

Bharatiya Paramartha Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

5. Basic Beliefs

The Sanathana Dharma had to meet the determined opposition from Islam for centuries; political subjection to Muslim dynasties added to the problems. The cry, 'Allaho-Akbar' rose to the skies, and challenged the very existence of the Bharatiya Culture that had been fostered since ages by the seers. No other nation suffered so long and so deep from such fear. But the eternally fresh and vital Dharma of this land has stood the test and even today, Sanathana Dharma is as potent and valid as ever. It is ready to meet any challenge from any new quarter. From the signs of the times, it is evident that this Culture is today dominant and powerful; why, it is prepared even to march forward and expand its area of constructive influence. Expansion is the sign of 'life', isn't it?

This day, the principles and practices laid down in Bharatiya Culture and the attitudes and feelings enshrined in it, are not lying low within the boundaries of this subcontinent. Whether we like it or not, they cross over to other lands and establish themselves there. The main ideas, the essential outlooks, penetrate the literatures of those peoples and permeate their thought processes. In some lands, among some peoples, they have won even dominant roles, with no opposition. For, Bharat is offering as its contribution to the peace and prosperity of the World, an invaluable body of spiritual wisdom. This contribution is more elevating than that from any other country. It is more necessary, more basic and more precious than what any other nation can give. This fact is becoming clearer to all mankind.

The ancients of this land were not averse to the examination of other problems too. They tried, like other peoples, to unravel the mysteries of external Nature. And, this amazing nation achieved even in this field, results, through the exercise of their sharp intellect, which are beyond the fondest dreams of men in other countries.

The supreme end of education, the highest purpose of instruction, is to make man aware of the 'universal immanent Impersonal'. This is the truth that is loudly proclaimed in the Vedas. The seers and sages of Bharat courageously entered upon this adventure. The ever-changing aspects of Nature, the appearance and disappearance of its working, may be a fine subject for study. But, the ancients of Bharat proclaimed that the science of the Transcendent Principle that permeates the Universe, the Unchanging Eternal, the Embodiment of Everlasting Ever-full Ananda, the Residence of Unaffected Undiminished Peace, the Ultimate Refuge for all Time of the Individual Jivi, that Science is the supremest Knowledge that man must gain.

The knowledge of the principles governing objective Nature can at best provide man with food and clothing; it teaches man ways and means of gaining them; it leads to the exploitation of the weak by the strong. If the people of Bharat had bent their energies towards the discovery of the secrets of the world, they could have easily acquired mastery.

But, very soon, the people of Bharat recognised that this search was but secondary and that the prime position should be assigned to the spiritual. They decided that pursuing the secrets of external Nature was not the real sign of a Bharatiya. This resolution brought glory to this nation.

Others cannot even approach the fringe of this problem. Like Prahlada, of the legends, Indians have been able to survive ordeals of fire and escape unhurt the torture of ages. Those who had no spiritual out-look or aspiration were not reckoned as Bharatiyas. Many in foreign lands believed that Indians were more politically minded, an inference that was misleading; they felt that only a small fraction of Indians was spiritually oriented. But, Bharat always insisted that the spiritually directed way of life was the first and foremost duty of every Indian. Whenever the chance offered itself, after discharging this duty, Indians felt that they should collect and confirm the spiritual potency that they had. This was exactly what happened in the past.

National integration meant in those days the concentration and commingling of all the spiritual forces and urges that were scattered among seekers all over the land. The word, 'nation', meant in India the grouping together of hearts that beat time to the same tune and that respond, by similar vibration, to the same spiritual call. The basic truths that this faith expounded were as broad as the sky, as eternal as Creation. Those Truths were described in many subtle ways and commented upon very close and deep. But, as a result of the very breadth of the vision that discovered them, and laid them down, it was inevitable that many faiths emanated on the basis of the beliefs they encouraged.

Diversities in attitudes and practices are natural and ought to be welcomed; there is no need for an iron-clad hard Faith. Only, there is no place for one over-all Faith. Rivalry among those following different paths cannot bring peace and prosperity to any country. Without the freedom to adopt faith, the world cannot progress. India taught that a small group can never command the inexhaustible resources of the world, that for the effective functioning of the community it is necessary to divide the work of the community among sections of the people, and allot the task of contributing its share of the common good to each section of the community. This gave facilities for diversities and for mutuality. Diversities were approved for the sake of the practical application of spiritual powers and potentialities; so, there is no need for factionalism and fights. The diversities too are but superficial; they are not really real. There is an entrancing sense of mystery that can explore these diversities and discover the key to visualise the ONE that underlies the many. This is what the ancient texts proclaim as the most precious revelation: "Ekam sat, vipraah bahudha vadanti" (The One alone exists; wise men describe It in manifold ways).

Therefore, it can be asserted that the Faith of the Bharatiyas is the one Faith that accepts and reveres all Faiths. When we shelter factionalism and fanaticism in our hearts, in relation to our own specific faith or the faith of others, we, as descendents of those fathers are bringing disgrace on ourselves. Whether we are adhering to the classical Vedantic faiths or whether we are adopting recent trends in that Vedantic thought, we have to bear in mind certain basic universally accepted truths. All those who bear the name, Hindu, have to believe in them and shape their lives accordingly. May they have the will to do so.

The first of these is: "Bharatiyas do not insist that everyone has to be bound to one attitude; or that every one must abide by one interpretation or commentary only, to the exclusion of other possible explanations or points of view, or that the way of life with all its implications has to be the one approved by some one individual or group." The Bharatiya culture lays down that it is a heinous sin to exercise force upon any one, in matters of the spirit.

Next: "The Eternal Universal Dharma or Religion is taught by the Vedas. The sacred body of teachings, referred to as Vedic, is coeval with Creation, without ascertainable beginning or end. With it, all inquiry into the spirit and the ramifications of faith have to find fulfillment and close. One cannot escape this conclusion, if he studies and practises the Vedas. For all problems involving differences in spiritual attitudes and aspirations, we can get solutions that are convincing, from the Vedic texts themselves. The viewpoints differ about what portions of the Vedas are authoritative for each; persons affiliated to one sect might regard some portions of the Vedas as holier and more sacrosanct than others. In spite of this, all are brothers and co-sharers, of the teachings and lessons imparted by the Vedas. All that is elevating and beneficial for us today, all that is holy and sacred to us, all that is pure and ennobling, have been made available to us from and through these wondrous texts of old. So long as we hold to this latter belief and proclaim it aloud, what can the little differences of opinion regarding comparative importance do, to cause rifts? For this reason, we have to announce these lessons and principles so that they spread beyond all horizons.

3. The Vedas are concerned with and they expound the Supreme Person, the Easwara who created this Universe, who fosters It, in whom It merges in accordance with the process of time, and in whom 'is again manifest as His Form this amazing Universe. We might have diverse beliefs about the nature and characteristics of this Easwara. One person might picture Him as having human nature and characteristics. Another might believe that He is the embodiment of non-human attributes. A third person might have faith only in an attributeless, formless, Easwara. Every one of these can find in the Vedas, declarations supporting his viewpoints. It is a fact that, though they hold diverse views, they all have faith in Easwara, the Godhead. That is to say, they believe that there is undoubtedly One transcendent eternal Power, and that all this has originated from It, that all is supported and sustained by It, and that all this has to merge in It again. This belief is the hall-mark of a Bharatiya; he who has not acquired this belief is not entitled to the name, Bharatiya. He does not deserve to be called a Hindu.

Of what nature, with what characteristics, is the Easwara you teach? This question is irrelevant to us. It is not so important. Let us not dispute about the various points of view, that divide persons. Enough for us if Easwara is accepted and emphasised. For even though one description and delineation might be better and clearer than another, no delineation and description can be 'bad'. One declaration would be 'good'; the second one would be 'better' and the third one, 'best'. But in the stream of Bharatiya spiritual Adventure, no description or picturisation can be pronounced 'bad and unacceptable'. That is the reason why, Easwara confers Grace on all those who teach any Name and any Form that can attract and inspire man, as sacred and valid. May this faith grow from more to more. For, it brings more spiritual progress, the more it is acted upon. Only, the aspiration must be related to God or Easwara.

4. For spiritual exploration and discovery, there can be no qualification like wealth or disqualification like poverty. This truth has to be handed down to the children by Bharatiya parents. They have to grow up with this broad feeling.

5. Bharatiyas do not accept the belief, held by persons belonging to other countries, that the Universe was manifested a few thousand years ago and that it will be destroyed finally and

forever, at some future date. Bharatiyas will not accept the theory that the Universe arose out of Nothing. They believe that the Universe or this objective Creation is beginningless and endless, and that, according to the laws of evolution in time, it will recede from the gross into the subtle stage and, after being in that stage, for some period, it will again recede into the causal stage from which It emerged. From the One into which it merges, it will gradually manifest itself as Many, through the subtle and the gross stages of expression.

(To be continued)

Select any name of HIS, any name that appeals to you, select any form of HIS; every day when you awaken to the call of the brightening East, recite the name, meditate on the form; have the name and the form as your companion, guide and guardian throughout the toils of waking hours; when you retire for the night offer grateful homage to God in that form, with that name, , for being with you, by you, beside you, before you, behind you, all day long. If you stick to this discipline you cannot falter or fail.

—Baba

Direct Influence

It is our great good fortune to be the contemporaries of Bhagavan Sathya Sai Baba. To be contemporary of an Avatar is evidently a result of the penance done in the innumerable lives in the past.

It is true that Lord assumes the human body and reincarnates Himself age after age, era after era, only to fulfill the cherished desires of redemption and liberation of man. Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Christ, Mohammed are the Avatars of the past eras, and we are deriving their uplifting spiritual influence on our prayers, by our meditations, by the knowledge and strength we acquire through their teachings.

Now the influence of Bhagavan Sathya Sai on our contemporary life is not indirect. It is a direct impact. We are privileged to see Him with our physical eyes; we are fortunate to listen to His captivating voice with our ears; we are able to enjoy the ecstasy of being blessed by Him; we are fortunate to taste the Prasad blessed by Him; and we are smelling the celestial aroma of the Vibhuti, the Holy ash, showered from His hands. As such, we are able to enjoy Swami's presence with all the five senses, provided to us by the Creator. How sweet is this privilege and how rare it is!

His presence on this earth is itself capable of transforming and spiritualising human consciousness. Bhagavan Himself declared that the highest miracle He is performing is this invisible inner spiritualisation of human consciousness, by transforming our Samskaras, called tendencies, to the absolute Satwic state. This is the eternal theme and objective in the process of evolution from Tames to Rajas, and from Rajas to Satwa states of our inner consciousness. This is the direct impact of the contemporary Incarnation of Bhagavan Sathya Sai, which is now

accelerating the process of evolution of man which otherwise will be possible only after experiencing innumerable births and deaths, births and rebirths. The entire animate world and the inanimate world on this Earth is now subjected to the direct influence of Swami's Presence. Swami once spoke to Charles Penn that He is holding the responsibility of elevating human nature and also of the entire animate world by relieving them from the enveloping sorrow and misery.

His mere glance is capable of producing spiritual upliftment. His sweet smile illuminates the dark clouds of ignorance studded in the human minds. His holy touch transmutes the infinite human misery into the perennial spell of blissful existence. His word brings about a regeneration in the behaviour of degenerate individuality.

Hence it is up to us to open the doors of the portals of our individuality so that we can receive Swami on the throne of our hearts. Swami's influence is direct and perceptible on all persons coming into His fold, as can be seen from the lives of several persons all over the world. His influence is indirectly working even on the minds of those persons who apparently are averse to His impact. Baba's role in the spiritual awakening of humanity can be observed from the reports, flooding from all the countries, wherever His Name is uttered. Time and space are not barriers which can obstruct the materialisation of His miraculous influences. There is no laboratory which can analyse Swami's inexplicable way of working. It is beyond scientific observation since it is non-phenomenal, and out of the purview of the sensory evaluation.

His direct influence is vouchsafed to all those persons who can directly enter into His View, which is the real meaning of 'interview'. We can enter into His view by dedication to the eternal values of life, and intense devotion to Him.

'I am never out of sight of my devotees and My devotees are never out of sight of Me'—This is the promise of Lord Krishna (Gita Chap. 6/30). Accordingly Baba is always seeing His Devotees. When the devotees are not able to see for themselves who they are and what they are, Swami is seeing them, and giving them the realisation of their own eternal nature. Swami is watching them in all their trials and tribulations of their lives. Swami is coming to the instantaneous rescue of His devotees, wherever they are placed in this world, responding to the cry of helplessness demanding His immediate Grace. He is materialising Himself in several forms before His devotees to bring them out of their calamities. All Forms are His and all Names are His. These wonderful Leelas are being experienced by His devotees, who narrate these wonders, with the tear-veiled-eyes, however unrealistic or unscientific they may appear to a mind narrowed by the limited rationalistic view of life.

Blessed are those, who believe; blessed are those who are capable of receiving Swami's direct Divine influence.

—*Patury Prasannam*

I am He

I came to Baba about five years ago as a psychiatrist, egotistical about his own knowledge and power and skeptical of the spiritual dimension. I thought I knew something about who I was and what life was about and had even tricked myself into thinking that I was happy. But how could I be, thinking as I did that I was the transient limited body, existing alone in a dark abyss, surrounded by empty meaningless space and emotionless physical laws that governed an unfeeling material universe. I thought I was a strange accident existing briefly between life and death. Coming from such a dry and lifeless point in my existence how can I even begin to measure the gift Baba gave me. I am Atma—I am the infinite consciousness and boundless love that permeates and sustains everything—that thou art—Tatt Twam Asi. What a glorious awakening to realize, So Ham—So Ham—I am He—I am He—and that the consciousness, the love, the I and the He is our Lord Sathya Sai. The only way to express gratitude for such a gift is to lay one's life down as a flower at Baba's lotus feet. I pray he grants us all the strength of character and fullness of love that renders our lives worthy of the offering.

—Dr. Samuel Sandweiss

Sai Family News

Sai Karuna

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samiti, Eluru, West Godavari District, contributed four Shrama-Dan Camps, on four consecutive Sundays, to help build a pucca shed, partitioned into eight rooms and a common hall, for the lepers living in and around Eluru Town. Formerly, they were living in dilapidated thatched huts which had deteriorated beyond use. Women members of the Mahila Vibhag have planted shrubs and saplings around the shed, which gives the appearance of an Ashram. The shed was declared open by Sri. C. L. Narasimha Rao. District and Sessions Judge, on 6, November, '77. The President of the Hindu Kushtu Nivarana Sangham, Sri. J Ram Babu, I. A. S. declared, while receiving the keys of the shed—now named, very appropriately, SAI KARUNA—that the construction of the Home so quickly and so well is indeed a miracle worked by the Grace of Baba. He said that the Samiti has demonstrated that religion does not consist of mere faith or belief; it has to be expressed in service to suffering humanity.

Mauritius

Devotees have inaugurated a SAI BROTHERHOOD, at Bonne Terre City, in the Island of Mauritius, on the Birthday of Bhagavan, 23rd November 77.

When obstacles come, meet them with courage. They harden you, make you tough. The best way to get rid of weakness is to strike at the very taproot of the tree—the mistake that you are the body, with this name and this form, these senses, this intelligence and this mind. These are all the luggage you carry. Don't you say, my nose, my mind, my hand, my reason, just as you say my book, my umbrella? Who is this 'I' that calls these "Mine"? That is the real 'you'. It was there when you were born, when you were sleeping forgetful of all else, forgetful even of your body with all its equipment, internal external. That 'I' cannot be harmed; it does not change, it knows no death or birth. Learn the discipline that makes you aware of this truth and you will be ever free and bold. That is real Vidya, the Atma-Vidya, which the sages have gathered for you.

The thousands who come to Puttaparthi are coming there for this precious wealth; you too must, one day or other, learn this and save yourselves. All men have to reach the goal, travelling along the path of wisdom.

—Baba

Seva is Sadhana (Relief to Cyclone Victims)

Calamity hit the smiling Delta of the Krishna River—the Divi Taluk in Andhra Pradesh, on 19th November, in the form of a devastating tidal wave and a terrific cyclone, which reduced the region into a shamble of death and despair. A few days earlier, a destructive tidal wave had swept into Nagapattinam and the surrounding areas in Tamil Nadu and caused great havoc. The call for Service was heard by the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samitis of the affected areas and many of the Seva Dal members stayed away where duty called, denying themselves the long-awaited chance to attend the All India Conference of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations on 20, 21 and 22 November and the Birthday festival of their beloved Bhagavan. Bhagavan appreciated the spontaneous response that came from the Sadhana-toughened youth of the land, who have been during the years trained for just this type of organised, enthusiastic, self-less Service.

The 23rd November was the Birthday Festival of Bhagavan and more than 30,000 devotees from all the States of India and many overseas countries were present at Prasanthi Nilayam. Bhagavan directed that "Seva for the survivors of this great tragedy was the foremost duty of all." He asked the members and office-bearers of the Units of the Organisation in the affected and adjacent Districts to proceed to their home villages and plan out relief, as quickly and as efficiently as possible.

When he spoke of the loss of human lives which totaled more than 20,000 and the pall of gloom that darkened the area, and described the kind of help that had to be rendered, the devotees present pooled together, within a few hours, more than eight lakhs of rupees, for the expenses of relief and rehabilitation. The amount rose to over eleven lakhs pretty soon, and the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust Flood Relief Account opened at the State Bank of India. Prasanthi Nilayam is being swelled every day by voluntary donations from all parts of the globe.

Bhagavan set up an adhoc Committee to organise the Relief Operations and the Committee was on the spot, right in the centre of the land of tears as early as the 26th, with about 200 seasoned Seva Dal volunteers, more than 20 doctors and other medical personnel and truck-loads of dhotis, saris, children's garments, drugs and provisions. The devotees of Bhagavan from Nellore, East Godavari and West Godavari Districts of Andhra Pradesh as well as from areas adjacent to the Relief Centres operated by the Committee, are wading truck-loads of rice and provisions for supplementing the resources. In fact, the hearts of all people affected or not directly involved are moved by the spontaneous and loving compassion which turned into instant and magnificent charity.

On the 28th, a Relief Centre was opened at Kotta Majeru, 12 miles from Masulipatam Dr. A. Bapiraju, of the Organisation, who was in charge of the medical relief here, for the most critical fortnight, writes; "I feel that what was mentioned in the newspapers is quite inadequate to describe the terrible havoc evident before our eyes. The horror that covers the rice-fields dotted all over with heaps of dead animals and humans is frightening in the extreme. We found that they have not yet been buried or cremated, since the place is still inaccessible and the task is too stupendous. By Baba's Grace, there was no evidence of cholera or other epidemics, which usually haunt such areas. All the Relief Work here is being conducted by the Sathya Sai Seva Samiti members in an orderly and disciplined manner. On 10th December, when we shifted the Camp to Gundapalem, 3 miles away, the survivors of the tidal wave were so grateful to us and so satisfied with our work that they did not allow us to leave, though we would still be within easy reach." The Camp had to be shifted, since hundreds had to wade through slush and mire to avail themselves of the relief. Over 4500 people are fed daily in this Camp.

The other Relief Camp established by the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation and run by the members of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Dal is at Barrankula, the focal point of more than 7 villages which suffered extensive damage from the cyclone. Over 2000 persons lost their lives here and thousands of cattle killed. No other Relief Agency had reached the place for days together, since it is on an isolated land mass, cut off from Nagayalanka 4 miles away, by slushy tracks, which trucks could not negotiate. Materials for the Camp had to be carried as head loads by the Seva Dal youth. Hundreds of carcasses were lying all along the tracks, and the young men, toughened by Bhagavan's programme of Sadhana and Seva took on themselves the task of disposing off the dead, in co-operation with the Police and some 'prisoners from Rajahmundry Jail, recruited for the purpose'. Sri. B. V. Ramana Rao. State Convenor, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Dal, writes, "The obnoxious stench of decomposing flesh had to be overcome and the Seva was carried out in the spirit of Sadhana by the Seva Dal." Arrangements have been made to feed more than 1500 persons every day at this Camp. Two Doctors (who have taken leave from their Official Duties in order to be with the Seva Dal Camp of the Sathya Sai Organisation) were busying themselves with preventive inoculations, to keep at bay infectious diseases; by Baba's Grace, they succeeded in their Sadhana."

The third Centre started by the Sathya Sai Seva Organisation is situated at Adavula Deevi' in Divi Taluk, the area which received the full force of the fatal tidal wave. More than 5000 people, sheltering under temporary sheds with tarpaulin roofs erected in the Camp are being fed every day, in this Camp. They are mostly shelterless fishermen, who have lost their all. They belonged to about 27 hamlets on the sea-shore, rendered desolate by the anger of the sea. Five doctors (including a Lady Doctor) are actively engaged at this Centre fighting against the entrance and spread of cholera and typhoid. They have large quantities of drugs and a band of volunteers skilled and eager to improve sanitation. They conduct health-checkup sorties on a large scale, the doctors proceeding even to remote huts in the affected areas. Food is also being sent to adjacent villages in lorries supplied by the police or in the jeep that the centre has, at its disposal. For example, from Barrankula Camp, food for more than a thousand persons are sent daily to the village Swarnagundi, about 3 miles away. In all the three Centres where: such intensive relief work is being undertaken provision is made for the supply of drinking water, for every source of potable water has been rendered briny and saline. One notable feature of rehabilitation is that a

glass of milk is given to every child below the age of five, any time of the day, since it was found that calcium deficiency was resulting in an increase of skin diseases.

During the past few days, an additional 4000 dhotis and 4000 saris, besides thousands of children's garments got ready by the students of the Sri Sathya Sai College of Arts and Science for Women, Anantapur, were distributed to the villagers. 2000 sets of vessels for domestic use, each set of vessels enough for the needs of a family of five members were also given to them. After hectic days of exhausting Seva some volunteers go back to their villages, and their places are taken up by fresh members from those or other villages.

In and around Bapatla, the cyclone caused frightful damage to crops, houses and gardens. There too, the Sathya Sai Seva Organisation runs a Camp at Ganapavaram where about 2000 afflicted persons are fed; food is sent from here to Konagramam 4 miles away, for hundreds.

Altogether, more than 200 trained workers serve in the Camps, taking up work according to the over-all plan. When the Seva Dal members return, after weeks of hectic work, they describe during the Bhajan sessions of the Seva Samitis in their hometowns, the sufferings they are trying to alleviate. Listening to their stories, the villagers spontaneously pool their resources and are happy to send to the Camps provisions, vessels and clothes.

The orange scarves worn by the members of the Seva Dal mark them out as trained Social Service Volunteers, who believe in the authenticity and validity of all Religions and the bronze medallions axed to the scarves remind them and others that work is worship. They feed the distressed as embodiments of the Sai they revere, and refer to the service as Narayana Seva. They perform this Narayana Seva normally many times a year in their own places as acts of worship and so, they render the Seva effectively and thriftily, with no expensive fanfare. The Seva Dal draws its inspiration from Sri Sathya Sai Baba Himself and the programme of Sadhana He has laid down—Bhajans, Meditation and Study. Bhagavan has directed the Seva Dal to 'Start the Day with Love, Spend the Day with Love, Fill the Day with Love and End the Day with Love? This, He has announced, is the way to win the Grace of God.' The Love that permeates the Relief Camps has won the admiration of individuals, institutions, and organisations all over India and even in many overseas countries. They feel that the Sadhana attitude of the Seva Dal will yield the best results. A stream of donations has been steadily flowing from all over the world to support and sustain the relief measures. The Medical Shop Association, Hyderabad, for example, has sent 100 lanterns and 1000 bed-sheets to the Seva Dal Camp for distribution under their auspices. The construction of houses for the dispossessed is already under way. There are a large number of children rendered orphans, since their kith and kin have all been killed by the wave that washed away all traces of their homes. Bhagavan, in His Infinite Grace has decided to take them all under His benign care in the Orphanages He is establishing.

—Ed.

The All-India Conference

One of the Special Features of the Eighth All India Conference, held in the immediate Presence of Bhagavan, at Prasanthi Nilayam on 20, 21 and 22 November, was the Seminar on the Objectives of the Organisation, during which distinguished members of the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust addressed the gathering of over 7500 delegates. The main point emphasised by the speakers was that members and office-bearers of the Units of the Organisation must experience the Omnipresence of Bhagavan, in every spiritual, educational and service activity in which they are engaged. This depends upon consistent individual Sadhana, of meditation and bhajan. Without this equipment, no member can elevate Work into Worship or Fill the Day with Love, as Bhagavan directs.

The deliberations of the six subcommittees resulted in various recommendations which were discussed by the members in Open Session. The decisions finally approved by Bhagavan and accepted by the Conference dealt with co-ordination, at all levels, between the workers in the three wings of the Organisation—the Seva Samiti, the Mahila Vibhag and the Seva Dal. A clear directive regarding Collection of Funds was also given by the Conference. It was laid down that the State Trust will be the only agency authorised to collect Funds and that the Funds will be available only for Educational and Service activities approved by the Trust and the State President of the Organisation.

The Conference decided to entrust an All India Committee of Educationalists with the task of framing an integrated Sathya Sai Educational Programme and to project it, on the wider map of the entire Country especially its emphasis on moral education. A Research Report on the Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas Programme was released during the Conference, on behalf of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Research, started 3 years ago with the blessings of Bhagavan. The Bombay University co-sponsored the project. The report was presented by Miss Villy Nanji and impressed every one with its conclusions, about the efficacy and value of the Bal Vikas movement. The publication of such studies has led the Maharashtra Government to introduce the Bal Vikas Course in the Secondary Education curricula of their Schools. Other States have welcomed the Extension of the Project into their Bal Vikas classes also. Some Colleges in Bombay are contemplating to give preferential treatment to Bal Vikas pupils while admitting students to their classes. Bhagavan also released a new publication, "For Mankind", being a pictorial Report on the educational, medical and service activities of the Organisation, which gives useful information about the Sai Revolution, to all who are interested in the prosperity, peace and progress of India.

The World Council of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations has taken some decisions about some changes in the Organisational patterns in Overseas centres. The Conference also has accepted some changes in the rules and regulations governing the Units of the Organisation and their Office-bearers. These are being compiled and the Handbook will be in the hands of every Unit in January 78.

Bhagavan has nominated, with His Blessings, State Presidents for the Organisation, in the following States on and from 23-11-77.

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| 1. Justice V Parthasarthi | Andhra Pradesh |
| 2. Dr. S. Baruah | Assam and N E Region |

3. Sri Yugal Kishore Sinha Bihar
4. Sri Kulwant Rai	.....Delhi, Himachal Pradesh
5. Dr. C. G. Patel	.....Gujarat
6. Sri N. Kasturi	.....Karnataka
7. Sri M. Krishna Menon	.....Kerala
8. Sri S P Shet	.....Madhya Pradesh
9. Sri L C Java	.....Maharashtra
10. Sri Brahmananda panda	.....Orissa
11. Sri Vinaya Kumar Kapur	.....Punjab
12. Sri Syatn Singh	.....Rajasthan
13. Sri P G Achuthanandam	.....Tamil Nadu
14. Sri Umesh	.....Uttar Pradesh
15. Sri R R Chatterjee	.....West Bengal

—*Ed.*

The Sai Religion as I Experienced

—*Prof. S. Bashiruddin, Director of Communication,
National Institute of Rural Development*

The truest test of a Godman according to the scholar-statesmen, Dr. K. M. Munshi is the capacity to instill faith in human beings. By this yardstick alone there is hardly any one to compare with Sri Sathya Sai Baba among the Godmen who strengthen the faith of millions of people today.

I went to Sai Baba with an open mind to seek solace in a personal crisis. Little did I realise that He would give an interview which He was merciful enough to grant me. Still less did I know that He would materialise a silver locket in Arabic script "Allah." Not only was I dazed to receive this from Sai Baba but I can vouchsafe with confidence that no one in my 41-year life has infused as much faith in me for ALLAH as Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

More than this, before I met him, "divine love" and "grace" were mere words that I read in pious books and poems which I thought were either the exclusive experience of sages in the past or naive and idealistic visions of impractical people. But within hours of my meeting Sai Baba at Dharmakshetram in Bombay and on my return journey to Poona by Deccan Queen, I started physically and mentally experiencing ecstatic joy for which I could see no physical reason. The nearest analogy to the feeling I, could give is the way someone would feel happy when he gets an international award or a distinction in a university examination or a first prize in a lottery.

Was this a delusion? My social science background questioned.

Attitude Change

I belong to the discipline of Mass Communication where the highest achievement is the ability to change human attitudes, on which hundreds of dissertations and thousands of research articles have been written. But communication specialists have not been able to make a dent in the consciousness of human beings and change long held attitudes.

My meeting with Sai Baba was followed by an attitude of compassion in me for less privileged human beings, and strangely enough my superiors and colleagues showed a positive attitude towards me.

Baba was so loving, merciful and informal that within minutes of His presence He put me at ease touching my shoulder, and with His sweet and mellifluous tone He addressed me as "Bangaroo" which in Telugu is an endearment. He made me feel as though He had known me for many years. The affection, warmth and cordiality which I received in my first meeting with Him in the shape of a group interview, where probably I was the only novice to Sai Culture; the others were long standing devotees as the Sitar maestro Pandit Ravi Shankar, Hindi film Star Manoj Kumar, Beatle singer George Harrison, and others. That was my first visit. Since then I have had Sai Darshan and meetings with Baba in the company of my wife and children.

Though people apparently might feel that Baba shows more interest in the rich or the highly placed, one who is exposed to His ways over a period of time realises that this is a totally erroneous impression. Baba knows the psychological needs of his devotees and He responds in proportion to the sincerity of devotion and the pressing needs of the Bhaktas.

Responds To Need

On my second visit to Baba, when I was accompanied by my wife, we had to wait for more than five days to be recognised by Him although my wife told me that a number of Harijan women who had come from Rajasthan to Puttaparthi were called for interview the very same day and that quite a few American disciples along with educated and affluent Indian women were overlooked by Baba for days in succession-possible, because Baba knew the need of the humble working woman of Rajasthan was more.

Though my wife was brought up in an orthodox but affluent and educated Muslim household given to daily non-vegetarian food, she has totally given up non-vegetarian food without Baba asking her to do so. His compassion and kindness was so overflowing that she resolved to give up meat-eating as Baba is a vegetarian. This is the kind of attitude change that only divinity can bring about. Let me make it clear that vegetarianism is not equal to devotion, as Baba himself told us, that devotion is an attitude of the mind and not food habits.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba has never told me nor as far as I know any other person, to give up his religion or cultural tradition. In fact, He says, follow your religion and reinforce faith in God as you understand Him, which is the same as faith in Sai religion. While there were some lurking fears among my friends and relatives about cultural and religious erosion of my background when I came into contact with Baba, the fact is that today after my surrender to and discipleship of Sathya Sai Baba. I can modestly claim to be a better Muslim in terms of faith in Allah,

tolerance of other religions and improved ability to put into practice at least a few precepts of my own religion which formerly I could only talk about.

Humility is a virtue in any religion though no holy book nor priest could make me really accept this. But after meeting Sai, I have started striving to cultivate humility because of my love for Sai.

To a considerable degree, before I met Sai Baba I was wavering but Baba through stages has strengthened my self-trust and trust in God. He says that a true Bhakta should first have confidence in his own self, and then in Paramatma.

Reinforces All Religions

Sai Baba only proves what is contained in the religious texts so that the faith of the believers is strengthened. The KORAN says that God reveals His universal message to different people at different times, through revelations of Prophets and Messengers of God and that there is no distinction between the message of any of these prophets. Sai's teachings do not contradict anything contained in the Bible, the Koran, Gita, Zendavestha, Vedas, Dhammapada, Upanishads and other holy books of mankind. On the other hand, Sai deepens one's insight into the universality of the power of God.

That surrender of the doubting intellect and complete faith in God is almost a precondition for receiving grace has been emphasised in all the religions. And one experiences this when one approaches Sai.

Again, the Koran states that God does not need from man anything but that even man's devotion to God is only for the benefit of man. How true is this in the case of Sai Bhaktas from whom Sai Baba does not expect anything but devotion and that too, for the Bhakta's own solace and well being.

While I respect pragmatism and shun quibbling and theorizing, Sathya Sai has taught me that mere devotion is not enough but He wants action motivated by devotion for He promises that divine grace is in proportion to human effort.

I see no conflict between the Islamic teaching of "human effort to be followed by divine support" and Sai's emphasis on "grace in proportion to human effort." The Holy Koran says, "God does not change the condition of a human being unless first he himself makes an effort to change it."

The Islamic view of Allah as most merciful, most compassionate and most forgiving is embodied in the physical presence of Sathya Sai who has been more kind, forgiving and beneficent to me than both my parents, my wife, four children, my brothers, maternal and paternal grand parents, uncles, aunts and all the relatives and friends put together.

Sai Fosters Love

To me the foremost qualities that Sai embodies are love, affection, kindness, goodwill and forgiveness. This is what I understand as Sai Religion and what Sai Baba stands for.

Again in my communication discipline, a very high priority is given to effectiveness in communication, leading to the release of motivation among others. But I have never seen so many highly placed men and women judges, doctors, scientists, professors, government and army officials, film actors, writers, musicians, businessmen, management experts, not to mention the numerous ordinary people motivated to serve food to others, sweep the floor, sleep on mats or squat on the floor, up to six hours at a stretch—all for the sake of Sai's love and devotion for Him. They are prepared to do anything for Him for they have received His love and kindness beyond measure and they are willing to sacrifice their precious earning hours, medical consultation, administrative or state matters, for Baba's love and grace. Could there be a better object lesson in motivation?

Sai's divinity in all its ranges incarnates and embodies the virtues of all religions, saints and prophets for He personifies the very best that any civilization has held up before mankind as an ideal. He is close to men and women, children and old men, rich and poor, healthy or sick. Each sees in Sai the divine power of love, forgiveness and acceptance. One has to experience these traits to really believe.

My religious background makes me see universality in all religions irrespective of caste, race, nationality or language. And I have seen Sai's precepts, and life more than testify in reality the application of these religious precepts, which books can only teach, but Sai practises.

I have met at Sai festivals and meetings at Prasanthi Nilayam and Brindavan. Christians, Sikhs, Muslims, Buddhists, Parsis and Hindus, both men and women, from as far-away places as Mexico, Spain, Argentina, U. S. A., Germany; Australia, Canada, Fiji, England, Mauritius, Holland, Nepal, Sweden, Kenya, Tanzania, Iran, Malaysia, and Sri Lanka, and as near places as Kurnool, Anantapur, Hindupur and from the different corners of India—Kashmir, Assam, Kerala and Gujarat. They belong to such professions as psychiatry, plastic surgery, government service, music, aviation, engineering, industry, teaching, social work, politics, armed forces etc, etc.

My small children who met Baba only once remember Him and like Him much better than those whom they have met many times and from whom they have received costly presents.

Sai instinctively perceives the need of everyone and responds with compassion. He can see the future, the past and the present simultaneously. He knows the children's problems better than their parents or teachers.

Miracles Of Faith

As for the miracles, the greatest miracle is the change in mental attitude that He brings about. No doubt. He does this through various super-human powers available to Him, but I give here just two examples.

My daughter who felt that she had not fared well in one of her papers in the S.S.C exam was feeling depressed. The moment she met Baba, He told her that you FEEL that you may not secure higher grade in one paper, maybe you think you will get 45 to 55% . Is it Biology? He asked. My daughter nodded assent. Both my wife and I never knew what our daughter thought of

her performance in Biology as she never told us. Baba told that she would any way get a first class and that she need not worry. She not only got a first class with 76%, but in the Biology paper she got the highest marks 89%.

When I introduced my first son to Baba and told him that he got a first class in I.S.C. exam, Baba ignored him though He gave silver lockets with "Allah" inscription to my three other children. He told my son that He would not give him anything until He extracted a promise from him regarding the company of his friends. Later, when I queried my son as to whether he had any reservations on Sai Baba, he admitted that he had, because of the attitude of his friends. How Baba perceives the inner motivations of human beings is a divine mystery but He gradually transforms people who come into contact with Him through His mercy, compassion, divine guidance and protection.

Today my whole family is devoted to Sai without any reservation and we enjoy His grace in abundance. Above all, we have found Him strengthening our faith in Islam and the concept of Allah as the universally merciful and beneficent power.

Miracles He does perform, but He does these for instilling faith in doubting minds in order to make them trust themselves and God better. Where pedantry, scholarship and research advance the path of civilisation by careful plodding, Sai breaks the limitations of reasoning and points forth the ultimate solution in an instant. His teaching is the quintessence of all religions. I can say without hesitation that I am able to understand in a living manner, many tenets of my own religion as contained in the KORAN better after surrender to Sai. He stills the unsteady intellect and gives stability to wavering minds. His vision contains the vision of all prophets. His solutions are in accord with all religious teachings, for those who have insight and a deeper awareness of the unity of mankind.

Beyond Reason

How does Sai achieve this? It is fruitless to analyse His ways, for limited human minds cannot fathom divinity. But one thing is certain. If God is Love, Sai embodies it more than any one alive and present on earth today. He can cut through barriers of age, sex, caste, race, language and nationality, as He makes clear. "It is your Prema for me and my Prema for you that produce the results." Sai demands nothing from His devotees except purity of heart, total devotion, sincerity and surrender. In return He gives, all that is necessary for a peaceful existence. In our mundane world, I should not forget adding that His grace takes care of jobs, health, promotion, family problems, return on investments, friendship and recognition.

One should deem it a supreme privilege to surrender at His feet because He redeems one from fear, worry, doubt, ill-health. He removes hatred, resentment, ego-conflict, pride and anger and replaces them with modesty, affection, goodwill, fellowship, the growth of creative faculties, ensuring success both in the material and spiritual sense.

As in every religion, there is no short-cut to grace from Sai. Though it is true and proven hundreds of times that no one goes in vain to Sai, it is equally true that unless one has Bhakti, total humility and abject surrender, the grace does not flow. Where these qualities exist, the flow of grace is definite.

Whether Sai is God, messenger, prophet or Avatar Purusha, are questions which human beings cannot decide, but the fact remains that He embodies in human form all that divinity has sanctioned and prophets have vindicated in the long history of mankind.

Results Testify

The test of anything is the result it produces and in satisfaction through personal experience. It is a closed mind that would prejudge a phenomena just because it does not conform to the limited confines of theoretical reasoning and pride of intellect. Sai's divinity produces results though it confounds the intellect. Let us not forget that reason is a later development in human beings, which at the time of birth and death has little role to play. Only when we are open to experimentation and are willing to go through an experience can we savour the fruits of faith and humility.

Sai religion is the living embodiment of whatever is contained in all the religious teachings which are the heritage of mankind. I invite my brothers and sisters of all religions to come forward boldly and to strengthen their faith in God and fellowship of man through Sai, religion.

The great nationalist Poet, Dr. Mohd. Iqbal summarised the meaning of surrender to God when he said that "the one prostration (before God) which you consider burdensome, will free you from prostrating before thousands of others." Anyone who has become a Sai disciple knows the peace of mind and the freedom he gains by submitting to Sai.

Hyderabad

To the Delegates

The Bliss of Realisation is not an article that one can give another or which one can receive from another. Brahmananda is not transferable. This Truth has to be first accepted by every one. For, what has to be earned by one's own effort is nowadays sought for, from others. This is mere waste of time. The Atma or Self is holy; it is full; it is free. So, each one is holy, full and free. Know this and you are free. Feel it and you are full. Live it and you are holy.

But, through sheer ignorance of this fact, man imposes on himself sacrilege, incompleteness and dependence and he laments his fate and destiny. This is indeed behaviour to be ashamed of! The human being is not simply this conglomeration of the five elements that form the material body we see. It contains the mind, prone to resolution and Irresolution crisscrossed by wishes, desires and wants; it contains also what are called the 'inner instruments'—the intellect, the ego, the levels of chitta or consciousness etc. These compose the Sookshma Sarira of the individual, the subtle body. Also there is another entity in man, beyond the dual regions of thought, beyond the ups and downs of birth, death, and growth, a 'body' referred to as the Kaarana Sarira, or the 'causal'. It is not an effect, but, a cause. That is the image of God in man, the Divine Spark.

When you sit before a picture of the Divine or stand before an idol, in reverent adoration, you usually close your eyes, in order to have Darshan of the Form! Imagine a person closing his eyes to get a clearer vision! This is the Darshan the Bharatiyas crave for the vision that can be won by

insight, rather than by outer view. Many seekers, especially in the West, believe that God is in some Heaven or some Height in outer Space and point to those regions when they speak of God. But, Indians believed in the authenticity of the experience of Rishis recorded in the Vedas and by later seers; they had the faith that their own Reality and the Reality of the universe are identical, that the Universe is the Body of God, who is Eternal, Pure, Intelligent, and Absolute. Many have visualised that this is the Truth.

Religious texts of all faiths have but one aim—to develop the Inner-vision and through cleansing the Consciousness. While other religions proclaim that their Scriptures have been composed according to the directions of God, the Vedas have declared themselves as the authentic Breath of God Himself. It is a pity that the children of India are neglecting this precious heritage, that has such profound and unique validity.

It is a hard task to cleanse the consciousness only by the discharge of one's duties. The Grace of God is also essential for this consummation. When Self-confidence is lost and the Grace of God is absent, all human efforts will lead him along the downward path; from that moment, fall is inevitable. One must also remember that unless society has peace, one cannot live in peace. Therefore, one must ensure social peace, so that one can have the blessings of peace, for oneself.

The fruit of all Sadhana is the achievement of the knowledge of the Atma as one's real core. In order to help the Sadhaka to attain this result, it is necessary to impose some hard rules and limitations. An illness cannot be conquered by mere drugs alone; a tight regimen of food, drink, and habits is also to be prescribed and followed. All are 'ill' with Bhavaroga, perpetual journey from birth to death and from death to birth. Repetition of, the Name is the drug; but, this must be accompanied by the regimen, Disciplinary Limits and Laws. 'Na sreya niyamam vinaa'—No spiritual progress without regulated disciplined lives. A song is pleasant to the ear only when there is a consistent tune and proper timing—a raga and a system of taal. So, even for your spiritual sadhana through these Seva units, some rules of discipline are essential and they have to be strictly observed. You should not deviate from them.

Man takes to the easier, smoother path and lands himself in disappointment and despair. He does not identify the Madhava in his manava-hood, the Divine in his human-ness; he does not realise that society is the body of God; he does not respect the heritage that, has, come down for him from the sages of this land. He moves about as an animal, regardless of the Divinity in him and around him. Imitation has become the order of the day; it is an insidious infection. The imitator becomes the bondsman of the person he imitates. Surely, this is not the way of life for self-respecting people. Look at the tiny seed; it has much greater self-respect than these persons who borrow their thoughts, attitudes, likes and dislikes from others. The seed is hidden in soil; but, it does not become 'soil'. It is fed with water; but, it does not turn into water. It is given manure; but, it does not change into manure. It preserves its individuality, in spite of all the forces that operate around it. It sprout, grows into a sapling and a tree, according to its own, innate nature. Learn from the seed this great lesson and you can be saved from the evils of 'intimation'. Mix with people; but, do not give up your uniqueness. Benefit by Satsang and by association with the good and the great. But, be yourself, your own true Self.

The Sathya Sai Seva Organisation has been working all these years through its various Units. It is necessary to assess now what benefit it has conferred on the individual as well as on Society. Members and Office-bearers must endeavour ceaselessly to promote the Ananda of others, to improve the standard of life of others and to ensure peace and mutual good-will among others. They must utilise all their skill and resources for this purpose. Those of you who have taken up office must lead others in this effort; when you simply preach and admonish, others will have no enthusiasm to work. Let bygones be bygones. There is no use worrying over the past. From now on, Office-bearers who have assembled here as delegates must be ready to set examples, themselves, of earnest, intelligent, Sevaks and Sadhakas.

Of course, it is very easy to drive men on from behind; but, leading them on from the front-line is highly desirable, as a Sadhana. Office bearers must take the lead in Nagarsankirtan; then, the others too will follow and get inspired. For what reason is Nagarsankirtan prescribed as an item in the programme of the Units? Is it for-spreading a cult? No. It is for your own good, so that, you may start the day with Love, with Bhakti and Shraddha and Seva, so that you may pay your debt for having been born in this sacred land of Tyaga and Yoga.

Of what avail is a life spent in selfish pursuits? When is man to yearn for and enjoy the bliss of the transcendent? Is it not obligatory for man to express gratefulness to Nature and Nature's-God for all the benefits and thrill he derives from them? He pays tax to the municipal authorities for the little house he occupies, for the electric current he uses, for the water that flows in the taps in his dwelling place etc. But, who provided him the energy, the space and the water? The gratitude that you have to show God is named 'ball' in the Vedas. It is usually taken to mean 'sacrifice of some animal', but, how can the killing of an animal make up for the absence of, gratitude? Bali means tax and this is the more appropriate meaning for the Vedic word, the correct one. How is this tax to be paid? By three modes of behaviour—fearing sin, loving God and serving brother man.

Sathya Sai has nothing to do with money; he does not concern himself with your riches. He is concerned with your Gunas, your virtues and the quality of your lives. For carrying on the activities of a Bhajan Mandali, Satsang, Study Circle etc., why should funds be necessary? For Bal Vikas classes too there is no need for money; there are the Gurus and there are the children. Lessons can start in an atmosphere of Love and Seva. When money is on hand, pride envy, and greed will increase; when these, afflict man, vices multiply. Spiritual riches will decline. Virtue is the best treasure; good conduct is the best form of wealth; Sadhana is the highest of professions; Seva is the noblest of ideals. Though Lord Vishnu has Lakshmi the Goddess of Wealth as part of Him, it is said He is a mendicant with a begging bowl-clamouring for the alms of Love from every human heart. It is resolved, in this Conference that, members and office bearers of Units should on no account collect donations, but, the task of providing money for approved purposes will be the duty of the State Trusts.

The Samiti is the thumb; the Mahila Vibhag is the Forefinger; the Seva Dal is the middle finger; the Bal Vikas is the ring-finger; the Bhajan Mandali is the little finger. All are fingers of one hand. So, there should not arise any ill feeling between these; they should all co-operate and help each other. If, any one of these develops egoism, it will harm itself and others. Egoists is the crown of all vices. Be always in the attitude of servants; that is the best training to become

masters. Every one must feel equally entitled to the Grace that can be won by Seva. Every one of you must be ready to sacrifice everything, even your lives, for the welfare of those in distress.

The age of Seva Dal members was hitherto fixed as between 18 and 35. But, now, this has been revised. The age can be anywhere from 16 and above. Why should we deny the chance to any one or discard any one as too old? The skill and enthusiasm, the discipline and sense of duty of every one can be put to some good use. Seva Dal members have to observe many disciplinary rules, like the sexes keeping away from each other, in all activities of Seva. It is best that the Seva activities of our Organisation are kept free from contact or involvement with other Seva Organisations in the country. For, other Organisations do not have the same strict rules and regulations regarding many matters. The environment which marks their service programmes and the atmosphere created thereby may not be congenial to the Seva of this Organisation. The Seva Dal has to plan and perform Seva activities on its own, in this way, they can also avoid complications that may hamper work.

Units of the Organisation are taking up, more and more service activities in the villages. The villages have preserved, at least to some extent, the ideals of Devotion to God, Brotherhood of Man, Compassion to the Disabled etc. You have to direct them on the methods of sanitation and help them for literacy and means of self-reliant livelihood, supplementing their meagre incomes. You have to serve the villages during festivals and fairs; also during droughts, floods, fires and other calamities. The problems of people in cities and towns are much more difficult and urgent. They are fast losing hold of all things that distinguish man from animals. Morality, virtue, mercy, charity, brotherhood, Love—these are becoming rarer and rarer in individual and social life. Fear, suspicion, rivalry, greed—these are making city life a nightmare. So, there is greater need of Seva in the Cities. Villagers too are catching the infection from the city-dwellers and from the books, newspapers and films that the City people produce. So, by means of Satsang and the influence of your own lives, you have to modify the habits and behaviour, the ways of thinking, of City dwellers, so that they may have less fear and anxiety and more peace and contentment. You have to plan out a programme and dedicate yourself for fulfilling it.

Another point: We are having now in our Bhajan Mandalis participants from all Religions. The Sathya Sai Religion is the Religion in all Religions; it accepts all religions as authentic, for each strives to cleanse the Consciousness, so that the Divine may be revealed therein. Encourage them to share in the joy of Bhajan by singing their own prayers. Older devotees must inspire the newer ones by their Love and their enthusiastic support.

On account of the enormous development of activities and the multiplication of responsibilities, it has become necessary to give some new people a few responsibilities and some older people changed functions and positions. But, whatever happens, you belong to Swami and Swami belongs to you. This fact shall not alter. Install this belief in your hearts. Watch attentively for the alterations and additions made in the rules during this Conference and observe them strictly in your dealings. Engage yourselves to the fullest extent possible, with sincere enthusiasm, in the duties cast upon you.

—*Bhagavan's Discourse, 22-11-1977*

True Devotion

Devotion, or to use its Sanskrit equivalent, Bhakti, is a very significant word and it is necessary to understand its nuances very closely. Bhakti is the process of Prema, directed to God; it means, "devoted to God so much that He is the only centre of one's Love." Narada in his Bhakti Sutra, describes Bhakti as Parama-prema-swaroopa, "of the nature of the highest Love." If Love is directed fully to God only when one's wishes are fulfilled or when one's distress is removed then, it cannot be called Bhakti or the higher Love. When one is in trouble men run to temples or churches or mosques and indulge in various rites, rituals or prayers, asking God to help them overcome them; and, when these disappear or are over, they ignore God and forget to pray. This is not Devotion. Devotion involves dedication of time, energy and feeling. Ignoring God when good times prevail cannot be Devotion; it is only a scheme of bargaining, for selfish ends. Devotion arises from deep attachment; it is a sign of reverent affection. The purest and the strongest type of devotion is called Ananya Bhakti (exclusive attachment). It comes of deep yearning for God, who is known as the only support, the only kinsman, friend, guide and goal. Adoring God as the sole refuge is the sine qua non of Bhakti.

Twam eva mata (Thou alone art my mother); cha, pita twam eva (and, Thou alone art my father); twam eva bandhuscha (Thou alone art my kith and kin); twam eva vidya (Thou alone art all my knowledge) dravinam twam eva (my wealth is Thou only) twam eva sarvam (Thou art my all) mama devadeva (O, my God of Gods)—this is the deepest yearning that prompts the devotee. Of course, the number of such devotees is very small. The desire to have wishes fulfilled, through Divine intervention and supplication to the Divine, is a great handicap of a true devotee. It does not agree with the self-less Love that has to characterise the devotee. Selfishness sometimes, self-lessness sometimes, when it suits the occasion—this type of devotion will cancel out into zero. The clamour that God does not respond and shower Grace even when sincere prayers are offered can be traced to this 'part-time' devotion and 'halfhearted yearning'. He who welcomes with equal open-heartedness both pain and pleasure, regarding both as gifts from God which he dare not evaluate as good or bad, is the true Bhakta. This attitude of devotion enables one to live his days in undiluted Ananda.

Narada was lead by God to understand and appreciate the Bhakti that the Gopis (milk-maidens of Gokula) had in their hearts. He knew that, though their husbands, parents-in-law and others tried to wean them away by inflicting various obstacles, the Gopis never deviated from the path of Love to Krishna. The Bhagavata describes that the Form of the Lord had got imprinted, like a picture on paper, on their hearts and so, it could never be erased or removed. Nothing could shake their faith and loyalty neither fear, nor pain, neither grief nor joy, neither persecution nor calumny.

The Lord is the resident of the heart of those who love Him and His Creation. He has to show Grace on such dependents and devotees who have dedicated their likes and dislikes to His Will. It is the Law with which He has bound Himself—'I shall support and sustain, save and liberate all who take sole refuge in Me'. Ananyaaschinthayantho maam, ye janaah paryupaasathe, theshaam nithya abhiyukthaanaam, yoga kahemam vahaamyham. He has no partiality or

prejudice. "I am in every one, every one is in Me", He declares. So, He asks, "How can I dislike any one or degrade any one?" The devotee who draws Grace upon himself, by the sheer force of his Love, can even be considered more adorable than the Lord. One day, when Narada went into the Presence of the Lord, an interesting dialogue ensued. Narayana asked him, "Which among the Five Elements is the greatest?" and Narada replied that the Earth appeared as the biggest. But, Narayana argued that more than two thirds of the earth's surface was invaded by, water and so, water as found in the Oceans was far more powerful. When Narada agreed that water was indeed so, Narayana said that the Sage Agastya had swallowed the Ocean as one mouthful. So, Narada had to accept that Agastya was even more dominant. When Narayana told him that Agastya was now a star in the sky. Narada agreed to the inference that the sky was indeed vaster than anything else. Narayana then reminded him that God as Trivikrama had measured the sky with His one foot. So, Narada came to the conclusion that Narayana who had assumed the Trivikrama Form was the biggest and greatest of all conceivable Forms and things. Then, Narayana told him, "Narada! What do you say of the greatness of the Bhakta who encloses the Lotus Feet of Narayana, the Trivikrama, in the cavity of his heart?"

The College Student, Shroff, said, in his speech just now, that God is in all forms, that He has all powers and that He is present everywhere. What does it imply? What do we mean when we say that He is omnipresent? Those who journeyed into outer space and landed on the moon declare that they did not find God anywhere! "We examined every corner with, telescopes and other instruments; we could not find God", they announce. But, these instruments are designed to bring distant things near. There are other instruments to make manifest the Divine that is the innermost resident of man himself. These are mantras or mystic formulae by which the eye of man can be clarified and his vision purified and sharpened. The Five Elements—earth, water, fire, air, space—have each, one special characteristic. Earth has not only its attribute to "smell" but it has also the attribute of all the other four. So, it is grossest of all. Water has only its attribute of "taste" and three other attributes—those of fire, air and space. So, it is not as heavy or gross. It can flow from height to depth. Fire has neither smell or taste. It has only three attributes—its own, namely Form and the attributes of air and space. So, fire can rise high. Air has no Form: it has only 'touch', its specific quality and "sound" the attribute of space. So, it is lighter and can move in any direction. Space is the subtlest, for it is burdened with just one attribute—sound. God who 'manifested' the five elements has no attributes at all and so, He can be and He is everywhere, at all places. This is the real explanation of the omnipresence of God.

When things become 'light', they can rise easily. When the weight of seeds is taken away, cotton bolls can float in the air and be carried about by the wind. 'Light' also means that it will acquire 'light', and shine. When the burden of desires is shoved off, man becomes light and can feel the 'light'. When the mind expands, it becomes 'light', when the mind is shrunk by egoism, envy, scandal, self-praise etc, it remains heavy and hard. God never comes near or goes far. He is as distant from you as you choose. People complain, "Lord! I try to approach you but you always keep at a distance." This cannot be correct; for, the distance between you and Me is the same as the distance from Me to you. It is your mental fear or suspicion that makes you feel that I am more distant from you than you from Me. I am ever with you, nor had I ever gone far.

The path of devotion and dedication is declared by seekers in all faiths and all lands as the easiest. But, whatever the path, the first step can be fruitful, only if the seeker has won purity of

heart. And, Love alone can cleanse the heart of all blemish. Hatred, envy, pride, greed, all these breed on a love-less mind. A mango tree is heavy with blossoms one day; but, the next day, it is found denuded and dry, the reason has to be examined, according to those who know the science of trees, at the roots. Some pests must have attacked the roots. Remove the pests in your mind and feed the roots with Love, Bhajan, Nagarsankirtan, Japa and other activities cannot yield fruit unless the heart is softened by Love and is moved into constructive channels of Seva.

Another point: Happiness is Union with God. This is available if the Presence of God is felt at all times. Be in the Presence, think of Him, talk of Him, see Him in all Forms and all activities, discover His Will to all that happens—this is the way to cultivate Bhakti and to ensure Happiness and Contentment. The Gopis are examples and inspirations for the practitioners of the Constant presence of God. All that attachment one pours out on one's parents, friends, kith and kin, fame and fortune, property and possessions, the Gopis concentrated on the Lord. So, they were able to bind God to themselves. Bhakti means the achievement of that concentration and that faith.

—*Divine Discourse: Brindavan 28-8-1977*

What Do You Want?

Whether one decides to follow Baba's advice or not will depend upon one's goals. If one wants to be happier, more peaceful, more in control, more in harmony with himself, and his environment, the guidelines given by Baba are essential.

If one wants to experience a deeper meaning in life, to go beyond this mortal body sad mind, and experience the Inner Self, or the Immortal Atman, it is an absolute necessity. For those who want to understand themselves and uplift themselves physically, mentally, and spiritually, Baba's words are the very steps upon which they can ascend.

—*Bob Najemy, Athens, Greece*

Baba in Bombay

Baba's visit to, Bombay this time, a brief one ending with the New Year day, has left many longing for a longer one. Each visit sees a larger number of devotees gathering at Dharmakshetra for "Darshan".

Two of the three functions in Bombay had to be restricted to invitees. The first one, jointly organised by the Bombay Andhra Mahasabha and the Andhra Education Society at the Society junior College premises at Wadala, was a smaller one. But Baba was happy, to spend some time with the students and bless them.

The second one in the City, at Sunderbai Hall on Maharshi Karve Road in South Bombay, gave some anxious moments to the Seva Dal volunteers. Many had turned up, just to have "Darshan" of Baba. The volunteers, however, handled the crowds with patience and discipline. The function was to celebrate the tenth anniversary of Dharmakshetra. The large Sal family in Greater Bombay was overjoyed to have Baba himself with them for the occasion. Dr. (Mrs.) Madhuri Shah, Vice-chancellor, the S. N. D. T. Women's University, and Mr. V. S. Page, Chairman of the Maharashtra Legislative Council, addressed the gathering.

The New Year Eve was Bal Vikas Day at Dharmakshetra. Children of Bal Vikas delighted Baba with their programme, "Unity of Faiths" depicting the basic oneness of the different religions. The Sal devotees could not have hoped to see a more uplifting sight than Baba addressing the New Year day gathering, observing the birthday of Jesus. The theme of Baba's discourse for the day was Jesus himself. "If India was to be saved and made stronger, it could be achieved not with the help of politicians and weapons, but only through selfless service and through a spirit of self sacrifice on the part of the people, he said.

Baba said 'feeling one with mankind' was the greatest virtue a man could possess. Strength did not lie in physical powers or the amount of wealth. Through modern education one was inclined towards only material prosperity. What needed to be developed was spiritual strength.

Fr. Abre paid a handsome tribute to the workers of Dharmakshetra for their useful service to the community around. Its work had great impact on the life of people. The farmers of Palghar, nearby, for instance; who received their basic training at the institute run for them in Dharmakshetra, not only learnt to go about to their agricultural operations more purposefully, but even learnt some human virtues.

The magnificent result of the system of Sai education and the discipline it infused in the boys and girls studying in schools and colleges run by the Sai Seva Organisations, are there for all to see. Impressed by the record of these institutions, managements of 12 secondary schools in Bombay and outside had offered them to be run by the Dharmakshetra Charitable Trust. The formal handing over was done at the New Year day gathering at Dharmakshetra by Mr. Dharamdas Kshatriya. He was happy that the schools would now have the guidance of Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Bharatiya Paramartha Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

6. Religion is Experience

This wave-like movement of proceeding and receding, of merging and emerging, has been happening, since Time; it will happen till Time ends; it is eternal in its feature—this is the belief of Bharatiyas. Man is not just this gross body; in it, there is a subtle component called mind; inside it, as its prompter and spring, there is an even more subtle principle called the Jivatma (individualised Soul); this Jivatma has neither beginning nor end, it knows no death, it has no birth—This is the basis of the Bharatiya faith.

One other article of faith: This is a unique feature of Bharatiya mental equipment. Until the individualised soul gets liberated from the individualisation and merges in the Universal, thus attaining Moksha or liberation, it has to encase itself in one body after another, and go through the process called living. This idea is held by no other people. This is the Samsara idea, which the ancient texts or Sastras of India reveal and propagate. Samsara means "the movement into one form after another." All the different schools and sects among the Bharatiyas accept this fact that the Atmas (apparently individualised) are eternal and incapable of being affected by change. They may differ in describing or denoting the relationship between the Atma and Easwara or God. One school of thinkers may posit that the two are ever separate; another may declare that the Jivatma is a spark in the universal flame of fire that Easwara is; a third may assert that the two are undifferentiated. But, the Truth remains that the Atma is beginningless and endless; since it is not born, it has no death. Its individualised image has to evolve through a series of bodies, until it attains fulfillment in the human. All schools are one in upholding this faith, in spite of the variety of their other interpretations.

We shall now come to the foremost among the glorious Truths, the most astounding of the basic Truths that the human intellect has attained in the spiritual field: the Atma is by its very nature, Purity, Fullness and Bliss (Parishuddha, Paripoorna and Ananda). This is the belief that animates all schools of thought, whether they are the worshippers of Shakti, or Siva, or Vishnu, or whether they are Buddhists or Jains. Every Hindu acknowledges it. The Dvaitins (Dualists) believe that the fundamental genuine nature of the Atma is Ananda; this is diminished and desiccated by the consequences of human actions in life after life and therefore, has to be restored and revitalised by the Grace of God. The Advaitins (the Monists) believe that there can be no diminution or desiccation. They assert that the Atma is fully splendid; only, through the influence of the deluding effect of ignorance (Maya) which superimposes false impressions on what is really true, it appears as if it has diminished. Whatever may be the differences in interpretation, when we take our stand on the central core of the Truth on which all agree, between the "East" and the "West", there will be discerned a vast deep passage, where both do journey to the goal. The people of the Eastern countries seek in the inner regions of their selves the realisation of this gloriously beneficent consummation. While worshipping, we close the eyes and endeavour to visualise God inside ourselves. People of the West lift up their faces and visualise God in outer space, in the beyond. They believe that their scriptures have been recorded by Persons under the direction of God. Bharatiyas believe that the Vedas—their sacred

scriptures—were the very breath of God conveying meanings to the sages who had installed Him in their hearts.

There is another point which we have to understand: We have to hold fast to it always. Unless a belief is held unshaken throughout night and day, it cannot be used to achieve any victory. No success is possible otherwise. When a person asserts that he is low and mean and that he knows but little, he becomes low and mean and his knowledge shrinks. We become what we believe we are. We are the children of Almighty God, endowed with supreme Power, Glory and Wisdom. We are Children of Immortality. When we dwell in this thought, how can we ever be low and ignorant? Bharatiya spiritual culture enjoins on every one, to believe that the real nature of man is supreme and that he should ever be conscious of this truth.

The Bharatiyas of past ages had faith in their great Reality. They achieved victory in their endeavours as a result of this faith and rose to lofty heights. They reached the peak of progress. We have slid down into the present decline, mainly because we have lost faith in the Atma in us. This was the beginning of our fall. For, loss of confidence in the Atma or Self involves loss of faith in God Himself. That Omnipresence, that Inner Motivator of all, who is the warp and woof of our body and mind, our emotions and intellect—strengthening faith in Him is the only means of realising the highest goal of man. This is the lesson that Bharatiya spiritual history longs to teach.

Children of Bharat! Teach your children this life-preserving, glorious and heart expanding Truth from the early days of life. The sanctifying vision that Bharatiyas secured is this: the Atma is full and free. It is a wonderful discovery, a thrilling thought! The Atma is by its very nature full; fullness need not be attained or accomplished and added to It. If fullness is added to it, it can also be subtracted by the passage of time; what is built up must disintegrate. If man is impure by nature, even though he may succeed in achieving purity for five minutes, he has to wallow later in impurity, for the purity that comes in the middle will be easily swept away by circumstances. So, all Bharatiya spiritual thinkers declared that Purity is our very nature and that Fullness is our genuine reality. They said that we are never really 'wanting'. This was the lesson that Bharatiyas taught the world. This is the stream of spiritual strength that flowed from India and fertilised the world.

At the end of life, one should bring to the consciousness the great thoughts one has attained in life, the high feelings one entertained; this was the directive of the sages of India. They did not demand that one should bring to memory the faults and errors one committed in life. These are inevitable and universal. But, the sages declared that one should be aware always of one's Reality and one should be engaged ever in contemplating its grandeur and glory. That, they said, is the greatest step to progress.

There is another fact that we have to pay attention to, more than all else. For Bharatiyas, religion means 'experience' and nothing less. It is indeed pitiable that we forget this important fact, very often. This secret must be imprinted on the heart of every one. Only then can one be safe and secure. Not only this. It is not the way of thought of a Bharatiya to say that all things can be attained by self-exertion; the Bharatiya knows that Divine Will is the basis of every thing. Religious principles have to be practised and their validity experienced. Listening to their

exposition is of no use; learning some one set of arguments and conclusions and repeating them parrot-like are not enough. If they appeal to one's intellect and are approved by it as correct, that will not help at all. It must enter us and transform us. The reason why Bharatiyas posit God and declare that God is Being and Becoming is their experience, which is the highest proof. The declaration does not originate from the head, from the faculty of reason, the Yukti. The forefathers asserted that there is the entity, Atma, in each and that the Atma is but a spark of the Universal Atma, for they had become aware of it, deeply and without doubt. There were, in the past, thousands who had sought the experience and won it. Even today, such persons are not absent. In future too, they will be present. It is a thirst that affects man. Unless he contemplates God and confronts Him in bliss, unless he wins the awareness of the Atma that is his reality, man will be tormented by the thirst, the agony that he is 'lacking completeness'.

Man must first grasp the Truth. All religious factions and fights will vanish, as fast as man grasps the Reality. For, the name 'follower of theistic code of morals' can be allotted only to one who has experienced God and realised His Glory. Only those who have realised Him in their hearts can have the bonds, that chain their hearts to the wheel of birth-death, broken. Mere chatter-box orations do not indicate awareness of the Truth that has to be attained through religion.

Theistic faith is based on genuine experience. Once we accept this, self-examination starts and one is able to measure how far he has journeyed towards the goal or away from it. He will then realise that He is groping in the dark and dragging others into the same darkness to grope with him. Only then will men give up factional hatreds in the name of religious wars on those professing different faiths. Those who revel in religious wars should be asked—Have you seen God? Have you become aware of the Divine Atma? Or else, what authority have you to decry or deny the name of God? Are you, struggling in the darkness, attempting to draw me too into that darkness? Can a blind man lead another blind man along the road? That is an impossible task. Therefore, understand your Truth before you defame or deny mine.”

(To be continued)

Blessing for the New Year

"Overcome by inner foes, how can man succeed in overwhelming the outer foes? Burdened with sloth and dullness, how can he achieve wisdom? Prompted by passions how can he cultivate devotion 2 Balance equanimity—these alone can confer peace and harmony.”

Premaswarupas! The World today, is like a school with no teacher, a temple with no idol, a garden with no water, or a wire with no current running through. Of course, people all over the world strive to acquire power by accumulating wealth, authority, or knowledge. But, unfortunately, along with these, the insidious evil of egoism is also being accumulated. So, man is fast becoming the enemy of mankind; man is fast losing humanity itself. He becomes less and less of man and more and more of the demon or beast. Brahma Vidya or spiritual science alone can cure him and save the world. But, man prefers the short cut, the more comfortable and

attractive material path. And, he suffers in despair, fear and hatred. Egoism is the root and crown of all evil thoughts and tendencies. Humility towards all else and reverence to those whom we serve—these alone can elevate man to man-hood.

The history of this sacred land, Bharat, is replete with instances where egoism and greed inevitably led to catastrophe. The Kauravas were hundred in number; they had vast military strength; they could field superior numbers, equipment and generalship. But, they were destroyed, root and branch, for, the ego drained their spirit and made them weak. The Pandavas were only five; they were poorer and less strong, speaking in the army way. But, they had two sources of power on which they could rely—the power of being in the right and the power of being in possession of the Grace of God. Military victory was not the ultimate aim of the Pandavas; they yearned for being on the side of Dharma, whatever might be the odds. That alone brings real happiness, happiness that lasts and satisfies. Other pleasures bring sorrow in their train. They are only intervals between pains. Material pleasures are transient and trivial. We try to derive joy from essentially inert and grief-laden materials. Even if a lump of charcoal is washed with white soap, milk being used instead of water, can it ever become white? It can be reduced to white ash, only when it is put into fire. So too, our minds can be made pure, only, when it is subjected to the refining process in the fire of Juana or Wisdom.

Our country, today, can be saved (this is the case with every other country also) not by political manipulations or military alliances, but, only through the development of the consciousness in each one, of his inherent Divinity. That divine strength can save or salvage any country. Instead of trying to expand over the whole globe and universe, man should try to probe into his own inner world, and remove the junk therein and set at rest the evil urges that raise their hoods there. World peace and prosperity can be accomplished only by such explorers and pioneers.

Education and the intellect are not so essential for this adventure. Ramakrishna Paramahansa was not very literate; nor was his consort, Sarada Devi. But, their hearts were sacred and pure. They liberated themselves by their renunciation and Tapas, and discovered their Reality. They followed the path of Sathya and Dharma. It is not as if there were no scholars and pundits in those days. But, they are all forgotten. The names of these two will remain long in the world. Good character, eagerness to serve others, realisation of the Divine in all—these alone can save man and confer bliss.

Today, in all spheres of life, political, ethical, moral, material, etc., one tendency has become fashionable. When ten people agree on one point, the eleventh man considers it fashionable to deny it outright! He does it just to show himself off. He does not discriminate or inquire why the ten say so or how they arrived at that conclusion. He opposes blindly, since it is a sign of heroism. Wealth and all that it can purchase have become the goal of man. Jesus had twelve important disciples. Among them was Judas, who was tempted to betray his Master when he was offered thirty pieces of silver! Merely talking of faith and belief, of God and Grace, is of no value. A person can still be only a part-time devotee! Faith and devotion should be demonstrated in actual day-to-day life. Worship, through work. We want young men who can engage in such work enthusiastically. Most of them spend time in talking and idling. Hard work must be welcomed by them. Work hard, in a spirit of devotion and dedication and you will be surprised at

the joy you can derive there from. All work seems the same, but, there is great difference between dedicated worshipful work and drudgery. A glass of plain water and a glass of sugared water appear the same; drink them; you know the difference. The spiritual sugar makes the glass sweet and sustaining.

Years of Bhajan and meditation have not borne fruit in you; you are where you were. How can fire be struck from a wet matchstick? You may strike all the sticks in the box; you cannot strike fire. Soaked in worldly desires and caught in material entanglements, how can the light of wisdom come into your beads? You cannot generate the fire of Jnana.

The Lord told Narada that he can find him installed, wherever His glory is sung by His devotees. Does it mean that He is installed in the thousand places where Bhajan is sung? No. The condition is 'sung by devotees'. The devotees sing to please God, to acclaim His majesty; they do not crave for exhibition, appreciation or fame; they have no envy or pride in their hearts. Tansen was a celebrated singer, attached to the court of Emperor Akbar. He was so talented, that when he sang the Raga Meghamala, clouds gathered thick in the sky; when he sang Varuna, rain fell; when he sang Nagaswara, serpents flocked in front of him. One day, while Akbar was engaged in his prayers, he heard a street singer, a Haridasa, a wandering mendicant, sing a song which touched his heart immensely. Akbar called Tansen to his presence and asked him why he could not touch his heart so. "You have all the gifts; you are the most talented singer; yet that Dasa moved me as never before. Why?" He asked. Tansen said, "Maharaja! While I sing, I took upon your face to discover whether you are pleased or not. The Dasa sings looking at the Face of God always before him and he is happy when God is pleased." Bhajan must be sung from the heart, and not emanate from the lips.

Today is New Year's Day, associated with the birth and life of Jesus. It is a good occasion to give up the old and welcome the new—in thoughts, words and deeds. Jesus was the embodiment of Compassion and Love. His heart melted in sympathy when he saw any one suffering. His entire life was dedicated to service. In the interest of Truth, he laid down his own life. Such persons are revered in the world, however much times have changed. Jesus was having Sathyanarayana worship throughout his life; that is to say, he was adhering to Truth. Among us, people celebrate the Puja, once a year, and even on that day, they resort to untruth! Endowed with the human body which has to be used as an instrument for realising the Divine, if man indulges in self-deceit and falsehood, how can he justify the name, man?

Emperor Alexander, while returning from India at the head of his cohorts, noticed a Yogi, resting in the cool shade of a tree by the road through which he rode. He felt slighted that the Yogi had not recognised him and stood up in reverence. He went near him and unable to control his anger at his insolence, he kicked him with his left foot. The yogi opened his eyes and burst into laughter. This enraged Alexander even more. He said, "Fellow! You lie on the floor, wrapped in your own thoughts, when my victorious army which has won many battles and added many kingdoms to my empire passes by. Don't you know that I am Emperor Alexander, hailing from Greece?" The Yogi answered, "Sir! What you say about yourself might be true; I accept that you are a mighty emperor. But, what you did to me with your left foot tells me now that you are like a donkey, not like the ruler of an empire." We too often forget our great status and

indulge in low tactics and mean tricks. We look like human beings and make people believe that we are; but often, we behave as if we are worse than animals.

On Christmas Day, I mentioned that Christ spent all his life in the service of mankind. He spent 12 years alone, promoting the Inner Vision, and realising God. While engaged in service to the diseased and the downtrodden, he announced himself as the 'Messenger of God'. When you too are engaged in service, you must feel as Messengers of God. Invoke His Grace and His Compassion on those whom you serve. Later s for some years, he reflected on the Divine nature present in him and he came to the conclusion that he was the 'Son of God'. Thus, he moved closer and closer to God. You should also strive similarly to come closer and closer to God and feel that He is the Father and you are His children.

Thereafter, he lived for five years in the Himalayan region of Bharat, He moved in Kashmir and met many exponents and practitioners of the Advaita system of thought, which declares that there is only One and no Two—God alone. He realised the One-ness beneath this Diversity. And, he spread the Truth that 'I and My Father are One'.

Today, sons and daughters of Bharat, where the lesson of One-ness was first taught, go to western countries and propagate "the many"; westerners come from cultures hailing diversity, to India to learn and propagate 'the One'. It is a complete turn-around! We have to accept the value and practise the teachings of the great men whom we revere on their birthdays. Mere oratory is not enough. It only reveals hypocrisy. We must welcome the good that is in western culture and amalgamate it with our own Vedic traditions and spiritual ideals and help the children of this land progress towards a happy useful life. They should march equally fast and forward in all sphere of life—material, moral and spiritual. We should expect obstacles and overcome them. I tell you—Life is a challenge, meet it. Life is Love, enjoy it. Life is a game, play it. Life is a dream, realise it. It is not enough if children are taught some slokas, some stories and some chapters of the Gita. Discipline must be taught. They must develop a broad outlook. They must cultivate clean, healthy habits. They must learn thrift and the proper use of money. Bharat is lagging behind other countries in her financial strength. When children learn how to use money without waste and with care, the future will be bright. Children must also learn and practise good manners at; home and outside and also good norms of behaviour.

We need not wait one full year to make these new resolutions and discard the old ones. Sixty seconds have to go by, to make a minute. When sixty minutes are over, we say, one hour has gone. 24 hours make s day and 30 days a month. Twelve months make a year. So without seconds, there is no year. Make the best of the second then. Let every second be a chance to entertain anew thought, a deeper Love, a broader heart. We are now passing milestones one after another but, no progress is made in purifying the heart or strengthening faith. The mind of man is stationary. It is ten years since Dharmakshetra has been inaugurated. Bhajans, Kirtans and Seva are being arranged. Many participate. But, no one has tried to assess the progress made in spiritual advance. Purity of mind, ego-lessness, fortitude, these are what make even a little act acceptable to God. Of course, the spiritual path is full of hardship, obstacles and troubles. But, they have to be overcome, by relying on God. Will a cane yield sugar for mere asking? Can a diamond manifest its brilliance, without being cut? Every one of the great sages and teachers, both of the East and the West have undergone their share of torments and troubles. So, march on,

boldly and with self-confidence. I wish you all a happy life, a new life, a long life and a Divine Life.

—*Dharmakshetra, 1-1-78 Morning*

Cosmic Myth

As the phase of secularization and "demythologizing" has put unhealthy stresses on fragmented individuals and weakened societies of the West, leaders in a number of fields have been redirecting attention to the dimensions of human life which are expressed in myths. The word Myth, which for a while was used to denote childish untruth, is now much more respectable. Myth now means, not "what was never true", but rather "what is always true". Myths are multidimensional symbol patterns of life and consciousness, realities in man's heart or psyche, transcending linear logic.

Jung examined the importance of myth in the archetypes of the collective unconscious. Eliade, the eminent historian of religions, has noted universal religious man's view, and compared it with the un—whole—some, partial view of secular or "profane" man. Joseph Campbell has studied and presented myths of all the world as the needed influence for modern man. William Thompson has said that the task of our times is "to raise "to consciousness the cosmic myths now emerging."

It seems that cosmic myths have always been man's way of integrating with cosmic consciousness. An alienated mankind is now polluting and exploiting nature, keeping egotistically separate and asserting itself to harm the fabric of the cosmos. Myths can reintegrate people into the rhythm of cosmic harmonies. This is generally agreed, but the various exponents of myth—psychologists, historians, poets and cultural educationists—do not offer many ways of revitalizing the mythic dimension in people. They merely write of their appreciation of it.

In a traditional culture such as India there is an instant bringing-to-mind of the cosmic through Bhakti, Jnana and karma. In festivals people return to the timeless time outside of time, in temples and caves, to the infinite and sacred center of space. In dramas and dances, the mythic dimension is bodied forth by actors, sounds, and sights. In statues it is given dynamic static shape. In many forms the sacred is represented and therefore present to man's mind.

One-way in which the lost, or misplaced, cosmic dimension is brought to mind is in bhajans. Each bhajan is not only a sacred vibration, but also the painting of a sweet cosmic vision. Through vivid visualization, the Tibetan yogis could dry sheet after sheet dipped in ice-water, with their psychic heat. Through vivid visualization one becomes absorbed in the glories of God, which are cosmic and eternally true, and which return man to his rightful place in the scheme of things, evaporating destructive qualities.

Another way, the cosmic can restore our psychological balance and give us strength is through the practice of our favorite name of God and visualizing that form. We can thus be danced through life with the dancing feet of the Lord at our hearts.

The cosmic myth which we love becomes the cosmic myth in which we live.

—*Bill Jackson*

Gurupoornima Experience

The Hall, second largest in India, was estimated to have held 15-20,000 on that night. My friend and I were sitting fairly centrally, about one third of the way back despite the invitation to sit near the front and towards the side: the position was fortunate (or ordained) as otherwise, I doubt if the following wonderful experience could have been possible.

In His discourse, with Dr. Bhagavantham translating, Swami mentioned the prophets and teachers of the great faiths, showing that the Sai Faith embraced them all. Later on, Swami discoursed on the role of the Guru, but I heard little or nothing of this, because apparently inexplicably, my mind seemed to wander and I wondered casually if I could see Dr. Bhagavantham's aura. (Earlier in life I had been slightly clairvoyant but in later years had discouraged this as a form of eavesdropping and undesirable in the spiritual quest.) The dark background curtain absorbed the aura; so I switched attention to Swami to see if His aura could be discerned despite the curtain and concentrated hard to see at least its aura. Suddenly, unbelievably, Swami had no hair! His hair had become a sort of clear transparent aura. Amazed, my concentrated gaze then discerned within this frame a quite different head of hair, shoulder length, black, with a slight wave, and Swami's face became the face of Christ, a Jewish Christ, not the blonde Christ of the Mediaeval Italian artists. I gazed with interest and no religious emotion, at this phenomenon. As I gazed, the face became that of someone I cannot place—possibly Zoroaster or Buddha or perhaps some teacher unfamiliar to me—and throughout the subsequent events these two animated faces recurred, to assure me I was not inducing these visions.

