

Swami: That is exactly the doubt that is tormenting you, my boy. The Jiva is the 'I' consciousness me jiva is associated with the limitations of body and the senses. But He is the Atma, Jivatma, Pratyagatma, Chidatma, Doer, Enjoyer, everything.

Bhakta: Again another word Jada is used to mean inert matter etc. What is it, this Jada? How does it operate? Tell me.

Swami: From Buddhi to Body, all transformations of Prakriti are Jada. This is the unreal, the unconscious, the Asat, the Achetana. You must take everything that is not Sat and Chit as Jada. In essence, the world is really Jada and nothing else. But Jada is inseparable from Chaitanya, or Chit and Sat, just as air is inseparable from the atmosphere. Why, It has been said in the Gita in the past, that all movable and immovable creation is due to the union of Prakriti and Purusha, don't you know?

Bhakta: Then what is the relationship between Buddhi and Manas on the one hand and Atma on the other?

Swami: Well, really, there is no special relationship between them and the Atma; Atma is pure and without blemish; Buddhi too is pure and without blemish. And, just as the Sun is reflected in a mirror, the splendour of the Atma is reflected in the Buddhi. Then the shining Chaitanya of the Buddhi is reflected in the Manas; the shining of the Manas falls upon the senses; the light from the senses falls upon the Body. Now, what is the connection between all these? The relationship of all is the splendour of the Atma, is it not? The activity of every other thing is caused by the fact that there is a Buddhi which can reflect that splendour, is it not? So, note how the Buddhi is related: this side with the Atma; and that side, with the Manas and the Indriyas, senses!

Bhakta: Then, what is the relation between the Jiva which says 'I' and the senses and the body?

Swami: There is no relation at all! The 'I' is separate from the body, the mind etc. The 'I' simply superimposes on the Jiva, that is, Itself, the body-consciousness and the internal behaviours of the mind etc 'I am fair' says the Jiva, superimposing upon itself some thing with which it has no connection. I am dumb', It says, making the same mistake about the senses. It says it has this desire and that and imposes on itself the

activities of the Manas etc. All this is mere superimposition. The basic truth is only One, the Paramatma, the Paramjyoti, the Eternal, the True, is only One I Understand this well.

Bhakta: Ah; What superb teaching, Swami, if only this teaching of the Principle of the Atma, which even children can grasp, spreads over the whole world, the world will emerge from darkness to light.

Swami: That is the reason why I converse with you about every point and allow all to partake in it. The sun's light falls upon the mirror, the light from the mirror falls upon the bungalow, the light upon the bungalow falls upon the eye. Similarly, this "Sandeha Nivarini" has been decided upon in order that the illumination of My Teaching may fall upon the Bhakta mirror, and thence onto the "Sanathana Sarathi" bungalow; in order that from there its effulgence may shed Light on the Peace and Harmony of the world.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Bala Sai

Every picture tells a story, and, in Baba's case, every story is elevating and inspiring. The picture we have as front-piece for this issue was taken in 1940, 18 years ago, when Baba was about 14 years of age and a student of the Uravakonda High School. But, this picture was not taken at Uravakonda! It was taken at Hospet, on the way from Hampi, the city of Vijayanagara, the capital for over 300 years, of the great South Indian Empire.

He had by then already declared Himself as Shirdi Sai Baba and He was giving Darshan to devotees from far and near every Thursday at Uravakonda. He was no longer known as Sathyanarayana Raju. The brother, Sri Seshama Raju troubled by the turn of events, arranged a visit to Hampi with the members of his family as well as some friends, to see whether a change of venue and a picnic among the famous ruins will not 'cure' Sathya of the 'obsession.' After going over the dilapidated temples and mantaps of Hampi, eloquent testimony of the grandeur of human achievement and of human down fall, the party came to the magnificent temple of Virupaksha, the patron deity of the Vijayanagara monarchs, Pampapathiswara, the Merciful God of Yoga and Asceticism.

