

THUS SPAKE BHAGAVAN:

Awake! Arise!

*We can easily declare "Not this", "Not that".
But who can declare of Brahman, "This is It?"
For Brahman is Eternal Truth, Eternal Wisdom,
Beyond the power of speech to describe or communicate.*

Embodiments of love I Sparks emanating from fire are neither different from it, nor identical with it. So, too, the Jiva (individualised Being) is neither different from Brahman, nor identical with it.

How many of those born are humans when born? How many grow into human status, after being born? How many have lived as humans who have known the key to right living and right action? It is not by physical appearance that man is distinguished. The cotton tree bears long green fruits which resemble the mango; there are varieties of wild canes, but they are not sugarcane at all; quartz may look like sugar candy but it is not edible. We ought not to be misled by form. The content is the important criterion, and the content is Divinity.

*Jiva in the Body; in the Heart Is God
Both of them do sport some time
And then they part, each from each.
One there is, the puppeteer behind
And the Puppets—Evil and Good—
They play their pranks in the One.*

Jiva and Brahman become identical only when Liberation is achieved. Until the sea is reached, the river remains as river. It has a different name and a distinct form. So too, the Jiva, so long as it is involved with the physical case, the senses; the mind and the instruments of consciousness, does not merge in God. It remains apart.

The Atma is ever self-contained, self-sufficient. The material world exists on account of the Other. The Atma is the basic Unity which assumes the appearance of Diversity, the world. Its immanence is the unifying Truth, which is evident as the Divine in all beings. It is the duty of every man to live in the awareness of this Truth.

*He who lives on Earth must become Man at first
Then, he has to learn the way to God
And discover the delight of the Spirit
This is the Rajayoga path that the Vedas teach.*

The Atma illumines all objects; it needs no other source of illumination to shine. It is the seer of the Universe. For the Atma, the entire cosmos is an object that is seen. Even the eye that sees is an object, for the eye cannot see without the mind caring to see. And even the mind is an object, for the mind has to be prompted and kept alert by something else that wills and resolves.

The warp and woof of the mind consist of 'wills and won'ts', of 'reachings out and drawings back'. The reasoning faculty is itself a tool of the mind. The Atma has, as its apparent apparel, the body, the mind, reason, intellect and the inner tools of perception.

Though it seems to be the centre of all activities and agitations, the, Atma is unaffected. It is consciousness, pure and unsullied. The body and its accessories and equipment have birth and death, they develop and decline. But the Atma is free from change.

*The Eternal, with no birth and death,
No beginning, no middle nor end
It does not die, it is not born,
It can never be destroyed
It is the Witness of all, the Atma.*

He who strives to attain the awareness of this Atma has indeed fulfilled the destiny of man. But, out of sheer ignorance, man today has no inclination towards it nor does he proceed in that direction. His march is not steady and straight. Sankaracharya once poured out his heart in prayer to have three errors pardoned by God. 'Lord', he said, "knowing that you are beyond the intellect and even powers of human imagination, I am committing the error of meditating on you. Knowing that you are indescribable by word, I am trying to describe your glory. Knowing that you are everywhere, I have been preaching so; but yet I have come on pilgrimage to Kasi. My action belies my speech." Beware of this great error that is prevalent—saying one thing and endeavouring to achieve the opposite.

Man builds a frail nest on the sands, prompted by the delusion of certainty; a monstrous force upsets his hopes, without mercy. A sudden storm plucks the petals of a blossoming flower and scatters them on the dust beneath. Sunk in ignorance, man does not learn the lessons these disasters convey. He clings pathetically to his desires and designs. So, the result he reaps is quite contrary to the plans he framed! He can get the success he planned for only when his efforts and actions are in consonance with the results he seeks. The supremest result of spiritual effort is "beyond the reach of speech, thought and imagination," as the Vedas declare.

The Vedas use two words to indicate that goal: nitya and swagata. Nitya means that which undergoes no change, in the past, present and future. Swagata means that which, from one unchanging position, illumines the awareness (inane prakash) everywhere, for all, in all. The One Sun, from where it is, spreads His splendour in all directions. The lamp, though on one spot, sheds light on the entire home. The Atma, likewise, is only ONE; but it awakens all by the light of wisdom.

The Sun has two properties: Light and Heat. The Atma too can be viewed in two aspects: Swaroopa and Swabhava, its 'It-ness' and 'the effect of Its-Itness'. The innate Truth or Swaroopa is known as Dharmi and its effect or quality or Swabhava is known as Dharma. When one is aware of the Dharma, he can be said to have attained the Dharma-Bhoota-Jnana (the transformation resulting from the knowledge of the Atma Swabhava or Dharma.) The sublimation resulting from the knowledge of the essence or Itness or Swaroopa of the Atma is Dharmi-Bhoota-Jnana.

The Swaroopa of the Atma is Anu or Atomic. Its Dharma or quality is splendour-Prakasha. Since it is all-pervading splendour the Atma is described as Vibhu.

*Subtler than the subtle Anu
Vaster than the vastest
Witnessing all everywhere
Atma Is Brahma, Brahma is Atma.*

This subtlest Anu, Atma, is in all things and its quality is therefore evident everywhere. It occupies all but it cannot be occupied by any other. The Atma principle, the Brahma principle, is immanent in all things in the Universe, but nothing can penetrate It. Since the Anu or the Atma which has that form is in all things, it is clear that all things are Atma!

For, there is nothing in the Universe devoid of this Anu force. This quality of the Anu is cognisable in all things as the Dharma. So, the Dharmi or Atma is omnipresent. The human body too is no exception to this. The atom or Anu is immanent in it and so, we are the embodiment of Atma, of Atmic energy.

Holding up a silver tumbler in His hand, Bhagavan said: To know this as a silver *tumbler* is knowledge of the Dharma, knowledge of the effect; to know this is silver is knowledge of the Dharmi. This handkerchief too has the Anu characteristic. Burn it, it becomes ash; ash has atoms; the Anu persists even when the substance takes another form. That is the reason why the Atma is announced as Eternal Truth by the Vedas.

The body is composed of many substances but every substance is essentially *Anu* in structure. So too, appearance and nomenclature may change through childhood, boyhood, adolescence, youth, middle age and senescence, but the nature of the Dharma and the core of Dharmi, the Brahma reality, shines in native splendour without being affected in the least. Ignoring this one Reality that is the Truth of all, man is fully involved in illusory substances.

Things are not so important; the transcendent truth about the thing is its most valid value. You must visualise the spiritual in the material, the gold in the jewels, the Divine in the diversity of human character and conduct. Seek to know the One in the Many and you can reach the Atma principle. All are equal in birth and in death. Differences arise only during the interval. The Emperor and the beggar are both born naked, they both bow out without leaving even their new address. How then can their reality be different? There can be no doubt on this score. All are basically the same.

Who belongs to whom? How long does kinship endure? This attitude must not prompt you to escape your duties. The allotted duties have to be fulfilled by each individual. Brahman has no duties, no involvement. Though the world rests in Brahman, It is not affected in the least. The snake has poison fangs but it is not poisoned by it; the scorpion has poison in its tail but it causes no harm to the scorpion. When you see your own image in a hundred mirrors, you neither fear nor doubt. God knows that everything is His Image; He is not affected thereby.

The Vedas distinguish three entities—the sea, the wave and the foam. The sea is the Kootastha, the Unchanging Base, the Omniself, the Paramatma. The wave that emerges from it and merges in it is the Jivatma (the particularised, individualised form of the Paramatma), and the foam that forms on the crest of the wave and dissolves in it is the Dehatma (the Body consciousness, producing the illusion of distinction from both wave and sea, though essentially it too is the sea). The foam is of the nature of the bubble which the physical body is.

Since the Atma is in Anu form in the Body too, so, the body consciousness is termed Dehatma consciousness. Jivatma is the Atma that activates by its Presence the Individual Consciousness. The Paramatma is the base on which everything rests. But, man believes he is the body and ignores the Dehatma. He thinks he is a Jiva but ignores the Jivatma; he concludes that as an individual, he is separate; he ignores the Paramatma. Does the tree taste the sweetness of its fruit? Does the creeper inhale the fragrance of the flower? Does the book imbibe the inspiration of the poem? Does the pundit caught in activity experience the joy of detachment? But, a guru who has the experience of the Truth can direct you along the Sadhanas. The guru can only inform and inspire; the disciple has to move and act. The mother speaks in order that the child might learn to speak. She cannot put her tongue into the child's mouth! It has to use its own. The scriptures can only inform and inspire.

The wildness of the senses has to be controlled. Many try to do this by limiting the intake of food, or inflicting other types of punishment on oneself. But, these are perversions. The most effective means is the acquisition of Truth, the Truth of the Self. Since man is sunk in ignorance, the ignorance of the One Universal Eternal Atma that is the Truth in all beings, his love is narrow, restricted and centred in the ego. How then can he merge in Paramatma? Can an ant crawl over the waves of the sea? But, if he renounces his attachment to his 'dropness' and resolves to join the sea, he gets the name and the taste of the sea itself. Seek to become vaster, the vastest, the sea, the Brahman.

Unite—in the One with all. That is your mission, your destiny. Do not isolate yourself—"I for me," "He for him". If you hope to be happy while isolated, take it from me, it is a mere dream. Know that you are the Atma, just as everything else is. The Atma is self-luminous; you do not need a lighted lamp to discover a lighted lamp! You need no candle or lantern to see the moon. You can see the moon through its own rays. The Atma shines in all; you have only to open your eyes to know it. The scriptures declare: "All this is God", "God is in all." Mere repetition of these truths as slogans is of no benefit; experience the Truth, live in the light of the Truth.

The Guru initiated the disciple in the mantra "Sivoham" ('Siva am I'). He continued repeating it constantly. Some one asked him what the mantra meant. He told him, "it means: I am Siva," but he had still no faith in that fact. That questioner had heard of Siva being wedded to Parvati. So, he asked, "If you are Siva, what of Parvati?" The disciple was shocked. He had no courage to face the query and reply that Parvati is the Shakti principle of the Siva aspect of God. He had not become Siva nor had he the faith that he could become so.

Embodiments of Love! The Divine has no special Day, earmarked as Birthday. The day when you cultivate holy thoughts, attitudes and modes of behaviour in your hearts, the day when you decide upon some activity of pure unselfish service, that is the Day of the Birth of the Divine for

you. From that day, you can celebrate the Birthday as a festival. Practise in daily life a few at least of the things you have heard and understood. Be examples for the validity of the ideals treasured in Indian culture. Live those ideals and let others be inspired to live likewise.

—*Discourse on Birthday, 23.11.1981, Poornachandra Auditorium*

Thus spake Bhagavan:

Faith in the Goal

*When each desire is fulfilled
God is loved, adored and thanked
When no desire is fulfilled
God is denied, discarded and dismissed.*

This Kali Yuga is praised in the scriptures as incomparably conducive to the salvation of man, for he can now attain the Highest through the mere thought of God and remembering His name. So, of all the Yugas, this Yuga is described as the most holy, the most beneficent. Dhyana was prescribed as the means of liberation for men in the Krita Yuga, Tapas as the means during the Treta Yuga and Archana (Ritual worship) for the Dwapara Yuga. But, for people of this Yuga, the simple remedy prescribed is just namasmarana, the constant awareness of the Name. In spite of this, it is a pity that men do not care for this easy path and so render their lives barren and blighted.

Unless you give up, you cannot acquire—that is the rule of life. Even trivial things cannot be won without parting with something. One has to pay the price. What then, can be said of the price one has to pay to secure the most precious of all gifts, the gift of the awareness of the Atma! To earn this, one has to give up sensual pleasures, but is this too big a price? In fact, what is renounced is not pleasure at all. It is fraught with pain too. Can you not give up grief to earn joy, evil to earn good, diversity to earn unity, division to earn oneness? One must strive for victory in the struggle against the whims and wiles of the senses. One must focus all one's physical and mental resources to earn success; one must fill oneself with Divine Grace by offering his strength and skill to Divine Purposes.

Every activity has a goal, an end in view. Proceeding to the market, going to school—each has a purpose. When such momentary and short-lived activities are motivated by goals, how can one pass 60 or 70 years of life on earth with no purpose guiding him and leading him on? The purpose gives taste to living. When the *pappu* (boiled dal) on your plate lacks *uppu* (salt), you push it aside! But, you wade through years and years leading tasteless, insipid lives

When praised, man gets inflated, when blamed, he gets deflated. But, for one who trusts in God, in the Bhakta, both these reactions are signs of weakness. Man must withstand both praise and blame, success and failure, pleasure and pain, like the Meru Mountain Peak. He must strive to be steadfast and unmoved. Once you develop desires, you become their slave; you will find no end to them. When they are attained, others assail you and leave you discontented still.

Be aware of your innate Divinity and show these recurring desires their due place. The Atma in you is unaffected by desire or defeat or victory. They are passing clouds. The sun is not concerned with their comings and goings.

There is no one unfamiliar with the Ramayana. It describes the Dandaka forest heavy with thick darkness and terrible with the resounding roar of wild beasts. It was infested with frightful cruel gangs of Rakshasas. Surpanakha was a demoness who roamed therein. Khara was a demon of the same nature. In some patches of this jungle, Rishis who were leading pure unselfish God-centred lives had their hermitages. And, into this forest came, as exiles, Prince Rama, Lakshmana, his brother, and Sita, Rama's consort. They spent some days with great sages like Agastya, Sarabhangha. They found the ascetic Sabari also in her retreat. As a result, Rama destroyed the Rakshasas and restored peace in the region for the sages to perform their sadhana and rituals undisturbed.

This is what the epic says. But, where exactly is that Dandaka forest? You need not look for it on any map or turn over the pages of history. It is the heart of every man. The evil feelings are the Rakshasas; the good thoughts are the Rishis. Rama is the personification of Viveka, the discriminating faculty of the intellect. Sita and Lakshmana are the Higher levels of consciousness—Sujnana and Prajnana. Rama puts an end to evil feelings and promotes good thoughts. Rama is the Emperor of Ayodhya. That name means "Impregnable". No enemy, that is to say, no injurious or demeaning feeling or thought, can invade the heart when Rama is installed therein. Thyagaraja sang, "Telisi Rama Chinthana Cheyave manasa". (Oh! mind I meditate on Rama with the full knowledge of what He represents).

When I speak, you hear the speech via the microphone through the loudspeakers. You listen to the instrument, the loudspeaker, but I am the speaker. So, too, when your tongue utters the words, it is the Atma that prompts and shapes the words. The owner sits in the car and travels. The car, your body, has four wheels on the ground; (Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha, the four goals of man); they are filled with air; Faith is the air which makes your travel smooth. It has to be uniform in all the four wheels. There is the steering-wheel inside the car that directs the outer wheels. That is the 'mind'. The food and drink you take is the petrol for the car and its 'horn' is the tongue. You are journeying along the road of family and social life (Samsara) in this car. Recognise that God is the person at the wheel. He will take you happily to the destination. Have faith in Him and be free from fear, anxiety and agitation. Surrender to Him. His grace can save you, His wisdom can enlighten you, His power can overcome all your obstacles. Faith and surrender are the manifestations of Bhakti. They can ensure peace and joy for you and all mankind.

—*Bhagavan's Discourse on 3-10-81*

DASARA DISCOURSE:

Finish the Game

Somaka, the wicked, spurned and suppressed the Vedas; but, did he reap any happiness?

*The ten-headed monster coveted and kidnapped another's wife; but did he achieve any gain
The close-fisted Kaurava refused pin-point land to his closest Kin: but did he secure the spoils?
The terror-bound Kamsa sought out and slaughtered each new-born babe: but did he escape
from death?*

*Wicked men, even now, meet this fate:
Take this Sai ward as the word of Truth.*

*Without the flower, the plant yields no fruit,
Without the emerging fruit, ripeness cannot happen.
Without intense Karma, Bhakti cannot emerge.
Without Bhakti how can Jnana be found*

The visible universe is the substance of our bodies, the subsistence of our minds and the source of our progress. The ever-changing universe has in it the never-changing Absolute principle. Both are aspects of the ever-full Brahman. The Individual is the Becoming of that Being. The individual consciousness is the projection of the same Universal Consciousness and both are complete in themselves. Even after the body decays and disintegrates, the individual consciousness remains unaffected; it is as full as ever. The Vedas declare: "That is Full; This is Full. When the Full projects the Full, the Fullness remains Full."

The Isavasya Upanishad describes this truth clearly and elaborately: It lays down that this Jagat or Cosmos is the dwelling place of God. "Isavasyam idam Jagat" It is a short Upanishad, having only 18 verses; but 18 is a very sacred number. It is a number symbolising Jaya or success. The Gita has 18 chapters; the Mahabharata has 18 sections, the Puranas are 18 in number!

The Upanishad reveals another special feature of the truth of the Universe. The Visible Universe has an invisible base! It has a material cause and an efficient cause, a Nimita and an Upaadana. But man pays attention only to the efficient cause and not the material. This cup has silver as the material cause; the cup is the efficient cause. The cup is seen, but the silver is not cognised. The Cosmos is seen but God is not cognised. God is the material cause; He is in and through the entire Cosmos, as the silver is in and through this entire cup.

The Isavasya is the most important of all Upanishads. It is the essence of Vedantic scriptures. It contains them all in a nut-shell. There is no text as sacred and as valuable as this one. It demonstrates the Cosmos as Divine and the Atma as immanent in all. It teaches that the Atma is unaffected and supreme over all else. "Inside and outside, all, everywhere, Narayana pervades," it asserts.

The five elements abide in Narayana, God. There can be no seed without a shell or husk. The husk is the Cosmos; the seed is God. They are both interrelated, and abide together. One must try to understand this fact through steadfast inquiry, Jnana. The ignorant ascribe validity to the husk; the wise probe into the basic Atma. The ignorant person believes that the Universe is all that is, and reduces himself to the status of an animal. Animals harm only other animals; but the ignorant person causes injury to his own self!

The Isavasya Upanishad directs man to progress through four types of sadhana: (1) Some that have to be necessarily performed; (2) Some that have to be experimentally performed; (3) Some that have to be performed after observing vow; and (4) Some that have to be performed for the sake of the experience they confer. These are all conveyed through mantras. These are not to be confused with mono-syllable, five-syllable or multi-syllable formulae. Mantra means any idea expressed in words that can liberate man from thralldom when he installs it in his mind or mana. The idea is, in all cases, the All-pervading Almighty Presence.

Embodiments of Love! You learn this as well as many other Upanishads and recite them over and over. You recite the sacred "thousand Names" of Vishnu and of Lalita. You study many other holy books. Of course, the time spent in these activities is rendered holy thereby. But, these are not helping you to transform the work you are engaged in, any more valid and acceptable to God. Are you putting into practice at least one percent of what you read or recite? Milk, it is true, contains butter; sesame seeds contain oil; cane yields sugar. To benefit from this knowledge it is not enough to read about it or recite it. Holding milk by hand, you cannot get butter; filling the lamp with sesame cannot light the wick; shaking the cane will not result in a shower of sugar. When you keep heaps of sweets on a plate in front of you, and recite 108 times "Heaps of sweets," "Heaps of sweets," "Heaps of sweets", can your tongue relish or stomach receive the stuff you describe?

The poet asks:

*Can the hungry man be satisfied
When one praises the menu for him to hear?
Can the agony of the poor be allayed
When one glorifies wealth for him to hear?
Can the suffering of the sick end
When one sings aloud of medicines in his ear?*

Speech and song are not enough to cure the dire disease of recurrent birth and death. God has to be planted firmly in the mind; the Omnipresent God has to be enshrined in the heart; God has to flow with the blood in, the veins. God has to be visualised through the inner eye.

There can be no 'This' without the 'That', no creation without the Creator. You are now attempting to possess Creation, with no faith in the Creator, not even aware of the Creator. The body has a head above and feet below. Though the body, with all its limbs, forms one organic unit, the feet are despised and the head honoured. Nevertheless, when we invite a person, to our homes, we cannot welcome the head and dismiss the feet. So, too, since, 'Isavasyam idam jagat', the Cosmos is permeated with God, we cannot welcome one and dismiss the other.

Man can earn wisdom only in and through the challenges the world offers and the opportunities for awareness that it confers. When once Jnana is attained, the world can be left to itself; one need not be involved in it or with it. It is as the daily newspaper. When it has been read once, only an insane person will start reading it again. Today's newspaper is tomorrow's waste paper. When one has experienced the world, it would be a sign of insanity to wish for experiencing it again. Man relishes consuming the same meal day after day, washing the face

every morning, listens to the same story on every occasion; he does not advance forward into the joy that awaits him.

Utilise the world as the means to an end; do not desire to stay on it. It is a caravanserai, where you can rest awhile during your pilgrimage to the Source. It is a bridge along which you can move safely from 'This' to 'That'. Finding that the bridge is wide and strongly built, can any, pilgrim build a house thereon for himself? The Cosmos is changing constantly. The minutes that are past cannot be retrieved even if tempted by a billion rupees. The past is not ours any mote; the present slips from our grasp; the future is uncertain. You come naked into the world; you go out of it, without informing the survivors of the address where you can be contacted. In spite of this, attachment grows and you cultivate bonds. This is the great illusion.

How can the Omnipresent Divine be delineated and described? There is a Nepali story which says: "A person was asked, 'Who is your father?' He answered, 'My father is so and so'. 'But, how can you assert so? On whose authority do you declare him to be your father?' the questioner persisted. "My mother. Her word I believe to be truth." So, too, when asked. "Who is the Father in Heaven," man answers, "God". "On what authority do you rely for that statement?" Man replies, "On the authority of Mother Veda, Veda Mata, the scripture, the Upanishads, which contain the genuine nectarine truths which these the seers churned out of their ascetic denials, discovered in the depths of their purified hearts and earned for the welfare of all mankind. But unfortunately the Vedas have been riddled with commentaries which endeavour to parade personal predilections. Each scholar interprets them as his fancy dictates and so, faith in the Divine has declined yielding place to atheism. The Divine is the omnipresent ONE. It is the minute in the minutest, it is the vast in the vastest. The Atma that is not born, that does not die, that cannot be killed, that is the Universal Eternal Witness, the Brahman itself.

This is the Truth which the sages visualised through their experience. How can any one describe to another the sweetness of sugar? One's own experience alone can be the proof. It is foolish to doubt or deny the experience of another. Such behaviour can only promote friction and fear. Many stand forth and argue that there is no God. But, since others do not retort, "What right have you to insist that I should not believe in God. God may, not exist for you; but I experience God and God exists for me," they continue their prattle.

Life is impossible without breath. Life is also impossible without faith. All of you who have come to this gathering came here in the faith that you can return home. If that faith was absent, you would not have come at all. Some declare, "Experience first, faith next." This is similar to the declaration, "Swim first, water next." Have faith enough to practise the advice; learn to revere the directives. Then you attain the experience. How can the stomach be full, without eating the meal? So, take up the effort. Plunge into action. Do not hesitate or doubt. Action, Karma, that is the Divine Task. That is the reason why the very first section of the Vedas is the Karma Kanda, the "stage of Action".

The Isavasya Upanishad directs the Sadhaka to cultivate the Inner Vision so that he can experience God, the Easwara. Easwara is the warp and woof of the Universe. He is the basic gold in the diverse jewels. What I wish to emphasise now is that you should ruminate over these truths underlying Creation, and bring about a transformation, however small, in your habits, attitudes

and actions so that you can realise the goal of life. Animals seeks tasty things, Ruchi. Man must yearn for fulfillment, Abhiruchi. Cultivate that yearning and attaining that goal finish the game. This is my blessing to you today.

—*Bhagavan's Discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium, 7-10-1981*

From the Garden of the Heart

Man has to progress every moment; a stagnant style of living does not befit him. How long can we tolerate a boy staying in the same class at school? He must proceed from one class to the next higher one, year after year. The spiritual aspirant too should not stagnate in one Sadhana. From the master-servant relationship with God, he must advance to the body-limb relationship and reach the stage of merging in the all-inclusive One, that is to say, from dualism, through conditioned non-dualism to monism or non-dualism.

Man, in the initial stages, worships portraits or idols of God with flowers and the sixteen forms of reverential homage. Preliminary concentration (Dhyanam), invocation (aavahanam), offering seat (aasanam), washing feet (paadyam), offering hospitality (aarghyam), ablution (snanam), offering vestments (Vastram), sacerdotal thread-wear (yajnopaveetham), sandal paste (chandanam), flowers (pushpam), incense (dhoopam), lamp (deepam), food (naivedyam), pan (tamboolam), camphor flame waving (neeranjnam), circumambulation and prostration (pradakshina namaskaram).

But, good character, good conduct and virtuous life are essential qualifications for the aspirant. Of course, floral offerings are commendable. The sixteen items are good. But, one should progress from this stage to the awareness of the Atma. Flowers fade and rot soon. The effect of offering flowers may not last long. What God loves more are the flowers blossoming on the tree of man's own life, fed and fostered by his own skill and sincerity. They are the flowers of his virtues, grown in the garden of his heart.

Of these, Ahimsa, the virtue of Non-Violence, is the very first. This involves much more than abstention from injuring living beings. One should desist from causing pain to any living being not only by his deeds but even by his words and even in his thoughts. One should not entertain any idea of hurting another, or humiliating another. The second flower is indriya nigraham (mastery of the senses). One should not run after sensual pleasure and sensory joy. The third flower is Daya, Sarva bhootha-daya (compassion, towards all beings and all things), for, "all this is God." It is said, homage paid to any god reaches the Supreme. (Sarvadeva namaskaram Kesavamprathigacchathi). It can be said, with equal truth, humiliation caused to any living being reaches the Supreme (Sarva jiva thiraskaram Kesavam prathigacchathi).

The fourth flower is Kshama, tolerance, fortitude, unaffected calmness. Kshama is identified by the scriptures with Truth, Righteousness, Knowledge, non-violence, sacrifice and joy. Without Kshama man cannot be happy even for a Kshana (moment). It promotes divine qualities.

It reveals the inner Divinity. One has to perform Sadhana to earn it and establish himself in it. Nourish the idea that God is equally present in all, in spite of ridicule from the ignorant and sarcastic criticism from the blind or even praise from admirers. Do not mind them.

The fifth flower is Santhi—inner Peace. Santhi does not mean that a person should not react at all, whatever others may say or however they may abuse him. It does not mean that he must be silent as a rock. It involves mastery of all the senses and all the passions. Inner peace must become one's nature. Santhi has detachment as the basic quality. The sea, which likes to gather and possess, lies low on the ground; the cloud that likes to renounce and give is high up in the sky. Santhi endows man with unruffled mind and steady vision. The prayer for Santhi is usually repeated thrice. "Om, Santhih, Santhih, Santhih." This mantra, Om Santhih, is repeated thrice, since Peace is prayed for in the physical, mental and spiritual planes. Man should not bring his blood to boil nor should he yield to fear. Spiritual calm is exemplified by Emperor Janaka of the upanishadic texts. He was known as Vaideha, without body, not because he was disembodied, but because he lived in utter forgetfulness of the body and its needs. He saw, heard and spoke only from the Atmic plane of consciousness.

The sixth flower is Tapas, austerity. Tapas does not mean forsaking wife and children and escaping into the loneliness of the forest. The real austerity is the exact co-ordination between one's thought, word and deed. The man of evil can never achieve this; he behaves falsely to his own self. When man succeeds in this Tapas, the words he utters will have such power that what he says will be transformed into mantras.

Then, we have the seventh flower, Dhyana, meditation. Today, there are in vogue as many systems and methods of Dhyana as there are hairs on my head. Every one describes it according to his own whim and fancy. Sitting quiet and transferring their emotions and feelings on to God is no Dhyana. They must transmute their emotions, desires, feelings with the help of God into Divine qualities. They should not bring God down to their level; they must raise themselves to the level of God.

The eighth flower is Sathyam, Truth, that which is unmodified by the passage of time. The Divine alone persists unchanged from the past, through the present into the future. When this flower blossoms in your heart it will reward you with eternal fragrance.

Worship the Lord, offering Him these flowers. Now when other flowers are used, devotion does not last after one comes out of the Puja room door. When one crosses that door step, anger, hatred and anxiety possess him and degrade him. Without developing the qualities indicated by the eight flowers how can any one win the grace of God? Engaged in asatya Narayana vrata on all 364 days, what is the good you hope to get doing Sathya Narayana Vrata on the 365th day of the year? When you claim to be Sai devotees, justify the claim by cultivating these flowers of virtue and offering them, instead of the garden flowers, to God.

—*Bhagavan's Discourse on 6-10-81*

The stage of life, the status in society, the profession, the company into which you are ushered, the recreation you like—all these are to be used by you for cleansing the inner mirror,

so that God may be reflected clearly therein. Grihasta-ashrama is a step in the ladder to God-realisation. You do not settle down on a step, or stay on a rung, or build a home on a bridge. Move on, climb ahead, cross over, towards the goal of God. From Iham you proceed to param; through the practice of the dharma (code of disciplinary rules), pertaining to life in the world as a member of the human community, you transcend it and earn the right and the qualification to know about the dharma of the beyond, the nature and glory of the Divine. Ihadharma gives Ananda; but Paradharma reveals to you the Source of Ananda and merges you in the Source.

—Baba

Seva: Accent on Planning and Training

The recommendations of the Fifth All India Seva Dal Conference, which were submitted for Bhagavan's approval at the end of three days' deliberations, covered the entire range of Seva Dal activities in the context of the Charter of the Sathya Sai Organisation adopted at the Third World Conference in November 1980.

Accepting Bhagavan's message that "Seva is the highest form of Bhakti" and that "spirituality should permeate every action of a Sai devotee," the Conference felt it necessary to reorganise and streamline the present Seva Dal structure in order to enable the concentration and effective utilisation of the capabilities of various members in specialised areas of service. Seva Dal work will be broadly divided into three categories: (1) Rural reconstruction and slum uplift; (2) Regular and seasonal Seva activities; (3) Vocational guidance and training programme for youth.

The Conference called for a 'completely new approach' to the planning of Seva activities. The planning should be done at the State level, offering full scope to the various districts to take up projects and expand Seva activities. Such planning should open up avenues for the induction of new blood into the ranks of the Seva Dal who, will bring with them fresh vitality and enthusiasm: The highest priority has to be given to effective coordination between the Bal Vikas and Seva Dal wings to ensure that there is a smooth transition from the Pre-Seva Dal to the Seva Dal wings.

The Conference recognised the vital importance of proper training, both of existing and future members of the Seva Dal, firstly to enable them to achieve the objectives for which they joined the Organisation and, secondly, to enable them to place at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan their offering of well conceived and directed efforts of Sadhana. The Conference offered the following suggestions with regard to the training programmes: (1) The inner significance of the Charter of Sai Organisation must be explained to each and every member of the Seva Dal and for this purpose a Refresher Course should be conducted; (2) In view of the regrouping of the activities, the training programme suitable to each group should be planned and conducted according to the circumstances of the area concerned; (3) The training should include talks and literature which will give full information about the activities of the various institutions run under the Divine Umbrella; (4) The course on Education in Human Values should be included as a part of the training for all categories of the Seva Dal.

The Conference directed all Seva Dal members to engage themselves in efforts to improve the socio-economic conditions of the community, particularly in the rural and slum areas. Two activities, viz., Adult Education and Vocational Guidance and Training to the youth are specifically suggested to be included in the programme of activities.

Tension is Good!

The other day, a friend of mine told me that he had requested Baba to relieve him of a position he held since it had added considerably to his mental tension. He said that Swami told him: "You must continue doing the job!" And with His characteristic smile added, 'Tension is good!'

This unexpected statement set me thinking. Baba never makes such a statement unless He meant something significant not only to the person concerned but also to others like me. The continuance of tension is contrary to what we understand by spiritual living. We believe that once we are on the spiritual path there will be no more tension! But Baba told my friend, 'Tension is good!'

Baba sows such seeds of thought which have often led me to exploration and adventure in the realm of thoughts and ideas. I delved a little more deeply into the word tension. In today's common usage tension has come to mean, "stress, strain, anxiety, apprehension, dread, nervousness, fearfulness, etc." Baba surely could not have meant that sort of tension! Was He trying to say that it is only under tension that we will think of Him? It is only under tension that whatever we have learnt is put to test. An examination is usually a period of tension, and very often we do our best under certain tension.

I recalled the occasion when I was under severe tension as I was gheraoed by my Office staff; that was the time when all that I had tried to learn from Swami was put to test. Baba says, "Love thy enemies. Start the day with love." I prayed, "Swami! These people are using all sorts of abusive terms against me. The union leader is doing his job. Let me not hate him, Swami." I prayed. My tension decreased and a solution was eventually found. Most important of all, I had no ill-will against him and all those who shouted, and I maintained good relations with them.

Swami says, "Welcome the test, for thereafter you are awarded the certificate. It is to measure your progress that tests are imposed. So, do not flinch in the face of grief: The Lord bestows a favour when He decides to test you, for He is impressed by your achievement and wants to put upon it the seal of His approval. Rise up to the demands of the test. That is the way to please the Lord."

I continued my exploration. I thought of the veena and the violin which are tuned by stretching the strings, i.e., by tension. Each string has to be stretched correctly so that it will produce a particular note and all the strings will be under proper tension so as to produce harmony—"the simultaneous combination of tones, especially blended into chords pleasing to

the ear.” This gave me some new dimensions to the term tension. I recalled that while tuning the strings of a veena to a particular note, we not only tighten the string but the final tuning is done by moving a string so that at a particular position which is very critical, the string resonates on plucking. In the case of the violin, a screw is adjusted to get the same effect. To tune properly, we have therefore to achieve the correct tension; less tension or more tension will not produce the correct note. Too much tension will snap the string.