Having thus gained and held my attention, Swami then gave a great blessing and an emotional jolt, for there was my revered Ramana Maharshi, white haired and slender faced, utterly unlike the former visions. I am a devotee of the Maharshi, whose writings have given glimpses of reality, and had been feeling disloyal because of the new devotion to Baba. Baba settled this disquiet by showing that there is no difference between Gurus, only the accent is different, and Baba embraces them all. This, I think, was the main purpose of this blessed experience. The following visions were brief and were mostly of the Hindu deities or personalities which had become meaningful to me. Rama; a brief but distinct and repeated glimpse of Ganesha, believe it or not; Shirdi Sai Baba briefly; Shiva. Recently I had seen a photograph of Sathya Sai Baba in which He had given the illusion of being Durga on Her lion, and I wondered if I might see Baba in this female form. Instead, I had a breathtaking vision of Tripura Sundari—Lalita—Goddess of the Triple Worlds, exquisitely beautiful and very alive. I was wondering why Krishna did not appear. So He did! Periodically I yearned to see Baba Himself, with interesting consequences: I

saw Him at His various ages, His face always an oval of Light; at times He dissolved into pure Light with no form at all. Now and again, in response to mental request, I saw superimposed over other visions our present Baba talking animatedly. His face—how can I adequately describe it? —clearly visible but not of solid matter, more, like a series of points, the nucleus of matter.

What was Baba's purpose in allowing these visions? So many lessons were learnt that evening, apart from the previous knowledge that Ramana is one with Baba, that all are One and we are one with the One. Maya, illusion—the unreality of constantly mobile matter and its reality as pure Light. The Formless God who can assume any form He likes and the response of those forms to our own mental creativity. I had recently been thinking deeply about Maya, and in Ooty I had mentally, half-seriously asked Baba to show me His real form.

"God can be seen in concrete form—but it is still only in the devotee's mind. Form and appearance is determined by the mind of the devotee. Minds and interpretations differ."
(Teachings of Raman Maharshi: Osborn.)

"Visions of God are as real as your own identity. Objects bear relation to the state of the seer. Visions of God have their place, below the plane of Self-realization." (Talks with Ramana Maharshi.)

Gurupoornima—Baba discoursing on the Guru-and the lesson that God, Guru and Self are one—the Guru leading us to this inner awareness that, in the ultimate, it becomes a 'do-it-yourself' job. Beloved Baba, to give so much to one as unworthy and unprepared as I am! And to how many of those many thousands did He likewise communicate, while delivering what I can only presume to have been a profound discourse? How blessed are we to be within His aura! Om Sri Sai Ram! Beloved wonderful Baba!

—D. W., Australia

Krishnavatar

This day is being celebrated as the Birthday of Krishna, not for the reason that Krishna is being born every year, but, because the hour, the asterisk, the month and the season during which he was born ages ago, recur every year, and this day, we have the same conjunction as happened when he was born millennia ago.

Krishna was born in prison! This fact teaches us that God has to incarnate or present himself in the dark and narrow prison—house of our hearts, so that we may derive light and earn freedom. Maya is the delusion that hides the truth of Being; it tends to identify one's truth as the physical body with its appurtenances and prompts us to cater to the cravings of the flesh. Man forgets the Divine in him; he listens to the call of the animal in him; and, he falls from his high destiny. But, when Krishna is born in the cellar of the mind, he is saved; man must become aware of God within the cavity of his heart. Yesterday, while returning from Ooty, we halted at Bandipur Wild Life Sanctuary and, riding on a tame elephant, we moved into the forest to catch a glimpse of wild elephants. Imagine, sitting on an elephant, we were seeking elephants! When we caught a

glimpse of a trunk in a bush, we were overcome with delight. Sitting on a tame, domesticated elephant, we were eagerly searching for an elephant in its natural surroundings, unaffected by artificial habits and skills. Man too is everywhere ignoring the Atma within himself in its natural environment and trying to seek the shadows that attract him.

Sri Krishna was born as the eighth child of Devaki. This is significant, for Samadhi is the eighth stage of spiritual effort, coming after Yama, Niyama, Asana, and Pranayama. Pratyahara, Dharana and Dhyana. These are grouped as Ashtanga Yoga, the Eightfold Discipline. The Lord can be visualised only after the seven steps are successfully negotiated and the mind purified in the process. The term, Samadhi, is generally identified with a temporary loss of consciousness, or even more, a temporary heightening of the consciousness. But, we have to judge the state by the effect it has on the person and his attitude towards himself and others. Samadhi means, sama (equal) dhi (intelligence) that is say, intelligence, grasping the equality (fundamental) of every being. Not only will all idea of difference and distinction disappear, but, even the idea of duality—heat and cold, grief and joy, good and bad—disappears. And, when man reaches that state, the Lord is born, automatically in his consciousness.

The moment Krishna was born, the chains that bound his father fell off; the doors that had been bolted flew open, the prison guards were immersed in the ocean of bliss, so that they could not recognise any event or thing in the material world. The fire of hatred that was burning in them was cooled; darkness gave place to the dawn of wisdom. The sky showered raindrops to soften the earth and suppress the dust. How can the elements operate against the Divine will? Sound, touch, light, taste, and smell—all became sublime to celebrate the new Era of Peace and Plenty. Vasudeva, as instructed by the Voice, placed the child in a basket and carried it on his head across the Yamuna river (which parted to give him the right of way) to Gokul where at the same time, Yasoda, Consort of Nanda, had given, birth to female child. Just when he emerged from the prison, a donkey brayed to indicate a good omen! But, Vasudeva was afraid it will waken the guards; so, he held its feet with both his hands (after placing the basket on the ground) and prayed that it keep silent. That was the depth of his devotion to the Lord whom he was transporting, as per His directions.

When he went to Nanda's house and entered the lying-in-room, she had just delivered a baby-girl. There was no one there, except, the sister of Nanda, Radha, who was at that time nine years old. Vasudeva brought the babe over and placed the Lord by her side. The female child is Maya Shakti, for, she ushers the Avatar of the Lord. Yogashakti too has to be ever with the Avatar, and it too had come as Balarama, born to Rohini, another wife of Vasudeva. Mayashakti played her ruse as soon as she was placed in the bed of Devaki. She cried aloud, awakening the guards; they reported the arrival of the child, to Kamsa. He expected that the eighth child would be a boy; but, nevertheless, he took hold of the girl and smashed it upon a rock. Mayashakti flew up into the air, declaring that the person who was to kill Kamsa was growing up safe in Gokulam.

Though Kamsa slaughtered a number of babies from Gokulam, Krishna escaped his eye; Krishna systematically overpowered and killed various emissaries sent by Kamsa, to Gokulam under various pretexts. Putana, a demoness assumed a charming human form, and came to Nanda's house, offering to breast-feed the child. She said, "Mother! You have lost a number of

newborn kids. Perhaps, my breast milk might save this one,” and Yasoda believed that she was a woman of true compassion and that her milk might have the holy effect she claimed it had. She handed the baby Krishna over to Putana; but, Krishna knew her intentions; he drew out her breath itself and left her dead.

But, let us pay more attention to the boy Krishna than to his exploits. All these exploits reveal that Krishna being Divine, no one could harm Him or suppress Him. According to the folk-belief, they bored the ears and nose of Krishna, in order to ward off the death that had carried away many children from the family. On the nose they put a golden wire.

The nose-ring had a small-sized pearl. The pearl is won by diving into the depths of the sea; so, it symbolises the Viveka or discrimination that is won, after diving into the secrets of the objective world. And, since it marked the tip of the nose, it also sought to emphasise the need to concentrate, to meditate on the tip of the nose—the eye should not be fully open, for, it will distract the attention, nor should it be closed, for sleep would intervene and put an end to the process of meditation. It should be half-open, the sight of both eyes being directed to the tip of the nose, where Krishna wore the pearl.

Krishna's complexion was neither fair nor dark; it was three parts dark and one-part fair, an amalgam of both. Since they were Vaishnavas, the parents placed a line of musk on the centre of the brow. He wore silver bangles on His wrists, such as cowherd boys wore those days in that part of the country. But, the kankans that Krishna wore were not mere bangles or kankans. They had profound implications. One rite that every Hindu has to honour before entering on any enterprise of a sacred nature, like performing a Yajna or undertaking a vow, or taking on a new stage of life, was the tying of a kankan to the wrist, in memory of the determination that he evinces to fulfill that vow or carry out the duties of that stage of life. Krishna had taken three vows, and the kankans were symbolic of his determination to fulfill them. They were as mentioned by Him in the Gita: (1) Dharma samsthapanarthaya Sambhavami yuge yuge. I shall incarnate myself in every age, to revive and resurrect Dharma (2) Yogakshemam vahamyham. I shall bear the burden of ensuring peace and prosperity of all who rely on Me and (3) Mokshayishyami maa sucha. I shall save all those who surrender wholeheartedly to Me and I shall liberate them from the cycle of birth and death. Therefore, Krishna has assured man that He would save him from penury and grief, and from sin and its terrible consequences, provided He adheres to Him and adores Him; He has also assured the world that He would come in human form and lead mankind into the Dharmic path and thus, liberate them from grief and the succession of births and deaths.

He says, when promising His Grace to all who adore Him with no other thought, that all who do so will receive His Grace; there is no restriction of caste, creed or colour or country of origin; no one receives special favour as a result of erudition or age or caste. Krishna was the embodiment of Prema; His Prema had no bounds. How fortunate you are that you have today the same Krishna, the full Prema Avatar, moving among you! I shall show you the very Kaustubha that I was wearing at that time. (Here, Baba waved His hand and in a trice, a brilliant flash of light revealed a unique jewel in His palm—the Kaustubha, famed in the Bhagavata and the Puranas. A big-sized Emerald of unexcelled green blue, rectangular in shape, bordered by

splendorous diamonds, hung on a gold chain. (Baba moved among the students, teachers and others and graciously allowed every one of them to see the sacred jewel very close).

Krishna moved among men as an ordinary person and drew them to the observance of His prescriptions by means of His Divine Prema. He refrained from parading His Divine Insignia, the Conch, the Wheel, the Mace and the Lotus. He did not wear even a Crown. While a boy, He followed the cows into the pastures with just a towel bound round His head. (Here, Baba called for a longish towel, and He wound it round His head, to show how Krishna appeared at that time. He announced that, in those days, as now, there were peacocks in plenty in and around Brindavan and Gokul, and so, when He came across a feather fallen from its wing, He stuck it between the folds of the towel. It was a moment of rarest and finest delight, when Baba stood revealed as the boy Gopala, before hundreds of awestruck but adoring devotees) When the Pandavas celebrated the Ashwamedha and the Rajasuya Yajnas, Krishna asked for some assignment being given Him, so that He might be of service. Though He could destroy the entire Kaurava brood, He tried His best to instill good sense into them in order to save them. Then as well as now, the teaching and the message are the same: "Know thyself, that is the only right way to know Me." Being associated ardently with men, winning their Love through Love, and, through a process of correcting their vision and purifying their consciousness, leading them to the realisation of the God which is their core—this is the task, then as well as now. Unless the human form is assumed, no one will come near; if the appearance is super-human, people will keep away. So, as the Sastras say, Daivam Maanusba rupena, the Divine in the Form of Man, has to come, to save mankind.

The Five Elements are the products of the Lord's Will; so, they obey the Will of Krishna. Whatever Krishna said came true. The only correct definition of Truth is, 'that which Krishna speaks'. Believe in that. Be firm in that belief. One day, when Krishna went on a stroll with Arjuna, He pointed to a bird perching on the branch of a tree; He asked Arjuna, "Do you see that peacock?" and Arjuna answered, "Sure. I do," "Oh. Arjuna. It is not a peacock. It is an eagle," said Krishna and Arjuna promptly agreed that it was an eagle. Soon, Krishna corrected Himself and pointing to the same bird, said, "I am sorry. It is a dove." Arjuna too corrected himself and said, "Yes. I see now it is a dove, all right." Krishna laughed at Arjuna and said, "It is not a dove at all; it is a crow," and Arjuna agreed without demur, "Undoubtedly it is a crow." Krishna then accused Arjuna of stupidity, because he was saying 'Yes' to whatever he said—the bird was peacock, eagle, dove, crow. Arjuna said, "What you say is the Truth, for me. You can make a crow a dove, a peacock an eagle. Why should I differ from whatever you declare? Your word is the Truth I go by."

You too, must develop that faith and not be turned away by your egoism or others' cynicism. Develop Viveka and Vairagya and then, your hearts will bloom into fragrant beauty. You have here a picture of Sai standing on a Lotus. Sai Krishna will install Himself in the Lotus of your heart. He will be ever with you as guard and guide and he will shower Grace on you. He will be the Mother, Father, Preceptor and God, He will be the nearest kinsman, He will be your All.

Therefore, I desire that you learn well the subjects taught you as part of the curriculum; discharge your duties as students to the best of your skill and intelligence. Follow the disciplines imposed for your betterment. Practise Japa and Dhyana and cultivate the attitude of Seva.

Become good sons and good citizens, and bring honour to the family, the society and the country.

—Divine Discourse; Sri Sathya Sai Hostel, Brindavan 6-9-77

Announcement Regarding the Celebrations Of Mahasivaratri

During Mahasivaratri Celebrations 1976 noticing the enormous rush of hundreds of thousands at Prasanthi Nilayam. Bhagavan announced that the celebrations will not be held in subsequent years. This announcement stands. Readers are requested to inform intending visitors and pilgrims that the celebrations will not be held.

—Editor

Sai Family News

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust Cyclone Relief:

Out of the total donations received front devotees of about Rs. 12,00,000 Rs. 5 lakhs have been already spent for urgent relief work in the affected areas in Camps run by the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Dal. (Rs. 3,50,000 for feeding the victims of the cyclone and tidal wave, at the rate of about 10,000 per day, and distribution of clothes and utensils, in Krishna and Guntur Districts; 1 lakh for repairing and re-constructing Colleges and High Schools damaged during the cyclone; and Rs 50,000 for distribution of clothes etc, for the victims of the cyclone in Tamil Nadu.)

With the balance of about 7 lakhs, Bhagavan proposes to build 6 Re-enforced Concrete Community Halls, in some of the Coastal Villages, for multipurpose use, by the people.

Wedding Gift:

Christmas day of 1977 was unique in its splendour, for Faith from America. It was her wedding day and more. Amidst Sai Devotees from the Western world, Bhagavan Baba performed the wedding of Faith with Michael, also the U. S. A.

Baba materialised a lovely gold Mangalya studded with pearls and rubies. Baba's discourse was the quintessence of the concept of marriage, yet a new and novel message from the Western point of view. Man and woman represent two halves of a fruit. The understanding and adjustment between husband and wife should be like milk merging with honey, losing one's identity with the other and complementing one another. Marriage is a holy Samskara. One thinks of only 'I' before marriage and one should think of 'we' while sharing both joy and sorrow after marriage. The process takes one from ego-centred state to egoless state, which is the basis of spirituality. The six pearls of the Mangalya represent the six aspects of womanhood that are to be cherished. They are love, beauty, joy, purity, kindness and faithfulness. But the most effulgent pearl in the centre represents the most important and glorious aspect of 'Motherhood. It was

indeed an elevating experience for the newly weds, but equally so to all those assembled in the hall.

Prema Nilayam, Port Kelang:

Sri. J. Jegathesan writes, "The small prayer-hall-cum-service center called Prema Nilayam was built entirely by the voluntary physical service of the devotees of Sai who desired to transform, as Baba has said, Prema for Baba into Seva for their fellowmen. When the Minister of Information, Malaysia, Hon'ble Dutuk Amar Haji Taib Mahmud was informed that the structure is a small one and that not one cent was paid to any hired labourer, he said, 'The size does not matter. What is important is its significance to the devotees and the good intentions behind the building of this centre.' The Prema Nilayam is something that all devotees can identify as theirs, because it was built by their own hands."

Seva Activities, U. S. A.

At the Metropolitan Chicago Center, members, acting individually and anonymously, have taken up the following tasks: Reading to and housekeeping for the blind

- Grocery shopping for the house-bound
- Answering letters for the ill
- Teaching classes for the handicapped
- Giving exercises for the elderly
- Conducting neighborhood recreation for children

—*Ed.*

The Mystery of Fullness

—*Dr. M. V. N. Murthi*

"That is Full This is Full
From the Full, emerges the Full!
Subtract this "Full" from that Full,
What remains is also Full!"

This is the enigmatic paradoxical mantra from the Isavasya Upanishad, which apparently is "full" of contradictions. This cryptic statement has been explained by exponents of Vedanta from the viewpoint of the fullness of the Brahman and the fullness of the Atman. In fact Science also leads us to the same conclusion and it is the endeavour of this discussion to see how this amazing statement of the ancient seer is valid through scientific insight also!

The term "*Poorna*" "full" means "entire" "complete", and it is this meaning of the term which makes this bold declaration meaningful even in terms of science. It is scientific knowledge that all matter either in its gross or microscopic form is complete in itself. A microscopic speck or a grain of sand or a large chunk of quartz all consist of the same matter, *viz.* Silicon Dioxide. The crystallographic and optical properties of the most minute microscopic speck are true for the entire chunk; an X-ray picture of any part of the chunk will show the same pattern. The minutest speck is complete in itself; the entire chunk of quartz consists of such complete units of SiO₂

tetrahedral linked with each other. If we remove a speck of quartz from the large mass, what remains is also complete as far as the structure and properties of the mineral are concerned.

When Uranium disintegrates, it ultimately becomes lead; each radioactive element, at any particular stage of disintegration, is complete in itself; what remains is also complete. All matter tends to be complete in itself.

A drop of water consists of molecules of H₂O. Every drop of water is the same as any other drop in structure and properties. Even a droplet has the same completeness as the ocean! To qualify itself to be called as water, it must be complete in its structure from which follow all the other physical and atomic properties. This is true for all other liquid or gaseous matter.

Each cell of a plant or animal is complete in itself; cells may be different, but each category of cells is complete. Describing details of a spectacular film entitled, "The Incredible Machine" about the human body, Time Magazine (November 3, 1975, p 48) has this to say: "But one scene, more than any other, suggests how far science must go before it fully understands the activities it has recorded. In this sequence, cells from the heart muscle lie in a culture dish, each continuing to beat at its own rhythm until it comes into contact with another cell. Once their edges touch, the two cells mysteriously begin to beat in unison." Thus each cell is complete in itself in its function. Aggregates of cells are also complete to fulfill their functions. To fulfill any function the cells complement one another which result in identity and completeness!

This is true of atoms also; every atom of silicon or oxygen is complete in itself, In fact we cannot have an atom of either silicon or oxygen without a certain configuration of protons, neutrons and electron. To make an atom of oxygen it must have a nucleus of 8 protons 8 neutrons, and 8 electrons revolving around them. An atom of oxygen is the same as any other oxygen atom in any part of the Universe! The atom of hydrogen on the earth, the sun and the distant star is the same! Even isotopes of atoms are the same wherever they occur!

If we probe into the atom, we also find a completeness! We are dealing as it were with a "solar system" and around the nucleus, the electrons revolve in their orbits and they are complete in themselves. Both the macroscopic and microscopic are complete. All creation tends to attain identity and completeness by aggregation; even on disintegration what remains is also full. Felspar may alter into clay; each speck of the clay mineral is also "full"; it is a distinct mineral species with its characteristic structure and composition. Each potassium atom which is released in this process is "full" in itself.

Every seed is "full" in itself. Each seed is capable of producing the same kind of a full-grown tree, each with its identity. Each animal is complete in itself; the same blood the same heart, the "same" stomach operates in each animal of a species.

Man is also part of nature and what applies to other parts of nature like plants and animals applies to him also. Each human being is complete in himself or herself. All human beings have similar bodies, they breathe the same air, similar blood courses through their veins; there is the same heart-beat in the millions of human beings of the world.

Only Man is endowed with intelligence, a fraction of the Supreme Intelligence. The air within the pot is the same as the air outside, each atom and molecule of the constituents of the air is as full within the pot as outside. Each is a speck of the Divine, but the Divine is Indivisible and cannot be fragmented; therefore the Divinity encased within the individual is also full.

The *Rishi* is telling us that although we appear as if we have been formed by subtracting a part from the whole, and apparently we feel we are only a fraction, we are really "full", as "full" as the Source. We are like soap bubbles big and small; each bubble is full, is complete, otherwise it will not be a bubble! Each is like the zero, which can expand into infinity. Only the human being has this infinite capacity to realise this fullness. The *Rishi* is also warning us that we should not be satisfied with the "fullness" of our petty little selves; how full we are depends on the size of our "self"! Fullness means expansion until we include all; we become all!

The *Rishi* is not merely content in giving us a scientific statement of facts but wants to make us wonder at this marvelous feature of the phenomenal world, wherein anything to remain distinct has to be complete, full; if it is partial it cannot be distinct; all incompleteness must fulfil itself in completeness! Everything tends to become full. From one aspect of completeness, it may change to another form but still be complete in itself.

The seer wants us to wonder at the supreme beauty of the structure of the atom, of the crystal and see eternity and infiniteness in them. He wants us to discern the invisible law that operates throughout the Universe, which brings matter into aggregates, into atoms and molecules; into gases, liquids and solids each complete in its atomic and macroscopic aspect. What is this law, what is this force, which operates, in such a way that at every stage completeness is achieved? If the mere, speck of intelligence which man has, can discern the majesty of these patterns, is it difficult to conceive that all this creation or flux, is nothing but the operation of a Supreme Intelligence, whatever we may like to call it?

Science and the results obtained by scientific studies and thought gives us no alternative except to accept the operation of Intelligence or Cosmic Consciousness, achieving perennially centres of fullness, through a process of eternal flux!

I insist on five points of discipline: (1) Silence. It promotes self-control. It lessens chances of anger, hate, malice, greed and pride. You can hear His Footsteps only when there is silence. (2) Cleanliness. Inner and outer cleanliness are essential, if you desire to install God in your heart. (3) Service. It broadens your vision; widens your awareness; and deepens your compassion. (4) Love. Love is God; live in Love. Love does not calculate or weigh the reaction, result, or reward. (5) Hate-lessness. No being is to be looked down upon, as secondary, inferior, unimportant or expendable. Each has its assigned role in the drama designed by the Almighty. He is in every being and so, slighting any being becomes sacrilege.

—Baba

The New Society

There are many today who talk of establishing a New Society on the ruins of the Old. They have no correct idea of the relationship between society and the individuals who comprise it. Since the days of the French Revolution in the last decade of the eighteenth century, plans and pictures of the New Society have been produced in plenty. The main motive was, for many, the realisation of equality for all. Many desired that the individual must have maximum benefit and power, regardless of the prosperity and welfare of the country to which he belonged, or of the people inhabiting it.

Profit is the main motive force of the individual and of organisations, even though these latter may declare that they are nonprofit ones. Profit and more profit, wealth and more wealth-that is the slogan that urges man to work. In this insane race, the qualities that constitute human nature are fast disappearing. Faith in one's innate Divinity and in the same Divinity that is innate in all others-this alone can weld society together and promote individual and social well-being. Man must understand and live the ideals for which humanity is constituted.

The proper study of man is mankind. And mankind has a grand destiny to fulfill. Straight is the path towards that goal, but man is following the crooked path of hypocrisy. There is constant conflict between man's thought, word and deed. People talk loudly of peace; but, they work ceaselessly on plans that will promote destruction. Professing peace and brandishing atom bombs, how can peace dawn on earth? Demonic qualities are appreciated and encouraged, while conferences are held for promoting peace. What has to be done to cure this evil of hypocrisy is to promote education which will bring about a change of heart in man. Present-day education is engaged too much in providing the young with skills by which they can eke out a livelihood. It does not allow the Divine in man to blossom.

Egoism, jealousy and greed have to be eliminated; equal-mindedness and a sense of balance and contentment have to be implanted and fostered. Youth must stand on its own leg and not go from office to office with the degree as a begging bowl. They must be tough, ready to do manual work. Today we do not find young people eager and willing to do hard work. They all want to become rich as quick as possible. They yearn to accumulate wealth and reach high positions of authority. In this land, where renunciation was adored and the ideal of simple living was honoured, it is a pity to find young persons running after power and pelf. Money comes and goes; morality comes and grows. Character is the hallmark of educated youth. Material wealth cannot grant real peace and joy. Individuals who can devote their careers for the service of their less fortunate brothers and sisters are needed today.

The educational system in India is still the same which Macaulay devised. It does not conform to our national ideals and culture. Experts may call it 'National Education', but, it is neither education nor national. The strengthening of faith in the undying spirit is 'very necessary to promote self-confidence, the spirit of adventure and courage. That is in line with our culture and traditions. But, this spiritual education is absent in our schools and colleges. Man is human only in appearance. He has no distinctive quality that marks man out from other animals. Human qualities like compassion, sympathy, the urge to serve others and to elevate the community are absent. Anger, jealousy and greed are inhuman. They can be easily suppressed and overcome by man when he is determined to acquire human characteristics. Man is not merely the physical body; he is the more subtle mind. And, there is the Atma, which is the core of even the mind.

Above all, man is the only animal that can develop universal Love and concretise it in actual acts of service.

Students must be made aware that the Universe is the body of God, that God is in all, and that God is all. Everything is full, Poorna, because everything is God. There is nothing like a vacuum, no place where there is nothing. Scientists argue that something cannot come out of nothing; but, there is no 'nothing'. (Here, Bhagavan created by a wave of His Hand, a golden locket and gifted it to the Vice-Chancellor of the S. N. D. T. Women's University who was sitting in the front row, saying), This locket, has it come out of nothing, or has it come out of something? The aspect of God is everywhere; there is no vacuum!

Science cares for and knows only a small fraction of what has to be known. It is a half circle; where physics ends, philosophy begins. The spiritual path is a full circle, reaching the point from which inquiry and knowledge started. It tries to understand the source of the mind, the feelings, the urges and the promptings and it finds that the God who directs the Cosmos is directing the mind, the feelings, the urges and the promptings. Science is proceeding higher and higher, up and up, but, the mind is contracting and human nature is sliding lower and lower.

In this country, the sages have laid down the means and methods of exploring the mind and unravelling the sheaths that cover the inner levels of consciousness. We can understand the Truth through the processes of Yoga. Since all the troubles, all the bondages happen through the vagaries of the mind, one has to master the mind and this is achieved by means of Yoga. Being in an organisation that is devoted to dedicated service helps you to master the mind. Treat work as worship. Revere duty as God. Then egoism will disappear and the sense of the unity of all life in the Divine will be evident, as never before.

Every one must become a worker, a hard worker, a sincere worker, and an enthusiastic worker—a Karma Jivi, a Karma Yogi. It is not as if there is not enough food and clothing in this country. There is enough food, shelter and clothing for all; but sacrifice is wanting. Waste is rampant, Luxury is demanded. Food habits are ruinous. Idleness is on the increase. God has given each person one stomach and one mouth; but, He has provided as instruments for filling that stomach and to keep the body in comfort two hands. Nothing is beyond the intelligence and skill of man. The will alone is absent, and the spirit of devotion and dedication. When an eagle has wings, what prevents it from flying high and far? Only the will. If it makes no attempt to fly, it has to be where it is.

Wherever you are employed, in trade or industry, or in public offices, treat the work as God's work. In fact, according to Indian culture, before beginning the day's work, prayer is offered to God to make it a worthy offering to Him. You must pray that the work you do will not bring tears in the eyes of any one, it should not harm any one by its reaction. The work you do is like the seed. It must sprout into a plant. Its consequence will affect some one; so, do it in such a way that no one is hurt by the consequence. Speak sweet and soft and spread joy and peace around you.

The Vice-Chancellor pleaded for the development of self-confidence in students. That will endow them with self-satisfaction and the quality of self-sacrifice, which grants self-realisation. I

want that you must always see the unity in all diversities and not harp upon the diversities that are superficial. The fault in modern youth is mostly to be traced to the parents and the elders. They set very bad examples; they teach false standards of life and low standards of behaviour. I have personal experience of this. The 700 students of the College at Brindavan have now become bright lamps, but when they came they had all the evils and vices of the society and family wherein they grew up. They are now promoters of the traditional values of our culture. The world cannot beset right by the old; youth has to take up the task. Give them the chance, the right examples and the proper lead. That is what mankind needs this day.

—*Bombay, 30-12-1977*

To the Andhras in Bombay

The awareness of the Atma or the Divine in man cannot be gifted to another or cannot be accepted from another; it is there, all the time; only, the veil of ignorance has to go. When the false image disappears, the true shines in all its glory. It is like the Sun behind the passing cloud. Your duty is to deny this veil and let the Sun of awareness shine forth and illumine your thoughts, words and deeds.

As Andhras, it is desirable that you revere your native region and native language. But, the reverence should not lead to irreverence towards other regions and languages. Be proud of your language and culture—there is no harm. But, let not that pride lead you to dislike other languages and cultures. The language by which thoughts are expressed may be varied but, the thoughts, emotions and feelings are the same in all, aren't they? The language of the heart is the same; when it comes to the tongue, it may take various forms, that is all. When it is known and appreciated that the One manifested Itself as the Many, and that the One is known by many Names there is really no scope for hatred, or irreverence.

Attitudes of tolerance and reverence can be cultivated only along the spiritual path. That is the one path for attaining peace and harmony, in this world of ceaseless striving and never-ending despair. The Satsang, the gathering of god-ward-bound seekers, is a must for the sprouting of spiritual desire and its fulfillment. Even the tardy will soon develop a keen enthusiasm for the spirit through the influence of the Satsang. A piece of string may be bright and white, but, no one will wear it on the hair or, round the neck. But, let it get twined through a heap of fragrant flowers and make of them a garland, people will love to have it in their hair or round their necks. The Satsang of flowers gives it that high status. A boulder, neglected and ill-treated, lying on the bazaar road can receive the adoration of millions for centuries, if through association with a sculptor, it becomes an idol for a temple. The common rat, despised as a pest, becomes holy, when worshippers of Ganesha find it associated with Him as His Vehicle. On the other hand, Fire which is worshipped as the God Agni becomes the target of the hammer, when it enters a ball of iron. That is why Sankaracharya has sung, in the Bhaja Govindam, "Through Satsang, you develop freedom from delusion, through freedom from delusion you develop faith in Truth and through faith in Truth, you attain Liberation Itself."

We become what we feel and act. Karma shapes the future; Karma has shaped the Present. Karma is the supreme maker of one's destiny. So, one has to seek Satsang in order to purify one's Karma, which otherwise, might act as shackles. For, it is impossible to escape from the consequences, once Karma has been done. The Shruti requires you, therefore, to 'prostrate before every Karma that you do', praying that it may not bring harm to any one or to yourself. As Children of Immortality, men are entitled to live noble lives and realise the Reality. The Lotus takes birth in slush, rises through water, and dies when thrown out of water. It cannot survive long when deprived of water. Man, too, is born in the world, lives in it, and has to be in it, among men. You must have heard the dictum, "All honour rendered to all men reaches God." Hear also the other statement, and take it to heart, "All dishonour inflicted on all men reach God." It is the Law, as inescapable as the law that makes this piece of cloth that I hold in my hand, fall to the ground when I release the hold. Only when man is able to have the Grace of God and the re-inforcement of Dharma he will not be led into disaster. He will then be led along the path of spiritual progress. For Dharma protects its protector.

So long as man lives a life devoted to objective pleasures and objective victories, he cannot escape sorrow, fear and anxiety. Only the inner view can grant him Ananda. For, the Atma is the fountain-head of Ananda. Egoism is the crown of all evils. Man very often accuses others of being cattle; but, the cattle are ashamed at this comparison. For the cow eats hay, drinks stuff that man cannot use and yet, yields strength giving sweet tasty milk. Man on the other hand fights with his own kith and kin and consumes food only to worsen his evil acts. Man must develop humility and a sense of proportion, as regards his aims and ideals.

You have fostered this educational institution. We must lay emphasis on universal ideals in the field of education. You must encourage those who talk the language of the Atma, and not merely the language of the Andhras. The latter provides food for the stomach: Joy for the eye, bliss for the heart and delight to the mind—these are given by the former. Man is not merely a body; he has a mind, a heart, many levels of consciousness, and a thirst for the Reality. Many practise Dhyana, but, the evidence for progress in Dhyana is to be sought in a more universal outlook, greater steadiness, peace and forbearance, more eagerness to serve fellow-men etc. Dhyana must reveal the Divine in man and thereby, induce self-confidence, self-satisfaction and self-sacrifice.

So regulate your lives that you do not dislike others nor do others dislike you. Love all, as embodiments of the same Divine Principle. Demonstrate by your lives these ideals, among the Maharashtrians. Truly, Andhras are broad-minded, and warmhearted. They adore the Earth-mother and the Go-matas (the Cow, as Mother). With the co-operation of the Maharashtrians, you have built up this Institution and I am happy to bless it and give all guidance and help. All are mine; I am yours. When it is an educational institution that you are having, I take special interest in it, and I declare I am ever ready to visit it and bless the students.

—From Bhagavan's Discourse 30-12-77 at the Andhra Educational Society Junior College

Ah the Way to See Baba

What glories untold
In that ashram unfold
On the banks of the Chitravati!

May its wonderful light
Soon burst on our sight.
Ah, what it will be to see Baba!

When the love light doth shine
From His eyes so divine.
While from ours, devotion is beaming
With rapture complete
We will fall at His Feet.
Oh, what it will be to see Baba!

—Adapted from an old hymn by Iris Murphet

Bharatiya Paramartha Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

7. Be Yourself

He who has visualised the Atma principle that animates all can never condemn the religion of any one. He will never enter any religious squabble or conflict. He will never talk lightly or demeaningly of another's faith. He will never disturb or despise the faith held by another. Only the ignorant with no spiritual experience, only those who do not know the depths of truth, will embark upon the condemnation of the faith of others. It is very unbecoming of man to indulge in or encourage religious conflicts, to ridicule the rites and ceremonies through which others adore God, and to label the religious practices of other people as 'superstitions'. For, each one has accepted the practice and holds on to it, since it confers Ananda on him!

The ONE is spoken of, by those who know, as MANY. The same thing is seen and experienced in different ways, by different people, according to the angle of vision and the level of intelligence and awareness. Different persons describe the same thing or experience differently. How can any one declare that they should not do so? Or that what they describe is wrong? No one has the right to disparage or deny.

Only those who strive to transcend the here and now and become aware of the Transcendent Principle of Godhead deserve the name, Hindu. Those who revel in hurting others do not justify that name.

The inner core of Bharatiya culture is this realisation of the Unity of Atma principle that fills each heart with Universal Love. Those who are aware of this Unity and are well established in it, are kith and kin of Bharatiyas, whichever country they may live in, whatever language is native to their tongues. Many human communities have, as the basis of their beliefs, the theory that man is a bundle of matter, and that this matter is subject to the laws of physic and chemistry. In the languages of the West, death is denoted as "the act of giving up life or Jiva," whereas in the languages of Bharat, it is "giving up the body or the Deha." This is due to the faith of the Westerner that he is the body and the faith of the Bharatiya that he is not the body. The Bharatiyas assert and know that they have the Atma as their Reality and that the Atma is enclosed in a body. The two views are widely disparate. A civilisation that is built on the shifting sand of worldly pleasure can last only for a little while. It will disappear from the surface of the earth. On the other hand, the civilisation of Bharat and of the countries that value and follow the civilisation of Bharat have survived for centuries and are vital even today. They show new and refreshing signs of more creative life. This fact has to be kept in mind by those Bharatiyas who have dedicated their lives to the imitation of other civilisations and cultures.

Imitation cannot build a stable culture. It can never become 'civilisation'. It is a sign of cowardice, not a quality that can ensure progress. It is the royal road to downfall. How can man draw inspiration for uplifting himself, if he is engaged in hating himself and devaluing his achievements? The Bharatiya should feel no sense of shame, when he brings back to memory his forefathers, and the elders and teachers of the past who built the culture that nurtured him.

Instead, he ought to feel proud of his forefathers and the elders and teachers who shone among them. He must be proud that he has such persons as his ancestors, that his nation is of such holiness, and that his country is one that is endowed with such sacred characteristics. The children of Bharat have to fill themselves with the proud consciousness that in their native land were born wise persons who had attained the heights of self-realisation, as well as many others who had risen to the peak of perfection.

Manifest the power that lies in self-exertion! Do not resort to the weak stratagem of imitating others. Instead, absorb the good qualities that others may possess. We plant a seed in the soil. Then, we supply it with the ingredients it needs-water, air, manure. The seed sprouts; it grows into a sapling; it becomes at last a huge tree. You will notice that it does not become either soil, or manure, or air or water. These it makes use of; but, it sticks to its own nature and grows into a tree.

May you too live like that tree. Of course we have much to learn from others. There is no need to doubt this fact. Those who refuse to learn thus, declare themselves fools. Whatever can promote your spiritual advance, you can learn from others. Imbibe them to the full, according to the lines laid down for your own progress in your own moral path or Dharma. You must live as you, not as some one else. Do not allow any one to divert you away from your innate nature. Be immersed in your God, in your own imaginings and feelings, in the Bliss that springs from your own heart, and in the delight derived from your Sadhana. When others try to prevent you from doing this, whatever plans they weave and whatever contrivances they employ, resist them at the cost of your own lives. Do not deny yourself that Divine Awareness and that Divine Ecstasy. This is the exhortation that echoes through the Paramartha Vahini of the Bharatiyas. Pull down

the barriers that stand in the way and obstruct the free flow of the culture of this land that confers such sweetness and strength. Clear the channels through which it flows and cleanse them. Then it can follow its course, unimpeded.

Sai has willed that the Sadhana of this country, Bharat, has to take this course. For too long a time the theistic Dharma of this land has stopped moving. Its characteristic has been for a long time, static. Now, it has to be made dynamic. It must vitalise the daily life of every human being. It must enter and fructify the palatial Rajbhavan and the lowly hutments of the poorest to the land.

It is the treasure of every one; every one has the right to inherit it and benefit by it; having been born as man is enough, one has a valid claim to share it. For this reason, Bharatiyas have to take it before every door and welcome every one in each home to share it. As the air we breathe is, in God's creation, available to all, the Dharma of the awareness of God and His Power and Mercy has to be available to all. Bharatiyas must hold on to this wide outlook and the Universality and Unity of this message, the conflicts between disparate faiths and beliefs will disappear of themselves and peace and love will be restored on earth.

Imagine a house full of darkness since centuries. You may enter the house and pray to the darkness to leave the premises; or, you may shower abuse on it for days together; or, frighten it by threatening force. The darkness will stay; it cannot be diminished at all. It will not yield to your tactics. It cannot be scared out. But, light a lamp, and it will flee that instant. The lamp of wisdom can save man from age-long darkness. This truth has to be well recognised by man and, once recognised, he has to shape his life accordingly.

Man has immensity in him; this is the core of Bharatiya thought. It is really a mystery how man came to regard himself as one condemned to fall! A person might strike us as demonic or as divine; in both the Atma is the Reality, to the same extent. You cannot say the Atma in one is less and in the other, is more. When faults are found in any one, you will have to conclude that there are deficiencies in behaviour, that is all. Do not conclude that there is no Divine Atma in him. As a result of the company he keeps or the inefficiency of the society in which he grew, faults have grown in him. They are not native to his nature, which is Atmic. You will have to provide him good company and beneficial surroundings and persuade him to enter them. You should on no account condemn him as a born incorrigible, and keep him apart.

The body is composed of cells, which are made up of atoms. The atoms are also physical phenomena. They are fundamentally jada, or composite or unfeeling. The Vedantins speak of a subtle body, separate from this gross body. That too is physical. It is the centre of subtle skills and force. It is in this body that all the subtle mental feelings and agitations take place. Every force can work only through some medium or other, which is physical. The same power that operates the gross body works through the subtle feelings and emotions, and subtle processes of thought. They are not two different entities. One is the subtle form of the other, that is all.

What is the source of these powers? If we delve deep, we will find that there are two things in nature, Aakasa and Prana. Aakasa is the source of all the gross and subtle material one encounters; when Prana or Life-force contacts it, due to the impact, the Aakasa principle

transforms itself into either gross or subtle, in varying proportions. Prana too is omnipresent, like Aakasa; it can also penetrate everywhere, and everything. Like the blocks of ice that water becomes and that float on water and that move about on water, the Prana acts on Aakasa and bodies appear. Prana is the force that moulds the Aakasa into various forms. The gross body is the vehicle of the Prana that it has shaped out of Aakasa. The subtle body is of the form of thought, feeling etc.

When the subtle body is transcended, the awareness of the Reality becomes manifest. Just as the nails on the fingers persist, however often we pair them off, as part of our gross body, the subtle body too is an integral part of man's make-up.

(To be Continued)

Descent and Ascent

Why should the Lord take the human form and come into the physical world when the scriptures have laid down the goal of man for all time and the different paths to self-realisation have been long ago placed before man. The Gita itself answers this question. Deluded by Maya (which is the nature of the phenomenal world) man is normally incapable of discriminating between the real and the unreal. He cannot develop the detachment necessary for freeing himself from the shackles of Samsara. Even when one desires intensely to cultivate Viveka and Vairagya, chained as he is to Vasanas or latent tendencies, and to the material world he is unable to rise above his physical existence. "That which, through delusion, thou wishest not to do, thou shalt do, even against thy will, fettered by thy own acts born of nature" (Gita, 18-60).

The descent of the Lord into the phenomenal world, therefore, has as its sole object, the ascent of man to his Divinity. Other purposes, such as the protection of the Righteous, the elimination of the unrighteous, the establishment of Dharma, all these sub-serve this main purpose—raising the Manava to the status of Madhava.

The Lord is no doubt within us. He is near, yet far. "Doorastham cha anthike cha thath" (Gita 13-15). But, between identifying the Self with the body and seeing the Self as Ishwara, the journey is long and arduous. It requires for most people many lives of Sadhana and arduous effort. The destination—saswatam padam, avysyam—eternal, undiminishing abode—is well worth all the discipline called for. While a Ramakrishna, a Ramana or Sankara was ready even from birth for the eternal state, men are in various stages of attainment and progress. Despite the guidance given by the scriptures, the seers, and the sages, man needs some loving hand to lead him to the goal. He needs a Guru. But, a Guru has to be a realized person, for no one can lead an aspirant to the destination which he has not himself reached. Rarely can one find such a Guru these days. Baba says, "For many a Guru today, the fence is more valuable than the crop and more essential. So, he emphasises the restrictions and rules to the detriment of the Sadhana," But, we have no reason to despair. He has also the solution, "Pray to God to illumine your mind, awaken the Intelligence and be your Guru."

And, as if such prayers have been heard. He Himself is here, as our Guru. Bhagavan Baba is the Guru of even Gurus. The whole world is His Gurukula. He is engaged day in and day out, to work for the emancipation of humanity. His teachings have a universal appeal to people of all ages, of all countries, all avocations, and belonging to all religions. He provides guidance to the Bhaktas, to the Jnani and the men of action, and to all levels among them. He instills in His devotees the discipline needed for evolution, through His own example.

Bestowing His infinite Love on Humanity. He directs His devotees to live in Love. Engaged incessantly in work, He exhorts them to engage in Shreyo-karma (virtuous deeds) through activity dedicated to God, actions for the good of mankind and actions for one's own spiritual evolution. Lord Krishna did the same. Remember His pointing out to Arjuna the importance of action, when He tells him that there is no work in the three worlds to be done by Him, nor anything to be obtained, and yet, He is engaged in work, because if He did not work, men would follow His path of non-action and it would ruin humanity" (Gita 3-22/24). "My life is my message," says Bhagavan.

There never was such an opportunity for mankind in its march to spiritual freedom. He has come down to us, so that we may go up to our sublime Goal. "Follow My Lead" is His call, to the devotees. "In the, Divine Path, there is no chance of failure; it is a Path in which every milestone is a monument of Victory." He stoops to extend His Hand to us and take us, step by step, in our ascent to Divinity.

—C. P. K. Nair, Calicut, Kerala

Impact on Humanity

The lofty Himalayan pinnacle stands there formidable, inaccessible and awe-inspiring. But, the mighty Ganges seems to extend a silent invitation for a holy dip in the sacred waters flowing gently, the waters that exhilarate and exalt, that caress and clean the tired limbs and the languid spirit. Baba is the Ganges of Love. He is our father, mother, master and lord, all in one.

The influence that emanated from a lad of fourteen like a slender stream in the early forties of this century has now become a mighty current invigorating all that it touches. There is no distinction of high and low, no division into east and west, no difference of age or learning. It is all-pervasive and all-embracing. The millionaire and the mendicant receive in equal measure the shower of compassion and the smile of grace.

Today Baba's influence has spread far and wide. Prasanthi Nilayam has become the abode of peace and bliss, where the whole world finds shelter and succour. His Language of Love springs from the heart and goes straight to the heart. It is the balm of all hurt minds and it knits up the ravelled sleeve of care. To wipe every tear from every eye is Baba's mission. To kindle the flame of hope in the anguished gloomy mind, Swami smiles sweetly and resplendently. His gentle words soothe and inspire the drooping spirits. His penetrating gaze liberates the imprisoned splendour in every bosom. His clarion call summons one and all to step out of the shades of the

prison and retrace his steps to the celestial home. He drives home the message that man is not a creature of the moment but the pilgrim of eternity.

To listen to Baba's discourse is an experience that not only thrills but dwells with us forever. Language seems to be no barrier since the message finds an echo in every bosom. Like music, it haunts the mind "long after it was heard no more." It flashes upon "the inward eye, which is the bliss of solitude."

It is not cloistered virtue that he stimulates. He grants the vision that transcends all division and beholds the Lord in all creation. Serving one's fellowmen is the purest worship offered to God who is not confined within a temple, mosque or church. "He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the pathmaker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and shower and His garment is covered with dust, He is the unfailing friend of the lowliest and the lost." This new orientation given to devotion lends universal appeal to Baba's teachings. They offer the quintessence of all the scriptures in words clear as ringing bells and fair as smiling flowers. It is a Gospel of Love translated into deeds that seek to ameliorate the sad lot of the lowliest and the lost and make this world a better place to live in.

With his soothing words, healing touch, and enchanting smile, Baba works wonders. Those who come out of the Interview Room seem to walk on air. They emerge with beaming faces and sparkling eyes. The burden has rolled away. New vistas beckon them to launch forth, "to strive, to seek, and not to yield." They are charged with a new faith and a strength, that can sail beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

The greatest of all the miracles performed by Baba is the transmutation of personality. His alchemic touch has brought about radical change of heart in several that had approached Baba for the fulfillment of petty desires. Gradually, the mind is led forward to the state that is beyond both desire and despair; Baba knows the prognosis and diagnosis of all the ills that afflict us. He is the sculptor who knows when to thump gently and when to chisel severely. He knows how to deal with this shapeless mass. He carves and fashions vessels of beauty out of warped and fragile stuff.

Today Baba plays the grand role of a world-teacher, from the high pedestal of universal brotherhood. His winged words fly far and wide, scattering the fragrance of Love. His Love transforms a petrified heart into a flower of tenderness. To have come into Baba's fold, to have felt and experienced his ministering care is indeed the height of blessedness. To follow Baba's words with discipline, devotion and dedication, one needs faith in one-self and the gift of Grace from that Spring of mercy.

Wherever we are, whatever we are, let us rally round this perennial fountain of Light and cast off all dismal gloom. Let us undergo a sea-change so that we may evolve into something rich and strange, when we behold eternity in an hour and Heaven in a flower.

—*Amarendra*

Live for Him

Living has been the most passionate experience of man. It has been his most important activity. Yet, very few persons have been able to claim that they have lived *fully*. Most people end their lives before getting the idea of living 'fully', and then, they go through another incarnation to complete it. But, then they forget, and the whole cycle starts a new.

Life is given to us to live fully and entirely, but, most of us live only a small fraction of it, most of it remaining un-redeemed, and unrealised, and as Baba terms it so beautifully, "the spiritual hunger continues to gnaw at our being." So long as fulfillment remains a dream, life remains un-redeemed, and living becomes a sketchy, snatchy affair, without any meaning or kernel.

What then is this 'living fully'? Aren't we good, honest, learned, serviceable, and haven't we a loving, lovely nature? We eat when we should eat, we work when we should work, we sleep when we should sleep, but, of course, we die when we 'should not' die! Death always comes rather too early, and more so, when we are least prepared!

Why is it that Death alone is improper, impious, and awful? It is because we live only for ourselves, not for Him. He gave us the body, the mind, the skills and the capacities; but, we comfortably eliminate Him from our lives and anoint the little rat, 'EGO' that can eat into our vitals, as the King. We worship the Ego in us, in *our* kith and kin, in *our* children, in *our* possessions, and even in *our* relationship with Him. So, we live for every one else, but, Him.

It is only when we begin to live for Him that we truly live for ourselves and take a step toward living fully. Life becomes meaningful, joyful—not awful, partial, partitioned. Even death becomes a part of the beatitude that Life becomes. Death ceases to cause fear, ceases to be unwelcome. It becomes a part of the composite vision of life we would have attained by living for Him.

When the fear of death is gone, we see a new meaning for life and a new beauty all around us; the desire to live a full life awakens in us. We seek the giver of this Gift and we find God. Bhagavan says that we are all born, so that we may never be born again. We die so that we may never die again. The key to unravel this cryptic statement is His Advice: "See everything as He or His, offer everything to Him, do everything as for Him, leave everything to Him, be an instrument which has no likes or dislikes" be just a tool, an efficient tool for His hands.

The question may be asked, "But, why? The play is His; the role is His choice; the lines are His; He directs, He decides the dress, the outfit, the decoration, the gesture and the tone, the entrances and the exits." And, listen again to what Baba says, "All activity is Puja; the food provided by Him, eaten by Him for His own sake, to yield strength for His work. Each moment is worthwhile, for He gives it. He uses it. He fulfils it."

What really happens, when we try to live up to this Truth? "The fight is Mine, the might is Mine, the trials and triumphs are Mine, the fruits of victory are Mine, the humiliation of defeat is Mine. You are I; I am You."

When we strive to be worthy instruments in His hands and nothing other, we begin to live *for* Him, and inevitably, we live *in* Him. When we live *in* Him, we live a full life, with its trials and tribulations, pains and pleasures, rights and wrongs, ups and downs, all dedicated at His Lotus Feet. Then, gradually, we become identified with Him" You are I; I am You." The process is like the three wonderful steps Bhagavan has prescribed: "First, the light is without; then, the light is within; and third, the Light is I."

In the Ramayana, we have such a character in Bharata. He lived for Sri Rama, all his life. But, when Rama went into exile in the forest, and he stayed on at Nandigram, his entire life was transformed into the utmost dedication. He lived for Him and then, in Him. He became He. This happened so truly and genuinely that when he sat in the chariot that brought Rama into the City of Ayodhya when he returned after the exile, people could not tell one brother from the other. You are I; I am You.

Therefore, let us now take the first step towards the Full Life—living for Him, every moment of our lives, in thought; word and deed. Let every moment be rededication of all three at His Lotus Feet. Let the prayer arise every moment from our hearts, "Lord! Take me in, make me Thine Own."

—Bijaya B. Misra, Cuttack

Collections By Units

The attention of all Units and Office-bearers of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation is drawn to the fact that collections for funds etc., are not permissible. Spiritual activities like Bhajan, Nagarsankirtan and Narayana Seva, Educational Activities like Bal Vikas Classes and Seva Activities by the Seva Dal have to be carried on as Sadhana without any collection of Donations and Funds. This directive has to be strictly observed by all Units and Office Bearers.

—Ed.

Ramarajya

Who has not heard of the glorious days when Rama ruled the Earth? The description of the peace, prosperity and happiness of the subjects of Rama has become an ideal and an inspiration for subsequent generations. For centuries, people have been yearning for the reappearance of Ramarajya on earth and praying for the same. They measure their pitiable condition with the picture of the Golden Age, under Rama, and pine for the consummation of their longings.

Whenever I read books on Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Ramana Maharshi, I feel sad that I could not be at their feet and imbibe the nectar of their Upadesh. But, after visiting Puttaparthi and dwelling in that atmosphere, surcharged with Love, I am no more afflicted with despair or dejection. I have realised that God has come to revive Ramarajya among men.

Puttaparthi is the one place where Ramarajya exists today. We have not seen Rama and Krishna, but, seeing Sai is seeing them both. When you watch thousands sitting on the sand, anxiously awaiting the Darshan of the Lord, who comes amidst them and scatters His smiles and Grace-filled Gifts, we feel that the descriptions in the Bhagavata of the Gopis and the Gopas awaiting Darshan of Krishna must be true. The Bhagavata says, "Their feet refused to take the Gopis away from His presence; their hands refused to handle tasks unrelated to Him their ears were deaf, when stories other than His were related; their eyes did not relish any other sight, except His charming Form; their tongues could not utter any other sound than those about Him; their minds had been stolen by Him and filled with His thoughts." This is very true of the vast gatherings of devotees at Puttaparthi.

In Bhagavan's Presence, perfect peace prevails; there is no fear, no greed, no hatred. The environment is charged with devotion, dedication, and divinity. We feel that Ramarajya must have been very much like this. Here all are equal, of one level, before the Omnipresence of the Lord. The air is fragrant with heavenly silence. And, every one of the devotees is coming here to carry back to his home, office or factory, his society, country or nation, the silence and the steady control of emotion. He is a Sadhaka come to re-enforce his determination to succeed.

Every one is eager to help, to accommodate others, to be of service to the old, the sick, the stranger and the child. Every feeling that hurts, or divides is kept under control. allowing brotherhood to prevail. Tamils, Gujaratis, Bengalis, Syrians, Africans, Jamaicans, Ghanaians—all sit and pray together in unison, to the One Lord they acknowledge as supreme. Indeed, this is the One Place which holds out hope of Ramarajya all over the world.

Here, there is no gap between the scholar and the student, the beggar and the billionaire. All can be found offering physical labour together. Tireless, they serve, in long lines, passing from hand to hand, basins of concrete or shovels of earth, or other materials needed to be transported. One feels, this is the beginning of the New Age, when the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man will rule over all hearts.

—*Pramila*

Sai Family News

Be Warned

Information has reached us that persons claiming to be 'intimate' with Prasanthi Nilayam are corresponding with devotees in foreign countries asking for Stamps, Coins, First Day Covers etc. Such requests are from impostors who have somehow gained the addresses and so, they have to be totally discouraged.

Again, some persons in India have prepared printed note paper with Bhagavan's Address and are writing letters to devotees as if from Bhagavan or under His Instruction. We have received a letter of this kind on a letter-head printed in Hindi, sent to us by a devotee who received it from an impostor. It is best that extreme caution is exercised whenever such letters are received.

Melbourne (Australia)

Christmas at Melbourne for the devotees of Sai marked the Inauguration of the Sai Center. The following hymn was written for the occasion and read at the Gathering:

SAI is the WORD that was GOD
in the opening verse of St. John's Gospel;
SAI is the LOGOS (the Dharma)
the Fathers saw Christ to be;
SAI is the Father Christ pointed to
and, said, 'I and my Father are One';
SAI is the 'I' in 'I am the Way, the Truth
and the Life', which Christ told;
SAI is the Second coming of Christ
as prophesied in St. Matthews;
SAI is the One who sent Christ to proclaim:
"He who sent me among you will come again";
Sai is Sathya—TRUTH, as Christ did announce
"His Name will be TRUTH";
Sai is that One (Ekam sat) of whom Christ also said:
"He will wear a robe of red, a blood red robe;
.....and, HE will be short, with a Crown (of hair)"
whence a Lamb strode near and cried, 'Ba—Ba';
SAI is Love, SAI is PEACE, SAI is ONE, SAI is ALL
SAI is Eternity SAI is Truth SAI alone, the Goal.

Blood Donation: Jakarta (Indonesia)

On Sunday, 6th February, the Sri Sathya Sai Centre, Jakarta had arranged for Blood Donation by members and others. Of the 150 persons who came forward most willingly to do the Seva, 80 were selected and the Red Cross Organisation were collecting the donated blood in the Divine Atmosphere created by Bhajan by the Bal Vikas students of the Center. The occasion filled with devotion and joy was televised by the Jakarta Station.

"Sanathana Sarathi" at Tampa Bay

Esther Howarth writes: "The magazine is passed round to members of the Center here: it appeases our spiritual hunger, until the next one arrives. We are studying the Dhyana Vahini in our Study Circle and we have benefited marvelously. I have devised a way to keep the Name and Form before me while getting exercise. Twice a week, I swim at the pool which is 20 yards long. As I swim, I repeat to myself, OM SATHYA SAI BABA, with every stroke, and visualize Baba at the end of the pool waiting for me with outstretched hands, smiling as I come to Him across the Ocean of Bliss.

Within Prison Walls: Mexico

Sten Potter writes after exhibiting the film, "My Life is My Message" (depicting Baba) in a Men's Prison, "Having only heard a little of Sai Baba in the past, I for one was deeply impressed and I am grateful that we had the opportunity to show it to the men here. Their reactions, for the

most part, were very positive. There has been much interest expressed here towards seeing more of Sai Baba. I am sure that this will be transmitted to Sai Baba, although I have the feeling he already knows.”

Our life is a pilgrimage through day and night, through green valley and arid desert, through tears and smiles, through death and birth, through tomb and womb. When the road ends and the Goal is gained, the pilgrim realises that he has journeyed from only himself to himself and that, though the road was long and lonesome, the God that led him thereon was ever in him, around him, with him and beside him. His yearning to merge in God was the yearning of the river for the sea. He realises that he loves, since the God in him is love; he craves for harmony since God is harmony; he seeks joy, since God is Bliss; he thirsts for God, since he is composed of God and cannot exist without Him.

—Baba

Self-control

The crest jewel of a glorious life is self-control. The first step and the most difficult in the path of spiritual attainment is self-control. Every one aspiring to manifest his innate excellence as a human being has to master the senses and the vagaries of the mind.

This can be done by cultivating a sense of detachment and by constant practice. Man is endowed with these two capacities. Animals cannot change their innate characteristics by their own self-will. They may be trained and tamed to behave as man wants them to, as in a circus, but, the native instincts surge up, when the results of training wear off. You can never trust a circus lion and be sure that it will behave as you desire. It may turn upon its trainer with its inborn thirst for blood. But, man can be made Divine, with his own cooperation and willful efforts. He can overcome the evil traits gathered during years of evil company. Good thoughts, good deeds and good intentions can replace the opposite ones, by means of systematic effort.

During this Iron Age, man has declined fast because of the increase in selfishness and egoist impulses. If one has no humanness or humanity, what can the mere physical form signify? Of what use is a temple, with no idol or shrine? Why have a fan, when the house has no current? The physical form is the fan; human-ness is the current that can make it meaningful. And, what exactly is 'human-ness'? Compassion, sympathy, fortitude, tolerance, broad-hearted-ness, Love—these constitute the real man. Ants never eat alone, nor do crows. They announce the good news of the availability of food to their kith and kin and eat together. Man grabs and hides.

Egoism is the result of ignorance regarding one's reality. There is a Sanskrit statement which says that he who has no knowledge of his own reality is but a cow. It is said that when a monk was teaching this line to his class, his cow started shedding tears. When asked the reason, the cow is supposed to have said, "This is a great insult to me and my species. We consume dry grass, hay and leaves and drink the stuff that man discards as useless for him. In return, we give man the most nutritious milk. To compare us with any type of man is a slander which we cannot accept." It said that man is misusing his scholarship and learning for nefarious ends.

There are three types of man: Those who refrain from any inquiry about themselves, their origin, their duties, their goal etc; these are the lowest type. For, unless man discovers that he has risen from the animal and is evolving towards Divinity, how can he ensure his own progress and the welfare of the human community? Then, there are people who try to discover answers to these questions, but, finding that they involve some Sadhana and some detachment and deprivation, some control and some exertion, they give up the attempt pretty soon. Of the third type are the spiritual heroes, who strive ceaselessly until success is assured and attained. They encounter obstacles on the way cheerfully and with equanimity; they hold back the prancings of the wild horse—mind—with the triple rope of discrimination, renunciation and determination.

Discrimination results in sifting the eternal from the transient. Renunciation does not mean the giving up of hearth and home, of parents and family, and fleeing into the forest, in search of peace and quiet. It means only the practice of non-attachment. Upeksha, wherever you are and whatever you may be after. Do your duty as an act of worship. Do not worry if the expected result does not ensue. Leave the consequences to God. Do not feel proud if it succeeds, for, it is He who has crowned it with success. Do not attach yourselves too much and too close with any one. We have doors for our houses, so that those whom we want can come into our house. We do not allow donkeys and street dogs to come in without hindrance. The door is intended to keep out, as well as to bring in. So keep out the bad from your minds and welcome in, the good. Bad thoughts, evil plans, cruel feelings, loveless prejudices—these are like crows, jackals, and monkeys. Keep them off the door of your mind.

Elevate your thoughts. When the wind blows aloud, catch the OM that resonates in that sound. When you look at the blue sky, think of the glory of Krishna and Rama, the Avatars of God. When, after weeks of toil, you stand before the shrine of Badrinath or Kedarnath, you close your eyes in ecstasy and pray to the God installed therein, don't you? Why is it that you close your eye, instead of keeping it open, to witness the shrine and the idol? Because, we are satisfied only by the 'inner vision', not merely the outer vision.

Keep the inner eyes free from hate, greed and ego. We offer only such flowers to God as are not infested by pests and insects; let us offer God, words, deeds and thoughts that are pure and uncontaminated by evil thoughts. And, remember, God is omnipresent. Prostrate reverentially anywhere His Feet will be evident on that spot. Whatever you speak, He hears. Whatever you do, He witnesses. Whatever you think, He weighs.

—From Discourse by Bhagavan

The Higher Education

Two Paths

Education must help to weaken all narrow loyalties and strengthen the aspiration for establishing a World, peaceful and prosperous; it must promote in the individual consciousness, unity, tolerance and equality. The lessons imparted to youth should not, like rainfall on desert

sands, disappear without fertilising the soil; nor should they, like rainfall on marsh, make the mind more slushy; they should, like the raindrops imbibed by oysters produce in the mind pearls of wisdom and virtue.

There is also a second type of education: the training given for earning a livelihood, imparting the skills and knowledge necessary to live in comfort.

The first type of education is termed spiritual. You are here being educated, through both these paths. Of course, there is a vast difference between the education prevalent in the past in India and that which prevails today. In the past, pupils were taught along with secular topics, ethical, moral and spiritual subjects also. And, great attention was paid to the development of character and disciplined living. Present day education is devoid of discipline. It encourages a kind of life, where each one can follow his own whim, wish and desire. Can this be correct? Is the view that the whims and fancies should not be controlled and regulated, correct? We have to pay some attention to this problem.

The Many as One

We are engaged in seeing some one thing or another, all the time, with no intermission. That produces some impression in the mind; it imprints some form on the consciousness. The heart of man expresses different emotions and reactions to different people. The son is looked upon with affection; the husband with love and attachment; the in-laws with respect; the same individual reacts differently to different persons. This is common knowledge. Why does this happen?

The Rishis of the past visualised only One Godhead, but, the expressions of their Vision varied from person to person. Ekam sat—the Reality is One. But, bahudha vadanti—It is spoken of differently. The manner of speaking depends on the individual's own level of experience and capacity for experience. It has always been so, in all matters. This day, the Colleges teach a large variety of subjects. Among you, some have opted for what are termed 'Arts subjects' and some others, for 'Science subjects'. But, you seldom recognise that the goal towards which both are moving is the same. These branches of knowledge are like small tributaries of a river which flows towards the sea. Nadeenaam sagaro gatih—All rivers move towards the Ocean, the Ocean of 'Spiritual Education, Atmavidya'.

The Ganas

Education has to deal with the three basic qualities in man—the dull, the passionate and the balanced (the Tamasic, Rajasic and the Satwic). These, unless sublimated and regulated will ruin man or re-instate him as Divine. They can, if regulated and controlled, win him the three worlds and bring him the Trinity. For example, you can find the three in the story of Rama. When as a young boy, Rama was walking across the forest along with the sage Viswamitra, he met the woman Tataki and killed her; he came across another woman, Ahalya and he restored her to her husband after advising her in appropriate terms. He later met another woman, Sita, and he made her, his own. The first woman is the Tamoguna, the second the Rajoguna and the third Sita, the Satwa guna. Each represented one of the three Gunas. Again, Rama had three 'friends' or 'comrades'. The Satwic one among them—Vali—he absorbed into himself. The Rajasic 'friend'—Jambavanta—was granted His Presence for some length of time and he was awarded a coveted position and status, at some future period. The Tamasic 'friend'—Sugriva—was constantly

corrected and transformed. Again, we find Rama contacted three persons spurned by society—Sabari, Guha and Kumbhakarna. Sabari is the representative of the Satwic nature; the boatman, Guha, is the Rajasic type. The demonic Kumbhakarna, constantly relapsing into actual sleep, is the true representative of the Tamasic type. Each of these three was sent to one or others of the three Lokas by Rama. Rama made clear to mankind the nature of the three Gunas and how it can affect one's career, by these three examples.

Humility

Each one has to decide for oneself which of the three ideals one has to hold forth before the world. The possession of degrees like M. A., or B. A. is of no consequence at all. Students should give up all narrow feelings and ideas. Faith in God is the widest and deepest of feelings that the heart of man can entertain. Without it, man is reduced to inert matter. Faith in God and devotion to the Supreme induce humility. Education must endow man with humility. But, today, education cultivates the ego and so, man's life is reduced to sheer waste.

Egotism is a wicked instrument; on account of it, as our Puranas declare, even divine beings have fallen. Great scholars and ascetics, rulers and warriors, like Ravana and the rest, have met their downfall, as a result of this vile trait. It is the crown of all evil traits. It is the crest of every crooked path. It makes man bewail his lot and deprives him of all the gains of knowledge. To be proud that 'we are educated persons' or that 'we are the authorities in charge of educational institutions' is a meaningless gesture.

You have to learn many things from elders after approaching them reverentially. But, first get rid of the ego; then only can life flow, without obstruction, easy and free. Look at the football; boys kick it about, in the field from one end to the other, and never give moment's rest. That is because it is inflated with air; when the air is let out, no one will care to kick the deflated ball; the humble man is left alone.

Humility, with no pride or jealousy, no tinge of ego, is the chief virtue of man. He must develop full control of his senses and attain self-respect. You are the mothers-to-be of this land. Therefore, when you cultivate humility from now on, the children of this land will also become gems of virtue and ideal citizens. Education develops humility; humility heightens authority; authority opens the avenues of wealth; wealth promotes, under such conditions, the quality of Dharma; when it invigorates, living will lead to happiness here and bliss hereafter.

Abala

Women are termed Abala, 'weak', 'without strength'. Do not feel like that. The courage, renunciation, power, generosity, love and fortitude that women have is unequalled by men. Cultivate that love and treat your sisters here with loving consideration. Do not allow Tamasic and Rajasic qualities to predominate; develop the Satwic qualities of balance, tolerance and love. That is the justification for education, the real gain. This is the spiritual current that is the core of all education. Educated people are as these bulbs. They must shed light to show others the way. They must shine, at a result of the spiritual current with which they always have contact. On the other hand, if the bulb does not shed light, even when the current is on, it means that it is not in good condition. It means that the mind of man is polluted by the Tamasic and the Rajasic natures.

You mentioned that I have come to you for the first time, in the New Year. But, there is no new or old, in time; it is always the 'present', the 'now', in the flow of life. Those who have the Tamasic and the Rajasic natures are like blocks of coal, which can never be washed white, by soap and milk.

The coal cannot become white, but, the soap is rendered dirty and the milk, dark. They must be subjected to the fire of divine agony. Then, the coal becomes weightless and full of light, as ash. So too, the individuals subjected to the Tapas or heat, become light and begin giving light. Since they are light they can spread themselves over wider and wider regions.

Who are those who truly guard and foster the dignity of man? The answer is: "Those who exercise control over their senses, and who possess self-respect; those who have the spirit of detachment and the quality of Love." Women especially must endeavour to acquire these qualities. You must earn for this College a great name, by supplementing your secular studies, with the study and practice of moral and spiritual disciplines and truths.

We welcome into this College new batches of students every year and we bid farewell to the batches that pass out. The lesson we wish to impart to both, is, the lesson of discipline. 'Control', 'give up', 'limit', 'regulate'—these are the guidelines. Na sreya niyamam vina—No progress, without observing bounds and limits. Discipline is the very pulse of life. The circulation of blood, the process of breathing and digestion, —each follows certain strict rules, is bound by certain limits and laws. Life itself is a limited company! Our desires are unlimited; but, the limit is set by the deposit we have kept from which to draw. Give up greed, the craving for more than you deserve. Students often wish for less effort and more success. This should not be. Wish for success after putting in the necessary exertion.

God and Man

The Divine Principle is unreachable by reason and logic. You may ask, when it is inexplicable, how can we believe it? On that account, can you disbelieve even the Divine. Now, when you throw a stone into the air, it falls on the ground. The reason for this behaviour is the gravitational force of the earth. But, this cannot be seen. Since a person cannot see it, he is tempted to deny it. So too, though the Divine is not seen, its influence, its impact, its working can be experienced.

In like manner, there are millions of things indicated by the words of the dictionary. Even though we have not seen all of them, we believe that they exist. We are convinced that they are things existing on earth. Then why disbelieve in the Divine Principle only? Without realising the absurdity of their behaviour, people talk confusingly in their ignorance.

The fact is: Without the Divine, there cannot be the human. Human-ness arises only when the Divine enters into the awareness. He who is not aware of his Divinity has only wasted his years of life.

It was the holy Gokulashtami; the Day when Krishna was born. So, at Dakshineswar, on that day, the priest in charge of the temple of Krishna decorated the idol with plenty of costly jewels and made the shrine very attractive. At night, he could not make up his mind to remove the

jewels. So, he kept them in place on the idol itself, locked the outer door of the shrine and went home. A thief, who noticed this, broke open the lock and removing the precious gem-set jewels, all of them, he carried them away. The priest discovered the theft and reported the theft to the proprietress of the Temple, Rani Rasmani. Her son-in-law rushed into the temple, and seeing the idol bereft of all ornaments, shouted, "Have you no shame, Krishna! You could not save the jewels you were wearing on your body from being stolen by a thief. How then can you save us?" Ramakrishna Paramahansa heard him and reprimanded him severely. "Fie on you! Gold for Him is as dirt. You may, in your ignorance, value it as gold; but, he has his own sense of values. Since you value them as gold, you should have guarded your gold jewels."

Do not rely on God protecting you from every thing. God does not concern Himself with worldly matters so much, as with your spiritual advance. He will save you from the grief resulting from past lives of which you are not at present aware. Therefore it is that man is advised to develop Vairagya, or Detachment, so that he might not get entangled in worldly desires.

Destiny

Of course, Destiny too plays an important part. It cannot be ridden over. During an earthquake in East Asia, a whole village was destroyed. There were only two survivors in one family, a brother and sister, aged 16 and 12. They moved out into the jungle and the brother fed his sister and himself selling fuel which he collected. One day, a palmist examined the brother's palm and predicted that he would marry his own sister. Aghast at this, the brother led her into the wilderness and axed her, unknown to any one. He left her dead and ran away from the scene. But, she was discovered alive by some one who brought her up. The boy too was adopted by some kind soul, and he too grew up in a nearby village. It so happened that the sister was brought to the same village and given in marriage to the boy. It was only after the birth of a child that the brother could identify her as his own sister. Ashamed of the sin of incest, he ran away from human sight and was seen no more. She did not know why he had left her. She roamed about in despair, trying to discover her husband. She carried the baby in her arms and waited long on the edge of a precipice, scanning the countryside for signs of him. At last, the legend says, she was changed into stone! Even today, that human stone can be seen in Vietnam, announcing to the world that Destiny is invincible. What has been determined to be the consequence of the past cannot be modified. You can only pray for Grace that can make the impact less painful, less grievous.

Convey these ideals to all. Cultivate great virtues; be generous; give up undue attachment; then, you can spend your entire life happily. Greatness does not lie in the actual achievement; it lies in your realising the value of the act, the achievement. When you remove the pollution from the mind, the light of the spirit will shine and the Reality will be revealed to you.

Feminine Shakti

Woman has been awarded the highest status in society; the country is itself honoured as Motherland. And, the future of the nation depends on women. Women are repositories of mighty strength. In days of old, a big fight ensued in the Papi range of hills near Rajahmundry, on the banks of the Godavari. The men prepared themselves for the battle; but, the women held them

back. They pooled the mystic strength latent in them, as Shakti, and were able to save their people from the enemy.

Do not judge others as good or bad. Do not search for the evil in others, for the evil will enter you. God tolerates the good and the bad. His Grace falls equally on both. Place a surgical instrument that was used to save life and an axe that was used to cut down living trees, side by side—a magnet will attract both equally. Be equal minded and tolerant. Love all with equal fortitude.

—*Bhagavan's Discourse: Sri Sathya Sai College for Women, Anantapur*

The New Challenge

—*Smt. Sharda Mukerjee, Governor, Andhra Pradesh*

My first thought as I came into this Hall was: What a beautiful Hall it is! When we were young, and went to one of the premier Colleges of the Bombay University, we certainly were not blessed with such beautiful surroundings. The second thought that arose in me was: Education in India has gone so far ahead, that the "Nature of Radio Isotopes" is being discussed here in this College and the participants are women students, the majority of them. I wish to congratulate the Managing Body of this College for providing such facilities for the higher education of women in this region. This is the first experience I have had of the educational Programme of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. As you know, His fame has spread far and wide; but, actually to see something great in concrete, impresses one much more than hearing about things.

I do not propose to talk to you on the very specialised subject you have met to discuss, for, I am not equipped to do so. I am departing from the usual procedure of reading out a speech prepared by some one for the occasion. I shall talk about something that concerns all of us—College Education.

Whenever I visited any one of the premier Universities abroad, I found that although we sent students with First Class degrees, they did not quite measure up, as they should have done. One could understand the situation, if it were only the Humanities, for, there, they are up against a foreign language. It was not always so. It was observed in Mathematics and in Science.

Now, as we spend more and more money, why do we get less and less results? In our days, there were very few facilities at College for study and research. But, yet, discontent has increased today. It is usually said that students are frustrated for lack of employment opportunity. This is not a new phenomenon. I remember the time when I finished my graduation and stood high in Economics, and Law. When I sought a job in Bombay, a job was just not available! Today, women are not debarred from any occupation or employment channel.

When you enter the College, remember that the country is spending on you now much more than it did on any of us. Dr. Bhagavantham mentioned that the environment provided for you in

this College is ideal for academic achievement and the building up of character. I am glad you have such a fine inspiration in the environment.

Generally speaking, there is a decline in earnestness among young persons so far as study is concerned. In our days, we just could not get through a Law Examination unless we secured 50 percent of the marks. Today, if there are not enough number of youth passing the examination, they resort to strikes etc. and get through. Some students came to me one day and asked that there should be a re-examination held. They said there was a good deal of copying at the examination that was held. I said, "Yes. That is a good idea. But, let me know, how many of you have passed in this examination?" Not one of them had. So I said, "Why don't you go back and bring me an application from both those who have passed and those who have failed?" They never came back again! They accept, something bad was done; but, they are not prepared to face the consequences boldly.

Hold on to elevating ideals. Be eager to give back to the country at least a small measure of what you have received from it. Education must train our mind and teach it to hold on to Truth and Efficiency. I shall give you an example of a young boy who was studying Architecture. He came from a good family, with high traditions of public service. So, I said to him, "What do you want to do when you finish College?" He replied, "Well, I would like to take up a job for Rs. 500 in the Government." I said, "Really?" He said, "Why? If I have a job on 500 in the Government, I will get very much more, on the side!" So, they seem to think, right from the beginning that they must be smart enough to collect easy money and live in style.

These are all challenges that face youth today. You will have far greater challenges than we had. I am glad you are being equipped here to meet them. There is no reason why you should not meet them boldly and succeed when you have been trained in an institution such as this, where there is peace, quiet and loving guidance, and every opportunity to study and expand knowledge, and to develop the right personality, with the right outlook and attitude. I express my tribute to Sri Sathya Sai Baba who has started and is fostering Institutions of this kind in many States.

*—From Speech, delivered at Sri Sathya Sai Arts & Science College
for Women, Anantapur, 20 January 78*

Who Have the Right?

Man can claim certain fundamental 'rights', which the leaders of society and rulers of peoples have to guarantee and protect. The most precious of these rights and the most fundamental is the right, every man, woman and child has, to manifest and develop the innate Divinity. That single right includes every other. Man has the right to be truthful, to express his love towards all beings and to live at peace with himself, undisturbed by physical or mental anxiety. He has evolved into a human being just for this consummation, this achievement. These three are the hallmarks of the Divine.

Of course, every human being has a few responsibilities as well. He has the duty of living out his days along the path of Dharma. What is Dharma? It can be identified with the help of three signs: It must be ennobling, sanctifying, elevating. It must bring out the higher qualities of man into action and render him more courageous, more serviceable, and more peaceful. It must not contradict the principles of natural justice. The traditional definition of Dharma is 'that which maintains and supports human society'. Among the sources of Dharma, as mentioned in the Sastras, we have the Vedas, the Sastras and the code followed by 'good men'. The Vedas and Sastras too are revelations, made by the Divine about the codes of conduct, to minds purified by renunciation and single-pointed devotion to Truth.

Who are these 'good men', the 'Sishtas'? Those who have earned the right to lay down the norms for society must be impartial and unprejudiced. They must also be aware of the basic Divinity that pervades the Universe and every particle therein. To build a house, materials as well as a builder, are essential. Iron, cement, wood, bricks etc are wanted as well as a person who plans and builds. To build the Universe, there was only the Lord, Easwara, who willed so and His Will provided the plan and the materials. When you will, 'I shall drink coffee', cups and plates, spoon and powder, milk and sugar get ready to fulfill that desire. When the Lord declared, "Ekoham; bahusyam. I am alone; let me become many." His Will manifested as this multiplicity. When good men are established in this vision of the ONE appearing as MANY, they can manifest only Love. Their words will be soft and sweet; their deeds will be helpful and peaceful. They will relish only pleasant and joy-yielding tasks. Their lives will be living examples of Dharma.

What is the Dharma most natural for man? The Gita says that man must use in his dealings with others only words that are free from anger or spite, that are loveable and beneficial, that encourage and inspire rather than discourage and defeat. As far as possible the good will try to avoid hurting the feelings of others, even by speaking the truth about him. A very sincere Sadhaka once retired into a hermitage deep in the forest and entered on a schedule of meditation, reinforcing his will with two vows—one, never to hurt any living being and two, never to slide into falsehood. While he was fairly on the way to success in his task, one hot afternoon, he saw a young deer fleeing from some hunters and hiding in a bush behind his hermitage. The hunters appeared within minutes and accosted him, with the question, "Did you notice a deer entering this place? Where has it gone?" The Sadhaka was in a fix. If he answered that he had no knowledge of the deer, he would break his second vow; and, if he divulged where the deer was, he would break his first vow, for, the hunters were intent on killing the deer. So, he resorted to a stratagem which saved him from both the sins. He said, "How can any reply be given? The eyes that see cannot talk; the tongue that can talk has no power to see!" One has to resort to such cleverness to avoid hurting or harming others.

Sastra is a word derived from the root 'to command'. The Sastras have a series of Do's and Don'ts, that are drawn from the experience of generations of elders and lawgivers. That experience is conferred to them by the spark of Divinity that animates them. Remember that God is the witness watching your every breath.

Of the Four F's that I insist upon, the first one is—Follow the Master. Now, who is this Master? The Master is no other than the Inner Voice of the God within. Be conscious of this

Inner Resident, the Charioteer. Give Him the reins of the senses and of the wayward Mind. You recite Shanti three times, at the end of every rite. The significance is that you pray for Peace in three fields: Adibhoutik (the field of the mere physical, composed of the five elements), Adidaivik (the field of the sense-organs and the inner instruments of perception, each presided over by a separate daivik force) and the Adhyatmic (the field dominated by the Over-soul the Atma, whose awareness by the Individual is the only guarantee of lasting peace).

The mineral was born; it died and manifested as a tree. The tree died and manifested as animal. The animal died and became man. Man dies and does not become anything superior. He degenerates into the animal! He misses his way, for, ignorance befogs his eye. Man's destiny is to become God; he has to attain it, soon or late. Until then, he will be playing the triple role and behaving some times as a saint, sometimes as an animal and often as a blind man searching for a black cat in a dark room.