Curiously enough, the brother noticed that Sathya did not enter the sanctum sanctorum, but stood outside the door, watching the architecture! In fact, all through their peregrination in that area, hallowed by the Ramayana as Kishkindha, Baba was moving as in a dream. A reverend sage, who saw Sathya at Hospet, had said, "This Boy, my friend, is Divine." Well, the others offered Puja to Virupaksha and at last, the priest waved the flame of camphor before the Linga when, to the utter amazement of all of them they found Baba standing, smiling, in place of the Linga and accepting their pranams! Every thing about the 'Boy' was so unexpected and thrilling since childhood and more so since a few months, that Sri Seshama Raju hurried outside, to discover where Sathya was; and, he found Him, leaning on a wall staring at the horizon!

The ecstasy of the members of the party can be better imagined than described. They did special puja to Him also and their Faith in Him as a Manifestation was confirmed. The news that the Uravakonda Boy, who declared Himself as Baba and who had indisputable miraculous powers had come to Hampi had already spread to the town of Hospet, 7 miles off. Now, this story of the identification with Virupaksha witnessed by the members of Baba's party only added to the enthusiasm of the citizens of Hospet. They arranged a function in honour of Bala Sai, with Bhajan etc., the members of the Municipal Council and other leading citizens vying with each other to make the celebrations a success. This photo, taken then, shows Bala Sai, seated on a chair, at the meeting which they arranged.

Ponder over this picture, dear reader! The innocence pervading the face, the depth of those eyes, the calm dignity, the masterful pose! In a few days more, this 'Boy'(!) was to tell Sri Seshama Raju, the epoch-making words, "I am no longer yours! My devotees are calling Me!! I must carry out the work for which I have come!!!"

Kasturi

Baba's Sayings

I have seen every one of you, often, before, though this may be the first time you see Me.

I have come to award Ananda to all; not to do Sadhana or achieve Sakshatkara, or Moksha; my Mission is Unique.

I hasten in a trice to the person who, forgetting himself, calls out for Me in Complete Surrender.

Even if you have faith in Me, cultivate faith in yourself; that is as good as having faith in Me, in fact, it is only another way of doing the same thing.

Mere pursuit of Artha and Kama, without the Dharma in the beginning and the Moksha at the end, is like a body without the head and the legs, a useless fractional corpse!

Truth is the most worth-while subject in any educational curriculum.

“Gems from Baba’s Discourses”

When you offer to the lord the bouquet of your heart, offer it free of worms and insects like lust and anger, like greed and delusion, like hate and vengefulness. Even when you daily place a common blossom on the idol or picture, you do not remove the branch, the twig, the thistle and the leaf?

Spiritual Gestures of the Lord

It is common knowledge that every individual, in virtue of his birth as a human being, is endowed with the knowledge of certain facts about the material world, unless he refuses to trust his own senses. It is only through the senses that we daily learn something that was not known before and make further enquiries and discoveries that replenish the storehouse of knowledge. Because of his reason and his capacity to discriminate and discern, man is called a rational animal. By this quality, he is known to have reached a milestone in his life’s pilgrimage (or, to put it another way, in his evolutionary progress) through several forms of earthly existence. So, one is expected to have the knowledge of ‘what is’, that is, the fundamental truth, gained by constant offerings of prayer and self-surrender to the unknown and unknowable.

What we see at the Abode of Peace, the Prasanthi Nilayam, are not miracles but the creative genius at work. Lord Sri Sathya Sai is neither a miracle-man, nor a medicine man. The divine ways of the Swami are as clear as daylight unless of course our ignorance is impenetrable.

Take, for example, one or two daily occurrences we come across at the place. The ways of the Lord are simple, but yet splendid! At times, Swami sings songs composed by Himself. In one of the songs, He denies full knowledge of the powers of Purushottama, even to the best of saints and Brahma, the creator of all things. How can be it possible for Swami to say (to deny, is to say) that His knowledge is superior to that of the above mentioned, unless He Himself is Purushottama? This undoubtedly is one of the many lessons of truth we get at the Abode of Peace. In another song he warns us against Sadhana for Ashtasiddhi. Because He is the giver, He knows their value.

Then there is the instance of garlands. It occurs when we garland Him. After due acceptance He returns then to be used for decorating the idol of Shirdi Baba or the portraits of Krishna, Rama and others, in the Mandir.