I tried to apply this concept to our day to day life. Is not much of our problems due to the fact that we tighten our strings too taut? In fact we are under such tension so often that the slightest touch snaps our mental equilibrium and we shout back in anger at the first victim! Somehow we seem to be unable to learn the art of correct tuning. When you get angry Baba has told us, "lie down on the bed; drink a glass of cold water."

We are under too much tension when we are unable to cope with a situation. Then as our emotions take the upper hand, we forget all the good advice that Baba has been giving us and we burst out. I Spirituality means correct tuning of all our faculties. Our mental dispositions must be well balanced—Sama Dheeh. This led me to the statement of Lord Krishna who told Arjuna that "Yoga is skill in action" (Yogah Karmasu Kausalam). Skill implies sharpening of our capabilities when we achieve the best under any given circumstance. This is possible when we are tuned properly. The term yoga itself implies one pointed attention without which such skill will be impossible. It is because we have not learnt the correct tuning of our abilities that we are unable to have mental equanimity.

Spiritual life therefore means tuning ourselves to the correct tension so that our body, mind and spirit, thought, word and deed, are in harmony. If we are unable to produce music it is because we are out of tune. Some of our strings have snapped under too much tension; others too lax to be able to produce the correct note.

Spirituality does not mean that we relax. It is not a state of being lax with little or no tension; such a state is *Tamasic* and not *Satwic*! A spiritual life means proper tension! It requires attention, at-tension! The Samskrit word for a type of spiritual practice viz, Tapas, translated in English as "austerity", means heat. This certainly does not suggest an inactive state. All such states are the result of the proper type of tension tuning!

Baba is Himself the best exemplar of proper "tension". He is always busy and all His actions and activity display *kushalam*. Watch the steps He takes as He walks, the way He receives a letter or blesses a picture with His signature; when He speaks to a small group or to a lakh of eager listeners; when He pats on the back of a student or allows a devotee to have the much-coveted *Padanamaskar*. If we want to understand what Baba meant when He told my friend, "Tension is good!" let us watch Him!

—M. V. N. Murthy

The Fingers Five

A call to all units of the Sathya Sai Seva Samiti organisations in the country to work as a single entity like the fingers of one hand, was made by Bhagavan Baba in His valedictory address to the Fifth All India Seva Dal Conference, which concluded on November 21, at Prasanthi Nilayam.

Bhagavan appealed to the Seva Dal members to look upon Seva (service) as a continuous activity in the practice of spiritual sadhana. He urged that the resolutions passed at the Conference "should not be treasured in files but should be put into daily practice." Bhagavan said:

The Cosmos has only One Master, God, the All-comprehensive Supreme Consciousness, Chaitanya. It energises and operates the Cosmos, the Vishwa. It impels all the activities of Man. Man is but an instrument which the Chaitanya wields. God is not limited by time, space or circumstance. But, the physical body, the mind, the intellect, the senses, their longings—these are moulded and modified by time, space and circumstance. Without believing in this fundamental factor, man falsely imagines, "I am doing this", "I am planning this." It is the Supreme. All Pervasive Consciousness that unfolds the skills, motivates the senses and operates the intellect.

All activities of man must result in cleansing his Chitta, all levels of awareness. When these are done as offerings made to God, they advance this cleansing process a great deal. The way he works, shapes the destiny of man. Work is sublimated into worship which fructifies into wisdom. The flower is Work (karma), the emerging fruit is Worship (Bhakti) and the ripe sweet fruit is Wisdom (Jnana). It is one continuous and spontaneous process, this spiritual fulfillment of the Sadhaka, the Sevak. They are like Childhood, Youth and Old age, each imperceptibly growing into the succeeding stage.

While engaged as you are in Karma, Seva Karma, as a Sadhana, you encounter many hurdles. But, that is the nature of the world in which you act. It is a world of dual characteristics—good and bad, joy and grief, progress and regress, light and shadow. Do not pay heed to these; do what comes to you as a duty, as well as you can, with prayers to God. The rest is in His Hands. Mohamed preached monotheism and was driven out of Mecca. Jesus preached mercy and charity and he was charged with treason. Harishchandra refused to give up his allegiance to truth and was driven to such straits that he had to sell as slaves his wife and son. So, when you stick to the path of Truth and Righteousness, pain and poverty may haunt you. But they are only clouds passing through the sky hiding for some little time the splendour of the Sun.

Karma is Sadhana, when it is done as Seva. The Seva attitude is most beneficial to the person rendering it as well as to others. Seva is the best use to which the body can be put. In fact, you are not doing Seva to others. You are doing it always to yourselves, to the God in you and the same God who is equally present in others.

The Seva Dal has been established to instill in the minds of youth these sublime ideals. Every one of you cannot engage yourselves in all the projects of Seva Dal. So, the activities or Karma have been demarcated into three categories and members are given the option to choose one or

other activity as their own contribution: (1) Those who have studied up to some standards can take up educational activities; (2) They can also busy themselves in activities relating to health education and enlivening life in slums and villages. (3) Others can visit Hospitals etc. and spread cheer among the patients.

We are holding some conference or other every year during the Birthday week. The resolutions we arrive at, after discussions here, should not be treasured in files, but must be put into daily practice. Organisations easily fall into mere publicity and fanfare. The Sathya Sai Seva Organisations should be an example and inspiration for such. Practice alone can deepen your faith and justify the appreciation and affection that the Sathya Sai Seva Organisations have earned.

Do not proclaim that you are rendering Seva once a month or three times a year! That reveals laziness, want of enthusiasm and faith. Do you take food only once a month? Your hunger is not appeased even when you have four meals a day! Your spiritual hunger can be quenched only by more frequent Seva, at least for two hours or four hours a day. Each one of you wastes more hours everyday in gossip and scandal mongering. Better than these barren pursuits, one can visit hospital wards or villages or sweeping and cleaning bazaars or bus stations.

These little acts of Seva can confer on you great spiritual benefit. Firstly, it will destroy your egoism. Pride will transform friends into enemies; it will keep even kinsmen afar; it will defeat all your schemes. Seva will develop in you the quality of humility. Humility will enable you to work in happy unison with others.

We have in our organisation State Presidents, District Presidents, State Convenors etc. etc., but these positions should not be used for enthroning oneself and exercising authority. They are allotted to people so that they can be examples in their own lives of the Seva Sadhana. But some State Presidents are too proud to share in Seva activities! Leaders must lead; they should not push from behind. State Presidents must lead others, by giving them instruction and inspiration. If they cannot or do not, they have no right to hold that office.

Again, you must work together joyfully as brothers and sisters. When any difference of opinion crops up between you, how can Seva be done with uniform attention and enthusiasm? You have to reconcile such differences silently and with love, and place Seva in the forefront of your activities. When Seva calls you, all must come together as one. There should be no politicking in the region of Seva. No trace of politics should pollute the Seva you do. No idea of separateness should tarnish your thought. Do not talk harshly to any one. Some people who are office-bearers in the organisation do indulge in strong unpleasant language. God is adored by you when you do Puja as "mridu madhura bhashine", 'He who speaks soft and sweet'. This is a meaningful characterisation of the Lord. Through soft and sweet speech, we can transform even demonic persons into decent individuals. From words, honey drips; words are fragrant flowers; words enshrine Vedic wisdom; words can build a heaven or even hell. Words can plunge you into prison; they can release you into freedom.

When any Convener or President promotes factions or differences among devotees, treat them as pests, as termites on trees, and remove them. Be vigilant that they do not enter the units of the organisation.

All units must work as a single entity like the fingers on one's hand. The Seva Samiti is the thumb; the Mahila Vibhag is the pointing finger; the Save Dal is the middle finger; the Bal Vikas is the ring finger and the little finger is the Bhajan Mandali. I find there is very little cooperation between the units now; it is mostly 'Operation' that is happening. Have high ideals, great Sevaks like Hanuman before your mind's eye. Service to man is service to God. In the Purusha Sukta of the Rig Veda God is described as having a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet. That means that all heads are His, all eyes are His, all feet are His. So, Seva to man is the command of the Vedas.

Teach the illiterates in the villages how to read and write and broaden their vision. Visit the slums in the cities and instruct them how to avoid disease and maintain health. Welcome the slum dwellers into your group and work together with them to make the area clean and attractive. Once you take up Seva, you will discover many ways of doing good.

First cultivate humility and compassion. Then learn the knowledge and skill needed for the particular Seva project. Thus, you can make your life meaningful. By this means, you can add to the Ananda of the person who has given you the chance to render this Seva to your fellowmen.

Vidya Vahini

11

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Man has to achieve many objects during his life. The highest and the most valuable of these is winning the Mercy of God, the Love of God. The love of God will add unto him the great wisdom he needs for attaining unshakable Santhi or Inner Peace. Every one should endeavour to have an understanding of the true nature of Godhead. Of course, man cannot at the very beginning of his attempt, grasp the unmanifest Absolute phenomenon. He has, at first, to impose a form and some attributes to bring it within reach. Then, step-by-step, he must try to enshrine it in himself, as the descent of Divine Energy (Shaktipaath). The person engaged in the pursuit of success in this effort is not a mere individual seeker entitled to pursue the goal. He has to cultivate also the spirit of service (Seva) and be engaged in good deeds which earn the gratitude of people. Thus only, can he accomplish the task of cleansing the levels of his consciousness (Chitta) and become a fit candidate for spiritual victory.

Sanyasa or Monk-hood does not mean the mere acceptance of the fourth stage of life and its rights and obligations, retirement into forests after breaking off contacts with the world and leading the austere life of ascetics. The Sanyasi must move among people, become aware of their sorrows and joys, and impart the instruction and inspiration they direly need. This is the duty monks should fulfill.

The Sanyasi can be likened to a species of fish. The fish moves around in the depth of the lake; it will not be stationary at one spot. And while moving around, the fish eats up worms and the eggs of pests, thus cleansing the water. So, too, the Sanyasi should always be on the move journeying into the far corners of the land. His duty is to cleanse society of evil by his example and precept. He must transform it by his teachings into a society free from vice and wickedness.

The tree can spread its branches wide. But the branches can, put forth blossoms which yield fruit only when the roots are fed with water. Instead, if the water is poured on branches, fruits and flowers, can the tree grow and spread? Society has as its root of prosperity and peace, the quality of devotion and dedication. Hence the educational system must pay attention to the promotion and strengthening of these qualities among the people. Persons who occupy positions of authority are named Adhikaris: That word can also mean Adhika-ari, the worse enemy! The true Adhikari should carefully avoid that course and use his position for serving the people under his care.

In olden times, when in any region the people were sunk in fear or anxiety, or when the sources of joy and contentment ran dry, they traced the cause for the calamity to some fault or failure in the worship offered to God in the temples of that area. They sought to identify these mistakes and correct them so that they could have inner peace. They believed that the crisis could be controlled through these means. Such acts are now bundled together and labelled as 'Superstition', to be cast aside. But this is not superstition at all. Modern scientists are in such a pathetically poor state of understanding that they do not recognise these important problems. This is the preliminary stage of confusion caused by the progress of modern types of education.

The ancients grasped the supreme Truth only after personally experiencing its validity. The moderns however dismiss their discoveries. This is the reason for growth of barbarism in the so-called civilised countries. Many have not recognised this fact. Every living being craves for happiness; it does not long for misery. Some desire the acquisition of riches, some believe that gold can make them happy. Some amass articles of luxury, some collect vehicles, but every one is set upon obtaining the things one believes can give him joy. But, those who know wherefrom one can get happiness are very few in number. Happiness is of three kinds. One type is of the nature of poison in the beginning but turns into nectar later. This happiness is secured through the awareness of the Atma; it is Satwic happiness. That is to say, the preliminary sadhana of sama, dama etc., which has to be gone through, appears hard and unpleasant; it involves struggle and effort. So, the reaction may be bitter. In the Yoga Vasishta, Sage Vasishta says, "O! Rama! The boundless ocean can be drunk dry by man with great ease. The enormous Sumeru mountain can be plucked from the face of the earth, with great ease. The flames of a huge conflagration can be swallowed with great ease. But, controlling the mind is far more difficult than all these." Therefore, if one succeeds in overwhelming the mind, one achieves the awareness of the Atma. This success can result only when one undergoes many ordeals and denials. The bliss that one earns afterwards is the first kind of happiness. As the fruition of all Sadhana one is established in the perfect equanimity of unruffled consciousness (Nirvikalpa Samadhi) and the Ananda that fills him is indescribable. It is ambrosial, equal to the nectar of immortality. Nirvikalpa means the state of consciousness when it is devoid of thought. This state can be reached through appropriate Sadhana. It is of two natures: Non-dual in full experience and the state of non-duality

when dual thought ends. The first takes man beyond the triune of Knower, the Known and Knowledge and he is aware only of the Cosmic Intelligence or Brahman (This is advaita bhavana). The second stage is reached when all the attributes ascribed to God and man merge in the realisation of the ONE which embraces the Cosmos and all its contents (This is Advaita Sthayi or Advaita Avastha).

There is another type of happiness: On account of the impact of external objects on the senses of perception, pleasure mistaken as nectarine is aroused. But, in time, the pleasure turns into bitter and unpleasant poison. This is Rajasic happiness. When man welcomes this Rajasic sensory pleasure, his strength, awareness, intelligence, enthusiasm to reach the four goals of human endeavour known as Dharma, Artha (wealth), Kama (Righteous Desire), and Moksha (Liberation), all these become weak, for his interest declines.

The third type of happiness is Tamasic. It dulls the intellect from the beginning to the end. It finds satisfaction in sleep, slothfulness and faults, and derives happiness therefrom. The Tamasic person ignores the path that leads to the awareness of the Atma; he pays no attention to it, throughout his life.

True education, therefore, is that which directs and counsels the mind and intellect of man towards the earning of Satwic happiness. Of course, it can be secured only by untiring effort. The scriptures declare: "happiness cannot be acquired through happiness" (Na sukhaath labhyathe sukham). By undergoing unhappiness alone can happiness be won. This truth was to be instilled through Vidya or education. When man knows of the Ananda that Satwic happiness can confer, the Vidya too will be found easy and palatable.

Having been born as humans, all efforts must be directed to acquiring this Amrita Vidya (Education for Immortality) along with earth-bound material-centred Vidya, for it is only Amrita Vidya that can reveal the Atma and enable man to experience the Atmananda.

(To be continued)

Bethlehem in Prasanthi Nilayam

Over a thousand Christians from all the Continents flocked to Prasanthi Nilayam, the Jerusalem (this word too means Abode of Peace) of the Sai Age, where they imbibe the Jesus spirit of Peace on Earth and Goodwill among men. They experience here the Presence, of the Father, who had sent His only Son to the earth 1981 years ago. To those who had lost faith in the message of the Christ, diluted and distorted by dogma and the divines, Sai Baba has restored abiding faith and active spiritual enthusiasm. They now believe not only in the Biblical miracles of Jesus but in the greater miracle which makes each one a messenger of God. Baba's greatest miracle, not only for Christians but for others as well, is the restoration of faith in oneself and in the path laid down in the religion one is born into.

Christmas Week at Prasanthi Nilayam was unique for other reasons too. The unusually large number of people who gathered in the Presence was lodged in the Round House and had several joint sessions of satsang, during which they selected and rehearsed for presentation on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, Christmas Carols, hymns and songs and Bhajans in many languages and as many national groups. Devotees from 21 nations attached to differing sects—Protestants, Catholics, Presbyterians, Unitarians, Baptists etc.—besides Jews, Buddhists and others were fused into ONE SAI FAMILY. They emerged from these Satsangs with sweet Sai Harmony in the songs and the Divine Sai Love in their hearts.

Bhagavan was welcomed into the Round House on Christmas Eve with exemplary devotion. The beautiful circular building with three floors, each having an inward facing verandah, was the ideal locale for the world festival of Homage. Devotees, men and women, stood on the verandah of each floor holding lit candles and singing together "Holy Night". The devotees, who had formed 21 national groups, then sang in unison carols and Bhajans, glorifying the Advent. The music of Adoration filled the illumined well of the Round House and overflowed into the cool night air of Prasanthi Nilayam, shining under the star-studded canopy.

The hour of Dawn, on Christmas Day, was an unforgettable experience. Instead of the daily group singing of Bhajans around the Mandir, Christian melodies were sung. Christians led the Nagarsankirtan, each with a lighted candle in his or her hand. Oh! Thousands of candle flames went round the Nagarsankirtan route in the early dawn. When they circumambulated the Mandir, singing "Holy Night", they reminded every one that the Night had been rendered Holy by the Birth of One who had come to make the Earth holy. Men and women separately converged in front of the Mandir, and lifted up the lights in prayer, while singing of the Glory of the Lord.

The prayers were answered. Bhagavan appeared and, in an unexpected burst of Grace, He emerged through the silver doors and granted Darshan from the semicircular balcony, His Hands raised in Benediction. Many saw Him that morning as the Living Christ.

On Christmas Day, in the evening, the Poornachandra hall was packed to capacity. There were over twenty thousand devotion-filled men and women to witness the celebrations and listen to the programme of speeches and songs. The imposing fresco figure of Jesus amidst the flock, tenderly carrying a lamb, which faces the audience, came alive in the minds of many as they assembled in the Presence of the Father.

Mother Sai had responded to the request of the 'past students' of the Sri Sathya Sai Women's College, Anantapur, for allowing their Association, named "Kingdom of Mother Sai", to celebrate its Annual Day on Christmas. The members of that Kingdom had installed a gorgeous Christmas Tree on the stage and decorated the dais and hall to heighten the atmosphere of dedication and worship. The annual report they presented highlighted service activities among the rural folk who lacked health, education and elementary amenities. A few members then made short speeches on how the Kingdom is leading them to the Kingdom of Sai Within.

Then, Howard Murphet from Australia, the author of two popular books on Baba, described the identity observable in the teachings of Baba and of Jesus. He confessed that his faith in Jesus and his miracles was confirmed when he witnessed the signs and wonders of Sai. "We are indeed fortunate to be in the presence of the Messiah of the Age," he said.

Al Drucker from California, of the Jewish faith, spoke on Baba and the Revelation of St. John. Hislop, President of the American Council of Sathya Sai Organisations, spoke on the all-pervasive Love of the Sai Avatar.

Bhagavan, in His Discourse, described how Love can overcome all barriers and destroy all prejudices and mould mankind into one single family.

The Divine Message was followed by an 'all-nation' programme of spiritually elevating music. The outstanding feature was the thrilling rendering of the immortal song of Handel, "The Messiah" by a hurriedly assembled assortment of amateur singers! The Messiah for whom the song was prepared as an offering on Christmas inspired them to accomplish the well-nigh impossible. The vast congregation that filled the Auditorium took minutes to recover from the ecstatic delight that flooded their hearts. Devotees from many overseas countries rose up in rows, as they were called nation by nation in alphabetical order, and sang together Bhajans and songs on ISA (Jesus) and SAI, in 21 different languages. Another welcome surprise was a Christmas Play woven around the Birth in the Manger and the Three Wise Men of the East, enacted adoringly by a group of children of devotees from countries as distant as New Zealand and Denmark and Japan and Trinidad.

When the programme concluded with Arati, Bhagavan stood among the children on the dais, allowing the cameras to click for photographs. When the massive gathering dispersed, every face was lit with joy and wet with tears of gratitude for this chance to experience the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man.

CHRISTMAS DISCOURSE:

Compassion as Man

Jesus was compassion (Karuna), come in human form. He spread the spirit of Compassion and conferred solace on the distressed and the suffering. Noticing the torture of birds and beasts at the Temple in Jerusalem, he reprimanded the vendors and drove them out. He drew upon himself

the anger of the priests. Good works always provoke the wicked. But one should not falter or fear when opposition obstructs. The challenge gives joy; it evokes hidden sources of strength; it brings down Grace to reinforce the effort. Pleasure springs during the interval between two pains. One has to struggle with difficulties in order to taste the delight of victory. Jesus was the target for many mighty obstacles and he braved them all. As a result his name and story and message are shedding splendid light all over the world now.

Not only Jesus; every Prophet, Messenger of God, Teacher of Truth and Spiritual Leader had to wade through ridicule, neglect and persecution. Though a diamond is cast in a dustbin, its lustre remains; its price will not diminish. Though a sweet pumpkin grows on a thorny fence, its taste remains; its attraction will not diminish. Even if a peacock's egg is hatched in a fowl-roost, its charm remains and its nature does not change. The Divine, though it moves among all and sundry, can never be affected or deflected. Envious folk heaped insults on Jesus. Even among his disciples, some betrayed him and deserted him. Self-dominated people turn envious at greatness and goodness. But since Prema, the Prema of Jesus, had no trace of self in it, Jesus was unafraid. The loveless are enveloped in fear. Love instills courage and promotes adventure. It delights in daring. If you follow the Master, you can face the Devil, fight to the End and finish the Game.

Jesus was Love. Sathya Sai too is Love. That explains the unity of Christians of all sects, which we see here. In Rome today, Catholics gather to celebrate the Advent of Jesus. The Protestants celebrate it by themselves in their churches. The Jews are not welcomed at all. But, in the Presence of Sathya Sai, all are equally welcome. The Jews arraigned Jesus and demanded that he should be punished; in this Presence, the Jews are adoring that very Jesus. The Prema of Sathya Sai has transformed and transcended those memories. It has made them realise that there is only one caste, the Caste of Humanity, there is only one religion, the Religion of Love. A few moments ago, Drucker spoke to you on Jesus Christ. He got the courage and the wisdom to offer homage to Christ because of the impact of Swami's Presence. He understands that there is only one God and that God is omnipresent. Names and forms are different, naturally; but they are all aspects of the ONE. Love must bind all believers together; not only believers but nonbelievers too must be loved and served as His images.

Love must be manifested as Service, Seva. Seva must take the form of food for the hungry, solace for the forlorn, consolation for the sick and the suffering. Jesus wore himself out in such Seva. The Heart full of Compassion is the temple of God. Jesus pleaded for Compassion. Compassion was His Message. He was sorely distressed at the sight of the poor. This day, Jesus is worshipped but His teachings are neglected. Sai is being worshipped but His teachings are neglected. Everywhere, pomp, pageantry, hollow exhibitionism! Lectures, Lectures, Lectures! Mere gas! NO activity, no love, no Seva. Heroes while lecturing, zeros while putting what is said to practice. Develop compassion. Live in Love. Be Good; do Good; see Good. This is the way to God.

—From Discourse by Bhagavan, Christmas Day, 1981. Poornachandra Auditorium

“He Has Come!”

—Howard Murphet

Christmas at Puttaparthi! We all enjoy it, but what is its special significance?

On a visit to India, an Indian who lived overseas bought two locket, each with a picture of Swami inside. He hoped that his wife, who worshipped Jesus, would accept one of them. She did not want to take it, but he placed it in the palm of her hand. Out of curiosity she opened it, and to her amazement—and her husband's amazement—found that the picture of Swami had become a picture of Christ. Now she worships both Forms.

It is natural for a person to feel loyalty to a particular Name and Form of the Divine, especially if through custom his mind has become conditioned in that way. And it is not easy to change. I know because I was taught to worship Jesus from childhood, and I felt a twinge of disloyalty when I began to worship Sri Sathya Sai Baba as God. Oddly enough, I also felt a little disloyalty to Shirdi Sai who had grabbed my heart before I knew the Sathya Sai Form.

But Swami began to show me the deeper truth about this—in two ways. One, by his parables-in-action, as I call his miracles. There were many of these. In our early Sai days, we took a Christian lady to Swami to be healed of a difficult malady. He healed her and produced for her a small medallion, with Christ on one side and himself on the other. Since then I have seen him do this for other people and also materialize other Christian symbols, such as figures and crosses. Without words he teaches thus an important lesson.

Secondly, there is his constant verbal teaching on this theme—that there is only one God, though people see Him in many different Forms and call Him by many Names. The One God answers to all. Forms, we begin to see, belong to Time; they pass with Time, but the true God behind them is eternal. We come to see how absurd it is to think that God might disapprove because we worship Him in one Form instead of another. In order that we will not slip back into that strange idolatry, we must constantly keep our minds on the Reality behind the forms.

So with that in mind how should we think of Christmas?

We are celebrating an event where Eternity stepped into Time. 1981 years ago this day God took a human Form (as he had done many times before in the long history of mankind.) His purpose in coming was what it has always—been to raise the sons of earth,” as the carol says.

During World War Two I had the good fortune to be stationed for a few months in Palestine, and I was able to visit Bethlehem. I well remember the day we drove the short distance from Jerusalem, through country that somehow memory reminds me of the country around Puttaparthi. The little town of Bethlehem is on a hill with the Church of Nativity dominating the skyline. That church is built on the spot where once stood the inn, or hotel, that had no room for the birth of a Godman. (Typical of all hotels).

But, fortunately, the stable where the Christ Child was born is still there. It was an underground stable, beneath the inn. This underground grotto was a mass of lights and burning candles like an altar. Well, perhaps, it is the holiest altar in all Christendom. On the wall in one

place is an inscription in Greek (the Greek of the early Christian period), which tells the visitor that here is the spot where stood the manger where the baby Jesus was laid on the straw.

There is certainly a sacred atmosphere, a holy vibration, in that grotto where God once made his Advent on earth, humbly, among the oxen and asses. It was a lowly beginning to an epoch-making event.

Some parallels with Sai Baba

Tradition has a few stories about the boyhood and early manhood of Jesus, but we know little for sure until he began his mission to mankind at the age of about thirty. It was a mission of peace and love and righteousness. He showed the compassion for sufferers that Bhagavan shows today. And like Swami he had the miraculous power to help many of them. Jesus also demonstrated the power of Divine Consciousness over Nature, and what we call the "Laws of nature", when he did such things as turn water to wine and walk on the waters of the lake. All readers of the New Testament know those miracle stories. As a child I believed them, but later modern education led me to doubt them. It was only when I saw the miracles of Swami that I again believed the Christian miracles.

Many spiritual Truths that the Great Teacher taught then He is teaching again today—expounding on them more, giving a different emphasis to suit the modern age. Some of them are not easy for human nature to follow, and few people have lived by them during the centuries between the two Advents. "Turn the other cheek," for example. Do not return violence for violence. Give love where you find hatred. Love your enemies, or, those who spitefully use you. Do not dwell on the faults of others; look instead to your own failings and correct them. We could go on finding parallels.

Even one of Bhagavan's main themes, the Divinity of Man, was taught by Jesus; "I am in the Father just as you are in me and I am in you." "The Kingdom of God is within you," and a few other such statements have come down to us. Now Bhagavan Baba is emphasising that Truth to modern man—a Truth that the churches have omitted to teach. Perhaps, as Tennyson put it, "the thoughts of men have widened with the progress of the suns," and human consciousness evolved to the level where it can accept the fact that we are all children of God, with a Divine inheritance awaiting us. All we have to do is brush aside the clouds of mortal sleep, and remember our identity. But is that so easy?

I like the story from the Hindu scriptures about the prince who was kidnapped by robbers when he was a baby. He naturally grew up to think of himself as one of the robbers. Would he have believed it if someone had told him that he was really a prince? I think not. He would have needed some proof. In the end that proof came, and he went back to inherit his kingdom. We are in that situation. But the King himself has come to the "robber's den" (a rather appropriate name for this world) to tell us we are His children. Won't we now believe it? And act accordingly?

Love—the keynote

But Love is the main theme of both Incarnations. And Love is the keynote on Christmas Day. Saint John, who was close to Jesus, wrote: "We love each other because He first loved us." Does not the truth of that echo in our hearts today, now He is here again and we are able to experience

Divine Love? If sometimes, we fall short of the ideal of loving each other, we know that the Sai Family must strive to establish a nucleus of loving brotherhood as an example and inspiration to the world. What hope is there otherwise?

The Lamp lit by the Great Teacher of Palestine shone through the dark ages in Europe when Kali Yuga was at its lowest ebb. It shone in the monasteries and cathedrals, and in the lives of a few true Christians. Without that Lamp who knows to what levels of brutality and barbarity the world might have sunk? For the dark forces are always there within us, ready to drag us down to the brute level. But the Lamp was there as a beacon to help mankind keep its upward course.

Here again

Yet now, after 2000 years, the Light grows dim. The churches stand empty, and the forces of fear, suspicion, greed and hatred are gathering round a nuclear banner. The threat to man's existence on earth, and to the Divine Plan, is greater than ever it was before.

And so God has come again to re-light the Lamp and guide us through the mortal storm. Or, perhaps, to quell the storm, as He once did long ago on the Sea of Galilee. The Child, the Lamb, the Victorious One of Christian imagery is the way we might see him.

And going to the Hindu imagery, in one of the Puranas the gods say: "Siva Himself is here playing the active role of his son, Subrahmanyam." The Father is the Son; the Son is the Father. All we know is that there is only One God no matter what Form or Facet He reveals to us.

On such deep matters there is little we can know for sure. But we can, anyway, feel something of the wonder of celebrating that long-ago Advent in Palestine here at the birthplace of the Sai Avatar.

The name 'Jerusalem' means a place of peace, as does the name 'Prasanthi Nilayam'. And there is a place of peace within each one of us if we can find it.

In a song he wrote recently, Dennis Gersten has the verse:

So turn your weary eyes
Towards Jerusalem within
Where love is always burning
Now until the end.
Yes, turn against the darkest night
And let His light shine in.
Turn around Jerusalem,
He has come again.
Turn around Jerusalem,
His glory's on the wind.
He has come; he has come;
He has come again!

Yes, he has come. And, if you can receive it the Eternal One, in the garb of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, is sitting here before you now.

—*From address at Poornachandra Hall on Christmas Day, 1981*

CHRISTMAS DISCOURSE:

Param Prema

*The Lord is Love, His Form is Love,
All beings are Love, Love saves and serves,
Through Love alone can good arise
Love reveals the God in all.*

Love binds one person to another; Love attaches one thing to another. Without Love, the Universe is naught. The highest Love makes us aware of the Lord in every one. The Lord is equally present in all. Life is Love; Love is Life. Without God, deprived of God, nothing and nobody can exist. We live on and through the Divine Will. It is His will that operates as Love in each of us. It is He who prompts the prayer, "Let all the worlds be happy." For, He makes us aware that the God we adore, the God we love, the God we live by, is in every other living being as Love. Thus Love expands and encompasses all creation.

Looking a little closer, we discover that life itself is Love. They are not two but one. Love is the very nature of life, as burning is the nature of fire, or wetness of water, or taste of sweets. We tend a plant only when the leaves are green; when they become dry and the plant becomes a lifeless stick, we stop loving it. Love lasts as long as life exists. The mother is loved as long as there is life in her; when life departs, we bury her without the least compunction. Love is bound with life. In fact, Love is Life. The person with no Love to share is as bad as dead. This is the reason why love expands in an ever widening circle.

Love is the fruit of life. The fruit has three components: the skin, the juicy kernel and the seed. To experience the fruit, we have first to remove the skin. The skin represents egoism, the 'I' feeling, the excluding, limiting individualising principle. The seed represents 'selfishness', the 'mine' feeling, the possessive, the greedy, desireful principle. 'This too has to be discarded. What remains is the sweet juice, the Rasa which the Upanishads describe as Divine, the love Supreme, Param Prema, as Jyoti, Amritam, Brahma: 'Aapo Jyotheeraso amrtham Brahma'. Everyone has the right to partake of this nectarine Prema and to share It with Others. No one is excluded on the basis of race, caste, creed or place of origin. The only condition is: 'Have the skin and the seed been removed?'

When the Love Principle is known and practised, man will be free from anxiety and fear. Imagine your visiting a friend and planning to stay with him for ten days. You have some money with you, and you are afraid to carry it about with you. Now, if you have handed over the purse to your friend for safe-keeping, you can happily go the round of all the spots in the city and suburbs you long to visit. You can roam through the busiest market, with no trace of fear. The

purse you had is Love; give it all to your friend. Thereafter, fear cannot touch you. So also, deposit your love in God; He will liberate you from worry, anxiety and fear.

Through Japa, Dhyana and Save Sadhana, you have to cultivate Love towards God. Take Dhruva, for example. He prayed and practised austerities in order to induce God to grant him the rulership of the Kingdom. But when God appeared as Vishnu before him, he said, 'Lord! I do not desire the Kingdom. I want you and you only'. Similarly in the preliminary stages, one prays for worldly boons and material gain, but as thoughts get clarified and purified, one desires just one boon from the Lord-He Himself!

For, God is the entity closest to man, dearest to man. To every being the mother and the father might be a little afar but God is right with you, in you. Even if you do not love Him, He will not depart from you or move afar. 'Anoraniyaan', say the Vedas (smaller than the atom.) When you love God, He becomes 'Mahatho maheeyaan', expanding beyond the cosmos and filling all with grace. In every cell, He will be in you. You can earn this awareness through intense Love.

—From Bhagavan's Discourse on 25-12-1981, at Prasanthi Nilayam

Sai and Jesus

Through God's Will I came into this life in a Jewish family, and so I was brought up as a Jew, the same religious tradition that Jesus and His disciples were brought up in. Jesus symbolically, chose the Jewish festival of Passover for His last days on Earth. I remember as a child how on that Passover holiday we would sit together in the evening before the meal and tell the story of the Exodus of the Children of Israel from the land of bondage. Jesus and His followers must have also recited that biblical story on Passover Eve, which was His Last Supper. And for His disciples it must have had enormous significance since Jesus had announced Himself to be the Messiah, or Christos in Greek, who, like Moses in more ancient times, had been sent by God to save His People.

In the Passover story it is told how God came with wondrous miracles and signs, and directed Moses to bring the People out of captivity into the desert. There God gave them His Commandments and Law. Then after 40 years in the wilderness He brought them into the Promised Land. It is a story of trials and deliverance. Whenever the People came into difficult times, the prophecy was that God would send the Messiah, the Saviour who could deliver them from their suffering.