—*Discourse: College Hostel, Brindavan*

Bharatiya Paramartha Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

8. The Jivatma

A person can discard as many gross bodies in which he takes temporary residence, as the number of times he pares his nails. But, the subtle body cannot so be changed; it lasts and persists. This is the most secret doctrine of Bharatiya spiritual thought. Going further along this line of discovery, it can be revealed that man means: a complex of the gross body, the subtle body and the Jivi (the Individual). The Vedantic philosophy would declare that the Jivi shares the quality of Eternal unchanging Everlastingness (Nitya). Prakriti or the objective World is also eternal, but, with a difference. It undergoes perpetual change; it is never the same; but, it persists forever. The basis for the objective world, namely, Prana (the life force) and Aakasa (Space or ether) are eternal, but, they act and interact without rest and manifest variously and manifoldly.

The Individual Atma (the Jivatma) did not have its origin in either Aakasa or Prana; it is not material in nature. So, it is eternal, without any change. It did not happen through the impact of Prana on Aakasa, or Aakasa on Prana. Things brought together will disintegrate. But, things that are 'themselves' ab-initio cannot so come apart. For disintegration means 'resuming the original nature', 'becoming what it originally was', 'reducing itself to its native substance'. The gross body is the result of the combination of Prana and Aakasa and so, it dissolves itself into its components. The subtle body too dissolves but, only after a long lone; time. The Jivi is not brought together, so, it cannot fall apart. It has no birth. It cannot be born. A unitive part-less being can have no moment of origin.

The objective world or Prakriti, consisting of billions and billions of varied things, forces and events is governed by the Will of God. God is All-knowing, All-penetrating All-pervading; He is activating Prakriti and acting through Prakriti, all the time. Prakriti is ever in His care. His sovereignty is beginningless and endless. This is the doctrine of the Dualists, the Dvaitins.

This gives room for one question. When the world is ruled by God, how does He permit it to be so wicked and vile? The answer given is that God is not responsible for the grief and the pain. The sins we commit are the progenitors of the grief we suffer. Joy and sorrow are the consequences of the good and the evil' that man perpetrates. God is the Witness. He does not punish, nor does He cause grief. The Jivi is beginningless that is to say, he has no birth but, he involves himself in incessant activity and so, he has to go through the inevitable consequences of that activity. This is the experience of every one, the characteristic of every one's mind. This is the unbreakable law of the objective world or Prakriti. Grief or joy is the image of the activity one engages in. It is the resound, the reflection, the reaction. The Jivi can be the witness without concerning himself with the good and the bad of the activity. When involvement happens, good will have to be experienced when good is done, and evil will have to be experienced when evil is done.

The Vedanta asserts that the Jivi is genuinely, by its very nature, pure and, unblemished. This is the accepted doctrine according to Bharatiya thought. But, this truth has been befogged by ignorance and neglect. So, Maya afflicts the experience and the shade of ignorance brads evil. But, when Satkarma or beneficial activity is engaged in the clouds of Maya are scattered and the

Reality of the Self is realised. All beings, all Jivis are by their very nature pure. Good acts can remove the taints of evil deeds and preserve its essential purity. Then, the Jivi is led into the God-ward path, the Devayana. The God-ward urge will transform the words, the thoughts and the deeds of the individual.

We cannot think without words; words are the essential material for thought. When the individual drops the body, the words enter the mind, the mind enters the Prana or life-force and the Prana merges in the Atma. The Atma (individualised in the body) when it liberates itself rushes to the, Suryaloka, the Region of the Solar Principle, the Surya. From thence, it reaches the region of Brahma, the Brahma-loka. Having reached that region, the individualised Atma or Jivatma has no more concern with Prakriti. It will exist there till the end of Time: It will experience boundless Delight. It will have all powers except the power of Creation.

The authority, to rule over the Cosmos is exclusive to God. God is free from desires of all varieties. Man's duty is but to offer Him Love and worship Him through Love. This raises man to the highest status among beings. Those who are unaware of this status or incapable of discharging its responsibilities belong to other categories. They too offer and worship, they too engage themselves in beneficial activity. But, they crave for the fruits, they perform acts motivated by a desire to benefit from the results that emerge there from. "We have helped the helpless; so, our path will be smooth and safe. We have uplifted the downtrodden; so, we can avoid troubles on our road. We have busied ourselves in singing the Lord's Glory in chorus (Bhajan); so, we are sure of Heaven"—these are the calculations of people of this nature who engage themselves in 'good acts'. When such people give up their bodies, that is to say, when such people die, their words will merge in their minds, their minds will merge in their Prana, and the Prana, thereafter will merge in the Jivi, and the Jivatma will travel to the Region of the Moon Principle (the Chandra-loka) that is to say the Loka of the Presiding Deity of the Mind... suggesting that they have to enter again the realm of the mind with all its agitations and turmoils of wants and wishes. In the Chandra-loka, such Jivis will experience some satisfaction and delight, until the consequence of the good acts last, that is why it is said in the scriptures: Kaheene Punye, marthyalokam visanthi. (When the acquired merit is spent, they enter again the world of mortal men). The Jivatma encases itself in a body equipped with sense organs etc, appropriate to the earned consequences of the deeds of the previous body, and starts another life-career. The residence of the soul in the Chandra-loka is what the Hindus refer to as the time spent as a Deva in Heaven or as an Angel according to Christian and Islamic religions. The name Devendra given to the Lord of these Devas is an indication of a position of authority. Thousands have risen to that position.

According to the Vedas, when the highest good is observed, that person is elevated to the position of Devendra-hood. The soul raised previously to that position will descend to the earth and resume its career in human form. Just as on earth, monarchs change, in heaven too rulers cannot escape rise and fall. The residents of Heaven too are subject to the law of ups and downs. It is only the Brahma-loka that is free from birth and death, rise and fall, ups and downs. This is the basic doctrine of Bharatiya thought; its eternal nectar, administered to humanity.

When the Jivatma is as a Deva in the Chandra-loka, it cannot manifest any Karma. Only man can express himself through Karma which binds him by its consequence. Karma means, activity

undertaken with desire, with an eye on the result. When the soul is in Chandra-loka as a Deva, it is content and satisfied and so, it will not crave for activity for earning pleasure or achieving some success. The residence in that Loka is the reward it has secured for the good deeds done by it in the past, or it may be the prize won for such goodness. When the delight emanating from the good deeds is experienced and spent away, the balance of the consequence accumulated has to be suffered and so, the soul has to come as man on earth. Then, attaining the highest good, and engaging himself in acts of highest potency for merit, he can cleanse his heart and reach Brahma-loka from whence there no coming back.

The word, Naraka, can nowhere be found in the Vedas. The conception of Hell is foreign to the spiritual thought of the Bharatiyas. The idea of Hell and the various descriptions of Hell are all later additions in the Sastras and Puranas. The authors of these texts believed that religion will be incomplete if it does not posit Hell. They laid down diverse tortures as part of Hell, but, they laid down one limit to the pain Hell inflicts. They declared that there can be no death in Hell. The purpose for which Hell was created was only to incite fear among the people in order to make them desist from sin.

But, Advaita does not posit Heaven or Hell. It is concerned only with Bondage and Liberation, Ignorance and Illumination. It is known as Vedanta. There is no faith higher than what Vedanta stands for.

(To be continued)

Delhi and Hyderabad

Baba visited Delhi and Hyderabad during the first half of March, and stayed in each City for a few days. The visit left such a trail of experiences and impacts on the vast numbers of people who benefited by it that one is led to think that a new phase may have started in the strategy adopted by Him for the spread of Dharmic conduct and the feel of spirituality in the fabric of society.

Even as He boarded the flight from Bangalore to Delhi on the tenth of March, many important political personalities (can it be Co-incidence?) on the plane (the Pilot was an ardent devotee of Baba) and a large proportion of the passengers wanted to make the best of the aerial opportunity by making a bee-line to Him, seeking blessings. This was an early indication of what was to come in the next few days.

While in Delhi, leading personalities from different spheres of activity-Ambassadors, of countries from East and West, Ministers of the Central Government—past, present (and future), members of the Judiciary, officers of the Civil Services, members of the Armed Forces and leaders of public life sought and gained audience with Him. The visit took the elite by storm. Barriers that pollute the daily lives of people—racial, geographic, linguistic, economic, political and ideological—dissolved in His Presence.

Ignoring these differences, vast gatherings sat around Him listening to His Message of Love. At a specially arranged Meeting in the huge Indoor Stadium at Delhi, Baba, in His forthright discourse, declared that the World can have a bright and happy future, only through the observance of our ancient ideals and traditions, and not by the accumulation of weapons, or the adoption of new ideologies. The impact of the discourse was immediate and deep. Baba left Delhi on the 16th, ignoring prayers for the continuation of the visit for a few more days. So, the thousands who had come to Delhi from distant places for Darshan could disperse for home in good time and avoid being caught in the tornado that struck Delhi with unprecedented intensity, the day after He left!

He stayed at Hyderabad for four days on His return; the events there were a repetition on a provincial scale of what was witnessed at the Capital. Individual devotees were blessed by various Inexplicable happenings as a result of His Grace. On the elite of the Twin Cities the impact was striking. His stay culminated in a Special Meeting at the Indoor Stadium which was packed to capacity, with thousands of listeners squatting on the grounds. The Divine Discourse was as outspoken and hard-hitting as the one at Delhi. Her Excellency the Governor of Andhra Pradesh, who presided, inaugurated the proceedings with a brief speech saturated in humility and devotion.

Baba returned to Bangalore, by plane, on 20th March. This time too, perhaps by coincidence, the Pilot was an ardent devotee, who would go into the cockpit only after paying homage to the Lotus Feet. Baba had no respite during the flight, for a stream of passengers queuing up to Him for blessings.

—*S. Bhagavantam*

(A detailed account of the Visits and of the Divine Discourses will appear in the May number of this magazine-Ed)

Mahasivaratri

In spite of the announcement that Bhagavan has cancelled the celebration of Mahasivaratri at the place where He may be on that Holy Day, (and the certainty that He was not present physically at Prasanthi Nilayam, where the Festival attracts many thousands of eager pilgrims from all over the world,) thousands, who had realised that Bhagavan was omnipresent and His Presence must be 'sanctifying the Nilayam' on that Day devoted to Prayer, had gathered at Prasanthi Nilayam and were happy that they could be there that day, imbibing the sacred vibrations.

Bhagavan was at Brindavan, Whitefield, until the 4th day of March, when he left for Ootacamund on the Nilgiris in Tamil Nadu. He spent a few days there, at Nandanavanam, where since February 9th, a Boarding School for Children is established, with the aim of inculcating healthy and holy ideals in their growing minds.

Bhagavan blessed the children and tended them with Divine affection. Mahasivaratri was on the 7th, and there was no sign of Bhagavan at Brindavan or any news of His intention to return, in time for the holy day. Tami Nadu was alert and on tip-toe, hoping and praying that He might stay at Ootacamund or come down the Hills towards any City or Town or Village, in order to spend the Sivaratri quietly and unknown to many, as He had done a few years back at the Bandipur Wild Life Sanctuary. The students of the Sri Sathya Sai College at Brindavan were the saddest since they did not philosophise and lift up their drooping spirits by the contemplation of the Omnipresence of Bhagavan. The boarders of the Hostel at Brindavan and devotees in and around Brindavan dutifully arranged for the All Night Vigil and Bhajan, at Brindavan itself, to start at 6-30 P. M. and continue without break, until 6 30 A.M., on the 8th.

Meanwhile, people who had been to Ootacamund brought news that Bhagavan had left and that he might be bound for the Mudumalai Wild Life Sanctuary in Tamil Nadu, a few miles south of the Bandipur Forest. They confirmed the fears of devotees at Brindavan that Bhagavan might spend the whole day there itself, as He had done once before on Sivaratri

At about 2 P. M., however, Bhagavan in His infinite Compassion, ordered that the party leave Mudumalai for Brindavan. He was set upon reaching the place, where His 'children' were pining for Him before the Bhajan started and, in spite of the 200 miles that lay between, His Car appeared at the porch of the Brindavan Bungalow, at 5-45 P. M., awakening in all hearts an inexpressible gush of grateful delight. Bhagavan gave Darshan during Bhajan at 7 P.M., and He sat on the Dais for about an hour, listening to the melodious Bhajan by the students. On the morning of the 8th, even at the day dawned, hundreds of devotees from Bangalore City, engaged in night-long Bhajans there, joined the students and others at Brindavan and awaited the arrival of Bhagavan to fill their eyes with the Divine Darshan. Bhagavan came into the Bhajan Hall at 7 A. M., and graciously vouchsafed the Mahasivaratri Message for which thousands were praying:

"Sivaratri is a very auspicious Holy Day for all. It is the fourteenth day of the lunar fortnight, when the moon is waning; it is the fourteenth day, when the Sun is in the sign, Aquarius. The night is considered holy, since the Festival is related to the Moon, rather than to the Sun. That is the reason why it is called. Siva Ratri, the Siva-Night. Other nights are just nights, but this particular night is the Night of Siva. It is the Divine Night, the Night of Consecration, the Night of Dedication, the Night of Illumination.

The mind is intimately associated with the Moon; Chandra or the Deity in the Moon, is the presiding deity of the Mind. He loses one sixteenth of his brilliance every day, from the Full Moon Day and continues waning until this Night he has just one sixteenth of his power left. The mind too has to be overwhelmed and conquered by man, so that it may not obstruct his progress, by its vagaries and waywardness. And, with the moon, the mind too can get waned, if spiritual Sadhana is pursued. Finally, on this night, there is just a minute part to be defeated, and that can be achieved by keeping vigil and dwelling on the glory of God. The vigil that is prescribed is a symbol of the eternal vigil one has to observe; the rite of fast is the symbol of the need to deprive the senses the pleasures they crave for. The night-long Bhajan is the symbol of the life-long Consciousness of the Divine Presence that every one should cultivate. These rites and vows, which are laid down for Sivaratri are absent on other nights of the year and so, observing these today as reminders and symbols is very essential.

There are three types of men: the multi-centered, the uni-centered and the non-centered. The first group who allow their senses, mind and intelligence to wander where they will is a very populous group. So also is the third group, of people who flit from one thing to another, who hop around from one subject to another, in listless flippancy. But, to earn concentration and single-centered-ness, this Festival of Sivaratri is very propitious. The Bhajans and the ceaseless flow of Kirtan and Namasmarana are prescribed for this very purpose.

Therefore, you must realise that this Bhajan and Namasmarana, worship and Puja, are all, not for pleasing or propitiating God, but, for your own spiritual progress. Of course, people praise the rich and those in power—especially, those who are employed by such men and are beholden to them for their livelihood—so that they may induce them to shower some gifts on them. But, God is All Power, All Glory and All Splendour. He cannot be induced by praise to shower Grace. Nor does He come down upon those who do not sing His praise. No. The recitation of the Divine qualities and the mention of the Divine attributes by means of these Bhajans are prescribed, so that, by constant dwelling on these elevating ideals, persons can imbibe the Divine qualities and approximate more and more to the Divinity that is their nature. We become what we contemplate. By constant thought, the ideal gets imprinted on the heart. When we fix our thought all the time on the evil that others do, our mind too gets polluted by the evil. When we fix our mind on the virtues and well-being of others, the mind too becomes cleansed of wrong and entertains only good thoughts. No evil thought can penetrate the mind of a person wholly given up to love and compassion. The thoughts you indulge in shape your nature; they affect not only others, but, you too. For example, when you press the button to release a flash to take the photograph of some one opposite, his face is lit and yours too is lit to a certain extent. When a truck full of municipal refuse passes by, you are affected by the bad smell, though you may stand afar. It may be a momentary thought, it may be a trivial thought—yet, its effect on the mind cannot be avoided. It is because the ancient sages knew the importance of this truth that they declared, "He who knows Brahman becomes Brahman." To become Brahman, the only way is to spend time ever in thought of Brahman, to the exclusion of every other thing or idea. With a lump of salt on the tongue, how can any one relish the sweetness of honey or fruits? With a lump of candy on the tongue, how can the taste of salt and savoury be known? Immerse your mind in good thoughts; the world will be good. Soak your mind in bad thoughts; the world will be bad for you. So, recollect only good; do only good; plan only good; speak only good; as a result you will near God, the source of all Good. This is the message of Sivaratri.

According to numerology, the first three letters of the word, Si-va-ra, connote the numbers 5, 4 and 2, and the third syllable or letter 'tri', means three. 5, 4 and 2—all three make one whole, one composite picture of the 'eleven' Rudra. Rudra means the One who makes man weep; the eleven Rudras are the 5 senses of perception and the 5 senses of action, and the Mind. These, by leading man astray in pursuit of trivial and transitory pleasures ruin man and make him weep. But, the Atma, if it is sought after and relied upon, will shed its rays on the eleven and make them meaningful partners in the progress of man towards self-realisation. The rays from the Atma illumine the Intelligence, and the illumined Intelligence alerts the Mind and the alerted Mind gets control of the senses and the path is clear for the person to proceed through knowledge to wisdom.

Another significance of Sivaratri is this Siva, or the Paramapurusha, the Eternal Absolute Person, in His desire to attract Prakriti engaged Himself in the Tandava dance, the Cosmic Dance. The Dance was a Divine Plan to attract, a Miracle, one may say. For, all Divine Miracles like those of Rama (He who pleases and delights) and Krishna (He who attracts) are for drawing people to the Divine Presence for the purpose of correcting or cleansing them, or confirming their faith, and then, leading them on to the Sadhana of Service, so that they might merge in ecstasy in the Source of all Ecstasy—Chamatkara resulting in Samskara, Samskara leading to Paropakara and Paropakara conferring Sakshatkara. The Tandava dance was so vast and fast that Fire emanated from Siva's Body from the heat generated by activity. In order to cool Siva and comfort Him, Parvati, the Consort, placed the Ganga on His Head, made the Crescent Moon rest amidst the coils of his hair, applied cold sandal-paste all over His Body, wound round the joints of His hands and feet, cold-blooded snakes, and finally, being Herself the Daughter of the Himalayas (the Mountains of Eternal Snow), she sat on His lap and become a part of Him. At this, Siva rose and both Purusha and Prakriti danced together to the immense delight of the Gods and of all Creation. This happened, according to the Puranas, on this Sivaratri Day.

The significance of this myth lies in the truth that it has enshrined within itself-how to please the Lord and win His Grace. What a pity that a Holy Day of such sanctifying significance is being celebrated through a routine of meaningless and even harmful pastimes. Since a vigil is laid down, they spend the night in witnessing a series of films, or in playing cards. Can a person who rolls in bed since he does not get sleep claim that he has observed the vow of vigil? Can a stork, standing on one foot, on the bank of a stream, intent on the appearance of a fish which it can pick up and gulp, claim that it is practising meditation? Can a person who refuses to eat his lunch, because he has had a tiff at home with his wife claim that he has observed 'fasting'? There are no short cuts or tricks in the spiritual path.

Sivaratri is celebrated in all Siva temples today. Srisailam is a famous temple of Siva, where thousands gather. There is a fine story told about the Festival in Srisailam. At the foot of the Srisailam range of hills, there was a village, where a boy of nine years, named Bala Ramanna, attended the Primary School. He learnt from his friends at school that their sisters and brothers-in-law were coming to their homes in order to attend the Sivaratri Celebrations on the Srisailam Hills. Ramanna came home and wanted that his mother should get his sister and brother-in-law too for the festival. Though she told him that he had no sister and therefore no brother-in-law, he would not pay heed. He said he must have a sister and a brother-in-law like his friends. So, the mother, just to quieten him, said, "Yes! But, your sister is on the Hill in the temple; her husband too is there. Their names are Bhramaramba and Mallikarjuna" She gave him the Names by which Siva and His Consort are known. Bhramaramba meaning the Bee and Mallika-arjuna meaning the White Jasmine. These names are very apt, because the Consort draws inspiration and instruction and derives wisdom from the Lord.

When he was told that his sister was in the temple on the Hill, Ramanna insisted that He would go and invite her and his brother-in-law to come home and be with them for some time. He wanted to take some presents for them, but, his mother said that they were far too rich and that younger members of the family should not dare present anything to the elders. So, Ramanna cried piteously and could not be comforted unless he went up the Hill and met his sister and her husband. The mother sent the boy with a neighbour who was proceeding up the Hill for the

Festival; she gave them some money so that he could get some presents for Ramanna hastened up the Hill, ran into the Temple, crying, "Sister" "Brother-in-law" and fell at the feet of the idol of Bhramaramba. He held the idol by the hand and began dragging her to accompany him. He clasped the idol of Mallikarjuna and would not leave hold. The priests in the temple drove him out as a mad boy.

Then, in despair, he climbed a rock and threatened to fall down from that height, unless his sister came with him, with her Lord. Just then he heard a shout, "Brother-in-law" "Ramanna" "Don't jump" "We are coming with you"and, soon, Lord Siva and His Consort presented themselves before him and accompanied him to his cottage in the valley below. The mother and son were so overwhelmed with Divine Bliss that they merged in the Divine Phenomenon present before them and were seen no more by mortal eye. This incident has added to the sanctity of the shrine of Bhramaramba and Mallikarjuna at Srisailam.

Children in those days, and elders too, had simple hearts, innocent minds and high ideals. Nowadays, cynicism and disbelief have become rampant. There is a wave of negligence and sloth sweeping over the people. If one word is uttered, they try to discover ten meanings into it and no one of them is the right one. When one subject is raised, they start a series of arguments and counter-arguments and in the dust that is raised, truth is ignored. Life is largely artificial, ideals are narrow, and so, Divinity is beyond reach.

Bala Ramanna had unadulterated faith and so, he was able to dedicate his pure Self to the Lord and reach the Goal. You must always raise small things into higher levels by infusing them with high meaning. He believed that the stone image could be God; he did not bring God down to the level of a stone image. You can worship a picture as God, but, you should not posit God as a picture. Wood, stone, mud—all three can be Divine; but, do not limit God as wood, stone or mud.

Have high ideals; strive to elevate yourselves. Reach the Highest Goal, God. Whatever the obstacle, the calumny, the cynicism, the opposition that come in your path, do not be disheartened. Give up the animal in you, stabilise yourselves in human virtues and proceed boldly towards the achievement of Divinity. Do not waver—This dayBhakti; tomorrowpleasure—seeking; the day after, material pursuits; the day after that, cleverness and duplicity!" "When everything is succeeding, devotion; when something goes wrong, despair; when discipline is enforced, you give up; when Love is showered, you approach"this dual attitude must be given up.

The very Divine Principle, which seekers strive to visualise by means of years of asceticism and renunciation, Japa and Tapa, is before you here and now; realise the good fortune you are endowed with. From this day—I have this day, the holy Festival Day of Sivaratri, granted pardon for all the errors you have fallen into, knowingly or unknowingly up to this time—have auspicious thoughts, auspicious words to all, do auspicious deeds and as a result attain the embodiment of Mangala or Auspiciousness, Siva Himself."

At the end of the Discourse, Bhagavan sang a few Bhajan songs, accepted Aarati, and concluded with the sanctification of Prasad, later given to the thousands who had gathered.

On the evening of the 8th March, the students gathered at the Hostel and Bhagavan blessed them with a special Discourse, a large part of which has great relevance to devotees in general. He said, "In this holy land of Bharat, human life has, according to the vision of the seers, to flow along four stages: the Brahmacharya, the Grihastha, the Vanaprastha and the Sanyasa. When life is lived keeping these stages in view, man can reach the goal of Self-realisation through Self-confidence, Self-satisfaction and Self-sacrifice.

Of these four stages, the first Brahmacharya is the very basis, the foundational structure. Usually, the word Brahmacharya is applied to a stage in which a man is unmarried and has not yet taken up the burden of running a household. A Brahmachari is an unmarried youth. But, this meaning is far from correct. Charya means 'moving'; Brahmacharya means 'moving in Brahma'. The Brahmachari lives and moves and has his being in Brahman, the Ultimate Absolute Divine. Whatever he may be doing, or planning, whatever happens or whatever is consumed, he knows that it is all Brahman. That awareness gives him maximum joy and contentment in all circumstances. The Brahmachari (the Means of boyhood and youth are the years of Brahmacharya: the foundational years) has his mind fixed on the blossoming of the spirit and guarding the mind from the pests of hate, greed, lust, pride etc. He might observe many things, but, he tells himself that each of them is an illusion, an untrue phenomenon, subject to change and disintegration.

The mind is but a mirror; the good and the bad are both reflected therein. If the mirror is distorted by lust, greed and anger, hate, pride or pettiness, the images too get distorted. The images attract or repel, according to the wishes of the onlooker, his likes and dislikes. Unless the mirror is cleansed and kept straight and level, truth cannot be reflected in it. By passing successfully through the disciplines of Brahmacharya, the youth should be able to get in the mirror of his mind a true picture of Brahman.

Buddha knew that reflections are not valid. So, he taught that "Sarvam Dukham"—all is misery. Man is born in sorrow, grows up in sorrow, lives through sorrow and dies inflicting sorrow, himself entangled in sorrow. A person celebrates with great pomp the birth of a son. But, the son starts a continuous series of anxiety and sorrow. His health, his studies, his behaviour, his pranks, his companions, his future—all create a crop of anxieties.

See how when a desire arises for joy, it brings also a train of sorrows. That is why the Buddha said that desire is the root of grief. When man is able to discriminate between genuine joy and false joy, he will attach himself more to Brahman and less to the sensual and material.

Those who succeed in the Sadhana of Brahmacharya continue throughout life dedicated to Brahman. But, those who fail, move on to the next stage of life called Grihastha, the householder type. Those who conquer the senses, achieve purity of consciousness and establish mastery over the mind—these continue as Brahmacharis. Those who are unable to attain this high state become Grihastas. But, even for such persons, there are Sadhanas that can help their progress. When they observe certain rules and limits, widen their hearts and deepen their faith, they too can march forward to the goal of Self-realisation. The stage of the householder will impress on the person the truth that Buddha taught, "Sarvam Sunyam" "Sarvam Sunyam" (Everything is

void.) Nothing is solid, substantial, or everlasting. Everything undergoes change, moment by moment. In this perpetual flux, what can be trusted to be permanent? To which can one hold as refuge?

The next stage is Vanaprastha. He who could not make the best out of the householder, Sadhana takes recourse to the 'recluse' stage, as Vanaprastha is called. When debts pile up, when there is no peace and harmony at home, when despair stares in the face, then, the dispirited householder becomes a recluse. To such people, the warning that Buddha administers is— Sarvam Swaswarupam, Sarvam Swaswarupam (Everything is in its own nature and form). That is to say, each is a unique individualised being, no one is capable of identity with another. All attachment based on that belief is false and fragile. The wife, the son, the kinsman, the friend—all are travellers on different routes at different paces. Why bother about another? Reduce attachment and try to save yourselves by cognising the God within.

The scriptures lay down many hard disciplines for Vanaprastha, which may well keep people away from this stage. They have to reduce the intake of food systematically, the maximum is 15 at the rate of one mouthful a day from the Full Moon to the New Moon and they must increase the intake at the rate of one mouthful a day from the New Moon to the Full Moon Day. They must sleep under the open sky. They must be moving on in the same direction without staying long at one place. They must utilise every experience to confirm the renunciation of desire. The lesson that they must ultimately learn is as Buddha declared, Sarvam Kshanikam, Sarvam kshanikam (Every thing is momentary).

The fourth stage is Sanyasa, Monkhood. This does not involve just the wearing of the ochre robe and the shaving of the head. Sanyasa means, giving up all desires, except the one desire to merge in God. Since man welcomes into his mind a series of enticing desires, and pursues them with eager determination, life which can be a saga of beauty, sweetness and delight, is turned into a vale of tears. To escape sorrow, the only means is to escape birth and its consequence, death. God has neither and so, merging In Him is the one sure remedy.

If man directs his will, intelligence and strength into evil ways, how can he ever hope to be happy, peaceful and prosperous? Such people engage themselves in sin with laughter in their eyes and later, when the consequences overpower them, they repent with tears and sobs. So, man has to keep away from bad thoughts, bad company and bad influences and strive all the time to earn the Grace of God. Do not be content with the superficial pose of goodness; for, God cares for the reality, not the appearance. Service done in the true spirit of Love is the surest means of winning His Grace.

Through holy merit, you have earned this human life. You have won the additional good fortune of nearness to the very Avatar of God, come as an Embodiment of Love, Power and Wisdom. Do not let this magnificent chance go without benefiting you. Whatever others may say, hold fast to your faith and declare that you will not be tempted away from the path you have chosen as the best. If only you take one step towards me, I shall take a hundred towards you and help you to reach me. I shall bless you with the confidence and courage needed for leading a life of peace, harmony and service. Yesterday, returning from Ootacamund, some students who were with me desired to take a photograph of me, with a Polaroid camera that they had. I told them

that when they click, would get MY REAL FORM, showing them who I really AM. When they clicked, what emerged from the camera was the picture of Dattatreya, the Trinity, the Composite Divine Form of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. Be conscious of that Reality which is in you also and so shape your thoughts, words and deeds that they conform to the Divinity that is your core.”

—*Ed.*

Oh, Ye of Little faith!

A friend with whom I work has listened to my endless tales of Sai Baba's miracles and power, with doubt and teasing. But, he did not scoff or deny and even asked me for some of Bhagavan's Vibhuti, when his mother was ill. His name is Tony De Paco, and his mother recovered at the time, but, made her transition, a year later.

One night, Tony asked me if I would drive him to where his auto had stalled. The starter was quite active, but, the motor was not responsive. I suggested we sprinkle some Vibhuti on the motor.

Tony said that the electricity or the petrol was not reaching the motor, and, he would just leave it, until he could return and fix it.

But, I prevailed and Tony allowed me to place Vibhuti on the motor, before he tried again to start the obstinate auto which was very old and worn. The motor started, much to our delight, and Tony started the many miles home, while I followed, in my car.

We finally arrived where I should turn to go to my home, and Tony wanted me to turn off and he would continue the two miles further, to his residence.

But, Tony is a good man. I decided I would follow him, in case the auto stopped again. I was very grateful for this decision of mine, when I saw Tony's auto stopped dead, a short distance further:

I stopped and went towards Tony. I was expecting his gratitude for my gesture, when I was dismayed to hear him say, in disgust, "Now, see what you have done! You have stopped this motor again. Baba's Vibhuti had it running and you did not have the faith to turn off. So, your lack of faith has stopped the motor.”

While I was towing him home, I thought, " I *talk* like the devotee—but, it is Tony who has the *faith*. How wrong I was, to feel superior!"

—*John Eversole, Santa Barbara, Calif. U.S.A.*

Our Beloved

The full, cosmic, Universal Being descending into the human mould is the Avatar as the scriptures declare. But, we need understand the word in the right perspective. What induces the Most High, the Universal Mind, the Transcendent Will, to come down and engage Itself in limited conditions for the betterment of mankind? What makes Him endure neglect, calumny, doubt and denial, that blindness dare heap on Him? It is His Compassion. The Avatar comes prompted by compassion and lives as the embodiment of Compassion. The Karuna in the Universal flows in every word and act of the Avatar. Of course, Baba has declared, "When I am alone, I am God." But, keep in mind this declaration, while listening to this incident. "Once during Dasara, while a play was enacted by the Bal Vikas children on the stage, Baba was seated among the devotees, watching the kids sing and dance. Noticing that it was pretty warm in the thick of the crowd that had packed the auditorium, one devotee borrowed a fan from some one and began fanning Baba, rather vigorously. Baba sat through this apparently unconcerned for a few minutes. Then, He suddenly turned round, and with a charming smile, took the fan from his hand, saying, "I have come to do your Seva; why should you do my Seva?" Now, how do you react to a God who says this?

Bhagavan is a compassionate parent, not a distant formidable God Almighty. Can we afford to, install Him in a temple, anoint Him as Omnipresent Omniscient Omnipotent Lord, and keep Him away from our hearts and homes? Do you think He would love to stay in a lordly mansion with candelabras and carpets (for He is God Almighty), or do you hope to have Him in your own home, though it may be an unimpressive cottage?

He has come to give the drooping eye a little light, the broken heart a little joy, the failing limbs a little more endurance and the lost spirit, a little Love. He says, "My son! You complain I have a hard heart. You say I do not care for your tears. But when you weep, I weep; when you are happy, I am happy. I am fed when you are fed. Here is a God who is our kith and kin, aware of the joys and griefs of imperfect men, understanding our loves and frustrations, dreams and aspirations, asserting that man can realise his truth by involving himself in loving service of fellowmen. He admonishes us, "What sort of God are you seeking in temples, while on your streets thousands of living gods invite you to worship them with your Seva?"

He does not tell an erring man, "You are doomed; you are a sinner." If a man insists he is a sinner, He says, "No, my boy. There is nothing like sin. You have only erred. The moment you repent, I pardon you, I shall take your word that you will not repeat the error again." To the members and office bearers of the Seva Organisation bearing His Name, He says, "nothing pleases me, no Dhyana, no Tapas no scriptural studies, nothing.... as service of man. If you speak an angry word to some one in your impatience, to some one you cannot tolerate, you say it to me." How often has He said, "I do not want you to cringe before me, I want that you should demand Grace from me, as a child does from its parent." It is not the elaborateness of the worship that pleases Him; what pleases him is the love and sincere friendliness of a pure heart, a Partha's Love. He does not build caves or monasteries or academies to teach men the way to blessedness for Him, blessedness lies in feeding a forlorn brother or sister, in taking the hand of a blind fellow-traveller in shedding Love into a castaway heart. He does not lead us to dusty

debates on scriptural texts, but, he shakes the dust from off the scriptures, and asks us to recollect that the 'proper study of man is mankind'.

All these centuries, we worshipped a strange God, high up in the Heavens, or far in the interior of temples and we banished brother man from our minds and thoughts. So, instead of building up a prosperous, just and happy world, we have thrown the world helter-skelter. We do not see the tender sunlight playing on our doorstep; we imagine the sun, far over the distant hills. So, the Sun has come, to persuade us to look down and admire the beautiful strips of warm light that are lying in wait there.

Baba is today the supreme lover of man, the Beloved of every one of us. He is the greatest evangel of humanism, for, He asserts that the Human is not a whit less than Divine. His pronouncements are not like the distant thunder, which makes us cower in fear and mystery. They are like the fragrant breeze that blows around us, gently inviting us to come out of our petty selves and grow as big as the sky, as warm in generosity as the morning sun, and as lovely as the dewdrop.

Our Beloved Lord does not want to blind us by miracles; He wants that each of us should shine as a miracle. He does not want to make us small by His Himalayan height; he stands with us on the same ground, to lift us to Himalayan height. He opens our vision to the spectacle of our innumerable brothers and sisters jostling around us for a whiff of Divine Grace, and He shows us that He is the innermost core of every one of them. The World, according to Him, is not a place to run away from; it is an arena for service and sacrifice, for work and worship. He is the Greatest, ever born as man, for the love of man. He has never slept these years, never eaten what we would designate a meal. He is incessantly engaged in correcting, consoling and counselling man. He has never spent a quiet hour, never spoken a harsh word, never let a soul down, never reacted to calumny and malice except with a smile, never unsure of his mission even for a moment, never allowed a minute to go waste without a good deed, thought or word, never allowed a person to leave His Presence without the gift of Light and Love. Surely, He fills our hearts with the feeling that He is our only Beloved. May we be His forever.

—**B. B. Misra**

Sai Family News

Sri Sathya Sai Public School "Sri Sailam" Thikkodi, Kerala:

The Governor of Kerala, Mrs. Jyothi Venkatachellum, inaugurated on March 8 newly built Hostel Block of the Public School, established by the Sri Sathya Sai Trust, Kerala. Bhagavan had laid the Foundation Stone for the School on 30th May 1976 and the Hostel Building now constructed provides accommodation for 60 children.

—**Ed.**

Life is a pilgrimage towards God, where man drags his feet along the rough and thorny road of his years. But, with the Name of God on his lips, he will have no thirst; with the Form of God In his heart, he will feel no exhaustion; the company of the holy will inspire him to travel in hope and Faith. The assurance that God is within call, that He is ever near, will lend strength to his limbs and courage to his eye. When the goal is gained, man finds that he has travelled only from himself to himself, that though the way was long and lonesome, the God that drew him, was, all the while, with him and beside him!

—Baba

"The Lord's Prayer"

Although my home is in Woodville, Virginia, U.S.A. by Swami's Grace, I am presently here in India, in His Divine Presence, for several months. The great Peace of the Ashram has given me joy and inspiration. Simply receiving Darshan of Bhagavan has become a miraculous experience for me. As a Christian, I have long contemplated the beautiful teachings of Jesus. Now, through reading 'Vision of the Divine', 'Jnana Vahini' and other teachings of Bhagavan, I have found, slowly dawning upon me a new awareness of Christ's beautiful prayer gift to humanity, the Lord's Prayer. Hidden within the prayer, if one uses the key of Vedic insight that Bhagavan gives, lies a deeper meaning of universal validity.

During the past few days, particularly while waiting in the Darshan line, I have found this admittedly personal and intuitive interpretation of the Lord's Prayer drifting back and forth in my consciousness. Finally I have written it down. I hope the account is coherent, useful and not too esoteric.

The Lord's Prayer—A Vehicle for Self-Realization:

Prayer generated within the heart-depths of the sincere spiritual aspirant has always been the foundation of every religion. The mantric power of the Hindu Gayatri, the transcendent longing of the Vedic Prayers, and the universal "metta" of the Buddhist Invocation are Eastern examples of this ancient truth.

Within the Christian tradition, the simple and exquisite language of the Lord's Prayer has provided a similar source of spiritual nourishment. Traditionally this Prayer has been viewed as an invocation to God, who is beyond man, a submission to His Divine Will, a plea for His protection and forgiveness.

Within all His Discourses and Parables, that Christ tells His Disciples, there lay hidden or deeper meanings: "They who have ears for to hear, let them hear," He said.

Based on insights gained from the Gospel according to Vedanta and gained even more through the Grace and Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, I would propose, there is a more subtle and very powerful inner meaning to this central Prayer taught by Jesus. By interpreting the simple words, in the light of Vedic Knowledge, I have found the Lord's Prayer emerging as a

splendid Dialogue with that Divine Self, resident within each human being, and becoming enlarged in scope into an active vehicle for individual Self-realization and Liberation. The following phrase-by phrase analysis may suggest to others, as it has to me, deeper meanings within the wonderful Prayer-gift given by God, through Christ, to us all.

Our father:

Instead of an external father, visualise the prayer as an address to the Father within to our very Self or Atma, as it exists merged with the Paramatma, the AUM, Brahman, First Cause of Creation.

Who art in heaven:

This Atma-self, which each of us ultimately IS, lies bathed in a perpetual state of Being-Consciousness-Bliss (Sat-Chit-Anandam), beyond the confines of space or time. By daily recognising—even moment-by-moment recognising—this actual heavenly residence of the Self, we strip away the illusory sense-created mind and its dramas.

Hallowed be thy name:

Holy and Consecrated is the Name. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God." It is within AUM, this primal vibration and First Cause of Creation, that all material things—the matter aspect—come into being. In this, phrase lies all Mantra; it is the directive to pursue continuous Namasmarana while holding a material incarnation. The Name is hallowed, because it is the direct route to merging-instant by instant-into our Self, which is with God.

Thy kingdom come:

That is: May the sublime state of Sat-Chit-Ananda be realized Here and Now, Dear Self, through the chanting of your Name and the cognizing of your constant Glory.

Thy will be done:

The Self's Will: Good thoughts, good words, good deeds, the automatic selfless service performed by any Sadhaka whose heart and mind are constantly on the "Name."

On earth:

May Thy Will (the Will of Paramatma) be done on this material plane.

Earth called Bhoo, the gross aspect is identified in the Rg Veda with the Annamaya Kosa or physical sheath—hence, a second interpretation is possible: May the Will of Paramatma be done, by this Body within which my Self temporarily resides.

As it is in heaven:

Read for the meaning of "as", the word "because." Then, the proper emphasis of the word "is" becomes clearly related to Sat (Divine Being-ness at this instant). Hence: "Because It (this Bhuh this physical residence of Atma) is right now in heaven (that is to say, at ONE constantly with Paramatma.)

Give us this day:

Here, if one infers the comma, the seeker requests the Paramatma the gift of "this Day", the gift of Savitri, the divine spark of inner illumination, analogized in the image of the Sun's Dawning, in that most fundamental Vedic Prayer, the Gayatri.

(Give us) our daily bread:

"Give us understanding. Bread, .has been interpreted also as `Divine Grace'. Every sincere aspirant daily receives this Grace in proportion to the degree of one-pointedness and devotion he or she is achieving during moment-by-moment Sadhana.

And forgive us our trespasses:

This kind of Sadhana is difficult truly it is the highest challenge of living, and even the most sincere aspirant will slip often. There must be no feelings of guilt toward our selves when these lapses of the higher consciousness occur. This phrase like a Divine therapist's counsel, reminds us, "We must love our Self always." Only with a balanced non-attached Love, even when the small self errs, can progress continue.

As we forgive those who trespass against us:

The obverse of the Golden Rule. Doing unto others as we would have done ourselves, implies forgiving others as we too wish to be forgiven for our shortcomings. Christ said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, the meek, the poor in spirit." Only through the path of humility and ego-surrender shall we ever enter into the kingdom and purely comprehend, and be re-at-oned with our Atma-hood.

Lead us not into temptation and deliver us from evil:

Deliver us from the vagaries of the Mind. Here, "evil" can only refer to the ignorance born of Maya, the Cosmic Illusion constantly being foisted on us by the `temptation' of the five physical senses. Fixing all concentration on the Atma, our Father within, we realize that we are each one, actually Incarnations of Love, and that Love Divine is the ultimate Source and Final Goal granting liberation from the five senses entirely.

Amen:

Like AUM of the Vedas, AMIN of the Koran, the Hebrew—Christian tradition too has always included the Pranava, the Fundamental Sound of Creation. Often translated "So be it," at its deepest vibrational level, Amen is the Shabda-Brahman, the First Name within this Universe of Form. So, the prayer both begins and ends with the central touch-stone, the actual naming of Paramatma, the Self, which is God.

With these ideas in mind, the following paraphrase of the Prayer emerges, revealing further possible aspects of illumination and depth within the teaching of Christ:

Immortal Self!
Dweller in Bliss!
Sacred is repetition of Thy Name
creating a Path of Self-less deeds and thoughts
leading to Sat-Chit-Ananda;
May my body ever serve Thee

because it is the constant Temple of Thy Presence;
Illumine me with Grace, dear Atma;
Grant me Self-surrendering Love,
freedom from an unclean mind,
and finally, Liberation from delusion
by the senses. AUM.

Seen in this Light, the Lord's Prayer provides a detailed and direct route to the achievement of Self-realization by the aspirant.

—From the Darshan Line

The Mother

People conceive God in various ways—as Saraswati, the Giver of Wisdom, as Lakshmi, the Giver of Prosperity, as Vishnu, the Preserver and Protector of Man, as Vighneshwara, the Remover of all obstacles in human progress, as Rama, the Embodiment of Dharma, as Krishna, the Embodiment of Prema and so on. Aspirants and seekers have realised God in these Forms, according to their inclinations. We have with us today, the Divine Power in human form, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. From all that we see, hear and experience, we can assert that Baba is unique because, it is the Divine Mother in human form that is with us this day.

Baba asks us to worship the Mother as God. The Mother trains the emotions and intelligence; she fosters the body and the mind. Baba does the same to all who take shelter in Him. The Mother is the pillar of the Home, of Society, of the Nation and of Humanity itself. Mother knows the secret of mental peace, of inner silence, of spiritual courage, and of unwavering contentment, which is the greatest treasure that Adhyatmic discipline can give man. All these one gets now from Mother Sai.

Sai is Prema-Swaroopa. He loves all and guides all. His helping hand is available to every one, who is about to fall, wherever he may be or whenever the need arises. He looks so charming and simple, and is simpler still, in His approach to us, that we feel like children before the Mother and confide in Him immediately without any reserve. Love is His lesson, His medium of instruction and the consummation of His educative process. He seeks Love; He blesses Love wherever found, in however small a quantity. He plants Love in the driest and stoniest of hearts.

How lovingly the Mother admonishes us, in order to remove fear and doubt from our minds! "Do not call yourselves the children of Sin. There is no sin, worse than that. You are Amritaputras, Heirs of Immortality. You have the Lord Himself residing in your hearts. He is the Antaryamin, the Inner Motivator, of every being in Creation. How then can you be the child of Sin?" He asks. As He responded to the call of Draupadi, Sai now responds to every yearning call. After His stay for a few days on Horsley Hills, when Baba and His party were leaving the bungalow, He went near the buffalo, which had carried the water for the campers from below the

Hill, every day. He stroked it and patted it, and blessed it most endearingly. Such is the unbounded Love of Mother Sai.

Mother Sai is compassion itself. Several times, through forgetfulness, arrogance or ignorance, we continue our old habits, in spite of His counsel or command. But, does He, for this reason, abstain from showering His Grace and Love on any of us? No. Instead, He pardons us and urges us to repent for our faults. He encourages us to improve, slowly and steadily, correcting ourselves and watching our steps, at every stage. He teaches us patience and tolerance. He exhorts us to forget the harm *others* have done to us, as well as the good that we have done to them.

The Mother may not speak to you directly. The mere sight of that radiant face, full of joy and mercy gives us comfort and confidence. His silent glance is more eloquent to the listening heart than a hundred words. Indeed, it is only in the depth of silence that the Voice of God can be heard. In His Presence, Doubt is as a patch of shallow water exposed to the burning Sun. It disappears in no time. His words are charged with a strange Force—not of Vehemence or cold Logic—but, a Force generated by the alchemy of Love. If we take one step towards

Him, He rushes a hundred towards us. "Bring Bhakti and lay it here; take from here, Shakti instead," says Baba. "Bring what you now have, namely, sorrows, griefs, worries and anxieties and take from Me joy and peace, courage and confidence," He advises us.

Like the mother, He guards us and guides us; He feeds us and cures us. What can we offer unto Him in return, except the prayer that we may be shaped by Him into flutes for His breath, transmuting that breath into melodious music conferring the joy of Eternity on every fleeting moment?

He gives us of the best
And, the best of us we shall return;
He has never failed us; nor ever will,
Always behind us, so seldom seen,
He is our dearest Mother Supreme.

—Vidya S. Madgaoukar, Hubli

Recognise the SAI, resident in every heart, and all will be softness, sweetness and smoothness for you. SAI will be the fountain of Love in your heart and, in the hearts of all with whom you come in contact. Know that SAI is Omnipresent and so, He is present in every living Being and You. Adore every One as you adore SAI. Do unto him as you would like to be done to you. Don't do unto him anything you don't like to be done unto you.

—Baba

The Sai Revolution

The history of civilisation in most countries, with perhaps one exception to which we will come later, may be epitomised in one word, namely, 'fear'-fear of losing one's security of life at a desired level, fear of losing one's property or what one prizes most, etc....These fears have led to the present acquisitive society, capitalism, profit-motive competition, exploitation, envy, hatred, theft, violence and the host of other evils at the individual level, and to wars at the national level. All these features were accentuated by the Industrial Revolution in the West. A reaction to this was the socialist and communist revolutions in certain countries such as the Soviet Union and China, which sought to abolish capitalism; profit motive, competition, exploitation of one individual by another, and to ensure equal distribution of wealth. But the basic reason and the urge remained the same, namely, fear of loss of security for the individual and the State. The enormous progress in science and technology has doubtless made man's manner of living easier in its details, but fundamentally man's standard of life as such has continued to remain largely unchanged, namely, at the animal level.

2. The one exception referred to above was in the case of ancient India. It was the Indian sages, as revealed through their teachings embodied in the Vedas, the Upanishads and Puranas, who clearly laid down that man does not live by bread alone and that his primary duty is to utilise his capacity for discrimination of the true from the false and realise the fundamental truth of Divinity underlying all creation, which alone will enable him to cultivate universal anti selfless love for all creation and activity. Such love would banish once for all fear from the heart of man and enable him to lead a life of contentment, peace, prosperity and happiness. The elaborate code of conduct laid down by them in this connection is known as Sanathana Dharma.

3. It is this capacity for discriminating the Truth of Divinity underlying all creation and cultivating universal love on that basis, that distinguishes man from the animal. Unless man utilises this capacity fully, he tends to degenerate into the animal and history will repeat itself. The ancient Rishis of India accordingly devised their educational system of Gurukulas where education was imparted to the young by the Gurus by personal example and precept with a view to equip the young with necessary knowledge which would enable them to cultivate the qualities of love and appreciation of Divinity, side by side with other studies.

4. Unfortunately, over a period of time, these ideals and institutions tended to be confined to a lesser and lesser percentage of the population, until with the strong impact of foreign invasions and the establishment of British rule, these institutions were almost completely obliterated, and in their place, the Western type of education was imposed. This system of education was conceived primarily with the object of producing a body of clerks for helping the British rulers to administer India. In other more advanced countries, the object seems not very much dissimilar, though the product turned out may be for higher positions, such as technocrats, scientists, industrialists, administrators, etc. In all cases, the ultimate objective seems by and large to be the same, namely, to earn one's livelihood at the highest level possible. If that is to be the only end of education, are we humans any better than animals? In fact, are we not even worse off than animals, since animals can in any case earn their livelihood without any of the costly investments involved in the case of the humans?

5. This does not mean that there has been no thinking at all regarding the direction in which education was proceeding and the need for change. From time to time great minds have appeared

on the scene and pointed the way. But the resulting action was confined largely to a few and did not come down to the masses. It is in this context that the example and teachings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba have relevance and importance in current times. The main aim has been restoration of our ancient system of education and values, side by side with the teachings of modern science and technology, for ensuring peace, prosperity and happiness for man and to help him to appreciate and realise the goal of life.

6. With a view to bring up the next generation of young people imbued with these ideals, a chain of model educational institutions and service organisations in different parts of the country have already been set up and more are proposed to be set up in the future. The large numbers of young people that will be turned out by these institutions and organisations will be the torch-bearers of the new way of thinking and living for the future. In this manner, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba can be said to have started a new kind of revolution—not of the bomb-throwing variety all too common in current history—but a silent peaceful revolution in man's thinking regarding his manner of living, based on truth, love and service.

7. The salient features of this revolution can be summed up as follows:

(i) Spirituality is not a preserve of the ascetic and the recluse, but is a necessity for man for reaching his rightful goal by leading a fully integrated life, and also incidentally, for improving his efficiency in whatever walk of life he is engaged.

(ii) The study and observance of Sanathana Dharma, forming the basic guidelines for man's conduct in life, should be insisted upon, as providing the necessary discipline for reaching the desired goal.

(iii) All religions should be respected as they represent only different facets of the one universal religion of love.

(iv) The universal religion of love should be translated into practice in our daily lives through service to humanity and adherence to the Truth, righteousness, peace and universal self-less love.

(v) Devotion and faith in Divine should be developed by constant remembrance of God through-prayer, meditation, etc.

8. What are the implications of this revolution? On philosophy, religion and psychology, the realisation of the intrinsic divinity underlying all creation, will lead to one universal religion—the religion of Love. Psychology will talk not of suppression and freedom, but intelligent control of emotions. On education—the entire educational system will be directed towards achieving man's supreme goal in life, which will automatically result in peace, prosperity and happiness. On law and administration—problems will be simplified as there will be no jealousy, hatred, etc. with the disappearance of fear. On economic activity—as all relations will be based on love, there will be no motivation for profit as such, but only for service to others and out of love for one's own activity. Hence no exploitation or competition, and consequent conflict of interests, will arise. On the other hand, with the develop man's ability to fully exploit his potential talents

by contact with the Divinity in him, he will be able to improve his efficiency immensely in whichever station he is placed. The effect of such improvement on production and service will be obvious. On human activity in general—All actions will be guided by love on the basis of the One Divine force permeating all beings, and will therefore be free from fear, which, as stated earlier is the basic cause for all complications of modern life. As Bhagavan has said 'man should learn to love to do the work in whichever station he is placed, instead of trying to do only that work which he loves': All activity in general will be directed towards service to humanity in the interests of the general well-being, peace and happiness.

9. If man is to escape from the rut of decay and destruction to which he is heading, if not already in it, we may, well wonder if there is any alternative. This can well be a subject for research by socio-economic scientists: Sage Aurobindo wrote about the evolution of the human being into a higher stage of development with supra-mental powers. According to Darwin, improvement in creation goes on all the time. Progressive spiritual evolution of the human being and the transformation of human society based on spiritual outlook as outlined above cannot thus be entirely ruled out. Such evolution will doubtless be made real and aerated by the silent revolution under way under the Divine inspiration and guidance of Bhagavan Baba.

—D. Hejmadi

The System

When I was a student in the High School and College, I used to pray for a Course on Moral Instruction and Spiritual Culture, such as you have in this College, ever since Its inception. Fortunately I did not miss that type of instruction, for my father taught me the Gita and the Ramayana in the original, during the vacation months I was at home. I have always felt these lessons had a great deal to do to improve one's approach to life and its problems.

Modern education has to be unfortunately secularised, which means, that it is confined to worldly life and its problems. This is a conception far removed from that of ancient Indian educators. At Takshasila, Nalanda and other ancient Universities, education aimed not merely at helping a person to earn a livelihood, but, also to delve into his inner consciousness and develop harmony, peace and strength of character: There was no one who was alienated from the culture of his country and society. We have, through education, to make the young fit for life, more than for a living. Students are not aware where they can get the type of education that will give them inner harmony and strength. The fault really is ours. I am glad that the Course on Moral Instruction and Indian Culture has been framed here on a wide and voluntary basis.

The lack of character that we notice in modern life in all fields of life in all countries, the lack of ethical sense, is it due to the system of education, people ask. I must say that it is due to the lack of good examples, from the elders and those who profess to teach and guide youth. Success in life appears to come to those with different norms Society does not encourage people who behave courteously and honestly. Arjavam is the ideal set forth in the Gita—Straight forwardness I am sure society will welcome straight forwardness and encourage it, provided an honest

attempt is made to re-instate it. It is an uphill task The Gita says, Nigrahaḥ kim karishyati—What can control do, if Nature is powerful?

Another point which we have to consider at the present juncture is whether the teaching of science should necessarily end in agnosticism. It is necessary to have both science and spirituality, in order to have a harmonious personality. Sankaracharya has said that the Sruti has to be accepted as authoritative, where reason or science cannot help. Students must have a chance to know about the supernatural and the spiritual and choose the conclusions that appeal to them.

*—From Talk by Sri. T R Jayaraman IAS,
Vice-Chancellor, at the Sri Sathya Sal College, Kadugodi*

Achieve Ananda

Of what avail is all the struggle for catering to the cravings of the senses which are detrimental to the ultimate good? Of what avail is the lapse of many years of life, if, in this mad struggle, man forgets the Almighty that is his strength and sustenance? Man must be conscious of the Truth that the Universe has a Director, a manipulator, since no train can run without a Driver on the engine, no automatic signal system can be devised without a Designer, and no Cosmos can be and become, without One who thought It and willed It. This is the truth proclaimed through the ages by Bharat, and listened to with reverential attention by peoples of the East and West. "Let all peoples prosper with the blessings of the One God"—that has been the prayer rising from the hearts of millions of Bharatiyas for ages. The rulers of this land, the sages and seers, the leaders and elders, the mothers who nursed and the fathers who fostered the children of Bharat—have all—held before them this Ideal of Universal Love.

The means by which Bharatiyas sought and attained happiness, peace and harmony can be summarised in one word, Tyaga (Detachment). Attachment brings in its train conflict, competition, exploitation and hatred. The genuine bond between man and man must be grasped, felt and expressed in loving acts of service. This knowledge should be the spring in the heart, feeding the spirit of detachment. The Gita which was honoured as a great source of inspiration and instruction by scientists like Einstein is neglected by Indians; a return to the Gita is essential if India should regain the treasure of intelligent detachment. Without this spiritual equipment, science will be blind; without science, spirituality will be lame.

Science is limited by the possibilities of sense appreciation and rational understanding. It can comprehend only a minute part of the phenomenon, and so, its conclusions are partial and subject to revision, and negation.

As experience widens and deepens, the scientist will have a clearer vision. No one need be condemned for holding partial views; no one can correct another's views; it has to be done by the person himself, welcoming opportunities and experiences that are new. Through Sadhana, it is possible to realise the Divine in oneself and in all. Latent power can be made patent by means of Sadhana. Sadhana means single-minded pursuit; it is different from off-and-on spurts of Japa and Meditation. It must emanate from love (Bhakti), fed by faith (Jnana) and expressed through activity (karma). In every achievement of man, these three can be noticed. Ripe mangoes are exhibited in the fruit-stall. We love the fruit, we have the faith that it will give us joy, and we buy and eat it.

There is many a mystery in nature that have to be respected as inexplicable! Why should the earth attract objects that are unsupported? How does the force of gravity work? What exactly is electricity? How is it that the proportion of males and females in the population of a country is maintained more or less, fifty-fifty? When war decimates the males, the proportion of male babies born tends to increase! Who regulates with His Unseen Will this stream of life? Surely it cannot be the will of man. Who designed this interdependence of man and plant, which has prescribed as food for the plant, the carbon-dioxide exhaled by man, and as food for man, the oxygen exhaled by the plant? It is a mystery; indeed God as the ultimate mystery shines in the stars, galaxies and the vastness of space as well as in the atom and the cell. There is nothing and

nowhere devoid of God. The eye of wisdom sees the One, while the eye of partial vision sees It as Many. The I principle that activates you is present in every one else. See all else as I. Equanimity which is a precious mental trait is gained by realising not only that pain and pleasure are the obverse and reverse of life, but also that all beings are but manifestations of the ONE WILL. We are but reflections, one of another; each is but a wave of the same Ocean. Warmth is sought during winter and coolness is sought during summer. So, discomfort is needed as a prod. Pain is the foil for joy.

In spite of the fact that the experience of sages has resulted in many recipes for peace and harmony in the individual and for society, man is caught in a turmoil of argument on the best means of attaining them. Peace can never be secured when you think piecemeal. See things whole; conceive of *mankind-not of* this nation or that. Expand your love until it includes within its fold all nature. Or else, even when you race through space, your heart will be heavy with hate and pride. Absence of attachment to the little ego, and cultivation of Love towards all—these are the two Sadhanas most needed. Love should be patent as service or else it is but barren show.

Ananda is man's birthright. He may deny it, but, that will only delay his winning it. Ananda can be only in the Eternal and the Absolute. Objects are all subject to disintegration; even man, the, seeker of objects, is subject to decline and destruction. How then can the trivial give Ananda to the trivial? Man has to know that he is the Divine Entity that is beyond the ravages of time and space, unaffected by the duality of cause and effect. This is the reason why the sages declare that the true nature of man is Peace, Pure Love and Forbearance. Cultivate these and your progress is assured.

—*Divine Discourse: Hyderabad 18-3-78*

Bharatiya Paramartha Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

9. One with the ONE

The Jagat or Cosmos was created by God out of Himself, so that He is the originator as well as the material of the Cosmos. As a result, He is Full (Paripoorna). The Creation is also Full and the Individual Atma is also Full. Therefore, many full entities are postulated. God made the Cosmos manifest from Himself; when this declaration is made, the doubt may naturally arise, 'How could God become these walls, these tables?' God is supremely pure; how could He become these impure things? This is another doubt that comes uppermost to some.

Let us seek the answers. Man is fundamentally Atma; but, he has the encasement of a body, hasn't he? From one point of view, man is not distinct from the body, is he? In spite of this, however, man feels that he is not this body, that his reality is distinct from it, that he is not the baby he was or the old man he is, that he is neither male nor female, and that he persists through babyhood, boyhood, middle age and old age, masculinity and femininity and all the other stages and changes. So too, the Cosmos and all Creation are but the billion bodies of God. He is all this and in all this, but, He is changeless and eternal. Nature is amenable to change. The Atma too can contract or expand, blossom or fade, shine or be befogged. Bad deeds will diminish its

splendour by clouding its brilliance. Its innate and genuine Truth and Wisdom may be hidden by evil thoughts and deeds. Those acts and practices that can disclose the native splendour and glory of the Atman are termed 'good'.

The Atma is 'unbound' at first; but, later, it is rendered limited and restricted. Through good deeds and activities, it resumes its vastness and boundlessness. Every one without any difference has the opportunity to achieve this transformation. When the time gets ripe, every one can succeed in this and liberate himself from the bounds and bonds. But, the Jagat (Cosmos) will not end. That is eternal, incapable of being destroyed. This is the explanation of the second school of philosophy in India. The first one is the Dualist or the Dvaita. The second one is the Visishtadvaita or the Special Advaita. This is a higher stage in spiritual enquiry and experience. It posits three entities—God, the Atma, and Nature, and speaks of an integration of the three. The Dualists posit that the Cosmos is a vast machine designed and operated by God. The Visishtadvaitins declare that it is a phenomenon that is interpenetrated and imbued with the Divine. But, the Advaitins or the Non-Dualists assert that God is not outside the Cosmos, that He became the Cosmos (Jagat), and that He is all that is. There is nothing except God, no other, no Second. This truth has to be accepted by all. This is the highest Truth. To say that God is the Atma and the Cosmos is as the Body which He operates and lives in, is not correct. To assert that the Atma (God) is eternal and changeless but the Cosmos which is His Body can be subject to change and transformation is also not satisfying.

What does it signify when it is said, "God is the Upadana-kaarana, the Proximate Cause of the Cosmos"? Proximate cause, means, the cause which produced the effect. The 'effect' is the 'cause' in another form. It cannot be separate from the cause. Every effect that we notice is but the cause that has assumed a new form. The Cosmos is the effect, God is the Cause—these statements only stress the fact that the Cosmos is but God in another form. When it is argued that the Cosmos is the Body of God, and that the Body is limited and subtle, and that it leads one to the Cause, that is, God, or, it was from God that it has evolved and taken shape, the Non-Dualists would reply that it was God Himself who manifested in the form of the Cosmos.

It may be doubted whether all this multiplicity of things and beings are really God. Yes. It is the Truth. All these that the senses cognise, that comes into the awareness, are God. There is nothing else but He. Our bodies, minds, intellects, consciousness—all *are* God.

Here, another doubt may arise. Why should God be so many individualised beings? Why should He be so many Jivatmas? Will God who is of one Form manifest Himself as so many? How did this happen? If God had transformed Himself into the Cosmos, He should have subjected Himself to change; all things in Nature that are by their very composition subject to change suffer both birth and death. And, If God has come within the precincts of change, does it mean that He too has to die some day? He has to undergo change, and ultimately end. Keep in mind, this point also. Then, there is another point to be considered. How much of God, what portion of God became the Cosmos?

The Advaitins say, "Whatever the portion you may allot, or guess about, remember this: The Cosmos does not exist. It is an illusion. It never is, has been or will be. The Creation of the Cosmos, the dissolution of the Cosmos, these billions of individuals emerging and merging, all

this is but a dream. There is no individualised Jivatma at all, no separated Atma. How can there be billions of Jivatmas? There is only ONE, Indivisible Complete Absolute. Like the one Sun reflected as a billion suns in a billion lakes, ponds, and drops of water, the Jivatmas are but reflections of the One in the minds that it shines upon. This is what Bharatiya thought emphasises most clearly through the Advaitin thinkers. Those who cannot grasp this truth are under the influence of Maya or Delusion, it can be said.

Dreams too have to be based on reality. Without a basic reality, the 'dependent idea or fact' cannot exist. Without a basic thing, subsequent things cannot emanate. Without a basic being, subsequent beings cannot manifest. That base is God or Easwara. He is Full, He is the Mind, the Body the Atma. You are only as real as a dream. For the eye that can see reality the Cosmos is, not this multiplicity of name and form, but, mere Sat-Chit-Ananda, Being-Awareness-Bliss. Just think of your dream. It does not arise from somewhere outside you nor do the varied images and activities disappear into some place outside you. They arise in you and disappear into you. While dreaming, you consider the events and persons as real, and you experience, as really as in the waking stage, the feelings of grief, delight, fear, anxiety, and joy. You do not dismiss them at the time as illusory. The Cosmos is the dream of God; it arises in Him and merges in Him. It is the product of His Mind. These lives, and repeated arrivals, all are the fanciful weavings of Maya, unreal fantasies, illusory agitations, unreal appearances, You are the Full, you are God. God is You. Those who have experienced this highest wisdom can attain oneness with the ONE, here and now.

(To be continued)

Child Unfortunates

Student Inmates,

Though you are subjected to a regimen of duties in this Institution, you have to regard it as a valuable opportunity to mould your lives and shape your character into perfect models of ideal conduct. The sapling can be helped to grow straight; once it grows into a tree, the trunk cannot be trained to grow straight. It is beyond correction. In childhood, you were led astray, because you did not know which act was right and which act was wrong; there was no one to guide you along the good path. You fell into bad company, because no one warned you, nor rescued you when you succumbed. No one pointed out to you the way to God and goodness. If they had you would have quickly absorbed the advice, for, the minds of children are capable of imbibing the good, as deeply as the bad. There was no one around you who had faith in your innate Divinity; nor had they the compassion to save you and guide you into good ways.

Well. Forget the past. It has already passed. The present is the most important time for us. Hold on to truth; follow the right path always. Sathyam vada; Dharmam chara—say the Vedas. Do not entertain thoughts of despair or dejection. Be happy you have this chance of rebuilding yourselves as fine boys and girls, with sharp intelligence and loveable manners and behaviour. These people are coming to you and teaching you Bhajan and singing with you songs on God. They sanctify the fine atmosphere of love and mercy that prevails here. They tell you of God, the Avatar and the Saints. Have Ramakrishna and Vivekananda as your ideals. Follow their

examples. In this Institution, they give you the training that will liberate you, not the training you had when you were children that put you to bondage. Absorb the lessons you are taught to the fullest possible extent. Put Into practice the guidance given.

Do not have any ill-feeling among yourselves. Help others when they need help and when you can do so. Do not think that it is enough if you sing Bhajans when these people from the Seva Samiti come here and sit with you. Sing them in your minds, silently, sincerely, even when you are walking or working, writing or calculating. The Name of God is like a torch that guides your steps in the dark. Suppose you have to walk through a forest in the night; you may wonder how a little torch can help you for such a long journey through such darkness. Walk with the torch in your hand; the light it sheds will walk with you, every step of your journey. So also, life is a long journey through the night: keep the Name of God on your tongue, bright and clear; it will help you at every step.

Resolve to be good, loveable children, from this moment. Do your duties gladly and well, to the satisfaction of your well-wishers. If you feel sorry for the wrongs you did, that itself will please God and He will pardon you. If you turn a new leaf and become better and better every day, God will shower Grace on you. Here you are given both protection and education. This is the time for you to learn how to be useful sons and daughters of our great land. Whenever any idea of hurting others or taking some one else's belongings or spreading some false-hood about another or uttering what is not true comes into your mind, turn to God for help; ask Him to give you strength, for all these ideas are born of fear and cowardice. Repeat the name of God or hum a Bhajan. You will find that the bad thoughts would have fled, leaving you free from evil.

When you leave this Institution and start living outside in society, you must serve as examples for others in leading useful active lives. This is a workshop into which you have come, like damaged cars, damaged through ignorance and neglect. You must leave the Institution, rid of all defects, in fine running condition, perfect in every way, attractive in appearance and character. Your parents, the elders of your village, your kith and kin, your friends and all who have the welfare of our country in their hearts, must be happy and proud, at your new skills, fine character and great eagerness to serve.

—Divine Discourse: Remand Home: Hyderabad. 19-3-78

Love should not be rationed, on the basis of caste, creed or economic status or the intellectual attainment of the recipient. It should flow full and free, regardless of consequence for, it is one's nature to Love; one cannot but pour out Love, one cannot but seek out the dry, dreary wastes in order to water them with the spring of Love and make them yield a harvest of Love.

—Baba

Divine Visit to the Capital

Bhagavan Baba, in His infinite Grace, gave all the devotees in Delhi and nearby areas another opportunity to enjoy His physical presence and listen to Divine discourses from March 10 to 16. Three years had passed since Bhagavan came to Delhi last and everyone was for long yearning for the Divine Darshan. So, when the news spread about the possible visit, all felt jubilant and devotees from each Unit vied with one another to render Seva. Although Bhagavan's stay in Delhi this time was very brief, everyone received the same affection and love, and there was a great sense of satisfaction in the fact that Bhagavan had come again. Swami was received at the Palam Airport by the State President, Sri Kulwant Rai. The Airport reception was remarkably disciplined; devotees, heeding the Delhi Samiti's advice not to crowd at the Airport, patiently waited at 16 Golf Links. Although it was almost 11-00 P. M. when Bhagavan arrived, a large gathering was waiting at the Residence and, before retiring Bhagavan made them all happy with Darshan for a long time.

11th morning saw Talkatora Gardens full of activity with a huge Pandal, capable of taking nearly a lakh of people, with all ancillary services like medical attention, bookstall, and canteen for long distance visitors, the exhibition etc. Bhajans resounded from 8-45 A. M. and before Bhagavan arrived the Pandal was full making everyone wonder from where so many people had got their information because, in line with Bhagavan's instructions, the Sathya Sai Seva Organisation had scrupulously refrained from any publicity about the visit of Bhagavan. The large gathering was thus only a reflection of the faith and devotion of the people and Bhagavan's Grace.

The evening of the 11th witnessed a fierce hailstorm and rain, making it impossible for devotees to wait for Divine Darshan. The Pandal Committee was not hopeful that the ground could be got ready for the 12th morning for Bhajan and Darshan as the ground was wet and there were several pools of water. But Swami's orders were that, not only Bhajans would take place as usual on the 12th morning, but that the Bal Vikas Children's Rally (earlier planned for the 12th morning and cancelled after the rain) inauguration of the Exhibition, and Divine Discourse would all take place the same evening. As though bending to the Divine Will, the Sun shone brightly on Sunday and the morning Bhajan and Darshan took place. The evening saw a record number of devotees eager to witness the Bal Vikas Rally and hear the Divine Discourse. The discourse was translated in Hindi by Dr. I. Panduranga Rao. In the Divine Discourse Bhagavan stressed the need for following the path of Sathya, Dharma, Shanti and Prema for the prosperity and well being of Society. Citing many examples, Bhagavan explained how Satsang can always bring beneficial results, and exhorted all to follow good ways, good thoughts and good actions.

The Educational Exhibition, which was opened the same evening, attracted many visitors during the subsequent days.

From 12th March to 16th March Bhagavan gave Darshan to thousands of yearning devotees both morning and evening. Bhagavan moved among the devotees right up to the end of the vast Pandal, and hundreds of devotees received Grace in some manner or other. The special bays which held many sick persons drew Bhagavan's attention and Grace on all days. The Altar was tastefully decorated with architectural replicas of the places of worship of the major religion depicted in the Sarva Dharma Symbol, of the Sathya Sai Organisation.

On the 13th evening, Bhagavan gave a Divine discourse to a gathering of nearly 10,000 people, mostly educationists and elite dignitaries from other walks of life. The large audience of Principals, professors, teachers and educationists, representing almost all the Universities, Colleges and schools in Delhi, enthusiastically responded to the Sai Organisation's invitation to listen to Bhagavan's discourse. This function had been organised at the Vidya Bhavan Mahavidyalaya, Lodhi Estate, which has recently come under the Sathya Sai Organisation in Delhi for promoting Sri Sathya Sai educational ideals. During the previous two week-ends the school had been given a new look through the 'Seva' of nearly 1000 men and women volunteers of the Seva Samithi.

Dr. P. C. Chunder, Central Minister for Education and Social Welfare, was the Chief Guest at the function and Sri Sikhander Bakht, Minister for Works and Housing, presided. Dr. V. K. Gokak, ex-Vice Chancellor of Bangalore University welcomed the Ministers and the large audience present. Explaining the mission and message of Bhagavan Baba, Dr. Gokak said that Baba invites everyone to examine Him, experience Him and then only have faith in Him. Bhagavan had not come to reduce the physical misery of a few individuals, or to satisfy the desires of a few, but to lead the people on the path of Sathya, Dharma, Shanti and Prema. He has chosen the field of education as one of the channels for fulfilling this objective. Dr. Gokak then dwelt on the need to revitalise our educational policy with adequate spiritual content and explained how Bhagavan has made a big beginning in this direction through the Summer Courses held every year at Bangalore and the Bal Vikas and Pre Seva Dal classes held all over the country and abroad by the Sathya Sai Organisation. Several Colleges and schools are also run by the Sathya Sai Trust on the educational ideals of Bhagavan Baba.

Dr. Chunder, speaking on the occasion, emphasised the seriousness of the problem faced by the country in the educational field, both qualitative and quantitative. He spoke about the large masses of people who were illiterate even after many years of independence, and pointed out the need for universalising education. He added that the Govt. was planning several measures in that direction and sought Bhagavan's blessings and guidance for the successful implementation of those plans. He expressed his belief that Bhagavan Baba will give him and his colleagues the courage and determination to carry out this task.

Sri Sikhander Bakht, stated that what attracted him most towards Bhagavan was the fact that the 'institutions established by Baba were engaged in a campaign against falsehood of all varieties'. He enumerated various other points in Baba's teaching which attracted him and expressed his confidence that the educational ideals set by Baba will help every man living in this tormented world to achieve his life's goal.

In the Divine discourse that followed, Bhagavan explained at length what constituted correct and good education and how it had today degenerated from the lofty ideals of the past. Bhagavan expressed the hope that Delhi, as the centre of all activities in all aspects, will set an example to the rest of the country by introducing some ethical and Dharmic principles in the educational system. The large audience listened to Bhagavan and other speakers in pin drop silence. Commenting on the programme a senior educationist said that this was the first time that he was witnessing, in the annals of the academic life of Delhi, such a large number of Principals, professors and teachers assembled for such a noble purpose.

The Delhi Seva Samiti had, earlier in the year, conducted essay and debate competitions for college students. The winning students received prizes from the Divine hands of Bhagavan Baba. The two colleges which sponsored the winners, namely the Maulana Azad Medical College and the Women's Polytechnic in South Delhi, were awarded Shields, which were received from the Divine hands by the Dean of the Medical College and Principal of the Polytechnic.

On the 14th evening, the Mahila Vibhag of the Delhi Samiti presented a cultural programme by the Bal Vikas children at the Indoor Stadium at Talkatora, in the Divine presence of Bhagavan Baba. The children, who had thrilled the vast gathering of devotees at Talkatora Grounds with their beautiful display of band music and rally, presented a very enjoyable programme of spiritual and cultural items, mainly depicting the unity and worth of all the World Religions.

15th evening saw a surging crowd, which created a traffic jam, around the Talkatora Stadium, with prominent dignitaries from every segment of society, trying to find their way into the stadium to hear another Divine discourse by Bhagavan Baba. The stadium was packed with nearly 5000 listeners, who included Ministers, Members of parliament, diplomats from many countries, judges, journalists, educationists, senior officials, businessmen and others. This function was presided over by Sri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Minister for External Affairs. Dr. Gokak, in his introductory address, gave brief details about the working of the Delhi Sathya Sai Seva Samiti, whose activities are channeled under three heads, namely, Spiritual, Educational and Seva, with opportunities for every one to participate. Speaking further on the life and message of Bhagavan, Dr. Gokak explained how the people in the world today, which has shrunk into a small place, were unable to live a life of harmony and peace. Tracing the contribution of the East and West to World culture, he elaborated on the role of God-men whenever the World faced a cultural crisis as at present.

Sri Vajpayee, in his brief speech, stated that he had come to the function not as the Foreign Minister, but as an old devotee of Bhagavan. He mentioned that he had no faith in miracles, but proceeded to narrate the exciting experience he had of witnessing Bhagavan smiling at him when he opened his eyes on recovering consciousness after an operation he had undergone in a hospital some time back. Mr. Vajpayee stated further that, at the time of Emergency when he went to Bangalore and mentioned to Bhagavan how darkness had spread all over with no sign of light anywhere, Bhagavan replied "Vajpayee, don't worry; Dharma will triumph." He concluded by expressing his conviction that Bhagavan would lead the World from darkness to light, from ignorance to knowledge and from bondage to salvation.

Bhagavan's discourse, which followed, was listened to with rapt attention. Bhagavan commenced the discourse by reminding the congregation of their responsibility to take this country back to its pristine glory as the spiritual and cultural leader of the World. Bhagavan said that we had come to the present sorry state of living at a level less than animals because we had forgotten the purpose of life itself. After explaining the steps we ought to take to get out of this condition, Bhagavan said that Delhi should take the lead in this direction by introducing changes in our educational system. Bhagavan particularly mentioned to Mr. Vajpayee the need to

properly educate all those who went abroad about the spiritual and cultural heritage of India by giving them a three months long training.

Bhagavan's programme in the City included visits to two locations where the Sathya Sai Seva Dal is engaged in active Seva. On the 13th morning Bhagavan visited the "Cheshire" Home in Okhla, where the Mahila Vibhag hold regular Bhajans and other Seva activities for the benefit of the crippled and handicapped inmates. Swami moved among the inmates and talked to each of them. The other visit was to the village at Sultanpur, where the Delhi Seva Dal regularly conducts medical camps, Bhajans and Bal Vikas classes. The villagers had turned up in large numbers for Bhagavan's Darshan. It was a great day they had been looking forward to. When Bhagavan left Delhi on the 16th evening, thousands of devotees anxiously started asking when HE would come again.

—A. Hariharan

Ramakatharasa

This day is celebrated as the New Year Day, Yugadi, and it is indeed good augury that you have gathered here to remind yourself of Rama, His Name and His Story. The Name Rama is the essence of the Vedas and of all scriptures. It is sweeter than honey, more tasty and soft than butter. Pray that your mind may be drawn by these qualities to attach itself firmly to the Name. For millions in India, the story of Rama has been and still is the source of inspiration and instruction. It has thrilled their hearts for thousands of years. Valmiki denoted the sections of the Epic—Ramayana, that he composed, as Kandas. Kanda means both 'water' and 'sugar-cane-section'. Water is intimately associated with Narayana and the Ocean of Milk is the residence of Vishnu, one of the Trinity. Hence, the word Kanda is appropriate for the story of the Lord. The meaning, 'Sugar-cane-section' is also very apt, since, however short or long, thin or thick, straight or crooked the canes may be, they are all equally sweet, for, they all have sugar in them. So too, whether the incident described is sad or joyful, distressing or delightful, terror-striking or tender, humorous or holy, they are all equally sweet, for, they all have Rama in them. The rasa or sap of compassion or Karuna runs through every fibre of the narrative, whatever subject is dealt with. However many twists and turns the story may take, the native sweetness is not diminished at all.

Usually, the aims of human life are classified as four—Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. Of these, Dharma is the first and foremost, for it makes all the rest easy and beneficial. But, when man decides to earn them, he has to earn as a preliminary, the Grace of God. Then only can the venture end in victory. And, to win this Grace, the message of the Ramayana helps man. The Sarayu River that flows beside Ayodhya (the unconquerable fort, the Atma), takes its origin in the Manasasarovar, beyond the Himalayan Ranges. Symbolically, it flows from the Manasa, the pure Mind. The Sarayu represents Lakshmana—the embodiment of Prema, spontaneous, full and free. When the two streams of Karuna and Prema merge, we have Dharma, at its best and purest.

The Rishis depicted Rama as the Ideal Man, though they knew that he was Vishnu, and an Avatar of Vishnu; come to save mankind, including themselves. They subordinated the Divine aspect and highlighted the human aspect, so that he may serve as a model to inspire man. Each of

the Rishis who dwelt in the forest through which he passed knew the Avatar, but, they did not reveal it, since the purpose of the incarnation was the destruction of the Rakshasas. Sarabhang, one of these Rishis was invited by Indra, the God of gods to accompany him to Heaven. But, he declined the offer, for, as he said, Rama was about to pass through and he did not desire to miss his Darshan!