This should serve as an eye opener to those who still think that the Lord at Parthi is a ‘devotee’ of the Lord of Shirdi (who, it is revealed to me, was truly one in a series of

incarnations of almighty God). Our Swami is second in succession and the third incarnation will take place in Mysore State. Undoubtedly it is one of the many typical examples of his spiritual gestures the significance of which, if grasped, dispel our ignorance of Swami. He is more emphatic on this point, when He gives devotees, the images of their Ishtam, which he creates on the spot.

Even though Swami performs Mahabhishekam only to the idol of Shirdi Baba on the three holiest of holy days, i.e., Mahashivaratri, Vijayadashami and His own Birthday, He does not object when we in our utter ignorance of the presence of the Lord himself in Maya-manusha-swaroopam, stick to His other forms and names, for worship. Instead He kindly encourages us to cling to our own faith on Ishtam and to sing in praise of the Lord in the manner we most like. This can be seen in the daily performance of the prayer at the Abode of Peace. Because whatever Form and Name we adopt, he is the sole recipient of our prayers. All forms and names are his own. He is One in All and All in One.

There is as much truth in calling Swami a Sai Bhakta, as there is truth in calling Sri Rama, a Siva Bhakta because of his Linga Prathishtha at Rameshwar! The very fact that Sivalingams are being born from Swami's mouth on Mahashivaratri every year is sufficient to prove that He is no less a Godhead than Purushottama. What greater proof is needed to say that he is Purushottama than the fact that I was not contradicted, when I revealed what I know of Swami, in His presence time and time again. Is it necessary of possible for a lesser divinity than Purushottama to pose Himself as such and still continue to be as great as He is? The most unfortunate thing is that we forget the presence of Maya, that separates us from God.

Take the instance of the downpour held back! It occurred when He was taken in a procession on the night of Vijayadashami. He sat in a gaily-decorated chariot. By the time the procession started, the sky above was dark and heavy with storm clouds. There was deafening thunder and flashes of lightening. Truly, a wonderful spectacle! It took more than three hours for the procession to return to the Mandir. Still there was no rain. Baba descended from the chariot and went upstairs and every one of us returned to our lodgings! Then it started to rain! In fact, it poured and poured. Who else can it be if not God Himself that can hold back the downpour for so long? Another important occurrence on this occasion was the successive appearance of Vibhuti on His forehead during the progress of the procession.

If we reflect a little upon what we hear and see at the abode of peace, we will come to know how truth always persists in calling our attention to itself and the unknown becomes known.

Challa Appa Rao

Baba's Programme

1958 Dec. 14 th	Inauguration of the All India Convention of the Divine Life Society at Arkonam.
Dec 15 th	Madras
Dec 16 th	Bangalore
Dec 17 th	Mysore
Dec. 18 th	Coimbatore
Dec. 19-21 st	Trivandrum
Dec. 22 & 23 rd	Cape Comorin
Dec. 24-29 th	Courtallam Falls
Dec. 30	Tirunelveli
Dec. 31 st	Madurai
1959 Jan. 1 & 2 nd	Periyar Dam
Jan. 3 & 4 th	Dindigul
Jan 5 th	Madras
Jan. 13 th	Return to Puttaparthi

Reader! Please note:

“Sanathana Sarathi” is a monthly, for the present, and the articles published in it are purely religio-philosophical. Contributions of articles especially from those who endeavour to put into practice what they speak and write on spirituality are readily welcome.

Anything that smacks of “public news or comments on public news”, personal attacks, rude phraseology, or even non-devotional sentiments can find no place, in here. The Editor enjoys in full the right, wherever he feel it necessary, either to curtail, or to supplement or even to withhold publication of the articles received. No unpublished article will be returned unless after special request.

No commercial advertisement will be published in this magazine.

As readers are aware, the Subscription Amount of Rupees – Three per year has to be sent to the Editor by M.O. If the M.O reaches the Editor, before 16th of any month, will receive the ‘Sanathana Sarathi’ of the subsequent month and eleven issues thereafter.

Permanent change of address should be intimated before the 10th of the month, mentioning also the subscribers number(found on the wrapper) and the Old Address.

Editor,

“SANATHANA SARATHI”

Prasanthi Nilayam

Puttaparthi