In the family in which I grew up, this story of the Exodus had special meaning, for at that time we were living through the dark days of Hitler in Nazi Germany. We would sing with great feeling the songs which prayed for the Messiah to come and rescue us, and sometimes we would sing King David's heart-wrenching Psalm from the Old Testament, "Oh God! Oh God! Why have You Forsaken us?" But God had not forsaken. He had come and was present here on Earth in human form. Many years later, after coming to Bhagavan and hearing so many stories of long,

miraculous treks out of the darkness into Sai's Light, it became clear that we had all been rescued and were being brought by Him to the Golden Age, the Promised Land.

Last year the opportunity came to say to Him, "Swamiji, we are all so grateful to You. We were lost and You found us, and now You have brought us hereto You. Dear Lord, You are the Messiah we have been waiting for and praying for, so long." But Baba answered, "No, No. It's not like that. Not just The Messiah. You are also Messiah. You are all Messiah. You have the strength to rescue yourselves from bondage and help others to do so also."

Swami's message was clear..."Do not look for the Saviour outside of you. Like Moses and Jesus you are also the chosen of God, the Son of God. And in time you will even realize that you are wholly divine, that you yourself are also God."

It is a powerful and truly revolutionary message which must be deeply pondered over by all of us who have been brought up to think of ourselves as individuals, rather than as Atma, One with God. We cannot believe and we won't trust in ourselves as the Divine Spirit, that That is our true essence, our Reality. So in life after life we have gotten lost in the world, dwelling only in our lower natures. But our souls cried out for Freedom. When finally the agony and suffering became unbearable we prayed for deliverance. Like children we cried for the all-knowing, the all-powerful Heavenly Father to come and rescue us, to love us and guide us, to reassure us that we are of His same blood, made up of the same divine substance, and destined to reach Him. In His infinite Compassion and Mercy He answered that call. First. He sent Jesus, the perfected man, to serve as an example to us of the ideal human life. And now He Himself has come to guide us home.

Last March I started to ask Bhagavan a question about Christ, but before I could ask, He repeated a statement which most of us have heard before with wonder and awe. He said, "Jesus announced to His followers that this Age, this Kali Yuga, will become so wicked and man will become such a danger to himself, that the One who sent me, the Father Himself, will have to come and save mankind. His Name will be Truth. He will wear a red robe and a crown of black hair. He will be called Baba." And here Swami added, "My name is Sathya which means Truth. This is my robe and this is my hair. This is the Baba that Jesus announced." He was the all-loving Father as He said this. He was not making a pronouncement. He was just speaking very softly and gently and naturally of a simple truth that we can't properly talk of Jesus without at the same time talking of the Father. The two are inseparable. Sai and Jesus are One. Truly Sai and all His children are One.

As we grow up spiritually and begin to understand the magnitude of our great fortune to be born as human beings on the Earth at a time when our Divine Father has come as Avatar ... as we delve deeper into His Mystery, His Wonder, His Magnificence...as we strengthen the bond of Love between us...as we follow His teachings and do His work, seeing all Mankind as our family and brethren...we are naturally raised to the full expression of our own innate divinity. Our Prema and Bhakti directly call forth God's Grace, and He multiplies our efforts a hundred-fold. He says, "Be a Lamp unto Yourself," and step by step we are led onwards to our own upliftment, coming closer and closer to our Divine Father Sai, until finally we realize that we and He are One. SO-HAM. I am He. The Father and Son are One.

That in essence was the path that Jesus trod and revealed to us. And that is our own path as well. Let us pray to Bhagavan for His Blessings that we may one-pointedly proceed on that holy path, and soon reach His Lotus Feet.

—*from talk given by Al Drucker at Poornachandra Auditorium on 25.12.1981*

Sai and Sufi Tradition: An Islamic View

—*Zeba Bashiruddin*

(It was four years ago that I was given the directive "You don't even know your own religion. How can you know Me?" This led me to a study of Islam with a fresh outlook. I knocked at the doors of Sufism and when they were opened I found myself at the Feet of Baba. It is due to His grace that today I am a better Muslim than I was before I came to Him. —Z. B.)

Poornachandra Hall on the eve of 23rd November. Clad in white, with the silk-black night for the aura that were His Hair, bejewelled with roses of devotion, and hands lightly folded in the lap, He sat in the silvery swing. From the sparkling hall there rose the vibrant rhythm of thousands of voices celebrating His glory through recorded history and even beyond time in a full-throated song

Thou art Ram in a Mandir,
The supreme Allah in a mosque,
Nanak in a Gurudwara;
But in the heart's temple
Thou art ever Sai—the Divine Beloved.

This is the image: The Divine Principle—Self-subsisting, luminous, "with his seat in the heart"; swinging gently, lovingly. Eventually this is also the substance of what the Muslims call Sufi tradition, as well as the mystic literature in Islam.

SAI and SUFIS: In Sanskrit Sufi has a synonym—Yogi. True Yogis are described as those who are able to conceive and execute the Union "with the Supreme Lord"—Baba: *Sathya Sai Vahini*, P.60). Following the path of Bhakti Yoga, like the Yogis, the Sufis too "regard God as the Beloved, the only desired Goal. They endeavour to merge their Love with the ocean of Love that God is." (Baba: *SATHYA SAI VAHINI*, P.64). These are the people who enter the haven of Bliss, it is the Yogi Sufi who, at the end of his career, is greeted by the Lord

Come back thou
To Thy Lord.
Well pleased
and Well-pleasing
Unto Him

Enter thou, then
Among my Devotees
Yea, Enter thou
My Heaven (Quran LXXXIX: 28-30)

One point, however, must be remembered. Just as the Divine Glory, which the twentieth century experiences as Sai Baba, is eternal and is described by the Vedas and the Quran as "Without beginning and without end," the Sufi, despite its Islamic framework, is also immortal. On the manifested level, where there is Lord Krishna there is bound to be Arjuna. ("Arjuna's name has great spiritual significance. Arjuna is one who has pure heart"—Summer Showers, 1979, P.16.)

Following the same analogy, it can be said that where there is SAI (Divine Beloved) there is Sufi. "What makes a Sufi?" asked the thirteenth century mystic poet, Jalaluddin Rumi, and proceeded to explain: "Purity of heart, not the patched mantle and the lust perverse." Similarly the knowledge that illumines a pure heart is not time-bound, it is also unlimited and eternal.

"The One Reality, the learned call by different names," is the dictum of Rig Veda. The Quran attributes to this One Reality the quality of love that is more profound than the affection of the physical father and mother. Sai Baba embodies that DIVINE LOVE. A part of the name, BABA, He gave originally to Adam, who was called Baba Adam by the Ceylonese mystics and was claimed to be the first Sufi long before Islam historically made its appearance. Later the disciples of Turkish monasteries used the name for their leaders. The Muslim Sufis all over India followed this tradition and there were many prominent mystics such as Baba Farid, Baba Khaki, Baba Ishaq, Baba Zainuddin and the legendary Baba Ratan. The Sanskrit meaning of Sai (the Divine Mother) was translated into medieval Indian mystic literature as The Divine Beloved. "I am in your heart," He says and Kabir echoes the idea: "Your SAI is in you—know this Truth if you can." Guru Nanak speaks of SAI in his verses. Shah Qadri of the South in his folk songs speaks of the Union with SAI "To unite with Sai is to be like Him, like the ingredients in the bridal paste, Chiksa."

Indo-Islamic mystic tradition not only seeks to unite with the Divine Beloved and calls this union its goal, but recognises the presence of the Universal in every philosophic system. The result was a free interaction and adaptation of Indian thought and mystic practices into Indian Sufi tradition that yielded rich results. Indian Sufism has travelled for centuries this broad path, evolved and widened into a highway to reach Prasanthi Nilayam—the Abode of Supreme Bliss.

A Road to Prasanthi Nilayam: Sufism, the Islamic esoteric dimension, is noted for its dynamic and universal outlook. Amir Hussain, a fourteenth Century mystic from North-West India, was asked why the Sufis haunted taverns and believed that ideas and practices from other religions were useful to them. "The Sufis," he answered, "are ready to appreciate the positive and the true aspects contained in other religions." The Brahmin's morning invocations and holy thread, said Amir Hussain, were mere intermediaries. "All these are part of his religion and faith, in reality he sees nothing in his faith but Thou'.

The source of this understanding was the illumined heart that has learned the Truth from Quran:

To God belong the East and the West
Whithersoever Ye turn, there is the Presence of God.
For God is all-pervading, All-knowing—(II: 115)

As early as the eighth century, the Sufis learned gnosis from Christian and Buddhist monks. From ninth century onward translations of Greek, Persian and Sanskrit literature were available to the Sufis. Two great mystics, Hallaj and Abu Yazid, who had contacts in India, were influenced by *advaitic thought*: Hallaj, who cried "Anal-Hag (I am Truth)," was the first to be crucified. He was also the first in a long line who died at the altar of the Divine Beloved. Sher Khan and Sarmad from Delhi and two other Bihari mystics met the same fate for a similar belief.

Influence of Indian mysticism is also seen in the life and writings of Abu Yazid. His theory of total destruction of empiri-self in God is not the only point of similarity in his teachings and those, of the Upanishads. The controlled use of breath which he advocated was also Indian. Al-Beruni (973-1050 A.D.), Who translated the Yoga Sutras into Arabic, recorded a number of similarities between Sufi tradition and Patanjali's yoga on the one hand and the Bhagavad Gita on the other. (*E. C. Sacham: Al-Biunis India*).

One meaning of Karma which is popularly accepted is that it is one's destiny, or fate, the inescapable "writing" on the brow, which has to work itself out. There is no escaping it. But, people forget that it is not written by some other hand. It is all written by one's own hand. And, the hand that wrote it can also wipe it off. The husk, with which the paddy is born can be removed by effort; the Maya which persuaded you to write all that destiny can be conquered in an instant and then, the entire page can be wiped away.

Men are spinning cocoons for themselves, they suffer because they are unable to come out of it into the world of light. They are like the monkeys caught by the wandering beggar, dancing at the end of the rope and begging paisa from those sitting round the ring. Sankara said that he would willingly offer the monkey (mind) to Siva so that He may teach it tricks which please Him and use it for getting alms for Himself. That is to say, Sankara proposed to fill his mind with thoughts of God, so that the monkey would be tamed and made to serve God's purpose. You too must make the mind the servant of God, not the slave of the senses.

—Baba

The Miracle of "The Messiah"

—Richard Del-Maestro, New York

This Christmas, a historic event occurred at Prasanthi Nilayam. For the first time, the immortal composition of George Frederick Handel (1685-1759 A.D.), "The Messiah", was performed in

the physical presence of God Incarnate. Handel's masterpiece is presented every Christmas for the past 300 years in many Christian countries around the globe. Appropriately it is based on the story of the Supremacy of the Lord, drawn from a chapter in the Bible called Isaiah.

It is the Hallelujah Chorus, the most famous part of Handel's work, that we sang to the Lord, this Christmas. The text runs, "Hallelujah! (Praise Ye the Lord) The Lord God omnipotent Reigneth. The Kingdom of this world is become. The Kingdom of this world and of His Christ. And He shall reign for ever and ever."

The overseas devotees were permitted by Swami to present a programme before Him on Christmas Day. They could hold Satsang for the purpose of rehearsals in Shed No. 8. The Coordinator, Elizabeth, was hard pressed to include the Hallelujah Chorus in this year's offering, by a few sisters who had attended Christmas in Bhagavan Baba's presence for three years and more. She knew full well that even professional choirs have a difficult time learning it. "When preparing a Christmas for Bhagavan, we should do a good job," she said. So, the idea was not welcomed.

But, with Bhagavan as the inspiration, we must never underestimate (or even estimate), the boundaries of human achievement. Has not Bhagavan said, "Man thinks that he is weak, limited, bound. He is shaped by the mind which is the seat of a limited imagination?" The ladies were not interested in limits and bounds. They believed in Swami's prescription, "A pure heart gets inspired. It seeks beyond the intellect." They actually got the project started. And, believe it or not, six days later, we gave the first of four performances—the fourth at the Poornachandra Auditorium for Bhagavan and fifteen thousand devotees, on the ninth day after the first rehearsal!

It was a miracle that the ambitious schedule worked. It became clear to us how delightful non-egoistic hard work could be. Devotion, Duty and Discipline are truly the three D's (dimensions) of miracle making.

Well. Those from America, Australia, Canada, Denmark, England, Germany, Italy, New Zealand, Switzerland and perhaps a few other countries volunteered for the Messiah Project. Most singers involved didn't read music; the few copies we had were so indistinct by use that even the few who could, had a hard time deciphering. Soon, we found that only three days were left. The men gave up the rehearsal shed to the ladies and filed out to an open field. Standing in a row on a low cement wall, like alley cats on a fence, we sang our hearts to the sun coming over the horizon, and to the mountains around. The women worked hard by themselves. The entire group then met for three to four hours every day.

The music is in four separate lines, sung simultaneously. Tape recordings of individual parts were made and, often, one could spot a 'plugged in' Choir member toting his tape-recorder and humming his part in preparation for the next rehearsal. Many were not used to such rigorous, relentless practice. So resentment or ego would raise its ugly head, now and then. Our pace had to be more than professional if we were to succeed. All in all, those who were ignored recovered composure; the skeptics developed faith. The atmosphere was drenched with Love, for Him, and from Him. .

More than the rehearsal of a piece of music, this was rehearsal of peace of mind. Under the pressure of imminent deadlines, we cultivated confidence in ourselves and in God and found tremendous joy.

The music was meant to be sung to instrumental accompaniment, the absence of which would make it ever more difficult to render. I scouted for an electric organ without success. I must add that, in addition to rehearsals of "The Messiah," the Choir was participating in the preparation of forty-four other musical items for the Christmas festival. This engaged them for at least two hours daily. And, nothing could evoke greater enthusiasm than squeezing all this between the two Darshans of Bhagavan, each day.

A choir of Babas

The music started to crystallize; we went through to the very end without stopping! And, it was beginning to sound like the Hallelujah Chorus! That very night, while I lay in bed visualising the Choir, I imagined that each participant was Baba and that I was conducting a Choir of Babas! I had imagined and pictured people as Baba before but, this time, it became to my eyes and mind as clear as a photograph of 50 Babas with orange robes, crowns of hair and all! Then the thought to see myself as Baba came into my head and the vision changed to include that very idea. At that moment, I slipped into sleep and a "Baba Dream" was vouchsafed to me.

The Choir was in a performance hall and just as we were about to begin, Bhagavan walked in and, to our delight, went to the podium and began to conduct. Afterwards He and I had discussions on the performance to my heart's content.

Imagine how joyfully the account of these visions was received at the next Choir rehearsal! Swami continued encouraging us. On December 23, He called several members of the Choir for interview, blessed them and gave Vibhuti as a token of Grace. Indeed, we needed the Vibhuti! The Soprano section, for example, was composed mostly of Altos! Many women were pushing their voices too intensely. Sore throats afflicted quite a number of singers.

In spite of these obstacles, "The Messiah" Choir sang to the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, on Christmas Eve at the Round House. Swami rewarded our efforts by asking us to include the Hallelujah in the programme of carols and bhajans at the Poornachandra Auditorium on Christmas Day.

That night, Bhagavan was present in the midst of the overseas devotees, (about a thousand of them ready to sing from wherever they were) and hundreds of students from the colleges of Swami, besides thousands upon thousands of Indian devotees. Just as we were lining up on the stage, Swami told me, "NO. Women on the right; men on the left"—reflecting the separation of women in the Auditorium.

Unwittingly, we had rehearsed, as all Choirs do, with men on right and women on left. A conductor too rehearses his cues, so that his gestures become automatic. When Bhagavan gave me that command, it dawned on me—I would be conducting in reverse.

There was only one thing for me to do at that moment. I knelt before Swami and asked, "Will you bless my conducting?" His firm "Yes," with a pat on my back, was all I needed to hear. I garlanded Him, saying, "We offer this music at Your Lotus Feet".

I ascended the stage, reassured those who were concerned at the turn of events that the reversed order was NOT a disaster, and lifted the baton to begin. I was told that Bhagavan Himself was moved into joyous response as we sang, "And He shall reign forever and ever." Swami clapped hands to express His acceptance of our offering. The Auditorium was shaken by the thunders of applause. "Good Vibrations" was the comment that Bhagavan made about the Choral performance.

The miracle on Christmas Day was "The Messiah".

Towards A Glorious Future

Bhagavan gave an auspicious start to the academic courses in the new Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning at Prasanthi Nilayam by delivering the inaugural discourse to the students and faculty of the Institute in the College Auditorium on November 26. Some distinguished visitors were also present. Bhagavan said that from next June, the Institute will offer, besides courses in the regular subjects, lectures on the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Brahma Sutras, the Six Darsanas, the Vedanta texts, etc.

Bhagavan began his address with a poem on what is true Vidya

*Training man to foster global peace,
Effacing all trace of narrowness.
Maintaining One-ness and happy harmony
And equality among all—in Loving brotherhood—
This is the way of meaningful Vidya.*

Vice-Chancellor, Registrar, Teachers and Students!

The University was inaugurated on the 22nd and today the classes are starting under the new auspices. It is not merely the rising of the sun that has announced this day. Today's dawn has brought the rays of higher learning and the light of Ananda too to our classrooms.

Universities and kindred educational institutions have to nourish and foster every field of human thought and action. They have to diagnose the faults and failings that afflict society and prescribe remedies for rectifying them. But, it is common knowledge, how they have strayed into contrary paths.

Whether education succeeds or fails, whether humanity is cultured or uncultured, the span of life allotted to the physical existence of man ebbs away, minute-by-minute. Realising this

irrevocable fact, man has to identify his most essential duty on earth before his life is entirely wasted and before his span is spent out.

Man is indebted to the doctor who cures him and makes him healthy again. When he is overcome by trouble, he is indebted to the person who offers help and removes the cause of anxiety. When he suffers from the miserable consequences of unemployment, he is indebted to the person who provides him food and shelter and secures for him a job which ensures a life of comfort. Far more than the debt he owes to these, he is indebted to his parents who provided him the Body. And, there are others too. For, one has to be trained to make the best use of the body. One has to live in society, for society and through society and so, one has to be taught the means and methods of this art, by the guru. Man is in debt for such teachers too.

Emperor Alexander interpreted these services not as debts which have to be repaid, but as duties to be discharged. The parents' duty is to bring up the children; the teacher's duty after entering the profession and accepting the emoluments, to teach; man's duty is to sympathise with those who suffer and to render help; the doctor's duty is to examine the diseased, prescribe medicines and cure. And, what shall we say of the debt we owe to God who has conferred on us a great blessing by giving us this human existence. It is not His duty, nor His responsibility. He does not profit from man nor is He obliged to man. Alexander announced that man is indebted most to God.

Every one discharges duties with an eye to some gain. God is the only ONE who helps man and stands beside Him, desiring no gain in return, even without being approached for help! God's grace is available to all in the same measure. But man cheapens this existence and treats it as barren and baneful, as providing only fleeting pleasures and faint joy. NO. Many may consider gold as precious or diamonds, but Alexander declared that man is the most precious entity in the world. Gold has to be extracted from rock and made available for use. It is man that does this. Diamond, when dug from the bowels of the earth is just a dull heavy stone. It is man who shapes it into a many faceted sparkling gem. Nevertheless, we attach more value to the gem than to the smith. This is a wrong attitude which makes us neglect hearts other than ours. This materialistic outlook is not native to us; it has been copied from other cultures.

Be your own selves. That is the true gain from Vidya. Fill your hearts with compassion; become aware of your genuine reality, obey the dictates of your real self. This is the most important duty of students. You have eyes but you do not see; you have ears but you do not hear. You do not believe in what you see and hear. You talk of peace and walk along deceit. Sai has willed these educational institutions in order that you may acquire the higher learning, the Atma Principle.

Be full of hope; do not yield to despair. The optimist sees the rose, the pessimist sees the thorns underneath it. The optimist aims high; he gazes at the moon and sun and at the stars. The pessimist turns his eye down into the pits of pitch darkness.

Wherefrom does pessimism arise? From one's own wicked thoughts. These thoughts originate from wicked desires; wicked desires breed in wicked company. Beware, therefore, of the company you cultivate. Cultivate good company, company that can foster your virtues and

encourage you to study well. The world has had countless scholars but their names have been lost in oblivion. You know Ramakrishna Paramahansa. He was no scholar; Vivekananda had to correct his language. Once he told his guru, "Master, you are telling people that you are receiving five rupees a month as *pencil*. NO. It is not 'pencil', it is pension." But Ramakrishna insisted, "You may say pension, if you like. For my part, it is pencil, whether you understand it or not. My style of speech is mine, yours for you. Why ridicule me and correct me?" Yet, the hundreds of literary scholars have disappeared from memory, but Ramakrishna's Name is adored in all countries. Maths, Ashrams and Seva centres are working all over the world in his name.

You must have heard of Lal-Bal-Pal. Their names were once very popular. Lala Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal are not adored today as much as Bala Gangadhar Tilak is. Bala Gangadhar Tilak was a student of the Vedas; he wrote a big commentary on the Gita while in jail. His services to the people and the country were thereby vast and varied. The spiritual approach ensures lasting success. Vyasa and Valmiki became immortal since their learning was dedicated to higher purposes. Pothana had immense talents but he used them for glorifying God and he had the great virtue of humility. Writing his unique Telugu Bhagavatam, he says: "What is narrated is Bhagavatam, the narrator is Ramchandra. This narration, it, is said, will release men from bondage." He submitted himself to the Will of God and became an instrument.

Spiritual advancement must be reflected in daily living in respect for justice and straight dealings. Speak the truth; act justly. Look at our University Emblem. It exhorts you with the Vedic direction: Sathyam Vada; Dharmam Chara. Watch your thoughts, words and deeds. This is the crucial stage when you have to lay unshakably strong foundation for the future. Whatever you do now will be building up its reaction for your future. You may enjoy humiliating and ridiculing others now. But you cannot escape lamenting and repenting for this behaviour, later. It must inevitably rebound on you with equal force. Consider every other person as like yourselves, with the same aims and aspirations, hopes and dreams. Realise how you are all inter-related.

You are all children of Bharat, the land of Bharat, who ruled over it when Rama was in exile, in Rama's name and to glorify Him. He is praised by Thyagaraja as a person of sharp intellect and a person whose only thought was how best to serve Rama. Guard your speech lest it should hurt others. Do not indulge in gossip and scandal. Speech reveals your character. It can elevate you or lower you in the estimation of others. Let your hands be busy in serving and helping those who need help.

Students! We are teaching you from next June not only the subjects currently found in Universities, but also the knowledge treasured in the Vedas, Upanishads, the Brahmasutras, the Six Darsanas, the Vedanta texts etc. Beginning from February, I am myself taking classes, one hour each, morning and evening, on the Brahmasutras and the Upanishads. The three-month course will enable you to earn a diploma also. In order to realise the glory of this human existence, you will have to study these great scriptures which form the bases of Bharatiya culture. What is the purpose of life? This was the subject of persistent inquiry among the Sadhakas of this land. Mimamsa means steady inquiry. The pundits will recite the verses; I will be expounding, verse by verse, the meaning and significance of each.

Students! You are indeed fortunate! Be happy that you are here. Utilise these opportunities to your best advantage. After finishing your studies here, go to the world beyond and be examples for others. This inaugural day of classes in the Institute has begun so auspiciously. With pure hearts and clear intellects, proceed to ready yourselves for the bright future that awaits you.

Remember the Lord with thankfulness at least thrice or even twice a day; that will give you great peace. Do not give up, your worldly duties, but do them with the name of God on your lips, inviting the Grace of God on your heads. Do not involve yourselves in the affairs of your neighbours or others to the extent that you get so entangled you cannot extricate yourselves. Spend your time in the contemplation of the beauties of nature that are spread out before you in earth and sky: green expanses of the crops you have raised, cool breezes that waft contentment and joy, the panorama of coloured clouds, the music of birds. Sing the glories of God as you walk along the bunds of the fields and the banks of the canals. Do not talk hatefully in the midst of all this evidence of love; do not get angry, in these placid surroundings; do not disturb the sky with your shouts and curses. Do not pollute the air with vengeful boasts.

—Baba

THUS SPAKE BHAGAVAN:

Two Kingdoms with One King

*Good motives yield good fruits;
Bad motives yield only the bad.*

*Madly pursuing "degrees" as your destiny
Do not get bound in servant's role
Have the glory of, your country as goal
And master the art of hard work.*

Man's progress depends on strength of mind and purity of feelings. His mental condition and the actions which rise from his feelings—these two decide whether he will be bound or free, happy or miserable, rising or falling. The mind is the framer of all man's intentions and resolutions, his wills and won'ts. These sankalpas motivate the senses and initiate activities that reveal their nature. When a pebble is dropped into a well, the ripple causes further ripples and the entire surface of water is affected. So too, when an intention enters the mind, the waves it causes envelop the entire body and prompt many activities.

When the will is pure, the activities are also pure. When it is impure, the activities through which it expresses itself are also impure. So, one has to be vigilant. As soon as an intention is formed in the mind, one must examine it to find out whether it deserves to be put into action or whether it is unworthy to be acted upon. The Intellect must be called in to conduct this examination.

Intentions that arise in the mind have great potency and vitality. Even after the death of the person, they can shape events, produce good or inflict evil. Why? They are the cause for the person getting embodied again and going through further lives! Therefore, one has to cultivate beneficial resolutions and maintain them. These are like sharp swords. They can cut to pieces and destroy the weeds of evil thoughts, evil feelings, and evil habits. As a consequence, good thoughts, good plans, good acts and good lines of action can grow freely.

Students have to take particular care about one fact. When the mental resolutions take a bad turn and when you are caught in the company of bad ones, your condition becomes worse on account of plus getting added to plus. The result is disaster. When your intentions and resolutions are good, and when you join the company of the good, you can progress fast. The company of the good is like the noontime shadow. It is short in the beginning and lengthens as the evening comes on. The company of the bad ones is like the morning shadow. It is long when the day dawns and becomes shorter and shorter as noon approaches. The comradeship and-conversation of the undesirable appear sweet and profound in the early stages, but the effect is only pollution of your minds and hearts.

Sankaracharya has emphasised the value of the company of the good to persons on the spiritual path, for it leads man to immortality.

*From Good company to No-Company
From No-Company to No-Desire
From No-Desire to Un-moving Truth
From Un-moving Truth to Eternal Liberation.*

Evil company is easily secured; good company has to be sought and struggled for. To fall is quite easy; to climb requires strength of will. Therefore, man is tempted to choose the easier path. The objective world is an image, a reflection. When you take a shave standing before a mirror, you do not apply the razor to the image. You apply it to the actual face. God is reflected in the mirror (the objective world). You can see His image in man and beast and bird, in plant and tree and grass, in every cell and atom. But man is enamoured of the mirror and of the reflections, not knowing the original which is imaged therein. How can God shine in a heart that is darkened by bad thoughts and intentions?

Vidya must teach man to turn to God and then discover that Nature too is God. Vidya must awaken the consciousness latent in man and become aware of the Atma that underlies all its levels. Vidya claims to increase man's knowledge. What is that knowledge worth? Without character, that knowledge is best cast into the fire. The educated person is now more vicious, more greedy, more crafty than the uneducated I This knowledge encourages you to exploit and exterminate others. This knowledge pollutes and poisons the world. It destroys peace and prosperity all over the world. Words! words! words! The philosophy of words! Nothing is practised, no one acts.

Today the student world is tossed in confusion—not only in confusion but in downright insanity. We wear white clothing but look into the hearts. They are awfully black.

*Heads are full of evil thoughts
Ears are open for scandal tales;
Eyes delight in peeping unseen;
Minds crave for wicked plots;
Reason pursues plans to cheat.
When Vidya perceives these in man
It will not stay a moment there.*

When this is the condition of man, how can he earn Vidya? Of course, man's present situation and status are determined by his acts and thoughts in the past. The dog has to lap water with its tongue even if it tries to quench its thirst at a river. It cannot drink deep mouthfuls. Man has to formulate his plans, respecting the limitations he himself has imposed. Whether in a holy place or in vile surroundings, whether in an urban complex or in a rural hermitage, his attitude and behaviour will only be in accordance with the bent of mind he has earned already. Frogs hop on the lotus but they do not inhale its fragrance or taste its nectar. But bees come from afar and imbibe both. So whether we reach out to God depends on the fashioning our mind has received already. But, man can modify his mental condition by means of constant practice of righteous actions. When we are good, our surroundings too tend to be good. When we hold a rose in the hand, the group around us also gets the fragrance.

Students! You must be ever on the move, ever alert on the road to goodness, usefulness and happiness. Do not allow the slightest blemish to enter your tender, bright minds. Do not allow any evil to rob you of the sacred chance you have secured to consecrate your lives. Your parents are looking forward with great hope that you will become scholars, occupy high positions, earn great fame and lead noble lives. Do not disappoint them and cause them grief. In the past, when the years of study were over and the scholar was leaving for home, he was advised by the Guru to revere the mother, the father, the teacher and the guest as God Himself is revered. Nowadays, the Convocation, where the students are awarded their degrees, has become a riotous rabble. Students do not bring joy to their parents. What a great calamity is this! Students of our college must cultivate commendable virtues, mould themselves into ideal men and women, promote the happiness of their parents, and be examples to others through their holy thoughts and deeds.

Old students of the college should proceed to their own places and enter the professions suited to their skills and aptitudes. This is not wrong. But, it is your duty, wherever you are, to hold on firmly to the disciplines implanted in you at college. To call yourselves members of the Kingdom of Sathya Sai as old students of the college when you are behaving contrary to its ideals and rules instilled at college is bringing disrepute on your Alma Mater! Do not yield to the temptations that the outer world places before you. Maintain untarnished the character and conduct that you have acquired here and preserve the ideals which you have adored. Old students who are now members of the staff of the colleges at Puttaparthi and Brindavan (Bangalore) arranged a Polio Rehabilitation Camp as well as an Eye Operation Camp at Puttaparthi last month. Nityananda Menon bore the major brunt of these camps and organised them very successfully. This is an important aspect of Seva which old students can render to the rural population. Villagers cannot afford to proceed to the towns for medical treatment. They have no money to meet the heavy expenses involved. Seeing their plight, members of the Kingdom of Sathya Sai invited the doctors, arranged for the operations, provided accommodation in their college, nursed them into

normal health, provided lovingly nourishing meals to the patients as well as their kith and kin who came to attend on them, and made the medical personnel grateful for the opportunity to render service.

Old students of the Women's College at Anantapur have an Association working on similar lines. They have named it the Kingdom of Mother Sai. They too are taking on village after village as centres for their educational and health service activities. Girls build walls, put up roofs and thatch houses in order to provide shelters for the homeless! The village folk are struck with admiration and amazement at the skill and enthusiasm the students evince. They visit slums and, with the co-operation of the hutment-dwellers, clean the areas. They move into bazaars and markets and exhort the people to share with them the joy of cleansing the bye-lanes and drains. They are trying to provide electric lights to villages which are plunged in darkness when the sun sets. By such Seva they are giving great Ananda to Swami. I bless them that they may offer Seva in even greater measure, so that Swami can give them too greater Ananda.

These activities cannot be taken up and fulfilled by means of the spirit of service alone. They require funds too. And, they are finding it by utilising a portion of the salaries they get as teachers. In appreciation of this, this day, the Central Trust is allotting a hundred thousand rupees each for the Kingdom of Sathya Sai and the Kingdom of Mother Sai. They will, I am sure, render excellent service to the rural folk around their college, for Seva is the most urgent and effective Sadhana.

What we find in our country today, however, is something different. No sooner do they finish their studies than the students struggle to get out of the country to some overseas country like Iran, Iraq etc., clamouring for "money", "money". Mammon possesses them and ruins their lives. Our students do not allow themselves to be so enslaved. They know that while they are intent on good deeds and good acts of Seva, they will not be deserted. Dharma will guard those who observe Dharma.

—Bhagavan's Discourse at Poornachandra Auditorium on 22. 11.81

There are only three ways of saving oneself—Pravritti, Nivritti and Prapti. Pravritti action, external activity, is a method of sublimating the instincts and impulses. Nivritti (detachment, internal quiet) is a method of subduing the thirst of the senses and of the ego. Prapti (surrender) is a method of utilising the senses, the instincts and impulses, the intelligence, the emotions, for the glorification of the all-knowing, all-directing Divine. Do and dedicate; work and worship; plan and protect; but, do not worry about the fruit. That is the secret of spiritual success.

—Baba

Vidya Vahini

12

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

'Vid' is the root from which, by adding 'ya', the term 'Vidya' is derived. 'Ya' means 'what' and 'Vid' means 'Light'. So, "that which gives Light" is Vidya. This is the basic meaning of the word. Therefore, it is evident that Brahma Vidya alone deserves to be known as Vidya. Knowledge was considered Light and Ignorance as Darkness by the ancients. Just as light and darkness cannot co-exist at the same time in the same place, Vidya and Avidya cannot be together. So, all who journey along the path of progress have to purify their consciousness and illumine their selves through Brahma Vidya.

In the section on Vibhuti Yoga, the Gita informs us: Adhyatma Vidya Vidyanam, "I am," the Lord declares, "Adhyatma Vidya (the Brahma Vidya), among all Vidyas!" All other Vidyas or knowledge systems are as rivers; Adhyatma Vidya is as the ocean. As all rivers find their fulfillment when they merge in the ocean, even so all Vidyas join the ocean of Adhyatma Vidya as their ultimate goal. This is not all. When the rivers meet and mix with the ocean they lose their separate names and forms and assume the name and form of the ocean itself. So, too, the varied Vidyas concerned with the objective external would renounce their individual names and forms when they arrive at the confluence with the vast Ocean of Brahma Vidya.