Rama too misled people to believe that he was just a man. When the coronation was cancelled and he was to get ready to go into exile for 14 years, Rama wore the same face of joy, before his parents, his preceptors and his subjects; but when he came to Sita, he revealed the hurt he had received. For, Sita was so dear and near to him that he could not but open his heart to her. When Lakshmana was struck unconscious on the battle field and was feared to be dying, Rama mourned like any human brother and even more pathetically, for, as he said, "A friend can be replaced; a wife can be secured but, a brother like Lakshmana can never, never, be got." And, remember, they were not born of the same mother; Lakshmana was his step-mother's son!

Not only the sages and Rishis, even the mothers knew that Rama was divine but, through some mysterious influence, they too, did not reveal their knowledge. The mission on which the Avatar had come insisted that Rama should enter the forest and, hence, Kaikeyi who loved Rama more than any of the other queens, had herself to play the role of the cruel step-mother!

When Viswamitra came to the Royal court of Dasaratha, and requested that the two brothers be sent with him, so that he may celebrate a Vedic sacrifice unhampered by the demons, Vasishta and he were closeted for sometime, and they spoke to each other about the Reality of Rama. They both agreed that Rama who had come to complete the 'sacrifice' of the wicked demons was the Yajurveda Itself. Lakshmana who was immersed in witnessing and glorifying the might and mercy of Rama was, they said, the Rgveda. Bharata who sang ever the praise of Rama was the embodiment of the Sama Veda and Shatrughna, ever engaged in overwhelming the enemies lodged in the consciousness and at large, outside Ayodhya, was the true sign and symbol of the Atharvana Veda.

When the Ramayana is read, one has to imbibe the rasa, the essence, the compassion and the Prema, and discard the rest, as not so important. When a mango is eaten, don't you discard the seed and the skin? Ramakatharasa is the nectar to be taken; people do not eat the skin and seed, for the reason that they too are parts of the fruit they have paid for. The bee is concerned with the honey, not the symmetry, the fragrance or the structure of the flower. Everyone who knew was interested that Rama should carry out the mission on which he had come. Agastya quietly recommended that Rama should build his parnasala at Panchavati, for he knew that spot was best suited for the plot that Ravana would weave. Panchavati was 16 miles away from Agastya's hermitage but, the sage did not care. He wanted to save the world from the demonic hordes. Rama demonstrated through his life the Dharma that each must adopt, that would suit the stage of life, the surrounding environment, the aim sought to be achieved, and the obligations of the participants. Every act of his is replete with inspiring example.

While journeying with Viswamitra, the young boy that Rama was, met three women, one after the other. The first woman he met, he killed; the second, he advised and admonished, before sending her back to her husband; the third he wedded. The first woman was Thataka, the

demoness, the embodiment of Tamoguna; the second was Ahalya, the embodiment of Rajoguna; the third was the very embodiment of Satwaguna, whom he wedded and made a partner of his Avataric career. He knew whom to correct, whom to destroy and whom to accept. He cared for the Guna that was predominant in the make-up. So too, he chose three friends, each of different Gunas. Vali, who was eager to die at his hands, had the Satwa guna dominant in him. Sugriva who approached him for help and who helped him in return was only a contractual friend. Jatayu who fought Ravana until his life was about to be extinct was the Rajasic friend and Guha, the chieftain of the fishermen, was the Tamasic friend. Rama consoled, comforted and convinced Vali of the justice of the punishment that was meted out to him and gave him the death he longed for.

Sita, born of Earth is the symbol of Prakriti and Rama is the Purusha. Prakriti is the Pravarti Marga, the outward drawing force and Purusha is the inward-inducing tendency. When their wedding took place in the palace of Janaka, the bride and the bride-groom sat facing each other and went through the various rites, Vedic and traditional. One such was the pouring of handfuls of rice, on each other's head. They did not hold rice in their palms for this rite; they had fine white sparkling pearls. Sita held them in her palms and then, they flashed red, for, her palms were painted with henna and her face was flushed and her sari was red. Then, when she poured the handful of pearls on Sri Rama's head, or rather, on the white silk turban that Rama wore, as a ceremonial headgear for the wedding, the pearls were white. Then, when they fell in a shower on the floor, at the feet of Rama, they were blue in colour, reflecting the cloud-blue complexion of Rama. Here too, you can find the Gunas—red for Rajasic, white for Satwic and blue for Tamasic. When one is in the hands of Prakriti, one is filled with Rajoguna; when one is near and adjacent to Rama, one is Satwic; when one falls away from Rama, one becomes Tamasic. That is the lesson to be learnt from the incident of the pouring of pearls.

Rama means, he who pleases, he who attracts and satisfies. That is the Divine Principle—the Rama Principle. Every little incident in the Ramayana and every word in the Vedas have inner significances which have to be sought and gained. Sita is Bhujata, born of the Earth and the Earth too has the power of attracting. Sita attracts the soul and the spirit of man; Rama attracts the soul and spirit of man. Both are Complementary. Wherever there is the Divine latent, it will be drawn out by the Divinity patent. So, Rama is everywhere and every individualised I has the right to be drawn towards Rama, the Universal I.

—Inaugural Discourse: Ramakatharasavahini Sapthaha, Bangalore

Seminar on Spiritual Education

The Sri Sathya Sai Arts, Science and Commerce College in Whitefield, organised a Seminar on Spiritual Education in Colleges. The participants comprised eminent educationists and Principals of different colleges.

Prof. D. Narender, Principal of the College in his welcome address said that the chief inspiration behind the seminar was Bhagavan Baba—"the unique force amidst us today, working

for all that is best in our culture and tradition.” It was necessary to inculcate in students a sober sense of values and discipline, so that they become a constructive force in nation building, he added.

Bhagavan Baba prefaced his inaugural address with a benedictory verse. "The purpose of education is to teach man the method of attaining peace. We should give up narrow ideas and strive towards a united mankind.”

"Today's troubles are born in the mind of men. The mind is responsible not only for scientific and technological advances but also for wars. The mind has discovered electronic computers; it has also unleashed race hatred. In the 5550 years of this Kali age, there have been so far 15000 wars! Battles are not between countries alone. Everywhere there are battles, between individuals, between neighbours and between members of the same family!

Why to this so? Because man's sense of his sacredness has weakened. It is not as though we need a new religion or society or education, or new ideas or new books to help promote happiness and peace. "Every religion in the world has its wonderful Book—there are the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Gita, the Bible, the Koran, the Holy Granth, each one throwing light and wisdom. Today man suffers because of his ego and jealousy and because of his forgetting the divinity that connects man with man.

In ancient days, Rishis taught students at Gurukulas. Every village had its ashram and its Gurukula. The Rishis taught a *smaller* number of students then but the quality of the education was "strong". Today the number of students are *larger* but the education imparted is "weak". Students are not learning about ultimate realities.

Every student must become a true son of Bharat and be a living example of discipline and character. Today's students are tomorrow's leaders and as such it is the duty of teachers to make them true leaders. Of all avocations, the teacher's is the most sacred. Teachers should teach sacred spiritual values in such a way that students get interested in them. For this, it is essential that the teachers should always follow the path of truth and dharma and thus enable the students to follow their example. To supplement the work of the teachers, parents also should help by becoming good examples. If only they live principled and good lives, children would automatically follow them. If parents themselves lead lives of indiscipline and ease, how would their children follow a different path? If the parents give too much money to the children, the children become spend-thrifts and learn to squander money in wrong ways. Freedom is essential, but this should not mean license! The end of wisdom should be freedom. Children today have not only to be corrected by teachers, but also by parents in the home environment, so that they learn to fear sin and love God.

Sacrifice should be the basis of life, and students must develop guru Bhakti. They must learn all about duty, devotion and discipline. The main purpose of education is to teach the answers to two questions (1) What is life? and (2) How should it be lived?

Man should learn to live like man, instead of like animals, bothering only about food, sleep, drink, enjoyment and death. To do only these things, why does any one need college education?

Make life's *End, Joy* and don't just *En Joy*! Spiritual life does not mean *japa, tapa, dhyana, puja* etc. To realise the God within us, what is required are good thoughts, good ideas and acts of good service. One must give up hating others. There should be no hatred in the name of religion, caste or creed.

We do not have prayers in Govt. Colleges. How unfortunate that citizens cannot have time for prayer? But it is said, we must respect the 'secular' nature of our country and not have religious prayers! Well, nothing prevents colleges from having silent prayers for a few minutes every day. There is no room for caste, creed, or language in such silent prayers. Devotion and self-confidence will surely grow with each prayer.

"It is a good omen that the Principals of several colleges have come together to discuss the topic of spiritual education in colleges. I hope they will implement the decisions of this seminar. I wish them all success."

The delegates later adjourned for group discussions. Dr. V. K. Gokak, former Vice-Chancellor of the Bangalore University, spoke on "Spiritual education-Its scope and content." He said that though in 1959 the Sri Prakasa Committee and In 1966 the Kothari Commission had given several proposals to introduce spiritual education in colleges, nothing had been put into practice so far. Students need the sheet anchor of spirituality so that they do not get tossed about in doubt and depression. Dr. Gokak outlined the pattern of the Summer Courses conducted by Sri Sathya Sai Baba on Indian culture and spirituality. World religions, sacred texts, mystical experiences in the lives of great saints were some of the subjects covered by the course. Along with this, they were also given practical experiences like yoga, meditation, *bhajans* and *Nagarsankirtans*. Every evening they heard Baba's discourses and sang *bhajans* with him. Every week they had a programme of social work in the surrounding villages. All this training and experience for a month transformed the students. "Student power is a great force in nation building and we have to take all steps to properly train this youth force," he added.

The former Chief Justice of Karnataka, Mir Iqbal Hussain, spoke about "The Relevance of Spiritual Education Today". He regretted that today there is no value or respect for life. He quoted Iqbal who sang in Urdu. "Have unalterable faith in Him, for all paths lead to him. Strive to reach Him by constant effort. For this only Mohobut or Love is essential. For love conquers the world"

Dr, S. Bhagavantham, former Scientific Adviser to the Defence Ministry spoke on "Spirituality and the Scientific Temper." "The success of spiritual education" he said, "could be seen at the Inaugural Function, itself. An audience of 1000 students heard Bhagavan Baba in pin drop silence. Is such a thing possible anywhere else, particularly with present day students?" he asked. Man conquers nature for selfish ends. He should learn to be unselfish and try to conquer himself. He should understand that God is the unmanifested principle, hidden behind the manifested. Today, the common man looks up to the scientist but the scientist has begun to lose faith in his own science in certain spheres. Only firm faith in God and His existence gives strength to life.

Dr. Saral Chatterji, of the United Theological College speaking on "Spirituality In Daily Life" said, "Spirituality exists when I think of my neighbour's hunger and not only about my hunger and my family's hunger. When we transcend selfishness, it becomes spirituality." He quoted Swami Vivekananda to emphasise that the regeneration of a nation can be done only through the spiritual transformation of society.

The Principals then formed groups to discuss the four topics covered. The group leaders presented their recommendations at the Valedictory function held in the evening under the presidentship of Sri R. R. Diwakar. Smt. C. N. Mangala, Principal, N. M. K. R. V. College, said her group was impressed by the exemplary work of the students of Sri Sathya Sai College. It was important to mobilise student power through spiritual training to give them confidence and also a sense of involvement.

Principal Suryanarayana Rao of A. P. S College felt "that NSS organisations who are already doing social work could be involved in spreading the idea of spirituality in daily life."

Principal Rame Gowda of Rural College Kanakapura who gave the summary on the topic of "Spirituality and Scientific Temper" said that like one has the procedure of observation, inference and experiment to increase the scientific temper, for controlling the mind in addition to meditation, there could be lectures, spiritual education courses, essay competitions, lessons in the NSS classes, displaying *Thoughts for the Day* and *Sayings*, on College notice boards, in prominent places, and taking the help of student welfare officers to Implement these ideas and involve students.

The last group leader to present his report on "Relevance of Spiritual Education Today" was Principal Ramacharlu of R. V. College.

The Valedictory address given by Sri R. R. Diwakar, Chairman of the Gandhi Peace Foundation emphasised how Baba puts into practice whatever he preaches.

"Today, in the dining hall, there was so much peace, although 500 people had lunch. Is it possible to have such a tranquil atmosphere in a dining hall anywhere else?" he asked.

—***Shakantala Bala***

What greater offering can you give God than the ash, signifying your triumph over tantalising Desire, the burning of the weeds of lust, anger, greed, attachment, pride and hatred. Ash is the ultimate condition of things; it cannot undergo any further change. Ash cannot fade as flowers do; it does not dry and disappear or get soiled and unpotable as water does in a day or two; it will not get discoloured as leaves do, in a few hours; it does not rot as fruits do in a few days. Ash is ash forever and ever. Purity once won can be maintained as 'pure' for whole life.

—**Baba**

The Human Predicament

—Dr. M. V. N. MURTHI

Sense of Alarm

A common feature of contemporary thinking all over the World is one of alarm at the human predicament. U. Thant, former Secretary-General of the United Nations warned the nations of the World in 1969: I do not wish to seem over-dramatic, but I can only conclude from the information that is available to me as Secretary-General, that the Members of the United Nations have perhaps 10 years left in which to subordinate their ancient quarrels and launch a global partnership to curb the arms race, to improve the human environment, to defuse the population explosion, and to supply the required momentum to development efforts. If such a global partnership is not forged within the next decade, then I very much fear that the problems I have mentioned will have reached such staggering proportions that they will be beyond our capacity to control."

Inspired by and concerned at this statement, a group of thirty individuals from ten countries met in Rome as the now well-known Club of Rome, and this concern ultimately led to the initiation of a remarkably ambitious undertaking, "The Project on the Predicament of Mankind."

The subject was studied by a team at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) who developed a global model, the main concern of the team being the five basic factors that determine, and therefore, ultimately limit, growth on this planet—population, agricultural production, natural resources, industrial production and pollution. The main conclusions of the MIT team were the following: "1. If the present growth trends in world population, industrialisation, pollution, food production, and resources-depletion continue unchanged, the limits to growth on this planet will be reached within the next one hundred years. The most probable result will be a rather sudden and uncontrolled decline in both population and industrial capacity. 2. It is possible to alter these growth trends and to establish a condition of ecological and economic stability that is sustainable far into the future. A state of global equilibrium could be designed so that basic material needs of each person are satisfied and each person has an equal opportunity to realise his individual human potential. 3. If the world's people decide to strive for this second outcome rather than the first, the sooner they begin working to attain it, the greater will be their chances of success."

Global Effort

Reviewing the report and its main conclusions, the Club of Rome concluded: "The achievement of a harmonious state of global economic, social, and ecological equilibrium must be a joint venture based on joint conviction, with benefits for all. The greatest leadership will be demanded from the economically developed countries, for, the first step forward towards such a goal would be for them to encourage deceleration in the growth of their own material output, while at the same time, assisting the developing nations in their efforts to advance their economies more rapidly." "We affirm finally that any deliberate attempt to reach a rational and enduring state of equilibrium by planned rather than chance or catastrophe, must ultimately be founded on a basic change of values and goals, at individual, national and world levels."

In his best seller, *Future Shock*, Alvin Toffler, used the 'term' to describe the shattering stress and disorientation that we induce in individuals by subjecting them to too much change in too short a time. In his concluding chapter after examining the various aspects brought about by the accelerative changes of uninhibited science and technology, Toffler remarks: "By now, the accelerative thrust triggered by man has become the key to the entire evolutionary process on the planet. The rate and direction of the evolution of other species, their very survival, depends upon decisions made by man. Yet there is nothing inherent in the evolutionary process to guarantee man's own survival." Faced with the power to alter the gene to create new species, to populate the planets or depopulate the earthman must now assume conscious control of evolution itself. Avoiding 'future shock' as he rides the waves of change, he must master evolution, shaping tomorrow to human need. Instead of rising in revolt against it, he must, from this historic moment on, anticipate and design the future."

Tribal Notions

Viewing man's biological nature, Desmond Morris, in a very stimulating and thought provoking book "The Human Zoo" has discussed the human predicament from man's animal ancestry, his evolution in a relatively short time, the grouping into tribes and the modern problems created by what he calls "super tribes". He says, "We have in our relentless social progress, gloriously unleashed our powerful inventive exploratory urges. They are a basic part of our biological inheritance. There is nothing artificial or unnatural about them. They provide us with our great strength as well as our great weaknesses. What I am trying to show is the increasing price we have to pay for indulging them and the ingenious ways in which we contrive to meet that price, no matter how steep it becomes. The stakes are rising higher all the time, the game becoming more risky, the casualties more startling, the pace more breathless. But despite the hazards it is the most exciting game the world has ever seen. It is foolish to suggest that anyone should blow a whistle and try to stop it. Nevertheless, there are different ways of playing it and if we can understand better the true nature of the players it should be possible to make the game even more rewarding, without at the same time becoming more dangerous and, ultimately disastrous to the whole species."

The Mastery of the Mind

The problem of the human predicament has been receiving attention from psychologists, who are trying to probe the human mind. Unlike the earlier approach of trying to cure the mentally ill, the modern approach of Transactional Analysis attempts to understand, and also make the individual understand, how his mind works. The approach is explained in understandable language by Dr. Thomas A. Harris in his book "I'm OK-You're OK." Dr. Harris takes the view that we seem to be taking the position of 'to win or not win', apparently a hangover from our primate past: "When the primates were driven from the forests by the climatic changes that reduced the size of the forests, there were only two possible outcomes to their encounter with the old-time carnivores on the open plain. Those who won the battle over food survived; those who lost died.... the fact is that 'winning and losing' models have predominated throughout the history of mankindBut circumstances have changed. Because of scientific knowledge enough food can be produced to feed the people of the world, if the population explosion can be halted. It is now possible to conceive another option: I'm OK-You're OK. Co-existence is at last a possibility based on reality. In the beginning Man's brain grew and developed in the service of his own survival. Can we now turn the brain to new tasks, to the task of the survival of all people of the

world? Can the gift of life and our brief span of existence on this earth be enjoyed to the fullest of human spiritual capabilities?

The Hemispheres

In the last paragraph of his most interesting synthesis of modern physics with the wisdom of the east, Fritjof Capra (The Tao of Physics) concludes: "I believe that the world view implied by modern physics is inconsistent with our present society, which does not reflect the harmonious interrelatedness we observe in nature. To achieve such a state of dynamic balance, a radically different social and economic structure will be needed: a cultural revolution in the true sense of the word. The survival of our whole civilization may depend on whether we can bring about such a change. It will depend ultimately on our ability to adopt some of the yin attitudes of Eastern mysticism; to experience the wholeness of nature and the art of living with it, in harmony." Yin and yang in Chinese philosophy refer to the intuitive and the rational respectively. One of the most startling discoveries in recent times made by neurologists, neurosurgeons and psychologists is that the brain has two distinctive hemispheres, each of which has a definite function. The left hemisphere controls the thinking process. In sharp contrast, the right hemisphere takes care of the intuitive aspects.

In his book The Psychology of Consciousness, the author Ornstein points out how the esoteric psychologists of the East (Zen, Yoga and Sufi) have focussed on the right hemispheric consciousness, while Western psychology has concentrated on the left hemisphere. There is considerable thinking today that the failure of the West in matters of intuition may be largely because they have developed the left hemisphere of the brain, while the East seems to have concentrated on the right!

Baba Analyses the World Crisis

I have given a fairly long background to discuss the human predicament as seen by several thinkers from their own different angles, mainly to emphasise that all over the world people are concerned with the sad human predicament, and mankind's future. Such an overview of the world perspective in regard to the human predicament is necessary to understand the relevance and the role of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and His avatarhood. Baba has repeatedly said that He has come for world transformation. His message must be evaluated and understood in the context of the various problems here outlined. Baba sums up the human predicament thus "...Man has brought human society to the verge of total destruction. He has used his intelligence to pollute the land he lives on, the air he breathes, and the water that is the very source of his life. He has turned the mind which is the instrument of his liberation into a chain that keeps him in bondage. He has used Methods of Education, Codes of Law, Systems of Politics, Modes of Commerce and the Results of Science to imprison himself in prejudices, creeds and nationalities."

The problems analysed by the Scientists who undertook the study of the earth's resources and the limits to growth that can take place, and the Club of Rome which commented on the conclusions, suggested, as already indicated, that the developed nations have a great responsibility to the developing nations. They also made the general statement that there is need for basic change of values and goal: at individual, national and world levels. In an exhaustive interview Baba discussed this problem as raised by the Editor of Blitz. The solution to India's

problems lie according to Baba in co-operative endeavour. "To achieve this, one has to rid the people of the disease of individuality, greed and selfishness. Every individual must be taught to think and work in the broader concept of society and its needs." Baba stressed that "the rich will give up their extravagant wants, the poor will get what they need and a little more, and this process will bring about more equitable distribution": the suggestion the Club of Rome made in their final analysis; But neither the Club of Rome nor the Scientists of today are in a position to accept the real issue of 'economic growth and its limitations'. What about the future beyond 100 or two hundred years? What about posterity? We have squandered away the earth's non-renewable resources in such a short time.

The Basic Question

Nobody is ready to get down to the basic question which Baba posed: "Here again it is the spiritual path that can save this country and the world from the wrongs of materialistic disorder. What we need is a synthesis of the spiritual and material aspects of life. That will provide the social conscience and co-operative spirit imperative to the creation of national wealth and prosperity, through selfless co-operative labour." Baba went to the core of the problem of the distribution of wealth between the rich and the poor when He declared: "The difficulty is that you can equalise wealth, land and property by legislation, but can the law bring about the equality of the desires of the people? This requires the healing touch of spirituality." After explaining that "This triangular issue of economic imbalance needs to be spiritualised if an effective solution is to be found" Baba spelt out the only solution to meet the economic ills of society: "It is here that our insistence on a desireless life in which human wants are reduced to the minimum needs, comes to the rescue as the only possible way of restoring the social and economic balance. Curb your desires, reduce your wants, live in spiritual austerity and the available material will be sufficient for all humanity. More than that, the tensions of the competitive socio-economic system will be dissolved and peace of mind will be restored."

The Sai Answer

In fact, what looks at first sight to be a simplistic ideal and an impossible solution seems to be the only goal towards which humanity has to move to save itself from the disaster about which so many thinkers have given their verdict. This involves the rise of the human consciousness towards a higher level; it will be possible only if the essential characteristics of the unique human mind is used for creativity of a much higher order than for what it is being employed now. Baba concluded the interview asking this basic question: "Why encumber yourself with worldly riches and material comforts when you have to change your course or even meet with some dislocation or accident and in any case at the end of the journey you have to leave behind all your possessions except your Atma. Would it not be better to attend to the immortal spirit rather than waste time which is running out, on gaining wealth and securing comforts? This is the logic of spiritualism with which I seek to change the attitude of the people."

Spiritual Solution

Baba advocates a kind of spiritual socialism based on trusteeship, "based on love, co-operation and brotherhood". "All materialistic doctrines have failed to bring about any real transformation. There is no equality anywhere. Only spiritual transformation to a desireless mentality can put through the imperative revolution in human consciousness, from which alone the desired changes can accrue." This is the Answer to the problem posed by Alvin Toffler who recognised

that change is inevitable and essential: "Change is life itself. But change rampant, change unguided and unrestrained, accelerated change overwhelming not only man's physical defences but his decisional processes—such change is the enemy of life." The only key to decelerate change is to accept that the present trends cannot be reversed unless man uses his unique gift of mind and spirit and takes control of himself. This needs a spiritual approach as advocated by Baba.

Modern Psychology and Transactional Analysis again have recognised the basic problems of man. In fact, they have recognised the truth which Baba has been proclaiming all along. "If the relationship between two people can be made creative, fulfilling, and free of fear, then it follows that this can work for two relationships, or three relationships, or four or one hundred or, we are convinced, for relationships that affect entire social groups, even nations. The problems of the world and they are chronicled daily in headlines of violence and despair are essentially the problems of individuals. If individuals can change, the course of the world can change. This is a hope worth sustaining." In the last para of his book, Dr. Harris says, "Society cannot change until persons change. We base our hope for the future on the fact that we have seen persons change. How they have done it is the good news of this book. We trust it may be a volume of hope and an important page of the manual for the survival of mankind."

Sai-chiatry

It is reassuring that modern psychology has been freed from the basic tenets of Freud. It is restating what Baba has been telling us for several years. In fact He is the greatest transactional analyst that the world has seen. Eric Berne, the author of the system of Transactional Analysis, in his book "What do you say after you say Hullo?" after analysing the problems of the four types of combinations of personalities, concludes: "Stable changes must come from within, either spontaneously or under some sort of "therapeutic" influence: professional treatment or love which is nature's psychotherapy. The last statement "love which is the nature's psychotherapy" is the treatment which Baba gives in such overflowing abundance and floods us with, and this results in the cure. Baba told the Editor of the Blitz: "I have no methodology or machinery in the accepted organisational sense. My methodology is a simple one, based on conversion by love, and the machinery is one of human co-operation and brotherhood, again deriving from love. What we need today are one single caste of humanity, one common religion of love and one universal language of the heart. This is the simple methodology or machinery through which both the individual and society can be transformed, So the basis of change is individual transformation through love. Love is my instrument and merchandise; whatever I do in the field of sociology or economics is sought to be done by and through love. Both the wealthy and the poor who want me can come to me only on a basis of absolute equality and I use them to synthesising the existing socio-economic contradictions into a co-operative brotherhood.

We are all One

The basis for this love is the oneness of humanity declared by the sages of Bharat throughout the ages. Isavasasyamidam saravam (All this is enveloped in God); sarvabhootaantaratma (The inner core of all being is He); Vasudevassarvamidam (All this is God, Vasudeva). This ancient truth has been ringing in our ears through the ages but only Sai has brought the truth home. Individual awakening, transformation and salvation are achieved through a realisation of this basic truth, which can be experienced only through love. In one of the most powerful messages

ever given by Sai, He declared: "No society can find its fulfillment, no social ideal can fructify without the blossoming of the spirit of man. Mankind cannot realise the Divinity, whose expression it is, without careful and constant attention being paid to the cultivation of the spirit. How else can this Divinity express itself than 'in and through' individuals.... The Atma is the source, the sustenance of every being and every organisation of beings. It is the one and only Source, Substance and Sustenance. The Atma is God; the Particular is the Universal, no less. Therefore recognise in each being, in each man, a brother—the child of God—and, ignore all limiting thoughts and prejudices based on status, colour, class, nativity and caste." Baba further emphasised: "This is the true function of society—to enable every member to realise this Atmic vision. The men and women bound by mutual interests in a society are not merely families, cases, groups, or kinsmen or kinswomen; they are ONE Atma. They are knit by the closest ties; not only the one society to which they feel they are bound, but MANKIND IS ONE ...The brotherhood of man can be translated into life only on the basis of the Atmic Vision."

In another message He declares: "This Sai has come in order to achieve the supreme task of uniting the entire mankind, as one family, through the bond of brotherhood, of affirming and illumining the Atmic Reality of each being, in order to reveal the Divine which is the Basis on which the entire Cosmos rests, and of instructing all to recognise the Divine heritage that binds man to man, so that man can rid himself of the animal and rise into the Divine which is His goal.

Those of us who have had the good fortune of coming under His transforming influence have seen the many subtle changes which have taken place in ourselves and those who are near to us. Those who have witnessed the changes that Sai is bringing about in the hundreds of young children of the Bal Vikas, the Seva Dal and the students of the Sathya Sai Colleges, believe that the great change is taking place. For the first time Sai has brought spirituality into our everyday life; it is not an escape from life; it is an opportunity for living the full life of dedication and sadhana.

Sai—the Liberator

Perhaps for the first time in the history of Humanity we have a living Embodiment of pure unadulterated love, demonstrating the liberating influence of Love. The dominant frightful dictates of the "P" (parent) of transactional analysis (TA) is liberated and we are also liberated from the fears of the five year old, the "C" (Child) of the TA. " The liberating influence of His Love and his assurance, Why Fear when I am here, makes "adults" out of us, using again TA terminology. He liberates us from the petty little prejudices and lets us live a mature life, unfettered by the shackles or limitations imposed by blind-folding, irrational impositions from vested interests in the name of religion.

Sai's declaration: "A Revolution more powerful and pervasive than any man has undergone so far, neither political, economic, scientific, and technological but deeper and more basic is now on. It is the Spiritual Revolution. It sharpens the inner vision of man so that he can see his Atmic Reality. Its impact will surely envelop and enrich all human communities and transform mankind into a stream of Sadhakas flowing smoothly to the limitless sea of Divinity. This Revolution has Love as both means and end. It will awaken the springs of Love all over the world in the fields of Education, Morality, Law, Politics, Commerce and Science. It will inspire man to loving service, revealing the Brotherhood of Man and the Fatherhood of God."

The answer to the prayers and questions posed by Toffler, Harris, Morris, and Capra and hundreds of others lies in this Spiritual Revolution spearheaded by Sai, which synthesises, Science and Spirituality. Religion and Philosophy, Commerce and Morality, Politics and Principles. He has come to liberate us from the limitations of caste and creed, separation into races, black, yellow, brown and white, and from the illusion of man-made heaven and hell. Sai's Message is the answer to the Crisis facing humanity; it is the only solution to the Human Predicament!

Bharatiya Paramartha Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

10. Three Steps

There are three steps in the progression of philosophic enquiry (or Vedantic thought) In India. They are the Advaitic (The non-Dualist), the Vasishta-Advaitic (The special non-dualist) and the Dvaitic (The Dualist). It is not possible to advance beyond these three steps, by any human endeavour. Advaitic thought is beyond reach of the common man; it is not so easily comprehensible. To conceive it with the Intellect is itself hard. To experience it, a powerful faculty of penetration is needed. Therefore, it is best to start with the Dualist or Dvaitic step, and experience it as the reality behind things; then, the second stage of Vasishta-Dvaita is rendered easier to reach.

The individual must progress as fast or as steadily as the community. We pass through boyhood, childhood, adolescence, youth, middle age and old age; it is an imperceptible but inevitable progress. We experience each, only when we are passing through it. So too, with these three stages of philosophic discovery. Each of these views is latent in the rest and each proceeds out of the experience of the previous stage. It is not possible to be aware of all three at the same time. Based on our Sadhana and the experiences gained there from, each of these viewpoints comes into the consciousness and forms the spring of action and thought.

Those who assert that the Universe is real, but, declare at the same time that the existence of God is but a dream, are only proving themselves foolish. For, when the effect, namely, the Cosmos is real, it must have a Cause, for, how can there be an effect with no cause? God can be denied only when the Universe is denied. God can disappear, only when the Cosmos disappears. What now appears as the Cosmos is really God; this is the vision that the true Sadhaka will get, when he succeeds in his endeavour. As a matter of fact, the Universe we experience is the dream. When we awake from the dream, the Truth of its being God will shine in the consciousness. From the beginning of time, the God whom we posit outside ourselves has been the reality inside us also. This Truth too will become steady in the faith of man.

Of course, there is no philosophy existent that can be satisfying to all types and levels of mental equipment. Each has a distinct criterion of value. The stages of intellectual development, or the powers, of reasoning may be different from each other. So, the three schools of philosophical interpretation mentioned above (the Dvaitic, the Vasishta-Dvaitic and the Advaitic) attain acceptance among different temperaments and different groups of people. Therefore, no one school has the right to claim superiority and impute inferiority. Only those who are unwise will resort to such tactics.

When people approach us with fanatic views, we must meet them with a smile, eager and yearning, filled with devotion to God. One can get intoxicated, of course but, only as a result of quaffing the wine of Prema. When some one who is frantic for work approaches us, we must share with him our skill and strength and join with him in work. By this means, it is possible to bring harmony between followers of various faiths and philosophic thoughts. It will bring together schools of thought and belief. If only this principle of harmony and harmonious cooperation had become a permanent asset of each man, how excellent it would be? How happy

the world would have been, if every one had this knowledge that his viewpoint can at best be only partial and that it requires the harmonious commingling of many other facets to posit Truth?

Yoga means 'coming together'; in India, where yoga is flowing in the veins of every one since ages, it is possible to have the harmonious co-existence of many faiths and beliefs, which is the ideal type of Universal Religion. Those who can heroically put their faith into daily living can accomplish this 'together-ness' of all men in the human community. Togetherness or Union can be -established between one's outer behaviour and inner nature. The Sadhaka, intent on the path of Prema, can strive for Union between himself and the embodiment of Prema, namely God. The Vedantin can achieve the Union of all that IS in the one concept of God. The path of Yoga is designated differently in Sanskrit under different contexts; but, those who are able to conceive and execute the Union are revered as Yogis.

Those who strive through activities and achievements to establish the Union are the Karma-yogis; those who follow the Prema path, are the Bhakti-yogis; those who strive to manifest their latent powers and canalise them are the Raja-yogis; those who stick to logical analysis and rational interpretations and attain intuitive perception are the Jnana-yogis. In the Bharatiya spiritual history, these four types recur again and again.

First, the Karma-yogi. He adopts the path of establishing union with Godhead, by elevating and sublimating acts. We meet in the world many who seem to have been born, just to accomplish one particular mission or project. Their intellect is not satisfied with mere imagination or planning. Their minds will be full of actual concrete achievements which they yearn to realise. For such people, a guide-book or Sastra is needed to direct them along beneficial paths. Every one in the world is seen engaged in some activity or other, all the time. Yet, very few know the significance and worthwhileness of Karma; or, how best to realise the best results out of this inescapable trait. Hence, life is being made banal and barren. Karma-yoga teaches man the awareness of this significance and guides him along to achieve the maximum benefit out of the activity. Where, when and how Karma has to be done, how spiritual urges can re-inforce strength of mind in the performance of Karma, and how Karma is to be taken up so that spiritual development can result-these are taught us by the Karma-yoga.

There is one great objection raised by some people about this and we have to pay some attention to it. The objection is that Karma Yoga involves too much physical strain. But, basically, it is the company that one keeps that decide the strain and the stress that the mind and the body of man are subjected to. 'I like very much to engage myself in only this task'. 'I sought only to do good to him; but, he ignored my desire and tried to injure me', these are the usual causes for the strain and stress mentioned above. Such disappointment makes one lose interest in activity. It wants to do good and it seeks to do good to some one in some way, hoping to derive joy there from and distribute joy. When such joy does not arise, despair sets in.

But, without getting attached, without being aware of even whom the Karma helps or how, the lesson that Karma Yoga teaches is—do the Karma, as Karma, for the sake of the Karma. Why does the Karma-yogi fill his hands with work? That is his real nature, he feels that he is happy, while doing work. That is all. He does not bargain for results: he is not urged by any calculation.

He gives, but, never receives. He knows no grief, no disappointment; for, he has not hoped for any benefit.

The second Path: Bhakti-yoga. This is congenial for those who are emotionally oriented. It is the path for those capable of filling their hearts with Love. The urge is to have God as the Beloved. His activities will be different, for, they relate to incense-burning, gathering flowers for worship, building shrines and temples where he could install and adore symbols of Beauty, Wisdom and Power.

Are you inclined to remark that this is not the right means of achieving union with Divinity? Remember that saints and sages, great spiritual leaders and guides throughout the world have emerged just from this devotional and dedicatory stage of spiritual endeavour. Some faiths tried to imagine God as form-less, and described worship of God, through various such acts, as blasphemy, trying to suppress the Bhakti cults and in the process, they alighted the Reality and Its Power and Majesty. The belief that God cannot be symbolised in a Form is evidence of blindness; the charge that such worship is barren is a hollow charge. The history of the world is the witness to the efficacy of Bhakti. It is not proper to ridicule these activities, ceremonials and rituals and the descriptions of the lives of Sadhakas who adhered to them, in order to earn Union with Divinity. Let those who yearn after the joy of worshipping the Form do so; certainly, it will be a sin to shatter their faith and treat it as cheap and infructuous.

(To be continued)

His Revelation-My Realisation

—Dr. M. S. Rama Krishna Rao

I suddenly got up from a frightful dream. It was 15th November 1977. We returned a few days ago from Barrankula, a cyclone relief camp in Divi taluk. We went there in knee-deep mud, lived in tents surrounded by corpses, eating just to maintain the body. We spent nearly a couple of weeks. Bhagavan Baba appeared in dreams silently on 3 or 4 occasions. But after returning to Visakhapatnam, melancholic thoughts haunted me. Even though I am accustomed to go to hospital in a car for the past 18 to 19 years I felt guilty of the same when thousands are not having any conveyance. Similarly, I was hesitant to put on a "T" shirt, thinking that many of my brethren are going half clad. The same is the case with food. On top of this, scenes of dead bodies, collapsing huts etc. began appearing in my dreams successively for 3 days and from one such dream I got up suddenly.

I know that I was suffering from 'reactive depressive psychosis'. I thought I must have a consultation with a psychiatrist or write a letter to Swami. I wrote to Bhagavan only on two occasions on purely official matters, which forced on me while discharging the duties of a District President, At that time I was working as Resident Medical Officer of one of the two mental hospitals in the State and treating several people counselling and administering drugs etc. As such I know swallowing a few drugs will improve my mental state without much ado.

Suddenly I went into a reverie: People are suffering from all sorts of miseries from times immemorial. Is there no way out of it? Lord Buddha pondered over it but not many were benefited out of his teachings. So is the case with every religious preceptor. The golden kingdom promised by Jesus has never appeared so far. Are they referring to a different plane of consciousness? Bhagavan must answer my questions and also show a solution. In all probability HE may not answer my letter. As it was my previous experience, I may get the answer in a book or somebody may pick a conversation with me without any relevance and answer all my doubts. So I wanted the answer then and there, remembering that HE is ANTARYAMI and not only Prasanthi-Nilayam-vihari.

Suddenly I heard a clear inner voice asking me, 'About whom are you lamenting? On whom are you relying to get the answers? And who are you'? Abruptly the three groups—suffering humanity, God and myself—appeared before me commandingly 'You know why all this misery is occurring'? I meekly said 'Yes, Bhagavan, because I feel instead of One, these three as different entities'. 'So when will this misery disappear'? asked the Divine voice. 'When I feel that I am one with God and with all beings, and not separate, then there is no more misery'. I could not help the feeling that Bhagavan is making me answer my own questions, in a vivid manner.

All of a sudden I remembered the sentences of Baba at Whitefield in the interview room one day during 1970. On that memorable occasion HE emphasised that the answers I am getting now and then are not emanating from my own thought process but are revelations made directly by Him. With a mischievous laughter, the voice asked me 'Is this all theoretical?' I said 'No Baba, we are not able to maintain that non-dualistic state always and hence this suffering'. Absolute silence prevailed for some time.

From that very moment my depression vanished entirely and I could carry a new sparkling energy for days thereafter. So, let us always be aware of HIS presence within us, ready to give us unerring counsel, May HE bless us all to become that ONE REALITY.

Narada And We

Narada inspired Vyasa to compose the Srimad Bhagavatham, when he found Vyasa on the banks of the Saraswati River, despondent, because he had not secured inner peace for himself, even though he had waded through the Vedas, collated and codified the rks and hymns, and written the Brahma Sutras, which summarised the teachings of Vedanta for posterity. He had also written the monumental epic, the Mahabharata, and the Puranas. In the latter, he had gathered legends and myths of Gods and Godmen and elaborated the characteristics of Divine Incarnations and embodiments of Divinity. But, he needed the prompting from Narada to write the Bhagavatham, which ultimately saved him from total despair and granted him liberation from bondage.

Narada himself has an interesting lineage. He was the child of a servant, a maid, in the hermitage of a God-realised Sage; he was gathering flowers, tending the cattle and running errands for the disciples and pupils of the sage, who were many in number. When he was about six years old, there was an unusually large gathering of monks and ascetics at the hermitage where he was growing. The Sage had called together a large number of monks for the 'Four-month-Retreat' or 'Chaturmasya Vrata' prescribed in the Vedas for recluses, since they were months when the rains prevented their moving about in the country. The four months were spent in study, meditation and worship. So, Narada had many opportunities of serving the monks. Since he was intelligent and cheerful, he won the admiration and gratitude of the hermits quite soon. When at last, the Retreat was closed and the monks had to disperse, Narada was sad beyond words; he longed to accompany them and continue serving them, learn more and more the spiritual lore they could teach him. One of the monks who had developed a special affection for the boy called him near and initiated him into the mantra that could liberate him, the 12 lettered Mantra of Vishnu—Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya, Om Namo Bhagavate Aniruddhaya, Om Namo Bhagavate Pradyumnaya, Om Namo Bhagavate Samkarshanaya. Narada received this precious gift in deep humility and utter sincerity. He had full faith in the mantra, its efficacy, and in the Guru.

Though quite young and inexperienced, his faith made him progress fast and he was able not to be affected by the dual tendencies of grief and joy, of satisfaction and discontent, of exultation and disappointment. He saw every being and thing as God, filled with Divinity, full and free.

One day, while his mother was milking the cow, repeating the name of the Lord all the while, a black cobra bit her. It was a fatal dose of lethal poison. Narada was standing near her at the time; he witnessed her suffering the most excruciating pain, before death relieved her. Narada came out of this experience, without any injury to his Inner calm; indeed, he was happy that his mother was liberated by death from the bondage of attachment to him, her son.

Narada was then only seven years old. He left the hermitage, which had kept him within its confines on account of his love for his mother. He proceeded alone and on foot to the Himalayan Ranges in order to carry on his spiritual exercises. He was eager for the vision of the Lord Narayana, and in that constant longing, he had no urge to take food and drink, nor could sleep overcome him. Though his limbs were weak, his will took him along the steep and difficult mountain tracks, until he heard a Voice, ringing overhead, admonishing him for his ignorance of the fundamentals of divine wisdom!

'You are journeying across hill and dale, urged by the desire—I must have the Vision of the Lord—a desire that is basically egoistic and barren. For, you are God, and why try to see Him outside you?' At this, he sat under the cool shade of a tree and realised by a rare intuitive experience that God was initiating him into the truth he had ignored, namely, that the 'Soham' ever repeated by his breath, as it enters and exits while he is awake, dreaming or sleeping, is the ultimate Reality that he was seeking to know. When he grasped this Truth and became one with it, he became the Breath, the Soham, while his body composed of the five elements disintegrated and resumed the nature of its original components. He was merged in Vishnu and emerged from the Lord, endowed with a new Form and a new Name. He became the ray of Prajna, that flashes in realised souls and emanates from Brahman.

He is immortal, for the Brahma Principle is immortal, He is known as Brahma-manasaputra, that is to say, the son who was manifested and sent forth by the will of the Brahma Principle, to be an example and inspiration for all living beings.

Later, he came to be known in popular legend as the son of Brahma, the First of the Trinity and of Saraswati, the Consort of Brahma. Really, he issued forth from the Brahmatattwa (the Universal Absolute, the Eternal Verity, into which he had merged), charged with the mission of vitalising and alerting all beings to know that they are only 'parts of the Lord's becoming'! The story that Brahma is his father and Saraswati his mother are inferences drawn from a confusion, between Brahman and Brahma! Just as he quenched the thirst of Vyasa for inner peace, Narada is commissioned to quench the thirst of all beings for the Divine Nectar, (named Krishna or Vishnu or Narayana or in a thousand other different ways). So, he moves subtly and mysteriously, sometime with Form, mostly without Form, as a subtle Influence or a secret force, to carry out this Mission.

The legends, Puranic tales and their exponents describe him as a clever trickster, going from place to place and using the reverence he gains by his devotion to God for promoting quarrels and destroying the tangles into which his clients have got into. This gives people only a caricature of what Narada was and is. He intercedes in human affairs and worldly tangles only to ensure the victory of truth and the defeat of falsehood. He is pictured as carrying a 'vina' with him, and playing on it incessantly, while reciting the name of God. In his universal Form, while he is correcting, consoling and confirming faith in wayward individuals, it is not the material instrument—the Vina—that he carries. It is the three stringed Spinal Column, with the Ida, Pingala and Sushumna strings, that he plays upon, arousing the Soham or the Om melody in the consciousness. He prompts the higher urges towards spiritual progress through imparting the thrill of the Name of the Lord, by the sweetness of the music he arouses. The Spinal Column of man has 33 joints where bones intersect; each one of these is as a fret in the Vina that he plays upon, producing in the awakened consciousness of the person ready to benefit by it, the Primal Sound, the Universal Message of Unity, the Pranava, the Om.

Narada is the ever-present Prompter. He is ever intent on the duty of keeping beings on the God-ward Path. He is the Universal Friend, Guide and Guardian.

*—Bhagavan's Discourse: Summer Course
on Indian Culture and Spirituality, 23-5-78*

Prasanthi Nilayam

Prasanthi Nilayam.... the Abode of Peace. That heart leaps at the very mention of the Name. How we long to be there! We greet with joy those who are just returning from there, hoping that some of the lustre and grace of the Sai-drenched devotees may rub off on us.

To me, Prasanthi Nilayam means, simply, Home. It is my Mother's Place. When Mother calls, I go to Her. She knows what is needed. She gives it, namely Her Ananda in plenty. One returns from Mother rested and restored, and refreshed in body and spirit always. Many of the trees in the Nilayam can be recognised in mediaeval paintings, depicting scenes from Lord Krishna's career on earth. Near the Mandir, on the west side is a beautiful tall tree, which blooms around early Dasara and waft the lovely fragrance into Mother's Room. This tree can be noticed in many of the Rajasthan miniatures painted by mediaeval artiste devotees as well as the Deccani and Early Mughal painters. The neem, the coco-nut, the tamarind, the banana, the rose, the jasmine and mogra bushes all offer their beauty and their scent for us to admire and offer gratitude to the Mother.

Mother's Darshan is the morning! A flash of red, the graceful Form arrives, closer and finally, a deep look and a compassionate smile, —can any mother on earth, cause such an ecstatic flutter in all hearts? Mother is loving, yet, detached—every movement, gesture, flash, smile has a meaning and a lesson. Only Mother knows the agony of each of us each step, especially to those of us who have already taken the wrong ones. If Mother smiles, all is well; the heart is light and filled with joy.

But, let her turn away or look over us into the beyond, then, gloom descends. "What have I done, now?"...a great deal of interpretation and interrogation, in the quiet of the room. And, soon, the answer comes. A prayer for forgiveness, a promise not to repeat the mistake, and a renewed dedication, to please the Mother and the Mother only—regardless of what others may say or think. Please her, with each little thought, word and deed—and, Peace reigns again.

Mother smiles, at the afternoon Darshan. Ah! I was right! Even the slightest deviation from the path towards the ideal is noted by Sai Mata, for, She is Omnipresent. She is everywhere, in us, with us, beside us and behind us. A poem written in the room to Her, reaches Her as soon as line is formed in the mind. A wish, a thought, all is known and if only you trust in Her, she keeps the lines straight and true. She is the world's greatest teacher of the art of Positive Thinking. As soon as you grasp the Universal Laws of Love, Service and Compassion, as taught by Her, Mother takes you closer. She is helpful; you make less mistakes. Sai is pure Bliss. Mother, I love Thee.

Since at Mother's house, I am care-free of kitchen chores. Mother has a lovely Dining Hall, with many varieties of delicious and nutritious dishes, very lovingly prepared by devoted hands. Out of sheer happiness, I had all four meals on the first day—breakfast, lunch, tea and dinner. But, it was really too much. I restrained myself to one meal a day, with some banana and curds, now and then. Mother spoils us thoroughly with Her Love. She knows that we must relish the stay with Her, away from kitchen chores. She is such a practical Avatar.

The Gokulam Milk is the world's most blessed milk. It is rich, sweet and sustaining. Behind the Hill Is a Tree, behind the Meditation Tree, and this is the place I go to, in the early dawn. Just before sunrise, the hills are purple and the dark green forests and fields oblige us to give a glimpse—a silvery glimpse—of the river, Chitravati. The golden sky is streaked with pink and orange. Oh! How Mother would enjoy a morning walk in the cool crisp air listening to the tinkling of the cow-bells, as She used to do for years in the past and as Krishna in Vrindavan! I am wrong in believing that this is not being done now. She must be with me now, as I watch

these skies and fields, for, how can I visualise the beauty if She did not reveal it to me? She has taken upon Herself the heavy burden of saving Mankind. Multitudes are following Her whenever She goes or stays. Mother is busy with prayers from all around the globe; She has to watch every child of Hers while it sleeps. The child may forget the world, but, the Mother cannot forget the child.

The day of departure arrives. The tears well up, the hand quivers, as Sai Mata comes for a last look and smile. Ma! Ma! I am going, today.... "Accha!".... She is off. In a trice, teaching us the higher Truth, the Reality, that She is in every atom of the Universe, and that we cannot go to any place where She is NOT.

Prasanthi Nilayam...leaving Mother is so hard. The last glimpse of Mother, among Her, children.... and the last cry..."Mother! Call me again soon!"

—*Yasmin Sikal*

Sai Saraswati

The Sathya Sai Revolution in Education is on, in full swing. Bhagavan has declared that He is the Teacher of Truth, the Instructor for all mankind and the Guide on the spiritual Path.

On the 19th May, 78, in the morning hours, the Brindavan Complex of Hostels and College, Prayer Halls and Dormitories, Agricultural Farm and Dairy was full of eager, devoted and dedicated men and women, gathered to witness or participate in the magnificent Festival of Saraswati that was soon to happen. Exactly at 9, a Procession moved from Brindavan to the Sri Sathya Sai College of Arts, Science and Commerce, a procession of epochal significance to all who hope and prepare themselves for a better educational environment for Indian Youth.

There were in the procession more than 1200 students (boys and girls) chosen for participating in the month long Course on Indian Culture and Spirituality at the College to which they were proceeding—students from all the States of India with their teacher guides, and men and women who had come from across the seas in search of the wisdom of the East, students from the Colleges established by Bhagavan Himself, and 'Observers' interested in equipping themselves during the month with the armour of spiritual awareness and understanding. Really, a unique gathering—on its way to the venue of the Course, and the Discourses forming its programme of events.

The procession was led by a Band of musicians, followed by folk artists of dance and song, reciters of Vedic hymns and groups of Bhajan singers. It included the members of the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust which was the Organiser of the Summer Course and the Camp, as well as the members of the several State Trusts, besides the State Presidents of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations. The cynosure of all eyes was naturally Bhagavan who graciously came in an open vehicle decorated by devoted hands as a floral chariot. On His left sat Sri. Govind Narain, Rajyapala of Karnataka State, who was to inaugurate the Auditorium of the College, where the Summer Course (the sixth of the annual series) was to be held; and on His right sat the Minister

for Education, Karnataka State, Sri. Subbayya Setty, who was to inaugurate the equally magnificent Library Building of the College, with a Prajnana Pradarshan or Spiritual Museum of Exhibits, on the first floor.

Bhagavan Himself was inaugurating the eye-filling, heart-warming, architectural gem which was to be the College, which thrilled every entrant with the inspiring presence of Saraswati, sculptured in Divine sublimity and splendour, at the very centre of the huge range of building.

When the procession reached the College Porch, Bhagavan and the Chief Guests alighted and the mammoth gathering that filled the vast expanse of open ground in front of the building cheered the Inauguration by Bhagavan, and the Opening of the adjacent buildings of the Auditorium and the Library by the Governor and the Minister. Then, with the 1200 participants of the Summer Course seated in the Auditorium along with the Organisers and the distinguished invitees, the Ceremonial Function began.

Bhagavan. H. E. Govind Narain, Srimati Narain and Sri Subbayya Setty were on the Dais. Dr. V. K. Gokak, formerly Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bangalore (to which the College is affiliated) welcomed the gathering. He said that the Complex of College Buildings formed the most modern, the most impressive and the most loveable of the educational buildings in the Karnataka State. He introduced the participants of the Summer Course as an assemblage of inquirers from all parts of the world. He spoke of the need for such Courses, for, as he described, "we are now lulling the intellect to sleep by encouraging learning by rote rather than by experiencing, and denying youth the knowledge of the precious heritage of spiritual wisdom in our anxiety to be secular". Education today suffers from three major defects: preoccupation with the space outside the skull leading to the neglect of the kingdom of God within man, pointless, purposeless, curricula insisting on the memorising of facts and figures and, the neglect of Indian Culture and World Culture. He said that the Summer Course on Indian Culture and Spirituality is designed to correct these defects and supplement and re-inforce the anaemic curricula of Colleges.

The Governor of Karnataka State in his address said that the Course of Instruction that will be provided in the Auditorium inaugurated by him will mark the Renaissance in Indian Education, granting a synoptic view of world culture to the participants. He quoted the motto of the Sri Sathya Sai College—Dharmo Rakshati Rakshitah—and declared that the system of education will gain greatly in depth and comprehensiveness if the concept of Dharma is accepted. The academic and other distinctions won by the students of Sri Sathya Sai College can be attributed to the teacher-student rapport that is encouraged here. He also spoke appreciatively of the students, sharing the on-going process of national socio-economic development, through social service, rural uplift programmes, learning farming, dairying etc. He said the College was a unique institution, emphasising the ancient Upanishadic ideal of Vasudaiva Kutumbakam, and appealed to the students to shine as examples to the rest of the country in pursuing right ideals and practising right modes of life.

Sri Subbayya Setty, the Minister for Education, then addressed the gathering. He said the discipline he found in this College could not be found in any other College in Karnataka, and ascribed it to the extra effort and attention paid to its cultivation and maintenance. He deplored

the absence of affective and constructive thinking on the type of education India needs today and called for intellectual honesty and 'aggressiveness' in this endeavour.

Srimati Chandra Govind Narain, lit the Lamp inaugurating the Summer Course. She spoke of the great lessons taught by the sages of India about visualising Unity in Diversity and living in harmony and love with all. She pleaded for a happy blend of Vijnana and Prajnana and declared that Indian Culture laid down various lines of Sadhana by which evil tendencies like anger, falsehood and hatred can be controlled and conquered. She closed her short address with the prayer "asato ma sad gamaya; tamaso ma jyotir gamaya; mrtyor ma amrtam gamaya". Bhagavan then addressed the teachers and educationists. He said, "Bharat is the nursery of spiritual thought, the treasure-house of spiritual values as applied to life and Bharat is finding it difficult to win peace and security for herself and to teach the means of winning them to other peoples. The main reason for this tragic situation has been the degeneration that has affected the educational system. Bharat has now to re-discover the sources of her ancient greatness and her children have to offer gratitude to the Mother for discovering for them the paths to peace, harmony and happiness.

We talk of patriotism. But we forget that the thing we love is not a patch of soil, but, a community of men and women. Developing the country or uplifting it involves, therefore, improving and revitalising the lives, the ideals and the morals of the people. The individual becomes more useful, more effective, happier and healthier through a process of transformation, a process which brings about the renunciation of bad habits and evil thoughts and transplants, Instead, good habits and good thought-currents.

And, the stage of life when this process can well be initiated and hastened is the stage of 'student-hood', or adolescence. That is the period when the student community which is the tap-root of the national tree can be strengthened and stabilised. Of course, the first steps have to be taken even earlier, during childhood and the parents play a vital part in determining the tendencies and habits of the children.

Now, there is an atmosphere of helplessness; the rulers feel helpless in correcting the people; the people feel helpless in correcting the rulers or in correcting themselves. So, all are carried away along the current of indiscipline, anxiety and fear. It is only by restoring and revitalising the spiritual springs in the heart of man that a real and lasting transformation or Samskara can take place. This has to be taken up urgently and in real earnest.

The people must be assured an atmosphere of peace, love and mutual help. This can be done only by education which will promote these real virtues. The sign of the real expansion of education among the people is the peace and harmony that prevail. But, since the educational system of our country started imitating the West, and looking through Western eyes, the atmosphere has been polluted. The tree of national life has, as its branches, leaves, flowers and fruits, joy, peace, happiness, concord, harmony. The tree can grow, and be fresh and green only when the roots are fed with water and manure. The water our national tree needs is Dharma and the manure is spiritual sadhana. Deprived of these, it can only fade and fall.

The pure, unsullied minds of youth which can absorb Dharma and delight in spiritual sadhana are now being fouled by contact with politicians. They are being led away into political

controversies and used for promoting the self-interest of individuals or parties. Consider the careers of the great patriots and social workers and scholars, the men and women who are honoured with gratitude by the people—they were all students once and they used that stage for acquiring high ideals and skills, the habits of charity, tolerance, humility and service, and the means of securing inner peace. But, politicians today do not allow students the freedom and the encouragement they need to grow into stalwart spiritual Sadhakas and skilled citizens willing to serve the community to the best of their capacity

At a time when they are still at the crossroads, unable to decide what is beneficial to themselves and to society, they are enticed into political activities. These activities are by their very nature prompted by envy, pursuit of power, and reliance on improper methods of rivalry and conflict. They promote differences and distinctions, rather than encourage tolerance, forbearance and mutual understanding. They see the One as Many. Our seers in the past named lust and greed as evil spirits, anger as a demon and envy as a ghost. Now, these evil spirits, demons and ghosts revel in the land. And, when the tender minds of youth get contaminated by politics, these possess their minds too, and render them unholy. Politics thrives on egoism. And egoism does not allow a person to realise his truth or the truth of the other person. It gives a distorted picture of oneself as well as of other selves. Egoism has destroyed even semi-Divine or Divine personalities, as our epics and legends have shown. What to speak of mere men, therefore?

An educated youth must be distinguished from the rest of the community by self-confidence, humility, and compassion towards the suffering and the distressed. Or else, the educated man becomes a handicap and even a danger to the community. I suggest to the Minister in charge of Education, who is here, to pay special attention to this problem and to correct the present system, by including in the educational process moral and spiritual lessons. If a thousandth part of the effort made now to impart education for earning a living is directed to the process of educating for life, the success will be really great. Now education succeeds only in presenting youth with a begging bowl (the degree) which, they can carry with them from one Office to another, in their quest for jobs. But, Bharat needs heroes who can stand on their own legs, who are ready to sacrifice their all for preserving and promoting the peace and prosperity of their country and its peoples. We want sons and daughters who will revere their parents and respect their elders, who will always have the interest of their country and its peoples in their hearts and who are willing to undergo any sacrifice while trying to preserve its culture and its traditional values and ways of life. They must be the pillars on which the glorious future of India and the world rests. So, students must grow self-reliant and self-confident; they must be aware of their own Divinity and the destiny of their country and its culture. They are Vidyarthi, seekers of Vidya, not seekers of sensual pleasure—Vishaya-arthis. They seek 'education', but, learn 'agitation', though they must rely only on methods that will promote the goal they seek".

It is necessary to mention here that Bhagavan authorised the announcement of the names of the Auditorium and the Library Building that were inaugurated, as Gulab Kunwarba Auditorium (in view of the donation from the Rajmata of Jamnagar, and the Library and Prajnana Pradarshan Building as Deendayal Chopra Prajnana Pradarshan and Library Building (in view of the donation from the Chopra Family of Calcutta).

And finally, a paragraph on the Prajnana Pradarshan: This will be a permanent Spiritual Museum at the College. It is a well planned and well arranged collection of charts, pictures, models, photographs and artistic pieces depicting in unmistakable clarity, the 'Pilgrim's Progress' from Falsehood to Reality, from Darkness to Light and from Death to Immortality. When one stands in the midst of the museum exhibits, and turns around, he completes an excursion that leads him from the dawn of the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Ramayana, the Bhagavatha, and the Gita through the morning light of other faiths like Zoroastrianism and Buddhism into the noonday of Christianity and Islam, and moves on into the Ages of Reason, and Mysticism culminating in Ramakrishna, Ramana, Aurobindo and Gandhi and finally drawing the entire mankind, for the first time in history, under the invigorating and integrating message of Sri Sathya Sai. Surely, a museum that elevates the spirit of man and reveals the vast potentiality that lies in his Divine Core! The Museum is no amuseum; it is a 'must' for every student of Indian Culture and Spirituality. It is a good augury that it has been inaugurated on the very day when thousands have gathered for a month-long stay in Brindavan in the Divine Presence to fill themselves with the wisdom of the East.

—Ed.

The Beacon of Hope

Bhagavan is graciously arranging an annual Summer Course on Indian Culture and Spirituality since six years at Brindavan Bangalore, where more than a thousand students from the Colleges of all Indian States are gathered and, in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan, they undergo a tight schedule of lectures from distinguished scholars on the basic tenets of the major religions of the world, on the lives and teachings of great saints and mystics who have explored the blissful regions of the spirit, on the immortal scriptural texts that have received the reverential attention of all the races of the world (this year, one entire week was devoted to lectures on the Bhagavatham and on paths marked out by the leaders of mankind for the realisation of man's ultimate destiny—Liberation from the Ego and merging in the Eternal Absolute.

This year, more than 200 students have come from foreign countries to benefit by the Course and to listen to the Message of Bhagavan. Bhagavan, graciously, instruct and inspires the students (as well as the hundreds who attend the Course as 'Observers' and seekers) by means of a Daily Discourse, throughout the 30 days of the Course.

The participants have a Satwic regime of Pranavajapa, Nagarsankirtan, Yoga, Bhajan etc. They are initiated into Seva every Sunday, when they clean the Bus Stations and Shopping Centres called 'Markets' in the City of Bangalore, or, distribute themselves in the villages around Brindavan seeking chances of service. The impact that the participants, receive directly and indirectly, as they see and hear Bhagavan and experience His Love is the greatest gain each participant earns. Elocution contests, Quiz programmes and an Examination at the end of the Course ensure that the participants imbibe well the information and inspiration that are given to them while in the Camp. The participants also benefit by the scrutiny and study of the exhibits at the Spiritual Museum, artistically designed and thoughtfully arranged on the First Floor of the College Library. The Museum instills into the student an awareness of the common features of

all religions, and an eagerness to accept the guidance of Bhagavan for one's spiritual advancement. Bhagavan showers His Grace on the participants providing them 'a home from home' and all facilities for quiet study and intensive Sadhana. He gifts them the uniform clothes for the Convocation. The students find it hard and even impossible to leave the Presence of Bhagavan," when the Camp closes. Tears of gratitude and pangs of separation can be noticed on all faces. Each one is carrying back great quantities of worthwhile information; but, far more than all this, each one has awakened to the glories of the Reality, the Sai, that lies within and prompts every urge and activity! Surely, the Summer Course is redeeming the New Generation from idle pursuits and selfish competitive tendencies. It is the most constructive movement in the educational realm in India today.

—N. K.

The Universe is the body of God. Every Particle in it is filled with God—His Glory, His Might. His Inscrutability. Believe that God is the inner Truth in every thing and being. He is Truth. He is Wisdom. He is eternal. Be humble before the evidences of His Power and Majesty, in every cell and atom. It is the God in you that guides you and guards you. When you deny God, it tantamounts to your assertion, "I am born of a barren woman" or declaring very loudly, "I am incurably dumb". It is as absurd as denying yourself. Every man, woman and child has the right to know this Truth—so patent but, yet, so neglected.

—Baba

The Golden Touch of His Feet

("In sorrow after sorrow, it is His steps that press upon my heart, and it is the golden touch of His feet that makes my joy to shine". Tagore)

I am the pilgrim and art the goal.
I pray that every breath I take and step I walk
will lead me that much closer.

Yet I know that it is not my feet that make progress.
I know that the pilgrimage even, is not real

For, Thy feet, touched by my heart
are the means I have for reaching;
attention placed on the image of Thy sole
to my soul, the means to realize

Realize what?
That the shrine is love without limits

Let me welcome Your play, not shun it
be self-efface, not Self evasive

Let me appreciate, enjoy, your plan
not shirk it. Let me be more appropriate

Expansive is the way, the way to freedom.
Appropriate me

Make me shake off the worries,
the fears the cringing, the shrinking

Cure me of the sickness of half-heartedness
hesitation, petty reluctance

Open me, use me, wear me out doing Your work
till there is no me and as a leaf falls
and merges with the earth, let my ego decompose
that I may become one with Your solid
unsullied substance invisible

Wherever I may wander I am always at Thy feet
Thy lotus feet are my refreshment, my shelter
from the storms, my journey's meaning, my goal

May I ever feel within my heart
sweetly dancing, Thy lotus feet

Impression after impression
of pressing engagements
of leisure and tension
bear down on my mind, but trackless is Thine
infinite heart, and Thy feet dance
all colors away.

When You throw me for a loop of seeming
loss-of-center, let me know that You're within
me, let me find Your shelter feet

—*Bill Jackson*

I Am But a Fragment

All that I am, You have given me—
The Love, shining in my heart,
Your thought, filling my mind;
The rest claimed as 'me' dropped
As old clothes, out of the past.

Now, I am but a fragment of
Your Divine reflection—
Empty, myself-filled only with Love
But, if Your image be taken from
My mind, and Your Love from
My heart, there shall be nothing left...
All of me, turning into dust.

—*Parti*

The Great Task of the Guru

On 22nd May 78, at 9-15 A. M., Bhagavan inaugurated the First All India Bal Vikas Gurus' Training Camp to which more than 150 Gurus from all the States of India have been deputed. It is a six-day camp, during which a programme of lectures, discussions and sittings with Bhagavan is being gone through. Mrs. K. Mani of Vijayawada welcomed the delegates and the participants of the Summer Course to the Inaugural Sessions, held at the Auditorium of the Sri Sathya Sai College, Brindavan. She said that the Bal Vikas movement, initiated seven years ago and being managed by the Mahila Vibhags of Seva Samitis, now has more than 30,000 children in its fold, and instruction is being imparted according to syllabuses drawn up, to three age-groups—6-10, 11-14 and 15-17. She said that there were 1200 Gurus, trained to handle the Bal Vikas Classes and that, independent research on the impact of the Classes on the children and elaborate comparative studies of children who have not had the benefit of Bal Vikas have established that the Bal Vikas has succeeded in imparting attitudes and habits of thought and action, in the children that are highly valuable for the individual and society.

Bhagavan, in His Inaugural Address, spoke of the high role of the teacher, especially, of one who assumes the responsibility of moral and spiritual education of children. He said, "The ideal teacher is a Yogi who has no body-consciousness and delusion, and who is motivated by, detachment rather than attachment to fame or fortune. Like Brahma, the teacher implants seeds of virtue, like Vishnu she fosters the good and the beneficial and like Siva she weeds out the bad and the maleficent. If the teacher does not adhere to Truth, the community will suffer downfall. This is what happens when the teacher is a teacher of worldly knowledge! How much more vigilant must be the teacher who undertakes to train pupils in morals and spiritual advance!

Children by their very nature imitate the elders and follow their footsteps, with faith. So, when, the teacher observes good principles and walks on the straight path, the children too will develop on those lines. When the teacher indulges in bad habits, the pupils too learn them; or even if some might be wiser and avoid them, they will lose all respect for the teacher and might even ridicule them for their hypocrisy. The children have no means of discriminating what is good for them from what is bad. Gurus must make an all-out effort to set good examples. A little boy heard the story of Shravana from its mother and decided that he would obey his parents like that Shravana. He saw the play, 'Harischandra' and it had such a strong impact on his tender mind that he resolved never to speak untruth thereafter. He grew up and gained immortal fame as Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. Like a bird with two strong wings or a chariot with two smooth

wheels, he moved along on these two paths and won eternal renown. Unfortunately, children today have no such mothers telling morally effective stories or any play, depicting such ideals. Gurus must be good story-tellers and they must see that the tales actually have an impact on the minds of the children. History reveals that the heroes of childhood have a strong influence on the future careers of the children, in all lands. The child-mind is a tender creeper in search of a supporting ideal. Gurus should see that the support is straight and rooted deep. They must exhort the children, out of their own genuine experience, and not as textbooks do. They must practise what they teach and speak out of their hearts. There were teachers in the life of Gandhi who strove to lead him astray. But, he escaped their influence and steadily followed the path he knew was good. Do not put yourselves in the position of being admonished by your own pupils.

The Guru is a sculptor trying to release the beautiful idol which she finds imprisoned in the boulder. The parents and the Gurus are partners in this art of sculpture and they transform the uncouth boulder into a sacred idol for the temple. Be happy that you are engaged in this holy task; let no obstacle deflect you from this assignment. Nowadays, the number of mothers engaged in jobs in either factories and offices or schools has increased. But, more profitable than the few chips that are earned by you through this toil is the profit you can get by looking after the progress of your own children. It is far better to bring up your own two children than engaging yourselves in teaching a hundred children of other mothers and neglecting your own. Leaving one's own children to grow wild and unruly, what is the good of disciplining a hundred other children? Bring all children up, including your own, in truth, love, honesty, co-operation and mutual love. Gurus are now relating nice stories, teaching fine stotras and teaching extracts from the Bhagavad-Gita. This is all for the good and has to be appreciated. But, there are other more important things the Gurus have to implant, if the ideals of the Bal Vikas have to be realised. The children have to learn humility, reverence, fear of sin, love of God, respect for elders, affection for other children, and the value of silence and disciplined behaviour. They must please their parents and be sincere in their promises. Unless this too is done well and fully, you should not be contented. They must also learn, in the Bal Vikas classes, cleanliness and how to maintain it. They must be encouraged to rise from bed in the Brahma-muhurta itself and attend to their daily chores, after prostrating before the parents and elders. Until some years ago, children were bidden to begin the day when the cockcrows. Now, parents rise from sleep long after sunrise; how then can they insist on the Bal Vikas rule? The parents lead the children into evil ways. Drinking, smoking, gambling, and other habits are learnt by children with parental encouragement. They take the children along with them into cinema halls, where moral laxity, violence, and sensual depravity are depicted in attractive colours.

Parents should be persuaded to set good examples to their children, if they want them to grow into sons and daughters of whom they can be proud. They must be asked not to demonstrate their affection by stuffing the purses of their children with pocket money, for, money is the root of all evil. If the child wants ten rupees, only nine should be given. He should not be given twenty. The extra money jingling in his pocket will destroy his holy future.

Of course, the Gurus are now taking care that the pupils are well behaved so long as they are in the classroom; but, some care has to be taken to see that the disciplinary behaviour continues later and becomes a permanent possession of the child. For this, it is better a Parents Day is held, once in a while and the parents directed to watch for and encourage the traits of service, love and

reverence that the Bal Vikas implants. Gurus must also develop 'common sense' and 'general knowledge' in the children under their care. Do not finish the Bal Vikas course with a few dances, dramas, stories and bhajans. Warning must be given to the parents that the children should not be exposed to the banal influence of films and plays, and the degenerating type of pictorials and story books. Discourage them from cinema telling them that it is mostly artificial, false, and photographic trickery and that it is all synchronised stuff. Tell them that the pictures are generally about wicked persons and violent deeds, and that it is not advisable to see them. "When death is depicted on the film, the people are seen to be affected but really they are only acting—tell them! To be affected on seeing such artificial things is a sign of weakness. We are simply imagining situations and allowing them to affect us. The dress worn by the actors, the incidents depicted, the feelings expressed—all are artificial. What is being taught now in schools is mostly rubbish. We are handing out to the children glass beads and denying them precious gems. Children are not told the way to peace and, joy the road to harmony, and happiness."

Dr. V. K. Gokak then addressed the vast gathering of students and Gurus on the Role of Bal Vikas in the Educational System of Bhagavan. He said that the Bal Vikas is the earliest stage in the educational programme of Swami, with its three stages: (1) for the age group 6-10 (2) for the age group 11-14 and (3) for the age group 15-17. "The factual details of the course are not so important as the aim, the purpose, with which Bhagavan has designed the Bal Vikas. It is to transform children as Dhruva, Nachiketa or Markandeya, to transform Manava into Madhava. Maghavan into Bhagavan—a formidable challenge, indeed. The regular schools to which the children go attend to the physical and intellectual development of the children, and, during the 75 or 90 minutes a week that the Guru handles them in the Bal Vikas class, the seeds of this grand mutation have to be planted and fostered! Quite an ambitious programme, this!"

"The Guru has to pay attention to four goals, during the process of educating the child spiritually and morally, through the syllabi prescribed. (I) Develop the attitude of Devotion: This is done by the recital of hymns and stotras in the first stage; addressing the Lord as Mother, Father, Kinsman, Preceptor and Guide, as the Remover of Obstacles and Promoter of Knowledge; also by paying tribute to the Avatar through the Suprabhatam and Ashtotarasataka recital. The path of self-illumination is just indicated and made known. In the II stage more Bhajans are taught and the child is encouraged to lead the Bhajan singers. During the III stage, it takes part in public bhajans and shares the collective aspiration of spiritual advance

(II) Wisdom: The Bal Vikas awakens the moral sense in children through the stories that are told them; since they are selected from the scriptures and immortal books of all races they widen the horizons of the child mind, heighten and sharpen the intellect and enlarge the wisdom latent in them. At the second stage (11-14), the Gita slokas to which they are introduced generalise their attitudes and add to the wisdom that they might have achieved by then. In the third stage, when the Guru tells them in detail about 'one religion other than their own', the horizon is widened still more. At this stage, stories of mystics and outlines of the philosophic interpretations of Nature, Man and God are related and this too adds to the wisdom the Bal Vikas pupil achieves.

The Bal Vikas also purifies and strengthens the (III) *Will* of the child. Now parents are aware of the Will that surges in the child only when it evinces willfulness! But, when it is turned into

right action, and in 'doing good to others as you would like to be done to', it becomes a positive and beneficial gain. The Guru by precept and example awakens sincerity in thought, word, deed and feeling.

The fourth gift that the Bal Vikas hands out to the pupils is the training in (IV) *Meditation*. The child is made aware of the sweetness and delight that silence and meditation can offer. Here, the soul comes into its own in the human personality.

Dr. Gokak concluded by saying that the Child is a more formidable problem than a University student and the Guru is therefore engaged in a Sadhana, when she involves herself in the work of educating it, and bringing out the truth, beauty and goodness latent in it.

The Training Camp lasted for six days. Bhagavan graciously spent more than an hour each day, answering questions and clearing doubts. The Gurus had discussions among themselves in the afternoon sessions and collated points to be clarified the next day when Baba gave them the gracious chance. In this way, they were able to get light shed on many items in the syllabus and many knotty problems of organisation and administration. During the six days, they were enthused and instructed by about fifteen talks on the various facets of their task. On the concluding day, the 26th, the 160 trainees moved in procession, wearing the uniform saris gifted by Bhagavan, led by the College Band of Sri Sathya Sai College of Arts, Science and Commerce for Women, Anantapur, from the Training Camp Hall to the College Auditorium. Bhagavan spoke on the Guru Shishya relationship in Ancient India as described in the Bhagavata and Mahabharata, and drew their attention to the need for promoting that relationship even today in the Bal Vikas.

—Ed.

The Humanist Par Excellence

The Avatar of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is a baffling phenomenon which defies scientific analysis and philosophical explanations. The good and the glory of Bhagavan's nature are much too complex, intricate and rich to be capsuled into a definition, a concise statement or an over elaborate treatise. Mysterious are the ways of God to men and myriad are the ways in which He appeals to men and women of various degrees of insight and different levels of emotional and intellectual perception. Indeed, with His divine generosity, he gives Himself to immense varieties of interpretations and approaches. Each interpretation is only one of the infinite attributes of His many splendoured glory.

To my humble way of thinking, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is the humanist par excellence. In fact, without implying any doubts and questionings about His Avatarhood, it might be said that His humanist ideals (preached and practiced) give an added dimension to His Divine mission.

Modern humanism, in its positive side, believes that man is essentially good and that it is good to be born as man. One of the affirmations of humanism is that complete realisation of human

personality is the end of life. It also advocates the view that man's religious culture, in the context of the modern scientific and technological progress, must consist in the actions, experiences and purpose which are humanly significant. Such is the essence of humanist creed minus its atheistic overtones.

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba tells us, like the true humanist, that the true function of religion is to guide mankind to realize the highest values of life. The Quintessence of His preachings is that man is potentially divine and realization of that divinity is the true purpose of this noble human life. But today man's understanding of the universe, his scientific and technological achievements and consequent shrinking of the universe, have invested him with diabolic powers to destroy mankind, and have created a situation which requires a re-statement of the means and purposes of religion and its human significance and contemporary social relevance. So Bhagavan Baba redefines faith as a means to establish universal brotherhood based on Shanti, Dharma, Sathya, Prema and so on. As a step towards that end He attacks the immorality of a social system that thrives on human frailties and He prescribes moral strength as a real solution to get over the impasse. Eliminate the causes such as fear, greed, hatred and cynicism toward human motives—then the power of economic system, indeed of nature itself, over human life will be greatly reduced, enabling man to take a step toward, realisation of his divine nature. Such a programme, according to Bhagavan Sai, is a matter of individual will and faith. Human perfection and the sense of purpose that accompanies the desire for such perfection are Sai's humanistic ideal and prescription for the ills of any society in the modern world. Bhagavan Sai's humanistic and humanitarian moral fervour, nourished by the Vedic faith represent the essential 'goodness' of man. Is this not identical with the humanist creed that man can become perfect with social progress?

A variety of humanism rejects what it regards as excessive rationalism and scientific spirit. It insists that man must be guided in life both by reason and emotion in proper balance. It believes further that any improvement in the human lot has to be accomplished from within the individual through development of his higher self and ethical nature by restraining his lower nature and animalistic passions. When humanism parts company with excessive rationalism, it comes closer to religion, and when religion coexists with rationalism (Vivekananda says, It always does) it comes closer to humanism.

Religion has two aspects, personal and public. In its personal aspect, it is based on the private experiences and beliefs of the Individual. Baba never coerces people to believe in Him or in any God. But once a man believes in any kind of God (a form of personal religion), he has a duty to the public. In its public aspect, religion has ethical and socio-economic dimensions. He has to live a life of duty, discipline and devotion. He has to live with a sense of Prema, Shanti and brotherhood. Is this not a humanistic ideal? Is this not the ethical aspiration of rationalism? It is therefore presumptuous on the part of the rationalist to suppose that religion thrives on irrationalism. Religion and rationalism are not mutually exclusive, as is evident from Bhagavan Sai's life which is His message. It is clear that religion absorbs into it what ever is good in humanism. But humanism, on the contrary tries to keep God and religion at arm's length, by insisting that ethical perfection of man can be attained without reference to religion. It may be recalled that T. S. Eliot maintained that ethical affirmation of humanism could not stand without religious justification. Without religion man has no more reason to develop his ethical nature

than to give way to his animal impulses. Eliot adds, that humanism "flourishes most where religion has been strong, and if you find examples of humanism which are anti-religious, or at least in opposition to the religious faith of the place and time, then such humanism is purely destructive, for it has never found anything to replace what it has destroyed". Paul Elmon More also recognizes that humanism would, ultimately, have to look to religion for justification, when he rhetorically asks, "Will not the humanist, unless, he adds to his creed, the faith and hope of religion, find himself, at the last, despite his protests, dragged back into the camp of the naturalist?"

For those who have eyes to see Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai has a socio religious philosophy committed to the ideals of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema. Like Lord Krishna, he has come down to us to put back Dharma on these four wheels. Vital to his socio-religious philosophy is his conception of God and man. According to Him, God is an embodiment of perfection. He is Beauty, Truth and Goodness—all embodied in one. Man is potentially divine and so he urges every one to realize this truth and strive to manifest the inherent divinity in him. But it is not a private exercise. It is a duty to society to discover one's own divinity, but also to help others manifest their divinity.

Even a cursory look at the ideals and ways of working of various wings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samitis, reveals this socio-religious humanism at work. The Seva Samiti's activities are manifold and are directed toward the noble end of attainment of perfection in man. It conducts Bal Vikas schools for children, (similar to Bible schools and Sunday schools in the West, but only more effective, more universal in outlook, purposeful), where the young ones are trained in singing Bhajans, in story telling, dance and such religio-cultural activities based on scriptures of all faiths. Evaluating the scholastic attainments of Bal Vikas Children, Prof. T. R. Kulkarni said that they had "not only greater intellectual powers, but a greater sense of responsibility and moral outlook, and a greater sense of aesthetic values than those who have not attended such schools". Can rationalism and its dialectics infuse all that into the young ones at that tender-age?

The Mahila Vibhag Wing of the Seva Samiti is concerned with Bhajans and Bal Vikas schools. But in a general sense they are also concerned with the problems of women.