"Vidyaa thapobhyaam Poothaatma"—"By means of Vidya and Tapas, man is transformed into a purified soul." Vidya can be considered as having two aspects: Baahya Vidya and Brahma Vidya. Baahya Vidya provides the wherewithal for human livelihood. Man can study many subjects, earn valuable degrees, acquire higher and higher jobs, and manage to spend his life with no worry and fear. This type of Vidya helps man, whatever the job he is raised to, whether a peon or a Prime Minister. Brahma Vidya, on the other hand, endows all human beings with the strength which enables them to discharge successfully the duty they owe to themselves. It lays down the path which leads both to joy in worldly relations and bliss in the life beyond. Therefore, Brahma Vidya is far superior to all the Vidyas available on earth to man. Brahma Vidya has the divine potency to liberate every one from bondage. Baahya Vidya has no such potency. Brahma Vidya makes you aware of the Omniself, the Absolute, the Parabrahman; Tapas enables you to merge with That. Vidya is the process of acquiring knowledge; Tapas is the known. The first is indirect, it is the means. The second is the goal, the end.

Guru means literally the 'big' person, the 'great' person. That is to say, the guru must have mastered these two, Vidya and Tapas. When one desires to wash off from the clothes he wears the dirt it has accumulated, he needs both soap and clean water. So too, when one is anxious to remove the dirt that has stuck to the mind, both Vidya and Tapas are essential. Only when both are used can the levels of consciousness be thoroughly cleansed. No vehicle can move without two wheels, nor can a bird fly on one wing. So too, no man can be rendered holy or purified without Vidya and Tapas.

Tapas does not mean positioning oneself upside-down, head on the ground and feet held up, like a bat. Nor is it the renunciation of possessions and properties, wife and children, and, emaciating one's body, holding the nose to regulate breath. NO. Physical actions, oral assertions and mental resolves—all three have to be in unison. The thought, the speech and the act all have to be pure. This is the real Tapas. And, they have to be coordinated not by the compulsion of

duty. The effort must be undertaken for satisfying one's inner yearnings, for the contentment of the self. This struggle is the essence of Tapas.

The Gita depicts the ideal Guru and the ideal Shishya—the pupil is the Adhikaramurti and the Preceptor is the Avatarmurti. Arjuna has earned the right to learn; Krishna has come as Man to teach man. The pupil is Narottama (The best of men); the Preceptor is Purushottama (The best among Physical Embodiments). The pupil wields the bow; the Guru wields the secret of all skills, Yoga. He is Yogeswara. Arjuna is Dhanurdhari. When these two meet, Vidya is transformed into Brahma Vidya.

The pupil, Arjuna, after imbibing the teaching of Krishna, said, "Karishye Vachanam thava", "I shall do as you command'." He threw away now, not his bow named Gandeeva, but his great big ego itself, the Ahamkara that was deluding him. The Guru was the Sutradhari—the Director of the play. The Shishya, Arjuna, was the Patradhari (the character in the play). The Shishya should not be proud that he has been entrusted with a duty; for, as long as you are conceited, you cannot get a Guru. When the Guru accepts you, your pride will disappear.

One should not feel great or be proud when he gives his all and boasts of his sense of renunciation. The real renunciation is to give oneself away. Then, the Guru will grant him freedom to follow his own will, as Krishna did. "Beloved Arjuna! Yatthechchasi, thathaa kuru." "As you will, so you act. Think well. And do as you like," Krishna told him. He meant that He had given him all the advice he needed and He had also accepted the ego Arjuna had discarded. And so, Arjuna can now be granted freedom to act as he wills, for his will has become His. The individual who has reached that level has to be given freedom. The guru should not mercilessly order his Shishya about simply because the Shishya has dedicated himself and his all to him. The greedy guru and the indolent disciple—both fall into perdition. The Guru should not turn into a Vittapahari, a person who steals wealth; he should be a Hridayapahari, a person who steals hearts! The guru has to be an alarm timepiece. He must wake up those who are enveloped in the sleep of ignorance and reward them with teachings on Atmajnana, the knowledge of their Atmic Reality.

A traveller going through the countryside from village to village was confronted by a river in floods. The waters were rising and rushing. He was helpless because he did not know how to cross to the other bank. He cast his eyes all around. He saw two men squatting under a tree at a little distance from where he stood. He walked towards them. He found that one of them was lame and the other was blind. So, he inferred that they would not know where the river was deep and where it was shallow enough to wade across. He went back, without questioning them. He knew their answers should not be acted upon.

The preceptor who has not mastered the Sastras, which are the repositories of the experience gained by seekers in the past, is represented in this story by the blind man. And the lame person represents the person who has not put the knowledge into practice and gained personal experience. In fact, knowledge of the Sastras and experience gained by its practical application—these two make a full man. Only such a Guru can save the Shishya by his instruction and example. This is the conclusion expounded in the Mundakopanishad.

Even more difficult than getting .a good Shishya is the task of securing a good Guru. Only when a real guru accepts them can the shishyas become exemplary persons. Pure-hearted students, unselfish students, non-egoistic students - when such aspirants approach them, the Gurus exult in ecstatic delight. Parikshit, the Emperor, renounced everything and decided to realise God, and, right at that moment, Maharishi Suka appeared, to guide him straight to his goal. Similarly, when the good Shishyas get the good gurus, they succeed not only in attaining Bliss but also in conferring peace, prosperity, and joy upon the entire world.

(To be continued)

Bhagavan in Bombay: Bal Vikas Rally

An ochre-robed veteran monk walked up the dais holding a white scarf with both the hands towards Sri Sathya Sal Baba. The lady who compered the Bal Vikas Children's rally announced: "Lama Bihari, representing the Dalai Lama, presenting a scarf to our Beloved Lord. In the traditional Tibetan style, Lama Bihari went on his knees and bowed thrice.

Several thousand men and women, witnessing the biggest-ever children's rally of its kind at Shivaji Park, broke into spontaneous applause. This was one of the highlights of Bhagavan's four-day visit to Bombay. One wondered if only the Dalai Lama had been, per chance, in Bombay, he would certainly have greeted Baba himself. And what a sight it would have been! One worshipped by millions of Tibetans as their God, and the other worshipped by millions of people in India and abroad as the embodiment of divinity, meeting on a common platform.

The rally at Shivaji Park, on January 27, in which nearly 2,000 Bal Vikas children participated, was preceded by a pageant of fourteen purposefully got-up floats, each representing an aspect of Baba's teachings. The various tableaux were artistically got up to depict the message of Baba with regard to "Unity of Faiths", "Science and Spirituality", 'Help to the Handicapped', and other ideals.

It started from outside the park, moved out into the neighbourhood and returned to the park for the rally, whose theme was "Savings as an instrument of better life." The theme of the pageant was "Practice of values in life." Children of the Sathya Sal primary school at Dharmakshetra, performing 'lezim drill', led the pageant.

As the procession entered the park, a Gurkha regimental pipe band received it, playing a soft melody.

Bhagavan distributed certificates to several boys and girls who had passed the all-India examinations for Pre-Seva Dal group.

Bhagavan Baba arrived in Bombay on the morning of January 26, Republic Day, and his next four days in the city were crowded with engagements in various parts of the city, from Nariman Point in the south to Malad in the far North.

On the evening of Republic Day, Bhagavan addressed the largest gathering ever assembled at Dharmakshetra. The open-air auditorium had been considerably improved in the past few months, to be able to accommodate a much larger gathering than in previous years. Still, it could not accommodate all, estimated at over 30,000, who turned up and the crowd overflowed on to the road outside. Nevertheless that large concourse heard Baba's discourse in perfect silence, as they always did. (A report of Swami's discourse is published elsewhere.)

The second day in the city, January 27, Baba's engagements were all outside Dharmakshetra.

Beginning with the children's grand rally at Shivaji Park, which the Governor of Maharashtra, Air Chief Marshal (Retd.) O. P. Mehra, addressed, a committee of hosts entertained Baba to a

musical evening at the Tata Theatre of the National Centre for the Performing Arts. The Governor headed the committee. He wondered what kind of welcome he could give to a divine personage. A thought occurred to him instantly. He would extend a welcome as from "one Chancellor to another." (Bhagavan Baba is the Chancellor of the Institute for Higher Learning at Prasanthi Nilayam). He was aware that the two functioned in two different planes, Baba on a 'spiritual plane' and himself on a 'materialist plane'.

Accommodation in the Tata Theatre being limited admission was limited to invitees. Every seat was filled. Most of Bombay's leading industrialists were there. Some of the foremost singers of Bombay sang devotionals for Baba.

A symposium on "Practice of Values in Life" was held at Bhaidas Hall, which was packed to capacity long before the proceedings began. The well-known jurist and a trustee of the Sai University Trust, Mr. Nani Palkhivala, and the famed cricketer of yesteryears, Mr. Vijay Merchant, now totally devoted to welfare work, participated in the symposium. This was followed by an inspiring discourse by Bhagavan Baba on what would really bring about peace and harmony in life.

The Chairman of the World Council of Sri Sathya Sai Organisations, Sri Indulal Shah, told the gathering how fast the scheme of education in human values, evolved by Baba, was spreading in the country. The Bombay Municipal Corporation had accepted it quite some time ago. The Delhi Municipal Corporation has asked the Sathya Sai Seva Organisation to take up the training of its teachers in Delhi. And only recently, the Union Education Minister inaugurated the scheme in Hyderabad.

The most unforgettable experience for the members of the Bombay Samiti and other workers of the organisation, men and women, during Bhagavan's brief visit was what they witnessed on the morning of January 28. They had all received passes to attend a 'homam' in the prayer hall of Dharmakshetra. Sri Indulal Shah and Srimati Sarala Shah conducted the 'homam'. Bhagavan Baba was present. He heartily blessed them, materialised a ring and slipped it on Sri Indulal's finger and himself let out something which even the members of the Samiti were not aware of. It was Sri Indulal's 60th birthday. The 'homam' was for his 'shashtyabdapurti'. Sri Baba said that he had come to know that Indulal himself was averse to observing it but was 'inveigled' into it by two senior members of the organisation, Sri L. C. Java and Dr. Keki Mistry, both former chairmen of the Samiti and now members of the Dharmakshetra Trust. Baba laughed and said he sided with Java and Mistry. He paid a heart-warming tribute to 'Indubhai and Sarala', as he called them, for their spirit of selfless work and handed them garlands to exchange.

Bhagavan was very appreciative of the talent shown by some of the children of Bal Vikas, who presented a ballet and two skits on Friday, the penultimate day of his stay. Earlier, he attended a reception accorded by two suburban units of the Samiti at Malad.

Bhajan was fixed for 6 a. m. Saturday, a very early hour to reach far off Dharmakshetra. Yet a large crowd turned up and bade a loving farewell to Bhagavan as He drove past them to the airport at 7 a. m. waving his kerchief.

An exhibition of works of art by the children of Bal Vikas, held in the prayer Hall of Dharmakshetra, was declared open by Baba. Its theme was "Values in Life". Bhagavan was taken round by the participating children themselves and was very much impressed by their performance. The paintings will be exhibited in other parts of the city in the months to come.

—V. N. B

Bhagavan's Call to Tamil Nadu Sai Sevak

Inaugurating the Fourth State Conference of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Tamil Nadu, at "Abbotsbury," Madras, on January 22, Bhagavan Baba exhorted the members to render service to society with love and compassion and to regard it as the greatest Sadhana for their spiritual development.

The Conference was attended by 717 delegates (434 men and 283 women) from all districts of the State, besides thousands of devotees who had assembled outside the hall.

Sri P. G. Achuthanandam, State President for Tamil Nadu, welcoming Bhagavan, expressed the gratitude of the members of the organisation for His Grace in being present and guiding the deliberations. He asked the members to search their hearts and satisfy themselves whether they were carrying out the nine directives of the charter issued by the World Council-in their daily lives. He requested Bhagavan to distribute prizes to Bal Vikas students who had distinguished themselves in different examinations and contests.

Inaugurating the conference, Bhagavan stressed the importance of selfless and loving service as a form of spiritual sadhana. He gave the example of the earth, which was ceaselessly rotating at 1000 miles per hour, around its axis and at 66,000 miles per hour around the sun, in order to help all living things to survive on its soil by causing the alternations of night and day and producing various seasons.

Later an entertainment programme was presented by Bal Vikas and Pre-Seva-dal boys and girls, who staged scenes depicting true Bhakti and "Panchali Sapatham", an episode from the Mahabharata.

On the 23rd, Dr. Punnaivanam called upon all members to involve themselves in more service activities and asked the delegates to divide themselves into six groups to deliberate on the work done so far and to draw up programmes for the future.

The six groups were concerned with (1) Planning, (2) Enhancement of spiritual values in service activities, (3) Study Circles, (4) Education in Human Values, (5) Bal Vikas Activities and (6) Door-to-door Health Education.

After speeches by the Convenors of the respective groups, Sri Venkateswarulu, Govindarajulu, Srinivasaraghavan, Srimathi Leelamma, Mrs. Vidya Srinivasan and Sri Unni, the representatives of the groups met in different places. The reports of the groups were discussed by the State President with the District Presidents and a resolution was drawn up, containing a directive to all Samitis to adopt one village/slum area each and work for their improvement in health, sanitation, education and other day-to-day needs. They were invited to organise more eye camps and medical service camps and intensify the organisation of Study Circles and to spread health education.

The Resolution was read by Sri Achuthanandam and placed in the hands of Bhagavan.

Bhagavan, in His valedictory discourse, described at length different categories of Bhakti—Bhoutika, Ekanta and Ananya—and explained the characteristics of Ananya Bhakti, which was the highest form of Bhakti. He blessed the members with His Benediction and directed them to continue their service activities with devotion and discipline.

On the 23rd morning, Bhagavan witnessed a fine display of group dances by Bal Vikas children designed to dramatise Bhagavan's message and demonstrate the children's determination to live up to it.

Bhagavan, who arrived in Madras from Brindavan on January 21, gave Darshan to thousands of devotees at 'Sundaram' and graced the bhajans there in the morning on three successive days. On January 24, Bhagavan motored to Neyveli and conferred His Benediction on the large gathering of devotees, who had been patiently waiting for Him for over three hours from midday. Bhagavan was deeply touched by their devotion.

—Ed.

Life is like a flight of steps towards the Godhead. You have your foot on the first step when you are born; each day is a step that must be climbed; so be steady, watchful and earnest. Do not count the steps ahead or exult over the steps behind. One step at a time and that well climbed, that is enough success to be satisfied with and to give you encouragement for the next one. Do not slide from the step you have got upon. Every step is a victory to be cherished; every day wasted is a defeat to be ashamed of.

—Baba

From Bhoutika Bhakti to Ananya Bhakti

To love God as the embodiment of Supreme Love is the highest form of Bhakti. The stages by which this highest form of Bhakti can be developed by spiritual aspirants were explained by Bhagavan Baba, in an exhilarating discourse on January 23, at the valedictory session of the Tamil Nadu Sathya Sai Seva Organisation's annual Conference. A vast gathering listened to Bhagavan's address with rapt attention

Lord Sridhara is the embodiment of Prema or Love. He lives in Love. Love is his Divine Form. His Love is pervading everywhere in the Universe. This is the "Taraka mantra". God cannot be understood by words without understanding even a bit of this supreme Love. How are you going to get good thoughts in this world without comprehending this Love, which is God's true form?

If something gets rusted, you can clean it. If there is husk or covering over a seed, you can remove it. If you want, you can even remove ignorance from a normal individual. But it is not possible to save and correct a foolish person.

Embodiments of Love!

You are all brought here today by bonds of Love. It is only Love that binds one person to another and one thing to another. The entire world is filled with Love. Life devoid of Love can be described as lifelessness.

In Love, there are three levels. The first is the best and highest level. Men at this level have full faith and belief that God, who is the embodiment of eternal bliss, is present in all beings without exception. They will have the feeling that Easwara is present everywhere, in every thing in the form of Love. For such people, "Adveshta Sarvaboothaanaam" will be the feeling. That is, they see nothing but love in every being. They have no difference between their "own" people and others. Persons filled with such supreme love will experience bliss.

Those at the second level care only for their own good and the welfare of their own kith and kin, their comfort and happiness. They may not care about others, about their merits or their faults. These people can be termed as "Madhyama", or middle level persons.

There are others who don't feel happy if they see that others are happy; in fact they grow jealous of others' happiness. They will be always looking for faults in others and criticising, them; they cannot tolerate other people being happy. There by they ruin all aspects of love in themselves. Just as a crow Feels jealous when a cuckoo sings well, these people feel jealous at others' attainments. Just as the crow ridicules the swan, these people ridicule other good people. They are in the lowest level of Love ("adhama").

Although love is present in the same manner in all these three categories of people, they enjoy, experience and use this love in different ways. In every tree of life love is present in the form of sweet juice in its fruit. But this is covered by a skin called "DESIRE". Hence we will not be aware of the sweet juice in the fruit. Only those persons who remove the skin of desire and throw away the seed of bad qualities like anger and jealousy, can enjoy the sweet juice of the fruit of love. When rows away seeds f likes and dislikes and removes the skin of desire, he can enjoy Param Prema—Divine Love. This is also called Rasa Swaroopa. The Upanishads say that this Rasa is Brahman. With a view to experiencing this Bliss, they prescribe ten types of Devotion (Bhakti). Bhakti can be classified under three headings. Though Bhakti is described in common parlance in many ways, the Vedas say that there are only three types of Bhakti: Bhoutika, Ekanta and Ananya Bhakti. These have been described in many different ways and various commentaries also have been given about them.

What is connected with Shravana (listening), Manana (digesting what was learnt) and Nidhidhyasana (Practising what was preached and learnt), all the rituals connected with Yajna, the visiting of various kshetras on pilgrimage, and various types of service such as charity (dana and dharma) are all classified as Bhoutika Bhakti. Japa, Tapas and Sandhya-vandanam etc., are all connected with this first type of Bhakti. Constructing temples, consecrating idols, worshipping in temples and all rituals connected with these things are only Bhoutika Bhakti. These are connected with 'Jada,' (the physical). Even though one may be immersed in meditation and experiencing visions of such idols, these have to be classified under this first type since all these experiences arise out of the body, mind and intellect, which are transient and not of a permanent nature. This body has to perish and hence experiences arising out of this body will also disappear with the body. Nevertheless, this type of Bhakti is necessary in the first stage.

Travelling in this path, we should slowly march to the second step of Ekanta Bhakti. Many people think that Ekanta Bhakti means dedication to one idol or form and experiencing mental vision of that one Form exclusively in privacy. This is not correct. Ekanta Bhakti is a subtle thing achieved by effective control of the mind and experiencing one's self (Antaratma). It is not correct to think that control of the mind means holding it steady without wandering around. To be able to cleanse the mind of impure thoughts is the correct meaning of 'Ekanta'. This is a Sadhana to be practised in a lonely atmosphere in a quiet place free from noise or disturbance of any kind. The best time for this practice is from 3 a.m. to 5 a.m., which is called 'Brahma-muhurta'. Selecting a particular time in this period, closing the door without contacting any one else one should sit quietly and adjust the rate of inhaling and exhaling of breath. It is important that the pace of inhaling and exhaling must be the same. By gradual practice, the number of breathings per minute must be reduced from eight or ten a minute to two or one. You have to take your own time, proceed gradually in the process of reduction of the number of times of inhaling and exhaling. Because of the flow of thoughts in the mind (Sankalpa and Vikalpa,) the breathing also gets affected and disturbed. To control the breath in this manner and direct it in the proper path, there is a very effective discipline that should be followed. The tip of the tongue must be made gently to touch the rear of the teeth. When it is kept in this specific position, the thoughts in the mind become less and one may concentrate on control of breath. When you control the Sankalpa and Vikalpa of mind and you detach yourself from thoughts of the body and things around you, you come to the stage of Ekanta Bhakti. All that we do with the body and mind are called Bhoutika by Vedanta. Ekanta Bhakti is at state of mind, without thoughts and desires, when it is concentrated on God.

In the state of Ekanta Bhakti the mind is dissolved and is in a still state. While God is everywhere in every one, in people with Ekanta Bhakti, the mind is rid of all impurities and God's presence alone is experienced. If you take a small tumbler with very little water and place it before the sun, you can see the reflection of the sun in the water. Though the quantity of water is very little, because, it is steady and clear you can see the reflection. On the other hand, if you try to see the vast expanse of water in the sea nearby, you don't see the reflection because the water is always moving in the form of tides. Nor can you see the reflection of the sun in a well where the water is muddy. Even in the sacred river Ganges you can't see the reflection of the sun because it is ever flowing, though the water may be pure and the bed is sandy. Similarly, God

will not be reflected in a mind full of likes and dislikes and desires of the mind that is wavering or full of impure thoughts. If you want to realise the presence of God in all human beings, you must recognise the importance of purity and steadiness of mind. When the mind is pure and steady divinity will be resplendent.

To experience this Divinity in this way, Ekanta Bhakti alone will help you. In any other path you may have all other things and some may experience visions of different types. These are nothing but hallucinations and products of the imagination. Without good qualities, you cannot control your mind. How can you build a house without brick and mortar! To achieve purity and steadiness of mind, earnest practice is essential. Ekanta Bhakti is not obtained by locking yourself in a room and worshipping an idol with devotion. This can only be called Ekakti Bhakti; after all, the idol is only a created object. You should experience and worship only your Atma Swaroopa and not a created object. You should have vision of the Primordial Divinity, whose reflection is in your Atma. Worshipping an idol is necessary as first step. But we can't devote all our life-time only to the first step.

By continuous training and practice of Ekanta Bhakti, in due course you will be able to see the 'Atma' within yourself. The Atma is there in us. You can't see it because there is a cover in the form of impurity and waves of likes and dislikes hovering around it. When you remove all these impurities you will see (that the mind rests in a clean and pure state. At that stage, if you turn your vision inward, you will have the vision of Divinity which is 'Sakshatkara'. This is Ekanta Bhakti. What we read in books is not Ekanta Bhakti. It appears simple. It is not so. True Ekanta Bhakti is realised only when you turn your vision inward away from the sensory objects and experience the Pure Atma. Ekanta Bhakti is Antar-Drishti or inner vision., while Bhoutika Bhakti is Bahir Drishti or outward vision.

After practising Bhoutika Bhakti and Ekanta Bhakti, Ananya Bhakti will be easy to attain. We have a feeling that Ananya Bhakti consists in surrendering to God, saying: "I have no saviour other than you." We think that simply by saying "you are mother, you are father, you are friend and you are my saviour, Oh God of Gods," we have surrendered and are practising Ananya Bhakti. This is only oral Ananya Bhakti. Real Ananya Bhakti comes from deep inquiry into the Reality of the inner Self in the depths of your heart.

The experiences you have in the waking state and the things you see in the dream and deep sleep states are illusory and transitory if you inquire into them deeply. After such inquiry, the Ananya Bhakta will come to the conclusion that in all the three states whatever one sees is illusory. He will find that the 'I', which is present in all the three states, is only the Atma and that there is no difference between this Atma and the Paramatma. If the thought of the body is not there, duality will not be there. Where there is no thought of a second one, it is Ananya. To reach this state of Ananya, you have to go through the stage of Ekanta Bhakti only.

You saw in the drama presented by the Bal Vikas children yesterday how a Pundit was describing Krishna, describing the jewels that he was wearing, the flute he was playing etc. A thief who listened to this was intent on reaping a rich harvest by robbing the boy of the jewels and asked for his address. The Pundit gave him the details of the place on the bank of the Jamuna, with all its scenic beauty. He gave this information only from his book knowledge. The

thief, with full belief, went to the address and saw Krishna, accosted him and took the jewels from him. The Pundit could not see Krishna, while the thief could see him because the Pundit had only book knowledge and no real belief. 'Panda' means 'Viveka' or discrimination. One who has 'Viveka' is Punditah. This 'Viveka' is of two types: one is worldly or Bhoutika, and the other is spiritual or Adhyatma. The former can be understood by experiments and instruments, but in the Adhyatmic sphere such 'Viveka' will not work. One should have faith and pure love. Without such faith or pure love, whatever arguments you may enter into, whatever inquiry you do, will yield no results. One with doubts can never achieve success in spite of many births. Ananya Bhakti can be described as 'un-questioning faith.' King Parikshit had to lay down his life within seven days. At this stage, Suka, the great Rishi, came to teach him about God. He was a Sarva-sanga-parityagi. He had no attachment to the world. If such a great sage described the devotion of the Gopis as the most sacred form and highest state of Bhakti you can realise how great was the Gopikas' devotion. It was Ananya Bhakti in the highest sense. Parikshit questioned Suka Maharishi as to how the gopikas got Ananya Bhakti and experienced divinity while following only the worldly path. Suka put a counter question to Parikshit as to whether he thought Krishna was God or an ordinary human being. He added that if Krishna was God, the Gopikas were devotees. If Parikshit thought Krishna was a cowherd, then there was no use his teaching him at all. He said he was teaching Vedanta and Bhagavata only to one who had faith and belief in God. It is only for those who are eager to learn and have the faith that the teachings about divinity should be taught. Individuals who are having Shraddha to experience divinity, even if they are ten in number, have to be taught.

Members of the Sathya Sai Organisations should make attempts to follow the right path and raise their own spiritual effort to the level of Ananya Bhakti. The world today is in a very bad state. If the situation in the world should improve, it will be only through Astikas who are believers in divinity. They should themselves become Premaswaroopas or embodiments of love and by their Sadhana, backed by patience, forbearance and compassion, play their role in serving society and contributing to the betterment of the world. God is present in you and is viewing with thousands of eyes, what all you do. Even if no one is seeing, God is seeing you and watching your actions always. Therefore you should do everything with this awareness in you. It is my hope that all of you will improve your life by fostering love and doing good, seeing good and being good.

The Dharma or Code of Conduct for each has to be different for it is decided by changing factors like age, profession, status, authority, scholarship and also by considering whether a person is a male or female, teacher or pupil, master or servant, child or youth, father or son, dependent or free. But the basic principles of Dharma are Sathya, Prema, Sahana and Ahimsa—Truth, Love, Fortitude and Non-Violence. The various codes, written or unwritten, are only elaborations of these basic principles.

—Baba

Sai Family News

A London Symposium

The Sri Sathya Sai Baba centre of Graveney, London, organised a symposium on Baba's message and mission at the Battersea Town Hall on 7th November, 1981, in honour of Bhagavan's Birthday. The Symposium was directed mainly towards non-devotees, who comprised more than one half of the audience of over six hundred. All Sai Centres near and far co-operated in making the symposium a success.

The occasion was utilised for launching a beautifully produced book, "Baba's Influence on Children." This book of articles written by children was compiled by Genoveva and Victor Kanu and shows the profound and vital influence Baba is having on young people.

Peggy Mason, speaking on 'Love in Action', illustrated the fantastic scope of Baba's work and influence, from providing crutches for the disabled to building great universities and colleges. Victor Kanu spoke on "Sai Baba—the Divine Healer." Victor quoted freely from the new children's book to show how Swami's influence has changed the behaviour, attitudes and habits of the children represented.

Lucas Ralli posed the question "Who is a Devotee?" and answered it. Ron Laing, who has recently been appointed a member of the World Council of Sri Sathya Sai Organisations, gave the final address, "Who is Baba?" He described the amazing childhood of Sai Baba leading to the statement of His Mission when He was still a young teenager. Ron's final words were: "Lift up your hearts, a new Golden Age is being created. God is incarnate in India NOW."

Asian and Western cultures joined in perfect harmony to sing the deeply moving Arati followed by the equally moving "Jerusalem"-Blake's immortal poem set to music by Perry.

—V. K., London.

Sai katha in Assamese:

Bhagavan's Birthday Celebrations organised by the Sathya Sai Seva Samiti in Gauhati concluded on November 26, 1981, with a delightful presentation of "Sai Katha" (The Sai Story) in Assamese by Bal Vikas children. Music for the programme was provided by Rupak Sharma, former student of the Sathya Sai College at Brindavan, who also directed the performance and arranged the choreography for the dances. Indrani, Sumangal and Nandita acquitted themselves well as the young Sathya Sai from childhood to his annunciation of His divine mission.

—K.K.

Human values

Kendriya Vidyalayas in different parts of the country are introducing the course in Human Values, which has grown out of the Sathya Sai Bal Vikas educational programme. The Kendriya Vidyalaya at Ernakulam (Kerala) initiated the programme in, November last, with the help of six primary teachers who underwent an intensive short-term training course earlier. 97 children in standards II, III and IV are attending the classes.

Shigehalli school sanctified

February 4, 1982, was a red-letter-day for the villagers of Shigehalli, near Brindavan, when Bhagavan sanctified the new building of the Higher Primary School, the foundation for which had been laid by Prof. Kasturi a year ago. The village had been "adopted" by the Sathya Sai College for development and the Kingdom of Sathya Sai had contributed Rs. 15,000 towards the cost of the school building.

Bhagavan was received with "Poorna-Kumbham" and Vedic mantras by the children of the school—30 girls and 65 boys—at the entrance to the village. Bhagavan declared open the new building by cutting the ribbon and going through all the five class-rooms.

After presentation of the headmaster's report and a programme of songs and dances by the school children, Bhagavan addressed the gathering on the need for imparting a spiritual content to education to build up the character and moral strength of the younger generation. He called upon parents to set a good example to the children by their conduct at home and outside. He announced that He would arrange for the supply of uniforms to the children and sitting planks for the classrooms.

Doctoral Thesis

Sri Kashiram Madhavalal Patel, Principal of the Kendriya Vidyalaya, Gandhinagar, Gujarat, has been awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by the Sardar Patel University, Vallabh Nagar, Gujarat, for his thesis on "A study of the value orientation in the educational institutions run by Sathya Sai organisation'." His thesis, which was prepared under the guidance of Dr. J. M. Bhatt, Reader, M. B. Patel College of Education, Sardar Patel University, was accepted by the Faculty of Education of the University in November. This is the first time Sathya Sai educational institutions have been the subject of a full-fledged doctoral thesis.

Duties of women

The Bangalore City Mahila Seva Dal and Mahila Vibhag arranged a 3-day free training Camp for 280 girls belonging to 9 Junior Colleges and 10 High Schools of the city in addition to 48 teachers. Two College principals, the Director of Collegiate Education, Srimati Selvie Das, and the Director of Adult Education, Smt. Ahalya Achayya, also participated.

Lectures on "Human Values," Importance of Karnataka Culture," "Swami Vivekananda", "Relevance of Gandhian Values to our youth," "Development of personality," 'Role of Motherhood,' "Great Women of India," "Seva as Sadhana", 'First Aid and Mental Health,' were given by various speakers. Smt. Indra Devi gave a talk on yoga with demonstration of Asanas. Prof. N. Kasturi spoke on the 'Omnipresence of Bhagavan Baba'. Essay, elocution, music and rangoli competitions were conducted.

On the third day the trainees had the good fortune of having Bhagavan's Darshan at Brindavan and listening to His divine discourse on the duties of women, primarily as mothers. Bhagavan's address in Kannada, punctuated by parables and humorous anecdotes, was listened to with intense interest by the students.

You are aware that, at the present day, both in India and outside, there is a wave of spiritual discontent surging in thousands of hearts and, as a consequence, we have eager groups who give up everything worldly and seek God and Godly preceptors. But, many do believe that this search concerns only the individual and that society need not get involved in their yearning or their endeavours. This is as foolish as saying that one need not worry about the darkness prevailing outside the walls of his residence. The individual and society are intertwined inextricably. There must be illumination for both. Ananda must surge out of the individual and fill the lake of society, and from thence, stream into the Ocean of Grace. Society is just a name for a group of individuals: but, it has no corporal body. Individuals are the limbs that nourish and support the 'corpus' celled society.

Society shapes the individual, provides the arena for his development and sets the ideals he should plant before himself. When the individual is stronger, more intelligent, more service-minded, and more efficient as a worker, society benefits; when society is more aware of its role and of the need to cleanse that role with humility and wisdom, the individual benefits.

—Baba

THUS SPAKE BHAGAVAN:

Singing the Name

The present Age, often condemned as Kali Yuga, is, in fact, the age in which one can attain Liberation most easily. This is revealed in every scriptural text. The reason, according to them, is that one can be liberated now by the Sadhana of Namasankirtan, singing the glory of the Lord, and listening to the Name, being sung. Among the nine steps of devotion, listening to the Name being sung—Shravanam and Kirtanam (singing the Name)—are mentioned as the best. Kirtanam is singing the Names which denote the glory of the Lord and Sam-Kirtanam means "singing the Names continuously aloud without interruption, and without fear." Whereas Kirtanam can be by one individual and can promote one's own spiritual progress, Sam-Kirtanam is by a group of people. It can help the process of liberation not only for all members of the group, but it will be beneficial to those who listen and even to those beyond the circle of listeners; the whole world can benefit by the vibrations.

Samkirtanam is generally described as of four types, with distinct characteristics. They are: (1) Guna Samkirtanam, (2) Leela Samkirtanam, (3) Bhava Samkirtanam, and (4) Nama Samkirtanam. Let us examine these types in some detail.

Guna Samkirtanam aims at describing and adoring the Gunas or Attributes and Qualities of God, in order to exalt Him and win His Grace. But God is Gunatheetha, beyond Satwa, Rajas and Tamas; He is really attributeless. Ascribing qualities to Him is lowering His Glory. They exist in the imagination of the devotee and praising God as possessing them can give the devotee only momentary satisfaction.

Leela Samkirtanam is the second. The entire Creation represents the Leela of God. Not only that. Its Maintenance (Sthithi) and Dissolution (Laya) are also God's Leela. How can anyone

describe the manifold Leelas of God? They take diverse forms. Through that Leela, one can imagine the entire Universe as His; the next moment, his Universe can disappear! His Sankalpa is All-powerful. Whatever happens, good or bad, is God's Leela! Unless one has cultivated an attitude of equanimity towards good and bad, one cannot claim to have understood God. The Sadhakas of today are happy when something good happens; when something bad comes about, they slide into contrary thoughts. When the entire Creation is the Cosmic Leela of God, to demarcate a few and sing in terms of those few reveal only ignorance and feebleness of vision.

The third type is Bhava Samkirtanam. Devotees who are attached to this path of adoration adopt one or other of six special (Bhava) approaches, attitudes or relationships to God and attempt to derive consummation thereby. It must be said that all the six are deficient and based upon a limited conception of Godhead. (1) The Santhi Bhava. This emphasises that the devotee endures whatever happens to him gladly as coming from His Grace. In the Mahabharata, Bhishma is pictured as the supreme model of this type. But, he on his own volition, postponed the moment of his death in order to acquire the merit of having cast off the body on an auspicious day! He believed that the Uttarayana half of the year was more holy and that death before the Sun crosses the Tropic of Capricorn would result in an evil future! When God is both Time and beyond Time, who is man to divide Time into good time and bad? The happiness or misery awaiting one cannot depend on the time of death. Believing so is a sign of weakness in the devotees of God. (2) Sakhya Bhakti is being devoted to God as a close friend is devoted to another friend. Arjuna is quoted as the one who was liberated through this type of relationship. But, Arjuna was mostly lost in the human aspects of friendship and kinship and often strayed away from the devotion which is due to the Divine. He attained closeness to the Lord too easily so that he failed to recognise the significance of the proximity that was awarded to him. They were such friends that Arjuna addressed Krishna familiarly using the word for 'brother-in-law'. This indicated only a human kinship; so, Krishna confirmed that relationship and justified that loose expression of familiarity when He brought about the marriage of Arjuna with His sister, Subhadra! So, even the Sakhya attitude cannot be fully rewarding.

(3) Dasya Bhakti is the name for the next type. This highlights the attitude of the servant to the master. Hanuman is the classic example of a devotee embodying this type of devotion. He was at the service of Rama at all times. Though encased in the form of a monkey, he had mastered all the sixty four branches of learning and the meaning of the four Vedas; he could recite the six Sastras. He was physically, mentally and spiritually redoubtable hero. Nevertheless, he served Rama with no trace of ego in thought, word and deed. He had achieved purity of all three (trikarana shuddhi).

But, the Dasa Bhakti of Hanuman was not free from defects. His service was steadfast and total to God as Rama. He was not attached to God as Krishna or as bearing any other name. The Vedas declare that God has a thousand names and He can assume a thousand forms. Hanuman's allegiance was limited to one name and one form. Dasya Bhakti, therefore, leads to a partial vision of the Universal Absolute.

(4) Vatsalya Bhakti, the fourth path, advises the Sadhaka to adopt the relationship of a mother to her child. The example held before the aspirant is that of Yashoda and her adoration of the child Krishna. She recognised only this one relationship, though others praised Krishna as

Mathura-puri-nivasa (He who lives in the city of Mathura) and worshipped Him as Gopi-hridaya-vasi (He who is installed in the hearts of the Gopis.) When Uddhava came from Mathura, Yasoda enquired about her Gopala. "I do not know the Krishna who lives in Mathura or in the hearts of Gopis. I am asking you about my child Gopala!" she insisted. Thus, the Vatsalya Bhakti too leads to a certain amount of exclusion.

(5) The next type of devotion is called Anuraga Bhakti. The Gopikas of Brindavan are the best examples of votaries of this path. Many crooked, prejudiced and perverted people do not recognise the purity and value of this path. Many who interpret it wrongly according to their own bent of mind take to wrong paths. Narrow minds and narrow ideas can ruin one's life and the lives of others too, like pests destroying the entire crop. The Gopikas had total belief, total faith. But, they too had the dual feeling of lover and the loved. Duality is caused by ignorance; the mind breeds the duality, of likes and dislikes. Karma or work results in likes and dislikes. Janma is the cause of Karma; Karma causes sorrow and joy, the dual reactions.

(6) Madhura Bhakti is the last path. Radha is the unique example of Madhura Bhava. The moment the name of Krishna was uttered, she lost herself in indescribable Bliss. In spite of this, even Madhura Bhakti posits duality. So, Bhava Samkirtanam in its first three forms does not confer total awareness of God.

Let us consider the fourth form—Nama Samkirtanam. This can grant full happiness to all people, in all places and at all times. There can be nothing greater or more gratifying. The Names—Rama, Hari Hara, Sai, Baba, Krishna—having each two syllables are all derived from the word Prema, which is the essence and core of the Atma Ramayana. Prema or Love has to prompt our thoughts, penetrate our words and promote our actions. The word Nama has great significance numerologically. *Na* is equal to 0, *a* is equal to 2 and *ma* equals 5, the total being 7, indicating that the Nama Samkirtanam needs for success seven elements: Shruti, Laya, Raga, Tala, Bhava, Prema, Samhita. Seven connotes the 7 swaras, the 7 Rishis, the 7 week-days known as the sacred Saptah. Samkirtanam must be done with emphasis on tone, tune, and timing, attitude, attachment and mergence, and the attainment of the highest good. It should not be singing for singing's sake. The melody must emerge from the heart, from genuine Love which is so ardent that it is Tapas itself. Samkirtanam from such Sadhakas will certainly liberate the individual and transform the community and the world.

Premaswarupas! Even if you are unable to do Dhyana or Japa, engage yourselves in singing the Name of God without fear and with faith.

—From Bhagavan's Discourse at Dharmakshetra, Bombay: 26-1-82

"Use His gifts for Serving Him"

Kumari Rama Devi is an old student of Sri Sathya Sai Women's College, Anantapur. In spite of being blind from birth, she pursued her studies with self-confidence and great enthusiasm. She

considers that the grace and compassion of Swami are her two eyes and His Love is her strength. She passed M.A. in English Literature in I class from Sri Venkateswara University and is now teaching English in the Women's College at Anantapur. She wrote Bhagavan's 'Chinna Katha' in Braille for the benefit of the blind. During the Birthday celebrations of, Bhagavan in November 1981, Rama Devi offered that book at the Lotus Feet. The following is the speech delivered by Rama Devi on that occasion.

I am here before you all at our Lord's behest to share a few thoughts with you all. Out of His infinite compassion Swami has drawn me into His fold. My entrance into this Divine phenomenon was uneventful—rather a quiet homecoming. When I first joined His college for women at Anantapur I did not know anything about Him. But day by day the awareness of His divinity seemed to swell within me as I heard about His Leelas and listened to the Divine discourses. Swami often had an affectionate word for me. Thus, I prospered in Sal love and completed my Post-Graduation. Then out of His immense love for us regardless of our shortcomings, I was granted a position as a teacher in His institution. So, have I come to His lotus feet—my haven of peace.

As a member of the Kingdom of Mother Sai, I keenly desired to put in my little share of service, and so I translated the volume of "Chinna Katha" into Braille script, to enable people like me all over to share the nectarine bliss of the numerous anecdotes Swami so often relates to us.

Recently I had the much-coveted audience with Swami wherein He encouraged me to speak. With His immeasurable love, He said, "You Rama are far better than those people who have My gift of sight. They profit little and misuse it much. You are protected from such harmful exposure and blessed with the Eye of wisdom to see God with a clear mind." He bade me impress upon the listeners the proper use of our senses.

The faculties of sight and hearing are God's precious gifts to us. They are given to enrich our life, to see and experience the Glory of God. Alas, we are frittering them away in pursuit of loud and vulgar cinemas and even more worthless revels. We relish gossip and scandal. The most important human organ—the Eye—lies thus wasted. Crime and horror seem to be the order of the day. They excite the senses and mislead our mind. It is a criminal waste of time: I once heard some one say: "Now, how shall we kill time?" My God! Time is not meant to be killed!

Yes, we do need occasional entertainment. But need we resort to such vicious pastimes? Nature presents an unending drama of changing hues, coupled with melodies that delight our being. Personally, I find my entertainment in the sheer abundance of Nature around me. Oh, the pitter-patter of rain upon the roof, the rustling of the wind amongst leaves, the chirruping of birds, the cool breeze and the roar of breakers upon the sea-shore. If I can respond in thrilled joy to her, how much more joy can you find in her!

When we walk upon a thorny path, we cannot eliminate all the thorns. The easier and more sensible thing to do is to wear shoes and protect our feet. Likewise, good and evil co-exist in this world. We can always learn to be blind and deaf to it. Unless we close our eyes to the external frivolities, we cannot delve deep into ourselves to draw from the perennial source within. It is not

enough if we cultivate a negative attitude. True, evil must be avoided, but an alertness to absorb the beneficent influences around us must be developed. Insignificant objects in our daily lives have much to teach us. In fact, Swami uses such familiar examples to drive home profound truths. Only yesterday Swami said, 'Nature is a mirror which reflects God'. But unfortunately the eye is often too lazy to register much.

Helen Keller once asked a friend who had just returned from a long walk in the woods as to what she had seen. She replied, 'Nothing in particular'. Helen Keller wondered as to how it could be possible for the mere touch of the tender symmetry of a leaf, the soft velvet feel of a petal, the luscious carpet of grass, to reveal the miracle of Nature to her, whereas her friend failed to see anything worthy of note in the woods. So she concluded that the seeing see little.

In every creature resides God. Every object in Nature is, as Wordsworth puts it, 'appareled in a celestial light', but we do not see it. It is unfortunate that we have lost the sense of wonder the child possesses. The film of familiarity obstructs our vision. We are too engrossed in our humdrum existence to notice the divinity prevalent. Here I am reminded of the lines:

'On life's busy thoroughfares
We meet with angels unawares
But we are too busy to hear,
Too busy to sense God is near.'

I wonder how some people entertain doubts about Swami's divinity inspite of seeing Him—seeing those compassionate love—showering eyes! But, let me tell you all, I have no such doubts at all. I feel that the Divine Hand leads me on gently ever.

Let me tell you of one of my experiences. It happened during the summer course of 1977, the one and only I have ever attended. The entire month was one rich experience for me. In the examination held at the end of the month I secured the first rank. Now, how is such an event possible? Let me tell you. Though I enjoyed my varied experiences there, yet there was one fact that disturbed my happiness. It was my fast approaching M. A. examinations. They were scheduled to be held ten days after the summer course. I was greatly worried as I felt such a short span would not suffice for my preparatory study. Worrying greatly I carried on. But miraculously, just a week before my exams, my mind seemed to clear. I watched the workings of my mind with a detached interest. There seemed to be a feeling in my mind suddenly that my M.A. exams were remote and of no great importance. It was as if some one took over my worries and cleared my mind for some purpose—little did I know what it meant. Informed that I too was expected to write the summer course examination, I wrote it and the rest was His grace. Thus in His subtle ways, He has given evidence of His grace and love. Let us not take for granted His gift of the senses to us or use them as mere conveniences. According to Prahlada:

The hands that worship the
Lotus-eyed Lord alone are hands;
Only the tongue that extols the
Lord of Sri is a tongue;
Only the eyes that behold the

Saviour of the Gods are eyes;
The head that bows to the Lord on
the Serpent Couch is alone head;
Only the ears that listen to the praise
of the Supreme are ears;
The heart that contemplates the
Foe of the demons is heart.

It means that all our senses should be employed in the glorification of our Lord, only then do they serve their purpose.

As for myself, I rest content with what I have. I ask not the Lord, 'Give me sight', for He has taught me to 'see' what is worthwhile in life and be happy. My only prayer to Him is to open my inner eye and I am confident that he will respond to my prayers. Every day I shall take one step towards the door of wisdom. The day will come when I shall knock at the door, it shall open softly, and I shall behold the beautiful vision of God.

Caveat to Overseas Sai Centres

In a circular letter addressed to all overseas Sathya Sai Baba Centres, Prof. K. C. Sachdev, Secretary, World Council of Sri Sathya Sai Organisations, Prasanthi Nilayam, says

Handbills issued by an overseas centre for pushing sales of Sai literature, films, tapes etc. and air tickets for visiting Puttaparthi, have come to the notice of the World Council. These handbills use the sacred name of our beloved Lord, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, and refer to His powers and teachings for the twin purposes of (1) pushing sales at the centre and (2) persuading people to buy air tickets through the centre: Advertisements of this type are undesirable and against the guidelines issued by the World Council. Sale of air-cum-rail tickets is not an authorised function of any centre. Such activities should be strictly avoided.

Vidya Vahini

13

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Students! The Ageless Person, beyond delusion and darkness, has to be cognised by every person through one's own effort. You have taken birth as inheritors of this estate of Eternal Bliss. You are the dearly loved children of the Lord. You are as pure and as sacred as air. Do not condemn yourselves as sinners. You are lion cubs, not sheep. You are wavelets of Immortality, not bodies compounded from matter. Material objects are there to serve you and do your bidding: you should not serve them and do *their* bidding.

Do not think that the Vedas lay down a bundle of frightening rules and regulations and laws. Every one of them has been laid down by the Lord, as law-giver. All elements in the Cosmos, every particle everywhere, are acting every moment as ordered by Him. This is what the

Vedas inform us. No worship can be higher and more beneficial than serving such a Lord. One has to offer Love to Him, more Love than one bears to anything else in this World and the next. He must be loved as the One and Only. He has to be remembered adoringly with such Love. That is the fruit that real education must result in.

The lotus leaf is born under water; it floats on water; but it does not get wet. Man, too, must be in the world likewise—in it, by it, for it, but, not of it. This is the special feature of the Higher education, to prepare you for this role.

That is to say, with the heart immersed in the Divine and the hands busy in work, man must live thus on earth. Love should not degenerate into an article of commerce. Love fulfils itself in Love. The Hindu religion does not attempt to establish, through conflict and controversy, anyone doctrine or theory. It seeks to evaluate all theories and doctrines by the touchstone of experience.

The tree is judged by its fruits. Codes of behaviour, spiritual practices and manifestation of Love have all enormous virtues which promote the progress of man.

According to the point of view of great men and of the spiritual teachers of India, man advances, not from falsehood to Truth, but from the partly true to the fully True. Each individual Atma can be called a Garuda bird. It soars higher and, higher, and gathering supra-natural strength, at last reaches the Solar Orb with unlimited Splendour and Majesty.

The basic Truth of Creation is Unity in Multiplicity. This was understood by Indians. All other religions have accepted certain fixed doctrines and built systems on them. They are content with the establishment of such creedal groups. They devised methods of worship, prayer and adoration in accordance with the feelings and emotions they laid down as valid and valuable. The service that every religion offers to mankind is to expand the consciousness of man beyond the material sphere and light the spark of Divinity already in him. The Bharatiya mode of worship is based on the awareness that the One manifests through many discrete forms and many discrete attributes, when confronted by many discrete situations and conditions. So, Bharatiyas have the intellectual tolerance, among all peoples of the world, to proclaim to all the quarters that God exists and can be found in every religion. This is their unique good fortune.

One of the basic rules of living is not to be ashamed of one's forefathers. As one reads more and more the history of the past, as one visualises more and more the human condition in those ages, your pride is bound to increase. Let faith in the supreme achievements of your forefathers flow in and energise the blood in your veins. Let the strength of that faith render your body, mind and spirit equally strong. The fruit of genuine Vidya is the recognition that every community of people and every religion has, along with a basic unity, something special of its own to offer.

In fact, no country in history has been the target of such dire calamities and has suffered under alien rule for so long, as India. Despite this, Bharatiyas are ready to encounter boldly any new

calamitous storm, for their lives are still more or less firmly based on the ancient ideals. This has been the stable foundation for their way of life. Faith in God is faith in Atma. They believe, without any hesitation, that it is that faith that has guided and guarded them.

These guiding principles of Bharatiya life were not restricted by the geographical boundaries of the country. Whether the people of this land desired it or not, they are spreading to other lands. They are transmuting their literatures by instilling their values into their thoughts and feelings.

The natural sciences can provide us only food, clothing and such like. Spiritual science alone can add strength and steadfastness to the self. Students should pay special attention to this fact. Consider of what use are food, clothing and such like even in plenty when one has no strength or steadfastness in oneself.

Again, when it is desired to promote the prosperity of the nation, you must, of necessity, gather into yourself all the spiritual resources that you can. In the past, the need was known and efforts were made to fulfill the need; in future too, this need must be felt and fulfilled. That is to say, all the spiritual inclinations, beliefs and urges which are now feeble and dissipated have to be united and reinforced, one with the others.

The unique features of the Bharatiya religion form its solid base. They are as wide as the sky and as eternal as Nature. As part of the religion, creeds and cult may exist as branches for a tree. One need not condemn them as wrong. But, no branch should fight against another or compete with another. When that happens, the tree will be destroyed and all will end in ruin. When creeds indulge in competitive rivalry, religion is ruined and the world is destroyed. "Ekam sat; viprah bahudha vadanti" (Only One Exists; the wise describe It in many ways.) We may each have different ideas on the nature and characteristics, the form and attributes of God. One person may believe that God has the qualities and form of humans. Another may believe in a God devoid of human form and signs but yet manifesting in embodiments. Another may believe in God as altogether formless. Every one of these can find in the Vedas declarations supporting their stands. For, all have faith in God, that is to say, in a mysterious Power (Shakti), which is the source, support and sustenance of all, a Power which subsumes all. This is the truth proclaimed and elaborated in the Vedas.

(To be continued)

A Prayer to the Lord

Our LordOur Father, Mother, Our Lord who have come in human Form among Thy people,
Hallowed be Thy Name! Oh, let us keep it incessantly on our lips and in our hearts!
Thy Kingdom be manifested every day brighter—allow us to work in Thy vineyard!
Thy will be done in the Heaven of our souls merged with Thee and on the Earth of our actions
surrendered to Thee!
Teach us to receive our daily bread in service to our brothers and sisters, seeing Thee in
everyone and everything,
And forgive us when we let go of Thy Hand, teach us to forgive readily all that offend us!
Lead us on safe little bridges over the troubled waters of temptation,
And deliver us from all darkness and separation into the everlasting Light, uniting us in the Bliss
of Thy Divine Love
For Thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory, For ever and ever! —AU M—

—*From Sai Newsletter, Tustin, California*

Struggle to realise the Atma, to visualise God; even failure in this struggle is noble, than success in other worldly attempts. The buffalo has horns; the elephant has tusks. But, what a difference. To live in the body, with God, is the life of man. The dull activity—hating Tamasic persons cling to the ego and to kith and kin; their love is limited to those. The Rajasic, active, passionate persons seek to earn power and prestige and love only those who will contribute to those. But the Satwic, the pure; the good, the equanimity-filled, love all as embodiments of God and engage themselves in humble service. Pundalika was one such. He was massaging the feet of his old mother, when God appeared before him! He did not interrupt the service, for he was serving the same God, in his mother! Tukaram declared to Pundalika that it was God, who had manifested before him; but Pundalika did not waver. He asked God to wait for a while, until he had finished the service of God that he had started.

—Baba

YUGADI DAY MESSAGE:

Bhagavan's Call for "Vishwaprema"

Delivering His Yugadi Day message on March 26th, the beginning of the new year Dundubhi, from the Mandir at Prasanthi Nilayam, Bhagavan exhorted Sai devotees to cultivate 'Ekatma-bhava—the spirit of oneness—and "Vishwaprema" universal love—as the essential requisites for overcoming the narrow bonds which divided mankind. By developing a spirit of co-operation and mutual help, they would contribute to the integration of humanity on a spiritual basis.

A large gathering of devotees from far and near was present on the occasion. The Yugadi celebrations culminated in the evening, when Bhagavan was received with Vedic chants by Brahmasri Kameswara Ganapathi.

Brahmasri Kuppa Bairagi Sastri, before explaining the astrological portents for the new year, dwelt on the supreme significance of the Sai avatar and pleaded for the grace of Swami to be showered on one and all so that they could purify their hearts and seek to realise Him.

Prof. V. K. Gokak, Vice-Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, spoke next on the inner meaning of the Yugadi Day celebration. He said: "Time is like a river which flows, and space is like the earth which binds the river on two sides. Both time and space have no beginning or end. What we do by the celebration of Yugadi is to fragment the endless time for our own sake. Just as Nature has different seasons like spring, summer, autumn, etc., the inner nature of man has also different seasons which change from time to time. The troubles faced by man arise from his inability to realize these changing seasons." He also explained how the mixture of bitter and sweet preparations eaten on the morning of Yugadi had a lot of inner meaning and concluded: "We should evolve in our life so as to move towards the Divine and reach the threshold of Divinity when it holds its doors open inviting us. Eating of the mixture of bitter and sweet tastes indicates that man has to look at both good and bad with an equal eye and travel as a pilgrim to reach God with earnestness."

Bhagavan graciously delivered His divine discourse in which He explained the real meaning of Prema. "The aim and goal of Love is sacrifice. A man without love is as good as dead. There are several kinds of love in this world. But the real love is the love towards God which has no selfish motives attached to it. Love is like a triangle. On one side it has giving, on the second side it has fearlessness and on the third side selflessness. One should expect love for love and not any material returns. This is possible only in the case of Divinity."

Bhagavan exhorted the gathering to develop 'Ekatva bhava,'—oneness—and 'Vishwaprema', universal love, to come out of the narrow bonds which confined them, and to evolve to a higher level. He called on the people to develop Kshama—forbearance or patience. "It will help to remove the beastly and demonic qualities such as jealousy and hatred."

Referring to the New Year Dundubhi, Bhagavan said: "Today we are bidding farewell to the year Durmati and welcoming the New Year. Dundubhi symbolises the drum. Beating of the drum signifies auspicious activity. The almanac predicts all good events and auspicious events during this year. The years following Dundubhi may be full of difficulties. The names of the succeeding three years are: Rudrodgaari, Raktaakshi and Krodhana, which indicate the prospect of troubles and tribulations. The fourth year is Akshaya, the year in which Sai took birth. That would be a year of peace and prosperity."

Bhagavan exhorted the devotees to change Karma into Karmayoga as Karma is only an activity to cleanse the Chitta (the mind), while Karmayoga would lead to spiritual realisation. It is not enough if we eat sweets in the name of Yugadi. As we abandon the old clothes and wear new clothes, as we remove the old festoons and fix new festoons, we have to develop better thoughts by removing old thoughts so that we can reach the Divine. "Develop a heart without speech rather than speaking without a heart," concluded Baba.

—Prasanthi Nilayam 26-3-82

End of the Search

As I sat in the Darshan Line waiting for the gorgeous Red-robed figure to appear like the sunrise from beyond the horizon, my eyes turned to the people waiting for Him. Here were sitting cross-legged on the floor of the Mandir and on the sands of the Sacred Compound that had been hallowed by the Holy Feet, people from all over the world. Here were scientists, administrators, leaders of the armed forces, judges, doctors, lawyers, educationists, men and women who were accomplished in their respective fields. These were the 'elite'. There were also the common people and the poorest poor. All sat like children waiting expectantly for something. I wondered what kind of a phenomenon is this, that people of all walks of life came to this Beautiful Diminutive Figure. What did this Glorious Personality have which others did not? The people in the audience seemed to have had everything in life as we know it. Yet they had found something missing. There was a lack of fulfillment. And in search of that unknown entity, each one had come. Each one had felt that he had been searching for this missing part of himself and had wandered far and near, played with this toy and that, and finally turned up at the Abode of Peace.

At a human level, the Red-robed Figure with the glorious crown of hair had been born in the poorest of families in an obscure village in India, not reached by road or rail. He had left school at the age of 14 without completing his studies. Yet this One taught the world's elite the greatest of secrets, viz., the truth about Oneself and how to live in this world.

How does one explain all these phenomena? At a worldly level, it is very difficult to understand. For the answer one has to turn to Swami, who, in his inimitable way, makes the most abstruse and complex of subjects something easily understandable.

Swami says spiritual education is one half of a circle, the other half being worldly education. Most of us have been spending years mastering one worldly science, art, or other, without spending even a fraction of that time trying to know about the Atma or ourselves. Atmic knowledge is the basis of all knowledge for it is from that Source of Infinite Wisdom that everything is derived. If you lived in the derivative only without being aware of the source, life would be incomplete. That is why, to all of us, sooner or later, comes the feeling of something not being just right with our lives. These stirrings are the first expressions of the Divine Urge in oneself to know oneself, and to become merged with the Source.

Swami says man spends far too much time learning to earn a living and too little time learning how to live. I realized the significance and the truth of it during my stay with Swami. I had felt that I could not stay for more than a few days, as I had to go back to my busy practice, but He willed it otherwise. My restless ego gave up after a struggle and I realized how mixed up in my values I had been all along. One has to stress always the importance of the Atma rather than the body. For this, it is never too early to start. The human life is too sacred an opportunity to be frittered away in animal-like living. Every moment is to be utilized to reach that Source from which we seem to be separated. For this alone, I would like to remember my past lives, the times

which I spent away from the human existence, praying and waiting for an opportunity to be born a human being. I would then realize the immense treasure I have in my hand now and use it to my advantage.

I came away from Swami full of peace, of a kind which I had never thought existed. Swami's love and the peace that He showers are indescribable.

—*Y. Gopinathan, Windsor, Ontario, Canada*

"He Has Come to Give"

Ade-Joshua, Dada, was requested by the Publisher of the Nigerian Journal, "The New Nation", to interview a man who had been to the Orient to see Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He was Dr. J. E. Adetoro, a former University Don, a Doctor of Philosophy, onetime Federal Commissioner of Health and Federal Commissioner for Industries, Nigeria.

'I was one of several hundred of thousands from well over seventy countries,' said Dr. Adetoro "that went to Andhra Pradesh, India, to have the spiritual experience." Ade-Joshua writes, 'We had a lengthy religious discourse which spilled over to the following day. Dr. Adetoro insisted that I watch a video cassette recording of the Avatar'.

"The world today", writes Ade-Joshua, "is in general state of ferment. No age had witnessed moral and spiritual depravity to such disquieting proportions as ours. People have taken to drugs and tranquillisers to give solace to their depraved souls. The youths are disillusioned with their leaders; the leaders do not know what to do with the youths. No age had perfected the art of annihilating our fellowmen, like ours. Every other day, world leaders are increasing their war arsenals and nuclear build-up. The portents are just ripe for a great religious leader in the person of Sri Sathya Sai Baba."

'Unlike other Avatars', writes Ade-Joshua, 'Sai Baba does not espouse the cause of any one particular religion. Like the colossus that he is, he encompasses all religions in his giant stride. The recurrent themes in his doctrines are: Love, Service, Humility and Surrender to Divine Guidance. He believes the greatest religion is Love, in its pure pristine form. He shuns all materialism and is one of the greatest apostles of the concept of 'giving and not receiving'.'

'Millions of his followers have taken the cue. They are involved in gigantic projects, tithing out their time. This communal esprit de corps is diametrically opposed to the individualism of the West. Miracles abound where Sai Baba is, but they are secondary to Sai Baba's interest in instilling such spiritual qualities as steadfastness, purity and unselfishness in his followers,' writes Ade-Joshua, Dada.

Dr. Adetoro said, 'As a matter of fact, although I was away for five weeks, I had a personal interview with him (Sri Baba) only during the last hour before I was to go on the bus to the airport. Seeing the crowds of people, I was wondering if he would see me. But under the

influence of his presence, I was able to realise a desire which I had nourished for many years but for which I could not muster enough courage. I gave up meat eating and I have turned to a purely vegetarian diet. I am now fully convinced that alcohol is a poison'. 'I was suddenly instructed to go into the sitting room and wait for Sai Baba', he told Ade-Joshua. "I was so overwhelmed by his physical presence. He told me that I was an academician and that he was wondering why I have not been doing any work! He materialised Vibhuti (sacred ash) and asked me to eat it. He created some more and, telling me about my physical condition, asked me to put some of the ash in my bath water for three days.

'For the first time, you have a religious leader who is not interested in taking anything from you, if anything, he has come to give. As a matter of fact, one week I attended a teachers' course for teaching children. We were from sixty different countries and, at the end of the course, it was Sai Baba who gave each of us a piece of cloth! Well I what do you give to an avatar? What he wants is your Love, Service and Steadfastness.

"He has always said that he is all names and forms, that he and Christ or any form or embodiment of God are the same. If you invert the Sai, it becomes Isa, whom Muslims acknowledge as Jesus. This is a point which somebody raised,' said the Doctor. 'A world teacher belongs to the world. The whole world is his family. All are his children. I am telling you that hundreds of thousands of people from eighty seven countries came to see Sai Baba. I have never seen such a crowd in all my life,' concluded the Doctor.

THUS SPAKE BHAGAVAN:

Inner Peace

Life as man is a holy opportunity, a supremely sublime chance. And, it is great good fortune to be able to receive an education which can help one to realise one's destiny. Education that does not confer wisdom, wisdom without humility, scholarship without tolerance, music without virtue-are husks without grain! Discriminative intelligence has to be gained from education; it must be accompanied by humility and tolerance. Tolerance must spread sweetness all around. Sweetness emanates from virtue.

Love is the core of every virtue, of every good, of every phenomenon in Nature. Love must be sought in and shared with every being and thing. Love is the essence of worship. Love towards God becomes compassion to living beings. All religions prescribe duties which promote purity of the consciousness in all levels. The goal to which every sadhana leads is the mansion of Santhi (Equanimity undisturbed).

Embodiments of Love! Let me tell you that Inner Peace is very hard to acquire and develop. Be unaffected, whatever anyone says, however much anyone harms you, however many obstacles any one places on your path. Of course, the experience is bound to be bitter, at first. But, it will turn into nectarine joy, in the end. Your forbearance might be construed as cowardice or dullness or weakness. Do not pay heed to these conclusions. For, if you react with anger or hatred, vice or vengeance, you are certain to ruin your lives.

Santhi is the one indispensable treasure to be gained by spiritual effort. Thyagaraja sang, 'Without Santhi, there can be no happiness, either for the skilled or for the scholar'. Scholars are today stuffing their brains with pride, envy, competition and such poisonous attitudes. They do not treasure love and peace. They are acclaimed scholars when they pass certain memory tests, otherwise called question papers handed out at examinations. They do not pass any test dealing with mental, qualities that make living happy and peaceful.

The Inner Peace that emanates from a Pure Consciousness is won by meaningful moral activity. That is the activity to which one has to dedicate all one's powers and skills. Every activity must be directed towards this end, not in the vain pursuit of sensual pleasures and hollow desires. When the mind revels in such demeaning thoughts and distractions, man degrades himself to the level of demons, in spite of having the external appearance of a human being. A stinking pool will not cause as much damage to the neighbourhood as a stinking mind can cause to the community. Education is the process by which the mind is purified and made socially beneficent.

Nara is the Sanskrit word for a human being. 'Ra' means 'Destruction' and 'Na' which qualifies the word Ra, means, 'NO'. That is to say, Nara is the being than 'does not destroy', and 'is not destroyed' Nara is the indestructible Atma and so his innate nature revolts against any idea of destruction. When such a Nara desire: and designs for destruction, how can he be anything other than a demon? The Sovereign Consciousness enshrined in the destructible sheath (the body) has to be recognised as the spring of one's life. That is the reason why I have been telling you to 'Follow the Master, Face the Devil, Fight to the End and Finish the game'. The degrees that you gather in Universities cannot ennoble your life; the education you have received has to be manifested in your activities and in your dealings with others. Then only can you be at peace with yourselves and with society.

—From discourse at Vidyagiri, Prasanthi Nilayam

The Lord alone is aware of the Plan, for His is the Plan! You see only a part of the play on the stage and so it is all very confused. When the entire story is unfolded, then you will appreciate His Plan, not until then; for that you have to get behind the screen of Maya and contact the Director himself. While you are an actor on the stage reciting your role, you cannot grasp the inner meaning of the entire play which has the 'world' as the stage and 'ages' as the duration. If by acting your role well you develop Prema towards fellow-actors, that is more important than getting Bhakti for God. If you acquire Santhi, that is a more valuable success than acquiring Jnana. For Prema is the seed of Bhakti and Shanti is the seed of Jnana.

—Baba

BHAGAVAN'S DISCOURSE:

Offer the Vessel Bright

Sinking and rising, struggling in the Sea

*of tasteless, futile, birth-death waves,
Do you not see the Boat of Bhakti that Sridhara the Lord,
In His compassion, has brought to rescue you?*

Life is a precious gift. It has to be sustained by Breath. But, there are victories to be won during Life, at the cost of life itself. However many successes man wins, he pictures before his mind many more and advances from one venture into another. He has no contentment (Santrupti) in spite of all his achievements. He relishes new and newer wants and never reaches fulfillment.

Combined effort is the natural mode of living. Co-operation among individuals grouped as society guarantees security and stability. It is, as the sages call it, Sri Rama Raksha, the mark of Divine Grace. The surest sign of man's awareness of his Divine Nature is the recognition by him of the bond of kinship with other men. When the seven hundred million people of India bind themselves together through the plus consciousness, this land can achieve success in all fields and limitless Ananda.

The bond of kinship has snapped and, as a result, life has been rendered meaningless. The evil spirits of greed and pride, of envy and hatred, are executing their demonic dance in the hearts of mankind. Men are not able to appreciate the value of the air they breathe, the greatness of the sun's rays that illumine the world, the drops of rain that sustain life, and the subtle power that underlies every object in nature. Humans have become low and people who have dedicated their lives to high ideals are nowhere to be seen. What needs to be done today is "fostering men who are determined to stand and suffer, even risking their lives, for realising the holy goals of peace and prosperity for the entire world."