The Seva Dal Wing consists of young people committed to service to society. Each member of this wing is given training in spiritual matters such as singing Bhajans, doing meditation and such other Sadhanas. They are equally well-trained in such mundane things as fire fighting, flood control, first-aid, handling of electric gadgets and so on. Each Samiti adopts villages for educating the villagers on the importance of cleanliness and social harmony. On prescribed days, the Seva Dal workers collect food packets and clothes which are distributed among the inmates of leper colonies. The way in which they conduct themselves on all these occasions, with a sense of duty, devotion and discipline, is exemplary. They submerge their ego, sink their status consciousness and work together with a sense of dedication. Here there is no difference between the rich and the poor, the privileged and the under-privileged and between caste and castes. Every one sees the other as an embodiment of the divine soul. Can any social service organisation cultivate and develop as a permanent asset such a sense of equality and fraternity?

The spiritual regeneration which Baba has been seeking to bring about is not possible without educational reconstruction. So Baba's Samitis have started a number of Schools and Colleges where students are given spiritual and religious orientation while they receive instruction in academic courses. It may be recalled here that the Kothari Commission has strongly recommended imparting of moral and spiritual education to our students. Bhagavan's colleges and Summer schools prepare the young ones intellectually and spiritually to become the responsible citizens of the country, with love and brotherhood for one another and with profound respect for our valued spiritual heritage. On the contrary, the undergraduates and unfinished graduates brain-washed by rationalists and humanists, eventually end up as do-nothings, hypocrites and anti-social elements. Uprooted from the age-old traditions of our land, and disillusioned with the feeble prop of their new-found faith which cannot replace the old, they represent a pathetically "lost generation" of this land of ours.

What Baba and His disciples have been doing is only a fractional part of His ambitious programme of spiritual regeneration of mankind as a whole and establishment of Universal religion which can absorb and synthesize all existing faiths. Baba *has a* social philosophy (call it by, any name, it is great) which seeks to reconcile spirituality with practicality, to bridge the gulf between Paramartha and Vyavahara.

—*Dr. J. Srihari Rao, M.A. Ph.D. Raipur*

Beauty is Bliss

Beauty is bliss; bliss is beauty. Through beauty—which is the expression of Love, Harmony and Melody—bliss is attained. The flower, freshly blossomed, the bird with attractive plumage, the house built with care and simple loveliness, the picture that is charming, cool and quiet, the individual shining in spiritual awareness, these confer a strange joy to the onlooker. But, the joy that can be derived from these are transient, even when they are deep and elevated: They survive only a few moments or days, by which other influences mar or destroy the effect. A lovely rose is lovely only until evening; then, the petals fall off and fade, and the next day, even the perfume becomes unpleasant. No object that is accessible to the senses can give man undiluted, permanent bliss. The charm of an individual person is not exempt from this rule.

Permanent bliss can be derived only from permanent things; how can the transient shower bliss on the transient? The ever-beautiful Lord alone can award the ever-available bliss. The eternal Truth is God; the eternal source of joy is also only God.

The Gopis had realised that Sri Krishna was the eternal source of beauty and of bliss. They did not regard Him as a transient being, subject to the vicissitudes of ordinary men. They chose Him as their Lord, for, they knew He was God in human form come to liberate such as they. So, they decided on the Katyayini Puja. They were no group of deluded souls, uneducated and illiterate, and therefore, easily misled. Though dark-complexioned, Krishna was the entrancer of all hearts. The splendour of Divinity gave Him universal charm. His beauty and the bliss that it spread all around Him were eternal, and unbounded. The aim with which they undertook the Puja was that Krishna must accept them and be their Lord. They never craved for the gross relationship of human marital bondage. Husband means he who guards and develop the resources and uses them economically and well. Bhartha, the Sanskrit word for husband means, he who protects, regulates and rewards, he who bears the burden. They wanted that Krishna should be their Bhartha, in this sense. The film-makers, the play-wrights and the novelists are today caricaturing and distorting this pure, sanctifying picture of the Gopi-Gopla relationship, and presenting it before youth as sheer salacious stuff. For the Lord who is resident in every heart who is the inner Motivator of the feelings, and faith in every individual, how can any other relationship be ascribed?

Sri Krishna was 84 years old, when the battle of Kurukshetra ended. IN 3138 B.C. the Coronation of the eldest of the Pandavas (who emerged victorious from that battle, after defeating the Kauravas) was crowned Emperor. Later, Krishna returned to Dwaraka. The people of Dwaraka, who had long yearned for His return, and who were afraid that He might once again proceed to spend time with the Pandava brothers whom He loved much, prayed that He should not desert them and leave them to suffer the pangs of separation from their Beloved Lord. So, Krishna stayed on at Dwaraka, for 36 years more, and at last, He left for His Heavenly Abode on the night of February 17/18 in the year 3102 B. C.

The news struck the Pandavas like a thunderbolt; but, it did not plunge the Gopis in gloom. They knew that Krishna was of eternal nature; He was the originator of Time and so, Time can leave no marks on Him. He was the very embodiment of Prema and Ananda, and so, those devoted to Him and moulded by Him shall not grieve or lose their Love.

The story of the Gopi-Gopala relationship is fundamentally, the story of the Jivatma-Paramatma relationship. Their hearts were transformed into Brindavan; they had no trace of the 'I-am-the body feeling', the Deha-bhranti, which is the root of all egoistic faults. In fact, the Scriptures declare in unmistakable terms, that they were Rishis in the Kritayuga, Vanaras in the Tretayuga and had assumed the Gopa-Gopi forms on purpose to be in the Presence of the Avatar of Krishna. The Lord had granted their request that they should be allowed to adore and accept the Avatar as their Guardian, guide and Goal. They had been awarded the boon of Darshan, (which removes sin) in the Kritayuga; they had received the boon of Sambhashanam or Conversation (which removes sorrow) during the Tretayuga, when the Lord came as Rama and they came as Vanaras; they had now come, as Gopis, in order to have the boon of Sparshan or Touching the Feet of the Lord (which burns off all the deleterious consequences of the activities in previous lives. By touch or Sparshan, even a cold black piece of coal can turn itself into a red, light-giving bright cinder.

Since the Gopis were aware that Krishna was omnipresent and omnipotent, they addressed a big black bee that came into Gokulam one day as Krishna Himself, appearing in their midst in that form. They ran behind it and shouted, 'O! Krishna is here!' They welcomed the bee with a great sense of gratitude and joy. They poured out their sorrows and got some relief, by this release of pent up feelings.

Those whose hearts are packed with earthly desires, the Krishna principle cannot be clear. The Gopas and Gopis were free from all attachments and desires, except the attachment to the Lord and the desire to be in His Presence. They moved like automatons among their kith and kin; they performed their household chores without getting their minds involved in them or in their consequences. They were like Jivan-muktas, always in Divine Bliss. They went along the streets hawking curds, butter and milk; but, with the wares on their heads, they did not shout the names of the things they had come to sell; they shouted, in, ecstatic joy, the names, "Govinda Damodara Madhava". They called on Krishna, not on their customers. By this practice of the constant Presence of God, they were able to earn a pure heart, and sacred thoughts. The Lord is described in the Shruti as "Sweetness". "Raso vai saha" They too became sweet, by the un-intermittent contemplation of the embodiment of sweetness.

Half educated and purblind persons were plenty even in those days and they could not grasp the glory of Krishna and of the Gopis. Krishna had unlimited power and wisdom. What He spoke was Truth. The Gopas and Gopikas were examples of steady faith, which did not waver with the ups and downs of life. It withstood slander, persecution and neglect. They knew that their path was holy and their goal was God. So, they never hesitated or slackened their pace. They were also examples of amity and mutual help. When any Gopi was overcome by grief at separation from the Lord others gathered around her and consoled her back into normalcy. They shared her agony and rendered it less painful. They told her that they too had the same anguish but, they did not want to hold it for others' view and ridicule. The Gopis were fine examples of what a real Sadhaka ought to be.

—*Divine Discourse: Summer Camp*

Bhagavan on Bal Vikas

(Bal Vikas Guru Training Camp)

The Bal Vikas is the primary basis of the great Movement to restore Dharma in the world. The elders are far-gone, and it is difficult to expect transformation of their habits and attitudes. Children have to be led into good ways of living, simplicity and humility and disciplined methods of life. The parents have to be persuaded lovingly and through the examples of bright, cheerful and co-operating children from the Bal Vikas Classes, to send their children also to the classes. As you know, you cannot draw children to your side if you hold a stick in your hand. You will have to hold some sweets, instead. So, the Gurus have to be embodiments to Love and Patience.

The ideal of the Bal Vikas is the raising up of a generation of boys and girls who have clean and clear Consciousness filled with noble ideals. The actual syllabus is not so important as the creation of the atmosphere where these habits and ideals can grow and fructify. The Bal Vikas pupils attend other schools during the rest of the days of the week and are amenable to the Bal Vikas discipline and curriculum only on one day in the week. So, the impact of the Guru must be extra strong, so that it may act like a catalyst, changing its behaviour and reactions even in the school.

The home too must feel the transformation in child behaviour. It may be advisable to gather the mothers of children, once a month or more frequently and give them guidelines on childcare and the higher ideals of family and social life. You can suggest to them ways and means of following up the effect of the Bal Vikas, and while allowing maximum freedom to the child, hold harmful tendencies in check and promoting beneficial ways of moving with elders and the other members of the family. Parents have to be cautious how they behave and converse in the presence and within hearing of the children; for, they are keen learners from the examples the parents provide. A spirit of understanding and sympathy has to pervade the home. This can be communicated to the mothers at these gatherings. It is a necessary supplement to the Bal Vikas. The Home in which the Bal Vikas child grows, as indeed the homes in which all children are entitled to grow and develop, has to be clean and full of vibrations, free from hatred, envy, greed, spite and hypocrisy. The food that the child gets has to be Satwic and pure. From the age of two to five, the mother is the teacher and the ideal for the child and this fact has to be brought home to the mothers.

Workers and Office-bearers, Gurus and Seva Dal members of the Sathya Sai Organisation all over the world, must remember that they are subject to the scrutiny of the public, wherever they are and whatever they do. They must be free from the habits and practices which they recommend others to give up. The Bal Vikas Guru must have her own child as a pupil in the class. They should not lose temper; they have to keep their emotions under control. They should not exhibit either depression, or dejection or wavering of the will. The quality of the work is more important than the quantity. So, do not take up more than you can render satisfactorily. Let your own conscience be the judge; if you feel that you have discharged your duty to the children or to society, then you may rest content.

Of course, the environmental conditions for the propagation of the spiritual ideals of brotherhood, simple living, spiritual search, and loving service are not very congenial. When you deal with the children of families that are not already devotees of Sai or of some other Form of the same Divinity, the obstacles are greater. Sometimes the husbands of the Gurus may discourage the dedicated outlook with which the work is undertaken. I know that great success has been achieved in spreading the Bal Vikas movement in the States. There is still much more scope, especially in the alum areas and in the villages.

They present problems of other types, which have to be solved with greater discrimination and deeper Love. Meet these problems with a desire to serve the children better and longer; then they will solve themselves easily. For, the Bal Vikas is devised not merely for the education of the children. It educates the Gurus also, equally if not more. It elevates and sublimates the thoughts and emotions of the Gurus, far better than any other Sadhana can. Remember that as Gurus, you have a Guru, guiding you and overseeing your Seva. So you too are pupils. You learn the lessons of equality, equanimity and self-less Love, while a Guru.

In the Bal Vikas Classes, you must endeavour to have children from various faiths, so that friendship will grow into understanding and understanding into Love. Do not talk about the various religions in the beginning and stress on the similarities that you have noted. That will only create confusion in the tender minds, which do not recognise or seek differences or even similarities. Tell them stories from the scriptures of all religions, and let them feel that the saints and seers of all lands are good, great, blessed by God and God-fearing.

Let them realise that prayer is universal and that prayer in any language addressed to any Name reaches the same God known by those many names. Let them understand that God can be invoked into a picture or idol. He can fulfill man's sincere desire, provided it is helpful to others and helpful to oneself. Love binds all children together, for they have not learnt to hate. Love can unite all mankind, provided he is cured of greed and envy, desire and attachment. The Vedas teach that man should adore and worship God in gratitude; the Bible teaches that man should pray for peace and practise charity; the Quran teaches man to show mercy to the suffering and to surrender his will to the All-High. The Buddhist texts teach the lesson of detachment and sense-control, and the Zend-Avesta exhorts man to get rid of evil propensities and shine in this own innate Glory. The Guru has to learn all these qualities and then teach them by precept and example.

More than all, the Guru must be equipped with Sahana—a calm and quiet temper, prepared to meet without a ruffle the buffetings of the environment. When some one inquires whether you have the calm temper, do not get enraged! Some people get angrier and angrier, when they are asked thus. Even when you have to speak harshly to a child or parent, because all other means of bringing a point home have failed, let your heart be soft; let it not be hardened by prejudice or hatred.

You must equip yourself for this task of Seva by some individual Sadhana done daily with sincerity and regularity, The Pranava recital is one such. It is laid down at the Prasanthi Nilayam that the early dawn recital of OM should last twenty one times. This number has a significance of its own. It is not arbitrarily fixed. We have the 5 Karmendriyas and the 5 Jnanendriyas; we have

also the 5 vital airs or Pranas, sustaining us. Again, we have the 5 Kosas, or sheaths enclosing the Divine Spark that Is the Reality. All these total up to 20. So, the recitation of the OM twenty one times purifies and clarifies all these 20 components and makes man, the 21st entity, ready for the final merger with the Reality. The Life-principle (the Jivatattwam) merges with the Paratattwam (the Supreme Absolute). The Jivatattwam can be pictured as a rider on the 20 component comprising 'horse'. Finally, you end the Pranava recital with recital of Shanti, three times. That too completes the process of clarification and purification. For, the first call for Shanti is for the purity of the Adibhoutik part of the Self (the Body). The second call is for the purity of the second part, the Adidaivik (the Mind) and the third is for the purification of the Adhyatmic (the Spiritual). This Pranava recital will tone you up and calm all agitations in the mind and quicken the downpour of Grace.

The OM is the primeval Sound, the sound caused by the vibration of creation through the emergent will of the Attributeless, Nirakara Nirguna Brahman. It is referred to as Shabda-brahman. The OM is a composite of A U and M. Just as G O and D, when pronounced together is uttered as "God", so too, the letters A U and M are uttered as OM. The A emanates from the gullet, the U from the tongue lying in the interior of the mouth and the M from the lips. But, when the joint sound OM is uttered, it emanates and has to emanate from the region of the navel of man.

The OM must be recited slowly and with deliberation. The sound must be like an aircraft, approaching from a distance to the spot where you are and flying away into the distance...low at first, gradually becoming louder and louder and then slowly relapsing into a silence after this experience being, as significant as the Pranava. U is the peak, the Kailasa, which the sound reaches in its adoration! A is the base; M is the end.

In the Sri Chakra, the mystic figure in which the Parashakti, the Cosmic Energy principle (and the Deity presiding over it) is invoked and installed, the OM is the very Centre, around which all the other symbols are placed. Man too must do this installation. The OM is the real life-principle of every mantra, of every *man*. Mantra is what saves *man*; man is but the *mana* or mind, with which he can meditate on the mantra. You can have this Pranava-sadhana watching the breath as it enters and exits, and listening in silence to the So (the 'silent' sound audible when it enters) and ham (the 'silent' sound audible when it exits). You have to ponder over the meaning of Soham.... 'That I am'. What are you? *You are That*, you are a spark of the Divine. You are not the body, senses, mind, intelligence etc with which you are now identifying yourselves with. You are God, deluding yourselves that you are imprisoned in this body.

Sadhana of some sort is a must, for all Sai workers, for, that alone can give them Shanti and the other most valuable gift, Prema. It will change your vision and enable you to witness Unity where formerly you were confounded by diversity—of language, religion, nationality, creed, colour and caste. Bal Vikas can be best served only after cultivating that new vision. So, decide to practise some spiritual Sadhana, and consider the Bal Vikas too as an additions Sadhana.

Instead of transforming his home, his village, his state and his country, and thereby the world into a Prasanthi Nilayam—the Abode of Higher Peace—man has made them arenas for wild passions like anger, greed, hatred and violence. Instead of making the senses—which are at

best very poor guides and informants—his servants, he has made them his masters. He spends all his energies and the fruits of his toil for the satisfaction of the trivial and degrading demands of these untamed underlings. Oh! the pity of it!

—Baba

Bharatiya Paramartha Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

12

The glory of the great heroes of the spirit, those who have scaled the highest peaks of Realisation, and those who attained spiritual fulfillment is exercising immense influence on the mind of mankind. It is as a result of a long line of such seers that the spiritual Message of India has attracted the attention of all nations. If India has been able to earn the reverence of the world, the reason has to be sought in the precious treasure that they have earned and preserved. Here, love of God and fear of Sin have been the chief pillars of life and the everlasting guides for living. Bharat has won a name for being a holy land, a land saturated in renunciation and in spiritual Sadhanas aimed at union with the Absolute, renowned for Tyaga and yoga. The urges that this culture encouraged were all directed to the conquest of the vagaries of the mind.

Can the explanations offered by this culture on the nature and characteristics of Reality be palatable to those who are afflicted by agitated feelings and passion? To the great builders of this culture, God was tangible Truth, the One and Only Real Fact, the Goal of their entire Love. So, the inheritors and followers of this culture treat the nihilist arguments based on the inescapably limited 'reason' as the fool is treated to the story. The fool saw an idol, and eager to discover what it was, he broke it to pieces with a hammer!

The Bhakti Yoga will teach such people the path of Love. It will tell them not to love with a view to gain profit. Love all; love all as you love yourselves. No harm can come to you then. It will only spread joy and happiness to all. God is present in all beings as love. So the Love is directed to and accepted by, not the individual but by God who is resident there. The seeker of God who relies on the path of devotion and dedication soon becomes aware of this fact.

Some love God as the Mother, some others as the Father, and some love God as 'dearest and closet Friend'. There are others who regard God the Beloved, the only desired Goal. They all endeavour to merge their Love with the Ocean of Love that God is. Wherever Love is evident, take it that it is God's own Love. God is the greatest Lover of mankind. Therefore, when anyone decides to serve man whom He loves, God showers Grace in plenty. When the human heart melts at the suffering of others and expands as a result of that sympathy, believe that God is present there. That is the sign of the validity of the path of devotion, the Bhakti Yoga.

Now, about Rajayoga: Rajayoga means the process of establishing mastery over the mind. One need not surrender one's intellect or follow the guidelines of religious leaders. There is no chance

of being misled or mistaken. At every step, one has to rely on one's own intellect and experience, as tested by oneself.

Every being has three varieties of instruments for acquiring knowledge, and through that knowledge, wisdom. The first is 'instinctive'; this is very strong, active and advanced in animals. This is the earliest, the lowest and therefore, the least beneficial of the three. The second is the 'rational', the instrument that seeks the cause and the effect thereof. This is most evident in man. The instinct can operate only in the limited field of senses and sensory experiences. In man, the instinctive knowledge is largely subordinated by the rational instruments. The limits of the rational are very thin; reason can range over vastly wider fields. In spite of this, reason too is capable of very poor performance only; its reach is restricted. It can proceed only a certain distance. It cannot venture further. The road that logic takes is not straight. It is more circular, returning again and again, to the place where it started from.

Take for example, our knowledge of the objective world, of the elements and energies that compose it. That which urges and prompts the objective world and its components does not stop with just this much. It absorbs also that which is immanent outside the objective world. And so, the extent that reason can spread over and explain is as the 'consciousness' that is imprisoned in the tiny molecule, as compared with the vastness and grandeur of the transcendent fullness.

For us to go across the boundaries of reason into this full, free realm of intuition, certain spiritual exercise and disciplines are essential. They can be grouped under the name, God-propelled Jnana. For, we have only three stages of Jnana—Sahaja-jnana (Native, derived from the senses of action and perception), Yukta-yukta-jnana (Knowledge derived by the process of discrimination and evaluation), and Easwara-prerita-jnana (God induced knowledge gained through Grace by inner vision or intuition). The first of these is the knowledge possessed by animals; the second is the characteristic of man and the third is the special treasure of high-souled individuals. It is possible for every one to foster, cultivate and develop the seedlings of this third Jnana. For, the capacity is latent in all.

Another fact also has to be borne in mind. The three are three stages of growth and so not three mutually exclusive types of knowledge. The Easwara-prerita-jnana will not contradict the yukta-yukta-jnana; it will only bring to light what is unmanifest in the yukta-yukta-jnana. The later stage only confirms and elaborates the previous ones. Afflicted by the vagaries of the mind and its fancies, some take their distorted attitudes as God-given or Grace-induced. And, they may even call upon others to heed their counsel. They lead men astray by their barren guidance. These morons announce that their absurd prattle is God-propelled.

True teaching can never be counter to the yukti-yukta-jnana, the conclusion arrived at by discrimination and evaluation. The Yogas mentioned above are all established in consonance with this view. Rajayoga has to be practised mostly by the mind and its resolution. This is a vast subject and so, we shall consider here only its central theme. It is something that is the only refuge for the lowest of the low and the highest of the Yogis—namely, single-pointed meditation. For the person engaged in research in a laboratory, for one walking along a road, or for a scholar reading a book, or an individual writing a letter, or driving a car, the concentration of all their attention on the articles before them and the activity they are engaged in is very important. He

understands the nature and peculiarities of the object he is handling. The more intense your concentration, the more successful will be your activity. When the mental abilities are focussed on one effort, knowledge can be acquired quicker and from a wider field. And, that is the only way by which knowledge can be earned.

Concentration will enable one, whoever he is, whatever the activity he is engaged in, to finish it much better than otherwise. Whether in material assignments, or in ordinary day-to-day work or in spiritual Sadhana, concentration of mental energies is a must, if success is to be achieved. It is the key that can open the treasure-chest of Jnana. This is the most important aspect of Rajayoga. It can even be said that it is the only important aspect of that Yoga. Millions of unwelcome, unwanted, unnecessary and even harmful thoughts enter our minds and confound its activities. These have to be kept out; the mind has to be vigilantly guarded and controlled and kept under our rigorous supervision. Rajayoga is the one refuge for persons endeavouring to win this victory.

(To be continued)

Devotion and Discipline

True and sincere devotion is the only way for man to free himself from the endless chain of birth and death. God like the Kalpataru tree will fulfill all man's wishes, if only he makes the attempt to reach the Lord."

Devotion is sacred love offered in a selfless manner to God. "As the river flown towards the ocean, the stream of our life should flow into the ocean of the grace God, since the objective of human life is to take the sacred Path to God."

Devotion is of three kinds: pushti bhakti, maryada bhakti and pravaha bhakti. In pushti bhakti, the devotee enjoys the accumulated good of several births. Prahlada and Radha exemplify the pushti bhakti which is akin to the path taken by the cat. The mother cat will take its kitten to a number of places for safety and the kitten will not move to a their own. All their safety will be looked after by the mother cat. Prahlada felt, in this way. God would look after his safety, as also Radha who only wanted Krishna's Anugraha (grace) under all circumstances.

In maryada bhakti people well-versed in the Vedas and the scriptures, break the knot of their heart, and learn Bhakti through the pursuit of the four Purusharthas. In this category are individuals, who divide the Purusharthas into two parts, by combining Dharma and Artha in one part; and Kama and Moksha in the other part. This is because of the belief that wealth should be earned through the Dharmic path, as well as the conviction that wealth is necessary for dharma. Kama-Moksha was combined because of the conviction that what should be desired or sought for in life is Moksha or salvation.

Pravaha Bhakti is bhakti resembling that of a drifting stream, where surrender and devotion do not exist. People go on the same beaten track of enjoying worldly pleasures committing sins, and

drifting along. As stressed by Sankara in Bhaja Govindam, they become part of the endless chain of birth and death.

Though we know that this is not right, we continue to do karma that brings rebirth. This is like the case of the notorious thief, who at the end of his sentence left the jail, asking the jail superintendent to keep his belongings in the prison, since he would be anyway returning there very soon! What is the use of the jail term if the thief had not reformed and was going back to his old habits only to return to jail! Human beings who waste their lives in worldly affairs without any thought for and devotion to God are like this thief!

The country has many religions and all religions teach good things or the basic tenets of truth, morality, and worship of God in diverse ways. All the good and noble qualities like love are the properties of the Atma or the soul. The tendency of the Kali Yuga to deny religion will lead man no-where! For, without matha or religion, man will not have proper mathi, or mind! All those who say there is no religion are themselves starting a new religion and others blindly imitate them. Imitation is a weakness which students in particular should avoid. They can imbibe the good things from others but they should maintain their natural qualities, like a seed which absorbs the good from water and manure in the soil, but sprouts into a plant and later grows into a tree, without changing its native characteristics.

Ananda or bliss is man's sahaja bhava or natural quality. If a baby is laughing, the mother continues to attend to her chores, but the moment the baby begins to cry, the mother rushes to the baby, since crying or unhappiness is unnatural for a baby. Similarly, for one who is born, death is natural. Why be unhappy about it? Human life is transient and the human body is born and dies every moment. So, creature comforts for the body are mere ancillaries. It is said in the shastras, that a village without a temple and a body without a heart cannot exist. Thus, the whole body is a village and the spirit is its temple

Students should recognise and realise this basic truth about life, that their education cannot change their fate, if they do not cultivate the qualities of obedience, humility and wisdom. They should never turn into worshippers of money; also exhibitionism is not sincere devotion and students should always try to follow moderation. Correct discipline should be observed at all times and at all places, as a way of life, indeed like the breath which does not change whether we talk, walk, sleep, cry or laugh.

There is the sweetness of divinity in each human being which should be realised through sadhana." With sugar at the bottom, unless we stir the sugar the sweetness cannot be felt in the water. Similarly the tumbler or hridaya of water where the divinity is present in the form of sugar has to be stirred with sadhana, by the spoon of buddhi or intellect to help us really experience the sweet taste of divinity!

It is no use proclaiming Bhakti externally. It has to be hridaya-purva-prema or heart-filled love, which realises that "I and You" are one. Students should take care not to have the pravaha bhakti, but try to cultivate pushti bhakti and introduce into today's world of strife, such enduring qualities as peace, love and forbearance. Indeed one who has devotion is much more important than who has mighty mansions or has won battles or amassed wealth.

Equanimity

"Samatwam yogam uchyate" "Equanimity is the path to reach Unity". This is what the Bhagavad-Gita declares. Not only the ultimate merger in the Absolute but, even peace and security in the daily process of living, cannot be gained, without cultivating this quality of "Samatwam" or Equanimity. The effort to gain equanimity is the hardest but the most beneficial of all Sadhanas. It is a bastion against the ups and downs of fortune. Without it, life becomes an uncertain game, a constant struggle with fear, hope, anxiety and doubt.

Equanimity has to be achieved in five different fields, so that man can be perfectly happy. The first is PHYSICAL. Man must learn to be unaffected by seasonal changes, or idiosyncrasies of the weather. His body must be immune to the vagaries of heat and cold; he must witness the sudden outbursts of cyclones, earthquakes, and volcanoes with a calm, unruffled mind. During winter, warmth is needed; during summer, one seeks coolness. Warmth is valued on account of cold; cold is sought on account of the rigors of heat. So, both are valid and valuable. So too grief and joy, pleasure and pain. Pleasure is the interval between two pains; pain is the gap between two points of pleasure. Man must realise this and be unaffected by changes in natural or mental weather. Such a man is a hero among Sadhaka.

The Second is SOCIAL. Man must acclimatise himself to praise and blame. Blame is only the shadow of praise. He cannot have one without the other. When a well is dug, the soil that is excavated rises by its side as a mound. The deeper the well, the higher the mound. The mound that rises is the praise; the well that deepens is the blame. Profit and loss, success and failure are the obverse and the reverse of the same experience. Man has to establish firmly in his inmost consciousness this basic truth about the impact of social conditions on him. He must learn to watch the passing show as the sun watches the procession of clouds below, trying to hide its splendour. Fill the well with the mound by its side; it becomes level again! Picture this fact, and earn equanimity.

When loss is incurred, men are miserable; but, profit too brings misery in its train. The tax-gatherer's shadow haunts the profit maker. The attitude must therefore be, "Let what comes, come." One should have no elation or dejection. Welcome the fruit whatever it is, as a gift from God. Do not bank on its quantity or quality, or plan what to do with it. Do your duty, sincerely and to the best of your ability. Let the result be what He wills. Success and failure are often unpredictable experiences; they follow man, alternately, without any clear reason. So, the Sadhaka and the seeker of peace have to concentrate on doing the duty, doing what has to be done, and leave the rest to Providence.

The third is KARMIC. The law of cause and consequence brings about birth and death. It is inevitable. Every act must result in some consequence sooner or later. Men are born, they live

and die, as a result of the impact of actions done in previous lives. The impressions of the past on the present cannot be wiped off, except with the Grace of God. The future alone can be moulded by the activities of the present. People calculate the causes of death and list them. But, the only relevant cause is ignored and, that is, Birth! All that is born has to die. All that is put together has to disintegrate.

The fourth is EMOTIONAL. The emotion of Bhakti leads man to the realisation that the fact that the Lord is all-powerful and all-pervading. So, one should not complain when things go wrong or appropriate the credit when things go right. Bhakti must confer equanimity, because, the devotee sees his 'favourite Form' of the Lord in every being. He knows that He is the inner resident of all beings and so, whatever happens is His Will. The dedicated servant of the Lord does not judge the merit or demerit of what fortune awards him; for, he is aware, beyond doubt, that all that happens is for the best.

The fifth is INTUITIVE. The intuitive Vision of the Jnani tells him that there is only One, and not two. So, all dual attitudes and opinions are false and misleading. There is just one energy or consciousness in all beings—the elephant, the dog and man. So long as the consciousness of 'I' and 'Mine' persists, the One in each cannot be cognised. Samatvam can be earned only by giving up Mamatvam. Until then, Truth will be a will O' the wisp. Take the flute. The Gopis had great envy at the good fortune of the Flute, which Krishna held in His hand and played upon. The Flute replied, "He loves me because I am hollow from end to end and there is no substance that hinders His breath from flowing through me and causing melody most thrilling." The Gopis had the equanimity to realise the validity of the Flute's argument. They had no jealousy of each other. They were happy when others were happy and grief-stricken when others had grief.

—*Baba: Discourse 8-6-1978*

Never Alone

In me, outside me, around me
through me
the divine exists
to rule me

I'm never alone
the King is on the throne
to rule me

Lifes little moments of
victory and defeat
Leave me with thoughts
of only the feat
as I have succeeded
as I have failed

as I have learned
destiny's tale

The heart murmurs near
the thoughts I hold dear
I'm never alone
You are here
You sharpen my skills
You brighten my mind
You delight my senses
everything is divine
and I see You in everything I do,
You are the fuel
You are the fire
You are the energy
that drives me much higher
beyond the dawn
of Light

I'm never alone,
You are in me
for eternity
guiding me through
leading me true,
to essence sublime
and my divinity
How could it be
You without me
in this place
in all its waste
Never alone
always with You
senses in bliss
just enjoying this.

—*Douglas J. Mahr*

Pioneers!

—*Hon'ble Sri Atal Behari Vajpayee*

Let me make it clear, at the very outset, that I have not come here as Minister of External Affairs. I have come as a Jijnasu, a seeker, an aspirant eager to learn the ultimate Truth. I cannot call myself a devotee, for I have yet to acquire devotion. I will continue to be a Jijnasu as long as

I live. We all ask questions to ourselves. One of them is. "what exactly do we want to achieve in life? Is it wealth or fame or a position of power?" I know many wealthy people but they are not happy. They have money and money can purchase medicine. But money does not give them health. This does not mean that we should give up the world. As men concerned with the world, we need money, to keep body and soul together. But, money cannot be the ultimate goal of life. I find many Americans here before me. Theirs is a land of plenty. It can be called the Kubera bhoomi but the people are not happy, for, happiness comes not from the accumulation of external objects or skills but from within.

Of course, it is very easy to say that we have to seek happiness from within ourselves but this is a very difficult process. I have power, position and a little name. But sometimes, when I am alone, I feel I am groping in the dark. Every person craves for light. The student participant from Chandigarh who spoke just now of his experiences in this Summer Camp spoke of knowledge gained and wisdom earned. This is really a Tapovan, a hermitage, and not merely a spiritual 'camp'. This institution is not just a structure erected from brick and mortar. Really, It is the wisdom gained by the spirit that matters.

We Indians are very good as individuals. We shine as good doctors, wonderful engineers and experts in many fields. But, when we come together, we are a crowd, not a community. The community spirit is the result of the fellow-feeling and compassion—qualities of the spirit.

Ours is a multi-lingual country. But we are all sons and daughters of the one Mother, India. When we come together, we speak in many languages, but they are all the languages of our Motherland. The language may be different but the trend of thought, the Bhava, is the same, for it is based on the deep-rooted traditions of our country.

We all aspire for self-realisation but the problem is to how to set about it. It is a crucial question. As soon as we see a ray of hope, there appear dark clouds on the horizon to overwhelm the ray.

The world is now in a very tense situation. Humanity is on the crossroad. The choice before it is no longer between cooperation and confrontation; it is, as President Carter said, between survival and annihilation. We are in the very brink of disaster. Now, who will save humanity? Certainly, not the politicians, as we know them. Politicians guided by Dharma can. Dharanath Dharmam Ithyahu. Every activity that sustains and supports the community is Dharma. I wish Swami would arrange a course on Dharma for politicians. I wish I could be one of the fortunate few who could be the disciples of Swami. I would be the first to join such a training class. I am really fed up with this race for position and fame. Prahlada prayed:

Na thwaham Kamaye Rajyam
Na Swargam na punarbhavam
Kamaye dukha thapthaanaam
Praninaam aarthi naasanam.

I do not desire a kingdom, or heaven or birth in superior lives; I desire only to serve the distressed. That is the goal we have to set before ourselves

As the student said just now, quoting Swamiji, "If there is love in the home, there is peace in the society; if there is peace in the society, there is peace in the nation; If there is peace in the nation, there is peace In the world." We must be careful to see that the spiritual battery is charged, if we cannot do the better thing, to have self-charging batteries. With the blessings of Swamiji, that stage will be acquired.

The darkness that threatens can be dispelled, for this country is destined to become great. We have a mission; we can show the way to the world, provided we ourselves go that way.

The Summer Course on Indian Culture and Spirituality must have impressed on you the new—generation that it is Dharma that matters and not just, the accumulation of degrees and diplomas. These may help you to earn money; but they cannot bring peace. Under the inspiring leadership and guidance, the moulding of new generation on right lines, is already on. You are the pioneers. Take the message of Love. Compassion, and Fellow-feeling to every part of the country.

—*Summer course: 20-6-1978*

Peace is the most priceless possession of man. It is the sign of a virtuous character, a willingness for service, a readiness to renounce, a clean spirit of resignation and awareness of the evanescence of the material wealth, of an agitation-less lake of joy in the heart.

—*Baba*

Spiritual Progress

It is not the sign of a progressive individual, to be always sticking to the same level of spiritual discipline. The intelligent student must be changing his text-book from year to year, and proceeding from one class to the next higher one, when the year elapses. To be satisfied with studying the same text year after year, or to vegetate in the same classroom for years is the fate of the feeble-minded. In the spiritual field, which is the field that really matters, the aspirants must proceed from one experience to another that is more illuminating. Their vision must become wider, their Love more universal, their path smoother and straighter, their feelings purer and less egoistic, their goal clearer and more unifying. Of course, one has to start the journey with the cognisance of the dual nature of the world sad of the human mind. One has to struggle with the opposites that confront us, grief and joy night and day, heat and cold, happiness and misery. One has to posit a God who is in His Heaven, dealing out Grace and worship Him, plead with Him, pray to Him and thank Him for Grace received.

So long as the aspirant has the body-consciousness and so long as he believes that he it the body, God too is conceived as having a Body; so long as he is drawn by the senses, he offers beautiful flowers, fragrant blossoms, incense, and the flames of lamps and camphor, besides cooked food and sweet to the God he has clothed with the vesture of flesh and blood. This series of Sadhana is only the very first stage, the kindergarten of spiritual progress. Gradually, by these

means and the constant contemplation of the expanse and depth of Divine Love, the heart of the individual is filled with higher ideals.

The flowers get sublimated into virtues, with which one feels God can be best adored. The Shrutis say that there are eight such 'flowers' which God likes most. Nonviolence is the first, Control of the senses is the second, Compassion towards all beings is the third, Forbearance is the fifth, Equanimity is the sixth, Meditation is the seventh and Truth, the eighth. Worshipping God through these virtues, the aspirant experiences much greater Ananda than with material flowers. Formerly, he was roaming about, wasting physical effort, time and energy to gather the flowers from trees and plants that grow around his place. The flowers fade and so, it is not an intelligent act to offer them to One who does not fade. How can lasting joy be gained by this kind of adoration? The merit, if any, must go to the plant or tree that produced the flower, and not to the man who transported it and placed it on the idol. The virtues that you have cultivated and grown into a fragrant flower that showers happiness on you and others—that is the most appropriate offering to place at the Lotus Feet of the Lord. Good words, good thoughts, good deeds—these have to be grown on the tree of life and placed before God, in order to win His Grace. In the preliminary stages, some concentration of physical and mental activities in the gathering of material and the collection of thoughts, dedicated to God are necessary. But, one must be conscious that it is only the preliminary step.

The aspirant must widen his beneficent contacts, with the progress in spiritual awareness. The virtuous person must develop brother-hood and fellow-feeling with all beings, because, the God whom he adores is present in every one of them, as their inner charioteer. God is Sat, Chit and Ananda. Contemplating Him, one also becomes aware of Him as the Reality of one's own being. Sat means, 'IS-ness'. It is the very root of Sathya or Truth. Truth is; it is never 'not'. It is, forever. It can never change, or disappear. It is, as it is, now and forever. This quality is also man's own; he need not earn it anew. Man's nature is Divine; so, Truth is his core. But, it is hidden by the miasma of egoistic desires and half-blind reason. Truth shines in the inmost cavity of the heart of man; one can draw upon its strength, provided one is aware of it.

Then, we have 'chit'. Chit means 'Consciousness'—the quality by which we are made aware of the objective world and its characteristics—its reality being misinterpreted by the senses as multiple and as permanent. Chit, when used, reveals the eternal and helps us to reject the trivial. Ananda is the third quality of God, which is natural to man also, because, he too is fundamentally divine. When a child is crooning happily in the cradle, no mother is worried; but, when it starts wailing, she runs towards it, since wailing is un-natural. But joy is its very nature. The Springs of Ananda in man is choked by desires and disappointments, anger and hatred, greed and pride. But, whatever else he may do to acquire happiness, he has finally to fall back on his own inner springs.

Man must get himself firmly established in these three: Sat-Chit-Ananda, for, he too is Divine. The body is the chariot and God is the Charioteer, the Sanathana Sarathi. The Sanathana soul has taken on a Nootana body. (The ancient soul has embodied itself anew). The drops of water that were raised up as vapour by the Sun and lifted into the sky as cloud, have to fall on earth as rain, meet as streams and flow into the same sea, with relentless determination, in order to reach consummation. The Ocean is the Origin for the stream, as God is the Origin for all beings. But,

now, the stream meanders in the desert and loses itself in pools and hollows. Man too is a waif and stray. He is like a letter, with no address on it, either of the person who wrote it or of the person to whom it has to be delivered.

The devotion to God must be as intense and as single-pointed as Radha's. She sang of Krishna as the 'image in the pupil of her eye' and as 'the baby in her heart'. That was the extent of the purity of her attachment to Krishna. She saw the whole objective world as Krishna Himself; there is nothing or nowhere, apart from Him. The Lord is not a 'bird in the bush to be sought and secured'; but, a bird nestling in the softness of our own heart. The adorations became for Radha internal and intense, silent and constant. Follow these ideals that are placed before you, in the Bhagavatham and other scriptures of all religions. And, be shining lights that can illumine the path towards God for all with whom you come in contact.

—*Bhagavan: Discourse on 18-6-78*

"The Knowledge Industry!"

"Where is the Wisdom we have lost in knowledge?
Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?
The cycles of Heaven in twenty centuries
Bring us further from God and nearer to the dust."

T. S. Eliot

The intellect is a wonderful instrument, shaped, refined and sharpened by natural selection in the course of millions of years of animal evolution. It is the latest and finest product of the brain, that mysterious organ with which the human species is so richly endowed. The finest flower of the intellect is Science, that glorious body of steadily expanding knowledge of the external world, verified and proved to the hilt, which has become the life-breath of mankind today. Science places the highest value on objectivity and dispassionate reasoning gives us a better understanding of the world around us and helps us to transform it to our advantage. Those processes of understanding and manipulation are best achieved when the knowledge is least tainted by subjectivity, and least affected by the preferences and prejudices of the scientist.

Intellectualism of this type has become the object of adoration for vast masses of people, scholars and ignoramuses alike. Hair splitting distinctions, long and learned discourses, recondite concepts have become highly respectable. A dry-as-dust scholasticism has developed and the masses watch with uncomprehending admiration at the antics of the scientist. This happened to an almost maddening extent in Bharatiya culture also. Philosophical systems based on involved commentaries on the sacred texts stand as a monument of the intellectualism that grew wild in this country also.

The same thing is happening in a global scale this day. We are overwhelmed by a deluge of books, spewed out by the pulp industry. Conceptual thinking is all that matters now; scientific thought processes and philosophical knowledge are held to be the high-water-mark of human accomplishment. The Americans have coined the term "knowledge industry" for this noblest of human endeavours—education, the difficult and to some extent, esoteric process of developing the human consciousness to its highest potentiality! This process is considered as a kind of 'conveyor belt' assembly of information, concepts and ideas, leading to mass-scale manufacture of men of knowledge!

The tragedy of the whole situation is that even while the mills of this high power industry are inexorably grinding with ever increasing success, ignorance is increasing with incredible speed! This much admired intellectualism is failing dismally to lead mankind into light. It is also being recognised that knowledge may be power but it certainly is not peace. Knowledge is no substitute for virtue, and it does not necessarily lead to virtue. Out of the 400 crores that inhabit this world, 100 crores have all the good things of life and are rather unwilling to share them with the rest. They are not only the *intelligentsia*, but, also the *priviligentsia*.

In situations like this, when humanity is disillusioned by the glittering triumphs of the intellect, people recoil from abstract knowledge, philosophical speculation and technological innovations and return to the "pristine culture" of "pure feeling". They become suspicious of objectivity and its abstruse conclusions; they prefer personal experience and simple understandable, livable, solutions.

This adoption of Bhakti in place of Buddhi may appear to highbrows as a rejection of the highest faculties of the mind. They may label it as an atavism, but, that is a deplorable delusion. What really happens is a re-assertion of the supremacy of the heart over the head, that even more important than knowledge, is the life of the emotions, which are as old as man himself, that experience is direct and Immediate, fundamental and all-embracing. Unlike conceptual thought, and constructed knowledge, it is not mediated by language. They involve an awareness of Reality in which the whole Being participates.

Philosophy begins with doubt, and leads one through scrutiny to the construction of a complete rational system or to scepticism. Religion on the other hand is a movement that comes from below and is the product of experiences of men and women enshrined in mythology, ritual and sacred lore. The Ideal of philosophy is the sage, who relies on himself; the ideal of religion is the believer, who loses his identity In God.

Baba has told us, so often, that it is the mind' that is the enemy and that until it is deprived of its harmful propensities, there can be no salvation for man from its coils. In His Shivaratri Discourses, He has emphasised that the Moon is the sovereign and symbol of the Mind and that at the end of the waning lunar period, special Sadhana has to be done to overcome the Mind. The Upanishads also say that the mind cannot reach the highest stage of Divine ecstasy. Language is helpless in describing and delineating the Experience of the Basic Truth of Things. The goal of man "spiritual quest" cannot be gained by the intellect. It is a goal from which words return, together with the mind, finding it impossible to gain access. The equally famous hymn, "Hiranmayena patrena, satyasya apihitam mukham," may also refer to the golden envelope

formed by the mind which hides the Truth. Baba says, "The discursive Intellect cannot proceed without making distinctions. Hence it cannot approach the plenary Reality which has no distinctions of its own. The only knowledge which is immediate and indubitable is self-knowledge, i.e., knowledge, not of but, knowledge that is the Self or Atman."

—*Dr. H. Bhaskaran Nair, D.Sc.*

The Summer Course

—*Dr. Benito f. Reyes, President, World University in Ojai, California, U.S.A.*

Contemporary education, the way it is being pursued, practised, and administered now in existing schools, colleges and universities in the world is rather inadequate and insufficient to promote the peace, welfare, and happiness of mankind.

The utmost it is able to do is to maintain the status quo, and that means the continuance, preservation, and intensification of a life-style that is characterised by ignorance (Avidya) in the midst of so much technological knowledge; individual and collective unhappiness (such as wars) in the midst of so much available pleasure, physical comforts, and conveniences; and sickness, old age, death, and continuing suffering (as an inevitable by-product of human morality) In the face of so much search and research in public hygiene and sanitation, physically oriented medical science, carpologically conditioned behavioristic psychological, and sociological studies, as well as vaunted molecular biology, genetic engineering, recombinant DNA, and space exploration.

We have already reached the moon, but we still are unable to understand the nearest thing to us—ourselves.

In the language of the Buddha, we are still whirling helplessly and hopelessly in the Wheel of Birth and Death, darkened by our Ignorance, enslaved by our own desires, and doomed (unless we liberate ourselves) to sickness, old age, death, lamentation, and despair (jara-marana-soka-parideva-dukkadomanasa-upayasa).

"Only while moves this wheel Invisible,
No pause, no peace, no staying place can be;
Who mounts must fall, who falls must mount,
The spokes go round increasingly."

The fact is that, in all humility and candor, it must be admitted that contemporary education has to a great extent failed to clarify three important things:

1. To give us a correct understanding of ourselves.
2. To give us a correct understanding of the meaning and purpose of life.

3. To give us a correct understanding of the meaning and purpose of true education.

In the plainest, simplest, clearest language possible, let it be stated that:

1. We have been led to believe and accept that man is basically and essentially only a physical organism (Cf. Scientific classification of man as an animal; physicalistic paradigm of science; cerebro-centric epiphenomenalism in physiology; behaviourism in psychology)
2. We have been led to regard life as principally a short span between birth and death and that, therefore, its primary objective is material success within this brief interval of earthly existence. This has brought about the kind of life-style we are now living-materialistic, physicalistic, mechanistic, cerebrocentric, sensorialistic, hedonistic, epiphenomenalistic, mammonistic, legalistic, commercialistic, polypragmatic, polyerotic, and completely psychoneurotic; and
3. Education, as we have it now, is a continuing pursuit, practice, and promotion of the physicalistic mindscope and life-style obtaining in the world at present. It is this mindscope and this life-style which have brought about all the unhappiness and the sufferings we are undergoing at present.

Thus, in the world today, there is much education in the art of earning a living, but very little in the art of living itself.

There is education for the production of successful professionals, but hardly any for the emergence of successful human beings.

There is education in technology and for technology (all kinds of technology), but no education in spirituality and for spirituality.

There is education for success, all kinds of success, but no education for the awakening of love.

There is no education for the vanquishing of the ego.

There is no education for the realisation of oneness with all life.

There is no education for the globalisation and the universalisation of consciousness.

There is no education for world peace.

There is no education for sanctification, for holiness (wholeness) and for the awakening of God-Consciousness within each man.

There is no education for immortality.

There is no education for the perfection of man.

Many contemporary educators may well be aware of all the ideas presented here, but they may possibly lack the conviction and the realisation necessary to generate the energy of implementation.

The following suggestions are made with a deep sense of humility.

- I. Serious effort should be exerted by individual educators to transform themselves, to undergo spiritual transformation, or metanoia, to become exemplar of the spiritual life, the way Sri Sathya Sai Baba, as an educator and teacher is. The effect on education and other educators will be tremendous.
- II. Organize, hold, and maintain on a regular basis, as an alternative to traditional educational programmes, nation-wide as well as world-wide seminars and institutes, workshops, and intensives on:

Spirituality, Meditation and Alteration of consciousness in order to awaken in students a new QUALITY of CONSCIOUSNESS, in fact, a new Breed of Human Being equipped with fully awakened spiritual potentials, such as love for all, God-Consciousness, and awareness of inherent immortality.

The summer course on spirituality of Sri Sathya Sai Baba is a good example. It has begun to draw participants from all over the world. Successful participants may themselves start echo-seminars and echo-institutes in their respective countries or localities.

- III. The use of mass-media as a multiplier-process to enable the spiritual institutes and seminars to reach the greatest possible number of people. A Television Institute of Spirituality will reach millions in quick time.
- IV. National as well as world conferences of educators should be held where these ideas can be discussed and where, among other things, the following can be considered:
 1. Global partnership and cooperation in education as suggested by U. Thant, one-time Secretary-General of the United Nations.
 2. The spiritualisation of education as suggested by Arnold Toynbee and as being implemented by Sri Sathya Sai Baba as well as by the World University in Ojai, California.
 3. Global educational co-operation through the establishment of a Global Association for Accreditation.
 4. Transnationalisation of educational curricula.
 5. The creation by an appropriate body, such as the United Nations, of a World Educational Trust Fund for the educational uplift of all who are qualified to receive the help and

6. The determination of valid spiritual methods and techniques of education as well as the evolvement of a world educational curricula should be the work of an Assembly of Spiritually Awakened Educators from all over the world.

This is no Farewell

In many fields of national life, the situation for those who can discern is something that causes concern. But, in the field of education, that has to activate all the rest and keep them progressive and prosperous, the situation is very nearly deplorable. The ideals being followed have become narrow; the principles and purposes have been distorted. Instead of constructive and integrating courses and curricula, elevating and enthusing methods, education has become a divisive demoralising influence. People blame the products of education without paying attention to the damages inflicted during the educative process.

Highly qualified scholars emerge out of our Colleges and Institutes of Higher Learning with no awareness of their own inner Reality and no faith in their Divine Destiny. Nor have they the knowledge of the universal code of Morality, the basic principles of Righteousness and the fundamental disciplines of spiritual advance. But the salvation of the individual, the society and the nation—indeed of humanity itself—lies in this knowledge and in its application in life.

The 'educated' adult must possess the 'self-confidence' to stand on his own legs. He must spurn slavishness and subservience, both material and mental. He must derive strength from his own Inner resources. He can know how rich and potent these latent resources are, by means of meditation on his genuine nature. Now, the older and as a result, the younger-generation has given the go by, to the virtues of detachment and renunciation, service and self-lessness, honesty and sincerity, in its insane pursuit of profit and pleasure.

Is this to be the fate of this Nation, long dedicated to spiritual victory? The children of Bharat should not forget the precious heritage of Indian Culture and Spirituality. Nor shall they neglect the inner Sadhana that can illumine their Reality. The Divine key to the New Era of National Revival is Spiritual Sadhana.

While the older generation has only a short distance to go ere they alight, you, students from the Colleges of India, have to go far longer distances. So you have to equip yourselves with knowledge and skill, intelligence and insight, and courage and confidence. Laziness is sin; work is worship. Of all rituals, labour is the most sacred, the most rewarding. "Somaritham" (Indo-lence) must be given up; "Soham-tattwam," (I-am that awareness) has to be gained. Do not yield to despondency and despair. Move forward boldly into the arena of life with Truth (Sathya) as your Shield and Renunciation (Tyaga) as your Sword. A lamp on each doorstep makes the whole street a path of light. An illumined heart in each of you makes the whole world a globe of light.

The wild fancies and out-bursts of emotion for which students are blamed are to be traced to the promptings of politicians; they do not sprout from the tender unsophisticated minds of our

boys and girls. Students! Do not be led into anger and violence. Decide on the goal of your lives, on the ideals that ought to shape your activities and the best means to achieve those ends. Do it yourselves, without mortgaging your minds to power-seeking persons. Harden yourselves by self-reliance and discipline. The more the discipline, the tougher you become, in body, mind and spirit. The purpose of living is to seek out and realise the Unity of Mankind by sharing in the joys and sorrows of others. That is the reason why the Sai Organisation is a Seva Organisation. Do not disappoint your parents or your motherland; become good children and good citizens. Meet problems and situations calmly and intelligently without becoming problems yourselves to your parents and your motherland. Love, compassion, eagerness to help others—these are natural characteristics of man. Rein in your senses. Control your emotions and impulses. You have been introduced to a few yogic exercises here. They will be of help in regulating your minds. When your bodies are strong and your minds are pure, your parents will rejoice. Otherwise, they will be sad and your motherland too will weep.

This Summer Camp, where you were exposed to Bhajan, Kirtan, Yoga and Seva and to a series of lectures on Indian and world culture, on the Bhagavatham and its relevance in modern times, and to the Satsang with spiritually minded persons for one full month, is really-speaking, a workshop, out of which you are emerging today fit and strong, aware and alert, with new urges, holy habits and sacred thoughts. Do not think that the Course has 'ended' this day. Such a Course can have no end. This is not a Farewell Function. No. It is a welcoming Function, when you welcome into your hearts new and sacred ideals. When you enter the world, outside this Campus, and encounter its conflicts and confusion, remember, I will be with you wherever you are, conferring guidance, peace and security.

—*Bhagavan: Discourse on 19-6-78. Brindavan*

Bharatiya Paramartha Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

12. The Vedic Base

The consideration of Jnana Yoga remains. This is mostly devoted to the study of principles, basic principles. This Universe or Cosmos that we cognise as outside ourselves can be explained by means of various theories of knowledge, but, no one of them can be convincing to the uninitiated. The Jnana Yogi weaves many such theories and hypotheses. He is not convinced of the reality of any material object in the Universe, or of any activity or even of any one else who propounds any other explanation. He believes that he should transcend the daily chores of life and not be bound by social or other obligations. In the vast Ocean of ISNESS, or Sat, all objects are but drops, in his view. They are all struggling to move from the circumference to the Centre, from which they manifested through Maya. The Juana Yogi too yearns to merge in the Centre, the Core of Reality, away from the tangle of apparent diversity. He exerts himself to become the Truth, not only to become aware of It. Of course, as soon as he is aware of It, he becomes It. He cannot tolerate the thought that he and Truth are separate and distinct,

The Divine is his only kith and kin. He knows none other. He does not entertain any other urge, any other attachment, any other desire. God is all in all. He cannot be affected by grief or joy, failure or success. He sees and experiences only one unbroken, unchallenged stream of bliss-consciousness. For the person who is firmly established in this state, the world and its ups and downs appear trivial and illusory. In order to stay in that Consciousness, he has to counter the pulls of the senses and face the fascinations of the world without any agitation of mind.

The Jnana Yogi is vigilant against the temptations held before him by his senses, and turning them aside, he approaches the Divine and seeks strength and solace there. He realises that the power and energy that vitalise the tiniest of the tiny and the vastest of the vast is the same Divine Principle. His actions, thoughts and words reveal this vision he has experienced. This is the Paramartha Drishti, the Supra-Vision. It sees all elements—the earth, fire, water, wind and sky—as the Divine itself and all beings—man, beast, bird, and worm—as emanations from God and therefore fully Divine.

One fact has to be noted here. If a person has this knowledge of the immanence of the Divine, and even of its transcendence, he cannot be honoured as a Jnani. For, the knowledge has to be digested through actual experience. This is the crucial test. It is not enough if the intellect nods approval and is able to prove that Godhead is all. The belief must penetrate and prompt every moment of living and every act of the believer. Jnana should not be merely a bundle of thoughts or a packet of neatly constructed principles. The faith must enliven and enthuse every thought, word and deed. The self must be soaked in the nectar of the Jnana.

The intellect is a poor instrument. For, what the intellect approves as correct today is tomorrow rejected by the same intellect on second thoughts. Intellect cannot judge things finally and for all time. Therefore, seek for the experience. Once that is won, the Atman can be understood 'as all this'. That is the Jnana Yoga. According to the Bharatiya way of thought, the Vedas are taken as the Voice of God. Thus, the Vedas are the primary source of all knowledge for Bharatiyas. Everything is tested on the basis of Vedas. The ancient sages have laid down that what agrees

with the Vedas is agreeable to man; what does not thus agree cannot agree with him. The Vedas were not spoken by humans, or composed by men and women. They were heard and recorded by sages, and transmitted by the guru to the pupil for generations by word of mouth. The guru recited, the pupil listened and recited just as the guru did, with the same care and correctitude. Thus the Vedas have been handed down from century to century. No one can determine the exact dates when the Vedas were first heard or recited. Therefore, they are taken as Sanathana or Eternal.

At this point, we have to keep in mind another very important truth. All other religions prevalent in the world hold as authoritative communications made to some holy persons by God Himself in His Corporate Form, or through some Superhuman personalities or embodiments of parts or portions of Divinity. Bharatiyas do not follow this line. They declare that the Vedas are based on no human authority; they do not depend on any man for their validity. They are emanations direct from God; they are primeval; they are their own authority and validity. They were not written down or composed, constructed or put together.

The Cosmos or Creation is limitless, eternal and it has neither beginning nor end, has it? So too, the Voice of God, namely the Vedas have no limit, they are eternal, they have no beginning nor end. 'Vid', the root from which the word Veda is derived, means, 'to know.' When knowledge began the Vedas too manifested. The Rishis visualised it and announced it. They are the 'see-ers of mantras'—the mantra—drishtas.

The Vedas have two major sections: the Karmakanda and the Jnanakanda. First comes the Karmakanda and it is followed by the Jnanakanda. In the Karmakanda, a number of different 'krathu's or sacrifices in which oblations are offered in the sanctified fire, are mentioned. Most of them have been given up by Bharatiyas in recent times, since it has become difficult to perform them with the exactitude the Vedic rules prescribe. Some still continue in a very attenuated form. In the Karmakanda, the moral codes are insisted upon very much. The moral rules and restrictions regulating life and conduct refer to the Brahmachari (the student) stage, the Grihasta (householder) stage; the Vanaprastha (recluse) stage and the Sanyasa (monastic) stage. Also, the Karmakanda declares what is right and wrong for people following various professions and occupying different statuses. These are being followed here and there, in some thin form, by people in India.

The Jnanakanda is called Vedanta or the end of the Vedas, the Goal, and the Finale. The Jnanakanda is enshrined in the Upanishads. The adherents of the Dvaita, Visishtadvaita and Advaita schools of philosophical thought, the worshippers of Siva, Vishnu, Shakti, Surya and Ganapati—all accept the supreme authority of the Vedas. They may interpret the Upanishads and other texts according to their own predilections and intellectual calibre, but, no one dare question the authority of the Veda or the Vedanta. So, it is possible to use the words Hindu, Bharatiya or Vedantin, to the same person. The various schools of philosophical thought current at the present time may appear difficult to comprehend or as derived from unripe understanding; but, when the matter is thought over in quiet, or the texts are studied in silence, or investigated without prejudice, it will become clear that they have all relied on the points raised and the conclusions arrived at in the Upanishads. The Upanishads are being symbolised and worshipped in image

form in temples and in private shrines, as a tribute to this universal appeal. They have entwined themselves, inseparably, in our lives.

The Vedas are 'endless': Anantho vai vedaah. But, they were reduced into four collations and their essence was preserved in those forms. For promoting peace and prosperity in the world, the four were then taught and propagated. They are the Rg, Sama, Yajur and Atharvana Vedas. They uphold Dharma (Righteousness), proclaim the Reality, and promote peace and harmony by developing among men the attitudes of worship, music, and adoration and also by the cultivation of skill in weaponry and war. They present the ideal before mankind, and exhort them to follow.

Whether the Bharatiya is aware of it or not, invariably, every right act of his, will have some Vedic injunction or prohibition behind it as the regulator or the illuminator. From marriage rites until funeral rites and even the rites for the propitiation of the manes, the Vedas are the guides. A true Bharatiya should never forget the Vedas or be ungrateful to them. The dualists, the special-monists, the monists—all direct their lives according to lines laid down in the past by the sages. But, they do not now know the origin and the purpose of these guide-lines. If only they do, the fruit will be much more plentiful and permanent.

(To be continued)

In Every Level of Consciousness

It is the bounden duty of man, in this life or in later lives, to know and experience the Basic Cause of the Universe, and all the Love, Sweetness, Attraction and Admiration it evokes in him. When that is known, man can have uninhibited Bliss. All his misery is due to separation from that Source. He is Sat-Chit-Ananda Swaroopa, and he must become aware of this fact, so that he may be happy. If he asserts that he is not Sat, but, subject to decline, decay and death, he will be haunted by fear and uncertainty. If he asserts that he is not Chit, or Pure Intelligence, he will be caught in doubt and dialectics, and wander into dry discussions or devious paths of delusion. If he asserts that he is not Ananda, he will be stricken by every passing wind of disappointment and subject to sorrow on every trivial defeat. The Basic Cause of the Universe is Sat-Chit-Ananda and since man too is a spark of the same First Cause, he is also made of the same component.

The Original Will wished all this to emanate. He who is the embodiment of that will has to be adored and remembered in gratitude, for, we are all expressions of that same will. He is the only One that deserves our Love, and homage, The Gopis and Gopalas though they were not learned in spiritual lore or philosophic analysis, knew that Krishna was the visible embodiment of that will and therefore they poured their Love on His Lotus Feet. The bubble arises from water, floats on water and, when it bursts, it merges in the water from which it rose. The bubble is a temporary phase of water, with a temporary name and a temporary form. That is all the difference. If it feels that being light and bright, it is separate, the idea is a delusion—a product of ignorance. So too, with man. Man is Atma, lives as Atma and merges in Atma. All the rest is trivial and temporary. The fear and anxiety, the grief and pain the distress and defeat—these are the results of the identification with the falsehood. Man is truth; his consciousness is truth. So, he

ought to proceed from one truth to another, one facet of truth to another brighter and clearer. No one can move from untruth to truth. What is called untruth is only partial truth, or dulled truth or clouded truth. The ultimate Goal is the truth of truth.

The mind is like a boulder which the intellect shapes as a sculptor does. If the intellect allows the senses to dictate the design, the boulder will be transformed into a horrid or ugly idol, a blunt or blind weapon. When the senses are sublimated by the spirit, the image wrought by the intellect will be charming and adorable. One must have the mind fully co-operating in spiritual disciplines and not obstructing them at every step. Liberation is the goal and the mind must help the pilgrim at every stage. It should not tolerate any activity that is contrary to Dharma or injurious to spiritual progress.

The Gopis had trained their minds to help and promote spiritual discipline and so, the minds never wavered or strayed into wrong paths. They stuck to Krishna, believing Him to be either the friend or the kinsman, the comrade or the companion, the lover or the loved. When Krishna was prayed to by His friends and companions that the food packets that they had brought from their homes did not suffice to allay their hunger, He advised them one day to go a little further into the forest and ask for food from the Brahmin priests who were performing a huge Yaga there. But, they would not even speak to them, for their ceremonial purity would be reduced by conversing with people born in lower castes! They said that the Yaga had not yet finished, the valedictory offering in the Fire had not been done, and that they could think of handing out food items, only after they themselves had eaten their meal.

When the boys returned with long faces indicating their failure to get food, Krishna asked them to by-pass the men and ask the women instead. Krishna encouraged them and promised that they could return safe and with large quantities of eatables. The boys found the women engaged in the kitchen when they told them that Krishna had sent them asking for food, they left the kitchen and hurried to the presence with huge quantities of delicious food, which were made ready for the big feast ahead. Their hearts melted at the thought of Krishna being in urgent need of food. They had heard of the Divine Leelas of Krishna, which revealed His Avatarhood—the destruction and defeat of all the demonic forces sent by the wicked Uncle, Kamsa, to slay Him.

The priests peeped into the kitchen when the Yaga was over and found the vessels empty and the women gone to the Presence of Krishna and His companions. Women preserve the culture of this country with greater tenacity and faith. They keep men, on the moral path and they inspire men to follow spiritual disciplines. Their hearts are tender, and full of compassion for the hungry and the distressed. That is why in this land, women are adored and revered. Elders quote the Sastras and say that the home where the floor is soaked by the tears that fall from the eyes of a woman can never see peace or prosperity. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa took great care to see that Saradamani Devi did not take his simple jokes and ridicules too much to heart, for, then, her tears might fall on the floor. We honour the land where we are born as our Mother-land; the language we learn at our mother's lap as our Mother-tongue; the Scripture that teaches us morality as Mother-Veda. So, every Bharatiya has four mothers, including the mother who gave birth to him. All these have to be adored as Divine, according to Indian culture.

In order to live up to the high standards which Bharatiya culture expects every one of you to elevate yourself, you must cultivate Love, Non-Violence, Fortitude and Equanimity. The last three guard and develop the Love that you desire to cultivate. Many people have succeeded with the help of the latter three qualities to get their minds fixed in Universal Love. But, a large number of Sadhakas give up the ascent in the middle, for, they lose confidence in the goal as in their victory. They do not believe in God who is the embodiment of Love and so, they have nothing or none to urge them forward. The first faint whisper of doubt disheartens them and they slide back into a life of the sensual level, which they find pleasant and easy. Sadhana alone can steel such people for the spiritual adventure.

The wise are buoyed up by the bliss of their genuine awareness; the seekers and aspirants have their urges satisfied by the experiences of people whom they have faith in. Or, they find no other explanation for the problems that assail them. The atheists hang by the slim thread of reason to the beliefs they have once entertained. If they have faith in their own selves, they can infer that their selves derive strength and joy only from the Overself or God.

Those who deny God or the Supreme Will or the First Cause can give no proofs for their stand; nor can those who assert that there is God. Both have to rely on their own experience. How can sweetness be denied by men who refuse to taste sugar? How can they be convinced that sugar is sweet until they taste it? We can see energy manipulating the minutest atom and cell and the vastest most distant star or spiral. How else can we understand this omnipresence and potency except by laying down God as the Architect of the Cosmos?

You must have heard some people saying that no living person can be adored as God, though the Shrutis declare, "Daivam Manusha Roopena"—that is to say, "God is to be seen in the human form." Perhaps, they can revere only a corpse! Not Sivam but Shavam is what they wish to revere!

Many people shy at Truth, for, they are afraid of facing the Truth about themselves and others. The Vedas declare, Sathyam Vada—Speak the Truth. But, people have become so accustomed to expediency and temporary profit that they cannot stand the full glare of Truth. Nor can the path of Dharma be pleasant for them. They are used only to the byelanes which avoid the straightness of Dharma. The Vedas say "Dharmam chara", Walk on the path of Dharma, but, for feet used to crookedness, how can Dharma be pleasant? Therefore, people repeat like parrots in the cage, the Vedic Dicta mentioned above. They do not feel the need to observe them in actual life. In reality, Truth is God. Love is God; Dharma is God. The Gopas and Gopalas saw in Krishna, the embodiment of Truth, Love and Dharma. What He said was Truth; what He was Love; what He did was Dharma. Their consciousness was so immersed in Krishna that they found everywhere and in everything, Krishna alone. Krishna for them did not exist as a separate entity in the home of Nanda; He was right in their own Consciousness, all levels of it. That is the sign of the true Bhakta.

—Divine Discourse: Summer Camp 6-6-78

"Kiswahili!"

It was on the 5th May 1974, that I was proceeding by car from Arusha, in Tanzania, East Africa, to MACHAME Hospital, to attend to a patient, whose condition was reported to be rather serious. My wife and two other ladies were seated at the back; I sat beside the driver. We had hardly travelled about five miles beyond Arusha, when a truck with a trailer attached was seen coming fast from the opposite direction. In about thirty seconds, we would have crossed each other safely. But, suddenly, the heavily loaded trailer got detached, and came towards us, like a demon determined to destroy us. There was no method of stopping it or slowing it or diverting it.

The truck sped on, without its driver knowing that the trailer had got loose. On our right was the truck and on our left was a huge boulder, rising twenty feet from the ground. And, right in front was the demon of a loaded trailer intent on smashing our car. My driver tried his best to avoid the collision and save us and the 'Cortina'. As soon as the truck was by-passed, he turned "in between the truck and the trailer," and he was able to save his side of the car as well as the back portion. But, unfortunately, the side on which I was sitting was hit and shattered badly. The front wheel of the car was pushed by the impact of the hit right up to the front seat; as a result, my right leg went under the seat and suffered multiple compound fractures below the knee, with five fragments. There was dislocation of the left hip joint. The dashboard pressed the front of my chest and my head was crushed between the upper and lower edges of the window. There was no pulsation; breathing stopped. People gathered round and wailed in great grief, "Poor Doctor! What a death! Who can counter the Will of God?"

I felt that I was alive and that I was in Prasanthi Nilayam. Baba whispered to me in a low voice, —I wondered why He whispered to me like that—"Get up. Otherwise your leg will be no more!" I called out, "Baba! Baba!" and when the people around me heard the voice, they realised with a shock that I was still alive. They started pulling the car from underneath the giant trailer.

Just at that moment, they heard the shout, "Kiswahili", above the din. Two hefty looking Africans appeared and shouted Kiswahili meaning, 'make way' "Allow us to get this Doctor out," they said. They kept all else at a distance and took entire charge of the salvage operation. We will get this Doctor out, they seemed to say. They used their physical strength to cut open the window, push back the dash-board, and remove the plate under which the right leg was stuck. They kept the jack underneath the seat and pulled it behind. Meanwhile, I gained a little consciousness, when they touched the body and handled it in various ways. I asked for water, and when it was offered, I could sip a few drops only with great difficulty. Then, I became unconscious again.

People told me later that the two Africans struggled for over an hour and a half, to get my body out of the damaged car and put it in the Ambulance van. As soon as that was done, they disappeared and no body knew who they were. They have not been seen all these years. If they had been 'real', they would certainly have come to Arusha, in anticipation of some recognition of the timely and invaluable help rendered.

I was at Whitefield, near Bangalore, at Brindavan, on 19 and 20 April 78 where Baba was staying. I still had to use a stick while walking and climbing steps. Baba called me twice for interviews with Him. He said He was aware of the accident. "Your spinal cord was completely crushed, I had to come in the form of two Africans, to give you a new life. Your wife was surprised when she was dragged aside. I assured her that she need not worry about you." In His unbounded Love, He removed the defect from the right leg, which necessitated the use of the stick, by Himself rubbing over the right knee-joint Vibhuti created by Him. I could thereafter walk and climb steps, as before the accident. May Sathya Sai be the Sarathi of all beings on earth.

—Dr. D. J. Gadhia

Letters of Gold

"This Day deserves to be recorded in history in letters of Gold," said the Joint Director of Public-Instruction, Andhra Pradesh, Sri C. Gopinatha Rao on 25. 7. 1978 while offering homage to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and welcoming the Hon'ble Minister for Education, Andhra Pradesh, Sri Venkatarama Reddy and the Special Officer of the Abhyudaya Prathamika Sikshana Samstha, Andhra Pradesh.

The occasion was the Inauguration by Baba at the Auditorium of Sri Sathya Sai College, Brindavan, Bangalore, of a Ten Day Orientation Course on Spiritual Education for over 600 teachers from the Elementary Schools of Andhra Pradesh, selected by the above Samstha which is sponsored by Government, to be the pioneers of a great big educational project, never before attempted on such a vast scale by any State in India. The State has decided to entrust to this Samstha the establishing of 3000 Model schools in the various districts of Andhra Pradesh where children would receive training, from dedicated teachers in yoga, health and hygiene, reverence to elders, social service, honesty, good manners and faith in the Almighty. Voluminous reports by a series of Educational Commissions and Committees led by eminent educationists from the days of Sadler to our contemporary Kothari Commission have emphasised the need for the inculcation in children of reverence, sense of duty, cleanliness and moral strength.

But, the idea was in cold storage, until the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Dr. M. Chenna Reddy and Hon'ble the Education Minister, Sri Venkatarama Reddy, visited Puttaparthi and received Baba's Blessings and gracious commendation. Bhagavan agreed to train, in the first phase of this epochal movement which is evidently the result of His own Divine Will, 600 teachers from all the Districts of A. P., to directly adopt and supervise the Model Primary Schools (about 35) of the Samstha in Anantapur District, and to adopt a Secondary School at Hyderabad. He has also offered the services of the devotees having experience of conducting Bal Vikas classes and organising Seva Dal Units, to run a few schools outside Anantapur District. Parents, educationists and patriots all over the State will enthusiastically welcome this act of faith, this bold and beneficial step.

The Hon'ble Minister of Education spoke of the realisation that has dawned on all right thinking people that the foundational Elementary Schools are not aware of the need to instill

character and moral stamina in the children of the land. He visualised amongst the children now undergoing the routine type of dry education in the elementary schools of our county many a scientist, mathematician, philosopher and saint fading away and folding up, through neglect and absence of the environment of hope, love and encouragement.

He spoke of the atmosphere of reverence for all religions that prevails at Brindavan in the Presence of Bhagavan and wanted that the trainees should imbibe the ideals of harmony, understanding, service and brotherhood that are the characteristics of Bhagavan's teachings. He described the plans the Samstha had formulated for equipping the Model Schools, providing them with better buildings, and quarters for staff and for revising the school time schedules and the syllabi. He appealed to the trainees to make the best of the great good fortune they have secured to spend ten days in the Presence of Bhagavan and to learn from Him the means and methods of bringing light and love into their own lives and into the school and the village.

Inaugurating the function, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba said, "a real teacher or Guru was one without attachments or desires, one capable of the greatest Tyaga or sacrifice, for the noble profession of teaching could train the future generation in the art of living like dignified beings. Unfortunately what was taught in our institutions today was just a process of equipping the youngsters for a job, but a job was not the end of all human activity. Bharatiya Vidya not only catered to the training of the intellect, but gave a spiritual turn to man's thinking. If through such an education, a deeper sense of values in conformity with India's heritage and culture were to be developed, the nation's future would be bright. But it had today become a rat race of money, without any stress on the building of character, which was vital for a human being to become a really useful member of society. The system had deteriorated so much that only the form was left and the substance was completely forgotten. Honesty and sincerity had become casualties and the nation was today turning out millions of young people who were completely bereft of the sense of spiritual value, so vital for life. Spiritual education taught respect for all religions and stressed the unity in the diversity of all faiths.

Such an education would make an individual a limb of society vital to its sustenance and growth. Teachers were guides to show the children, by word, deed and example that the spiritual blended the physical would produce a completely useful man. Love of fellow-human beings and the quality of Tyaga had to be inculcated so that the children of today would make useful citizens, tomorrow.

If at a young age, the habit of Prema is inculcated, the India of the future will become as great as the India of the past.

I am happy that the Andhra Pradesh Government under the leadership of Dr. Chenna Reddy is going in for the Gurukula system of education. I hope that other States would emulate this example.

—Ed.

I do not insist that a person should have Faith in God. I refuse to call any person a Nastika or Atheist. Beings exist as a result of the Will of God; they behave and believe in accordance with that Will, that Plan. Therefore, no one single being can be beyond the circle of

God's Grace. Besides, every one has Love towards someone person or object or idea and that Love is a spark of the Divine. Every one has ultimately to base his life on some aspect of Truth. That Truth is God. The moment one loves, when one respects truth, that moment is God's Moment. That moment, he is a Theist. So, adore all; revere all. Do not think ill of any one. Whoever has love in his heart, truth in his speech, compassion in his eye and charity in his hands is a Theist. God will surely bless him.

—Baba

Madhura Bhakti

Radha

The Yamuna bank: Calm.... charm.... inspiration... thrill. The cool breeze brings soft and sweet to the ear the strains of Divine Music from the Flute that Krishna plays on. Radha comes down from the high sand dune towards the waterline, with a big pot on her hip. Half way through, she stands stiff, for she hears her name being wafted by the wind from where Krishna was.... "Radha", "Radha". With wide open eyes, she looked on all the four sides. No one could be seen anywhere. Absolutely uninhabited area. Krishna was ever thus.

She fell on the sands in a faint. The pot was still in the fold of her hands. Radha awoke to the reality. "There is no place where you are not. The call arose from you alone; none else can be so soft and sweet, so sincere and so true. But, let me ask you just for this boon. You made us all act our roles; we played our parts as best we could. You urged us to laugh and to weep. You enjoyed both to your heart's content. I have had enough. Please, please let me go back to where I belong.

I dressed myself in desire and in disappointment, in anger and anticipation, anxiety and aspiration. I bedecked myself with the garlands of sensual reactions-melodious sound, smooth touch, ambrosial taste, bewitching sights, and bewildering fragrance. I had on my ankles the jingle of Illusion. I have won the applause and the jeering of the world. When I sang, Delusion marked time and played on the Tabla to spur me on. The Tamasic and Rajasic natures in me encouraged me to dance, providing the background music. Now my limbs fail; I am sick of the whole affair; may the play end, so far as I am concerned. Please, please agree to this my prayer."

Dhara

But, Krishna did not agree. He approached nearer and nearer. The Lord is a clear mirror, where the pure heart is reflected clear. Radha was His image the embodiment of His Ecstasy Radha is the Aahlaadini Shakti of Krishna and so, they are inseparable, indivisible. That is the very reason why Krishna called 'Radha' 'Radha', when she made her appearance on the Yamuna bank.

Radha continued, "This is the best chance for me to lay this gem at Thy feet. Alas, it is still uncut and dull. I was misled so long into the belief that the world is sweet, but, it is bitter, of astringent taste, unpleasant, and I have had enough. I am, as you know, Prakriti, Dhara, pronounced as Radha. So, I am burdened with the three Gunas—the Satwa, Rajas, and Tamas. Since Prakriti is feminine, I am perforce feminine too."

Stri

This is the Truth. Prakriti is feminine and so, its representative, Radha is also a Stri or Woman. The Sanskrit word Stri has three component consonants—sa, tha, and ra. These consonants signify the three Gunas in that order—sa meaning the Satwaguna, tha meaning the Tamoguna and ra meaning the Rajoguna. Women have the Satwaguna in ample measure. They are by nature helpful, tender, compassionate, humble and trustful. Next, they have also a good measure of Tamoguna. They are timid, shy and unenterprising. It is good that women are such. They have been endowed by nature with only a small dose of Rajoguna. Of course, this is the general truth; there may be exceptions, where the Rajoguna predominates and the Tamoguna recedes into the background. Rajo guna makes women aggressively bold, adventurous and pursuing freedom from restraint. The day when Rajo guna is accepted as a mark of womanhood, that day will mark the beginning of the end of femininity.

Man has only one home; but, woman has two, that she must guard from ill-fame—the home where she was born and brought up and the home of the husband she has chosen to live with for life. When she breaks all rules and runs unbridled into freedom, she becomes dangerous to the reputation and good name of both families—that of her parents and that of her parents-in-law. Indian culture and spiritual traditions awarded a high place to woman, since upon her rested the strength of the entire social fabric. She is the companion and guide of her husband, the earliest teacher of the children, the example for their social attitudes, the model for their speech, the guardian of their health and mental happiness. She is called the Ardhangi of the husband the 'half body'. There are many temples where God is worshipped as Ardha-nariswara, half woman and half man (the right half being male and the left half female). The honour and glory of a country were held to be in the hands of the women.

Abala

Whenever a religious rite was performed, or the Gods or manes propitiated by some ritual, the husband must have by his side the wife too. Or else, the rite or ritual was ineffectual. That was the status given to the wedded wife in the religious scriptures in India. No charitable gift can be valid until the wife indicated her agreement by sanctifying the gift at the time it was made. Of course, she had no authority to perform these rites by herself, as she likes. Hence she was called Abala, 'without power'. The power meant here is 'spiritual power over rites'. Unfortunately, the use of this word has become so widespread that women too had come to believe that they were fundamentally weak and powerless in all fields. This is a big mistake; only authorisation to perform rituals was denied. When Rama decided on performing an Ashwamedha sacrifice, the objection was raised that Sita was away as an exile in the forest and so, without his spouse, he was not entitled to perform the Ashwamedha. Some sages discovered that there was a provision to have a golden idol of the absent wife by the side of the principal officiator and so, a golden idol of Sita was made and placed in position by the side of Rama before the Yajna began. Abala does not mean lack of physical or mental strength. The wife makes the home of her husband a temple, a school, a council chamber and a hermitage.

Madhura

Radha lived the life of an ideal woman, as per the standards set by the Sanathana Dharma, and fixing her thoughts all the time on the Lord in pure unbargaining devotion; she secured the bliss of merging with Him. Hers was the type of Bhakti called, in the scriptures, Madhura. There are

six streams of Bhakti, all flowing towards the Lord and characteristic of six different types of spiritual attitudes. They are Santha, Sakhya, Dasya, Vatsalya, Anuraga and Madhura. Madhura is the highest among all the six, since it gives the maximum bliss. Milk is curdled, churned, butter produced and clarified into ghee. Ghee is the end, the ultimum. So too, Madhura Bhakti is the last word, so far as the experience of the mergence in the Lord is concerned. The journey ends and the feet stop when the goal is reached. When the Madhura experience is achieved, there is nowhere else to go; nothing more to do. The totality of God is experienced in Madhura Bhakti, His Poorna aspect, His Prema aspect.

Santha

In Santha Bhakti; the aspirant practises equanimity and considers all that happens to him as the gift of the Grace of God. Therefore, he is unaffected by success or failure; he is ever grateful for whatever God grants him. In Sakhya Bhakti, the aspirant takes God as his incessant counsellor, confidante, companion and mate. He feels the constant presence of the Lord and is never unaware of Him. In Dasya Bhakti, the aspirant feels that he is the servant, the instrument of the Lord, and revels in the role that God gives him on the stage of life. In the Vatsalya Bhakti, the aspirant loves the Lord as the mother loves her Child—with tenderness, anxiety, compassion, vigilance etc. In Anuraga Bhakti, the aspirant is deeply attached to the manifestations of the Lord, to whatever he deems as emanations of Divinity and he is highly pleased when he gets the chance to serve as such.

Prema

Since man has as his essential characteristic the quality of Love, he has only to foster it and tend it, so that he might love the Lord to the fullest, that is to say, love the Lord's Creation as much as the Lord Himself is loved. Then, the tree of Life will yield the sweet fruit of Madhura Bhakti. The fruit will have the bitter skin of I-ness and My-ness. This has to be removed. Certain egoistic desires and attributes might persist as 'seeds'; these too have to be removed, before the sweet pulp of Love is offered to the Lord. When Radha said that she had the vesture of desire and anger, she meant that she was unaffected by them. When she said that she was wearing the five elements contacted by the five senses in five distinct ways—sight, smell, taste, touch and sound—as a 'garland' round her neck, she meant that she was not contaminated by the contacts. Naturally, the Lord knew that all of her was dedicated to Divinity. This is the sign of Madhura Bhakti. The Lord said, this Prema has no alloy, it is free from blemish, it is full, it is free. So. He granted the final consummation to Radha.

—Bhagavan's Discourse: 9-6-78

Sai Family News

The Karnataka Experiment

The Summer Course on Indian Culture and Spirituality held every year since 1972 during the Vacation Months at Brindavan, Whitefield, for one full month, in the immediate Presence of Bhagavan has become a major event in the educational reconstruction of the nation. This year,

more than 200 students from overseas also joined the 1000 boys and girls selected from the Colleges of India. The language of the classes is English. Bhagavan has directed that shorter Courses on Indian Culture and Spirituality be arranged for College students in the various States of India, in the regional languages, and many States have held such Camps during the Christmas and New Year Holidays.

The State President, Karnataka, this year prepared a plan to have such Courses for students who, after writing answers at the SSC or SSLC Examinations, are staying on in their homes and native towns awaiting the results. Since it is vacation time, the students are available and eager to attend such Courses, if properly arranged, and held in the regional language. Every Seva Samiti was urged to explore the possibility and enter on a vigorous campaign to recruit students and lecturers. A flexible programme of lectures was drawn up. The idea received enthusiastic welcome from parents, students, Samitis and the public. For ten evenings, the Course ran, in each place covering lectures on the major religions, the ancient scriptures of all lands, the lives of saints, the message of the Masters and the ideals of spiritual living. State Level Certificates were given at the end of the Course, for all who passed a test. Local scholars and pundits, lecturers from the local College and others cooperated gladly. The townsmen celebrated the event as a Festival of Learning. Besides the students, elders too sought the privilege of attending as Observers. The movement is catching on, throughout the State and it promises to become an annual feature, with increasing impact on the youth. More than 60 to 100 students benefitted from these courses in each town, Chamara janagar, Mysore, Puttur, Chokkadi, Mangalore, Sagar, Siddapur, Shimoga, Bhadravati, Bidar, Bijapur, Hassan, Channarayapatna and Sringeri. The Seva Samitis in other towns are planning to arrange the Course during the ensuing Dipavali Holidays.

Kindergarten and Nursery Schools

In Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, Sathya Sai Seva Samitis are starting Nursery Schools for toddlers, taking the message of Bal Vikas to the younger kids and providing children with regular educational opportunities, throughout the year, under the Sai Educational Plan. In Bombay, the Sri Sathya Sai English Primary School will start from this academic year for KG and Standard I.

Sri Sathya Sai Centre of Accra, Ghana

This Centre has Bhajan and Bal Vikas Classes at Osu Temple., Accra. Attendance at the Nagarsankirtan is commendable. It has organised a Study Circle, where tapes of Baba's Discourses are played. Prof. K. A. Oduro is in charge of the Seva Activities of the Seva Dal, like running a Charitable Dispensary at Pokoase village, 11 km. from Accra, visiting the Ex-servicemen's Village etc. The Mahila Vibhag is also very active, with visits to the Hospital wards, the Deaf and Dumb Institute etc.

"Ten For One"

"You take one step towards Me; I will take ten towards you"—this is the assurance given us by Bhagavan Baba. Stated in simple words, it means that any small attempt on our part to progress in the spiritual field will be encouraged by Him, tenfold. The moment we set our minds on the God-ward path, Baba promises to help us reach the goal, swiftly and successfully.

There is an inner significance also in this Divine Declaration. What does he mean by 'ten steps'? In His Incarnation as Vamana one-step of His covered the entire earth and another, the entire space. The third step had to be placed on the head of Mahabali! So, in the course of reaching us and guiding us to the Goal, His ten steps (1) would mean an infinitely long distance, indeed! In other words, the Jivatma is far, far from the Paramatma, at present, though once the pilgrimage is entered upon, every step brings the two nearer and nearer.

This may sound paradoxical, since Vedanta declares that God resides not outside us, but, in our own heart; that the Jivatma is only the conditioned form of Paramatma. In other words, both are but 'object and image', 'ocean and wave' and both are in us. How then can distance separate? The Jivatma which acts as the 'ego' in us with the feelings of 'I' and 'Mine' is so shaped, as a result of the basic ignorance into which it has slid, the Maya, or as it is otherwise known, Avidya. Avidya feeds upon and is bred in Kamyakarma or activities promoted by desire and the impact they have on impulses and thoughts. These latter are called Vasanas. Vasanas accumulate so thick that they soon form an insurmountable barrier, between the 'ego' and the 'Divinity', which is our real Self. This cannot be got over, by human effort alone—whether along Karma Marga, Bhakti Marga or Jnana Marga. The Grace of God—"the ten steps for one"—alone can accomplish the task.

It is therefore clear that the statement made by Bhagavan about the ten steps is just an indication of the anxiety felt by Him, the compassion resident in Him, to reach His devotees and save them from doom. In fact, the Shrutis proclaim that the anxiety of Paramatma to reach the Jivatma is ten times more than the eagerness of the latter to reach the Paramatma.

From beyond the Maya Wall, Swami also declares to us struggling this side of the Wall. "Why fear, when I am here?" Fear means separation from God, As long as we feel we are separate from Him, we cannot be free from fear; when we know the identity, fear vanishes. There can be fear only when there are two entities. So Swami beckons us to take one step towards Him so that He may take ten, and pour His Love into us until we discover the springs of Love within us and become One with the Source of all Love.

Maya or Avidya is only the progeny of the ego—the feeling that we are the body, the senses, the mind and the intellect. When we come face to face with the real I, the little I disappears and we do not boast, 'I did this' or 'I planned this'. God acts only as a witness of all the Karmas, done by the promptings of the little ego, the I that boasts. Until He is realised, Maya will haunt us. Liberation from Maya can be achieved only by 'ending' the mind. Swami says, in His own characteristic way, "Bend the body, mend the senses, and end the mind." Bend the body—means discard the body-consciousness. This leads to sense control and results in our becoming 'diamond' or as Swami says, so meaningfully, "Die-mind". When the small I is crossed out and eliminated, the mind too dies, "nasana", as the term used in the scriptures refers to the process. Then, the real I, the universal unconditioned Consciousness becomes evident; that is to say, it comes down and fills the heart—an Avatar takes place for us, in us!

How can this body-consciousness be done away with? It is the result of the Samskara we have earned through millions of lives! Success can be achieved only through complete Sharanagati or mergence in the will of God. Nishkama Karma will help the growth in our heart of the ideal of Sharanagati. "We are only tools in His hands to carry out His Will." This feeling alone erases the ego. Not only has our Karma along with its inevitable consequences to be dedicated too God; all that we receive through the five senses has also to be so offered.

This is the meaning of the symbolic offering at the Lotus Feet of the Lord of 'flowers'. Think it over for a moment! The flower represents all the five satisfactions that we receive and accept from our five senses. When the flower is dedicated, we are dedicating all that we seek and get from our five senses by means of their contact with the objective world. The beauty of the flower (enjoyment through the eyes), its fragrance (pleasure through the nose), its softness (joy given by the sense of touch) and the sweetness of the nectar imbibed from It by the bees (catering to the tongue and its search for taste) are four forms of the sense enjoyment we offer and renounce at the Lotus Feet. And, the 'hum' of the bees which throng around the flower is the symbol of the pleasure we seek through the sense of hearing! The flower, therefore, is the symbol of Prapti or complete Sharanagati.

Thus, the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan, unaffected by the World or even the task which has brought them on this world, help us in our spiritual Sadhana, if we worship them. They move ten steps towards us, for every one step we take toward them. They help us to avoid Maya, for, how can fishes that are around the Feet of the Fisherman be caught in the net that he flings to enmesh them? Bhagavan's First Message to the world, given when quite a boy, at Uravakonda, was, "Manasa bhajare Guru charanam, Dusthara bhava sagara tharanam". Adore these Feet, the Feet of the Guru, imprinting them on your mind; then, you can easily cross over the vast Ocean of Change where you are struggling now."

—*Prof M. Krishnan Kutty Menon*

The Game is Yours

You tell me-follow the master,
But the Master is the Monkey-mind!
You urge; Face the devil,
Six devils stare at me!
And Fight to the end, You Insist,
I am already at my wit's end!
Finish the game, You demand,
Lord, I am not the player, but played upon!

Then, wait no more; my King,
Take up arms, and occupy This land;
And to this famished soul
Let Thy Panchajanya Sing.

The monkey shall go,
The devils will flee,
The fight shall be done,
And the game is, as always.
Yours, and yours, and yours.

—*B. H. Miers*

Padma-Brahman

"Who will teach; who will lead? —
Padma the Heart,
Brahmam the Eye"

But my heart throbs
as it misses the presence of Mother
in the lotus of the heart within;

My eyes are wet with tears
as they strain to catch a glimpse
of the distant Lord—

I cannot see the Sun
in the mid—region of the eye,
nor It's other in Heart below!

Where art Thou at this-most-needed-moment,
O' Divine Mother and Father—
Where is the Guru of my altar?

Your Feet even melts away,
The orange hue turns pale,
the fiery gaze vanishes into void...

Only intense longing remains in the soul,
and the echo of the A-U-Mmmm...
tailing into the infinite reaches of space

Perhaps there is where Thou-Both hide,
on Serpent Shesha's Endless peace,
surging on the ocean's undulating bliss

Behold! make this suffering cease,
carry me across the abyss of fretful life
O' mighty Rays of the Absolute-Descent!

—*Purushottama, Melbourn*

The Impact of Darshan

... ..In a moment, He will be coming. Nowplease keep quietKeep on thinking of Himpraying to Himentreating Him to come near and raise His Kanakambara (Golden Robe) revealing His Lotus Feet... No-no-don't gossip, even about Him. Simply be looking at those doors ...the doors that conceal That for which we have been running helter-skelter all our lives, the doors which are not made of wood but of pain and pleasurethe one hiding Him and the other befogging Him. Looklook....here He comes. Ah! the sweet smiling Lord of my life...here He is, standing full view before me.

Yes. He comes, not only today ...but, every day, all the days, wherever and whenever we call upon Him, and then, He calls us to come nearer and nearer to Him, until there shall be no You and I, but only ONE. He has done it so often in the past. He shall do it again, till the end of time. When He comes He come with a smile (why fear, when I am here,) which spreads like rosy sunlight between Him and we; a fragrant joy of soft ecstasy elevates us towards that Face; His footfall is so tender on the sands of desire; the cumbersome mound of my-ness crumbles at the unheard echo of that foot-fall. And then, the world is lifted away from its sordid surroundings, glimmering into an all-consuming tear-drop warm and wonderful, serene, sanctifying.

This is Sai-Darshan. What is the impact of that Darshan? It is like saying to myself SAII SAW!. It is in fact, seeing oneself, the beauty, the love, the tenderness that is enshrined in this I. The I in its purest embodiment comes near us and then, move away, tantalisingly. The urge to become more and more He and less and less I has been planted. After this, He starts His game of replacing our little I with His all-pervasive I and reigns in our hearts as sovereign, forever and ever.

Sai Darshan does not end there. In fact, a more lovely and a more enduring Darshan awaits us. After the first impact of the moment of Darshan, He prepares us for a wider and more expansive understanding of ourselves and Himself, an understanding transforming the momentary into the momentous, the now into the eternal NOW.

He comes. Yes, He comes and stands just beyond the reach of every body, an image of simmering quietness, of concern, of Divine dignity, yet of total giving-and-forgiving sweetness. Then His eyes swim from one end to the other, surveying the sick humanity, poised on a precipice and looking for His Grace which alone can save itoh, moment of moments! Look at His eyes, and you simply cannot! Suddenly Grace begins to stream forth in a soft murmuring flow, drowning the god of death, as it were, determined to drench our bodies, mind, souls, our entire being, and sealing it with His infinite kindness against all our woes and worries, sorrows and sufferings, endowing upon us a delight unknown before. At this moment He is no more a body, but a budding fragrance, a block of honeyed 'Navaneeta', seeking only to observe all our pains and prayers and waiting to flow on the hard bed of our hearts sweetening our entire life.

Now, look at those eyes again. The Divine Dignity and the aloofness is gone. In its place flashes a compassion, a kindness beyond compare, beyond measure, beyond our comprehension. He seems to feel the agony in our entrails, the misery in our hearts, the darkness in our minds and understand how with immense wealth hidden away within us, we still behave as beggars of trifles and treacle toffees. His eyes are wet with love, drooping with care, wide with eager earnestness to save us and shining with understanding.

While He Is achieving all this standing there, on the sands, He Is softly preparing us to receive Him. But we are blind to it, and at the most crucial moment of our lives, when we should be ready to accept His Gift which is Himself, we throw at Him, the weight of askings, of our desires and seal our eyes from having His true Darshan. We don't see Him, we see our own desires, our self-created pains, our insistent and persistent egos. He is hurt, and quietly, with profound pity in His heart, walks away.

In stead, let us keep where we are, not rushing forward, falling upon His Feet, crossing over a long line of people to Him to give Him a piece of writing, and madly stretching over to reach Him to get His Divine Touch on all kinds of things! He wants to touch our hearts and transform it, but we want Him to touch our handkerchiefs so that we can preserve it!

So, when He comes, that is the greatest of all moments for us sitting there. Let us be in readiness with patient waiting, for it is waiting for GOD, (not Samuel Becket's 'Waiting for godot'). He goes to an ailing boy,...ah, Lord, bless him. Yes, He blesses him, creates a pinch of Vibhuti for him, smiles at him, puts it on his tongue, pats him, smiles at him, and goes to another. Oh, how kind You are! I don't feel He does it to another. While He is pouring forth His Grace on the boy, I take part in it, I pray for him, as if I am he; I weep when He pats him, as if I am he, and He is patting me; I bask in the moonshine of His smile when He gives it to him. Then He walks along and goes to another, an old man who has been sitting there the last two hours ...Lord, please come to him, give him a 'Padanamaskar'... Yes, He comes, oh, as if He comes to me! He stands before him, quickly lifts the robe revealing the pair of Lotus Feet, and with what gratefulness, what joy, what ecstasy at the most unexpected piece of good fortune he bows low and lays his weary head on the refuge of the World and washes them with his heart's blood! I become blind with tears of joy, my throat chokes with gratefulness and my head is at the Lotus Feet even though I am physically 15 or 20 yards away from Him. A thrill runs down my spine ennobling me and enabling me to live the experience of the boy, the old man, and several others.

I begin to live in the boy, in the old man and every other who get a Touch, a word of solace, of comfort, and of love. Now he walks to a young man ...oh, my heart misses a beat! People rise in their tens, try to rush at Him and fall upon His Feet. I am shocked, a tear of remorse trickles down my cheeks, I pray for them—Lord, pardon them, for they know not what they miss. Brothers, please, please restrain yourselves-my heart cries out ...but as I look at His Face, a new understanding dawns upon me.

I begin to understand their agony, their pangs, their misery and their penitence at losing the only opportunity for which they have travelled not only a few thousands of miles but also for many lives, by their rashness. But I don't find fault with them, for I understand they could not

check themselves when they see the very Kalpataru standing before them. But this Kalpataru has come to give all, and take nothing-that too without asking! In their agonies I read mine, in their urge I experience mine, in their disappointment I am disappointed.

Then I look at Him. Is He angry? Is He displeased with them? Oh, a smile lights up my face. That Face cannot change. Nothing can distort it. All love, all compassion as before, printed in large bold letters! He is never affected, never carried away, never moved. He is always Himself, balanced, full of understanding, full of grace, oblivious of His separateness, as if He is one with all. He does not see the many, He sees only the ONE, and that One is only Himself. He talks only to Himself, He smiles only upon Himself, He walks not along the corridors of humanity, but along the corridors of space where He alone lives. Suddenly His Face becomes as deep as the sea, as vast as the sky, and perhaps, He mutters to Himself, "waves may come and waves may go, but I go on for ever"

There is great beauty and great dignity in that Face which is all-knowing, all-seeing and all-encompassing. My heart is filled with a placid calm, another name for vast understanding, and I not only live in the many, I begin to live in the ONE as well. The many dissolve in the ONE and the ONE is but that which lives in the many. I seem to see the glory of a new dawn bathing all my World with a tender golden hue which again is embodied as the robe of my Lord. I softly and secretly wipe away a tear.

While I was enjoying this Darshan, I was perhaps not very much aware of my 'I-ness'. I was like a sparrow hopping from door to door only to discover that they are all my doors, and I live there in different shapes, different forms, I speak in different voices and it is only I who get the DARSHAN in different bodies. When I spread too much in too many, the many gradually fade away and there is the ONE, with all its glory, grace and dignity. I live in the ONE, as the ONE, and my DARSHAN is complete. His walks are also complete. He slowly, silently and gracefully walks up the steps with a Divine Dignity, creating the primordial Pranava in every foot-fall, and disappears through the twin doors of pain and pleasure; and pain and pleasure have vanished from my heart leaving in its place a rare fulfillment.

I have had a holy bath, not in the Ganga of this earth, but in the 'Suradhuni', the Divine Ganga that cleanses the gods. I walk as if in the clouds, light of heart and swift of feet. I drink the nectar, the 'manna dew', and in all I see, I see only the pair of deep, loving and lovely eyes. I have the DARSHAN of my Lord both without and within, the without seeking permanence in the within; and suddenly I begin to understand the truth of the statement, "My hands and feet are every where," and " I am the dweller in the temple of every heart."

—*Bijoy Kumar Misra Cuttack, Orissa*

What is in a Name?

`The learned recognise the articulation of the name of Lord Vishnu as capable of eradicating all one's sins, even when it is intended to denote someone else, or when it is uttered jestingly, or as an interjection in the midst of a song, or out of seeming disrespect'. (Srimad Bhagavata).

The Bhagavata Mahapurana composed by the great Rishi, Veda Vyasa, is an immortal classic. It has the greatness of the Vedas and Upanishads and is rightly treated as part of the Scriptures (fifth Veda). The stories in the Bhagavata about the incarnations of the Lord, exemplify the tenets of the Scriptures and help ordinary people to develop spiritual values and religious devotion.

The verses from Bhagavata of which the meaning is given above, were the words of the messengers of the Lord interceding in the attempt of the servants of Yama (Death) to take away the life of a dying Ajamila along the path meant for sinners. Ajamila, a devout Brahmin, fell a victim to lust, under the influence of Maya and by reason of his own Destiny. At the time of his death, a frightened Ajamila called out the name of his youngest son, Narayana. The very utterance of 'Narayana' which is one of the thousand names of the Lord, and which means 'He, that pervades all things externally and internally', brought forth on him, Divine Grace. The servants of Yama wondered how a sinner could get his release from the bondage of his Karma, by merely calling out his son who just happened to have the name of the Lord. This was clarified by the Lord's messengers with two analogies: that fuel would be burnt to ashes even when fire is dropped on it accidentally, and that the potency of a medicine is not in anyway reduced by a sick person taking it even when he is unaware of its efficacy. So too, they reasoned the Lord's name was capable of eradicating all sins.

Leaving for the present the seeming incongruity in the circumstances, let us consider the message conveyed by the story. It is not always, or even generally, that one can remember the name of the Lord at the time of his death. It is only a Mahatma falling to the bullet of an assassin, who can utter 'Ha Ram' and cast away his physical body. Ordinary mortals including even the devout among them, give up their Prana (life) in a moan or a groan. They are not ready, by reason of their Karma for the release which a Jivan-mukta (released in-life) attains on the fall of his physical frame. Although temporarily caught in the coils of Samsara (worldly life) Ajamila had accumulated in his past lives enough spiritual wealth to wipe out the sins of one last life and evoke the Grace of the Lord.

The age in which we live, Kali Yuga, is spiritually impoverished. To the spiritual aspirant, however, this age provides the quickest and easiest means for attaining self-realisation. According to the Vishnu Purana, what is gained through meditation in Krita-yuga, through sacrificial Treta-Yuga, rites in the and through ritual worship in Dwapara-Yuga, is achieved by chanting the name of the Lord in Kali-Yuga. Namasmarana (recalling the name of the Lord) and Namasankirtan (singing the Name) constitute a total Sadhana as efficacious as any other discipline laid down for God-realisation. 'The only hold that man has in this dreadful darkness is the name of God. That is the raft which will take him across the stormy sea, darkened by hate and fear, churned by anxiety and terror' says Bhagavan Baba.

How is the Name so efficacious? The names of the Lord are redolent with elevating meanings and ideas. As mentioned earlier Narayana means the one that pervades and sustains everything in

this universe; Vishnu means, the all-pervading Being; Sankara is One who confers happiness and prosperity. Such names refer to the greatness and goodness of the Lord or His manifestations, to His Glory, His Compassion, His power in destroying the evil (dushta-nigraha) and protection of the righteous (sishta-palana). The names constitute 'Mantras'; they are 'capsules' containing the cure for the ills of worldliness (Bhava-roga).

The articulation and the repetition of the Name cannot be mechanical. It will not come to one's mind unless the mind dwells on it, its meaning and association. If the Namasmaraṇa has to be meaningful and sustained, one should be keenly conscious about all that it implies. Such consciousness automatically develops a devoutness and elevates the mind. By constantly remembering the Name and repeating it, one lives in it, lives in the constant company of the One that it represents. Bhagavan Baba points out, 'the name is redolent with Divine Glory. So, when it is turned over in the mind, it transmutes it into an instrument of liberation from delusion.' To such a person no other thought comes in a crisis or even in the moment of death except that of the Lord. Remember what the Lord of Bhagavad-Gita said, 'He who utters the single syllable Aum, which is Brahman, remembering Me as he departs, giving up his body, he goes to the highest goal'. He hastens to add 'He who constantly meditates on Me, thinking of none else, by him I am easily reached' (VIII-13, 14). This, in essence, is the Sadhana of Namasmaraṇa.

A question may be asked what name and what form among the thousands that are attributed to Him should be adopted by an aspirant for his sadhana. Doubts may also be expressed about the efficacy of dwelling on the Name and the Form when the Supreme is without form (Nirakara) and qualities (Nirguna). Bhagavan Baba clears these doubts in His inimitable way: 'God will assume the Form and answer to the Name for which you thirst! That is the measure of His Grace'. We know from the lives of many evolved souls like Sati Meera, Sant Tukaram, Lord Chaitanya and in recent times, Mahayogi Aurobindo that the Lord manifested to them in whatever name and form they adored Him. The efficacy of Namasmaraṇa has been recognised even by the great masters who expounded the Advaita theory of Nirguna-Brahman. Ramana Maharshi says, 'The Name is effective. Repetition of the name is remembrance of what it signifies.' Guru Sankara in his Dwadasa-Manjarika-Stotram asks the vain intellectual to seek Govinda (Govindam Bhaja). Not only Hinduism, but every religion like Buddhism, Christianity, Islam—all recognise the efficacy of Namasmaraṇa. 'Give unto the Lord the glory due to His Name' (Psalms).

The Lord of the Gita extols Japa as the greatest Yagna (sacrifice). 'Yagnanam japa-yagnosmi (I am the Japa Yagna among Yagnas)' (X-25). Japa is the devout repetition of a mantra or a Divine Name. The Brahmaivaṛtapurana extolling the merits of such Japa says that while religious practices prescribed by the Shrutis are subject to various restrictions and rules and therefore cannot be performed by all, by giving up such practices and merely repeating the name of the Lord, one attains everything.

Of Bhagavan Baba's miracles the greatest is the restoration of spiritual values in the lives of his devotees. There is no sadhana which he considers unimportant for raising man to his Divinity; of raising Manava to Madhava. But the most important, the most appealing and the one on which He lays the greatest emphasis is Namasmaraṇa, Bhajans which constitute an integral part of this sadhana is the devout and tuneful singing of Names. Nagarsankirtan is again the singing of

names and waking up man from his physical and spiritual torpor. Satsangs bring together like-minded devotees to read, discuss and imbibe the Glory of the Lord. The sadhana of Namasmarana to which Bhagavan attaches the greatest importance is bringing about a revolutionary change in the life of His devotees. He reminds however, 'It is the feeling in the heart that is the crucial test-not the length of time devoted or the amount of money spent'.

By constantly remembering the Name, by repeating or singing the Name, by performing every act in the Name, by dedicating oneself to the Lord of that Name, following ones Dharma and accepting whatever results, good or bad, arising out of it in His Name, one lives in the Name and leaves the world to reach the heavenly abode of the Lord of that Name, (Tat dhama paramam).

So, to the question, 'What is in a name?' the answer obviously is 'There is everything in it, if It is of the Lord'.

—*C. P. H. Nair*

Bharatiya Paramartha Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

13

Vedic Values

"Vetthi ithi Vedah"; Knowing, knowledge is Veda. That is to say, man can know from the Vedas, the Code of Right Activity and the Body of Right Knowledge. The Vedas teach man his duties from birth to death. They describe his rights and duties, obligations and responsibilities in all stages of life—as a student, householder, recluse and monk. In order to make plain the Vedic dicta and axioms and enable all to understand the meaning and purpose of the do's and don'ts, the Vedangas, Puranas and Epic texts appeared, in course of time. Therefore, if man is eager to grasp his own significance and true reality, he has to understand the importance of these later explanatory compositions also.

This is the reason why the ancients taught the Vedangas and other related texts even before the pupils learnt the Vedas. This was a must, in the Gurukulas or Hermitage Schools of the past. In those days, the Bharatiyas studied the 'Fourteen Vidyas', or 'Subjects'. The Vedas were learnt by rote. The master of the Vedas, who had learnt the Vedas in this manner was called Jada, or Inert! But, the word did not convey the meaning that he had not known anything. It only meant that he had nothing more to learn and was therefore 'inactive' and 'content'. Through the study of the Vedas, he had become the master of all knowledge. In order to make this human career worthwhile, the study of the Vedas was considered very essential.

The stream of Indian culture always emphasised the authority of the Vedas as the supreme authority for deciding the values of human living. Of the Vedas, the first is the Rg-veda. It is generally considered as composed of ten 'mandalas' or sections. In the first nine sections, hymns in praise of God under the names of Agni, Indra, Marut, Ushas, etc., are found. Historians and researchers have suggested certain theories to explain how these hymns of praise arose. Men in those days realised that Agni (Fire) Vayu (Air) Marut (Wind) etc., were far more powerful than them and so, they described their Divine qualities and propitiated them.

The second of the Vedas is the Yajurveda. This Veda has two rescissions—the Krishna Yajurveda and the Shukla Yajurveda. This Veda refers to the Ganga River and its region. It is the source of the Uttara Mimasa school of thought and interpretation. The people had by then demarcated the forest areas from the cultivable areas around the villages and had taken to habitation in the villages. There is a prominent reason that prompted the separation of certain portions of the Veda into the Yajurveda. The Yajurveda has seven sections called Aranyakas or Forest Texts, indicating by that very name, that it refers more to disciplines and spiritual exercises which can be practised only in the seclusion and silence of the forest.

The third Veda is the Sama-Veda. In this collection, many of the hymns (rks) of the Rg-Veda are repeated, but, with additional musical notes so that they may be sung during Vedic rituals and ceremonies. So the Sama-Veda is mainly Swara or musical notation. The Rg-veda Aryans lived on the banks of the Sindhu River, while the Yajur-Veda came to their awareness when they were on the banks of the Ganga. The Sama-Veda songs are also visualisations of the same era, but, the people seem to have then occupied even the middle region of Bharat. The Sama-Veda is referred

to as the Gana-Veda also, in order to highlight its musical nature. All musical schools are derivatives from the styles that mark out the Sama-Veda. All tones and notes are embedded in that Veda.

The fourth is the Atharvana or Atharva-Veda. Many have described it in many diverse ways. Some have even denied it the status of a Veda. Others say that it is made up of what remained after the collation of the rest. In the other Vedas, the might and mystery of the Gods are described. But, in this Veda, the possibility of man acquiring certain powers and mysteries by his own effort and exercises are mentioned. This is its specialty Hatayoga, tiraskarani vidya, ashtayoga—these are made available for man only in this Veda. Of course, by winning the Grace of God, man can acquire even skills that are otherwise impossible of attainment.

In short, it must be realised that the Vedas are very important for man and that they cover the entire range of knowledge. They are the source and spring of Bharatiya culture. They are the recordings of visions and divine experiences; their source is not some one definite person. They were revealed by God Himself, of His own innate Mercy. The Vedic inheritance has been preserved pure and unsullied even to this day, because, it was handed down from the Master to the disciple, in regular succession. Since it is timeless and authorless, it is worthy of acceptance by all. No one can afford to neglect or deny their value.

Whatever may be the diversities in contents, the commentators agree that the essential teaching of all the four Vedas is one and the same. The sections dealing with rites, modes of worship and the conclusions of inquiry all help man to achieve the four goals of life—Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. Since it is very hard to master the Vedas, we have developed a vast Smriti literature to expound the Shruti texts—the Puranas and the Itihasas. Farsighted were composed these out of historical and legendary incidents and events.

Karma and Jnana are related as cause and effect, and so, the Karma sections of the Shruti and Smriti, which emphasised activity led to the discovery of new facets of Truth and rendered the ideas of a transcendent God clearer and nearer. So too, the discovery of clearer concepts of God through spiritual inquiry along the Jnana Marga fed "activity" with better meaning and higher purpose. The benefit of Karma was proportionate to the faith and the faith in Karma was in proportion to the awareness of God, won through Jnana. For involving himself in good activities, Jnana is an essential pre-requisite. That Jnana has ultimately to be derived from the Vedas; it is based on the teachings of the Vedas.

Karma is, really speaking, the practice of Dharma. The Upanishads give us guidance on what has to be done and what has to be avoided; in the spiritual journey. They direct us to revere the mother as God, revere the father as God, revere the preceptor as God, revere the guest as God and also, warn us that Truth shall not be neglected, Dharma shall not be neglected. So, there are both positive and negative instructions—follow these counsels not others. Whatever conduces to your progress in goodness, accept; avoid other counsels—thus do the Upanishads instruct.

In those centuries, the King himself studied in hermitages at the feet of the Upanishadic sages, and helped others to study by granting economic aid profusely to the centres of learning which shone as Repositories of Vedic lore. As the king, so the subjects. Fostering the Vedas meant

fostering the Vedic scholars and practitioners, the Vedavids. At the present time, encouragement is afforded and scholarship is honoured in other branches of learning. The Vedic scholars are not given similar encouragement and emoluments. But, this is an important aspect that has to be attended to.

Dharmo rakshati rakshitah; Dharma protects those who protect it, says the Shruti. If people come forward to foster the sources of Dharma, that good act, by itself, will help foster those who do it. The study of the Vedas has become today the task of the economically weak. People have reconciled themselves to this situation. They associate the study with such a sad and pitiable picture. Vedic studies have come down to this deplorable pass. The very pundits who have attained scholarship in the Vedas are using it as a commercial item that can be sold. They do not demonstrate the value of Vedic study in the peace and harmony of their lives and thus win reverence for the Vedas by personal example. The Vedas are being misused by them for earning a pittance, rather than liberation and peace. This is the reason why Dharma is receiving a set-back and anxiety and fear, are spreading among men. The World can win back peace and harmony only when such persons are persuaded to practise the deals laid down in the Vedas, and thereby serve as beacon lights to guide mankind aright. Else, downfall is inevitable.

The Bharatiya spiritual stream has until the present times fertilised Vedic learning and practice. Its message has been always, "Journey forward along the Vedic Path." One may dilate on Vedanta and Vedas but, unless one holds forth the value of these ideals on the basis of his own experience and practice, it is a waste. This truth has been forgotten by these personages. Let them awake in time and save the traditions and values of the ageless Vedic culture.

(To be continued)

"Here He is"

God's World of Happiness,
Is on the Verge of Tears;
For all His Love and Workmanship,
Has been devalued through the years.

So now the time has come,
For God to come on Earth,
To save His dying creation,
From the devil's wretched curse.

Here He is before you
In brilliant orange robes,
To save ALL mankind,
In many different roles.

His face is full of beauty.

His eyes are full of Love.
His voice is soft and sweet
Like the grace of a dove.

We bow to His Lotus feet,
And pray to Him everyday
That He will save our Hearts and Souls
For He is almighty God in the Human Way.

—*Anita Saxena, California Age 11 years*

Pioneers of Educational Renaissance

Educational facilities have increased manifold during the years after Independence, but, standards of education have suffered vast deterioration. The number of school going children have increased, but the percentage of drop outs and the drop in the quality of education have not been arrested perceptibly. As Dr. Chenna Reddy, Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, said, "We have a proliferation of Universities, built on the sandy wastes of primary education, and, rickety high schools training the products of these primary schools. Of what benefit will be the various engineering projects in the country, when we do not build the people who can use them and profit by them?" Primary education of children in the age group 5-10 is the very first phase that has got to be strong and sustaining. Educational experts, administrators, and political leaders had given up hopes of ever successfully tackling this basic problem. "Can primary education be revitalised? Can funds be found for a great big lead into the future? Is it ever possible to transform the 42,000 Primary Schools in Andhra Pradesh, into centres of moral discipline and training grounds for spiritual and social values, besides being schools teaching the there R's and other skills?"

Dr. Chenna Reddy decided that a bold beginning had to be made and on a truly impressive scale. Parents, educationists and patriots all over the country enthusiastically welcomed this beneficial step, especially, when it received the blessings of Bhagavan. Dr. Chenna Reddy arranged to send the first batch of Primary School teachers, the pioneers of the "Abhyudaya Pathashala Shikshana" (about 670 of them selected from all the Districts of Andhra Pradesh, especially from the educationally backward areas) for an Orientation Course on Spiritual Education, at Brindavan, Whitefield, Bangalore, at the Sri Sathya Sai College, in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan. The Course lasted for ten days, from 25th August till 4th September.

The Course consisted of three lectures a day, by eminent educationists and child welfare specialists, followed by "discussion" among groups of trainees, guided by experts. Bhagavan addressed them every evening clarifying the problems and doubts raised by the participants, as a result of these discussions. The Basic Values of Indian Culture, the Ideals of Education as formulated in Indian Culture, the Gurukula type of Institutions, the Moral Goals of Education, the School and the Community it serves, Simple Living, Promotion of the Savings Habit, Prema

Marga (the Path of Love) as an instrument in the Educational Renaissance, Health and Hygiene, Medical Check-up of Children and Follow-up methods, Importance of silence, Meditation and Simple Yogasanas in invoking Discipline and Mural strength, Significance of Festivals (Hindu, Christian, and Muslim) Story-telling, Plays, Games, 'Chanting Bhajans, Stotras, and Hymns from the scriptures of all religions, Seva Activities by Teachers and children; the School as the Centre of Light and Love—these were some of the topics on which talks were given. More than 25 teacher trainees were invited to talk on these and kindred topics. The trainees also had a course of daily practice of a few simple Yoga postures, and talks on the value of Yoga in general. They also participated in the Social service activities of the students of the Sri Sathya Sai College of Arts, Science and Commerce, in about four villages around the Brindavan.

Dr. S. Bhagavantham, M. A., D. Sc., Dr. V. K. Gokak, M.A., D. Litt, Dr. R. R. Diwakar, of the Gandhi Peace Foundation, and the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Sri V.K. Narasimhan. Veteran Journalist, Dr. T. Sulochana, M. A. Ph. D, Hyderabad, Dr. P. S. Rao, D. Sc, Bangalore, Dr. Rajeswari, M.D., M.S., F.R.C.S., Dr. Hemalatha, M.A. Ph.D, Dr. Lakahminarasimhiah, M.Sc., Ph.D. Dr. Krishnamurthy, M E., Ph.D, of the Indian Institute of Science, Prof. N. Kasturi, Prof. Santha Diwakar of the College of Education, Bangalore, Prof. Nanjundiah of the Sathya Sai College, Sm. Maniamma, Convenor, the Andhra Pradesh Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas, Prof. Seethalakshmi from Chirala, Lady Organisers of Bal Vikas from Madras City, Principal Amar Kumari Varma, of the Vidya Vihar Nursery School at Nandanavanam, Ootacamund and two specialists in Child Education and Child Welfare from Toronto, Canada, Asha Bidani and Shakti—spoke to the trainees during the Course.

The atmosphere of Brindavan, showers of loving Grace from Bhagavan, His counsel and guidance, the experience of getting involved with students and teachers dedicated to spiritual ideals of service and Sadhana, the vibrations of sincerity and simplicity that surrounded them—all these had a profound effect on the teacher-trainees. As the Special Officer in charge of the new scheme of Abhyudaya Pathashalas or Model Schools, Kum. Sharada Devi said, "The teachers reached Brindavan downcast In Vishada Yoga; they are leaving, at the end of the ten-day-camp, as determined pioneers of a new era in education."

The Valedictory Meeting of the Orientation Course was held at the College Auditorium on the 4th day of August. The Education Minister of Andhra Pradesh Sri Bhavanam Venkataram Reddy announced that the Education Ministers of other States were also keen to know more about the Abhyudaya Pathashala Movement and therefore, the success of the scheme in Andhra will certainly bring about the long awaited and much needed revaluation in the field of elementary education. Two teachers who participated in the Orientation Camp spoke on the enthusiasm and inspiration that they had gained from the lectures and discourses, the gift of Divine Love from Bhagavan, and the atmosphere of dedication, discipline and Seva that pervaded the College, the Hostel and the Campus.

Dr. M. Chenna Reddy, who had come to Bangalore, spent a few hours with the trainees and understand their problems and anxieties, assured them that they will be given the fullest support by the administration in their endeavour to usher in the Gurukula style of education in the villages. In his address, he said that it will be a happy day when teachers raise themselves to the status of the Gurus of the past and the Gurus of today take up the role of teachers in their own

areas of service. He wanted that teachers must become the messengers of spiritual faith and the leaders of spiritual renaissance in the villages. "Bharat has been since centuries the Guru of Humanity. It has held aloft the supremacy of the spirit in spite of political subjection, economic exploitation and social disorder. How fierce the tornadoes of political or economic origin were, the people of this land never gave up their moral ideals and standards. But, there are signs that the younger generation is losing faith and confidence in the values cherished and fostered in this land since ages. Youth is swept by a wave of admiration for alien cultures that have yet to prove their worth. The inhabitants of prosperous and powerful nations that are considered as in the vanguard of technological and scientific progress are afflicted by fear, anxiety and a sense of doom. They are seeking for remedies to gain peace of mind for themselves, to purify the pollution of their minds, and to establish harmony among the peoples of the world. Bhagavan is drawing to himself thousands of such seekers from all parts of the globe, irrespective of nationality, caste, colour and creed. He is graciously conferring on these distressed and devoted peoples his Love, His Guidance and His mighty curative and corrective powers. It is fortunate that the Abhyudaya Pathashala Movement has received his blessings and his guidance.

The word secularism that our national leaders used, to describe the nature of our constitution has caused a great deal of avoidable confusion. It does not mean the denial of validity and value to religion as such; nor does it mean that religion should not find a place in social and political life. It means that all religions have to receive equal opportunities and equal respect in social and political life. Religion is fundamentally 'inclusive' and 'comprehensive' and promotes brotherhood, mutual love and co-operation. The Sanathana Dharma of the Hindus holds all religions as facets of the One Eternal Truth. Bhagavan promotes and lives this Universal Faith, which considers all the different religions as attempts by man to define the One Omnipresent Indefinable Supreme Spirit.

The Chief Minister said that it was indeed lucky that Bhagavan agreed to arrange this Orientation Course under his auspices in this unique College run according to the Sai ideals of education. He expressed his desire that the whole country must become a haven of peace and a home of love, as Brindavan is today. He said that he was sure the precious heritage and spiritual culture of Bharat will become the saviour of a distraught world as a result of the ministration of Bhagavan. He announced that Bhagavan had graciously agreed to arrange for the training this year of 2400 more teachers from selected Elementary Schools of Andhra Pradesh under the auspices of the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust itself and to himself guide the trainees during the camp.

Bhagavan in His Divine Discourse, called upon the teachers to realise the immense responsibility they had assumed when they entered the profession the responsibility to safeguard and promote the integrity and honour, the progress and peace, of Bharat. This country is even now the place to which aspirants for self-knowledge and self-realisation move from all parts of the world. The ideal placed before the people of this land by the Rishis is, "Lokas Samasthaas Sukhino Bhavantu", "May all the worlds be happy and prosperous." They prayed for peace, not only for men, but also for animals, birds, trees, plants, waters and outer space. And, their conception of God was that of an Omnipresent, Immanent and Transcendent Spirit, Form-less, but, capable of assuming any Form.

We have a word, Jnana. This is different from and much higher than knowledge. But, now persons who know about certain things are called Jnanis and what they have acquired is named Jnana. Every individual is equipped, willy-nilly, with some little knowledge or other. Some may have earned a little more, some a little less. But all have their share. If all are Jnanis, why should there be so much unrest, fear, and violence in the country? Why should people flounder in the darkness of ignorance so miserably and so helplessly?

The trouble is that scholarship or knowledge of some subjects is not the real Vidya, or Education. Saa vidya, tham vimukthaye—That is Vidya, which liberates. If education binds man to the senses, to fleeting pleasures and temporary gains, it cannot be Vidya. Education cannot be the process by which the information contained within book is transferred to the brain and later, reproduced when required. Education must result in better men, women and children. It must be proved in practice; it must be tested and confirmed in daily life. It must endow man with character. To be able to describe darkness as black, blood as red, milk as white, tamarind fruit as sour—this skill is not education, or Vidya. It may be correct information about things. Vidya must penetrate into the diversity and distinction that are apparent and make man aware of the Unity, which underlies it. It must reveal the bond that binds in brotherhood all men from all lands. It must take man from 'I' to 'WE'. It must help man to grow into the perception of 'mankind'. Vidya must make man convinced that different faiths have arisen in human history as a consequence of differences of environment, racial heritage and the variety of outlooks and levels of experience. All faiths try to ennoble man and make him march towards the Divine. So, there should not be any conflict or comparison between them.

Bhagavan said that there were many who tried to dampen the enthusiasm of Dr. Chenna Reddy, when he set about to establish the new-model Gurukula type of elementary schools. Nevertheless, he has maintained his steady faith in its success. I hope not only the Minister of Education, but, all the other Ministers, the entire Cabinet, will enthusiastically work for its success. One flower cannot constitute a garland. Many flowers must be gathered to make a garland of glory Andhra Mata. Bhagavan spoke on Ananda that one can acquire through the virtue of detachment or Tyaga. Tyaga alone can confer the highest bliss, the Amrutattwa. Attachment to the self and its needs and desires can bring only grief and momentary intervals of joy. Egoism and Tyaga can never go together. They are like fire and water. You must have heard the proverb, "The mother wished her daughter-in-law to be a widow and her son to live happily and well." Selfishness and Tyaga are as apart as these two wishes of the mother.

Bhagavan told the teachers that the human birth they have won as a result of many lives spent in virtue, truth and sacrifice, should not be frittered away in meaningless, mechanical pursuits. The teacher is the guide, guardian and god of the growing child. He can make or mar the destiny of the nation. He can sow the seeds of love, faith and humility in the fresh field of the juvenile heart. Do not worry about the monetary return that you get for the great Seva that you do; you can win the Grace of God, which is far more precious, and far more lasting. Never play false to your Dharma, as an Acharya who is considered Divine by the Upanishadic seers."

Bhagavan characterised the Reconstruction Programme as a huge Yajna, a sacred offering to the Divine that is latent in every child and community of peoples. He called for heroism, courage and determination on the part of teachers, administrators and the people in order to make the

venture a successful campaign against ignorance, sloth and stagnation. He wanted that the teachers who have been selected and trained must in their turn enthuse others working in the same school and in the same area. He advised that they should eschew any trace of arrogance or superiority, but, plead with their colleagues and co-workers sweetly and persuasively.

Bhagavan told them the story of Bhishma. When Bhishma, reclining on the bed of arrows, was discoursing on the code of morality that kings, princes and ministers, sages and spiritual preceptors should observe to a group of eager listeners consisting of the Pandava Brothers, Draupadi, their Queen and Krishna, Draupadi could not suppress a laugh. It came as a shock to every one of the attentive listeners. The Pandava Brothers hung their heads in sheer shame, that their Queen had perpetrated such an atrocious insult. But, Bhishma counseled patience. He said, "Draupadi is a well-bred princess; she can never be guilty of bad manners. There must be some valid acceptable reason for her strange behaviour. Let us interrogate her and discover what prompted her to behave so."

When at last Draupadi was asked why she interrupted the discourse with a laugh, she replied, "I am really sorry; revered grandfather! You are indeed an embodiment of Divinity and should be respected highly and listened to with great attention. But, I wondered, why you kept back these wise counsels about moral behaviour, and chose to be silent, when the Kauravas who were your pupils and wards were dragging me about in the Durbar hall that day, trying to molest me? And, I thought how could you tell us now, after all that has happened, how to conduct ourselves as kings, princes etc. Why are you preaching to the Pandavas now what you should have preached to the Kauravas, then?"

Bhishma heard her with great patience. He replied, "That day, when those horrid things happened, I was partaking the food provided by the Kauravas. I was feeding on sin. Now, the arrows of Arjuna have drained my body of the blood that was bred on that sinful sustenance. So, the Dharma and the Consciousness of Rightful Conduct that were laid low by that unholy stream of blood is now bubbling up and revealing themselves." That is the effect of food on the human mind.

Food is consumed not merely by the mouth; all that is absorbed by the senses, the mind and the intelligence is 'food' Since you have all taken the sanctified food provided by Brindavan, through the senses, the mind and the intellect, you must hereafter shape your lives in accordance with the aspirations implanted in you.

Referring to the invitation that the representatives of the trainees extended to him to visit the model schools all over Andhra Pradesh, when they have started work in full swing according to his gracious guidance, Bhagavan said, "I have been pressed during the last fifteen years to travel abroad and visit Western Countries, but I am declining because I believe that the 'home-land' must be set right first, before setting out to correct other lands. When you carry out in daily practice the directions given here and serve the children and the village with love and sincere reverence, I shall certainly come to you, I request you to give me that chance as early as possible."

The 670 teacher-trainees were later helped to go round the Bangalore City and see for themselves educational and other institutions of interest. They were also sent by Bhagavan on a round tour to Mysore City, and helped to visit spots of educational and religious interest. Most of them returned to their villages, via Prasanthi Nilayam, Puttaparthi. —*Ed.*

Be pure in words and deeds, and keep impure thoughts away. I am in every one of you and so, I become aware of your slightest wave of thought. When the clothes become dirty, you have to give them for wash. When your mind is soiled, you have to be born again, for the cleansing operations. The dhobi beats the cloth on the hard stone, and draws over it the hot iron, to straighten the folds. So, too, you will have to pass through a train of travail in order to become fit to approach God. See Me as resident in every one; give them all the help you can, all the service they need; do not withhold the sweet word, the supporting hand, the assuring smile, the comforting company, the consoling conversation.

—**Baba**

Sai Sevaks, New York

To serve one's fellowman leads to the consciousness that it is God serving Himself in another form, that there is not TWO, but, only ONE. To ignore others is to turn your back and separate yourself from God. Thereby, you slide down the scale of God-consciousness, into Selfness.

The spiritual path leading to God-Realization is one of the Mind out-going to others, through right service. Even while serving, one must meticulously and tenaciously watch that the mind does not think, "I am serving," or the ego creeps in unawares, as a thief in the night. Only as one, remaining as pure as Krishna's hollow flute through which He plays His Divine melody of Life, can one be truly in God's service. Unclogged by thoughts of 'me' and 'mine', only in the nothingness of the all-ness can service be absolutely pure.

The Sai devotees of the Planetarium Station Sai Center, New York, aspire to do self-less service and with the Grace of Baba, they have been able to do their 'bit'. Timmy, a young man, with a Master's Degree, from the University, does unpaid social service in a poor district in New York City. Timmy has such faith in Baba that when his old car breaks down, while on his rounds, he gathers people to hold hands and make a circle around it and they recite OM in Baba's name. He puts some Holy Ash (Vibhuti) on the carand away, it goes!

Once, at a Sai Satsang, he told the group of a pathetic case-which he had noticed and had determined to help. A woman was very ill with asthma. She with her three young children was to be evicted the very next morning, UNLESS the Government-owned apartment where she lived so long could pass the 'cleanliness inspection'. It was, he said, in a deplorable condition, owing to her illness, which she had not brought to the attention of the authorities. At the finish of the Satsang, all jumped up, rushed out, got into cars, went to stores, bought cleansing soaps, buckets, brooms, and reached the woman's apartment.

Happily chanting Om and singing Bhajan, they worked far into the night, until early morning arrived. Ten full loads of dirty clothes were taken to the automat laundry and the washing machines and drying machines there were kept busy until far past closing time (10 P.M.). The Manager got into the spirit of Seva and kept the laundry open until past midnight! The spirit of self-less happy service acts like a magnet, which draws.

By 2 A.M., the apartment was ready for inspection. When the Inspector came in the morning, it passed muster. He was visibly moved by the Seva spirit of the Sai devotees and their enthusiasm to help the distressed, and he promised to find better furniture for the woman and also to paint the apartment. While the apartment was being painted and redecorated, Timmy arranged to have the mother placed in a Hospital for treatment. Sai devotees took care of the three children who were taken to Timmy's place. The mother was brought home after two weeks, to lovely clean home and the children once again placed under her care.

Under Timmy's guidance, Baba devotees cook and serve a meal for several poor every week, and lovingly serve the same. They go to the market and secure free vegetables from the sympathetic market owners. They teach the people of the area, bhajans and the OM. Timmy and his helpers go into the roughest and toughest places in this underprivileged district and they inspire the young people to live better lives. Hundreds of medals of Sai Baba are worn by the young people of the district; pictures of Baba are kept and adored in their altars and shrines. Timmy or his helpers heed only mention the case of a family that requires aid while at the Satsang and Meditation Group at the Cathedral of St. John; clothes, shoes, food, —flow in. The things are bought and anonymously placed at the door, during the Thursday meeting. The needy family is provided and Timmy distributes the overflow in the district he serves. If a baby is born to a poor mother, one request—and, all that is needed for the new-born child, is quickly supplied—beds, furniture, and clothes. Timmy and others take the young boys, who prowl the streets at night, under their care, look into their home condition, see that they attend school and after finding out the reasons why they do not, try to correct them. At Christmas, hundreds of toys and presents were donated by devotees, so that each child in that area served by Timmy and his band of helpers had a present to be happy about. Devotees of Baba went into the area and sang for the people and played music. The children went home from these gatherings, knowing that they had not been forgotten during the festival. A movie of Baba was shown in one of the toughest schools in Black Harlem. When the teacher went back, about a year later, and inquired about a certain pupil who was when she knew him, living in an abandoned building because he was so poor, she was told that he had gone to India, after seeing the movie. And she remembered him as one of the toughest of the lot! That Godless boy had changed and Baba had showered His Grace on him.

Truly, the Divine Grace of Baba is felt throughout the world. Baba says, "My Life is My Message." More and more, throughout the world, are trying to make His Message, their Life.

—*Hilda Chariton, New York City*

Sneha—The Eighth Stage

Sneha is the eighth stage of the nine stages of Bhakti, as described in the Bhagavata and other texts. It is usually translated as friendship-but, that is a word that has been vulgarised by application to a number of transitory relationships between living beings. Friends form themselves as a result of a variety of reasons and circumstances, which are mostly of worldly and temporary interest. People who have free access to money gain friends pretty quick. So too, those who can exercise patronage, or distribute favours. Those in authority also gather 'friends' who will stay on during fair weather and disappear when the authority fades. Most friendships are based on selfish considerations and last only so long as selfish interests are promoted thereby. As the proverb goes, "When the lake is full, frogs gather; when it runs dry, not a single frog croaks."

Friendship ought to be a spiritual bond, a heart to heart kinship, based on full understanding of each other and pure dedication, one to the other. Students should be vigilant against false and fleeting friendships, and not be led away by hello's and handshakes. Do not cultivate close friendship with such persons, unless you know that the motives are pure, unselfish and spiritual. Genuine friendship can only be between Atma and another, that is to say, beta persons who have realised that the Atma is the core of their being. For the rest, return a hello for the hello, a good-bye for their goodbye and a 'how do you do' for their 'how do you do' and withdraw into yourself. Nowhere can we get the genuine Sneha, (which is declared as the penultimate stage to Sharanagati, or Atmanivedana-Total Surrender and Dedication to God), among the trivial, transitory friendships of world-lings.

Arjuna and Krishna had this genuine Sneha. Arjuna says in the Gita, that he considered Krishna as his Sakha or Friend and had the temerity to use 'words of jesting Irreverence' during 'play, or while reposing, or when seated, or at meals.' (Vihara sayyaasana bhojaneshu) They ate meals from the same plate very often, Arjuna rested with his head on Krishna's lap or Krishna rested keeping his head on the lap of Arjuna. They helped each other under all circumstances, and spoke soft and sweet to each other. Do not be under the impression that Arjuna was being overpowered by Krishna. He was well versed in Vedic lore and all the Sastras; he was a redoubtable warrior and bowman; he was full of courage and heroism. Krishna was the Purushottama; Arjuna was the Narottama. It was a friendship between the Embodiment of the Highest and the Embodiment of the Best. Krishna was the Avataric Person; Arjuna was the Anandic Person—the Avataramurti and the Anandamurti. Arjuna was addressed by Krishna often as Kurunandana. This name has a deep significance. Kuru means, Act, Activity, Karma. Nandana means: happy, delighted. The name therefore means—he who is delighted when he is engaged in activity; he who is miserable, when he is not engaged in activity. Throughout the eighteen chapters of the Gita, Arjuna is alert and active, sharing vigilantly and intellectually in every turn of argument and every facet of revelation. Arjuna too had several mysterious powers, derived from his spiritual excellence. When the Pandavas were in the forest, Arjuna declared that the weapons of the Pandavas will be rendered invisible, to all else, except himself and his eldest brother, Dharmaja. And it happened so.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa was fascinated by the Sneha that was exemplified by Krishna-Arjuna. He learnt from the Bhagavata and the Bhagavad-Gita how the Sadhaka can proceed along all the nine stages. He was also determined to emulate the Gopis and earn for

himself the Viraha type of Bhakti, the Madhura Bhakti that the Gopis had. When he read the Ramayana, he decided to emulate Hanuman and attain the Dasa-bhakti which he embodied. Of all the slokas in the Bhagavad-Gita, Ramakrishna was impressed by the one that emphasised the attitude of Atmanivedanam, or Sharanagati:

Manmana bhava madbhaktho,
madyaaji maam namaskuru
Maamevaisbyasiyuktvatvam
aatmaanam matparasyanaah

"Become One with Me; be devoted to Me; sacrifice to Me; bow down to Me; unifying thus Yourself, you will surely come to Me." One day, while Ramakrishna was going to Kamarpukur, night overtook him and he was caught in heavy rain, right in the centre of a burial ground. Of course, he was in such an ecstatic mood that he could not distinguish whether it was day or night, rain or dry, early or late. When he came to, Ramakrishna called upon God, under various names—Rama, Siva, Krishna, Kali, Hanuman. Then he suddenly realised that all the names referred only to the one and repeated within himself the Gita sloka that reminded him of Sharanagati to the One.

What happened to Ramakrishna reminds me of a little story. The master of the household called the errand boy and giving him a five-rupee note asked him to bring vegetables from the market. While going towards the market, the boy took the note and placed it in his pocket, saying, "Brinjals for one rupee", "Cabbage for one rupee". Thus he assigned the note to fish, to carrots etc. He started with a fiver and concluded with a fiver. Ramakrishna too started with the One and concluded with the One. The One becomes the many and the Many is recognised as One.

Many interesting incidents took place at Dakshineswar also. When Ramakrishna was once asked to go the Temple Office to receive his monthly salary, he was very upset, for, he refused to draw any wages for being given the chance of worshipping His Mother. Another day, when thieves broke into the Krishna temple which was an adjunct of the Kali Temple at Dakshineswar, Mathuranatha took Ramakrishna along to the place and wanted him to give a list of the jewels on Krishna according to his recollection. When Mathuranatha discovered that the idol was absolutely bare and that every jewel had been stolen, he fell into a rage, and began blaming Krishna Himself. "You are adored as the Guardian of the Fourteen Worlds, but, you cannot guard even the jewels on your body." Ramakrishna reprimanded him soundly, for this sacrilege. He said, "Krishna has Lakshmi as His Consort and for Him, your gold and gems are as cheap as dirt. As a matter of fact, what is gold but dirt in another form?" He made Mathuranatha repent for his silly outburst, making him aware of the true nature of Godhead.

If only you surrender your wish and will, your fancies and fantasies to God, He will lead you aright and give you peace and joy. You must not run after diverse ends and flitting pleasures. Leave everything to God; accept whatever happens as His Will. Ambarisha was a King who stuck to all the Vedic injunctions and observed all the rites and rituals laid down. He was noble, sincere and very devoted to Vishnu, the Form of God that embodies the Fostering and Sustaining aspect of God. Fasting on Ekadasi Day and breaking the fast, as soon as Dwadasi comes in is an

important rite, which Ambarisha observed meticulously, every fortnight. Ekadasi is the eleventh day of the moon and Dwadasi is the twelfth. The fast has to be broken, with Puja of Vishnu and the partaking of the offering made to Him, as soon as, according to the lunar calendar, the twelfth lunar day has started. On one occasion, a few hours before the approach of Dwadasi, the great Sage, Durvasa, reputed for his frequent fits of fury and bursts of uncontrollable temper, arrived at the Palace of Ambarisha. He was heartily welcomed by the King. Ambarisha pleaded with him to proceed to the Ganga, finish his ablutions and return in time for the breaking of the Ekadasi fast. But, the Sage took his own time and was nowhere evident, when the moment arrived. Ambarisha was in a fix. He consulted his preceptor, who, advised him to sip a few drops of sanctified water, since that can be considered as 'breaking the fast'. On Ekadasi Day, even water is taboo. He said that Durvasa can have no reason to get angry, since the drops of water were taken by him only as a token to keep the vow. But, when the Sage came and knew about the sip, He became so wild that he cursed Ambarisha for having broken the fast in his absence and without his guest joining in the meal. The curse took form and attacked Ambarisha. Just then, the Chakra of Vishnu appeared on the scene and confronted Durvasa.

Ambarisha took the curse as a gift from God; he had submitted to it in the spirit of Sharanagati, for he had no will of his own. So, God came to his rescue. He knows best. Ambarisha did not call upon Vishnu and pray that he may be saved from the anger of Durvasa. He accepted that too as the will of Vishnu. The Chakra pursued the terrified Sage all over the three worlds and when Durvasa fell at the feet of Vishnu, He directed him to approach Ambarisha himself for pardon. The attitude of surrender or Atmanivedana makes a person dedicate his entire personality at the feet of the Lord.

In the Ramayana too, we have an episode which illustrates this. Rama and Lakshmana were combing the forests to discover where Sita was. They were tired and thirsty. Suddenly, they came upon a clear pool. They placed their bows on the ground, and dropped the arrows, so that they were affixed by their tips on the wet bank. Slaking their thirst, they pulled the arrows up and kept the bows on their shoulders. Rama noticed the stain of blood, at the tip of his arrow. He became curious to find out how it came there. Lakshmana discovered a little frog that had been hit by the arrow of Rama, when he fixed it on the ground. Rama told the wounded frog, "Poor thing! Why did you not cry out when you were hit?" The frog replied, "Whenever in trouble, I cry out Rama. But, when Rama Himself inflicts pain, to whom am I to cry out? I accepted it as His grace."

Bhishma also adored Krishna even when He was rushing towards him with His Chakra, in order to take his life. His sense of Sharanagati did not desert him even at the point of death at the hands of the very person whom he revered as God. Kill me, or save me—I shall not falter in my loyalty, he said.

Ramakrishna too had the same sense of total dedication. He was in great pain as a result of the cancer, and disciples asked him to pray to Mother for some alleviation of the pain. Vivekananda was desperate that his Master refused to ask this little favour from the Mother with whom he was literally on speaking terms. But, Ramakrishna replied that if it was the Mother's will that he must suffer, he was not going to pray for palliatives. Ramakrishna always shaped his thoughts along the lines laid down in the Gita sloka mentioned above.

But, the disciples were adamant. They bothered Ramakrishna so much that one day he prayed to Mother that he may be helped to take a little food in spite of the cancer in the throat. Ramakrishna said that he heard Mother admonishing him for his Ignorance. "Are you not eating through all these billion throats? What if one throat is incapable?" Vasudevasarvamidam. This truth was brought home to the disciples by this revelation.

The Sneha stage of Arjuna is the stage when all distinctions between the devotee and God disappear, and two friends are one. When this stage of utter trust, complete absence of doubt, fear and anxiety, and unshakeable faith is reached, the next stage of Atmanivedana or Total Surrender is natural and easy. This is the real Friendship to which youth must aspire. See God in every being; and then, true Sneha will blossom. This type of true Sneha can come only when you follow the advice of Krishna

Adveshtaa sarva bhoothaanaam maitrah karuna eva cha
nirmamo nirahamkaarah sama dukha sukha kshami

"He who has no trace of hatred towards any creature, who is also friendly towards all and compassionate, who is free from the bondage of 'I' and 'Mine', who takes pain and pleasure as equally welcome, and who is forbearing in spite of provocation..."

These are the signs of true Sneha, and it is only when you are on the God-ward journey along the nine stages of Bhakti you can attain this Divine ideal of true friendship.

—*Divine Discourse, College Hostel 20-8-78*

Caught up in the coils of change, it is very hard, well-nigh impossible, to realise that one is just the witness of this passing show. But, that is the ultimate stage of the Sage, the Wise Man who has reached the goal. So, the individual Sadhaka must try consistently to practise the attitude of witness, the detached observer. Getting a glimpse of the King while he is passing in a palanquin does not make the beggar a King. The Jivi must not only know the Sakshi the Witness Supreme, he must become the Sakshi. Till then, the Sadhaka continues to be a Sadhaka. As a matter of fact, so long as 'I' persists, the state of Sakshi is unattainable. The Sakshi is the inner Core of everything, the embodiment of Sat, Chit and Ananda. There is nothing beyond it or outside it.

—Baba

The Significance of Avatar—to the Youth of today

Because we are humans, because we can think—or think that we can think—and do what we feel like doing, we think we have freedom and knowledge of what is right and wrong, what is good and bad for our own development. Further we think that we can do what we like; and, what we do, normally, is most usually out of impulse, desire and expectations anyway. This travail is

there, because in our times, the family, the school, the out-moded 'educational' establishment, the social environment, the commercial-technological trappings, the political—economic structure—indeed, the whole "civilization"—perpetuates these ungodly values and tendencies, remaining over from the failure on part of 'modern' man to progress to the next stage of consciousness enlightenment, and his bondage to the false sense of freedom, the *Moha*, which is rooted in the 'I-ness', the ego. And so we say, "I can do this"; "I want this"; "I like that"; "I know what is good for me"; "This is mine"; "I'm alright, Jack."

But do we, are we? Can we be sure? If we can, then why do things keep going wrong? Why are we periodically overcome with intense depression—'vishada'—and anxiety about our direction? Every moment, our life is marked with the lack of something, something fundamental that will give life a coherent picture, and make its flow smooth and satisfactory.

For really we are caught up in the meshes of a strange time in which, what by modern standard is normal, is really insane and crazy by ancient codes and life-styles of the wisdom (as distinct from the know-how) based ethos of, say, the Tibetans, the ancient Greeks, and the Vedic Indians. We are sensitive though; we perceive the insanity around us, the iniquities, the injustices, the contradictions, the double-standards, and pathos of the masses. We therefore revolt, and have been crying out for the last decade: a voice in wilderness! Some continue to rebel—but now the enemy is not so obvious. The leaders have joined the revolt too, but the struggle is not by any stretch of the imagination over. Who's to blame? "They"? Who are *they*? And who are WE? We are THEY too. Realising this we make a few adjustments and compromises to ease our conscience; some forget the ideals paraded only a few years ago; others sink away completely; most do not go far enough. Most of us think we have put a stop to the insanity infecting our own souls; but we merely repeat: "I'm alright, Jack"! And resort, to greater extremes of insanity - for example, the indifference evinced towards education, not questioning the popular cults of drugs, sensuous excesses, alcohol, tobacco, cinema, etc., that our generation (and even the much younger!) so freely indulge in. The youth of today are in a danger of inheriting and accentuating a life-style which is equally, if not more immoral than those of its ignorant predecessors. The youth in his callous existence adds fuel to the fire, as it were, of a "civilization" already ablaze.

So we look around and ask: who is sane? Who is moral? Whom do we resort to for leadership, for guidance? But even these few reflective moments slip away and we are caught in the throes of *Maya*. We continue to live for momentary pleasures the next meal, a glass of wine, the next outing, a new car, a 'get-away' to the beach. But we never stop to wonder and ponder whether life has more to offer. For it is so easy to lose ourselves in these fleeting glammers and forget about the higher aspirations of our hearts and souls. It is so 'natural' and acceptable in our times—if not actually encouraged—to indulge in vagaries like luxurious foods and drinks, sensual exuberances, unchecked emotional involvements, oversleeping, fantasizing, and just floundering, wasting our precious energy away.

Yet we do not realise that no energy is ours—not even the breath we breathe is ours! But we continue our wayward ways, because this is expected of us in our facile environment; the media brings this message loud and clear and, if we do not conform we are made to feel inadequate. Like a prisoner we are trapped by our own deeds. Like madmen we do not raise ourselves above the level of intelligence the rest are at. As inmates do we have any sense of freedom here? Are

the inmates using their freedom, or abusing their Individual virtues, their powers of discrimination, and their time when they could be cultivating In solitude with calm resignation, the unblossomed sweetness, peace, and purity in each soul, the inner strength, the sense of rightness and truth, and the sundering of the ego? But such virtues and clarity of the intellect (Buddhi) are out of sight to the inmates; and so a crisis looms in the life of the individual—whether he is an in-mate or an out-mate, he is still not his own mate.

On the social level, things are equally dismal. We find that religion as an organized institution does not get us off the ground; philosophy does not ask enough—what it asks seems unrelated to modern man's plight and desperation. Logic of "possible worlds" is not the logic of here and now. But both religion and philosophy have become superstitious in their own inimical way; they are handmaids of institutions such as the church, industry, technology, science, and academia. It is only when both the ancient-most disciplines proceed in a free spirit, and in unison, is there harmony between them; for then we have true spirituality. Without either purity there can be no true 'science' of the soul. The spiritual spring of man's life has been thwarted. Man's contact with nature, and that which ensouls both have been lost. The bridge between man and nature has collapsed. How can then man reach out to the higher plans of existence, and the higher levels of consciousness, which are his birthright? Conventional knowledge does not seem to speak the language of the higher reaches. Knowledge, can be easily bought nowadays; but it is wisdom alone that holds the 'secrets'. And, where lies the key to wisdom? As the cracks in the societal wall become larger, the search for this wisdom-goal gets more intense. At present not many individuals feel the dire necessity for this search. But those who know, know that a CRISIS looms at breath's length from man's being, to which he must immediately attend before it's too late for there to be *man* at all!

So here we are, in the depths of disorder, running about hither and thither, blaming one another for the chaos that is the order of the day; not knowing any direction, nor seeing any, veiled as we are by our own self-righteousness, ego, and mental tinkering by the social-political reality of the day. But the soul in the inner recesses of man's heart is unable to sustain this state of affairs any longer: it cries out like a prisoner from behind the bars, calling for his release. Though consciously we continue to follow the whims of our impulses and hidden Vasanas or 'psyche traces', deep down in the unconscious-witness there is a stirring which is at first imperceptible. But the agitation within the soul is of a different sort, and it manifests itself in a different way to how the external agitation makes its impact. The sleeping souls of mankind awake to a new light, and as the birds at dawn begin to sing glories to the coming sun, the hearts of a few—the sagely among the masses—begin to sing a new song, and in singing reckon the meaning of the inspired verses: they are like the many notes one sends expecting the advent of a dear one.

The pain and the suffering of the world almost tilted upside down, interacting with the budding love and joy in the same soul, creates fervour and ferment In the heart of man; the tension is too destructive and demanding. Yet the soul longs to be born anew and in purity: and this it *does* perforce! It "springs forth" unable to take the pain and agony much longer that bolls within. It is the '*witness-unconscious*' becoming Witness-Conscious, attaching itself to a "vehicle" of human-design: the soul pristine is born in a body divine.

"For" as Krishna makes it clear in the Bhagavad-Gita, "when there is waning of right-order (dharma), O Son of Bharat, (and) a rising of unrightfulness, then I give forth birth to my person (atman)"; It is: "For protection of the sagely, and for demise of the evil-doers; for the purpose of establishing right-order (dharma) on firm basis, I come forth into being, age after age." And Krishna tells Arjuna "Many births I have taken"

"and this of course is another." Why not another in this age when evil is so great, when disorder and unrightfulness reigns. The condition around us must perforce "bring forth" this "being". And so it has. The Avatar has descended amongst our fold. But how can we feeble-eyed recognize this 'being' clad in human vests? To this we must ask how did they recognize Jesus the Christ, Gautama the Buddha, Rama, Krishna in their terrible times? This 'being' gives in plenty love, joy, knowledge, wisdom, strength, guidance and care—but: for the price of our egos, delusions, conceits, pain and suffering. Such a one walked amongst the lot many times ago, but man keeps forgetting the lesson taught in each visit, so the Avatar has to "give forth birth to itself" again.

And such a one walks amongst us today. It is the force and torque of our own unvirtuous acts and suffering, that has "compelled forth" the *purity* within the depths, it shines resplendent as an example so that our hearts may be re-won, and we may invite the Essence of Being-sat-chit-ananda back into our selves, and let this Impulse this "Breath", this TRUTH live. Better Truth-living than evil-and-wrong raging. And this Truth is One-Spirit pervading the whole universe; it is at once our birthright it is US: it is our simplest essence: That is what we are in *real* form (Swabhava).

And this Truth become Avatar remains absolute Truth, —and even calls the Person form in which it is born. Truth: *Sathya*. Many know the Avatar-being of this age as Sri Sathya Sai Baba; but He knows Him self as Sathya only—all else is our humanly—perspective qualifications. But the Avatar plays along to this song—for it is a *song* the soul longed to sing; and a form the eyes longed to behold. The Avatar too joins in the singing of praises and glorifications of the many forms of the One-Essence-which is Truth; which is God.

So the Avatar plays His role in many ways. Being multifaceted, He moves through the multiverse, operates on multilevels and multilaws. His logic too is multiwebbed. To many He is the star of the gopis (cowherds) returned again; to many He is the lurer of hearts; to a great many, the reliever of pain and suffering in the mater levels of existence. He is the savior. The Avatar progressively marches towards the battlefield of life as well. The Kshetra on, which Arjuna sulked, in depression and despondency, where He, the Great Master, taught Arjuna the art of life, depleted as a battle between the evil and the good, between the unrightfulness and the rightfulness (dharma). The Avatar works relentlessly, to alleviate the burden and pain of all. He reorganizes the government within the *individual* first, then uses him to reorganize the social-ethical structure, the educational and welfare structures—not through bullets, but through bubbles of LOVE. Every act and initiation is a result of the infinite *wisdom* and *light*, the Avatar, embodies and shines forth. Just by His mere presence, spirituality begins to rise once again, moral and ethical notions are lived up to, selfless activity and service is engaged in by persons who would otherwise have rotted like useless stooges in a meaningless world.

We must stress—not merely stress but see and live by—this 'vision' that the Avatar walks amidst us, and also in the atmosphere and in heaven above us, working to turn the multiverse into a universe according to the original plan, such that the 'centre' will hold again. Though *One*; He walks in many forms—even the 'He' is one amongst the *forms* the Avatar takes when the Pure Truth descends. Were Lakshmana, Sita, Viswamitra, Hanuman any *bit* other than Rama? Rama made it clear to each of them that they were every bit identical with Rama's self. They were brought down, as it were, or they "came forth", to accompany and assist the Avatar in the form of Rama with the task at hand. Was, again, Balarama other than Krishna? But the Avatar in essence is even more than all the many "limbs" of one Avatar phenomenon in any given age. Not only are we left to guess who others are conterminous with the form of the Avatar as we see today amongst us, but also to discover for ourselves the enormity, infinitude and transcendence (nirvikalpatwa) of this unfathomable 'being'.

When Krishna began to reveal his universal form to Arjuna, the latter became fear stricken and requested Krishna to resume His 'human form'. Krishna then declares to Arjuna that the Avatar is the 'personal form' of the undeterminable *Brahman-Absolute* as Vasudeva, Purushottama, Vishnu, Narayana. So too the Sathya Avatar, Paripoorna Parabrahman, is not touched one bit by *Pravritti* or the primordial "stuff" of creation which we humans are made of. This truth about Truth—satyasya-satyam—is depicted well in the following Vedic verse:

"Fire is His head;
His eyes: the Sun and Moon;
The regions of Space: His ears;
His voice: the "heard" Vedas;
Wind: His breath;
His heart: the whole World;
...out of His Feet: the Earth."

Or

"Thousand-headed was the Purusha (Person),
thousand-footed, thousand-eyed
He embraced the earth on all sides,—
and stood *beyond*, the breadth of ten fingers."

Let us then, in reverence to His majesty, fold our palms and prostrate to the Higher Master who has come humbly to teach us a great many lessons, and free ourselves from the morass of ignorance of our self-nature, of reality, of the Oneness that is Truth, of the Truth that is God; and to shatter the age-long bondage ...at this juncture of time, which marks the cross-road of a modern crisis encountering an ancient (eternal) wisdom. Hari Om! Hari Om! Shanti! Shanti! Shantih!

—*Parushottama, Melbourne*

Whenever you see a sick person, a dispirited disconsolate diseased person, there, is your field of service. Every blood cell, every nerve, must tingle with love, with eagerness to share that

Love with the forlorn. When Love has filled the heart, it has really transformed into Divinity, for, God Is Love and Love is God.

—Baba

“Unforgettable Experience”

—Dr. Frank G. Baranowski, Arizona University

(Dr. Baranowski is a scientist who has explored the recesses of the human body and mind, especially, the auras that form the bio-magnetic field around the body and that reveal, when photographed and interpreted, the traits of emotional make-up and the predominant features of the urges of the mind. Facts gleaned from a study of the holy men of India have played a major part in his researches into the workings of the mind and in clinical hypnosis. He was in Bangalore, for over a week in July last, and he addressed the students of the Sri Sathya Sai College on the 30th July, on the Phenomena of Man, illustrating his conclusions with slides depicting in colour the human aura. That same evening, he spoke to the 665 Teachers from Andhra Pradesh, undergoing an Orientation Course, in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan, on Spiritual Education.)

"I am very glad to be here this evening, and talk to you, on the Phenomena of Man. We are understanding more about man each day, and about the most important aspect of man—that simple four-letter word, LOVE. I am sure you must have heard that some years ago, a camera has been perfected for what is called Kirlian photography, which takes pictures of the energy bands that surround the human body. With this camera, we can photograph the 'aura' of man, which very often extends beyond the limits of his physical body. The aura is generated by the inside of a person, the energy, the Love, the emotions. It comes out clear in the picture: that we can now take. Since 1969, thousands of pictures have been taken and studied by means of this bio-magnetic field radiation photography and we can now say whether or when a person feels Love, extends Love and showers Love. The halos or aura around people is of pronounced colours. Energy is white; when a person is full of Love, the aura around him is blue and when the Love is pronounced, it becomes pink. When a person is filled with hate, the blue becomes red. These bands can be seen, too, by trained eyes, after a series of exercises. Time does not permit me to show you the photographic evidence of what I am saying, but, let me assure you, we have it.

Strange things happen to your body when you hate, and are in anger. In one moment of anger, you use enough electric energy to light a two-cell flash-bulb, for three months! So, scientific and clinical evidence tells us to Love. Love is what you have to develop and share with others. We can, with our perfected cameras, now photograph five different types of aura—physical, psychical, moral, spiritual, and intellectual. They are basically five, but the auras can change colour as affected by the emotions.

I have met over a hundred holy men in India. Too many of these holy men are involved with their own personal egos. Their auras show mostly their concern for themselves and their institutions. So, they are only a foot broad or perhaps two feet. I am not a devotee, I have come here from America, as a scientist, to see this man, Sai Baba.

I saw him, on Sunday standing there, on the balcony, giving Darshan to the devotees singing below. The aura Swami projected was not that of a man. The white was more than twice the size of any man's, the blue was practically limitless, and then there were gold and silver bands beyond even those, far beyond this building, right up to the horizon. There is no scientific explanation for this phenomenon.

His aura is so strong that it is affecting me, standing by the chair on which he is sitting. I can feel the effect and I have to wipe my arm, off and on, as you must have noticed. It is very difficult for me to admit. I am a scientist. I have given over 6000 lectures in all parts of the world, but for the first time, believe me, my knees are shaking. The aura that emanates from Swami shows his Love for you. I have met a number of holy men, but, no one of them has made himself as available to you, as he does. That is a sign of greatness.

Many years ago, we had a philosopher named Ralph Waldo Emerson in the United States. He was once asked, "What is success in life?" And, he replied, "To laugh often and much, to win the affection of children, to find the best in others, to endure the betrayal of false friends, to make the world a little better place to live in than when we were born into it by rearing a little garden patch, improving some social condition or helping a child to grow healthier. To know that one life breathes easier, since you lived, that is success." Swami has given you the key to success—the simple four-letter word, LOVE. If ever I can use the phrase that I have seen LOVE walking on two feet, it is here.

(Dr. Baranowski resumed his seat, and Bhagavan began His Discourse. Dr. Baranowski, indeed all of him, sat watching Bhagavan with amazement and avidity; when the discourse was concluded, the Dr asked for permission to speak for a little while more).