Dedicated service

The phrase "our country" denotes not the dumb ground that does not speak to us, but the living beings thereon with whom we are involved. You must grasp this fact. We are ignoring this truth today. Each one must regard the prosperity and joy of others in the community as one's own. Then only will India or any other country deserve that prosperity and joy. One's happiness is bound up with the happiness of Society. One's physical, mental and intellectual strength and skills have to be dedicated, not merely to one's progress, but equally to the progress of society. Members of the units of the Sathya Sai Organisation must try to benefit themselves and their societies through such service. Use the strength, skills and spirit of service for such work. An unused machine gets rusted if it is not put to use, the human machine too gets rusted if it is not put to constant meaningful work. The pulse is not the correct indicator of your being alive; work, activity, that is the evidence and the value of real living.

Krishna declares in the Bhagavad Gita, "There is nothing in the three worlds that I am obliged to do, nothing unaccomplished that I have to accomplish, but I am still engaged in Karma (activity)" for, if God is inactive, the Cosmos will grind to a halt. Man's role is to translate his strength into activity along the path of duty. The young follow the lead of elders. So, elders must consistently hold on to ideals and work towards their realisation so that mankind can attain prosperity and peace.

What or who is God? When the answer to this question is sought, one discovers that God is the Glory immanent in Nature. Nature must indeed be laughing at the sterile frenzies, the endless pursuits, the countless miseries that man submits himself to in his search for achieving the unachievable! Man must search in Nature for the sacred lessons it holds for him; then, he can understand how deep, how everlasting are the meanings it can convey. The earth rotates on its axis at a speed of thousand miles an hour. Consequently we have alternations of day and night, which help us to live on this globe. Besides, it moves around the sun at the rate of 66,000 miles an hour, causing the seasons which bring rains for crops and vegetation which sustain human life. The earth does not profit in the least by these rotations but man exists and prospers on account of them. Mother Earth teaches her children this lesson of service and sacrifice.

Character is all

The line of conduct has to be the main key to the life of man. That line has to be along the path of virtue. It is the 'way of living' that keeps one in the memory of people long after his death. If it is not the virtuous way, the person is as good as dead. It is often declared that knowledge is power. No. No. Character is power, Nothing can be more powerful on earth than character. Riches, scholarship, status, authority are all frail and flimsy before it. A strong virtuous character cannot be earned from the study of guidebooks; it is earned only through intimate involvement with society.

There is no dearth of books today; nor is there any lack of Gurus. Educational institutions spread knowledge all around. To all appearances, the Sun of Knowledge, the Jnana Bhaskara, is showering His rays in plenty. But, one can hardly notice those who imbibe the nectarine wisdom thus offered and dwell in the ecstasy it can confer. The thick binding encasing the books seems to prevent the wisdom from emerging. The mountain range, with lust, anger, hatred, envy and pride as the peaks, shuts out the splendour of the sun. Charity, compassion, fortitude, sympathy, sacrifice, these arise from the higher levels of consciousness while opposite tendencies breed in the lower levels. The latter cannot confer Ananda; they can only plunge us in grief.

No one of the higher qualities or virtues or expressions of love is evident today. So, it has become impossible to discover 'man' among the inhabitants of the world. Man, Man, Man! What are the characteristics of the God-made Man? No man knows what they are, no man demonstrates them in life. Is anger a human quality? or, pride? or, self-centredness? No. They reveal the animal, though people infected with these faults gain currency as 'men'. Man must reveal by his conduct that he has evolved higher; he should not inflict pain nor should he be affected by pain.

Man is not merely flesh and bone. A gramophone record is not merely a circular plate with grooves on. Each record looks like every other-grooves, lines all over! In every groove is hidden voices, words, songs. In man, too, is latent the possibility of all Karmas. Every object, event or experience of ours since childhood is impressed and lies dormant in us. The rivers, mountains and stars we have looked at, are all-latent in us. 'Us' means, not flesh and bone. For, these experiences cannot be subsumed in flesh and bone. Why? We have in us the past, the present and even the future. We are all that was, is, and will be.

Man sees Nature as cruel because his mind is cruel. Clear the eye, purify the mind and you can see that Nature is divinely loving. Do not seek faults and vices. Seek the right, the correct and the good. Develop sympathy and compassion. Cultivate Vairagya, the attitude of detachment.

You may doubt whether there are any who have achieved Vairagya. Let me tell you there are not only a few, but many. They have no sense of I and Mine; they dedicate all acts to God and free themselves from attachment. To feel there are none is a sign of self-deception. Out of ten evil persons, there will surely be at least one who can be guided into the good path and out of ten such, at least one will accept God and out of ten such, at least one will be eager to live in accordance with Divine Law.

In fact, the Cosmos is activated by one single Chaitanya, Consciousness, and Intelligence. Man has only a role (patradhaari) in the Divine Play. God is the Director, the sutradhaari. That Intelligence, the Omniwill, urges all men to play roles decided on by It, and think and work as It directs. The scriptures declare that the Body is the Temple and the 'I' is the God installed therein.

Or, you may take it that the body is a vessel for cooking food, given on loan for us to use while hosting a festival. Can we return it to God, who has loaned it, in a worse condition? Should we not scrub it and clean it and return it bright and free from rust and dust? When the festival of life began and we received the body from Him, it was innocent of evil, pure, fresh and bright. While using it, we have inflicted dents, leaks and other damages, through lust, greed, hatred, anger and envy. Only the lowest would offer it back in that condition. Offer it as pure as He gave it; you can then be classed as the most worthy of Grace.

Remember always the high purpose on which we have come into this world, equipped with potentialities to acquire and utilise all levels of knowledge. Have faith in Divine grace, the grace of Gopala on the go (cows), of Pashupati on Pashu (the bound animal). Wear the Garland of Devotion Gems round your necks and saturate your thought, word and deed with Divine Love.

—*Bhagavan's discourse at Abbotsbury, Madras, on 22-1-82*

Sai and Sufi Tradition: An Islamic View

—*Zeba Bashiruddin*

The Sufi tradition found its milestone of advaitic thought in the beliefs of Ibnal-Arabi (1165-1240) and the widespread acceptance of his theory of *Wahdat-al-Wujud* (Unity of being).. Al-Arabi is nearer to Vedic and Baba's teaching than any other Sufi outside India. A keen student of Sai literature will find similarities in ideas and imagery between Baba's discourses and Al-Arabi's writing. Four ideas of Al-Arabi are significant.

(i) According to Al-Arabi, the One and the many are two aspects of the One. "The One reveals Himself in the many ... it is like a source of light from which an infinite number of lights are derived ... it is like a mighty sea on the surface of which we observe countless waves, for ever appearing and disappearing." (Fususul-Hikam). The two aspects of One reality were called by Al-Arabi *Tanzih* (nirguna) and *Tahbih* (sadguna).

(ii) Al-Arabi used the term emanation to mean the constant appearance of form and delimiting of form of the same Reality.

(iii) Man was given a cosmic significance. His idea of the perfect Man is equated with Logos and the spirit-giving principle immanent in the Universe.

(iv) Like Baba, Al-Arabi rejected the place of reason in understanding the purpose of human existence. Baba gives the example of the same electric current running through different electric devices. Al-Arabi gives the image of light passing through coloured glasses to suggest One Reality manifesting itself in men of different abilities. Intuition and not reason reveals the purpose of existence. The purpose of life is to realise the Union (Divinity) which already exists between God and Man. Al-Arabi advised Sufis that tolerance, human compassion and fellowship were indispensable features of spiritual life. Like Baba he also urged that the Divine existed and was worshipped in all religions. Instinctively Al-Arabi believed in the one Universal God. I may recall what Baba said in one of His discourses: "The monistic concept of Divinity expounded to Arjuna by Krishna in Bhagavad Gita harmonises the teachings of all religions and reconciles all traditions." (Summer Showers: 1979, P. 119).

Considering Love to be the highest manifestation of God Al-Arabi declared:

My heart has become the receptacle of every 'Form';
It is a pasture for gazelles (objects of love)
A convent for Christian monks,
And a temple for idols, and the pilgrim's Ka'ba
and the tablets of Torah and the Book of the Quran.
I follow the religion of Love, whichever way its camels take.
For this is my religion and my faith.

The major branch of Sufi tradition that developed in India observed this broader horizon of Divinity and Love, whether it flourished in the valley of Kashmir and was called the Rishi-Sufi order or welcomed the Nath Yogis to its assemblies and learned from them Hatha-Yoga. The Baul Movement in Bengal during the fifteenth century followed the same ideal of Unity of God. A popular group of Muslim and Hindu singers, the Bauls were 'men of hearts', non-dualistic and mystical; they used songs in the tradition of Chaitanya. The popularity of Vaishnavite themes in Sufi *Sama* (music recitals) was widespread as it induced ecstasy. In 1566 a Sufi dictionary of Hindi songs was compiled, which among other things explained the Krishna theme and symbolism in Sufi terminology. These are only a few examples from a treasure-house of a million others to suggest the direction in which Indian Sufi tradition was moving. The growing emphasis on the universal concept of Love was a strong trend that has found its goal in the presence of Sai. "The path of Love is the Royal Road that leads mankind to Me."

(Baba: *Who is Sai*)

To the Sufi seeker the goal is important and not sectarianism and dialectics. The secret of this goal is best described by Masud-i-Bak, a Sufi from Delhi. All names, says the mystic, refer to the One name, in all forms only the One Face is hidden, and in all religions One Road is concealed. This is the Truth that Sai embodies.

Continue your worship of your chosen God along the lines already familiar to you. Then you will find that you are coming nearer to me, for all names are Mine and all forms are Mine.

(Baba: *Why I Incarnate*)

Eight roses

They worshipped Him with flowers and songs, with camphor and prayers. They entreated Him with tears and sighs. They waited on Him with folded hands and smiling lips. He remained unmoved, reclining on the sky-blue swing of the heart. And in the fragrance of flowers, in the rhythm of the music, in the silence of tears and smiles He hid from them—the Subtlest of the Subtle. "I do not cause either joy or grief," He said, "You are the designer of both these chains that bind you." And all that He asked for was their love and devotion presented to Him as the eight flowers of non-violence, sense-control, compassion to all living beings, forbearance, Shanti, meditation and Truth.

A Sufi would pluck these flowers and offer them to Him for they have grown in his garden for centuries. The ten qualities that all the Sufis were expected to cultivate and which were repeated in Sufi literature and nourished in Sufi tradition were an elaboration of the eight "good qualities" Baba has pointed out (*Sanathana Sarathi*, June 1981, P, 142-45). Of these, Santhi and Truth are most significant because they are also the attributes of the Divine Beloved.

However, the eight good qualities are signs of a pure heart, the shrine for the Lore. "I am the dweller in the temple of every heart," says Sai. "Make your best endeavour to worship at the temple of the heart," advised the Sufi, Abdullah Ansari.

The Para Bhakti can only be offered in the bowl of service to society for "he who takes care of Man takes care of God" (Ibnul-Arabi). It is only then that a few veils from a thousand are lifted and the fortunate one-in-a million devotee reaches the doors, and experiences the significance of the Quranic greeting: "Peace—a word from thy Lord, Most merciful." An ancient promise that might have taken a thousand years or more is fulfilled as the Divine voice welcomes

"I am Anandaswarupa. Come, take Ananda from Me, dwell in that Ananda or bliss and be full of Santhi or Peace." (Baba: *Why I incarnate*)

—*The first part of this article appeared in February, 1982*

THUS SPAKE BHAGAVAN:

The Godward Journey

Astronomers know that from this day on, for six months, the Sun will rise more and more north and it would appear that He is travelling northward. Since the Sun is the presiding deity of the vision and the Intelligence of Man, and since the North is the Home of the Himalayas—the Abode of Gods, the symbol of Purity, Peace and Equanimity—the half-year which is inaugurated today is adored as the Half-year of Gods, while the six-month southward journey of the Sun is considered as the Half-year of the Manes. Sadhana directed towards establishing purity, peace and equanimity in the heart yields quicker success in this half-year. That is the general belief. The Sun shines on the earth for longer periods hereafter and hence, Vision and Intelligence can advance higher through His grace.

However, man cannot win these boons without striving for them. If he directs his intelligence towards the outer objective world and fritters away the chance of purifying his consciousness, he can only gather anxiety, fear, hatred and greed. However many Makara Sankrantis the Sun may confer, he cannot progress at all.

Listen to this story. The sage Prachethas composed the Atma-Ramayana which contained a hundred crore verses. The three worlds clamoured for it. He gave each world 33 crore, 33 lakh, 33 thousand, 33 hundred and 33 verses. This left one verse on his hand. It had 32 syllables. He gave each world 10 syllables and had two with him at last: So, he asked all three to value the two and benefit by it.

Those two syllables were Pre-ma. Prema is Love and Love is God, for all the worlds. Love came as Rama, Krishna, Hari, Hara and Sai. God wanted that the Heavenly regions (Devaloka), the Earth (Naraloka) and the Nether-world (Nagaloka) share this Prema equally. These three Lokas are designated also as Vishnuloka, Brahmaloaka and Sivaloka (Nagaloka) or, alternatively, as Jagrata (waking), Swapna (dreaming) and Sushupti (sleep). They are not to be identified as existing somewhere apart from man. They are very much in him alone. The Head is Vishnuloka. The Throat is Brahmaloaka. The Heart is Sivaloka. In the Head, we have all the senses of perception. It is the source of life, knowledge and experience, of depth and vastness. So, Vishnuloka is blue. Life is active during dreaming in the region of the throat. Dreams are frail short-lived experiences, but they are prolific; they are too venturesome and wayward. So, this region is the Brahmaloaka par excellence. The colour is red, on account of the quickness and variety of change. The Heart is Sivaloka, where the senses, the intelligence, the ego, the memory, all have merged. Like a bulb which is not linked with the wire, it does not shine. That is deep sleep; all colours merge in the white.

Prema can transform poison into nectar; want of Prema can poison even nectar. Suspecting Meera of having accepted a gift from Emperor Akbar and unable to bear the ignominy it brought upon his line, her husband, the Rana, sent her a cup of poisoned milk. Her heart was so saturated with Prema that the poison was as nectar when she drank it:

The, dull-witted cannot comprehend the efficacy of the Name of God; nor can they gauge the glory of the Divine. When one acts through Prema, every word and deed will promote joy and peace in others. When Prema is absent, even words spoken or good deeds done will react

wrongly. Prema is a tender plant which has to be tended with care and vigilance. Constantly, observing or paying attention to anything breeds attachment and gradually, desire starts sprouting. One entertains a series of wishes. Some of them fructify; others do not, and arouse anger towards the persons or circumstances that stood in the way. Anger is the offspring of Ajnana, Ignorance, which inflames the passions, and makes the victim to forget his own best interests. Anger destroys the sense of discrimination and presents before the inflamed mind the bad as good and the good as bad. It prompts the tongue to turn, vicious and vile. The tongue scalds even more ferociously than fire; it scalds like red-hot iron.

So, no attachment is to be developed, no wish is to be welcomed, nothing is to be sought for, no defeat is to be taken to heart, without delving deep into the consequences. Thyagaraja advises that even the Name of God has to be resorted to after full understanding. The mind is a Lotus; it, needs Madhu to grow through and Kara to blossom under. Madhu means water, and Kara means 'the rays of the sun'. As a matter of fact, the Sun lifts up the water from the ground and pours it down again. The bees that are drawn to the Lotus flower are also called Madhukara; they carry away the flavour and the fragrance. 'Madhu' means 'sweetness' 'honey'. It is another word for Prema. When the evil in man and the blemish in man are cleansed by the waters of love, the heart can bloom and gaze at the glory of God. Or else, man has to lie low in the slush, weighed down by dirt.

Students! The life around us teaches us many lessons. When the cow delivers a calf, the baby is encased in dirty foetal matter. The mother starts licking off the matter and cleansing the child. Its Prema is so overpowering. And, the new-born calf rises on its legs as soon as it is freed; from dirt! Just think of this, dear students! When the Pashu (animal) does this so lovingly and so thoroughly in order to help the child to rise, can Pashupati (the Lord of Animals) refrain from cleansing His children, in order to help them rise and progress? When the 'go' (cow) is so eager to save the child and help it to run about in joy, how can Gopala (the Lord as Cowherd) allow you to remain dirty and handicapped? Be firm in this faith in God. This is the gain that you must secure from studies. Education must feed the roots of faith. Vishwas (faith) is Swas (Breath). Faith lives and thrives on Love. Prema is Prana. Prana must charge Bhajan or Worship with faith. Faith prompts sweetness in your thoughts, words and deeds. The Uttarayana that begins today, the Northward Path, must be marked by a resolution to stick to the Godward path. Turn the mind towards God; that will keep it strong and sweet.

Thyagaraja said that if he is armed with the Grace of Rama, the planetary missiles can never injure him. Purandaradasa, another great saint, asked, 'What are eyes for?' and answered himself, 'To visualise the Lord'. "Eyes that do not yearn to see you are cotton balls; ears that do not hear your praise are narrow mountain caves Where jackals live; the tongue that does not relish the repetition of the Name of God can only croak like a frog," says Purandaradasa. This is the period of life when you must cultivate faith and draw strength from the Grace of God.

There are three types of people who are involved in work. The first can be named 'Non-doers' (Akarmins). They plan very pompously and pride themselves on their talents but, at the first sign of failure or discouragement, they get so dejected that they give up all effort. They renounce all sadhana, even attending Bhajan sessions. They are afflicted with the Tamasic nature. Keep away from such people; you should not allow even their shadow to fall upon you lest your enthusiasm

is affected. The second type is "All-doer" (Vikarmi). He plunges into work, without discriminating whether it is good or bad. He is too enthusiastic and too active. His is the Rajasic nature. The third type is the 'Good Doer, the God-Doer', the Satwic worker (Sukarmi). He does work with devotion and discipline, as his duty to the Divinity resident in him. He offers his work as worship and is content when he has done it to the best of his capacity.

Man suffers because he has taken birth, in order to suffer and purify himself in that crucible. His Karma (work) caused his birth. The feelings of 'Like and dislike' urged him to engage in work. He 'liked' and 'disliked' as a result of the impact of the environment he was in. That impact was helped by reason and rationalisation. They were moved by the influence of duality. Duality was the product of ignorance. If ignorance is overcome, one is in Bliss thereafter. Arjuna suffered from this basic ignorance and when Krishna granted him the light of wisdom, he was cured.

Have faith in the Truth that can remove delusion. You cannot be argued into faith, nor can you derive it from books. You can know and experience Truth when you cleanse your heart and broaden it through Seva and Love.

Bhishma, the unrivalled hero, the guardian of the cousins who fought among themselves in Kurukshetra, the great Vedic scholar and Sadhaka, the paragon of virtue, the person who reached the acme of renunciation, postponed his moment of death for 54 days in order that he might pass into the heavenly regions, by drawing his last breath on Uttarayana Day. As soon as Uttarayana dawned, he recited 'Krishna, Krishna' and merged in Godhead. That was the measure of his devotion. Seek God in everyone and you will be rewarded.

—*From Bhagavan's Discourse at Brindavan Hostel 14-1-82*

THUS SPAKE BHAGAVAN:

The Sivam Night

*A tree can be trained to stand up straight;
A stone can be chipped to charming form;
A mind? can it be so chipped and trained?
Answer if you can—the need is true.*

Embodiments of love! This day is reckoned holy all over this land. It is named Mahasivaratri. 'Ratri' means 'darkness-filled'. Of every twenty four hours, we are experiencing this half the time. But this night is Siva Night, the Night of Siva, the Night that grants Mangala, the Boon of Blessedness. And, the Mangala or Siva is announced as Maha, great, unlimited. Maha or limitless Blessedness can be conferred only by the Divine Source; it cannot be acquired from worldly achievements and triumphs. It is dependent on the Immutable Triad, on Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram.

It assumes all forms, this Santham!

*It assumes all names, this Sivam!
It is Sat-Chit-Ananda, this Only One!
It is Sathyam-Sivam-Sundaram*

The mountain peaks we see are rocks; the ground on which we stand is soil; the trees are wood; our bodies are flesh and bone. But, man manages to deal with these by attaching the labels of names and imposing understandable forms on them. Really speaking they are all only permutations of the five fundamental Elements—Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Sky. Every thing and being is but a formation, a transformation, a Vikaara. But, at the very Central Core of every entity, Sivam is present as Effulgence.

The tragedy is, as Karunyananda said, all are sunk in the sea of Samsara, of flux and fear, of conflict and discontent. The world appears dual according to our likes and dislikes. If we like a thing, it is good for us; if we dislike it, it is bad. When you like a person, everything he does. Even the bad, is pleasing; when you dislike him, even the good he does strikes you as bad. So, the sages advise that you can trek alone through a dark jungle and come out safe. They dissuade you from braving the same journey if you have someone whom you do not like as your companion. No one can determine who is likeable or when. You may be bothered by fear when you go alone in the dark, but you won't meet with disaster. But a person who dislikes you or whom you dislike is to be avoided.

Harmful tendencies and thoughts multiply fast in the mind of man, as fast as white ants, unless he establishes himself in his Sathyam-Sivam-Sundaram essence. Then, no one can dislike you nor can you dislike any other. Even those who injure and insult you have to be forgiven and loved, for, love alone can shower Ananda. The spring of love is in one's own core. The source of Ananda is the innermost reality. But, like the man who searched everywhere for his glasses and found them at last on his own nose, man too becomes aware of the truth that the search has to proceed in the inward direction.

While describing the benefits of group bhajan, Karunyananda said that its effect is like keeping banana bunches packed inside a smoke filled room to make them yellow, ripe and sweet. But only the mature bunches can ripen and sweeten. The rest might change colour but their taste will be the same. Spoilt milk cannot become good yogurt. Every individual of the group has to sing sincerely and with a longing to visualise God. Bhajan should not be imitative, mechanical or forced. Then only can bhajan expand the heart, reveal the Truth and arouse the springs of Love.

The entire cosmos is composed, according to the sages, only of five Elements. The first of these is what we call earth. Though it appears dull and inert, it is resonant with consciousness, Chaitanya, Energy. The second is water. It is vibrant with vitality, Prajnana. For example, when one, is prostrate with thirst or weakness and is apparently unable even to react to his surroundings a cup of cold water can restore him to activity. The third element is fire. Fire is luminous with vigilance, warning, wakefulness, attention (Jagrata). The fourth is air. Air carries the life-principle, the anima, the Prana. Air is not needed when there is no life in a thing. Prana is the image of the air principle. The last is space (aakasa). It is the expression of OM, the Pranava sound.

Every being has all these elements in its composition. This is the reason why the sages asserted, "Iswara-sarva-bhoothaanaam." So every being has to manifest activity, vitality, vigilance, watchfulness and the awareness of the OM in outer and inner-space. Man has the unique capacity to know his destiny and destination. He should not fall into the whirlpool of desires and be carried down into the depths of grief. As breath starts to gasp, hair turns grey, teeth begin to drop and eyes grow dim, man's greed to quench the clamour of the senses increases instead of decreasing! Satsang alone is the remedy, to make man live as man. Cruelty, jealousy, egotism, ingratitude—these should not emanate from the crown of creation. Mutual help and compassion, these should serve man as his two eyes. Do not entangle yourselves in kinship that lasts only for a day or two, a span of months or years. Attach yourselves to God who is your closest kin, today, tomorrow and always.

Embodiments of love! Where exactly are you now? Reflect on that. Even here, each one will secure only what is proportionate to what one has renounced however long or however near you might be. Ticks attach themselves to the udder which is full of sweet nourishing milk. But, the ticks secure only the blood of the cow, not the milk. The calf which comes skipping from afar drinks the milk, and avoids the blood. You have to be like the calves, like children of God seeking Grace. Do not become ticks that cling close but do not long for milk.

Near, nearer, nearer! That does not help. Become dear, dearer, dearer. That is the proper Sadhana.

The situation in India and in the world today is: 'Evariki Vaare, Yamunaa theree' (Each for each on Yamuna beach). The fingers of one hand do not feel the sense of belonging. The four members of a single home trudge along four separate tracks. There is no togetherness. How happy can man be if he develops togetherness! Can you eat a meal with a single finger? When the five fingers work in unison, your stomach is filled in five minutes! When ten men work together, the task is done in ten minutes. A single person, all by himself, may leave it unfinished, though he struggles for ten years! "Mutual help hastens Moksha," says the proverb. We have in India seven hundred million people. When these millions are regarded and respected as 'I plus you, plus you, plus you, plus you, plus you,' including every one of them, even the 'impossible' can be achieved. The highest Ananda can be won. But, now, look at the state of affairs: Father-son, Husband-wife, Guru-pupil, all relations are minus, and not plus at all. Minus always involves 'mindless' state.

Hold on to God, first, the world, next, and I, last. Let the last be lost. Leave off the present holds—I first, the World next and God, last, almost lost! Under present conditions, why celebrate Mahasivaratri and Mahanavaratri? You cannot advance spiritually even a single inch, however grand your celebration. Rural folk while celebrating Muharram hold the 'tabiz' and to the beat of drum and the noise of pipe and bugle march one foot forward (saying Hassan) and one foot backward (saying Hussain). They do not make any progress. You too do not move forward in Sadhana, for what you gain in one step you lose in the second. While in the shrine or while in Dhyana, you gain a little and when you go out or get up, you lose that little. The plus is cancelled by an equal minus, and the total gain is zero. You must examine yourselves and educate yourselves, without fear or favour. "Know thyself" is the prescription. Know that you are Divine and all thoughts and feelings and impulses arising in this body are prompted by the

God within. Dwell in this awareness always. Your senses, your vital airs, the physical, mental, intellectual and other sheaths are all activated by the Divine, the Primal cause and Energy. Explore within and discover this Truth.

You have been involved in Sadhana, you are engaged in bhajan sessions, for years and years. But, I know you have not attained the target of peace and joy you have set your mind upon. Remember, whatever you do ordering yourself, let it be with the full approval of the heart. Try to understand the purpose of God, the Divine plan, and straighten your thought, word and deed accordingly. Never stray from that goal.

A seed planted in the soil, fed with manure and water, sprouts and comes up as a sapling breathing air and basking in the sun. It benefits from the soil, but persists in its own nature.

It assimilates the manure and water but does not become either; neither does it merge in air nor sunlight. It is true to its self and its reality. An aircraft emerges from the mind of an engineer, the designer. He may ride in the craft but the craft was in him. That is the truth, discoverable by reason. For one who observes outer things, he is seen seated in it but for one who examines the inner process and project, the aircraft was originally inside the mind of the person now riding in it. Knowledge sees the two as separate; wisdom pictures the one in the other. There are two other levels of awareness beyond Vijnana (knowledge), and prajnana (wisdom). They are sujnana (intuitionary vision) and Atmajnana (Awareness of Unity).

Reflect on this Truth implanted in your heart. Recite the names of the Revealer of these facts of Truth, throughout this holy night. Win His grace and thereby merge in Him. My Blessings are on you.

—Swami's discourse on Mahasivaratri, 22-2-82, at Prasanthi Nilayam

Vidya Vahini

14

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Whatever be the teaching about the name or form of Easwara or God is not very important. We need not quarrel over those distinctions and differences. Instruction on God is service enough. Bharatiyas do not accept the view held by others that the world and the Universe of which it is a part came into being some thousands of years ago and will meet with dissolution sometime in the future. Nor do they accept the statement that the Universe was born out of the void (Soonya). They believe that Prakriti or the Projection (Nature) is not born of vacuity but has always been full and complete (Poornam). It has neither beginning nor end; it has only gross and subtle forms. It is no sign of enlightenment to infer that, since there is no evidence of the full and complete, there must be a void in the beginning. There are other levels of existence to consider.

Man, for example, is not entirely the body; he has, in the gross body, a subtle body, the mind, and another body too, more subtle than the mind, namely, Jivatma, the Individualised Atma or

Self. This last has neither beginning nor end, nor does it have any trace of death or decay. This is the truth that Bharatiyas believe in. This faith is based on the declaration of the Vedas themselves. We close our eyes when we worship God. We do not try to discover God outside us by raising our faces and looking upwards. Others accept that their scriptures were written by Divinely inspired persons, but Bharatiyas believe that the Vedas are the authentic voice of God, emerging from the hearts of sages.

Students! He who condemns himself, day and night, as petty and weak can never accomplish anything. He who thinks that he is luckless and low thereby becomes luckless and low. Instead, when you cultivate the awareness that you are a spark of God, that you have as your reality Divinity Itself, you can become really Divine, and you can have command over all powers. "As you feel, so you, become" (Yad bhaavam, tad bhavathi). It is how you feel that matters most. That is the basis for all that you are. Have faith in the Atma, the Self. This is a must for man. In its absence, man is being reduced to a monster, revelling in vice and wickedness. Your forefathers achieved prosperity, peace and joy and succeeded in attaining their goals through that faith alone. When people lose that faith, they are certain to fall. For, that faith is the very breath of life. When there is no breath, man becomes a corpse (Shavam). With the breath of that faith, he becomes Divine (Sivam), the same as Siva Himself. Faith in the Self is the expression of the Siva Principle in man; that faith can endow man with all forms of power and render him full and complete (Poorna.) For, the Atma, by its very nature, is self-sufficient and full. No other Sadhana is needed to realise that state.

Purity too is our nature; self-sufficiency (Paripoornatha) is also the nature of the self. Impurity and insufficiency are alien to man. Students should not ignore or forget this fact. Real education must arouse this faith and infuse the awareness of this fullness in every activity. This is the essential aim, the core of the right type of education.

There is one other truth that we have to keep in mind, more than every other. For Bharatiyas, religion means experience, nothing less. Our position is that no achievement is worthwhile, unless one earns it by one's own efforts. Everything valuable must be cultivated by oneself. Divine Grace awaits individual striving and sadhana. The doctrines and directives of religion have to be assimilated by means of actual experience. It is not enough if one learns to repeat them parrot-like.

The Truth has to be identified; this is the very first step. The sooner we understand the Truth the sooner will religious conflicts and creedal dissensions disappear. The Parat-para (Beyond the Beyond), the Omniself, is nearer than the nearest; other entities are all, though near, really far away. Become aware of this fact. Then alone can the knots, in which the heart is entangled, be loosened.

In the vocabulary of the West, man gives up his 'life'; but in the language of Bharatiyas, man gives up his 'body'. Westerners profess that they have bodies and that the bodies have souls. Bharatiyas do not declare so. They proclaim that man has a soul and that the soul is enclosed temporarily in a body. Therefore, they feel that the civilisations and cultures seeking sensual pleasures and secular glory are built on a foundation of sand, and can shine only for a brief period of time before they collapse.

Students! Imitation can never become culture. You may wear royal robes and act the role, but can you, as a result of this imitation, become a King? A donkey clothed in tiger skin does not become a tiger. Imitation is a sign of cowardice. It cannot further one's progress. In fact the tendency to imitate leads man down, step by step, into frightful shape. You must endeavour to uplift yourselves, as yourselves. You must be proud that you are Bharatiyas; you must be proud of your ancestors. Your commendable heroism lies in your joyous assertion that you are a Bharatiya (a child of Bharat, India). You should not imitate others and copy their attitudes, though you may imbibe the good in them.

We have to learn good things from others. We sow seeds in the ground. We provide it with soil, manure and water. The seed sprouts, becomes a sapling and grows into a huge tree. It does not become soil when placed therein, nor manure when it feeds thereon, nor water when it partakes thereof. It only imbibes from each of them whatever it can benefit from them. It grows into what is essentially IT, namely, a huge tree!

May you too grow likewise. You have to learn much from others. Learn the Supreme and the means of attaining it from even the lowest; learn from others how to practise progressive spiritual sadhana and saturate yourselves with it. But, do not be transformed into those others. This is the normal teaching for man, the smriti of Manu. This is the lesson that students have to understand. This is the first and foremost lesson, the crucial lesson.

(To be continued)

Bhagavan's Benediction on Bombay

"Shed your Ahankara (ego) and you will learn to respect others and earn others' respect as well."

~Baba to the 14th anniversary gathering at Dharmakshetra. (May 12)

"Let unity be your guiding principle. Seventy crores of people united will achieve success of the highest order for India"

~Baba to Bombay industrialists at Patkar Hall.

It was on a Tuesday morning, a working day, that Baba landed in Bombay and drove to Dharmakshetra for a four-day stay: Seeing a Bhajan already in progress, He alighted near the stage and walked straight into the large congregation. And the devotees greeted Him with all their love.

The highlights of His city programme were the 14th anniversary of Dharmakshetra and His discourse to the business community of Bombay on the 'Role of spirituality in economic progress.'

No less important to the Sathya Sai Seva Samiti was His opening of a homoeopathic clinic, as an extension to the existing medical facilities at Dharmakshetra. Baba found time to meet the parents of the 400 students of the Sathya Sai High school, essentially catering to the needs of the weaker sections of the community. He also released the first three volumes of the 'Saints of India' series and Part of "Path Divine" brought by the Bal Vikas wing.

The anniversary of Dharmakshetra is an event of immense spiritual importance for the Sai sevaks of Bombay. In the Divine presence they assess the progress made year-to-year, in their heart.

The honour of welcoming Baba to the anniversary celebrations fell this year to Sri P.K. Savant, one of His earliest devotees in Maharashtra, who had played host to him in his official residence as Home Minister of this State. There is no need any longer to make a pilgrimage to distant places, he said. Divine Baba is with us.

The redesigned enclosure at Dharmakshetra can now accommodate an estimated 25,000 people. Even that proved inadequate. Sri Savant said, in the early years, people flocked to place their "personal problems" before Baba. But the thousands now craving for his Darshan are those in whose hearts the spiritual urge has been kindled. His appeal to Baba was: 'Please come oftener.'

The theme of Baba's anniversary discourse was: 'Whatever you do, do it in spirit of dedication.'