"I have been watching Swami, while he was addressing you. The pink aura that was manifesting was so vast and strong that it went even beyond the wall behind his chair. It filled this big hall, embracing all of you gathered here. There can be no scientific explanation for this phenomenon. I have watched him for a week, now, as he has walked among you, morning and evening I have seen his aura, pink in colour, go into the person he is talking to or touching, and returning back into him. This is because we draw on his energy. His energy seems to be endless. It spreads everywhere and can be drawn upon by every one around. An ordinary man will soon get exhausted, going round as he does, among so many. I have watched him come to a little girl, in a wheel chair and tickle her. I was astounded at the aura of love that was all around him then.

I was not brought up in any belief, though I am, a Christian born and a Roman Catholic. The scientific community in my country finds it difficult to accept a God. It is not scientific, they assert. I am risking my reputation when I make this statement. Two days ago, right outside this Hall, I looked into his eyes; they have a glow inside them. It was clear to me that I had looked into the face of Divinity. There is no scientific explanation for this; they should not. But, they do.

In my estimation, he is exactly, what he appears to be, what he wants you to be, what he tells you to be, Love. That is what he is.

I have spoken on platforms where President Ford of the United States, Queen Elizabeth II, of Great Britain and Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands. But, I will never forget this experience. It is really overwhelming in its impact.

Bharatiya Paramartha Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

14

Soon after the propagation of Vedanta through the Upanishads and other texts, the Rishis, steeped in Tapas and the spiritual experience they gained there from, composed the Smritis, expatiating upon the codes of conduct for the people, during the various stages of life as well as when they occupied various statuses in society. The Smritis, however, did not acquire the authority that the Vedantic texts had, for, they dealt with rights and responsibilities, duties and obligations.

Such Smritis can be found in sacred scriptures being adored by followers of other religions. They consider such social codes and individual guidelines given by their Prophets and Seers as valuable and binding. We too revere them and should continue to revere them as regulations set up for the good of society and the progress of man. For, we must admit that they were framed by mahapurushas, outstanding sages and well-wishers of the people.

But, in process of time, the Smritis suffered change, by omissions and additions and by differences in emphasis. The sages allotted for each era or Yuga, a particular Smritis, as authoritative, for, too many Smritis with divergent counsel, caused confusion and doubt. They said, those in the Krita Yuga have to consider one Smritis as specially laid down for them, that those in the Treta Yuga have to follow the dictates of another, that in the Dwapara Yuga, people have to observe the path prescribed in a third and that the Kali Age people have to resort to a fourth. When centuries roll over the land one after another, new problems arise, new situations and predicaments confront man, and so, the laws and limits of the past have to be altered here and there. Indeed, such adjustments are a part of the Design. The people have to be shown the path to spiritual progress, under the altered circumstances and so, the Smritis that suits the new era has to be declared as binding

Nevertheless *this* has to be borne in mind and carefully noted in memory by the readers. The Atma Dharma, enunciated in the Vedanta, is eternal, unchangeable. It can never be watered down or 'adjusted to the needs of the times'. Faith in the Atma as the Core, the Reality, the Goal is the lasting teaching; it is true for all time. The truths of Atma Dharma are based on the eternal foundations of the core of Purusha and Prakriti, of Man and Nature which is the projection of the Divine Will. So, they are beyond the reach of change. They are as relevant and as valid today as they were thousands of years ago. Even when a thousand more years roll by, their relevance and validity cannot be affected in the least. Vedanta will stand firm Irrespective of the past becoming the present and the present flowing on into the future.

The moral codes and ideals of good conduct, the Sadhanas that man can adopt to control his mind and senses and purify his intelligence have, however to suit the conditions of the people, the bonds they cultivate among themselves and other groups. With the changing face of social conditions, they too have to undergo adjustments and modifications. They could well be appropriate and beneficial under certain circumstances of time and space, but, might be not be so, under other circumstances. For example, the food regulations that are prescribed during certain periods are withdrawn and new rules laid down during certain other periods. Climatic

conditions dictate the type of food needed. Smritis recognise the need and allow changes in food habits, in order to maintain health. The same attitude is seen in other matters also. For the same reasons under modern conditions, it is desirable to have changes in the regulations and limits that govern society. Of course, the fundamental principles of Dharma must remain unaffected. They can never be shaken or loosened.

Now, about the Puranas, "Puranam pranjali kshanam" that is to say, the Puranas deal with historical incidents, of Creation and Evolution. The incidents are so chosen and narrated that they provide illustrations of basic philosophic truths. The Puranas were composed to expound the teachings of the Veda and Vedanta to the common man through interesting mythological and legendary tales. The language of the Vedas is very ancient and it contains many archaic elements of grammar and vocabulary. Even great scholars find it difficult to discover the age when the rks were formulated. But, the Puranas were composed in the language that was current and that was easily understood at the time. What we now know as the Sanskrit language is the language of the Puranas. Not only scholars but even ordinary folk could easily follow that language when the Puranas were written.

The Puranas have as their subject matter historical narratives of Divine Personages, great Rulers and Dynasties, and the fortunes of kingdoms and communities. Through them all can be seen shining examples of Dharma and expositions of spiritual principles.

All the texts, scriptures, and holy books referred to so far are grouped under the one comprehensive name, "Hindu Sastras." It is no wonder that the people who revered and composed during thousands of years such a vast and valuable literature of religion and philosophy were, in course of time, divided and subdivided into sects and sub-sects, owning preferential loyalty to special creeds and beliefs. Some of these had broad gaps between them. We have no time now to elaborate on the fact that the differences between the sects are based on attitudes born out of the freedom of thought that was authoritatively allowed by the ancients. Nor is it necessary. What we have to grasp are: the truth accepted by all, and the attitudes approved by all, that is to say, the principles which a person calling himself 'Hindu' has to believe.

What is exactly the Cause of Creation? What is the nature of the original Substance which Creation affected and how? These are questions important not only for Bharatiyas but for all men prone to inquiry. There can be no effect without a cause; there can be no structure without a base. Well. It can be asserted that all this visible Cosmos has Brahman as the root cause. But, what is Brahman? Brahman is eternal, pure, ever-vigilant, omniscient, indivisible, formless; Brahman is the origin of this Cosmos or Jagat. Brahman is shaping, evolving and fostering this Jagat.

Now, a few doubts might arise in people's minds: How is it that there is so much partiality evident in Creation? Some are born healthy and some others, unhealthy. Some lead prosperous care-free lives, while others toil throughout their lives in dire poverty. Certainly, it can be argued, these are signs enough of the partiality that the Creation or Creator reveals.

It has to be made clear that life thrives on death. Life is based on death. One living thing consumes another, in order that it may live. The strong trample on the weak. This tale of terror continues unceasingly. That is the very nature of this world. Seeing this, people conclude that, if

the world was created by God, He should be Cruelty itself. Such inference appears justified from the ordinary man's point of view. But, the Bharatiya Paramartha Vahini, the Pure Stream of Bharatiya Spiritual Culture declares that this is not true at all! God is not the cause of either misery or joy, of good fortune or bad, it announces. Then, who brings about the evil and the good? We ourselves, is the answer. Rain falls equally on ploughed land as well unploughed. Only the ploughed land derives benefit there from. The clouds are not to blame. The fault lies in the ignorant idler who lets his land lie fallow. The Grace of God is ever at hand; it has no 'more or less,' no ups or downs. We draw upon it, more or less, or let it go by, or use it for our good.

The question might arise "For what reason are some born in happiness and some in misery? They have done neither good nor evil, to be treated so unequally." True, they have done nothing in this life, they are only just born. But, they have done good or evil, in previous lives. The consequence of what was done in the previous life has to be experienced in this life.

Now, we can arrive at two conclusions on which all sects of Hinduism are agreed. The Buddhists and the Jains also accept these two. Every one of us has a firm belief, that life is eternal. It could not have originated from nothing. That is impossible. If it has come out of inert slime or mud, it would have been inert and inactive. All things put together will disintegrate. All that is bound by Time will end in time. If life started only yesterday, it cannot last beyond tomorrow. If it has roots, the roots shall go dry and the tree cannot survive forever. Life must have been existent ever since the Cosmos has been in existence. It does not require any great argumentation to understand this truth. Do we not see that all modern sciences are tending to confirm more and more assuringly and clearly the revelations made in the texts and scriptures of Bharat? This too has to be accepted some day.

(To be continued)

Blessed Moment

Last April-May, I went to visit my sisters in New Jersey, U S A. While at the home of my younger sister there, one Tuesday, (May, 9th, 78, to be exact), I had a dream—or was it a semi-dream, or a vision? For, I am sure, I was at least half awake—in which Swami appeared, and conversed with me for some time. He enlightened me on a few spiritual problems which were worrying me, and turning towards me suddenly, He said, "Thursday, when you meet a person, give him the amount of money you can afford." I asked him, quite innocently, "Will a dollar be enough?" He replied, "Fine."

On Thursday, about a few minutes after twelve, my brother-in-law and I went to a couple of Banks, in East Orange, New Jersey, to make a few enquiries.

At one of the Banks, my eyes fell on a blind told, black gentleman, waiting for a clerk to attend on him. I started watching him. It seems he had come to withdraw a portion of the money he was expecting some one to deposit in his account, and the clerk was busy going through the books.

At last, the clerk came to him and told him that there was nothing in his account. The money had not come yet.

Slowly and sadly, he made his way out of the bank. I approached him and told him about my dream and Baba. But, he was too perturbed to listen or understand. I knew that he was the man that Baba had told me about. So, I gave him ten dollars. He asked me, with a smile on his face, "How much is it?" I said, "Ten dollars. Thank Sai Baba for this." I could not control the tears in my eyes. It was a blissful moment for both of us.

—Rajendra Ghayal U. K.

Dining with the Beloved

The gentle early springtime sun brought everything to life in the Anza-Borrego desert scene in Southern California. Bright little flowers formed a carpet of color, as though awaiting the Blue Lotus Feet of our Lord to be a soft cushion. How sprightly were the small birds, as they sprang from one branch to another, with full awareness of their freedom! All of this wonderland was covered with a delicate blue sky that played hide and seek with the surrounding mountains.

While enthralled with all of this nature scented with desert perfumes, I seemed to have a question filtering through my mind, as to whether or not I would bathe in the placidly clear waters of my friend's swimming pool. Then, I found myself almost unthinkingly turning away from the pool area and entering the precincts of the quiet cool house. I could see the pool reflecting the sky, through the large plate glass windows.

It was then I felt the meditative heartstrings enticing me from within. I had no sooner started the inward journey when Baba began to talk to me. It is His message which I would like to share with you now.

"Bathe in the water pool, for, is it not Ganga water? That water out there, too, is from God. Why should one differentiate as to one water's spiritual benefit from that of another body of water?"

Bathe with a divine feeling of receiving an inner purification for the water thus used is being blessed by Me. Remember that all water used to cleanse the temple of the soul is holy water. It can draw you closer to Me wherever you are, just as mother Ganga has done from age to age. Does not all water come down from the 'Himalayas of the Heavens', from whence all purity originates? How much more comforting it is to know that one can always bathe in the bliss of the Lord! I bathe the silver image of Sai Baba of Shirdi with a downfall of Divine Ash which pours right from My Heart. I do that ceremony with great joy and love. Should not all have that same loving attitude toward their living temples whether they are bathing it, giving it food or simply being good to it?

Take every opportunity to be closer to Me. When you partake of daily food, do so as in prayer, for, I am also with you providing the food of Divinity. When breath is taken into the body, know that I am also there, pouring in life-sustaining Prana. When you are serving another, always know that I am there also being served. Never separate yourself from Me, whatever you are doing."

There was something extraordinary about the pool as I entered it. The water seemed to come alive as it carried out its divine purpose. The Lord appeared present in the form of colorful mountains. The feeling within was so beautiful. It felt like the angels in heaven had been asked by the Lord to witness the spiritual merging and emerging. Baba's words came true, for the blessings from my experience in "Mother Gangs" have stayed with me.

Since that sweet encounter with the Lord, I have discovered how much His presence exists when breaking bread with Him at the table. There now seems to be less hurry. Why try to end quickly dining with my Beloved?

Now, I look back and ask myself why I waited so long in this body-temple to open my heart to His Heart.

May we live ever closer to Him as the sands of time run out.

—*Charles Penn. California, U. S. A.*

Learning and Liberation

Men crave for a prosperous future, for positions of authority and power, and happy care-free lives; but they do not crave for possessing pure, clear, loving intellects and a character that cannot harm any one. Therefore, Youth today in this land as well as in other lands is afflicted with deep discontent; which manifests itself in revolt against rules, regulations, curricula and social norms, and an agitational approach to every little problem that affects them. What is the basic cause of this phenomenon?

The reason lies in the fact that Indian Youth has learnt to neglect the ancient Culture of India and its ideals. They are imitating undesirable and fantastic norms of behaviour and conduct. They are addicted to a code of unbelief and have no roots anywhere.

The most fundamental teaching of the ancient culture of India is Love. For generations, the youth of this land have been exhorted, encouraged, and taught by precept and example, to love the poor, the helpless, the handicapped, the illiterate and the disabled, for, the same spark of Divinity that is in us is also equally evident and active in these others. Education must endow man with this compassion and this spirit of service—intelligent, timely and full. That is to say, education must not only inform; it must also transform.

Unless knowledge is transformed into wisdom, and wisdom is expressed in character, education is a wasteful process. If education confers this gift of transformation, then surely, life will become peaceful, happy, and full of mutual help and co-operation. But, the aim of education today has degenerated into the acquisition of certain skills, and intellectual tricks. It provides the educated with food, clothing and shelter and considers that its task is over, with that achievement.

The sages who laid down the goals of education have declared. "Saa Vidyaa yaa vimuktaye". That is true education which helps liberate man—liberate him from greed, hatred, unrest, narrow loyalties and ego impulses. Education, today, adds to the unrest already in the heart of man; it does not liberate him from the prison house of desire into which he has strayed. Man builds rest-houses, where he can cool his tired brain and revive his exhausted nerves, but, he has yet to build Santhi-mandirs, where he can unconcernedly learn to witness the happenings of the world, aware of the level of the world, aware of the level of their relative importance. That will give him equanimity. Faith in an All-knowing, All operating God will render him free to watch with interest the ups and downs of history.

Just as the body needs rest, the mind too needs quiet. Faith in God is the best guarantee of mental quiet. Man must follow the path of virtue, practise spiritual disciplines, and take an enthusiastic part in social service. These three have to be accepted, adored and assimilated into daily life. Education has to clarify the goal of life to the rising generation and indicate the ways and means of accomplishing it.

Women are taking to modern education in larger and larger numbers nowadays. They are serving in offices, schools and factories. They are also rising to positions of authority in other fields. But, most of them are prompted by urges of personal aggrandizement rather than ideals of service. They desire more and more material comforts. But, when women run after jobs, who is to run the family? If both father and mother move into offices to earn money, what becomes of the children? Poring over books, how can the kitchen work? More money may be earned, but, it leads only to more anxiety, more loss and more unrest. The women who take up jobs are finding that they have no happiness worth the name. The educated woman must utilise her knowledge and skill to bring up her children into healthy, virtuous and disciplined, patriots so that they may be of great use for the country, the culture and the Community. Earning money is not the end-all of education. It is the greed to earn money, by any means, as fast as possible that has led to the evils that we see in society today. Money breeds pride, pride fosters hatred.

No one has the golden quality of contentment. The discontented man is as bad as lost. There is no limit to man's desires. Every scientist and merchant, every person wielding power over others yearn to rise higher and higher and exercise more and more influence. Man's greed is so vast that even if you announce that there is a vacancy for the office of the God of the Universe, and call for applications, there will be hundreds of candidates eager to fill the place. No one attempts the rigorous examination of oneself, to find out whether he has the merit, the capacity and the title for holding the position he craves for. Those who contentedly carry out the duties of the positions they hold are very few. Every one, fit or unfit, throw stones, on the off-chance of getting a fruit from the laden tree. Students must cultivate humility, and the habit of self-examination.

Another reason for the prevalent dissatisfaction that is overwhelming youth is the chronic hypocrisy of the elder. The very people who proclaim the efficacy of Truth from platforms, the very preachers who dilate on Dharma and Santhi, live without any regard to truth, dharma or Santhi. The determination that one must act according to one's professions has disappeared. We can establish peace and prosperity, morality and uprightness, in the land only when those who preach, and those who teach high ideals act up to their own exhortations.

Sheer ignorance is the root cause for the disrespect that is being shown to Indian Culture and the fascination exercised by the culture of the West. Do these people at least grasp the values of Western Culture fully? No. Only the fringe and the foppery are adopted. How can a person who is unable to understand his own culture and heritage understand the meaning and significance of an alien culture?

The true sign of education is humility. For, there is so much more to be investigated and learnt. There are always many more who are far more learned. They carry their scholarship more lightly. Discipline is important in order to progress in learning, and even more so, in dealing with others. An indisciplined person is a danger to society; any moment, he may run amok. Man must recognise what limits, regulations and do's and don'ts are laid down by the sages of the past in order to ensure social security and individual advancement.

The code of conduct laid down for the students of this College helps you to develop qualities that will stand you in good stead later in life. The eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue—these four senses of sight, hearing, smell and taste are all located in the head. Of course, the eye and the tongue have been provided with doors, because, the doors can keep out what is not desirable and welcome in, what is desirable. Desire only the sight of beneficial things; desire only to speak out what will be conducive to peace and harmony. Do not 'indulge' in talkativeness. If you get a reputation for talkativeness, you will suffer from weak memory, social odium, and nervous debility.

You have the great responsibility of motherhood and the duty of educating your children into strong and good citizens of this country. Along with the University Degree, you must also acquire some general knowledge, which is essential for householders and others. Otherwise though the husband and the wife are both degree-holders, they would be helpless and desperate even if the baby has a slight cold. You must also be conversant with some spiritual discipline like Namasmara, meditation and yoga so that you may not be carried away by every adverse wind that blows.

It is best you imprint on your heart the dual nature of the world, that is a mixture of pleasure and pain, of joy and grief, of victory and defeat. Practise the constant Presence of God, and learn to offer all your activities at the Feet of the Lord, as an act of worship. Then, they will be free from fault. Sri Krishna advised Arjuna to enter into the fight and at the same time, he told him not to have hatred towards the 'enemies'. These may appear to be two irreconcilable attitudes, for, war is 'raga' (passion, attachment) and renunciation of hatred is Vairagya, absence of 'raga'. Arjuna asked Krishna how he was to reconcile these two attitudes. Krishna said, "Maam anusmara, yuddhya cha. Keep me ever in thy mind and fight. Do not cultivate the egoistic feeling

that it is you who is fighting. I am using you as my instrument,” He said. Even the food you take in is to propitiate him, who is resident in our bodies as the Vaiswanara, eager to digest the food we place in it. It is the Lord who receives the food, digests it and supplies strength thereby to the various limbs of the body.

This College was established ten years ago. That is to say; it is now a sprightly girl often summers. A baby girl of two or three will not dare venture outside the home alone. A grown up girl of twenty can well look after herself wherever she is. But, a girl of ten cannot be kept at home nor does she know how to look after herself outside. Therefore, we have all to guard her and guide her with great care and diligence. We must see that the ideals and aims of this College are maintained and fostered. On your Discipline, Devotion and Duty the success and reputation of this College are based. Now and later, you must lead lives of exemplary virtue and bring honour to parents and your Alma mater.

Do not hanker after too much of liberty in your movements. Women suffer most when they are moved by this desire. You must be the standard bearers of the educational ideals of this College. Teachers must be conscious of their responsibility, to set examples to the students. When one teacher neglects her duty, or lowers her standard of conduct, hundreds of students are affected thereby. The moral strength and virtues of the teachers will be reflected in the students on whom they exercise the impact. You have to serve them as your own children, children who need and deserve your Love. Be like mothers to these children and let this College be ringing with Love given and love received.

—*Bhagavan: Discourse at Women's College Anantapur. 30-8-78*

Devotees! Beware

In spite of warnings issued from time to time, the crook, calling himself Bharadwaja Sarma (one among his many aliases), is having a free time, fleecing devotees and escaping punishment. He reels off stories of his being a resident of Prasanthi Nilayam or Brindavan, or of his serving as Editor, Postmaster. Manager, Sanskrit Lecturer there and with his pseudo-bhajans and oily talks, he is able to worm himself into the homes of `devotees'. He collects advances for tape recorders and cassettes. He realises subscriptions for the magazines. He has a hundred different tricks to extract substantial sums, and he supplements the loot by even downright theft. A letter from Bhageswaram received recently describes how he prescribed a propitiatory Puja for a member of the family and offered to do it himself at Prasanthi Nilayam (!) in return for a heavy sum of money. Having won the confidence of the family, he committed theft of many gold ornaments. When caught and exposed, he avoids being handed over to the police by profuse tears and false promises. Members of the units of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations and of the Sri Sathya Sai Trusts are also misled by the cleverness. When such people to whom devotees look for guidance start participating in the bhajans and talks where these cheats initiate their campaign, simple innocent devotees fall an easy prey to the social vultures. So, any member of any limb of the Organisation encouraging such crooks or allowing themselves to be enticed by

their tricks have to be dealt with severely, so that innocent devotees may be saved from their clutches. Devotees! Beware!

—Ed.

Miracles, Manifestations and Materializations

—B. Srinivas Murty
Reader, Sri Sathya Sai College, Kadugodi

*Thoughts are things,
Things are thoughts.*

The Dynamic Equilibrium of the Universe

The universe—the totality of matter and energy—is in a state of dynamic equilibrium. The cosmos is a complicated network of processes in which all parts are interrelated, interdependent and interpenetrative. Each part contains the whole just as the whole contains the parts. Poets and mystics are right in saying that one can see the whole universe in a grain of sand or in a blade of grass. The universe is not a mindless machine. It is a vast self-regulating cybernetic organism, in which each microcosm is interconnected with all other microcosms and with the entire macrocosm. The universe being dynamic, its ultimate constituents are events, processes and situations.

The Observer's Role in Physics

The human observer plays a paramount role in the two major theories of modern physics viz. relativity and quantum mechanics. The quantum theory applicable to submicroscopic phenomena fails to explain macroscopic phenomena. Einstein's theory of relativity, which explains macroscopic phenomena, does not recognize the validity of the principle of uncertainty applied to subatomic processes. The breakdown of scientific determinism, mechanism and materialism becomes apparent in modern atomic physics.

Mathematics, the language of modern theoretical physics, abstracts and simplifies physical phenomena to such an extent that the resulting worldview is only an approximation to ultimate reality. Scientific knowledge has no finality. It can only be asymptotical. The fragmentation and reduction of the universe into the so-called fundamental particles leads to distortion of reality. A grand self-consistent model, a new unified field theory encompassing quantum mechanics and relativity, is still a mirage in modern physics. However, both the theories recognize the importance of the human observer's role and the interwoven-ness and the interpenetrative character of all natural phenomena.

Anthropocentric and Theo-Centric World Views

The universe is anthropocentric on account of the unique importance of the human observer in the mathematical formulations of relativity and quantum mechanics. It is a labyrinth of things and thoughts, and ents and entities. The perennial philosophy of mysticism offers a Theo-centric

worldview. The mystics say that the universe is a conscious organism, a web of thoughts centred on and radiating from God. These anthropocentric and Theo-centric world views become identical, when the microcosm merges with the macrocosm. There are interesting parallels between modern physics and ancient mysticism. There is close correspondence and striking similarity between the mathematical models of modern physics and the intuitive revelations of ancient mysticism.

Creative Cosmic Consciousness

Consciousness is the most fundamental reality of the universe. This cosmic consciousness is comprehensive because it embraces all in oneness. It is creative because it is the source of all creation. It is pure primordial energy because it generates, sustains and activates the universe. This pure primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness is ontologically the ultimate reality.

Consciousness is a Corollary of Heisenberg's Principle

Heisenberg's principle of uncertainty, according to which the position and velocity of an electron cannot be simultaneously determined, debunks the dogma of scientific determinism and suggests the operation of free will even in inanimate objects. Free will cannot subsist without consciousness. Consciousness is a necessary concomitant of freedom of choice. Since the principle of indeterminacy applies to all fundamental particles, consciousness becomes cosmic, creative and comprehensive in its range and magnitude.

This creative cosmic consciousness is pure primordial energy because it causes displacement to the trajectories of all fundamental particles of subatomic physics. Being the most fundamental form of energy, it is convertible into matter in accordance with the celebrated Einsteinian equation $E=mc^2$, where E stands for energy, m for mass and c for the velocity of light. Thus, the pure primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness is comprehensive in its scope and creative in its essence.

The Personal Equation in Physics

The experimenter plays a pivotal role in all microscopic processes. The para-mathematical formulas of quantum theory and relativity take into account the personal equation, which cannot be completely eliminated for the sake of absolute scientific objectivity. The experimenter fits one end of the chain of reactions. He is an integral, essential and indispensable part of all observations of subatomic phenomena. He may start as a nonparticipating observer but ends up as a non-observing participant. Since the experimenter is an animate observer endowed with consciousness, the element of consciousness enters the physicist's worldview. The observer's consciousness is a form of pure energy because it has the specific capacity for actively participating in subatomic processes and the general capacity for promoting work. Energy, according to physics, is capacity for doing work and work is displacement caused to a body at rest or in uniform motion.

When the human observer's consciousness is extended to the entire cosmos, it becomes cosmic consciousness. It is comprehensive because it is all-inclusive and all-encompassing. It is also creative in the sense that rapidly disintegrating particles are created during a subatomic experiment.

The Primordial Energy of Creative Cosmic Consciousness

Thus, it becomes obvious that this pure universal energy of creative cosmic consciousness is the primordial substance of the universe. It should be remembered that this is not another metaphysical monster in the menagerie of speculative monistic philosophy. It is not a hypothetical concept. It is a purely physical entity deducible from the theories of quantum mechanics and relativity. The primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness manifests itself in inanimate matter as *potential* energy, in the lower living organisms as *kinetic* energy, and in homo sapiens as self-conscious *creative* energy. Since creative cosmic consciousness is pure primordial energy, it is convertible not only into other forms of energy but also into gross matter in accordance with the theory of relativity. It is so subtle that it has infinitesimal mass.

The Human Mind

The human mind is an important form of the primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness manifesting itself as self-consciousness. The mind is grosser than creative cosmic consciousness but subtler than inanimate matter in which also consciousness is latent. The human mind is associated with a physical body which is a grosser manifestation of creative cosmic consciousness.

Bioflux and the Human Aura

Bioflux is a unique form of the primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness. The properties of bioflux have been studied by various researchers. It is radiated by the cells, tissues and organs of all living organisms. It exhibits the property of polarity. It can be observed as colours, auras and rays. Its patterns are affected by cosmobiological factors. The human bioflux varies with age, health and moods. It is also influenced by drugs and hypnosis. It is mainly concentrated in certain areas like the eyes, brain, spine and the plexuses. It exercises its influence on living as well as nonliving beings. An individual's aura is an index of his personality.

The phenomenon of bioflux was known to ancient philosophers and physicians. The 'Prana' of Ayurveda is identical with the bioflux. The human aura is also known as the aureole or the halo. Paracelsus believed it to be a kind of magnetic emanation. Mesmer described it as animal magnetism. Reichenbach's odic force is similar to bioflux. In occult tradition it is known as ectoplasm. Some have called it the anthropoflux or the human atmosphere. Wilhelm Reich designated it as orgone. The Russian technician Kirlian has developed high frequency photographic techniques to map the bioplasmic energy emanating from living organisms. Robert Pavlita has described bioflux as psychotronic energy. All these researchers have confirmed the existence of bioplasmic energy manifesting itself as human auras. The human aura is an experimentally verifiable manifestation of the primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness deducible from the theories of relativity and quantum mechanics.

Limitations of the Human Mind

The inability of the empiricorational human mind to comprehend the universe as a totality, to experience a, synthetic and synoptic vision of the cosmos, and to formulate a self-consistent weltanschauung can be attributed to its inherent limitations. The ordinary human mind is essentially egocentric because all its thoughts centre on and emanate from the ego. This

egocentric predicament is inescapable and unavoidable as long as the ego retains its separate identity

The mind is also governed by the epistemological law of the double-dichotomization of thought, according to which all thoughts involve the thinker in two dichotomies, one primary and the other secondary. The moment I begin to think I distinguish myself from the object of thought. This duality between the thinker and the object of thought is the primary dichotomy Implicit in all sensations, perceptions and conceptions, Similarly, the object of thought .as distinguished from all other objects in the universe. This duality between the object of thought and all other objects may be designated as the secondary dichotomy of thought. There is another restriction to the human mind. All thoughts are rigidly confined to the space-time continuum. The process of thinking cannot take place outside the framework of space-time. Thus, the horizon of human thought is circumscribed by the egocentric predicament, the logicospatiotemporal barriers of the primary and secondary dichotomies and the restrictions imposed by the space-time continuum.

Language is essential for the communication and exchange of ideas. It is not only a vehicle of ideas but also an indispensable aid to reflective thought. But, ordinary language is inefficient and inadequate for the explication of the concepts of modern theoretical physics. The physicist is compelled to make use of the highly abstracted and perfectly symbolized language of mathematics or formulating his theories. He finds it extremely difficult to translate his mathematico-physical theories into the ordinary language of phonemes and morphemes.

Thus empirico-rational thought (ERT) is a function of (f) the primary dichotomy of thought (PD), the secondary dichotomy of thought (SD), the space-time continuum (ST) and the linguistic barrier (LB). The foregoing epistemological considerations may be symbolically represented as follows: $ERT = f(EP, PD, SD, ST, LB)$.

Mystics Transcend the Limitations of the Mind

Mysticism is an intuitive apprehension of the total reality. It is a nonrational experience transcending the mind. The barriers to thought are broken down. The mind is silenced and released from its bondage to empiricorational thought. The cosmic voice of silence is heard and the creative cosmic consciousness is revealed to the seer. It is an ineffable and incommunicable experience transcending the barriers of language, the egocentric predicament, the space-time continuum, and the primary and secondary dichotomies of thought. It is a nonverbal and nonintellectual revelation. That is why its transmission through language becomes approximate and inadequate.

The para-mathematical equations of modern physics and the intuitive experiences of ancient mysticism have essentially the same meaning when expressed through the medium of ordinary language. Mystics as well as physicists have emphasized the interpenetrativeness and unanalyzability of the universe. Analysis leads to intellectual falsification of reality. The human observer's participation in physical theories is as significant as the mystic's personal experience. In other words, consciousness is as fundamental in physics as it is in mysticism and in all varieties of religious experience. Consciousness is the primordial stuff of the universe.

Matter and Energy Emerge From Creative Cosmic Consciousness

Matter and energy are inter-convertible. The pure primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness manifests itself in a gross form as matter and in its subtle form as mind. Creative cosmic consciousness is coextensive with the space-time continuum. Its primordial energy is ubiquitous and immanent. It organizes itself into the different ents and entities and the existents and subsistents of the universe. During this self-organization of the primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness into various forms the diverse ents of the universe emerge. The universe diversifies itself into a 'multiverse'.

The grossest ents are collectively known as matter and the subtlest ents are minds. Matter and mind are two complementary aspects or inseparable 'organisms' of the primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness, with which they interpenetrate and are interwoven. The universe, from the point of view of mysticism as well as modern physics, is a labyrinthine web of the primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness organizing and manifesting itself as matter and mind, which assume different names, forms and attributes.

Mind and Matter are Forms of Creative Cosmic Consciousness

Mind and matter are not rigidly isolated forms of the primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness. They interpenetrate each other. There is mind in matter and matter in mind. Mind is a subtle form of matter and matter is a gross form of mind. Matter and mind differ only in the degrees of their grossness and subtlety. The different forms and varieties of matter differ only in the structural complexity of their organization. Different attributes manifest themselves at different levels of structural complexity.

Similarly, mind is dormant in matter. Minds differ from one another in the complexity of their organization. The lowest living organisms also display the characteristics of irritability and response to stimuli. The higher living organisms have highly differentiated nervous systems and structurally complicated brains.

Potentialities of the Human Mind

The human mind manifests the higher faculties of memory, imagination, inventiveness, resourcefulness, ratiocination and creativity. Man is a self-conscious living organism partly material, partly mental and partly spiritual. The human mind can be interpreted in two ways. From one aspect, it is a subtle energized form of matter manifesting the attribute of self-consciousness. From another aspect, it is a gross materialized form of the primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness percolating through the human organism.

The human mind is a subsistent which cannot be located in the space-time continuum. It is the most predominant form of the pure primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness. But, the limitless potentialities of the human mind are eclipsed by the unavoidable egocentric predicament, the inexorable law of the double-dichotomization of thought, the rigid framework of the space-time continuum and the insurmountable barriers of the ordinary language of phonemes and morphemes.

Let us now consider a very significant and interesting potentiality of the human mind. Since it is an important form of the primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness, it has all the

physical properties of energy. Mental energy is derived from nervous energy produced by the oxidation of the physical pabulum, which sustains and develops the living organism. The human organism is an integrated whole consisting of the body and the mind inextricably linked together. Mind and body co-exist at different levels of consciousness. The body is composed of gross matter and the mind is composed of subtle matter. Since matter can be derived from energy, body and mind are sustained by the primordial energy of the omnipresent creative cosmic consciousness. Body and mind are as inseparable as space and time.

The Concept of the Mind

A more detailed analysis of the concept of the mind reveals its essential nature. It is a *noun* or substantive, if it is interpreted as the subtlest form of matter. It can also be interpreted as a degenerated form of the primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness, whose spiritual potentialities have been attenuated by epistemological, logical and psychological limitations. From the standpoint of behaviourism and logical positivism, the mind may be dismissed as a myth. It is a conglomeration of 'conscious activities and thought is interpreted as subvocal speech. Thus, the mind may also be regarded as a *gerund* or a collective verbal noun encompassing the different modes of thinking like reasoning, remembering and imagining.

But, there is no logical inconsistency in interpreting the mind as a substantive, if it is not forgotten that it is only an intellectual subsistent and not a spatio-temporal existent. Thus, the mind is an anthropomorphic form of the primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness treated as a collective verbal noun for the sake of nomenclatural convenience and for being in conformity with semantic conventions and grammatical usage.

Mind is Energy

There is abundance of empirical evidence to regard the mind as a form of energy. The mind acts upon the body. Psychologists have accumulated experimental evidence for psychosomatic phenomena manifesting the interaction between body and mind. Ideodynamics, psychokinesis and psychosomatics are phenomena which can be investigated statistically under controlled conditions in a laboratory. Physicians and psychiatrists tell us that a large number of physical ailments are caused by mental aberrations. Many metabolic diseases are being cured by psychiatric treatment.

There is enough experimental evidence to prove the existence of brain waves, which bear further testimony to the fact that the mind is a form of energy radiating waves of thought. Richard Caton first detected tiny currents of electricity in a living organism. The electroencephalograph (EEG) records brain waves. Dr. Hans Berger has made a detailed study of brain waves. The human brain has been found to emanate alpha, beta, gamma, delta and theta waves under different conditions.

Since the mind is a form of energy, it possesses all the characteristics of the energy of physics. Energy has been defined in physics as capacity for doing work. Work is 'displacement' caused to a body at rest or in uniform motion. Energy is also convertible into matter in accordance with the Einsteinian equation, $E = mc^2$.

The parapsychological phenomena of poltergeists, ideodynamics and psychokinesis and the psychological phenomenon of psychosomatics substantiate the physical existence of mind as energy. These phenomena have been statistically studied under controlled conditions. Several psychics can cause displacement to physical bodies, bend and twist metal rods by converging brain waves on them. Psychosomatics, the influence of psyche on soma or the action of mind on body, is a universal phenomenon. Ulcers are caused and blood pressure is increased by mental agony and anguish. On the contrary, love and compassion act like a spiritual tonic and hasten the recovery of patients.

Mind and Materialization

The creation, concretization and materialization of physical objects is a rarer phenomenon. But, since the mind is basically a form of energy it can transform itself into gross matter. Matter disintegrates into the energy of electromagnetic radiation. Radium, for example, disintegrates spontaneously into alpha, beta and gamma rays. Matter and energy are mutually interconvertible and energy has mass.

Complementarity of Waves and Corpuscles

Electromagnetic radiation behaves like waves in certain circumstances, obeying the laws of wave mechanics. In other circumstances, the same radiation behaves like corpuscles, obeying the laws of quantum mechanics. The wave theory is necessary for explaining the phenomenon of optical and acoustic Interference. The corpuscular theory is needed to explain the photoelectric effect. A single comprehensive theory unifying the concepts of waves and corpuscles has not been formulated. There is no possibility of reconciling the wave theory with the corpuscular theory. Both theories are necessary for explaining the behaviour of electromagnetic radiation. So, In order to resolve this intellectual impasse, the principle of complementarity has been invoked.

Mind as Waves and Corpuscles

The physical principle of complementarity applies to the metaphysical concept of the mind interpreted as a degenerated form of the primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness. The energy of the human mind is radiated in the form of waves, when it causes 'displacement' to material objects. The wave pattern of the mind is exemplified in ideodynamics, poltergeists, and psychokinesis. Mental energy behaves like corpuscles when physical ailments are caused by mental aberrations and cured by psychiatric treatment. The human mind displays a corpuscular behaviour in all psychosomatic phenomena. Similarly, the corpuscles of the energy of mind materialize themselves as things. Thus, thoughts become things.

But the ordinary minds of ordinary men and women can neither cause 'displacement' to physical bodies nor materialize them instantaneously. The limitations of the ordinary human mind have already been suggested. Its power is inhibited by the egocentric predicament, the primary and secondary dichotomies of thought, the barrier of the space-time continuum and the inadequacy of language.

The Higher Faculties of the Mind

A mystic transcends these limitations by annihilating his ego, dissolving the primary and secondary dichotomies of thought, and breaking down the barrier of the space-time continuum.

He gains a non-sensory and non-intellectual experience of the ultimate reality by silencing his mind. This is the esoteric path of mysticism and the occult way of yoga.

At a higher level a yogi can converge waves of his mental energy on animate and inanimate objects to cause 'displacement' to them or to bring about changes in them.

In practice, it is easier to influence living beings than nonliving objects. Animate beings are more susceptible to psychic Influence than inanimate objects. Hypnotism and mesmerism are examples of the psychic impact of one mind upon another mind. Autosuggestion is self-hypnotism. Human beings are more suggestible than animals and animals are more suggestible than inanimate objects. At a still higher level, a yogi can converge corpuscles of his subtle mental energy for the creation of gross matter and the materialization of objects.

The Dilemma of Determinism

There is yet another reason for the ordinary individual's inability to manifest the higher energies of the mind. Here, we find ourselves on the horns of the dilemma of determinism. It is the philosophical problem of free will, the dichotomy between determinism and indeterminism, causality and teleology or causes and purposes. Human behaviour is neither completely causal nor completely teleological. It is determined by the interaction between causes and purposes. An individual's actions are neither completely predetermined by external and anterior causes nor completely self-determined by his own egoistic impulses and posterior purposes. The actions of ordinary human beings are partly teleological and partly causal.

The Unique Phenomenon of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

You cannot comprehend me, says Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Nevertheless, we continue to be incorrigible enquirers, inquisitive investigators and indefatigable theorizers. The phenomenon of Bhagavan Baba is the greatest enigma of the present century. Although He is incomprehensible, inscrutable and unpredictable, we wish to have at least an inkling of the grounds for His incomprehensibility, inscrutability and unpredictability. Where intellectual comprehension breaks down, intuitive apprehension and mystical revelation can shed some dim light on the perennial problems of philosophy and spirituality. The Phenomenon of Bhagavan Baba is beyond our comprehension because His personality is supramental and supralogical.

Man is irrational and is condemned to freedom, says the existential philosopher Sartre. But, Baba is suprarational and self-determined. He transcends the dilemma of determinism and dissolves the duality of mind and matter. He beats the sick and has resurrected the dead. He is a natural thaumaturgist. He has suffered for His devotees transferring to Himself their painful diseases and curing Himself by His spontaneous thaumaturgic powers. His miracles, manifestations and materializations are unsurpassed for their range and magnitude.

Love Walking on Two Feet

Baba is love walking on two feet, says Professor Barnowski, who testified to the existence of an exquisitely beautiful aura of love encircling Bhagavan's body. This lovely and gorgeous aura observed clairvoyantly by the American parapsychologist can be captured with the aid of the latest techniques of Kirlian photography. The effulgent aura around Bhagavan is a glorious manifestation of the pure primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness.

Materializations

Baba's materializations shed new light on the baffling problem of the Cartesian bifurcation of the universe into mind and matter. Bhagavan's manifestations and materializations have disproved the distinction between mind and matter, which are only two complementary and interpenetrative forms of the pure primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness. He materializes a variety of objects like sweets, lockets, rings, watches and Vibhuti. These materializations are spontaneous and phenomenal. He creates whatever He wills, because He is absolutely self-determined. His materialization satisfy the scientific criteria of observability, verifiability and repeatability. What exactly happens during a materialization? A material object is created by Bhagavan's self-determined volition. Even the most radical empiricist cannot deny this fact, which is observable and verifiable by anybody who keeps an open mind.

Significance of Materializations

Bhagavan Baba's materializations have great spiritual, philosophical and scientific significance. Mind manifests itself as matter. Thought is transmuted into a thing. Volition is crystallized into an object. An intangible idea is concretized as a material substance. Materializations negate the dichotomy between mind and matter. Idealism and realism, mentalism and materialism lose their separate identities and merge together at the highest level as absolute monism of the pure, primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness.

A strong self determined will generates thought waves of stupendous power. Bhagavan Baba's thought vibrations have superhuman energy capable of causing displacement to material objects. By His strong self-determined volitions Bhagavan Baba generates thought corpuscles of tremendous power which manifest themselves as materialized object.

Bhagavan Baba's materializations are instantaneous because the velocity of thought radiation is infinite. There is nothing which thought directed and backed by a strong will cannot accomplish.

The nature of thought needs more detailed investigation. A mathematical formula representing the quantitative relationship between the will, mind and matter is a desideratum. More meaningful Insights into the mystery of the universe can be gained by the fusion of psychology and physics into the new science of psychophysics.

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is an integral incarnation of the Pure primordial Energy of creative Cosmic Consciousness. His miracles, manifestations and materializations testify to the triumph of the self over mind and matter.

Thoughts are things,
Things are thoughts.

Sai Ram Ramzan

Puttaparthi village in Anantapur district, Andhra Pradesh, India, has become a holy place for millions all over the World, since Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba was born there and since Prasanthi Nilayam (the Abode of Peace), the Residence of Baba, and the hub of the world wide Sai Revolution (through the revival and promotion of Truth, Righteousness, Peace and Love) is also situated there. The village has a population of about 3000, out of which a small minority of 300 are Muslims. Sai Baba found that the Muslims of Puttaparthi had to trek about four miles to Bukkapatnam every time they had to pray in a mosque, since they did not have a place of worship in their own village. He called together the Muslims, mostly poor agricultural labourers and artisans and very graciously consulted them on their needs in this regard. Baba in His infinite compassion built a mosque for them in the village, truly an architectural gem, charming, simple and spacious. The mosque was completed and consecrated in time for the Ramzan festival in August this year.

Baba welcomed the Muslims into the Prasanthi Nilayam area, when they prayed for permission to sing the pre-dawn Ramzan hymns (salaat) before the commencement of the daily fast. Another act of Grace was the visit that Bhagavan paid to the Mosque, on the Id Festival day. A large assemblage of Indian and Foreign devotees and also villagers of all faiths were present to share in the joy that Bhagavan gave to the Muslims that day, when He visited the Mosque. Sri. G. Fakhruddin the Convenor of the village Mosque committee while paying the homage of welcome said that the Muslims of Puttaparthi feel both humble and happy by the gift of a Mosque from Bhagavan. Sri. Fakhruddin said that the Light and Love that shone in and through the founders of all religions were physically present in Sathya Sai Baba today. He expressed eternal gratitude to Sai Baba for showing the Muslims the Pathway to God and for re-inforcing their belief in the universal aspects of all religions.

Prof. S. Bashiruddin, M. A, D. J., and M. A. (Minnesota), Head of the Department of communication and Journalism, Osmania university, spoke on the Universality of the Message of Sai Baba. He compared it with the tenets of Islam and said the teachings of Sai Baba had helped him to understand the Quran better and to become a better and more sincere Muslim. The Quran demanded practice of the Brotherhood of Man, and tolerance of all other faiths under the Divine Message of God. Baba taught that whatever the form of worship the spring of faith from which worship emanates and the destination of all forms of worship are both the same whatever be the clime or creed, the language or the name. Baba encouraged the development of devotion and loving service to mankind, and that was the reason why He granted this beautiful mosque to the village of Puttaparthi. Sri Bashiruddin said that Id means 'joy' and he felt that the Muslims of Puttaparthi and the area around felt happiest this Id Festival Day, as they had the Light of God shining on them within the mosque in the physical Form of Sri Sathya Baba. He declared that Sai Baba had strengthened his faith in Allah, when he faced a personal crisis a few years ago. He said that the Life of Baba was His Message to mankind. Sai Baba was the embodiment of infinite Mercy, Wisdom and Power.

Baba, in His Telugu discourse, which was understood by all the Muslims who gathered there, said that Ramzan was the month when the Holy Quran was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad.

It was a divine Communication, a Bhagavad Vani, reaching him through waves or Tarangas of Divine Vibrations. The Vedas too were revealed in the same manner by God to the Rishis. The Bible, the Zenda Vesta, and the other great scriptures of other religions also had similar Divine Inspiration as the reason for their validity. Since the Quran originated from God, Baba declared, it cannot be changed or modified, to suit 'changed' conditions. They are all eternal verities. The Quran, according to Baba, contained expositions of the five vital principles or pancha prana of human life: mercy, truth, sacrifice, love and tolerance. These principles, really basic to the good life are emphasised in all religious texts of humanity. If they assimilate the truths declared in the Quran, they can live in full concord with all others. No religion praises violence or falsehood. Baba said that fasting was laid down during the Ramzan, in order to make people experience the benefits of sense-control and in order to cleanse the spirit and the passions of man, so that he may be rendered fit to approach God. Fasting is also referred to as Upavas; Baba said that Upa means 'near' and vas means 'living'. So, Upavas means, living very near God. The Ramzan fast is intended to enable Muslims to set aside all sensory desires and to spend an entire month in the Holy Presence of God. As man gets the cool heartening breeze when he approaches the air-conditioner, or fan, so too when man approaches God, his sorrows will vanish and he will have his good aspects flourish by His Grace. Cultivate during this Month of God all the Godly qualities, charity, unity, love, service, detachment, tolerance. And, see that you practise them, not only at home, but, spread the joy outside your household also.

Fasting entails not merely abstaining from food and drink from sun-rise to sun-set, but, the mastery of the more difficult discipline of giving up violence, falsehood, anger, envy, and the maligning of others. One may have to face ridicule and persecution, obstructions and troubles when he decides to lead the good, holy life. Prophet Muhammad was persecuted thus and he had to leave Mecca for Medina. Jesus was crucified for the meek and the mute. As the Lord's Will assumes the form of a tree—the Kalpavriksha—in order to be a perennial source of sustenance and sweetness to others, great persons have suffered voluntarily, for the sake of their beneficent beliefs. In spite of hurdles and handicaps, Prophet Muhammad did not give up his conviction; He declared that there was only One God and that His Name was Allah. He commanded his disciples to serve mankind, and treat all others as fellow beings, children of the same God. Baba called upon the Muslims to study the Gift of God to man, namely the Quran and holds its teachings as valid for all time, because they are universal and basic.

At the end of His Discourse, Baba created out of His Will (Sankalpa) seven silver locket, each with the Arabic Inscription, 'Allah' and gave them over to the Convenor, to be distributed among the members of the Mosque Committee. Baba was cheered in great devotion by all the villagers, while the Muslims sang Telugu and Urdu poems praising His Love and Compassion towards all mankind.

—Ed.

Do not tarnish the spotlessly clean minds of children by creating distinctions between one child and the rest. Impart instruction equally sympathetically and with equal care to all. Select stories from the scriptures of all religions in order to interest children in the values of good life. Speak to them of the moral heroes of all lands, the saints of all faiths and all climes. For, they are all of the same stamp. No scripture enjoins violence or lays down untruth as a way of life. All

religions extol truth, righteousness, peace, brotherhood and love. All saints are embodiments of service, compassion and renunciation. Revere all manifestations of the Divine with equal ardour.

—Baba

We Don't Know Him

What He is, we think we know,
But, we don't know; how can I begin to say?

He is the One we prayed to, when we were young;
He is the One that all the temples are built for;
He is the One that the world worships
He is the Creator of all there is.
He is the Destroyer of all there is.
He is the Protector of all there is.
He knows all there is to know.
He sees what we are and sow.

He bears everything
He is the motivator of every being,
of our struggles, our failures,
our successes, our destiny.

He is our midwife and Mother
our Father and Brother
the funeral Director giving the last rites.

He is our sight, our might,
our Reason to be, our Ecstasy, Eternity.
He is Bliss. He is This.
This little 'man' has in His hand
all the power of the Universe.

The only Glory is His Story
The only Story is His Glory.
The words become a blur, losing meaning;
my mind cannot understand this incredible event,
this Advent, that goes beyond the scope of suspense.

And, our contact with Him—such a Blessing,
Such Grace,
to see His face,
to enjoy a minute of Bliss with Him—

A laugh, a smile,
As He walks down some aisle
Touching some one's hand, rescuing a man
And, then. when I feel
I'm almost beginning to see—
He tells me
HE'S ME!

—Doug Mahr, California

Yama and Niyama

Purity of thought, word and deed is the main ingredient of Baba's healing message. Baba encourages "sadhakas" to carefully observe the "Yamas" and "Niyamas" (restraints and observances) before attempting *higher levels* of yoga. The "Yamas" and "Niyamas" are those guidelines for living a pure and peaceful life in harmony with ourselves and our environment. The "Yamas" are five in number: Nonviolence, truth, non-stealing, sexual purity and non-covetousness.

These possible areas of transgression against ourselves and others have their external and internal expression. According to Baba, it does no good to curb the outer manifestation, if the mind is still dwelling for example on violence, or envy.

The "Niyamas" are fortitude, inner and outer purity, contentment, study of one's self and surrender to God.

We must go deeper into the meanings of these guidelines as we proceed. The main point we are trying to express here is that Yoga and spiritual progress (or even simple self-improvement) is a lot more than coming to a yoga class twice a week, standing on your shoulders and then crossing your legs and repeating a mantra. It is more than holding your breath and breathing through alternate nostrils. Yoga and spiritual growth is a 24 hour-a-day process and these *restraints and observances are absolutely essential* in order to make any progress.

Baba uses this analogy: If you want to fill up the tub for a bath, you turn on the water. Now, if you don't plug up the drain, then the tub will never become full. Similarly with spiritual growth: Exercise, breathing, concentration, meditation and prayer are all ways to fill up the system with spiritual energy and consciousness. But violence, stealing, untruthfulness, envy, sexual excess, weakness, lack of self-awareness, impatience, hate, greed, lust, anger, jealousy etc: all these are the plugs left open and you are losing energy and control as quickly as you gain it.

Many of you will feel that to observe all these restrictions would be "no fun", boring and "not normal". Well, surely it is "not normal", but do you really want to be "normal"? Look around you at the tension, weakness, unhappiness, general lack of awareness, selfishness and insensitivity of the bulk of society and ask yourself if you want to be "normal".

People who are sick mentally or physically will find the primary cause of their conditions in their previous and present attitudes, habit patterns, thoughts, words and deeds. A correction of outlook, attitudes and ways of living will be the only true cure. And as Baba has mentioned many times. We are all sick. For health is a state of optimum harmonious functioning. Within each of us is the potential to be a Sai Baba or a Christ or a Buddha or Krishna. According to Baba, each of us has God within us and the purpose of life is to realize that.

One of the most inspiring sights at both "Prasanthi Nilayam" and Whitefield (where Baba has a men's college), is the huge circular, five petalled lotus, ornating the front of most buildings and almost all of Baba's books. This is the emblem of his message to humanity. In the center is the "Jyoti" (inner light-pure white light) which represents the essence of all existence—the light of love and wisdom. The light, which illumines each man and draws him from the ignorance of what he thinks he is.

This central light is then focused to humanity through the five petals, representing the five major religious groupings in the world.

The essential message is that there is one God, and that all religious paths will lead to him if one follows that path correctly. Baba doesn't want us to change our religion; he wants us to LIVE our religion.

We must eventually go beyond our religious differences and Intelligently discover that the origin and "basic principles" of each religion are similar and are essentially stated In the "Yamas" and "Niyamas".

—*Helianthos Yoga Union*

Bharatiya Paramartha Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

15

As authoritative texts of the basic beliefs of Bharatiya Culture in the spiritual field, the Upanishads, the Brahmasutra and the Bhagavad-Gita, the Prasthanatryas, or the Three Sources, have to be reckoned, according to the ancients. Many In India feel that the A-dvaita Vedanta alone Is the correct one. But, this attitude is not a correct one. The Upanishads are the very Voice of Easwara. The Brahmasutra is the supreme embodiment of the principles and doctrines propounded by Vyasa ; it is the most Important of the texts depicting philosophic doctrines. It harmonises the entire body of philosophic beliefs; though based on earlier texts and dissertations, there is no conflict between the earlier and the later. In the aphorisms of the Brahmasutras, each conclusion attains fulfillment and reconciliation. The Bhagavad-Gita acts like a Commentary provided by God, for Vedanta.

All sects of Hinduism, who claim to be authentic and orthodox, accept the Three Sources as their basic texts—whether they are Dvaitins, Visishtadvaitins or Advaitins (Dualists, Special-non-dualists or Non-dualists). Whoever desired to propagate a new interpretation or a new attitude or theory-Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhwacharya, Vallabbacharya or Chaitanya-had to propagate it through commentaries from that standpoint on the Three Sources, the Prasthana Traya, only. Therefore, to assert that Vedanta can be used only with reference to the Upanishads and the doctrines that they teach is will be a great mistake.

All conclusions drawn from the Prasthana Traya are genuine and deserve the name Vedanta. Visishtadvaita as well as Dvaita have as much claim to be known as Vedanta as Advaita. This Unity in Diversity, this Harmony of difference, this is the core of the current of Bharatiya thought.

There is milk in the body of the cow. The milk has ghee in it. But, the cow cannot derive any strength through that ghee. The milk has to be taken out of the animal, it has to be boiled, and a little sour curd poured into it in order to curdle it; then, when the milk Is transformed into curds, it has to be churned and butter separated and rolled. Afterwards, the butter has to be melted and clarified, to get the ghee. The ghee thus prepared can be fed to the cow and then, it would be rendered stronger. So too, just consider—God is omnipresent. Yet, He is not amenable to man, unless man does Sadhana.

There is oil in the sesame seed; there is butter in milk; there is water underground; there is fire latent in wood. Similarly, the Omnipresent God is in the human body and the human mind. When we seek to separate Him and identify Him, one has to make efforts and do Sadhana. Then, as a consequence of the effort and the Sadhana one will realise that God is oneself and there is no difference between the two. This is Liberation, Wisdom, Realisation, according to Advaita. Sankara names this process the Upasana of Advaita.

Now, about the Upasana in Visishtadvaita. Is the Sadhaka to consider the God whom he yearns to adore, as different and separate from him or as a part of him, associated somehow with him? This is the question. Now for the answer. The Jiva is the soul of the body; God is the soul of the

Jiva. Having one's faith fixed thus, adoring God is the means that Ramanuja has propagated. This entire Cosmos is part of Him; it is in Him. He is the inner Motivator and He is present in all. That Supreme Person can be won only through undeviating devotion, Prapati, Sharanagati, and Total Surrender. "Twam eva sarvam mama deva deva. You are my all, O my God of Gods. You are my only refuge, you are my only Master"—this is the attitude one has to develop and make one's own.

The Upasana of Dvaita—the Jivatma and the Paramatma relationship is as wife-husband relationship. The Full Free Supreme Vishnu is the husband, the master, the lord; the ruler, the provider; the individual is the ruled, the dependent, the wife. This method of Sadhana has been taught by Madhawacharya. Without devoted attachment to the Lotus Feet of the Lord, that is to say, without Bhakti, liberation from the cycle of Samsara, why, even purity of intellect and emotions, is impossible of attainment. For those who have the spring of ecstatic devotion to the Presence of the Lord within them, though they may not have no texts to ponder over, the very contemplation of the Beauty, Grace and Power of the Lord will give them bliss of supra-conscious Bhakti. One cannot discover what prompts the experience. In that ecstatic mood, they discard all sense of shame and personality, and yearn to become the beloved of God, in blissful Union. They will then dance and sing aloud and be merged In genuine joy and Ananda. Sadhana in conformity with this faith have been laid down by Madhawacharya. The agony of the lover to attain the beloved is the true sign of Dvaitopasana. This has been elaborated in a thousand ways by others who came after.

The Upasana laid down in the Gita, is incorporated in the Mahabharata, named as the Fifth Veda. The Mahabharata is a veritable treasure-house of gems illumining the problems that confront man in worldly and spiritual matters. The Mahabharata is a magnificent drama that was enacted by Sri Krishna on the stage called Dharmakshetra, where He had collected together all the items he needed for the production. Madhava, that is to say, Krishna, was the Director who collected the participants, the cast, the songs each had to sing, the words each had to utter, and decided on the exits and the entrances. He was the actor, the witness, the producer, and all roles were He. On one side, immeasurable worldly power, soaked in unrighteousness, on the other side, righteousness filled limited Atmic power. This is the essential charm of the Mahabharata. This is the Bhagavad-Gita. The entire essence of the Mahabharata is in it. "Karishye vachanam thava"—"I shall do exactly as you order." "One can find safety and happiness in doing one's own duties"—"Swadharma nidhanam sreya." These are the touchstones of worldly Dharma.

Neglecting the path of Bhakti which can add unto you all prosperity and progress, those who close their eyes and contemplate on "Aham Brahmasmi" "I am Brahman," and suffer from the egoism it confers get only misery as their reward. If husk is pounded, no rice can be secured? Having no faith in Krishna's words, if one goes as his intellect dictates, it cannot be the road that leads to ultimate Truth, the Brahma-tattwa. The Bhagavad-Gita has itself taught beyond the possibility of doubt, by means of illustrative descriptions and incidents that Krishna is Parabrahman Himself. It is the essence of all the Vedantas. It is the repository of the Amrita, the Nectar, churned out of the entire collection of Sastras. It is the sacred stream of Indian Spiritual Thought, held in one text. Is there any one who can deny this?

The Cosmos or Creation, Time, Karma or Activity—all these are manifestations of the will of God and are bound to Him. They are considered by some as 'false' and 'unreal;' but, how can God who is the very embodiment of Sathya or Truth 'will' anything not true? Therefore, it can be said that these two are true, in one way. When evolution changes over into involution and the ultimate stage of mergence of both the conscious and the unconscious is reached, Easwara is the only One existent.

Time is the manifestation of the power of God, and so, it has no end or beginning which can be measured. Karma too is an important Truth to be reckoned as such. Easwara is no wayward force, which is unmindful of bounds and limits. He creates situations and environments strictly according to the activities that men have engaged in during their previous lives. The Creation, the Time and the Karma—all three—are true in Easwara and true along with Easwara. They are instruments which He uses. They are bound to Him.

Easwara or God though not perceptible to the senses, ordinarily, becomes so perceptible to the devotee who has such deep attachment to Him that he yearns to merge in Him. Why? Such devotees perceive God as clearly as they perceive external objects. God or Easwara is said to be Formless; that is to say, He can assume or adopt any Form. He has endless Forms. Then, in what Form does He grant the clear Vision to the devotee? He manifests Himself in the Form that the devotee yearns for, the Form which will grant him the highest satisfaction. These Forms are His Avatars. Easwara does not limit Himself when He thus manifests; He is fully present in every such Avatar; He manifests Himself with His full Glory in every Avatar.

It is said that there are some manifestations that are partial and some others that are full, and some that are temporary and some that are lasting. But, these are called Avatars only by courtesy. Narada, Sanatkumara and other similar sages are referred to in some texts as such Avatars. They have not got all the Divine characteristics. Therefore, they are not worshipped.

The Jiva is by its very nature 'eternal and immortal'. It has no end or beginning that can be calculated. It has neither birth nor death. It is self-illuminating. It is the knower and the knowledge; the doer and the enjoyer. Whether bound or liberated, the Jivi has all these characteristics intact. But, whatever it is, it has not got the Freedom that God has. In every act, the Jivi has to involve the body, the senses like the ear etc., the vital airs that operate in the body. All these co-exist with the Divine in the Individual. Whatever it is, the Jivi is not a machine that has no will of its own. Just as the activities in this life are determined by the nature of the activities in previous lives, the activities of this life do determine the activities of the next life. Easwara decides the place and time, the circumstance and the consequence in accordance with the nature of the activities presently undertaken. God has the power to shape the Nature of man but, He does not exercise that power and mould it differently. He leaves it to the free will of the Individual, which has to learn the lesson by experience.

The flake of stone that is chipped off the rock is a part of the rock; but, the Individual is not a part of God like that. In one sense, Jivi and Jagat are distinct and different from God. In another sense, they are inseparable. This mystery of separateness and identity cannot be grasped by means of reason and Intellect. It can be understood only through the Vedas and their Message. This is the main lesson that Bharatiya Paramartha Vahini can instill.

(To be Continued)

To Set us Right

Some are born with a question in their mouths. Bhagavan says, we are all born so. The child wails, because it gets no answer. It does not get the answer, since the parents do not know the answer, nor even the question. But, some persist and pray for the answer, they are eager and earnest, they listen to the dictum—Uthhishta jagratha prapya varaan nibodhatha—Arise Awake, and after reaching the wise, learn.

The question is koham? Who am I? Where have I come from? Whither am I journeying with each passing day? Why was I born, and why should I die? Whose will rotates the heavens? Whose love permeates the Universe? Wherefrom does all this beauty, all this grandeur, all this terror, emanate? They are not content with food and drink, clothing and a roof over their heads, a happy round of children around their knees. They suffer from a Divine Discontent. They struggle to overcome the hindrances to the realisation of the Truth, underlying the Universe and its Instigator.

They smother and suppress, they proceed to the very brink of suicide, they wander about the world, they escape into the wilderness, they pour over tomes of pilgrim diaries and geographies of the soul. They succeed, a few of them, in saturating themselves with love, wisdom and power, compassion, tolerance and equanimity, detachment and divinity.

Such men, wherever they are, are revered as Divine phenomena, and even as emanating from a portion or all of God Himself. The saints of Christian hagiology, the Masters of Buddhist lore, the Muslim sages, the leaders of all religions and faiths have thus ascended to the heights and won the loyalty and adoration, the gratitude and homage of millions. They are men who have pulled themselves up by their own hair, uddhareth atman atmaanam. Uplift the self with the Self only. They were aware of the God within them and of the potentialities of that Divine spark. They cultivated that spark by ceaseless endeavour and raised it into a column of Light, which could merge in the Cosmic Light. These ascend to Divinity. Divinity descends, to be among men and lead them towards peace, harmony and love. That is what the texts call an Avatar. The Avatar does not awake arise and walk towards the learned. The Avatar has no questions, no struggle, no hindrances to overcome, no urges to smother, no need to escape from the world which It has come to deliver, from disaster I We have no knowledge of any such Avatar in other countries or in previous eras.

But, we have in Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba all that one expects to experience when God puts on the vesture of human flesh—all the pluses and minuses that God assumes, so that he may move among men communicate with them, console them, comfort them, counsel them and make them aware of their being but reflections of Himself.

Bhagavan expressly declares that He is the Avatar and that His Life is His Message and that His Message can arouse the Divine Consciousness in every one. By means of a thousand miracles that happen through Him, He demonstrates that He Is the incredible, inexplicable Mystery of Mysteries that God has ever been. Vyasa who proposed to compose the Thousand Eight Names of the Lord whom he adored, got out of his depths soon and had to coin four names: Who? Where? What? and When? for these questions about the Lord could not be solved with his limited knowledge and experience as compared with the vastness of the potentialities and possibilities of God. Bhagavan has struck seekers and sadhakas as the embodiment of Truth, Righteousness, Equanimity and Love. What He does not know is not worth knowing. He can transform hearts and materials. He is all-power, all wisdom, all-knowing. He says, "I reside in every inch of space," and proves it for us, by signs of His presence wherever pain wails or prayer seeks. He plays the Avatar role by initiating educational, social service, and ameliorative institutions, and provides spiritual experiences through them for those whom he chooses as His instruments. No one has done all this before. No one has touched so many million hearts all over the world, irrespective of the Religion they have adopted, and lit in them the Light of Delight.

Man ascends to the Divine; God descends into the human. The one is the Saint; the other is the Avatar.

—N. K

The Reward and the Punishment

The Kerala Festival of Onam which you are celebrating at Prasanthi Nilayam this day, Is indeed unique, because of the legend that underlies it and the significance of the Inner meaning of that legend. Mahabali who was ruling over Kerala (as well as the rest of India) in ancient times was forced to give up his empire on earth and he was sent to the nether regions by Vamana, the Incarnation of Vishnu. When he pleaded that he might be allowed to visit his kingdom at least one day every year, that boon was granted, and God also agreed to accompany him. Onam is the day on which both Vamana and Mahabali visit Kerala.

Mahabali was an Asura ruler. He was the grandson of Prahlada, the great devotee of Mahavishnu. How Prahlada, even as a boy, won the Grace of God and escaped unhurt from all the horrid tortures inflicted on him by his fanatic father is related in the Bhagavata. Mahabali, too, was a devotee of Vishnu. He was learned in the Vedas and he performed many Vedic yajnas and ceremonies. He ruled his dominion very efficiently and his subjects were happy, peaceful and God-fearing. But, he had one fatal flaw in his character—namely, egoism, ambition, pride. He invaded Heaven and forced the gods to flee. Hence the need for an Avatar of the Lord to redeem the gods from exile and destroy the ego that was ruining the spiritual progress of the grandson of Prahlada.

Vamana, the Incarnation of, Vishnu, had to discover a stratagem by which the virtues of Mahabali could be rewarded and his egoism alone destroyed. God went to the place where he was celebrating a Vedic Yajna and asked (!) for the donation of as much space as could be measured by his three steps. That was the reward. When Mahabali proudly granted that gift, in

spite of the protest of his Guru, Vamana grew into the Cosmic person. He really was and measured the earth with one foot and the sky with another. The third foot had to be placed on his head. That was the blessing that would trample his pride into dust. That was the Divine Strategy which has made Mahabali immortal, and the Onam Festival, so significant.

—From Bhagavan's Discourse 14-9-78

Why be Healthy?

There is only one condition that can add joy to life and that is Health. It is the greatest piece of good fortune that man can aspire for. To win it and maintain it must therefore be man's goal. Man must realise that in order to attain the ultimate end of all these hundreds of lives through which the individual has passed, the healthy body is an essential requisite. The heart has to be full of bliss; the body has to be tingling with health. Man has lost his heritage of Ananda today, since he has failed to win and maintain physical and mental health.

The Shrutis declare that health is the very foundation for the super-structure of the Purusharthas: Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha, the four principal goals of man. We will have to live in harmony with Nature, so that we can be healthy in body and mind. The food that is taken to sustain health has to be moderate, pure and Satwic. But, man's wants have increased as a result of his senseless catering to the greed of his senses and so, his health has suffered terribly. We have to keep not only ourselves and our environs clean, but also the area in which we live and help the people therein to live clean lives.

I must also tell you that many spiritually minded persons neglect the body, as if this is a very desirable habit which will promote their spiritual progress. They take on various vows and fasts and starve the body of legitimate food. This exercise is called in spiritual literature as Upavasa and ignorant persons assume that it means, 'fasting'. Vasa means, 'staying' and up means 'near'; so, upavasa originally and truly meant, 'Staying near'. Near whom? Near God. That is to say, upavasa means, spending the whole day in the contemplation of God in the 'Presence' of Divine thoughts, in Divine company.

Food or Ahara has also a wider meaning. Ahara is anything taken in. Now we take in images, impressions, impulses, and ideas also from the outer world through our 'sensory organs' and these incite our inner enemies—lust, anger, attachment, egoism, hatred and the rest of that brood. So, these items of food that spoil our physical and mental health have also to be watched carefully. Ill Health can also be avoided if we are regular in our food habits. Most people eat much more than is good for them; they waste a good deal more than they consume and the food itself is prepared so badly and so unhygienically that it increases ill-health. If every one is health conscious and eats only as much as he really needs, there will be enough food in the country for all people.

With the advance in technological civilisation on the Earth, various deadly, dangerous, and mysterious diseases have appeared all over the world. Healthy habits like bathing, keeping the

teeth clean etc are being considered outmoded and uncivilised by youth. In the name of fashion many insanitary and morbid practices are adopted. Smoking, drinking, sitting long hours in the midst of packed crowds in cinema theatres and subjecting oneself to all kinds of shocks and tensions—all lead to chronic damage both to body and mind. Cancer, oesophagitis, tuberculosis, and heart diseases—all these have increased as a result of such deleterious habits. Man has to be vigilant about his habits, his desires, his emotions, the impressions he gathers through his eyes and ears, the books he reads, the films he sees etc.

Simple living is the best prescription for health. Reduce your wants and turn your thoughts towards the purpose of life, the attainment of mental peace through prayer, japam, dhyanam, and the study of great scriptures. The Name of God is the most reliable and efficient drug. For those who have not yet realised this Truth, for those who are not aware that their reality is the Atma that cannot be affected by any illness, and for those who therefore have more faith in a doctor and his diagnosis and prescription, the Sathya Sai Hospital has been opened 22 years ago in this area. Faith In God and in One's own Atmic Reality can guarantee more than all the drugs in the world continued health, both physical and mental. So, give up bad company, bad habits, bad sights, bad listening and bad activities. Keep the mind free from greed and away from sensual pursuits. Let it dwell all the time on good thoughts and be in good company. Keep it in the presence of God and it will be ever happy and healthy. When the mind is healthy, the body will be happy and healthy. They are both intertwined, like the horse and the carriage.

Develop health, both in body and mind. I am urging you to do this, for you have yet to witness and delight over many more leelas and mahimas of Swami—leelas and mahimas, far surpassing those you have witnessed so far—and many more wonders, victories and triumphs among mankind. You can thrill, and be in ecstasy, witnessing them. So, guard yourself well and carefully and maintain good health and joyful hearts.

—Bhagavan's Discourse 3-10-78

Divinity in Action

G. V. Subba Rao

The Indian sky over the ages has frequently been lighted by the periodic emergence of super-human spiritual personalities, such as Sri Krishna, the Buddha, Mahavira, Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhava, Chaitanya and Ramakrishna Paramahansa, all spreading the message of love and devotion, knowledge and faith, and peace and universalism.

Today we are witnessing once again an embodiment of a unique spiritual phenomenon of incomparable power and majesty. Sri Sathya Sai Baba is the modern spiritual star lighting up the firmament—spreading the rays of peace, love and spiritual knowledge in many parts of the world and to many people irrespective of their caste, class, colour, creed, region or religion.

His devotees come from many parts of the world and adore him with special reverence and love, which he himself exudes abundantly in his magnetic, charismatic, spiritual personality. Writing

about him can be difficult, not only because words are too inadequate to describe the multi-faceted nature of his incredible personality, but also because meeting him is an intensely personal, emotional and uplifting experience not easily rendered into simple prose. The temptation to glorify him, to wax lyrical over the spiritual greatness and magnificence of Sathya Sai Baba is indeed difficult to resist.

Sathya Sai Baba, emerged as a divine personality at the young age of 14. Since then, he has devoted all of his energies to putting people on the path of God, using his innumerable faith-creating miracles, by his thrilling and eloquent discourses on religious, philosophical and even scientific matters to the constant surprise of great scholars and scientists. He puts extraordinary energy into giving relief and comfort to the poor, the diseased and the suffering. He is involved in numerous creative and exemplary educational and social service activities. He inspires people with his single-minded and tireless teaching of SANATHANA DHARMA, the ever-new, but ancient, road of activism with righteousness, by the mobilization of a variety of talents—traditional and modern scholars of philosophy and religion, scientists, engineers, doctors, administrators, educationists, artists, poets, men of business, for constructive work and, above all, by the example of his own life.

Baba is the modern expression of the ancient Upanishadic philosophy and wisdom, spiritual dynamism and activism. This writer feels inadequate to convey fully the multifaceted significance and impact of this unique spiritual Force which must be heard seen, felt and experienced in Baba's divine presence. He can be described simply as DIVINITY IN ACTION, continuously encouraging us to experience divine bliss, which Is the centre of our identity.

Sathya Sai Baba's approach to different religions is reflected in his frequent citing of the Upanishadic statement, EKAM SAD VIPRAH BAHUDHA VADANTI. The one truth is spoken of differently: religions may be different but the goal is the same. One should not be confused by the variety of paths, but should concentrate instead on the goal.

Baba's contribution to the cause of excellence in education is exemplified by a number of arts and science colleges he has established for men and women in different parts of the country. These are not elitist institutions. The student body comes from the surrounding countryside as well as from different parts of the country and from many different backgrounds. Under the inspiration and the periodic supervision of Baba, they have turned out to be excellent centres of education in secular as well as spiritual matters. The discipline and conduct of the college students are exemplary and perhaps unequalled anywhere in the entire country. The students are inculcated with the ideal of, and are involved in, voluntary service to the community. Their academic performance and achievements have been rated among the best by educational authorities.

Although without the 'benefit' of traditional or modern formal education beyond the 'middle' school, Baba's knowledge of spiritual. Vedic and Vedantic lore is a source of continuous surprise to the biggest scholars in the field; some of the biggest gatherings of traditional pundits have taken place under his auspices in the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha, or Academy of Traditional Scholars.

The writer's association with Sathya Sai Baba goes back 15 years to one Shivaratri, in Puttaparthi, when he was practically awakened by the most thrilling and inspiring talk he had ever heard on Indian philosophy. Since then, he and his family have visited Puttaparthi many times, as well as Baba's other residence at Whitefield, near Bangalore. They have listened over the years to his sweet, eloquent and clear voice explaining in the simplest possible way and in authentic detail, the most profound philosophical and mystical truths of Vedanta. His speeches are interspersed with appropriate parables, examples, short stories and sayings which convey in the most effective manner the power of his teachings.

The writer has heard and witnessed from very close quarters innumerable scenes of creation from seemingly nowhere of "Vibhuti", holy ash, Shivalingas (emerging from his mouth) extraordinary icons of gods and goddesses, delicious sweets, unending supplies of sacred ash. Many books and articles have appeared testifying to these extraordinary "miracles" over the last 20 or so years. As one noted scientist put it, "My science ends where Baba's begins." Many careful researchers are hard put to explain these phenomena; "Inexplicable" is the word most often used in referring to Baba's miracles. Sathya Sai Baba has been termed the biggest challenge to the natural and behavioral sciences.

One recent instance of his miracles should suffice. The writer has known intimately the case of an active young man of 20 who developed an inflammation and constriction of his small intestine. He had to be hospitalized three times in the United States within a short span of a few months. The doctors, after extensive X-raying, put him on a strict regime of non-fibrous, low-residue diet. The young man had a hard time maintaining his nutritional balance. He was reconciled to a long period of a narrowly controlled, tasteless baby food style of diet, combined with a daily intake of dozens of different tablets.

This was the state when he visited Sathya Sai Baba last Christmas. Baba saw him, diagnosed his trouble, felt his stomach, materialized Vibhuti, put it on his tongue and made the astounding declaration that the young man's illness was cured as of that hour and day and that he could eat normally. In fact, the young man partook of a dinner that evening where Sathya Sai Baba served him food personally. The young man has been enjoying good health ever since.

There have been numerous other cases where Baba has instantaneously cured diseases that have been given up by doctors as being incurable. People are bated by the significance of this unique spiritual personality who is so absorbed in the uplift and welfare of all seekers in need.

Dissemination of Vedantic wisdom

Baba, through his profound and yet simple writings, discourses and teachings, which in printed form come to a whole shelf full is one of the most widely translated authors of spiritual literature into practically all the major Indian and world languages. These are available in numerous publications, such as, Bhagavad-Gita, Bhagavata, Ramayana, Upanishads, Prasanthi Vahini, Dharma Vahini, Prema Vahini, etc. His talks to the summer seminars are published in four volumes. His speeches have appeared in nine volumes. Baba has recently started writing, in serial form, a unique commentary on Indian (or Bharatiya) culture in the monthly periodical, *Sanathana Sarathi*, published in English and several Indian languages.

Baba is undoubtedly the most 'listened to man' in the entire length and breadth of India. His audiences even in remote places number in the thousands; and in the cities, in the hundreds of thousands. As one New Delhi diplomat remarked, how is it that this short, five-foot man, with weird hair and dress, attracts as many as five hundred thousand to even a million people to his meetings? The writer remembers several scenes of vast concourses of humanity sitting in pin-drop silence for many hours, tasting the sweet nectar of Baba's elevating teachings, bathing in the radiance of this divine personality and participating in melodious chantings led by Baba himself.

Baba's Message is well expressed at the entrance to Prasanthi Nilayam:

You are in the Light
The Light is in You
You are the Light

The Attachment that Detaches

"From attachment springs desire, and from desire comes anger. From anger arises bewilderment, from bewilderment loss of memory; and from loss of memory, the destruction of intelligence, and from destruction of intelligence he perishes." (Bhagavad-Gita, II 62 63)

It is only the Gita that can, in its inimitable style, give such a lucid and logical exposition of what attachment to the world of objects can mean and how it can ultimately lead to downfall. Considered in the context of our experience, there can be no doubt about the truth of the sequences or the consequences outlined in these verses. The desires that attachment arouses, the conflicts that arise amongst the forces that stand in the way of realising such desires, the despair and the frustration that result from their non-fulfillment—all these are experiences which no man of the world can miss.

It is attachment, all the way, for man from the moment he comes into the world as a tiny tot to the moment he leaves it. The first cry of disapproval of the world of the mindless infant changes gradually as the mind develops and gets attached to the objects that the world dangles before it. In due course deluded by Maya and caught in the coils of Samsara, his attachments develop to such an extent that he shudders at the very thought of dropping his mortal frame and leaving the world. When the time ultimately comes, instead of feeling relieved of one more link in the chain that binds him, he walls his way out of the world. He had to eat the bitter fruits of his actions directed by his desires, he had to suffer sorrows and disappointments, he had to face hatred and humiliation even from those he considered his own; but he was after the short Intervals of pleasure that punctuated his pains and it was the expectation of more of such moments that sustained his spirit. That was Maya.

Happiness is the innate nature of man, and it is after happiness that he runs. Unfortunately however he mistakes the little pleasures that come his way for happiness through his attachments, in the satisfaction of his desires little knowing that happiness does not lie in the world outside, but is to be found within himself. Bhagavan Baba says: "Happiness is an attribute

of mind. The mind even of the rich and well placed have to be trained to be at peace and filled with joy.” Infinite bliss is that which can be grasped by intelligence transcending the senses, says the Lord in Gita (VI-21).

We are definitely not concerned with any philosophy that asks man to run away from the realities of life. In fact there is no philosophy which advocates escapism and a cloistered life for the man of the world. Samsara with its dualities of pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow is part of the process of his evolution. It is through the experience of these alone that the mind develops discrimination and works towards release from bondage. As Acharya Sankara says in Vivekachoodamani; "The mind causes man's attachments for the body and sense-objects. These attachments bind him like an animal that is bound by ropes. Thereafter the same mind creates a distaste for the same sense objects as though they were poison and liberates man from his bondage." (173)

Life is not a journey from nothingness to nothingness. It has a purpose—a divine purpose. Man who is potentially divine has to evolve and achieve that divinity, Manava (man) becoming Madhava (God). This evolution may be completed in this lifetime or it may take many more lives. He will take the Godward path either on his own through the discrimination born out of knowledge or under the force of dire circumstances. In the world of names and forms, with its temptations and dualities, the equanimity and the harmony so necessary for the evolution cannot be easily acquired. The very scheme of the manifested world appears to forbid it. Where else can he find it? Bhagavan Baba provides the answer: 'Know yourself.' We have to seek for it within us. It is by living in the outside world and relying on the self within that life attains its fruition.