Another point He drove home was that without inner cleanliness, all our efforts not yield the desired result. (Readers have a full account of his discourse in a subsequent issue). He gave an illustration. A group of people once approached Sant Tukaram and asked him to accompany them on their pilgrimage. He pleaded his inability, as he had other things to do. But would they

do him a favour instead? He gave them a "bitter melon" and asked them to bring it back dipping it in all the sacred rivers they visited. They returned from the pilgrimage and handed back the fruit. Tukaram arranged a feast for them all and served the "sanctified" fruit. They claimed it was very bitter even after the dips it had had in sacred rivers! The lesson: "Mere external cleanliness will not do. It will not change your character."

Large groups of Bal Vikas children earlier brought Baba in a procession to the gathering. The Divine discourse, in Telugu, was translated into Hindi by Dr. I. Panduranga Rao, from Delhi.

Bombay being the financial capital of India, the industrialists of the city play an important role in the economic life of this country. The theme of Baba's discourse, at a gathering of businessmen, was the "Role of spirituality in economic progress."

Dr. V.R. Subramanian, Finance Minister of Maharashtra, who presided, called Baba a "Yuga Purusha".

Mr. S.B. Chavan, Union Planning Minister, said much of the progress in science and technology has only been misused to produce weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Sanat Mehta, a member of the Dharmakshetra Trust, welcomed Baba to the gathering of industrialists in Patkar Hall.

Baba said man always dreams of achieving one thing after another. In this process he becomes a victim of many evil things. If India is to prosper, they should have faith in unity and learn to work together, using their intelligence and abilities for the happiness of society as a whole.

The crowning event of Bhagavan's stay in Bombay was his visit to the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre at Trombay, Chembur, on special invitation. Bhagavan was received by Dr. Krishnamurthy and taken round all the different departments of the Centre, including the reactors and the agricultural and health departments. Bhagavan visited later the Anusakthi Nagar, the residential colony of the scientists and other employees of the Centre, where He blessed large groups of Sai devotees doing Bhajan.

Bhagavan invited the scientists of BARC to hold their next annual Conference at Prasanthi Nilayam, where all facilities would be provided for them.

—V.N.B.R.

He is There

After two years my husband and I were again at Brindavan (in March 1982) suddenly choked and breathless as that longed for flame-coloured Form appeared through the gates. Later, Swami said to me: "How *are* you?" and added, "You are sad!"

How to explain the pain of separation that the Form engenders, at my level of consciousness wherein the sense of Duality still exists? Perhaps much more so while in India, for one's thoughts are apt to run on geographical lines. Baba is in Madras... Baba is in Bombay ... Baba has come Will He look? Will He speak? and so on. It is inevitable that when that Form disappears from view there is the ache of separation, however much one has *experienced* His omnipresence. As Baba once pointed out to Dr Hislop, "You know Swami to be omnipresent, yet when you return to your hotel in Bangalore you think of Swami as being at Brindavan!"

Whenever there is form there is the pain of parting, for form is *Maya*. But our essence, the Atma, is encased in form! It has to express itself through a physical vehicle. At the same time as we are striving to rid ourselves of body-consciousness identification with the form, and to *realise* the One in the Many, we can only learn to love the Formless *through* the Form, the Unmanifest through the Manifest.

So "the Lord has to come in human form, so that He can be listened to, contacted, loved, revered, and obeyed. He has to speak the language of men and behave like human beings, as a member of the species ...The human mind cannot grasp the Absolute, Attributeless Principle; it is abstract and beyond the reach of speech, mind and intellect." (Baba)

This is the devotee's dilemma. And the limitation and paradox of the human condition often takes on ludicrous aspect. Here am I, in private interview, in the Presence of the Formless Absolute manifesting in this unique Form "invested with the totality of Cosmic Power," and what am I doing? I am foraging in my handbag in order to lend my spectacles to my husband who needs to read something! The mind boggles.

And then we are speaking of organisational matters, and He sums up a complicated situation in just three words which are so comical, so apt, that one wants to burst out laughing! We are talking so informally, so naturally, like 'Partners'—with God Incarnate.

And then I am speaking to my Dearest Friend, from Whom no secret is hidden.

There is time to ask 3 or 4 of the 100 questions I've longed to ask for months—and which now got out of my head! As He answers, and explains, there is that divine smile and I am rivetted to those Eyes which are all-seeing, all-knowing, dark pools of Love, sometimes even twinkling because in that communion *He* knows that *I* know that *He* knows what remains unspoken.

I take the Hand of my Mother and lay my cheek against it. And finally the Father lays His Hand on both our heads, saying, "I will bless your efforts ... Come back this evening." And in a moment He has floated through the curtain.

Once more we are privileged to become electrified by the students' bhajan singing, grouped around the Feet of their beloved Lord, singing their hearts out. As the Arathi is nearing the end, with a final smile to treasure He disappears from our mortal sight. Perhaps I shall never see that amazing Form ever again, except when He wills it so, in a dream. For, next morning we are going—leaving Him behind, (it would seem) as we fly to Bombay, my heart crying out "Oh

Swami ... Swami ..." and the tears come. The bliss and gratitude for incomparable blessing becomes tinged with sadness at the parting from the Form.

But when I got home to England *He was there!* When I go in my little car to the supermarket He is there. In my kitchen, in my study, He is there. When I feed the hungry wild birds He is there. When I go to sleep and when I wake He is there. I can talk to Him to my heart's content for He is there, so often pressing down on my crown chakra—the beautiful, tingling pressure that for years has indicated to me that "*someone* was there".

When I asked Him about it He explained that it was "God contact... God consciousness... the Super conscious." "You mean, Swami, that it has to do with *You?*" He put His head on one side, smiled with infinite tenderness, and said: "*Of course!*"

I feel like an ant at the foot of a mountain, seeing only the next stone. Or a bird in a cage. Or a butterfly struggling to emerge from a chrysalis in the rays of the life-giving Sun. *But always He is there ...*

—Peggy Mason, London.

Do not aspire to be a servant of God, working for wages; you reduce yourself to that level, if you ask for this and that from Him in return for the praise that you offer or the sacrifice you undergo. Even if you do not ask, if the bargaining attitude is in your mind, or, if you feel disappointed that God did not give you desirable objects in return for all the trouble you took to please Him, do not calculate profit; do not count on returns, do not plan for the consequence; do, since you have to do, since it is your duty. That is real puja. Dedicate the deed as well as the consequence to Him. Then you become His own, not, a cooly, demanding wages. That is the highest level a bhakta can reach through sadhana. That is the reason why nishkama karma is so highly extolled in the Gita by Krishna.

—Baba

Instant Transformation

The village D... was right on the border of India and Bangladesh. The nearest market place is four miles off. A mud track leads us to that place. The metalled road is twelve miles away. Bhim Sen's house is on the outskirts of the village. The international border is only 200 feet way! So, residents are tempted to make easy money by resorting to smuggling and even by flash raids across the border. Villagers from Bangladesh too are similarly tempted. Guards and security men are not always vigilant. They too can be tempted to keep their eyes shut. So, everyone was on a money-making spree. Ill-gotten money was spent in gambling dens and taverns of which D... was overfull. Lifting of cattle, kidnapping women, arson, dacoities—these provided outlets for love of adventure and anarchy.

Bhim Sen and his elder brother lived precariously together with their families in the same house. He was a teacher at the primary school. But, he took more interest in reading people's palms. He walked from village to village, meeting farmers and merchants eager to know what the future held for them in its closed palm. And, he earned a few rupees thereby. His elder brother did not appreciate Bhim Sen's mode of living; he feared that he was idling away his years. So, one day in July 1977 he warned him against his worthless pastime and asked him to manage his own affairs. The families were no longer to be 'joint'.

This was a bolt from the blue. Bhim Sen was broken-hearted. He realised that he was cast away because of his brother's mercenary motives. He was very depressed. His maternal uncle sympathised with him and gave him a small book in Bengali written by Smt. Sudha Mozumdar on Sathya Sai Baba. The Headmaster of Bhim Sen's primary school had a copy of "Sathyam Sivam Sundaram" in Bengali. The Headmaster gave him that book, saying, "Possibly this person who has taken birth in the South is even greater than my Guru. He is really a great Divine Power." Bhim Sen read the books and every word struck root in his heart.

Towards the end of September, Bhim Sen's wife, who was expecting her second child, developed labour pains. She suffered five long days of agony. Nothing could be done to give her relief. It is her destiny, folks said. Bhim Sen was certain all would be well. For, has not Baba said, "Why fear, when I am here?" But, his elder brother and a few elders of the village rebuked him for his stubborn resignation. They took over command on the fifth day and took her in a bullock cart to the Health Centre four miles away. Bhim Sen had to join the party. The compounder saw the patient and announced that the case was beyond him. She was taken to the Sub-Divisional Hospital in the same bullock cart along another twelve miles of sub-standard road. There, the woman was discovered to be beyond medical help. Yet, the suggestion was given that the District Hospital could be tried as the last chance. So, a taxi was engaged and the unfortunate woman was taken to that hospital, another fourteen miles away.

A team of six doctors examined her. X-ray revealed that the child in the womb had died, and was decomposed. It could be removed only through surgery but the woman was too weak and had developed too many complications, besides septic fever.

For three days and nights, Bhim Sen waited, sitting on a bench in the passage outside the ward where his wife lay. At last, he grew desperate. He said to himself, "Bhagavan! I have not committed any sin; I do not speak lies; I do not hurt others; I have never cheated any one. In spite of this, my child is dead, my wife is dying. If she dies, then I shall know that honesty has no value. God is a myth. Then, why should I remain honest? I shall become a criminal, like others. I will not return home." He set about planning how to dispose of the corpse, before he took the plunge.

The next morning, Bhim Sen was informed that during the night, his wife had given birth to a healthy baby boy! The surgeon in attendance was totally baffled. He said, "Bhim Sen! Our diagnosis was wrong, I must admit! But the X-ray, how could it be wrong? It showed clearly the decomposed body. Also, the position of the baby was such that normal delivery was impossible. The body had to be taken out only through surgery."

When Bhim Sen and his wife came into his village, the entire population received them with adoration and acclamation. Everyone knew that it was a miraculous boon conferred by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Bhim Sen decided to go to Bhagavan. He sold a jewel which his wife had and got Rs. 380. A friend gave him a hundred. In the second week of November 1977, he boarded at Howrah the train to Madras, where he imagined Baba to be. The Ticket Collector who knew He was at Bangalore corrected his ticket and collected the extra charges. Bhim Sen knew only the Cooch Behar dialect but some one came to his rescue always. He alighted from the Bangalore Bus at the eastern gate of Prasanthi Nilayam, right in the midst of a surging mass of fifty thousand devotees. It was the Birthday Festival and the 8th All India Conference of Sathya Sai Seva Organisations was on.

Poor Bhim Sen was tossed about from one group to another. No one could help him to meet Bhagavan so that he could fall at His feet. 'Baba! I will never be able to come again to your presence. I came here with the hope of talking to you. Now, I find I cannot get the chance of even looking at you,' he lamented. Next day, when Bhim Sen was sitting disconsolate at the Eastern Gate, a Seva Dal young man approached him and asked if his name was Bhim Sen. Amazed, Bhim Sen said, "Yes". He was told that Baba had called him. The first sentence Baba spoke to him in the room was, "My son! Why are you afraid? Did I not save your son at the Hospital? What did the doctors say?" Then, Baba told him the story of Sita and her unshakable faith in Rama that finally saved her from Ravana. "Be happy. Go home. Come back after 3 years", He said, when he prostrated before the Lotus Feet.

Three years! Three years of Sai's Grace! The villagers who could see Bhim Sen's son growing plump and pretty installed Baba in their hearts. Bhajan became a regular feature of life. Bhim Sen I brought the books. Smuggling, gambling, drinking, fighting and even smoking were given up. A Sathya Sai Seva Samiti was established in 1978 at D... and in 1979 at N.. A few miles away Bhim Sen—serene and blissful—walked from one Bhajan Mandali to another, covering about ten miles a day. After a two-hour Bhajan session in one house, the entire group moves on to another house for another session and thence on to another, until the small hours of the night. Men sing Baba Bhajans at the top heir voice while ploughing the fields, children sing them while playing games. Sai Ram is very much with them, in the paddy fields, in the clusters of green trees, in dust and water, even in the empty stomachs. They sing Suprabhatam and namavalis in their own tunes and pronounce them with their own twist; but, their voices are choked and their eyes shed tears when they speak of their experiences with Baba.

We were in that village on 23rd November. We felt that we were in a Prasanthi Nilayam. Baba is residing there, full hundred percent. We met a young man of 22 who was very much involved in dacoities on both sides of the border. He was a terror in the area. One day, he heard about Baba and a kind-hearted man gave him a small picture of Baba. Soon, he lost interest in robbery and resumed cultivation of his 2 bighas of land. He was miraculously saved from being implicated in a gang attack on B.S.F. personnel. He lost his land to the man who lent him some money. He had to hire himself out as a farm labourer. Then, some men advised him to engage in illegal Indo-Bangla trade, paying soft-money to the Border Guards He refused. A friend suggested the purchase of a few ducks so that he can sell the eggs. He replied, "People know that I am a Sai devotee. If I sell eggs, they may ridicule Sai Baba and say, he pretends he is a religious person

and he does such unholy trades". We found that some devotees have given him a bicycle and a little cash. He purchases vegetables at D... and sells them at the market, 4 miles away.

We saw three old ladies who had walked 32 miles to take part in the Bhajans. Such is the depth of their devotion to their God, Sathya Sai. Bhim Sen is their guide and ideal; he is their main inspiration—he and his son. The bonds of love that Sai has forged between men and women of all faiths and all levels of poverty are so strong that the Sai Family is an oasis of contentment and joy. Bhim Sen fell in with a gang of dacoits one night when he was returning from a Bhajan session but they recognised him and let him go. Thieves have experienced, he said, that stealing things from that village brings bad luck. People from beyond the border, irrespective of religion, come over to the village to share the Bhajans and the boon of brotherhood.

Bhim Sen visited Prasanthi Nilayam again in 1980. I travelled with him from Howrah then. We both met the Editor. I told him the fascinating story of Bhagavan's grace converting a border village of West Bengal into a Puttaparthi. He requested me to give an on-the-spot description of the transformation.

—Chandra Chud Mukherji

"Love is Ice Cream"

It was a Sunday morning at Prasanthi Nilayam. After finishing the morning 'interviews', Baba went to the western side of the Mandir where the children from the Primary School were seated. Baba does not like anybody, and certainly not the sweet little ones, to sit in the hot sun! He made them all sit in the shade in the porch very near the 'interview' room. The children beamed as they trooped in and sat in an orderly fashion, followed by Baba who came behind them, glowing with a big smile! He came to the first row and all of a sudden started singing, 'Love is My Form! ' He asked the children to join. All of us who were fortunate to be present had this unexpected gift of Grace! (I have found that Grace always comes unexpectedly!). Half way, he stopped and asked the children, "What is love?", with a teasing smile. The children were taken by surprise at this question and smiled, non-plussed! He 'minused' their bewilderment by obliging the answer!

"Love is Ice cream!" I heard Baba say. He allowed the children's laughter and the adults' surprise to die down, before He explained further. Baba, the ideal teacher, is Master of the technique of teaching. A startling question to evoke attention, provoke curiosity and secure interested listening is the master's method! All ears were now alert, awaiting Baba's explanation! 'Love is sweet, like ice cream; love is joy, like ice cream; love cool, like ice cream and love is pure, like white ice cream!' Baba explained. Apparently meant for the children, it was a gift from Baba to all of us, this extra-ordinarily original definition of Love from Love Incarnate! Images are sketched by poets to make the abstract concrete. Baba, the poet of poets, gives images which have great spiritual depths, and uses the most modern of them to make us understand what He wants to convey. In the Krishna Avatar, it was milk, curds and butter; Sai Krishna uses the imagery of Ice cream!

Who will not understand that Love is sweet like ice cream? Baba had also said, Love is joy like ice cream. We understand this best when Baba gives us a taste of what Love really is. The kind of Love that we experience with Baba is sweetness itself. "Rasovai sah" 'He is the very essence of sweetness," says the Upanishad. I remembered the imagery of a cup of water with a spoonful of sugar added to it, given by Baba on another occasion. Baba said: "There is sugar in the cup, but the water is insipid, for you have not stirred it well. There is God in the world, and by stirring the Divine well into every drop and atom thereof, you can make the world a sweet thing to live by." Life becomes sweet and joyful by stirring the Divine, whose most potent expression is Love, into every action of ours.

I also recollected another illustration of Baba, viz., sugar candy. Baba had used this imagery to explain the apparently paradoxical Upanishadic statement, "That is full; this is also full". Just as even a small particle of sugar candy is sweet like the larger lump, every bit of the ice cream is as sweet as the whole block. The part is as sweet as the whole. The quality of sweetness is not any the less in a small portion! Love is also like that; every act of love is complete, pure, full, nothing held back. Every act of love is a total act; love cannot be graded!

Baba said: 'Love is 'cool' like ice-cream!' This is so very different from the commonly understood meaning attached to the word love. We somehow think that love is 'hot'. Our popular conception of 'love' is that of a heated passionate emotion. This is what happens when people 'fall in love'! But Baba is talking of a kind of love which belongs to a higher realm, more lasting and sustained than the passion that fluctuates!

Like the finely dispersed globules of butter fat in milk, we all have within us little globules of love which do not become obvious. Like natural milk in which the fat content varies from cow to cow or between cow and buffalo, we also vary in our love potential. This can also be increased by appropriate feed! In our case, the feed is in the form of opportunities for manifesting our love. Love must be practised, until it becomes a natural habit !

However, to get the best out of life, we must get the cream out of the 'milk of human kindness', to use a common expression. The natural process is slow, but we must also be centrifuged to help the separation of love! We need the centrifuging force of challenging opportunities, which we must seek. Then the minute acts of love, compassion and kindness oft-repeated come together and float on top, above the otherwise insipid water of life. Love globules also must be forced to accrete!

Ice cream makes people who taste it allowing it melt slowly on the tongue joyful, happy. The solid block of ice cream loses its form by melting and finally disappears, fulfilling itself. Pure love springs from self-sacrifice; pure love is fulfillment. It is in losing that one gains everything.

Like Ice cream, God also melts when the heart of the devotee displays the warmth of Love towards Him. Sri Ramakrishna compared the inactive snake curled up, as Nirguna Brahman, while the same snake in motion is Saguna Brahman; both are the same essentially. The block of Ice cream is Nirguna Brahman; when the Ice cream melts giving ananda to the devotee, it is Saguna Brahman. The Avatar incarnates for this very purpose.

The ascent to the Divine

The central core of all great religions is the same devotion and love. The true meaning can be grasped only by the heart. Yet the mind strives to understand. By interpreting teachings it tries to support faith by rationalizing beliefs. But interpretations differ and intellectual problems, disagreements arise. I have sat through—and participated in a number of such arguments when people, sometimes armed with apparently opposing quotations from the same scriptures and teachings, disputed quite fundamental points.

One such point which occurs among Sai devotees is the issue of free will. According to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and all the great spiritual teachers, man is responsible for his actions. Baba teaches us to radiate unselfish love and so achieve liberation. He says: "When man has the right for engaging in karma, he has the right also for the fruit, no one can deny this or refuse his right. But the doer can out of his own free will and determination refuse to be affected by the result whether favourable or unfavourable." We are to love and serve others without expecting return, since "we are not the doers" of the good acts we perform. But to what extent were we the doers before acting out of love? The essence of everything is God, so He is in the evil too? Bhagavan says: 'Not a blade of grass may move without my will.' and Lord Krishna in the Gita says speaking about acts: 'They are in me, but I am not in them.'

Where does this leave us? How much time and energy are we to spend in discussing the possible answers to this and many other similar problems?

One may compare the spiritual path to the climbing of a mountain. Each person has a very individual path. The terrain changes, the path may lead over difficult rocks, at other times it may cross a gentle plateau. It may even go down for a while and may seem to lead one away from the summit. At times the road may fork and one has to make a choice. Sometimes one of the roads is the right one, the other leading to a dead-end. At times other either road is right, the two may even rejoin later on. The path which seems the shorter and more difficult is not always the better one. For the traveller without the necessary training, scaling a cliff may not be possible and it is then safer and in the long run shorter to choose a path on the plateau rather than to get stuck on a steep mountainside or fall off the rocks.

And so we continue the journey. At times the path widens and we share it with others, at other times it is so narrow that one is alone. But alone or together, each of us has to use his or her own strength for the climb. Teachers can point the way, gurus can light the path even break a new path but no one can ever carry us to the top. The walk is our own responsibility.

When climbing some equipment is needed. We need clothes, shoes, a stick, a rope when cliffs have to be scaled. The muscle power which makes the ascent is our sense of purpose, the desire to approach God, our love, unselfish service to others, our love and devotion to the Lord. This is Sanathana Dharma, the essence of all great religions and faiths. Without these no one can reach

the top. But these essentials are clothed differently in different faiths. Beliefs, explanations, customs differ. This is the equipment used in making the climb. And this equipment is highly individual. There are certain common features of the equipment used for certain kinds of terrain. Most climbers will need a rope to negotiate a cliff. But the type and size of the clothes will vary from person to person.

Equipment is needed for the climb. Beliefs and explanations are necessary on the spiritual path. The restless mind must be brought to some comfort and satisfaction. But this should mean satisfaction in a Satwic way. With moderation, not with indulgence. The climber should have comfortable shoes. It is difficult to make progress, if the feet are sore. But is he wise if he focuses all his attention in searching for perfect shoes? "Trying on shoe after shoe before properly experiencing one pair? Or even looking at his companions' shoes to compare and criticize? How far will such a climber get on the path? Wouldn't it be better to just find one pair which is comfortable and get on with the climb? And one must realize that the equipment is not only different from one person to the other but may also change for each individual as the landscape changes.

So it is with many beliefs, much of our understanding and also our way of living and behaving. It is important that we should have beliefs with which we are comfortable and which help us on our journey. Bhagavan Baba's individual advice to different people differs, because the people themselves are different and He knows each one's current needs.

I believe man is responsible for his actions until he surrenders to God. That one has free will to oppose Divine Love, to act against it. Once we surrender and become pure instruments of God free will is no longer necessary and then indeed we are not the doers anymore. This is a belief I find comfortable at this time. Others may feel differently. Beliefs are important. Sometimes it is useful to discuss them with others. But it is not useful to make this a preoccupation to waste most of one's energy in clarifying points the reality of which we cannot comprehend in our present state of evolution. If we do this, we are like the climber, who makes little progress because he is squabbling about his equipment. Even more, this type of thing may create dissension among fellow climbers and fragment our already poor concentration.

What matters is the job on hand, the climb. What matters is love and devotion for God, love and respect of fellow humans and all beings. By prayer we will acquire the wisdom to select the right amount of equipment, not too much and not too little.

The ascent may be difficult, the Path may be steep, there may be dark tunnels here and there but if we stick to the Path, some day we shall reach the Mountain Top of the Lord. Then all the answer will be known to us.

~Peter Hacker

Twelve Days with Bhagavan Grace Unbounded

Sathyam-Sivam-Sundaram; Sathyadeep at Dharma Kshetra in Bombay, Sivam at Hyderabad and Sundaram at Madras; beacons of Bliss; centres of Sai Seva. Bhagavan graciously grants Darshan, Sparshan and Sambhashan to thousands of devotees every year at these three sacred places on the dates when He inaugurated them with His Divine Hand.

Bhagavan arrived at Hyderabad on the third day of April, gladdening all hearts vibrating with the Ramayana since it was the Ramanavami Celebrations Week throughout the land. At Sivam, during the morning and evening Bhajan sessions, devotees from all parts of the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad as well as from the districts of Andhra Pradesh had the thrill of Darshan. Besides, Bhagavan graciously spoke to the vast gathering at Sivam on April 3 and 4.

During the first discourse, Bhagavan emphasised the need to cultivate Love, the Love that supports and sustains the Universe. Love is ever eager to give, never to receive in return. Arjuna acknowledges in the Gita, 'Pithaasi Lokasya charaacharasya', "You are the Father, the Progenitor of the Cosmos and of everything that moves and stays." Everyone is brother to everyone. The whole world is bound by indissoluble kinship. When Love illumines the vision, man can visualise the objective world as suffused with God.

Rama, the ideal

Referring to the Birthday of Sri Rama which was observed the previous day (2-4-82), Bhagavan exhorted people to learn from the story of Rama the lessons of ideal brotherhood, ideal rulership and ideal reverence to elders. "Hold before you", He said, "Rama as the model for shaping personal, familial, social and national attitudes and conduct. Determined effort on those lines can transform you into a 'vyakti', the Sanskrit word for 'individual'. This word treasures within itself a great truth and a valuable lesson. Vyakti means literally a thing which was latent having become patent. What is latent (avyakta) in man is God, who is Love. When Love is projected (vyakta) into every moment of living, man deserves the name Vyakti".

Baba drew the attention of the gathering to the interesting variety of programmes that the organisers of Ramanavami celebrations had arranged. He said that mere attendance at those functions and mere appreciation of the discourses delivered on Rama can yield no benefit. Shravanam must prompt mananam and mananam (repetition) must be supplemented by nidhidhyasana (practical application).'

Cherish human values

On Sunday, April 4, in the morning hours, a meeting was arranged by the Seva Samiti at Ravindra Bharati Hall to provide the elite of the Twin Cities, the officers of Andhra Pradesh Government, leaders of business and learned professions the long-awaited chance to listen to Bhagavan's discourse. Vidwan Sri Nookala Chinna Satyanarayana, Principal of the Hyderabad Music College, enthralled the audience by singing a choice selection of devotional hymns. Bhagavan captured the hearts of the vast body of listeners by His inspiring appeal for united and unselfish effort to establish peace and happiness in society. "The uplift of the country does not call for progress in industries or procurement of petrol. It calls for the cultivation of human values, for delving into one's own inner consciousness for inspiration and illumination," He said. Bhagavan recalled a question that a certain 'important' person had put to Him once. "Swami!" he asked, "I have read in books about you that you have converted water into petrol for your car

while on a journey. We are now having a famine in petrol. Why don't you convert the seas on both sides of India and the rivers flowing in this land into petrol?" Bhagavan said His answer was, "Of course, I can. But, what would happen when some clever person like you throws a burning match? Consider that! Such is the way the lazy brain works. They want prosperity to drop from the sky, without one striving for it. Wild ideas will not fructify. Men must discover their latent talents, encourage them to flourish and use them for the benefit of one and all. Grow up to your full potentiality, that is to say, Divinity itself" said Baba. "Above all, bow your head to moral greatness. Test every word, deed and thought of yours on the touchstone of Dharma, virtue, righteousness. Bhima had physical might; Arjuna had technical might. Bhima was an unbeatable warrior; Arjuna was an unbeatable bowman. But, both obeyed their elder brother, Dharmaja, for he embodied the might of morality and righteousness," said Baba.

Unity of hearts

Bhagavan ended His Discourse on a note of urgency. He called upon people to recognise the need for unity of hearts. He reminded the audience that this country had met with disasters in the past as a result of dissension and disunity. "When the limbs of one body do not subserve the needs of each other, how can the body be strong and efficient?" He asked. "India has the great task of contributing her spiritual heritage to the world community, by both precept and example," He concluded.

That evening, the Sivam Campus and the adjacent roads and open space were packed to capacity with thousands of devotees and Bhagavan showered His grace on them by a discourse which was a stirring call for further Sadhana of Love and Service. "Do not float on the top layer of society as oil does on water. A person who detaches himself from the society which feeds and fosters him is inviting the fate of the fish that deserts the water which sheltered it. Bhajan by groups of devotees, or Sankirtan, is more fruitful than lone singing. Kabir has spoken highly of singing in chorus; he says it induces self-forgetfulness quickly and easily. Kabir prescribes, 'Man me Ram; haath me Kam' ('Rama in the mind; work for the hand') as the best attitude for a happy life. While engaged in the service of others as an act of worship, one will not be affected by exaltation or despair. One is inclined to attribute whatever happens to the will of God. So, Service is prescribed for immunising the ego and the mind," said Baba.

"Many do social service for the sake of boosting their ego by means of publicity. They pose for photographs with brooms in their hands and eyes turned to the camera. No. Service has to be done, with full intensity and sincerity. There are 24 hours in every day. Why carry this body around if you cannot use it for service to others at least one hour out of the 24?" Baba asked.

'Engage in Sankirtan with full faith and enthusiasm. Be assured that it is a very beneficent Sadhana. Embark on it, all of you, women, men, old and young, and save yourselves from fear and anxiety, pain and bondage,' Baba advised.

On the 5th day of April, Bhagavan blessed the Sri Sathya Sai Bala Vihar High School with a visit. Bhagavan addressed the students and their parents and well wishers on the values that they must imbibe through the educational process. "A bird has two wings, man has two legs; a bicycle has two wheels. Man has to win two worlds—this and the next. Education must equip him for happiness in both," said Baba. "The culture of Bharat ought to be understood and lived by the

children of Bharat. The Sanskrit language is the way to master that culture. So, boys and girls of this land have to learn Sanskrit," He advised. "The stage of student-hood marks the golden age of one's life. Make the utmost use of this productive period. Learn to speak the Truth, to act truly, to think along true paths," He exhorted the young.

In the national capital

From Hyderabad, Bhagavan flew to New Delhi on the morning of April 6. The capital City had been waiting long for basking in the sunshine of His Presence. The sudden downpour of rain over the city during the hours of night on the fifth was therefore an offering of Nature to transform the broiling weather of the metropolis into welcome coolness. Delhi behaved as an air-conditioned city during Bhagavan's stay. When Swami alighted at Palam, the citizens were glad that the weather had joined them in the ecstatic response.

Bhagavan graciously proceeded straight to Golf Links Road to meet and console the bereaved family of the late Sri Sohan Lal, for long the State President of the Sri Sathya Sai Organisations in Delhi and adjacent states as far as Himachal Pradesh, member of the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, Chairman of the Books & Publications Foundation, since he was deeply devoted to Bhagavan and sought by every means to live the life of Love and Service that Bhagavan is advising His devotees to adopt.

At 4 P.M. that evening, Bhagavan addressed the office-bearers of the various units of the Organisation, engaged in activating the residents of different areas of the City in the various spiritual and educational programmes laid down by Bhagavan. They assembled under a spacious shamiana in the bungalow of Kulwant Rai, State President, Delhi. Bhagavan appreciated the earnestness and enthusiasm of the office-bearers and their work in directing the attention of members and others towards basic human values and the need for health care. He warned them against the canker of jealousy and factionalism. He spoke of Service as the most effective Sadhana to achieve the vision of the One in the Many. The assembly dispersed after witnessing a few items of entertainment presented by the pupils of the Bal Vikas classes.

Streams of seekers

Bhagavan stayed with Mr. Justice Bhagawati of the Supreme Court of India, on Janpath Road. From dawn, till late in the night, that place attracted streams of pilgrims not only from all the suburbs of the wide sprawling metropolis but also from towns and villages situated miles away, Bhagavan moved into the shamiana, which Justice Bhagawati had put up to provide accommodation for the visitors, many times during the day, so that batches of about a thousand each could receive the coveted Darshan, and place their prayers in His hands. Besides these, the Judges of the Supreme Court, Ministers of the Central Government, Ambassadors of Western, African and Middle-Eastern nations, Officers of the Central Secretariat, leaders of political parties, executives of business houses, etc. were able to meet Bhagavan and converse with Him on personal, national and world problems.

The lord's grace

On 7th April, Bhagavan motored to the campus of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, New Delhi, where a colourful pandal which could accommodate over 30,000 people had been erected for the Bhajan sessions. Bhagavan moved slowly along the long passages between the men and women

devotees, giving everyone Darshan, accepting the notes on which many of them wrote down their prayers, creating curative vibhuti from His Divine Palm whenever He noticed the sick and the suffering, and, finally sat on the elevated dais. All the time, the region reverberated with Bhajan songs from thousands of dedicated hearts. Bhagavan concluded the session with a thrilling Discourse on Namasmara, the efficacy of repeating, ruminating over the Names of God which invoke His Glory and Compassion. Sri Panduranga Rao, Director of Languages (Hindi) of the Union Public Service Commission, New Delhi, helped listeners by simultaneous and faithful translation of Bhagavan's Telugu into Hindi. In the evening, Bhagavan again arrived at the Pandal and blessed the thousands yearning for the chance of offering homage to the Lotus Feet.

On the 8th, at 10 A.M., Bhagavan drove to the fast-growing suburb of Delhi, beyond the Nehru Complex and adjacent to the buildings coming up in time for the Asiad, named Kalkaji Extension where, on an extensive site, He attended the Bhumi Puja, preliminary to the construction of a school to be run for the cultivation of human values as envisaged by Bhagavan Himself.

The prospect of receiving the Darshan of Bhagavan had drawn to that newly developing and rather isolated area a surprisingly massive gathering of the citizens of Delhi. Fortunately, the organisers of the function had erected a very spacious shamiana and collected on the spot early enough about two hundred Seva Dal workers, men and women, so that Bhagavan could give Darshan to every one, walking through the serried ranks of devotees squatting in silent discipline. The Bhumi puja was done in consonance with scriptural injunctions with continuous recitation of Vedic hymns. Besides the Bhajan, which resounded as a background for the worship of the Earth on which the school, a temple for Saraswati, the Goddess of Learning, was to be erected, and the exhilarating vibrations of Vedic mantras, one could hear from one section of the extensive Pandal, nearest to the Holy fire Altar, about 500 women and children repeating the 1008 Names of Bhagavan Himself, offering rice grains (instead of flowers) to the pictures of Bhagavan placed before them. These grains were later collected and added to the rice that was cooked for feeding the poor as part of Narayana Seva. When the worship of the Earth came to a close, Bhagavan created a plate of gold with mystic signs and symbols to be placed below the foundation stone of the school when construction starts. The entire proceedings were gone through in an atmosphere surcharged with benediction, beauty and bliss.