It is very necessary that man knows what is bandha (that which ties or creates the bondage) and moksha (that which liberates), for, his destination is Liberation. The bondage that we are speaking of is not what is imposed on us by a captor, an enemy, or even by our destiny. Our bondage is from the attachments which we have allowed the senses and the mind to develop. These attachments and the desires resulting therefrom bring the passions into play and man very often slips into bestiality under their tyranny. The one way to end this bondage is to bring the senses under control and to develop non-attachment.

This may sound an over-simplification of a complex discipline involving ceaseless efforts along the lines prescribed by the scriptures, seers and sages. It is the end and aim of spiritual life, the highest stage that Vedanta postulates. But that should not make us throw up our hands in despair. With our destination clear in our mind, we have to make a beginning sometime, however humble it may be. No effort of which the purpose is not known can lead us anywhere. Having set our heart on the goal, with no fear or doubt in our mind, but with extreme humility of spirit, let us wend our steps forward.

We have work in the world; there is no running away from it or from the role we have to play in the divine scheme of things. There is no wiping off the Prarabdha (past Karma) with which we have come into the world. To engage in actions according to our nature and consistent with our status in life, in a spirit of detachment, surrendering both our actions and the fruits thereof to the Lord is the great path to Liberation, the path which is most relevant to the age in which we live. Even the Lord in His human form of Sri Krishna worked "I am the one Lord of all the worlds; but why do I work? Because I have to set an example to others. If I cease to work the worlds will

fall into ruin"—this is how the Lord clarified the position to Arjuna (Gita 111-22/24) And we have seen the Lord, Bhagavan Baba, in our very midst work unceasingly, day In and day out, for the good of the world, for the good of humanity. His life is His message.

Action always Implies result. No action can be done in this world without evoking a result, however small or insignificant it may be. But the difference between action done by a man of the world and by one who is liberated in this very life is that in the case of the latter such action is for the good of the world (Shreyo-Karma). It does not bind him and the fruits of his action do not accrue to him. Clarifying the difference the Lord says, "(The soul devoted attains to peace well-founded, by abandoning attachment to the fruits of works, but he whose soul is not in union with the Divine is impelled by desire, and is attached to the fruits of action and is therefore bound." (Gita -12)

Desire, action and its result are illustrated with the analogy of the seed, tree and the fruit. By desireless action we disavow not only the fruits, but even the 'seeds' of future results. What remains is only action bereft of desire, bereft of attachment. The sangha or attachment has ended. "The only method by which the delusion of desire can be destroyed is to dedicate all activities to God and engage in them in a spirit of worship leaving the consequences to Him and ceasing to attach yourself to them," says Bhagavan.

Despite the variety of paths laid down by the scriptures, despite the practical steps suggested by the Lord In the Gita, and despite the loving guidance given by Bhagavan Baba man appears unable to take the first step. Although Bhagavan assures again and again that He will take ten steps towards him if only the devotee takes one step towards the Lord, he falters, as if there Is something unseen pulling him away, making it Impossible for him to take that one step. Yes, his sense of attachment Is so great and Maya so powerful that he feels unable to give up anything of the world, even though the thing to be gained in exchange is the Kingdom of Heaven.

If therefore, attachment is the nature of the mind, can the direction of that attachment be turned to the Divine is the question that is of immense practical importance. We know that the mind when it gets attached more and more to something, gradually loses its interest in things which were the sources of pleasure earlier. Without subjecting the mind to any rigorous discipline, without forcibly cutting out the stimuli it had from other objects, let the mind slowly imbibe the glory of the Divine. Hearing the holy name, visualising the holy form, studying holy tales, let the attachment to the Divine grow. We have seen this transformation in various degrees among the devotees of Bhagavan, confirming the efficacy of such attachment. Having tasted the nectar of the holy name In a Bhajan, there are many who spend all their leisure hours attending Bhajans, satsangs, discourses and other spiritual and humanitarian activities until the club, cinema and other forms of recreation become meaningless to them. This is the great change that Sai activities are causing all over the world and this is the transformation, which results from turning the direction of one's attachment from worldly pleasures to the feet of the Divine. And once this process starts there is the subtle Grace of the Lord leading one onward, and unmistakably, the aspirant gains more and more the tranquil bliss that arises from it.

I visualise a sadhana which has no conditions attached. I shall not even call it a sadhana if it implies any enforced discipline. There Is so much sweetness in God's name, so much beauty in

His form, so much glory In His manifestations, that the peace, solace and happiness that one can draw from bhajans, satsang or meditation are unlimited. God becomes the abiding interest. The nearness of the Lord becomes a matter of actual experience. He is there, guiding, helping, encouraging and consoling. In our silent moments we confer with God, we get guidance in our actions from Him, we act in His name and without thinking of the results we surrender our actions to Him. This becomes Karma phala-tyaga (sacrifice of the fruits of action) a tyaga achieved through attachment. This attachment is virtually the path of Devotion (in conventional terms) following which one can cut asunder all other attachments which have constituted our bondage.

Many great personages have attained the heights of devotion through such unalloyed love of the Divine. This may be considered by some as a path not so direct as the path of Jnana (knowledge). The fact is, no one path can be considered superior to another, and the path now outlined, i.e., the path of Devotion is the most practical for the man of the world leading to the same goal. The great devotee of the Lord who authored the epic poem 'Narayaneeyam' considers the very purpose of life to be the achievement of bliss resulting from visualising the form of the Lord and even prays that he may be born again and again to enjoy that bliss. According to Bhagavata, King Prithu did not seek the boon of Kaivalya (final beatitude) where there is no occasion for enjoying the nectar of His glory emanating from the hearts of exalted souls, through their lips (IV-20-23).

The devotion of the Gopis to Lord Krishna is the unparalleled example of such attachment. It surpassed all other relationships—even as wives and mothers, because they are ephemeral. Here is the highest example of the soul's identification with the supreme resulting in the total negation of physical ties. The rationale of this has been very beautifully given in their own words in Bhagavata, "You, who are the knower of Dharma, have observed that the natural duty of women is to render service to their husbands and children and relations. Let such service be rendered to you, O Lord, who is the theme of all teachings" (X-29-32), meaning thereby that their worldly duties are implied in and subordinate to the love of the Supreme.

The development of non-attachment through devotion is perhaps the easiest path that man can follow in his sadhana involving no preparatory or rigorous discipline. Bhagavan Baba gives us the analogy of fire in an incense stick being extinguished by trying to light logs of firewood. "Simply because God's love is infinite and endless, you cannot carry all of it with you. What you can carry will depend on the size of the pot you take." That little pot is with us all. Let us get the fill of it. As the attachment to the Lord grows our capacity to imbibe that love will also grow. The change will not be from activity to inactivity, or from likes to dislikes, or from prosperity to poverty, it will be an inward change in the values. There is no public display of any determination or decision, but a quiet transformation of the outlook. Such a person thinks, talks and works—he is very much here, but he actually lives in his Being. He is like the proverbial lotus leaf which does not become wet even while in water. He is attached to the Lord, but unattached to the world of objects. Says Bhagavan, "You cannot easily detach yourself from activity; the mind clings to something or the other. Make it cling to God, let it do all things for God.... Then you have known the secret of Shanti and contentment."

And that was what made Acharya Sankara declare to the world in that little verse in Moha Mudgara. `satsangathwe nissangathwam...' wherein he says "Through attachment with the Real and the Good (sat) there arises non-attachment; through nonattachment there arises freedom from delusion; where there is freedom from delusion, there is consciousness of the immutable Reality and on experiencing this there comes the state of Liberation-in-this-life."

Having commenced this article with a study of attachment to the world of objects, its ramifications and consequences, we conclude this with the reversal of the entire process by directing such attachment to the Ultimate Reality, unwinding the knots that bind us, attaining liberation and realising Supreme Happiness or Sat-chit-ananda in this very life.

—C.P.B. Nair

Unforgettable

Bhagavan had directed the devotees from the flood affected regions of Delhi, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal and Orissa to use all the resources of time and skill, money and materials that they can command for the relief of the victims and He had said that this Seva will be for them the most rewarding way of celebrating Dasara. Therefore, this year's Dasara had very few devotees present from those regions.

However, when on the morning of 3rd October, Bhagavan came through the Silver Door, amidst the acclamations of devotees, the ringing of festive bells, the music of nadaswaram and the chanting of Bhajans, there were surprisingly enough more than 20,000 persons in the vast quadrangle eager to listen to His Message and to adore His Presence. Bhagavan hoisted the Prasanthi Flag, and showered His Blessings on the eager multitude. Sri. Kasturi laid at the Lotus Feet the homage of the thousands who were present and the millions who could not be present. He spoke of the Dasara as the Festival of the Mother, the Jagan-mata; "We adore Bhagavan as Durga-Lakshmi-Saraswati, Sai Jagan mata. But, Bhagavan has directed us to adore five mothers or matas who are all facets of the Divine Mother that He is—The Dehamata, (the Mother who prayed for us, who bore us and gave us birth, who fondled us and fostered us, who filled us with her compassion, her knowledge, her devotion and her humility) the Gomata (the Mother Cow who fed us with sustaining food, the very picture of self-sacrifice and Seva of the supremely selfless type) the Desamata (the nation that welcomed us when we were born which presented us with codes of morality tried in the crucible of experience by sages age) the Bhoomata (Mother Earth which nourishes us, and bears with infinite patience all the Injuries inflicted through our greed and ignorance) and the Veda-mata (the Mother Veda, the pabulum of strength earned by the sacrifice and the austerity of many sages and seers, the guide on the road to attain liberation and obtain self-realisation."

Bhagavan in His short, sweet Discourse spoke on Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati as conferring Tushti (Contentment Happiness) and Pushti (Prosperity) and Srishti (the Intelligence to mould things and shape events). He emphasised the role of the Puranas in the formulation and the propagation of Bharatiya Samskriti, and advised devotees to study them more and more, so that their faith in Sadhana might get firm and unshakable.

That evening, the 22nd Annual Day of the Sri Sathya Sai Hospital, Prasanthi Nilayam, was celebrated, in the Divine Presence. General Mahadevan, G. O. C. Southern Command, was the Chief Guest. He visited the Hospital and was introduced to the Doctors serving there, as well as at the Dispensaries opened for the benefit of the pilgrims at the Poornachandra Auditorium. At the Annual Day Meeting held at the Auditorium Dr. Alreja, Medical Officer paid homage to Bhagavan and welcomed the General. The General spoke of physical, mental and spiritual health and the role of Namasmarana in maintaining and promoting mental health. He said that even in the below zero weather of Ladakh, he kept warm through Ram, and not rum! Bhagavan in His Discourse spoke on the need for Satwic food, and for restraining the intake of deleterious 'food', through the eye, and the ear.

On the 4th, the second day of Dasara, about 8000 poor persons were fed sumptuously, Bhagavan Himself being present, to serve them sweets and other delicacies. Saris and Dhotis were given to almost all the persons fed. It was a great day for the villagers and the poor who gathered at the grounds of the Srimati Easwaramma High school.

The morning of the 5th, saw the Inauguration at the Poorna Chandra Auditorium of the Vedapurusha Saptaha Jnana Yajna. Bhagavan moved in procession towards the Auditorium, accompanied by members of the Central Trust, the State Presidents of the Organisation, Vedic pundits reciting hymns, the students of the Easwaramma High school marching in step on each side, jingling bells, and students of the Sathya Sai College, Brindavan, Bangalore. The sacrificial Fire was churned out of sanctified wood, to the tune of bhajan songs and the recitation of prescribed riks. The Yajna was initiated with Vedic recitation, the ritualistic offerings of holy ghee, into the Fire, the worship by selected pundits of Durga-Lakshmi-Saraswati, the Suryanamaskar in correct Vedic style, the consecration of 'thousand lingas' and their worship, and the reading of sacred texts like Ramayana, Bhagavata and Devi Bhagavatham, by scholars.

The Sanathana Bhagavata Bhakta Samajam, an Academy of Spiritual Scholars propagating the Vedas, the Sastras, the Puranas and other scriptures of ancient India, has been taken under His protective care by Bhagavan and they have been sharing in Dasara Programmes since many years. About twenty members of this Academy were present at Prasanthi Nilayam during this Dasara. They were engaged in their traditional ceremonies at the Prasanthi Mandir, for three days. Later, the Harikatha artistes among them regaled and inspired the thousands who attended the after-noon sessions, when they gave learned recitations and renderings of various Puranic themes.

On the evening of the 5th, Bhagavan elaborated on the Yajna that was inaugurated that morning, and explained the significance of the Vedic ritual that will last for seven days. He spoke of inner Yajna and External Yajna, of Sacrifice, and of Life itself being a continuous Yajna. Brahmasri Kuppa Bairagi Sastry, one of the very first group of members nominated by Bhagavan for the All India Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha spoke on the Advaitic Teachings of Bhagavan.

On subsequent days, before Bhagavan gave His Divine Discourse, the huge gathering was addressed by members of the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha like BrahmaSri Sishtla Chandramouli Sastry, the doyen of Mantra-sastra Scholars in India. He spoke feelingly on Radha-bhakti and

brought out the real meaning of that oft-calmnied relationship. Brahmasri Peddinti Dikshit Das gave an analytical speech on the Mission of Avatar interspersed with songs composed by him on Bhagavan and His Glory.

Dr V K Gokak's speech delivered on the evening of the 5th, was on the significance of the production of the Holy flame. He also spoke of the Vedic Gods invoked during the Yajna and the inner meaning of this invocation. Dr Amarnath and Dr Anil Kumar from Guntur gave inspiring speeches on the Message of Bhagavan with profuse examples gleaned from His teachings as well as His Life, Dr John Hislop described certain miraculous instances of Bhagavan's Love and Compassion. He communicated to the gathering two Sadhanas that were being recommended to Western devotees (1) On waking lay hold of the hand of the Lord and have it within grasp throughout the day (2) On seeing any person, however strange, or unfriendly, believe that he is the Lord in that form and persist in welcoming with the same grateful smile all whom you meet throughout the day. It will be difficult to estimate or exaggerate the contribution of the young students of the Sri Sathya Sai College, Brindavan, to the vibrant and elevating atmosphere that filled Prasanthi Nilayam, during all the days of Dasara. Eager to serve enthusiastic to help, they were here, there and everywhere—at the High School Grounds during the Feeding of Thousands, at the High school attending on the foreigners who were accommodated there, at the Canteen serving the meals, at the Information Centre, at the Bookstall. The students of the Sri Sathya Sai Women's College Anantapur were also equally alert and efficient, and they helped to run the women's Section of the Canteen and the Bookstall, besides serving old and disabled women pilgrims.

It was a delight to listen to the College students, addressing the vast gathering every evening. They did not Indulge in platitudes, which very often become 'flatitudes' when emerging out of older men. A sixteen-year old student, a novice with scarcely five months attendance at College and residence in the Hostel, could elaborate on the Mission and Message of the Avatar of Love, basing his speech on the memorable dream that Tagore desired to transform into reality. It was Rama Prasad from Hyderabad who won the admiration of every one by this charming speech. Other speakers from the student group were Nityananda Menon, M.A. M. Phil. of the College, from Kerala, Kamal Sahani from Bombay, Amit Singh from Delhi, and Sarat Chopra from Calcutta. They all narrated heart-touching incidents illustrating Bhagavan's overwhelming Love which transformed their lives and is guiding them towards Self-Confidence, Self-Satisfaction, Self-Sacrifice and Self-realisation.

The students of the College captured all hearts by the excellence and variety of their musical talents. It was an experiment in spontaneous dedication. Nitin Pandit, Bombay fiddling with the 'very nearly impossible' Kashmiri string instrument, called Santhur, found that he could, with Bhagavan's Grace produce delightful music out of it! He gave an hour-long performance on it, of a standard that would have bated even long-established artistes. That was the unanimous judgement on this amateur artist. Boys from Kerala gave the astonished devotees two items, selected from the tribal dances of Kerala. One item brought before the gathering the weirdness and the terror of a primitive hunting expedition and the other, centred round a jungle shrine of Kali, awakened them to the strange world of ecstatic gyration. The Kerala contingent of College Boys had also one among them who could give an authentic and accurate version of the Dance of

Nataraja, in the genuine Kathakali style. Altogether, it was an evening of unalloyed delight and Bhagavan, the Divine Inspirer, showered His Blessings on the boys.

Another day, the students surprised every one of the 25,000 devotees gathered at the Auditorium by an orchestral recital of singular beauty and charm. Every student who had some little musical talent was drawn into the orchestra—Sonam Gyantso Bhutia, Sikkim who twiddled with the accordion Rodon Thapa from Nepal who knew how to handle an electric guitar, fiddlers, tabla players, flutists, harmonists, the Santhur specialist all joined in harmony and with two students from Assam (brothers) Rupak Chagkakoti and Hirok Changkakoti, and Rupak Sharma also from Assam and H.R. Venkatesh form Ahmedabad, they learnt, all by themseivs, to present many Telugu songs on the story of Rama in Karnatic Ragai. While the recital was going on, all wondered how the miracle happened—boys from all the States of India, integrated together in the holy task of offering their talents at the Feet of the Lord. The Assamese brothers reminded those versed in the Ramayana, of Lava and Kusa, who sang the story of Rama in the presence of Rama Himself. They sang the Telugu songs, as if they are to the language born. They won all hearts by their skill and sincerity. Surely, it was a thrilling performance and it conveyed many a heartening lesson to the thousands who drank the nectar in.

The students had another surprise in store They had themselves planned and prepared a drama in Hindi, "Bhajan Bina" wherein they depicted their own story revealing the infinite Love of Bhagavan, which saved them from the dreary desert sands of trivial worldly pursuits and directed them to the sublime heights of Self-knowledge. "One of the two sons of a landlord, Vivek has been admitted to the Sathya Sai College, while the other, the eider, Shekhar is a `student' in one of the local Colleges. The younger son arrives for a short stay and the father is delighted at the humility he has acquired, the spirit of service he has imbibed and the way in which he is ever living in the Presence of Bhagavan. He rises early, does his Pranavaopasana, is friendly with the servants, joyfully shares the household chores ... In complete contrast to Shekhar, who has a boisterous bullying temperament, and great disgust at anything reminiscent of God and Goodness. The elder brother has a gang of friends who drag him to the races, to the cinema halls, and to clubs. The younger brother and the father are powerless to correct him, though the home is full of Sai vibrations after the arrival of the younger brother. But, the gangsters who surround the elder son are disappointed that he could not bring the amount of money they wanted for betting at the Course and for election expenses. They fall upon him in anger, and inflict injuries on him. This opens his eye to the false life he has been leading and he is led into the path of truth, goodness and service." This play had a profound impact on the audience and every one saw in it the dawn of a new era in education, ushered by Bhagavan Himself.

Bhagavan Himself in His evening discourses spoke on the need for the inner search for one's Atmic core He elaborated on the validity of the Puranas and drew the attention of people to the valuable nuggets of spiritual truth they contain. In one epoch-making speech, He announced that the true Bhagavad-Gita that Krishna communicates to each one engaged in the battle of life is.... OM, the ultimate form of the SOHAM that is the Voice of the very breath of man.

On Vijayadashami Day, the Valedictory Offering was made In the sacred Yajna Fire In the Presence of Bhagavan the Yajnapurusha Himself. Bhagavan created precious gems and auspicious articles for the function. Later, He bathed the idol of Shirdi Baba, His Previous

Incarnation, with profuse showers of fragrant Vibhuti, created by His Will, along with a sizeable quantity of sacred Rudraksha beads. He also created a necklace of gold Inlaid with gems for the idol. The consecrated water of the Yajna and of the Abhisheka was later showered by Bhagavan Himself, on the thousands anxious to receive the Blessing from His Hand.

Srimati M. S. Subbalaksmi had her music recital in the Divine Presence, for an hour, of songs composed by her, adoring Bhagavan. In the evening, as part of the closing Functions of the Dasara Festival, Bhagavan gave Darshan on the Jhoola and every one installed Him in the Jhoola of their hearts, there to swing in harmony with their own purified thoughts and loving deeds Srimati P. Suseela the renowned Playback Singer and Sri Rajeswara Rao, the celebrated Music Director, sang songs in adoration of Bhagavan while He was on the Jhoola.

—N.B.

Book Publication

The publication of books on Bhagavan and of the Discourses and writings of Bhagavan Is a duty entrusted to the Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Education and Publication Foundation, Prasanthi Nilayam. Books in languages, other than English, Hindi and Telugu, are to be published, however, by Publication Committees, nominated by the State Presidents of each linguistic region, under the general guidance of the Foundation.

In recent years, however writers, publishers, and even Samitis and office of bearers of the Organisation have published books and brought them out for sale, disregarding the rules therefore. Without any previous consultation or any letter of authorisation, they announce that the books are published 'by' the Foundation! The Foundation has Screening Committees to examine and recommend books for publication by the Foundation, and so, all manuscripts in Hindi, Telugu and English have to be sent to the Foundation, before any step is taken towards publication. Some try to escape this obligation, declaring in the book that it is published 'for' or 'on behalf' of the Foundation! This too is an undesirable practice Without an authorisation letter, given by the Foundation, after scrutiny of the style and the contents, the title, the format and the price, no book can claim the sanction or approval of the Foundation for its publication. The Publication Committees of the various linguistic regions may also be advised to consult the Foundation; about the format, the title, the subject matter and the price of their publications. This would help better co-ordination of the publishing activities of these Committees. Occasional meetings of the Conveners of the Committees with the members of the Foundation will also further the cause better.

—Ed.

Sai-chiatry

Sri Sathya Sai Baba's miraculous Characteristics, powers, glory of a full avatar of God, Omnipresence and Omnipotence have completely bated physical as well as behavioural scientists throughout the world.

The greatest Scientist knows that, with all knowledge he has gained and the probes and analysis that he has been able to make, there is a world beyond his grasp which he can only dimly comprehend. Many hopeless cases which have defeated doctors often get miraculously cured by the "thaumaturgic power" at the hands of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Saints with thaumaturgic power insist that cure-seekers should give up their egoism and completely surrender to the power of the Almighty. Baba, says, "Everlasting shanti (peace), ananda (happiness) and Easwara anugraha (God's grace) are to be achieved by man, he must constantly strive to reduce his ego till it is completely destroyed and thereby he attains moksha or salvation."

In the words of Dr. Duane Robinson, Sai Baba's teachings place an ethical demand on scientists to remain pure in their search for truth, to be motivated by ethical concern for their fellow humans. A moral and rational technology, environmentally sensitive and humanistically sensitive, could apply itself to the nurturing of life on earth. Or, man can use this technology to destroy himself.

Baba has said, reassuringly, that it is not the Divine intention that man shall be destroyed, or shall destroy himself, He has not promised that we shall escaped unscathed from the predicament into which our vast flood of mistakes and misdeeds have brought us. But He has shared His Divine Vision of a human race living together In Love and understanding in Communities of their Creation.

Sathya Sai Baba explains His presence among men today as fulfilling a divine mission to mankind. He teaches that His Mission is to help humans to understand themselves better as possessing, each of them, a spark of the divine. And He teaches men to work together and serve each other so that mankind can live, finally, in a world community governed by love, co-operation, and concern for each other. The world's people could share spiritual awareness, aesthetic variety, noble visions, common possession of basic needs, and could celebrate together co-possession of the Divine.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba says some very specific things about community building. First, He says that man shall love God, love himself, love his brothers and sisters, and love all life on earth. This is basic for all else. Second, He says that love for one's fellow humans Is expressed in terms of caring for, compassion, kindness, service and sharing. Third, He says that the Sai community is a community to be built on the basis of this brotherhood and sisterhood of humans. He further says that the spiritual bliss and joy available to the Sai family members is a possibility for the extended family, the tribe, the village, the neighbourhood, the city and the region, and for the nation, and the world as well. A profound challenge exists to those who follow His teachings. The challenge is to learn how to bring it about, with the help, remember, of His omnipotence and omnipresence.

As a psychiatric, Dr. Samuel Sandweiss declares that Sai Baba's challenge to the Western behavioral scientist is the same as His challenge to everyone, everywhere. It is a challenge to the darkness. He is here to bring light into our lives. His mission is to turn the behavioral scientists, as well as all people of the world into spiritual aspirants who recognize the reality of God so that the aspirants work reflects man's deepest yearning to realize God. In response to Sai Baba's

personal Challenge. I believe that the field of psychiatry will become spiritualized. Psychiatrists will become aware that the ultimate goal in-psychiatry is actually the same as that of religion; to find the God or Atma within and to find it through the experience of love. Psychiatry must awaken to Sai Baba's reality; we would prefer calling psychiatry "Sai-chiatry", the Sai-chiatry of Atmic consciousness, the Sai-chiatry of love.

So there is Sai Baba's message of love. Here we find perhaps his greatest power, and most profound gift to us. He says, "Start the day with love, fill the day with love, end the day with love, that Is the way to God."

—**Davinder Bumar Sharma, Hissar**

You complain that God is hard-hearted; that He does not respond to prayer, or give signs from His portraits that you worship, or speak to you from 'nowhere' to assuage and assure. But, let me tell you—God is Love, Love is God. When there is no response from the very embodiment of Love, you have to infer that the cry from your heart is not sincere, and that it may be mere play-acting. It is perhaps set to a pattern, or addressed to some one whom you feel alien to you, some one who is a tyrant or a hard taskmaster, intent on denying you what you desire. No. Believe that God is Love, and confide in Him. He will respond.

—**Baba**

Bharatiya Paramartha Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

16

Every child arrives into the world, bearing the burden of unrequited consequences, accumulated in previous lives. It does not drop from the lap of Nature, as a streak of lightning from the clouds. It is born in this world in order to experience the beneficial and the malignant consequences, that are the products of its own acts in past lives. This is the explanation for the differences that are evident among men. This is the principle of Karma.

Among men, each one is himself the cause of his fortune, good or bad. He is himself the builder, the architect. Fate, destiny, pre-determination, the Will of God, —every one of these explanations is toppled by the principle of Karma. God and man can be reconciled and affiliated only on the basis of this Sutra or principle of Karma. When man realises that God has no share in causing his suffering and that he is himself the sole cause, that no blame attaches to any other person, that he is the initiator as well as the beneficiary—the cause and the effect—of his acts, that he is free to shape his future, then he approaches God with a firmer step and a clearer mind.

If at the present time, a man is afflicted by misfortune, it is assuredly the result of acts done by him. Accordingly, man has to believe that happiness and good fortune also lie in his own hands. If he decides, happiness and good fortune can be gained by him.

If a person is pure in spirit now, he himself is the cause. Unless a person yearns, he cannot earn. So, it is clear that the will inherent in man is beyond all stages and conditions, all formations and transformations. The freedom that it represents, is the result of his past acts; it is powerful, infinitely fruitful and supreme.

The next problem is Mukti or Liberation. The Atma is neither masculine nor feminine; it is not possible to impose these distinctions on it. They are merely physical attributes, pertaining to the body. When talking about the Atma, ideas, such as these, are but signs of delusion. They are relevant only when the physical body is under discussion. The discussion of 'age' is also a product of this delusion. The Atma is eternal. This ageless Entity is ever One and Only.

How did the Atma get incarnated? In the Sastras, there is just one explanation. For all this encasement and bondage, there is only one reason—Avidya, Absence of Right Awareness. Through Avidya, man gets bound; so, wisdom is the cure. That alone can take him across. How can this Awareness be accomplished?

There are three ways of acquiring it. (1) Through Prema, through Bhakti, through worship of God in full devotion and dedication, through loving service and adoration directed towards every living being who is but a moving temple of God—for He resides in each of them—the false knowledge, the Avidya can be scattered and the bonds made to fall off; the individual will then be released.

There are two ideas about God described in the Sastras—the idea that He is cognisable as having attributes and the idea that He is free from all attributes and so cannot be described as

thus and thus, that is to say, the Saguna aspect and the Nirguna aspect. The Saguna God is cognised as present everywhere, as the creator, sustainer and destroyer of every thing and being, as the Father and Mother of the Universe. Therefore, He is beyond and above all beings and things and eternally distinct and different from man. It is said by upholders of the Saguna aspect that the very cognition of this attributeful principle brings about 'liberation' or Mukti. Liberation is attained when man establishes himself in this knowledge and lives in and through it.

The second way is the contemplation on the attributeless Nirguna principle. The truth that the ascription of attributes to the Divine principle is undesirable and Inappropriate is realised during this contemplation and the attributes are shed from the concept of God. Then, the one Universal Attributeless person will alone remain in the consciousness. It can be referred to as the Knower, the Jnata. For, Jnana or Wisdom is relevant only in the context of the human mind and human consciousness. It cannot be designated as the inquirer, for, inquiry is the mark of the weak. It cannot be related to the Intelligence, for intelligence discriminates and the attempt to divide and dissect is again the sign of unsteadiness. It cannot be designated 'the Creator', for creation is the activity of the bound, the limited. It or He has no bonds or limits. Activity implies a wish, a want, a desire; it does not originate from any other cause. All work has as its base some inner pain which is sought to be alleviated.

In the Vedas, the Divine is spoken of only as THAT. The reference is always to THAT. The word 'HE' is susceptible of provoking ideas of difference and so, the word THAT is used, to indicate that it is free from all limitations and bonds imposed by the ascription of attributes. This is the essence of the philosophy of Non-dualism, for, attributes divide and distinguish.

It is the inescapable destiny of every one to fulfill himself. Every living being has to attain fullness, in the end. Each one is at present at a particular stage of this march, as a result of the activities engaged in during previous lives and the feelings be entertained in the past. The future is being built at present by the activities being engaged in now and the feelings that urge and shape them. That is to say, what we do, feel or think about, at present—these are the basic reasons for the good fortune or bad fortune which is in store.

The prompting to save oneself and the power to pull oneself up into liberation cannot be derived from books. This strength has to come from the individual himself. One can spend an entire lifetime scanning profoundly written books; one might earn the highest rank among intellectuals. But, at the end of it all, one might not have attained even some little progress in the spiritual field. To conclude that a scholar who has reached the topmost height can therefore be considered ripe in spiritual wisdom will prove to be a great mistake. The scholar himself might imagine, as he learns more and more from books that he is progressing more and more on the spiritual path; but when he examines the fruit of his studies, he will recognise that though his intellect has become sharper and heavier, he has not been acquiring the awareness of the Atma to the slightest degree. Most people have the skill to deliver wonderful discourses on spiritual subjects; but, really speaking, every one has failed in living the life of the spirit, the Paramarthika life. What exactly is the reason for this sad stair of affairs? Now, spiritual texts are studied to equip oneself with scholarship in the competitive race for superiority, to earn one's livelihood, to pose oneself at an undefeatable upholder of some specific point of view, and generally, to earn a reputation as a pundit. The scholar might write elaborate commentaries on the Gita. But, as a

result of all that study, if in his character, behaviour and conduct, he does not prove that the Gita has soaked into him, all that punditry is but a burden He is carrying around. This is the lesson that Bharatiya culture tries to impress. The source from which this lesson emerges is the Guru, the Purusha, latent in you The study of the scriptures and other texts can re-inforce the spiritual urges already in man and induce him to practise the precepts. Do not treat the learning you derive from them as so much fodder for the brain. It must be sublimated into Ananda, for the Individual. Envy, pompousness, egoism—such evil traits have to be driven out of the individual.

This spiritual treasure can be got from another too. Only, the giver has to possess supreme attainment, and the recipient has to possess the special merit that deserves She achievement. The seed may have life in it; but the soil must be ploughed and made fit to activate it. When both these conditions are satisfied, the harvest of spiritual success is assured. He who instructs in the field of religion has, to be of enthralling excellence; the listener, too, has to be of sharp and clear understanding. When both are surprisingly supreme and extra-ordinarily enthusiastic, the result will be spiritual awakening of the highest level. Or else, rarely can such results will follow. These are the real Gurus. They steal your hearts, not your wealth. The pupil has to concentrate on service to the Guru, and ruminate over his teachings. The pupil must be eager to translate the teaching into daily activity and actual practice. He must fill his heart with devotion and dedicate all his skill for the actualisation of the Guru's counsel. Such a person deserves the name, Shishya.

When the thirst for liberation and the revelation of one's reality is acute, a strange and mysterious force in Nature will begin operating. When the soil is ready, the seed appears from somewhere! The spiritual Guru will be alerted and the thirst will get quenched. The receiving individual has developed the power to attract the giver of Illumination. That power is strong and full. Therefore naturally, the splendour that can confer the illumination will get ready to bless:

Readers! Though Gurus of the common type have increased in numbers, there is available for man, a Guru, far more supreme and far more compassionate than any or all of them. He is no other than the Avatar of the Lord. He can, by the mere expression of His Will confer on man the highest consummation of spiritual life. He can gift it and get man to accept it. Even the meanest of the mean can acquire the highest wisdom, in just a trice. He is the Guru of all Gurus. He is the fullest embodiment of God as man. Man can cognise God only in the human form. The Bharatiya Spiritual Stream has been declaring, over and over again, that adoring God in the human form is the highest duty of man. Unless God incarnates as man, man can never hope to see God or listen to His Voice. Of course, man may picture God in various other forms, but he can never approximate to the genuine form of God. However much one may try, man cannot picture God in any form except the human. People can pour out wonderful discourses and talks on God and the nature and composition of all that exists in the Universe. They may satisfy themselves by asserting that all accounts of God descending in human form are meaningless myths. That is what the poor ordinary eye can discern. This strange inference is not based on Jnana. As a matter of fact, Jnana is totally absent in these assertions and declarations. What we can notice in them is only the froth floating on ego waves.

(To be continued)

Enemy Number One

The world today is rolling in a sick-bed, afflicted with fear, anxiety and all types of phobia. It is not as if there is no remedy to cure it and make it whole and healthy again. What is the treatment that can set the world right? Man must realise his high destiny, his precious heritage, his innate, strength and virtues. That will remove the hatreds, the greeds, the suspicions, that have caused this morbid situation. Develop the bond of brotherhood, this is the remedy suggested by various practitioners. But, that is not enough at all. Peace and harmony cannot be ensured when people tell themselves that they are brothers. We find that brothers and sisters, born of same same mother, fight against each other and place trust in each other. They pollute their minds with anger and envy and render their lives and the lives of their brothers and sisters miserable. Filial reverence and fraternal cooperation are mostly absent today among mankind. They fight for shares in property and spend much of their time and money in courts, trying to wreak vengeance against one another.

As a consequence of pride in one's own strength and power, a person might injure thousands, but, the pride will injure that person most, for, pride or egoism, is like a devil that possesses a man, a devil who is difficult to exorcise. Man cannot claim to be man, until this ego that prompts him to ruin others and ride over others is destroyed by Sadhana. The Gita directs that man has to be "nirmamo nir ahamkara." The Divine in him can manifest only when the dark forces of 'mine' and 'I' are rendered ineffective. To overpower the ego is a well-nigh-impossible task. We have heard of the six Internal foes that haunt man every moment of his life. But, the sense of 'I' and 'Mine' are far more deep rooted. People have conquered the six foes—Lust, Anger, Greed, Attachment, Pride and Hatred. Indeed, there are plenty who have achieved this victory. But, rare indeed is the hero who has demolished his ego, and escaped from its nefarious urge.

Egoism is a thorny bush and when one plants one in his heart and fosters it, he has to pay the penalty. Egoism makes enemies of fast friends; it ruins many good causes and projects. It will not allow two good men to work together. Grief follows it like a shadow. Where there is no ego, joy, peace, courage, co-operation and love flourish. When man is aware that the same Divine Consciousness that motivates him is equally motivating all others, then, Love ousts the ego into the background and takes charge of man's activities, words and thoughts. Consider this incident "The neighbour loses his son quite suddenly, and he is in great grief. So, the man goes to him and tries to console him and comfort him, by various arguments and anecdotes. "My dear friend! Why is a man born? Why does he die? The reason why he was born also explains why he died. Birth means death. Fate plays strange games with us. We are as puppets in the show. What is the good of grieving over the dead?" He pours into the ears of the bereaved person all the Vedanta that he knows. But, this grief continues as before, until he becomes aware of the truth, himself, unaided.

A few months later, the same neighbour loses his son. Now, the neighbour who received all the Vedanta a few months ago comes to him and repeats the same quotations seriatim, He says that the sons live only so long as the Karma lasts and their lives are cut short when they have no more Karma to atone for. "Similarly we too can keep our sons alive with us only so long as we have bargained for, by the good deeds we have done in previous lives. It is all a question of paying off

old debts.” These statements cannot console the aggrieved man. For, the man who preaches has not lost his son; the man who grieves is the man who has lost his son. When ego is awake, no wisdom can appeal. The feeling, 'not my son' is the root cause of the calmness with which advice is retailed.

We build a house for ourselves and are happy it is ours. When some one pastes a cinema poster on the wall, we feel 'our house' is tarnished and we even go the courts to punish the offender. When the election season is on, the walls are disfigured by loud and loathsome slogans and we quarrel with all and sundry, for defacing on a walls. Then, suppose, we sell the house to some one and move off. After that, even if the house is bombed, we are not in the least worried. It was the ego that caused all the worry so long. How did this egoism get into our make-up? Is it a weed that grew in us and is cultivated by us, until it destroys us root and branch? Where was this ego in the beginning? Where were we before we were born? Where will we be after we die? But, all our ideas and inferences are the products of the period between birth and death. When the girl you married was seriously ill as a child you never worried, since she had not become 'yours'. We have ourselves grown this attachment, as a cohesive and stabilising factor in life. But, we have allowed it to grow into huge dimensions, so that it hinders our spiritual progress. Cultivate Love, but, not delusion. Love the wife and children and do your duty towards them as a husband and as a father. But, always hold on to the true values. Do not lose the sense of proportion Take this illustration. There is an areca-nut palm, swaying, tall and slim, in the wind. It has a long thin shadow, also swaying, on the sandy ground below. God is the Truth and she World is His shadow. You desire to pluck a few nuts; but, you mistake the shadow for the tree and walk along the thin dark line and clutch the unreal nuts. This is what can be referred to as Delusion. But climb the tree, the Truth. You get the fruits. And, you appear also hopping along the thin dark line and plucking nuts. That means, proceed on the path of Love, the path of God; you can get both worlds. Love will expand your heart so much that you cannot escape from the duties to your kith and kin. Remember always that wife, son, mother—all kinship is basically only physical, body-bound, time-limited.

The ego brings wave after wave of wants and wishes before our attention and craves for our effort to gain them. It is a never ending series. So, try to reduce your wants; try to expand the range of your love, in order to be free from its coils. Living involves many impacts, confrontations, companionships, separations, conflicts and neglects. We have to give up both types of contacts—the repugnant and the pleasant, the viyoga and the samyoga. Attach yourself to God and the delusion of the world will automatically get loosened. Take the cases of Hiranyaksha, Hiranyakasipu, Kamsa, Ravana and the rest. They had all the wealth and power to be happy and peaceful. But, they were over ruled by their ego, which led them to ruin.

The ego attacks the sage, the scholar and the Sadhaka, the Heads of Monasteries and the gurus, even more than ordinary men. Their ego makes them proclaim that they can defeat all others in controversy, that they can prove every one else wrong and that they are the ones nearest to God. When egoism enters man, envy follows fast behind and occupies the heart. Some Gurus who have religious institutions under them laugh at you, when you tell them that you are proceeding to Puttaparthi for this year's Dasara. 'So, you have also become a victim of this Sai Baba madness!' they tease you. This is not what a spiritually advanced person should say. This seems to emanate from the depth of egoism and envy. "Good! You are welcome to go to any place

where you can get Peace of Mind, where you can acquire Ananda and where you become aware of Divinity. I am glad you have secured such a place. God is one and He is Omnipresent.” Monks wearing ochre robes should be free from egoistic pride and envy. I always tell you that God is present everywhere, in every one; that all names and forms are His. I direct you to go to any place where you can carry on Sadhana quietly, where you sense the atmosphere of Divinity and where you receive Love and can cultivate Love through Service.

When Arjuna reduced to ashes the huge Khaandava Forest, his ego did not raise its head. But, when he stood before the Kaurava army, the ego told him to flee. He had made enormous preparations for the fray; he had amassed especially destructive weapons, after years of austerity and adventure. When Krishna offered to mediate with the Kauravas and gain some token of their having yielded to the entreaties of the Pandavas, so that war can be averted, Arjuna argued with Him and told Him that His mission was bound to fail "Can Jasmine flowers yield fragrance when thrown into fire? Why waste your sweet words of persuasion on their deaf ears? Can life-sustaining nectar be got from life-killing poison? Well. Please yourself by going amidst them. For myself, I am all for battle, this very moment.” The Arjuna who was so bold and bellicose, was suddenly attacked by the delusion of egoism. He said, "I have no desire to rule over a burial-ground. I would rather beg and eke out my livelihood, than kill these kinsmen of mine. He told him, in the Gita. 'nirmamo nirahankarah prasanthim adhigacchatihe who is devoid of the 'Mine' and 'I' tendencies and the delusion that 'these are mine', 'these are not mine', 'this is I' and 'this is not-I'can alone attain the higher Peace, the Prasanthi.

—*Bhagavan's Discourse, 11-10-1978*

Give up and Gain

We have to interpret the Yajnas and Yagas that were prescribed and celebrated from ancient times in India as part of a grand strategy to make man realise his innate Divinity. They were elaborately devised ceremonies which sought to purify the emotions and clarify the thought-processes. The common man imagines that a Yajna means the erection of a ritual dais, with sacrificial pits for raising fires, the pouring of ghee to feed the flames with the utterance of certain mysterious formulae by priests selected for the purpose and a magnificent feast at the end of it all, with gifts for participants. But, Yajnas need not necessarily have all this pompous paraphernalia. All acts recommended by the scriptures are Yajnas, sacrifices of something the sacrificer possesses and suffers from.

There are two chief types of Yajnas—those prescribed by Shruti and those laid down by Smriti, which can also be classified as Internal and External. The Internal Yajna means the worship of the Form of God that one has installed within himself by means of intense Dhyana. We have to place Him in the shrine of the heart and offer as sacrifice the bestial and animal instincts and impulses that we still carry about with us. The mind is the sacrificial altar. The animal urges in us are the offerings in the fire.

Each one has passed through countless animal lives and the impact of those experiences are still, even when the individual has put on the apparel of man, persisting in the inner regions of the mind and the longings of the senses. Man is overcome often with willfulness, pride and self-conceit, which are the characteristics of the buffalo. Sojourn in the body of a buffalo during a lifetime or two must be the reason why man is afflicted with these perversities. Sheer foolishness fills man, off and on. He cannot be influenced at those times by reasoning or persuasion. This is the Inheritance that man has been burdened with, as a result of his living as a sheep in some or many previous lives. Man resorts to thieving and slyness in order to appropriate to himself what he cannot get by straight means. It may not be wrong to conclude that the slyness must have been acquired when present day man lived as a cat in times gone by. Man is noted today for his waywardness and unsteady behaviour; these qualities he must have imprinted on himself while he was a monkey, jumping from branch to branch in some forest. These low characteristics cannot be the true nature of man. Man is marked by holy, divine, ideal, truth-based, love-formed characteristics. Really speaking man has discarded long ago his animal behaviour; but, they re-appear and pester him, when the will to keep them away weakens. Therefore, by celebrating the Internal Yajna, man has to get rid of the animal heritage, once and for all. Then only can the human in him blossom into the Divine which is its destiny: in the Internal Yajna, man seeks Divine Grace to carry out this transformation successfully.

In order to overwhelm the inner foes, it might be necessary to keep out external foes also. So, while paying attention to the internal Yajna, it is obligatory that External Yajna too is undertaken. One has to engage in external activities that can supplement and support the struggle with the inner foes. The objective world is full of traps and temptations that have to be guarded against.

From ancient times, Yajnas like the Vedapurusha Saptaha Yajna, used to be celebrated in some quiet village or little town, on some far, off river bank or in some silent forest hermitage; but, it was clear to all that the Yajna was for the good of all and not for those who actually participate in it as ritualists or priests. It was not done to benefit one caste or region. When it was celebrated in a place that belonged to no one in particular all could share in the joy and the grace. Every one could contribute their mite of provisions or grain or ghee, to the common pool and feel that they are co-sharers in the spiritual endeavour. No distinction was made then between caste and caste, or between townsmen or villagers or the learned and the illiterate. Lokas Samasthaas Sukhino Bhavantu—Let all the worlds enjoy happiness and prosperity. That was the urge that led people to celebrate the Yajna. Impelled by this high ideal, the wherewithal for the Yajna was collected, the mantras were uttered and the offerings made. Therefore, the Grace of God, the Yajnapurusha, the Acceptor of the Adoration and the Sacrifice, spread over the entire mankind.

We consume in one meal rice grains grown in some far distant land, vegetables grown in a nearby garden, and milk and curds yielded by cows in the same village; the stomach receives them and transforms them into strength, and conveys the essence of that food to every organ, limb, muscle, nerve and cell of our body. Thus, the body obtains strength and a sense of happiness. The Yajna too is a process similar to this one. Grain, provisions, ghee etc. gathered from various places are offered at the sacrificial fire and the entire Desa (Region) gets strength and happiness, just as the Deha (body) gets, from the food consumed.

The slokas from the Bhagavad-Gita that are repeated before every meal declare that the materials that constitute the meal are Brahman, the person who prepares the meal is Brahman, the consumer is Brahman, the beneficiary is Brahman and the activity that is the result of the meal is to be dedicated to Brahman. It also declares that it is God who digests the food, and distributes its essence to the entire body, in order to sustain it and strengthen it. The energy that digests the food is symbolised as the Fire in the stomach. The slokas are

Brahmarpanam, Brahmahavih Brahmagno Brahmanahutam
Brahmaiva tena ganthavyam, Brhama karma Samadhinah
Aham vaiswanaro bhutwaa praninaam deham aasrithah
Pranaapaana samaayuktaa pachaamyannam chaturvidham

The Sacrificial Fire on the Yajna Vedika or Dais is the outer symbol of the Fire Energy in the human stomach, the Vaiswanara, the Jatara Agni. Every offering made into this Sacrificial Fire will contribute to the health and happiness of mankind. The vehicle of Vayu, or Air, will convey the finer particles, the purifying particles of these offerings to the farthest reaches of the world. The vibrations of the Vedic mantras that these pundits recite will have their impact on the hearts of all men and affect adversely the lower instincts and passions they are now burdened with. It is for this very reason that the sages of past ages designed and prescribed these Yajnas. The rituals that we perform through objective means are therefore only reflections and representatives of the inner struggles by which we hope to win inner peace and victory.

Virtues and vices do not enter man from outside him. When we encounter some grief, or are afflicted by some pain, we immediately ascribe it to some outside agency and we start blaming or hating some outer circumstance or outside individual. This is a profound error. For, grief, pain, virtue, vice, good, evil—all emanate from within us. All are manifestations of our natural qualities or our basic deficiencies. Each experience that pleases us or pains us is but a reflection of our own inner assets of good or evil. This is the truth, which can guarantee mental peace and reveal Divine Glory—One may bewail that in spite of his good thoughts, beneficent behaviour and righteous activity, he is suffering grief and pain. But, that is easily said. If others do not know the truth, does not God know? The grief and pain are witnesses to the fact that you have deserved them by your acts, in this life or in previous lives. The seeds are there, deep in your own selves, implanted now or in the past. If one bewails that the weed has grown without no one planting a seed, it only shows his ignorance. So, strenuous efforts have to be made, to uproot the down dragging animal heritage that is in us and become wholly human, if not partially Divine. One method of uprooting these weeds is to offer all thoughts, words and deeds to God, as the sloka quoted already recommends. Speak and act, in order to please the God in you. Let all your acts be in adoration of the indwelling Lord. The Yajna is an exercise in this Sadhana. Offer ghee into fire; take it as a symbol of pouring your animal impulses into the fire of destruction. Use the external ceremony as an image of the Inner Yajna.

How can a person bound hand and foot by another, himself free another from bondage? How can a person who is a slave of his passions deal with even his objective handicaps? In order to free himself from the inner entanglements, man has to take up voluntarily and enthusiastically, activities that can tame the outward-leading senses. The Yajna which has continued in Indian

Culture and tradition for thousands of years has to be understood as a Sadhana, which helps to conquer the passion of greed, and overwhelm the inner foes of hatred and attachment to the trivial and the temporary.

When you hold a mirror in your hand and apply a beauty dot on the image seen in the mirror, the dot will shine at the appropriate place and beautify the face, so long as you keep the mirror straight before you. Turn a little and the dot can be seen on your cheek or chin. But, apply the dot on yourself namely the subject.... and wherever you turn, to whatever side, the dot will ever beat the proper place on the face. Then, the reflection too will be nice with the dot at the right place. So, correct yourself first, then, the world will behave correctly towards you. The Yajnas teach you the lessons needed for this supreme effort to correct your own selves first.

The Puranas contain many descriptions of Yajnas and many lessons for the Sadhakas, but, they are sadly neglected by practitioners of spiritual discipline. Purana means "that which, though old, is yet new." They do not describe legends and myths only. They build the royal road by which the Sadhaka and the seeker can march towards the goal of life, namely, merging with its Source and Secret, God. They teach us the great discipline—From dawn till dusk, from waking at dawn to falling into sleep at night, all thoughts, words and acts are to be dedicated to the Lord, in the spirit of the Yajna—not mine but Thine. The Lord is the energy, the skill, the knowledge, the Intelligence, the Prajna that enabled you to utter a meaningful word, to form meaningful thoughts and to perform a meaningful act. How can the doer be divorced from the deed? He the Lord, Is the Inner Motivator, the prompter, the producer, the performer and the witness.

This is the reason why the Vedas announce that Brahma is Prajnana, Prajnanam Brahma. This is one of the four Mahavakyas that the Vedas enshrine within them. Since Prajnana or Brahma is the Reality in each of us, it is possible for a realised soul to believe and assert that He is God. This statement can be taken to be egoistic but it is the ripe form of egoism, as differentiated from the two unripe forms. 'I am the Body,' 'I am the Jivi'. The ego in the realised soul is like the burnt rope, a streak of ash, that cannot bind, but, which reminds us of the rope, its thickness, curves etc. The I should be rightly applied only to the Atma, not the body or the bundle of experiences called Jivi. It is the Atma. Every one refers to himself as I. The I is there in all. Meditate on this Truth and try to feel its impact in every thought, word and deed that you are responsible for. That is the road to Liberation.

—*Bhagavan: Discourse 5-10-78 Vedapurusha Sapthaha Jnana Yajna Day*

He is All Love and Bliss

The Akhanda Bhajan for 24 hours that was Inaugurated at 6 P. M., on 11th November at Sai Centres around the world can truly be said to herald the Birthday Celebrations of the Lord. The sacred lamp is lit to mark the inauguration of the Bhajan, everywhere, around the world when the sun sets on the 11th and the light of Love will illumine human hearts in all lands. On the 18th November, the villages around Puttaparthi were in high joy, since the Rathotsavam of the

Gopalakrishna temple, was celebrated with acclaim that day. The Temple is associated with the mysterious legendary origins of the village and so, Bhagavan who had revealed the significance of the markings and lines on the Stone that was worshipped therein, initiated during the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of His Advent, the Rathotsavam, for the new Gopalakrishna Idol that He blessed and installed there. Thousands of devotees joined the villagers drawing the decorated Chariot whereon the Idol was ceremoniously placed In the Divine Presence of Bhagavan. On that and two subsequent nights other Village Deities were also taken in procession through the decorated streets of the Village, halting before every house to receive the reverend homage of the residents.

Thousands of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Dal Volunteers had come into Prasanthi Nilayam even about the 18th, for they were eager to share in the preparations for the Birthday Celebrations. They erected the shamiana and the tents that were brought into the Campus, in order to accommodate the devotees who would gather, and the men and women members of the Seva Dal from all parts of India, who had to attend the IV All India Seva Dal Conference, on the 20th, 21st and 22nd November. On the 19th, the entire area was busy with their arrivals, and movements to receive their identity card; from the State Convenors of Seva Dal and through them their Badges of Admission.

On the 20th, more than 10,000 Seva Dal members from all the States of India dressed in immaculate white ranged themselves 'in fours' around the Mandir, in the afternoon. With the women members marching to the tune of the Bhajan songs played by the Anantapur Womens' College Band and the male members of the Seva Dal following, the procession entered the Poornachandra Auditorium, about 4-30 P. M. Members of the Central and State Trusts, the State Presidents of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, a batch of Seva Dal members from Malaysia, and more than three hundred visitors from foreign countries were also present.

Bhagavan reminded the Seva Dal, that Seva is fundamentally a spiritual Sadhana; it has to emerge from a pure unselfish heart devoid of ego or pride. "It must be rendered with intelligence, and discrimination. It must lead to the discovery of the oneness, of the person who serves with the person who receives the service.

The person soaked in self-less service and universal Love is God's own favourite child. That love must be manifested and evidenced by deeds and in acts of highest charity. Such men are born for the good of the world. Just as a house is built of brick and mortar, the residence for God in man must be built of Love and Faith. Seva is not undertaken for giving some pleasure to the person who serves. It must yield Ananda, Contentment and Comfort to the person served. Many who work in Seva Organisations do offer their Seva so crudely and ignorantly that they do more harm than good. While initiating any item of Seva, you must examine your intentions: Does the urge arise from selfishness or a spirit of sacrifice? Is your primary concern your own fame or fortune, or, is it concern over the misfortune of others? Genuine Seva longing must arise from the heart and must envelop all living being."

Thereafter, the State Convenors of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Dal presented before Bhagavan and the gathering short reports of the activities in their own states. Most of them from North India described how they served to relieve the distress of the people in the flood-devastated areas in

the Gangetic Basin, and other regions. Others gave accounts of the educational, activities and the programmes of rural service that the States were engaged in.

On the 21st at 9 A.m., Bhagavan laid the Foundation Stone for The Prasanthi Nilayam College Building. Seva Dal members had the unique good fortune of clearing and decorating the area—on the main road leading to the Nilayam, to its right, a little to the South of the Easwaramma High School. The area was levelled by bulldozers and with the range of hills as the background the College will assuredly be the cynosure of all who are drawn to the International spiritual capital which Prasanthi Nilayam is. While the sky was echoing the bhajans from more than 25,000 devoted pilgrims, Bhagavan ceremoniously arranged the consecrated stones in the North-Eastern Corner of the ground whereon the basement would rise. He created auspicious gemstones and other materials and placed them underneath the stones. Sri. Ramanathan Chettiar of Madurai was graciously directed by Bhagavan to offer Puja with his wife at the N. E. Corner of the site where the College Auditorium was to be built and, in the Divine Presence, he arranged the stones which were blessed by Bhagavan. Her Highness the Rajamatha of Nawanagar was graciously directed to do this bhoomi Puja in the Divine Presence, for the Students Hostel that will come up, to the west of the Easwaramma High School. The vast expanse of land where these buildings and others will soon come up was filled with thousands of devotees from all parts of the world, thrilled at the significance of the events they were witnessing.

When the Proceedings of the Conference were resumed on the 21st, six speakers chosen from among the State Convenors of Seva Dal spoke, two on each of the three subjects which the Conference was to deliberate upon—"Duty and Responsibility of the Seva Dal Member," "Quality in Seva Activities" and "Expansion of Seva Activities". The speakers stressed the spiritual Sadhana that Seva ought to be, and emphasised the value of 'mental Seva' and the need for the Seva Dal members practising Dhyana and Japa, apart from attending Bhajan and Nagarsankirtan. It was mentioned that the Seva Dal is the wing of the Organisation that has the most contact with the people and the deepest impact on them, and so, not only should the Seva be skilled and satisfactory to the recipients, but, the Sevak should be humble and reverential in his approach to the task. As regards the expansion of Seva Activities, the suggestions were to encourage more and more boys and girls to continue their Bal Vikas training upto the Pre-Seva Dal stage also. Also, to restrict the admission of new members to persons below 35, though, once they are trained and become enthusiastic Sevaks, they can continue as long as they are able to contribute their skill and eagerness.

At 2-30 P.M., the same day, the State Presidents invited their District Presidents and District Convenors of Seva Dal for a group discussion led by the State Convenors of Seva Dal, about the various points that arose during the morning session—training of Seva Dal, Sale of Sai Literature, Rural Service, First Aid Service expansion etc. A large number of concrete and practicable items of Seva Dal programmes was formulated and the States that had some valuable ideas to offer, nominated their spokesmen who addressed the General Sessions, which began at 5 P.M. in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan.

Bhagavan began His Valedictory Discourse to that vast concourse of more than ten thousand Seva Dal workers, with an exhortation that they should practise and proclaim the Sai Dharma which is but the refined form of the ancient Sanathana Dharma. He called upon them to

recognise the one Omnipresent God in every living being and to serve all beings with that faith. "Do not give way to hesitation or doubt; overcome all obstacles—ridicule opposition, indifference—with courage and the strength derived from dedication. Take the handicaps that confront you as challenges to your faith and tests provided by the Lord to appreciate your devotion all the more.

The highest Yoga is service or Seva rendered with no desire for gain. This is what is mentioned in the scriptures as Nishkama Karma. It ensures the cure of the animal instincts and impulses in man, substituting for them Divine qualities of Love and Forbearance, and keep man steady on the path of spiritual progress. The structure of a happy life can be built only on the foundation of love and compassion, which the practice of Nishkama Karma develops. Other types of Sadhana might or might not benefit man. But, this Sadhana cannot fail in purifying the heart and all levels of human consciousness.

Whenever you feel evil about others, be convinced that such thoughts come to you from the evil already in you. The feeling emerge from the heart and the heart is tainted. You are confident that you are good; then, why not assume that the other person also is as you are? This belief will make your Seva a meeting of hearts.

Prema from which Seva emerges is a fragrant, charming flower; it is also a rare blossom. Its fragrance arises from the desire to avoid pain to others. The fragrance is the fragrance of virtue. No evil thought must be entertained by the consciousness; no trace of greed should tarnish the mind. The pests of conceit and selfishness should not swarm the flower and rob it of both scent and symmetry. Mind-control marks the champak flower in man; sense-control is the jasmine; compassion is the rose. The Sevak, imbued with these ideals, will be on the alert to use every chance that may come to him to serve others-wherever or whenever it may confront him.

Divine Grace can be earned not by the quantity or variety of the Seva that you do, but by the purity and unselfishness of the motives that urge you to render it." Referring to the suggestions that were made by the members about items of Seva, Baba said, "Rajesh Khanna of Delhi showed you a small First Aid Box, which every Seva Dal member could carry with him and use, when the need arises. It is a good idea, since medicines, cotton, bandages, and other essentials will be readily available. But, I would like you to take another First Aid Box in the pocket of your heart, for it will give quick cure for some serious mental illnesses like hatred, greed, desire. Have tablets of Discrimination, an ounce or two of 'Sense-control', and a packet or two of Shanti, Prema and Sahana, all powdered and mixed well. By these drugs administered in time, basic ignorance or Ajnana can be cured." Referring to the reports that were read of Seva in villages that have been adopted by the Samitis in various States, Bhagavan declared that the repair or construction of a length of road, or the cleaning of drains, the medical checkups, the bhajans and the lectures are of little importance; what has to be done by the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Dal is Seva of a far more fundamental value. "Assess the evil habits, the gambling, the drinking, the consequent social and family tragedies that occur and try by individual and group persuasion to reform the moral character and habits of the people. That is real Rural Development. Without this moral reform, any additional income, they may get from development schemes will only be additional temptation to drink and gamble."

Bhagavan blessed the Seva Dal Members by His Declaration that each Dal is a Petal attached to Him and draws life, sustenance, strength "and inspiration from Him direct. Bhagavan graciously granted the coveted chance of Padanamaskar to each of them.

During the 3-days, the gathering was entertained; after the evening sessions with spiritual plays, recitations, songs and dance Items, provided by Bal Vikas children from Madras, Chirala; the tender kids from Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vihar, Nandanavanam, Ooty gave a delightful programme of dance and plays, which endeared them to the heart of every one. The students of the Sri Sathya Sai College Bangalore, enacted a Hindi Play which depicted in realistic terms the transformation that modern youth is being blessed with, under the Divine Guidance of Bhagavan In the College.

23rd November, the 53rd Birthday of Bhagavan, dawned brilliantly. Nature was in a festive mood. As soon as the Flag was hoisted on the Prasanthi Mandir, Bhagavan moved in procession, led by a Military Band from Bangalore, towards the Samadhi of the Parents. Swami says, 'My life is my Message', and true to that declaration, He sets the example to people that they should revere their parents. Later, at 10 A.M., more than 25,000 devotees from all parts of the world gathered in and around the Poornachandra Auditorium, in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan. Bhagavan was offered garlands as a token of reverential homage by the Members of the Central Trust as well as by the Heads of the Educational Institutions that are flourishing all over the land through His direct guidance and blessings. Then, Bhagavan blessed the gathering with His Birthday Message.

He declared that He was beyond all the vicissitudes of time and space, that He had neither birth nor death, and that the greeting with which many approached Him that day, viz., "Happy Birthday to you," was singularly inappropriate, because He was always happy. He said that the Birthday was being celebrated because thousands from all over were arriving at Prasanthi Nilayam, despite great difficulties during the journey, and enormous expense of time and money. 'You do not gather because the Birthday is celebrated; the Birthday is celebrated because you gather. That is the truth,' He declared. "I am not attached to such trivial matters as the celebration of birthdays. The day when you escape from the coils of attachment to the body and develop attachment to the Indweller, God, that day you can legitimately celebrate as My Birthday, for, from then on, I shall be with you, within you, guiding and guarding."

Bhagavan laid great emphasis on the need for a Unified Vision, the need to realise the Unity behind the seeming Diversity. With the vast increase in knowledge about things, specialisation has developed and more is known about the parts than of the whole. Each one has his own theory and his own special field of study. There are doctors who can deal with illnesses of the heart, the eye, the ear, the throat, the skin, the liver, the chest etc, but, the body is a coordinated function supervised by some unseen force. So also, all lands and people are parts and cells of One Divine Body. Do not ignore the underlying Divinity in people, while noticing their differences in colour and creed. There are people who call for the abolition of what they call 'blind faith'; they clamour that we must believe only in things and facts which we can see or become aware of. But, they announce a certain person as their father not because their faith is based on these two considerations, but, on their faith in the word of the mother. Mother Nature proclaims to us that God is our Father, but, we are asked not to have faith in those words! "These people have faith in

editors, correspondents, film makers; but, they have no faith in what Nature announces from every being around us, that some Inscrutable Power is planning and programming the Cosmos.

In the evening, the vast gathering had the exhilarating opportunity of getting the Darshan of the Lord on the Jhoola. Before the Jhoola function began, Sri Vijayaraghava Rao, the eminent flutist from Madras gave a short recital.

Smt. Radha and Smt. Jayalakshmi, the famous concert artistes from Madras thrilled the gathering with their exquisite renderings of Kirtans and Sai Bhajans. A Stereo Record where they sing Hindi Bhajans on Bhagavan was also released on the occasion. While Bhagavan was on the Jhoola in Divine Splendour, filling the hearts of thousands with supreme ecstasy, the students of the Sathya Sai College, Bangalore who had captured the heart of thousands of devotees by the Telugu Songs on Ramakatha rendered with the help of their unique orchestra gave another wonderful and inimitable programme. This time, it was Sathya Sai Katha, in Telugu songs composed by Sri Adinarayana Rao, Music Director! When the names of the participants were announced, one was struck by the All India character of the orchestra and when it was known that Rupak Changkakoti and his collaborators were the singers, the audience was delighted because they were sure of spiritually elevating musical feast. And, their hopes were more than fulfilled.

—Ed.

The first step in Atmavichara is the practice of the Truth that whatever gives you pain, gives pain to others, and whatever gives you joy gives joy to others. So do unto others as you would like them to do unto you; desist from any action in relation to others which, if done by them will give you pain. Thus a kind of reciprocal relationship will grow between you and others and gradually, you reach a stage when your heart thrills with joy when others are joyful and shudders in pain when others are sad. This sharing of joy and grief is automatic, immediate and universal. It is a sign of great spiritual advance. For, the wave has come to know that it is a part of the Ocean. All waves are temporary manifestations of the self-same Ocean.

—Baba

It's Simple

He is the Rays of the Sun
He is the Life Everlasting
He is My God
He is My Friend

He is Consciousness Expanding
He is Light Eternally
He is Your God
He is Your Friend

He is Joy
He is Happiness
He is Love
He is Everything
I Am.
They Are.
He is.
You Are.

—*Douglas J. Mahr*

Wait and See

If you want to be free,
You must learn to see
The pain of a flea, the glee of a bee.
The heart of a tree and the presence of He.
Then, you'll be—ready to turn the key
You will take an OD of the Cosmic Sea—
The sea that is yearning for you and for me;
Eternity it waiting,just,
You wait and see!

—*Christoff Saint John Age: 10 years*

One Flame, Billion Lights

In various parts of this country, there are different versions about the origin of this Festival. In North India, the story given is that it marks the triumphant return to Ayodhya, of Rama, Sita and Lakshmana, after their long period of exile and after the destruction of the Rakshasa race. In other parts of India, it is associated with the destruction of the demon called Naraka, by Sri Krishna and His consort Sathya. In some other regions it is supposed to celebrate the incarnation of Vamana and the blessings He invoked on Bali the demon King after subjugating his pride.

But the most prevalent and most significant of these lessons is the one which relates it to Narakasura and his downfall. His very name indicates that Narakasura was promoting the path of Naraka or Hell. All vices and sins were patronised by him. So, even his own mother, the Earth, prayed to the Lord to annihilate him and his gang of wicked demons. She pleaded that the Lord himself should put an end to her son's evil career and that the day of her son's death should be declared a festival day for the whole world, when mankind can express its joy at the deliverance.

This is the reason why this day is celebrated by people of all classes and all ages in merriment and feasting.

People wake up very early this day and light lamps all over their homes and all along the streets, to indicate that the dark days of the demon are over. They take ceremonial bathe, wear new clothes, dance around crackers and flares and enjoy themselves.

Narakasura represents the down—dragging tendencies of man and Deepavali celebrates the conquest of man over them. His capital city had a name which reveals his fundamental fault. Prag-jhothi-aba-Aura means the city where people are not aware of the primordial Light, the splendour of the Atma. The citizens put their faith in the body and the senses, the ego, the passions, impulses and emotions that arise there from. Narakasura is the son of Mother Earth. All men are children of the same Mother and all have in them the down-dragging pulls for which Narakasura suffered. The Narakasura story is thus a challenge and a warning to all mankind.

The Lord destroyed this Asura and his brood, with Sathya, His consort by His side. This fact is fraught with a meaningful lesson that Truth is the best weapon to overcome evil. Sri Krishna is the Prema principle and His shadow is Sathya. They are both inseparable and complementary.

In the story popular in North India about Deepavali, there is also a profound meaning. Ayodhya means the City that can never fall into the hands of an enemy force, that is to say, the Atma itself. But, darkness overpowered it for 14 years when Rama was away in exile. Rama means that which gives delight and nothing gives greater delight than the Atma. That is why we say Atmarama, while referring to oneself. We never use the words Atmakrishna or Atmasiva. It is always Atmarama. When Rama is not 'present', delight disappears. So, when Rama returned, It was indeed as if Ayodhya was born anew; it was a festival of immense and spontaneous rejoicing. Site lighted the Lamp in the Palace of Ayodhya and spread delight in the heart of millions. Sita is the 'shadow' of Rama; She embodies Santhi, When Rama (Dharma) and Sita (Santhi) were restored to the empire, it became a festival of light.

It must be noted that the name Krishna also means, "that which attracts and gives delight." It is the characteristic of God that He acts like a magnet and draws beings back into the source from which they became. The symbolism behind the long lines of lamps that are hung on every house, marking its outline and the strings of little lamps that are hung over every door is also highly Illumining. For, the lamps are all lit from one initial Lamp, just as all the millions of individual beings are emanating from the one original source of Life. Each one is a Jyoti lit by the initial Param Jyoti. Though billions of lamps are lit from the flame of the One Principal Jyoti, it doesn't lose its splendour or diminish in illumining power. That is the lesson on the omnipresent Divine Principle which the Deepavali (gathering of Lights) teaches. "Meditate on the one Param-jyoti' out of which your own Jyoti has derived its power to shine; you are but a spark of that eternal Universal Flame. When this is realised, you are led from Tamas to Jyoti."

—From Discourse by Bhagavan. Deepavali, 1978

The Search For The Soul

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'Gnothi seauton' (Know thyself)

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

The Paradox Of The Soul: The search for the soul has been man's main spiritual concern for many millennia. The quest for the soul and the conquest of the self are ceaseless Sadhanas involving innumerable intellectual obstacles. If we know what the soul is, we need not search for it. If we do not know what it is, we cannot search for it. We cannot search for something, unless we know what it is. We cannot obviously search for something, of which we have no knowledge. Even if we find it, we may not be able to recognize it. Thus, the seeker finds himself on the horns of a logical dilemma, and reaches an intellectual impasse.

The Complementarity Of The Soul And The Self: Nevertheless, the soul is the supreme reality for mystics. Even an explicit denial of the soul involves its implicit affirmation! The soul is an irreducible asomatic element recognized by all occult, esoteric and mystical traditions. Though it cannot be explicated in terms of what we know or what we can know, we can opine about it. It is a concomitant of another nonmaterial and supraspatiotemporal subsistent called the self. The self is regarded as the individual, person, subject, knower, ego or the I. It is the integral unity or unbroken continuity that persists through all spatiotemporal transformations. The soul is the conception of a nonmaterial entity. It is often identified with mind, consciousness and personality. It is the locus of an individual's spiritual and mental life. The soul is the objective counterpart of the self and the self is the subjective counterpart of the soul. The soul is the disembodied self and the self is the embodied soul. Both of them emerge from and merge with the pure primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness,

Self-Knowledge: The multiplicity of asomatic entities mentioned by theologians, metaphysicians, occultists and mystics puzzle the lay person. It is impossible to compile an exhaustive Inventory of all these nonmaterial principles like the soul, spirit, vital spirit, anima, pneuma, nous, psyche, mind, personality, self, atman, brahman, and so on. It is an exercise in futility to define and categorize them.

To simplify the enquiry, let us apply the philosophical principle of Occam's Razor, according to which, entities should not be multiplied beyond necessity. Let us choose the self as the object of our Investigation, because it is the simplest and the clearest immaterial element that we can conceive of. There is also another significant consideration for selecting the self as the most representative supraspatiotemporal subsistent. It is supramental. It may not be mentally comprehended but it can be intuitively apprehended, it integrates 'psyche' and 'soma' or mind and body into a harmonious human personality.

The search for the self is synonymous with the acquisition of self-knowledge, a combination of the concepts of self and knowledge, which may be subjected to philosophical analysis for gaining logical clarification.

The Goals Of Philosophy: Philosophy is love of wisdom. Wisdom is the application of knowledge to life and its problems. The aims and objectives of philosophy may be enumerated as follows: to unify all human knowledge; to formulate a synthetic and synoptic world view; to coordinate and correlate the discoveries of the special sciences; to understand the unknown and interpret the unknowable in terms of the known; to explicate the less fundamental in terms of the more fundamental and the complex in terms of the simple; to reduce complexity to simplicity, diversity to unity and pluralism to monism; and to clarify metaphysical concepts in terms of physical entities.

The Basic Theory Of Knowledge: Epistemology is a normative science dealing with the theory of human knowledge, its scope and limitations. It is a systematic study of the sources, nature and validity of knowledge, which should ideally consist of verifiable propositions. The problem of knowledge is concerned with the philosophical analysis of ideas, concepts, propositions and arguments. Knowledge is an intellectual process linking the knower with the object of knowledge.

The Five-Fold Path To Reality: There are various ways of knowing, like authoritarianism, sensationism, empiricism, rationalism, intuitionism and mysticism. Authoritarianism may be ignored as a method of knowing, because it is tantamount to an uncritical acceptance of testimony in opposition to an independent endeavour to discover what is true or false. Sensationism is the theory that knowledge is sensory and stresses feelings and senses as value determinants. Empiricism is the view that human knowledge is derived from experience or through the senses. Rationalism asserts that the human mind can know truths that are logically prior to experience, though they may not be necessarily analytic. Intuitionism is the belief that some kinds of knowledge can be acquired by direct apprehension without conscious reasoning or immediate sense perception. Mysticism is the conviction that an immediate awareness of God or communion with the Divine is attainable. It is unitive knowledge of the ultimate theocentric reality. These are the several paths to the tabernacle of truth, which has been tantalizing humanity.

The Three Touchstones Of Truth: There are three traditional touchstones of truth viz. correspondence, coherence and utility. Empiricists employ correspondence as the ultimate criterion of truth, which is defined as correspondence to facts or fidelity to objective reality. It is that which conforms to facts or agrees with the actual situation. The correspondence theory of truth is upheld by realists. But facts may be falsified by illusions, delusions, hallucinations and wishful thoughts. Rationalists use the principle of coherence or consistency as their criterion of truth. It is a test of truth that emphasizes the consistency or harmony of our judgments. A judgment is asserted to be true if it is consistent or coheres with our judgments that are axiomatically accepted as truths. The test of coherence or consistency is insisted upon by idealists. But, It is quite possible to formulate a self-consistent system of falsehoods. Pragmatism stresses experience and experimental enquiry and defines truth as that which has satisfactory consequences. This is the pragmatic test of utility, according to which anything which works in

practice and has favourable results is true. But, epistemological utilitarianism may lead to the rationalization and glorification of expediency and opportunism. *Sub specie aeternitatis*, that is, from the point of view of the eternal, absolute truth is beyond these three traditional tests of truth.

Sensations, Perceptions and conceptions: From the standpoint of psychology, knowledge of the external world is acquired in three stages. The several sensory organs like the eyes, the nose, the ears, the tongue and the skin are the gateways of sensations. They provide us with the sense data of sight, smell, sound, taste and touch. These sensations refer to the attributes of the things sensed. Sensations are organized into perceptions of the external world. Perceptions are further systematized into concepts culminating in generalizations. These generalizations lead to the formulation of causal laws on the basis of observed uniformities in nature.

Deduction And Induction: From the standpoint of logic, knowledge is acquired by employing reason for deducing generalizations from the most elementary axioms or self-evident truths. In deduction, we proceed from universals to particulars, whereas in induction we proceed from particulars to universals.

Ways Of Knowing And Levels Of Truth: The philosophical method is a confederation of the different ways of knowing. The three traditional tests of truth complement one another. There are different levels of truth and different modes of knowledge.

Affirmation Of The Self Through Its Negation: The philosopher Hume denied the existence of the self. The Buddhist attitude to the self is noncommittal and agnostic. It is contended that the most profound introspection will not reveal the self but only a bundle of sensations and a procession of perceptions. These thinkers reject the reality of the self. The fallacy in their arguments can be easily exposed. A doubter cannot doubt himself or his own self. A doubt cannot exist without a doubter. The very act of doubting implies a doubter. The act of doubting cannot take place without a doubter or a doubting self. Thus, the self is affirmed through its denial and negation.

Cogito Ergo Sum: 'Cogito ergo sum', (I think, therefore I exist) said Rene Descartes, the philosopher and mathematician. He made use of the method of sustained scepticism or liberating doubt for the affirmation of the self. I may go on doubting everything around me. I may doubt the sense data provided by my sensory organs. I may doubt my eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin. I may regard all sensations of sight, sound, smell, taste and touch as illusions, hallucinations and self-delusions. I may be deprived of all these sensory faculties. I may imagine that I am blind, deaf, incapable of smelling, incapable of tasting and incapable of feeling warmth and cold. I may even go into a trance shutting out all sensations, perceptions and conceptions. I may become oblivious of the passage of time and forget my situation in space. I may suffer from total amnesia. Nevertheless, I cannot doubt my existence. I cannot doubt myself. I cannot doubt the I that I am. I think, therefore I exist. Cogito ergo sum. Quod erat demonstrandum! The most radical sceptic cannot doubt so thoroughly as to doubt himself. The unqualified affirmation of the self is an inevitable and necessary corollary of all sceptical schools of thought.

Self Knowledge Through Intuition: The nature of the self cannot be comprehended by any of the sensational and rational ways of knowing discussed in the foregoing paragraphs. The self does not possess any physical attributes. It is a 'substance' devoid of all qualities. It does not provide sense data for being organized into perceptions and concept. It cannot be perceived as a concrete, tangible and corporeal thing. But, what is meant by an attribute or a quality? It is a unique characteristic, which distinguishes an object from all other objects under observation. It is clear that knowledge of the self cannot be attained by sensationism because the self does not supply sensa or sense data. Empiricism depends on sensationism for its perceptions. Thus, the self lies outside the scope of sensational and empirical knowledge. Rationalism cannot operate in an intellectual vacuum. It can only apply the faculty of ratiocination when sensations and perceptions are available. Thus, it is obvious that the self transcends all sensations and perceptions. Nevertheless, the self can be known by subjective research. The self-validating certainty of my Individual intuition tells me that my self is a reality, that I am a self, which is the I that I am. I am a person, an individual, a unique personality a singular ego, an unrepeatable and unrepeatable phenomenon. The self is unique and retains its identity in the space-time continuum. This self recognized, apprehended and identified by the self-certifying validity of personal intuition, is the subjective ego controlling and coordinating the mind and body, which are as inextricably interrelated, interconnected and interwoven as space and time. Mind and body interpenetrate each other in every cell of the living organism.

The Horizon Of Human Thought: The empiricorational human mind cannot escape from the inevitable and unavoidable egocentric predicament. All thoughts centre on and emanate from the ego, Empiricorational thought is limited not only by the egocentric predicament but is also subject to the epistemological axiom of double dichotomization of all sensations, perceptions and conceptions. The moment I begin to think about an object I distinguish myself from the object of thought. This constitutes the primary dichotomy of empiricorational thought. There is another dichotomy involved in the process of thought. To think about an object, I must not only distinguish myself from the object of thought but also distinguish this object of thought from all other objects in the universe. This is designated as the secondary dichotomy of thought. The process of thinking is rigidly confined to the space-time continuum. The three-dimensions of space and the fourth dimension of time constitute the spatiotemporal coordinates of all microscopic and macroscopic events. Space and time may also be regarded as the grooves of human thought. Language is not only an Indispensable vehicle for the expression and exchange of ideas but also an essential aid to reflective thought. Empiricorational thought is conditioned and constrained by the phonemes and morphemes of a language. Thus, the self-apprehended by the individual intuition is associated with the egocentric predicament, which together with the primary and secondary dichotomies of thought, the space-time continuum and the linguistic barrier circumscribe the horizon of human thought.

The Self Is Transcendental: The self is beyond the comprehension of empiricorational thought because it is the creator, controller and coordinator of the egocentric predicament which constricts all sensations, perceptions and conceptions, Hence, the self is a supraspatiotemporal subsistent, verifiable by non-sensory intuition or extrasensory perception.

The Self Is A Spark Of Creative Cosmic Consciousness: I am conscious of myself. The self is conscious of itself. Consciousness is an attribute of the self. This consciousness is a form of pri-

primordial energy. The theories of quantum mechanics and relativity physics emphasize the role of the human observer and his consciousness. The experimenter investigating subatomic interactions starts as a nonparticipating observer but ends up as a nonobserving participator. His consciousness interacts with the chain of reactions. The implication is that consciousness is a form of primordial energy capable of doing work or causing displacement to material particles. The element of consciousness, when extended from the microscopic phenomena of subatomic physics to the macroscopic phenomena of relativity physics, becomes the pure primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness. Thus, individual self conscious of itself is akin to the pure primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness. We are all tiny 'sparks' of the pure primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness. That is why, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba addresses us as 'divyaatmaswaroopulu' or embodiments of the divine atman. Baba Himself is the integral incarnation of the pure primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness.

(To be concluded)