At vigyan bhavan

On the 8th itself, in the evening at 6.15 P.M., Bhagavan addressed a gathering of 'intellectuals' at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi. Though the Hall could accommodate only about a thousand persons at the most, over five hundred more succeeded in persuading the organisers of the Delhi Seva Samiti, by their insistent yearning, to secure admission cards so that they could listen to the Discourse of Bhagavan. Sri S. B. Chavan, Union Minister for Planning, presided over the meeting. Mr. Chavan welcomed Bhagavan and expressed his joy and gratitude that Bhagavan had, in the present round of visits, included Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat in His itinerary, "Wherever He goes, Bhagavan has been emphasising the basic principles of our ancient culture and promoting the integration of different faiths and creeds. He is reminding millions that there is in every human being the eternal flame of Divinity, and therefore, man must give up all feelings of hatred and envy and all attempts at confrontation. As

a result of the inordinate and uncontrolled advance of science and technology, with no compensatory or complementary advance in spiritual experiences, nations have become afflicted with pride, pride about the weapons they have at their command with which humanity can be totally annihilated. Against this message of destruction, it has become necessary to present the Message of Love, Sacrifice, Sympathy and Compassion that has gone forth from this land for centuries. Bhagavan has been impressing upon the children and youth of this land and of many other countries the human values of Truth, Rightness, Peace and Love. He has established many educational institutions and encouraged educational experiments. The University recently established under His auspices for promoting the Higher Learning and spreading ideals of better life will be, I believe, a beacon for other educational institutions. It is therefore in the fitness of things that this huge gathering of people interested in the welfare of India and the world are anxious to listen to the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.”

Bhagavan began His Discourse with the recitation of two poems, one indicating the near impossibility of moulding the mind into an instrument for beauty and harmony, while intractable materials like wood and stone yield more easily to the processes of emendation and correction. The second poem ridiculed man who runs breathlessly after profit and pleasure, towards buses and cinema-houses, behind authority and wealth, but refuses to run after the treasure that can confer the greatest joy—the Supreme Truth.

Service of society

Bhagavan began with an analysis of the mind. "The mind makes or mars the career of man. It has the power of memory as well as of imagination. So it holds on to the past while acting in the present and planning for the future. All actions are motivated by thoughts that emanate from the mind. But the direction of the action and its results depend on the goal that the mind dictates. The goal must serve to guide the entire life of man. It should not be trivial or transient. The goal has to be so noble that one may have to give up one's life itself in the attempt to reach it. The attempt itself must endow man with high satisfaction.

Bhagavan declared that men must learn to work in unison. He said, "If only the 700 million people in India work unitedly, they can achieve fullest success in all their undertakings and share in unbroken Ananda." Bhagavan then exhorted mankind to welcome every chance to work for the prosperity of others. "A machine kept idle is affected by rust. The intelligence and skills of man must be used constantly and to the maximum capacity so that they remain sharp and bright. You cannot pronounce a man to be alive, judging from the beat of his pulse. He is alive only when he works for himself and others," He said. "People should not spend all their working years in earning and accumulating money. Even after retiring from service on superannuation, aged people seek some job or other in order to amass more money. They do not devote time and energy, intelligence and skill for the benefit of society," He said. "The reason", Bhagavan declared, "for this greed, is the absence of discrimination and inquiry into valid values. Man must inquire into his inner Reality and, discovering that it is the Divinity that makes him a part of the entire cosmos, manifest that Truth in action blossoming through Love.”

Devotees all the way

Even as Friday, 9th April, dawned, Bhagavan began His car journey to Rishikesh and on to Mussorie on the Himalayan foothills. Some distance from Delhi, beyond the Yamuna Bridge,

Bhagavan halted for a while at Ghaziabad where a large and disciplined congregation of devotees were singing Bhajans before a uniquely shaped mandir. The structure was of the shape of a Shivalinga in orthodox iconographic form. But, inside the Linga could be seen a life-size portrait of Bhagavan Himself. The Mandir was inaugurated and the portrait installed with the blessings of Bhagavan. The joy of the devotees knew no bounds when Bhagavan entered the Linga and right in the centre, facing the multitude, gave Darshan as the Deity installed in that shrine as well as in the heart of everyone who adored God.

Leaving Ghaziabad, Bhagavan halted for some time at Meerut where Sri D. D. Gupta, convener of the U. P. State Trust, who had miraculously regained his eyesight after years of blindness, through the grace of Bhagavan, welcomed Him with humble gratitude to a large gathering of devotees.

Bhagavan then moved on to Roorkee, where hundreds of staunch devotees had prayed that He should stay for a while at least, so that they could imprint His charm on their hearts. All along the miles of road over which Bhagavan's car sped, with at least a dozen more trailing behind, the journey was interrupted by groups of devotees on the wayside, waiting eagerly for Darshan with floral offerings in their hearts and bhajan songs on their lips. The gathering was largest at Haridwar, where underneath a decorated pandal, residents and pilgrims who had through some mysterious means known that Bhagavan would be passing through, joined the band of devotees. Their prayer was heard and Bhagavan alighted to give them Darshan and accepted the flowers redolent with devotion.

Vedapathashala near Rishikesh

Rishikesh too was driven through, for Bhagavan had to reach the neighbourhood of Lakshman Jhoola, a few miles beyond even the Divine Life Society campus. The residents of Rishikesh, however, had Bhagavan for themselves a few minute, when He had the car stopped to give Darshan. The Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Uttar Pradesh, had acquired a magnificent building situated on a multi-acre plot, right on the brink of the holy Ganga, where it just emerges from it, parental peaks, full and fresh, still unbridled by anicuts, unaffected by weirs and canals. Standing on the terrace of that two-storeyed bungalow, one can almost touch the thick green mountain on the opposite bank, looking at first glance like a picture painted by the Divine artist. The slender foot-bridge slung on chains that takes pedestrians across the Ganga is just a few paces away. The place is ideal as a Retreat for Sadhakas and as an Ashram for Swadhyaya. Baba inaugurated the Prajnana Pradarshan (Exhibition) of spiritual pictures, diagrams, symbols and icons established there, for the edification of pilgrims and others. Bhumi Puja for a Vedasastra Pathshala to be established and administered by the Uttar Pradesh Sathya Seva Organisation was performed in the Divine Presence with full Vedic ceremonials. Bhagavan graciously blessed a Vedic Vidwan who recited, with commendable correctitude, the text of the Shukla Version of the Yajur Veda that is widely prevalent in the Gangetic region. Thousands had gathered at the huge pandal erected for the Puja. Baba blessed the gathering with Darshan and He created Vibhuti for a few who needed that curative gift. Bhagavan gave the members of the Sri Sathya Sai Trust of Uttar Pradesh directions and advice on the use of the building as a Service Center and on the courses of study and curricula of the pathshala.

Bhagavan left the place at 4 P.M. and though the party had to reach Mussorie, according to the programme set by the organisers, before nightfall, He responded gladly to the invitation by the monks of the Divine Life Society, led by Swami Chidanandaji. He spent nearly an hour at the Hall where Bhagavata Recital was on and Himself sang a few Bhajans which were sung in chorus by the packed hall, with great enthusiasm.

Proceeding from Rishikesh, past the gathering of devotees again at Haridwar, Baba reached Dehra Dun, where the Sai Samiti has been active for years and where devotees had assembled at the bungalow of Sri Sahani. Bhagavan moved among the thousands who were vigorously singing Bhajans. He most graciously stood on top of His car in order grant Darshan to people sitting on the periphery of the vast gathering.

At mussorie

From Dehra Dun, with a few stoppage enroute in order to bless waiting bunches of devotees at wayside villages, Bhagavan led the long motorcade up the winding roads over a series of sharp hair-pin curves to the cool heights of Mussorie. Many roads in that far-famed hill resort were so narrow that only one-way traffic had to be enforced for vehicles coming from either side. Therefore, it was nearly P.M. when the entire party reached bungalow of the Maharani of Jind situated on a prominent scarp at one end of the line of hills, commanding a magnificent view of the plain merging into the hazy horizon.

The Maharani realised the party had come up from the sweltering plains into an area of high altitude and low temperature. She had anticipated every need and her hospitality was appropriate and profuse.

Bhagavan was supposed to take some rest in that quiet picturesque spot. But the Avatar cannot rest. By dawn, the tracks and trails leading up to the bungalow or down to the bungalow were echoing the footfalls of the hill-folk hastening for Darshan of Bhagavan the news of whose arrival had reached them already. Groups of townsmen assembled in the lawns in front and Baba blessed many of them with personal interviews. Some groups were graciously awarded the fortune of listening to short disquisitions on spiritual topics.

The Rani of Jind runs a small boarding school for little children at her place in Friends Colony, New Delhi. Bhagavan had inaugurated the school and visited it again during this visit. She is so deeply devoted to the uplift of the children of this land along the lines laid down by Bhagavan that she persuaded Bhagavan to lay the foundation for a children's school on a site adjacent to her Mussorie home. Thousands assembled to witness the function and listen to the Bhajan and get the Darshan of Bhagavan.

Bhagavan left the Hills on the morning of the 11th April via Panipat and Karnal. Intimation was sent in advance to the Samitis in the towns and villages on that road that Bhagavan might stop for granting Darshan only when groups of devotees are disciplined enough to sit in rows under the thick shade of trees.

Ramotsava festival

Bhagavan reached Delhi about 3-30 P.M. At 6-30 P.M., He was welcomed with traditional temple insignia and Vedic welcome hymns to the Ramotsava Music Festival, celebrated for three consecutive days by an All India Organisation which has the integration of Indian culture as its object. The celebration was held at the Convention Hall of the Ashoka Hotel, with Sri. B. D. Jatti, former Vice-President of India, as its Chairman. Vidwan Balamurali Krishna and the renowned Music Director Rajeswara Rao sang a few songs each before the altar erected on the Dais for Sri Rama. That evening, the ceremony of Sita Kalyanam was to be symbolically celebrated in strict adherence to the rituals prescribed.

Bhagavan addressed the assembly of distinguished citizens of Delhi, most of them devoted to the preservation and promotion of the eternal values of Indian culture, and the lessons mankind has to treasure from a study of the Ramayana. Later, when the Pundits had started uttering the Vedic formula for the confirmation and consummation of the wedding of Rama and Sita, Bhagavan created, by wave of His palm, a golden Mangala Sutra for being worn by Sita, as a mark of wife-hood. The vast body of spectators were thrilled with ecstasy at the spontaneity and splendour of the gift.

At Jaipur College

On 12th April, Bhagavan left early for Jaipur by plane. At Jaipur, Bhagavan stayed at the Sri Sathya Sai College for Women, founded by Him and serving the cause of higher education in Rajasthan for many years.

At 9 A.M., the Governor of Rajasthan, Sri. O. P. Mehra, arrived at the College and accompanied Bhagavan to the site where Bhagavan laid the foundation-stone for the Poorna Chandra Kamani Auditorium, adjacent to the college. Devotees from Jaipur, Udaipur, Bhilwara and other cities as well as from the villages around these towns where they have inaugurated service projects, had gathered in large numbers, filling the spacious, colourful Shamiana erected for the function, as well for the college celebrations which were to follow. The Governor and Bhagavan were seated on the beautifully decorated dias. The Principal welcomed the citizens and devotees. A few students spoke on the distinct features of the college and acknowledged their gratitude to Bhagavan, the Principal and other teachers for inspiring them, through love and sympathy, to achieve not only academic distinction, but, what was much more lasting and valuable, also get an insight into the Divinity latent in each of them. Bhagavan then graciously handed over prizes to the students of the college who had distinguished themselves in curricular and extra-curricular activities.

Character, the real test

Bhagavan then addressed the students and others who had filled the huge Pandal to considerable overflow. "Beneficial activities, adherence to Truth, straight thinking, humility before the Supreme power that is directing the Universe, and devotion to God and discipline are the real marks of the educated person", He said. "A person's life and its worth are judged according to the character that directed his activities. Some people might say that it is to be judged on the basis of the knowledge he has acquired during his life. No. Neither wealth, nor scholarship, nor the extent of authority exercised over others can be valid proof. Character alone is the real test of greatness. A good character cannot be acquired through study of books, nor can it be granted as grace by teachers or borrowed from friends. It can be secured and strengthened only through overcoming

challenges and gaining experiences. But the people desire what they call 'independence' and mean by it, not the power and capability to stand on one's own legs without becoming burdens on others, but to be free from bonds and limits. Birds have freedom to fly in the sky; fish have freedom to swim in water. Man too has the freedom to exploit, enslave or destroy other men or other living beings. Man has the duty of helping other men to live decently and long. A crane gulps fish through its bill and fills its own stomach, it does not feed other cranes. Man is not a crane; he is a creature endowed with love, compassion and sympathy. Unless the educational system promotes contentment and joy in society, holiness and health to the individual and makes all who share in it realise the awareness of Divinity, no country can prosper and find peace. The students of this and other colleges must imbibe discipline and a sense of duty. The citizens of Jaipur must feel it their responsibility to provide them every facility to manifest their eagerness to learn and enthusiasm to serve. Poorna Chandra Kamani was happy that Swami blessed him to start this college here. He had all the virtues that his name signifies—a full heart, an unruffled temper, inner peace, unselfish love. He cast off the body before his plans were fully accomplished. This day, we have laid the foundation for one project that he had in view," He said. Bhagavan declared that very soon, the college will have spacious and substantial buildings for all faculties and it will be full fledged in all respects.

Bhagavan had planned to return by the evening flight to Delhi and so, the few hours that were available were packed with grace on the Staff of the college, the students of the various classes, the Members of the Council of Management of the Sri Sathya Sai Trust of Rajasthan and with members and office-bearers of the Samitis of the Seva organisation in the state. Bhagavan showered blessings on the students specially by His presence in their midst during lunch.

Sai seva in M.P.

On Tuesday, April 13, Bhagavan flew to Bhopal, the capital of Madhya Pradesh, one of the most extensive of Indian states. Every one of the 45 revenue Districts has an active Seva Samiti dedicated to spiritual and service activities for the uplift of men, women and children. Madhya Pradesh has more than a thousand trained Seva Dal workers and thousands of Bhajan mandalis all over the sprawling state. Ever since the Sri Sathya Sai College for Women was inaugurated at Bhopal, about a decade ago, the State has been yearning for the Physical presence of Bhagavan in the state. The good news of Bhagavan's visit brought hundreds of devotees to the airport of Gwalior itself, where the plane stayed for a few minutes according to schedule. It was quite a surprise to find a gathering of four to five hundred sitting at the airport and singing Bhajans. One could notice a large number of school children and pupils of Bala Vikas classes.

When Bhagavan landed at Bhopal, He was received with floral offering by Sri Arjun Singh, the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, and a huge gathering of devotees. Bhagavan visited the new building of the Sri Sathya Sai College for Women and the imposing and well equipped Science Block.

Ecstatic scenes in Bhopal

Early in the evening, Bhagavan formally entered Shantivan, a magnificent complex of buildings dedicated to the Avatar of the Age, situated in the heart of New Bhopal. Besides a two-storeyed mansion which will be the abode of Bhagavan, the complex has a Bhajan Hall named after the Mother, Easwaramma Hall, and a block of smaller halls and rooms named after the father,

Venkappa Block, for housing the Sathya Sai Welfare Corporation, the Annapurna Kitchen and a large dining hall. Besides these, the Block also accommodates the offices of the State Trust, the State Seva Organisation, the Training Institute for Education in Human Values etc. The entire area was a sea of faces when Bhagavan arrived at Shantivan. The roofs and terraces of the bungalows on the roads adjacent and even window sills, sunshades, parapet walls and water tanks carried closely packed crowds of courageous people looking forward to the blessing of Darshan as Baba hoisted the Prasanthi flag on Shantivan. Many remarked that they had witnessed similar scenes only at Prasanthi Nilayam during the Golden Jubilee celebrations.

In the evening a meeting was arranged at the Ravindra Bharati hall where Bhagavan discoursed on education in Human Values, to a huge gathering. The Governor of Madhya Pradesh and the Chief Minister were both present. The Governor, while stressing the importance of man adhering to human values, referred his earlier visit to Prasanthi Nilayam and to his abiding faith that Indian culture had cherished these values untarnished through the ages. He spoke of Bhagavan being the saviour of these declining ideals and hoped that the educational activities launched in the State under His direction by his devotees will bring about a moral revolution which can redeem mankind.

Bhagavan elaborated on the qualities generosity, sympathy, fellow-feeling and compassion that form the basic human values. He directed that every individual and group must endeavour to promote these and defuse the forces that oppose or weaken them.

Bhagavan was busy throughout the day and in the morning hours of the next day, granting the members of the Trust, the State President and District Presidents and the members of the College staff His invaluable counsel. He left for Jamnagar in Gujarat from Bhopal airport by special aircraft.

Address at Jamnagar

At Jamnagar, the Rajamata of Nawanagar offered homage to Bhagavan and prayed to Him to give Darshan in the evening to thousands who had gathered in High School campus and bless them with His Divine Discourse. Sri Panduranga Rao of the Union Public Service Commission, who was rendering Bhagavan's Telugu addresses into Hindi, followed Him to Jaipur, Bhopal and Jamnagar. Bhagavan spoke on the dignity and destiny of man and the Sadhana required to recognise them and realise them. He said that while years ago education in India had as its aim preparing men for jobs, the problem has now become one of procuring jobs for men. "Educated people are greater problems today than simple uneducated folk. It is taken as a proud achievement when the number of schools increases by leaps and bounds. But the pride is as unjustified and misplaced as the pride of the mother who finds her child's hands and legs swollen beyond normal size. The really educated person must earn his living by the sweat of his face and not be a burden on others. The schools which the Rajamata, in her consideration for the progress of the rising generation is guiding, have these noble ideals of self-reliance and self-knowledge in view. The Rajamata has such a generous heart that she is constantly engaged in the relief of distress," Baba said. He advised the people to derive full benefit from her noble intentions and constructive projects. The children of the school presented a variety programme of Recitations, Music Recitals, folk dances and a few scenes from the life of Saint Jnaneswar.

Home for the aged

On the 15th, Bhagavan performed the Opening Ceremony of the Jam Sri Ranjit Singhji Niradhar Ashram at Jamnagar. The Home for the Aged, constructed and run to commemorate the centenary year of Sri Ranjit Sing Saheb of Nawanagar, is a specially designed complex of roomy dormitories for providing happy years of useful life for old people who are destitute. On behalf of the Board of Trustees it was announced that 'the object of the Institution is not just to maintain (about 200 people) as poor helpless persons but to enable them to live with self-respect, help in the management of the Ashram, do some activity and also pass their time in prayers and reading religious books in the company of each other, without any distinction of caste or creed.'

Bhagavan blessed the Vedic Pundits who were doing havan with appropriate ritual to spiritualise the building and fill it with vibrations of the Divine. He went through the dormitories and expressed His satisfaction with the devotion and the Love that were evident on every side.

Bhagavan left for Bombay by special aircraft at about noon and found enough time before emplaning for Bangalore from the Santa Cruz Airport to spend an hour at Dharmakshetra and meet a few workers of the organisation there.

Bhagavan returned to Brindavan at dusk on the 15th itself, after conferring the Grace of Darshan, Sparshan and Sambhashan on over a million persons in over eight states of India. It was for each of them an experience to be treasured in the heart.

—Editor

Vidya Vahini

15

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

You may master a billion fields of study; but, if you have not cultivated the attitude of detachment, the mastery is of no consequence. Sharing with others, serving others, this is the main Sutra of Vidya, its genuine expression. Education is rendered noble when the spirit of service is inculcated. The service rendered must be free of the slightest trace of narrow selfishness. That is not enough. The thought of service should not be marred by the desire for something in return. You have to perform the service as you would perform an important Yajna or Sacrifice. As trees do not eat their fruits but offer them to be eaten by others in an attitude of detachment, as rivers, without drinking the waters they carry, quench the thirst and cool the heat from which others suffer, as cows offer their milk, produced primarily for their calves in a spirit of generosity born of Tyaga, to be shared by others, so too should those who have acquired Vidya offer it to others prompted by the motive of service and without consideration of selfish interests. Only thus can they justify their status as 'noble men', Sajjana.

The authentic scholar should not entertain egoism in his thoughts, at any time. However, the misfortune is that scholars as a class are today afflicted with unbounded egoism. As a consequence, they follow wrong ideals and take to wrong Paths; they confer the benefits of education only on themselves and on their kith and kin. As a result, they forgo their position

among sajjans and the respect it can bring. One must grant generously to others the knowledge, skill and insight that one has acquired. If this is not done, human progress itself is endangered. To promote the best interests of mankind, one has to cultivate the holy urge of paropakaaram (service to others) and the attitude of sharing.

The parrot talk, 'Service to Man is Service to God' (Manava seva is Madhava seva) does not extend to all men; those who reel off this axiom do not inquire who are the men to be served. They are eager only to fill their own stomachs; for this purpose they restrict their mental horizons to the uplift of their own people. Thus, they lay waste the valuable education they have received. Man forgets the Fact that God is in perceptible form in all beings. Service rendered to any being is; service offered to God. This has to be the chief goal of the educated.

Nara is Narayana. Man is God. Every single act of Man has to be elevated as an act of service to God. But, students today do not know what exactly is Narayana and what exactly is Nara. How can a person claim to be educated when he cannot identify the Nara-Narayana principle? They are the entities denoted by the Upanishads as 'twam' and 'tat', 'you' and "that". He who has not become aware of these two cannot claim to have known himself. And the education that does not reveal oneself to one, of what use can it be to reveal anything else? But, to our misfortune, the educated who are the educators are engaged, not in promoting our best interests and serving us, but in doing great disservice as much as they need. It is highly strange. For, the educated persons must not only serve those who help them but also those who harm them. This attitude makes the service doubly holy. Serving those who do service to us is but a natural reaction. Serving those who harm us is the greater virtue. For, this latter course of action involves deeper understanding of one's best interest and an alert sense of time, place and circumstance. Education must confer and cultivate these qualities.

While dealing with uncultured folk, one has to exercise caution. So too, with ungrateful fellows who forget the good done to them. The law is the instrument the Government uses to punish those who do wrong. But the educated person and the student should not condemn them outright. He must manifest his natural virtue of detachment and practise his characteristic attitude of helpfulness.

Protecting one's Motherland is a noble duty. It is the primary duty of each student. The student cannot claim to have learned much unless he is able to discover and discharge what his duty is and what his immediate role should be, when circumstances call for such decisions. The educated man and the student undergoing education must both cultivate simplicity; they must discard ostentation. If they are addicted to ostentation, they lose their genuine nature or individuality. Students must note this point well. Whether a person is a master of all sciences or famous as a great intellectual, he is certain to be counted out of scholars and pundits if he has not humility and discipline in his dealings with others. Such persons will not be honoured by society. They may win respect for some time but that attitude will decline pretty soon. Such respect does not bring credit to the recipient. Artlessness and simplicity alone earn honour. They render the honour enjoyable. Insane parade of scholarship brings in only spurts of reputation and ridicule. When one gives up ostentation, one can get permanent respect from people. Real education imparts a spirit of renunciation, a dislike for ostentation, and the yearning for serving others.

Some persons develop swollen heads as soon as they acquire a little knowledge. They pretend to be experts in every field and boast the whole day about their attainments. They strut about as if they know everything. "The leaf-plate on which a full lunch has been served will lie low on the floor. The leaf-plate on which nothing is placed will hop high with every gust of wind." Thus says the proverb. So too, the person who has much scholarship and many skills in him will lead an unassuming life. But, he who has not derived genuine education and the strength it can confer lives in pomp and pride. He struggles much to hide his defects from being known to others. And, in the end, the struggles do not succeed. He meets with double ruin—he does not experience Ananda nor does he impart Ananda to others. He becomes the target of ridicule.

Therefore, do not allow the desire for ostentation to enter the mind; do not allow egotism to approach you. Be humble and be loyal to high ideals. Then only can you serve the cause of world peace and prosperity. "Sreyaasthe Viswasreyah". It is only when the individual succeeds in being good that the world too can become good. One who is eager to be a real student must place before himself the ideal of world peace and prosperity. He has to be unpretentious. He must vow to be of service to others. This is the essence of true education or Vidya.

Vidya Vahini

16

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

The Ideal Student

The student seeking Vidya must possess kindness, compassion and love towards all living beings. Kindness to all beings should be his very nature. If it is absent he becomes a boor. Vidya means, more than everything else, the quality of compassion towards living beings. If a person bears ill-will against any being, his education has no meaning. The advice given in the Gita, 'Adweshta Sarva Bhoothaanaam', 'with no ill will towards all or any being,' conveys the same message. In the same manner, the Gita warns off and on that any insult or injury or even neglect directed against any living being is an act that insults, injures or neglects the Divine. "Sarva Jivan thriskaaram Kesavam prathigachchathi". Love and compassion must not be limited to mankind only. They must enfold every living being.

Gita says, "Sunee chaiva svapaakecha, pandithaah sama darsinah". That is to say, the learned man who has acquired humility through Vidya must deal with equal compassion and consideration the cow, the Brahmin, the elephant, the dog and the eater of dog-flesh. Uniform compassion shown in this manner transforms uniform itself into uniform welfare for the recipients. Wishing well for all is the sign of one who has earned Vidya. The narrow vision that is limited to the community has to be given up. Bharatiya culture emphasizes the highest truth, the broadest vision. Imparting this ideal is the purpose of Vidya, as laid down in Bharat. No other country has placed before its people such a lofty all-inclusive, beneficial ideal.

This day, the country is facing ruin because this ideal has been neglected, Vidya has been grossly circumscribed and the educational system is polluting the social organism with narrowness and crookedness. So, marked changes have to be made in the system. At present we have mere book learning. But what is learnt from books has to be confirmed and corrected by practising it in social living. Then only can the knowledge of the kinship between man and man be gained. Thereby learning is transformed into vidya. Vidya cannot be acquired by merely mastering reading, writing and arithmetic.

Each student must, after intelligent inquiry, decide for his guidance during every occasion which goal is best and which action is best suited to realise it. Both the goal and the action must serve the needs of society and help it to progress. People should not be involved in injustice, violence and immorality. Nor should they deem their own gain as primary.

Students have to pay great attention to another important quality—cleanliness, both outer and inner. When either of these is absent, that person becomes useless for any task. The clothes he wears, the books he reads and the environment around him must be clean. This is the outer cleanliness. That is to say, every material object one has to deal with for living has to be kept clean. The teeth and eyes, the food and drink, all should be free from dirt. One can be healthy as a result of all this. The body has to be scrubbed and washed every day, or else, layers of dust will cause itching and boils will emerge. They may develop causing infection to others. And, one's condition will be rendered miserable. One may possess only one or two sets of clothing. But care should be taken to cleanse them before wearing. They should not gather dirt.

The books used for study should not be thrown about, as one pleases. Scribbling on the pages must be avoided. Paper should be preserved clean and spotless.

Those who see them must appreciate the care taken by the student to keep things clean. The room where he resides must be free from stink. The student must be able to draw on himself the love of all. The room where the student resides and the adjacent area must be kept clean. And, inside the room, no indecent picture should be hung on the walls. Only pictures that inspire great thoughts and high ideals should be visible to the eye.

However rich a person may be, he cannot be happy without health, he cannot derive full joy from the riches he owns. A meal makes him exhausted; without a meal, he feels weak. Thus he plods on without ever being happy. So, external cleanliness promotes health and happiness.

Next, we shall consider inner cleanliness—that is to say, keeping the mind and the intellect free from dirt, serene and sacred. When thoughts and feelings are impure and agitated, one cannot be calm and happy. When the mind is polluted, reactions are polluted. To keep the mind clean, one has to analyse sympathetically situations involving others and their activities, and then, decide on how to react to them. One should not rush to draw conclusions. Adopting the reactions of others is not desirable. One must resolve on any action only after intelligent discrimination and inquiry. "Some course of action is being followed, by some who are ours; so, we shall follow that course ourselves". This attitude is mean and demeaning, it is a sign of weakness. It is the consequence of basic ignorance. Sheep behave in that manner.

Born as men, moving about as educated persons, yet stupidly following others as sheep do and polluting the minds with ideas borrowed from the lips of others are things to be avoided.

The ideas and pronouncements of others may often be personal, or they may induce feelings of hatred between people. Why should we accept them as ours, and mould our feelings accordingly? We should not try to conform our feelings and patterns of behaviour with those of others. We should not relinquish our faith, our experience and our innate holiness.

We may not be able always to know the reasons for our faith. It originates and is shaped by our own personal likes and dislikes, our own dominant feelings. But, we must not become the target for anger, hatred and jealousy, and the evil deeds they lead us into. A student must cultivate wide, inclusive feelings. Then only is he entitled to acquire the higher learning. Then only can he earn respect in society. He must keep far away from narrow selfish thoughts, feelings and plans.

At the Feet of Sai

AL-ZAHIRO: THE MANIFEST
Red Rose of Persian bards;
Heart-throb of Upanishadic seers
Who heard Your footsteps
In the recesses of their souls,
And saw the universe sustained
By the harmony of Your-gentle breath.
What veils, My Lord, have you lifted from my mind!—

Is this the shadow of Your Orange Robe
That makes the evening so lovely,
The landscape quiet in its russet mood?
The dawn so enchantingly fresh?
The earth is sacred now for it bears
The prints of Your tiny Feet.
Your smile is in the flowers;
In the brilliance of dazzling sunlight;
In the crystal purity of water.
The vast stretches of space reflect
The silky depths of Your eyes—
Half-closed in Divine Ecstasy;
And the whole world is vibrant
With echoes of Your unspoken Love.

—*Zeba Bashiruddin.*

In Islamic mysticism God is remembered by His ninety-nine attributes. *Al-Zahiro* refers to the manifested aspect of God. To the Persian Sufis, Rose, especially red rose, was the symbol of God as the beloved, while the nightingale represented the human soul yearning for the Rose.

The Rosy Palm

I was born a bird in time's bower,
Fed by Haven's dews beside a tender flower.
The world around me was leafy green,
And every cloud was a fragrant dream.
But the more I bloomed, the pricks were more
Of thorny transience and a stinking sore!
The Heavens dew was a drop of tear
And the tender flower was a haggard fear.

I sighed and swooned, the world was grey,

But O', a sudden joy took my heart away.
You stood by me, smiling, calm,
And raising me up in your rosy palm.
My eyes were mellow with warm happiness,
To bloom in dews of Thy loving grace,
And my heart whispered: Yours I am;
When I fade and fall I kiss your palm.

—*Bejoy K. Misra*

Atomic Scientists greet Baba

Bhagavan's visit to the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre at Trombay on May 14th (about which a brief report appeared in our last issue) was remarkable in many ways, because it was the first occasion when a very large number of senior scientists had an opportunity to get close to Baba and listen to Him.

Bhagavan's visit was on an invitation to Him as Chancellor of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning at Prasanthi Nilayam. A large gathering of scientists and others greeted Baba when He arrived at the administrative building of the BARC. Baba gave Darshan to the members of the staff and went into the large briefing hall in the auditorium of the Centre where he was received by senior scientists of the establishment. One of the scientists explained to Baba the activities of the various departments at the Research Centre.

Accompanied by senior scientists Bhagavan went round the reactors and the department preparing and handling radioactive isotopes used in medical and agricultural research. Baba showed keen interest in the researches being carried on in the field of cancer treatment using radiation therapy. Commenting on the researches on food preservation, Bhagavan Baba observed that the new groundnut varieties developed at BARC could be useful for improving the cultivation of groundnuts in Rayalaseema. To the surprise of several senior scientists present there, Baba spoke to a lady scientist enquiring about the welfare of her family members recalling them by name. He informed the scientists that He had performed the Aksharabhyasam of the lady scientist 24 years ago and was seeing her again for the first after that ceremony.

The scientists were eager to know about the educational programme of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning and asked about Baba's interest in the promotion of science. Baba introduced to the scientists some of the youngmen who were in his party, who had taken Doctorates in physics and other science subjects. He informed the scientists that these youngmen had come to Him when they were, in their teens and they had grown both spiritually and educationally. He told the scientists that the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning will have well-equipped laboratories and will have reputed scientists heading the various departments. He advised the B.A.R.C. scientists not to segregate themselves on linguistic or other considerations but to work unitedly for the building up of our nation.

He informed them that the uniqueness of the educational complex at Prasanthi Nilayam consisted in the fact that it had educational institutions from the Nursery stage to the highest University level, in one campus.

Baba later visited the residential colony for the staff of the B.A.R.C. at Anushakti Nagar and gave Darshan to thousands of men and women who were waiting for Him.

—Ed.

Education and Culture

Welcoming Bhagavan during His visit to Bhopal on April 13, Sri Bhagawat Dayal Sharma, Governor of Madhya Pradesh, recalled his first visit to Prasanthi Nilayam after discovering a reference to this place in the Bhrigu Samhita. He wondered where Prasanthi Nilayam was till he met a person who gave the address.

That was more than twelve years ago. He had his first Darshan of Bhagavan at the time when Baba gave him an idol of Shankara and Vibhuti, with His blessings. The Governor felt honoured to welcome Him in Bhopal after many years.

Inviting Bhagavan to inaugurate the Institute of Training for Education in Human Values, set up by the Madhya Pradesh Bal Vikas Education Trust, Sri Sharma said:

At this hour of time, we are passing through 'Pralaya'. 'Pralaya' does not mean total destruction. 'Pralaya' starts when the basic values of life are destroyed. In this 'Agni Pariksha', whoever passes through the test successfully is dear to the Lord.

Bharat Varsha has its own identity, history and its own philosophy. We are forgetting these. The present education system teaches only 'Vigyan'. It has broken its link with Adhyatmic pursuits. It has taken us right to the core of a volcano. Baba, kindly save us.

This is a machine age. Today, graduates and teachers are produced mechanically. Naturally, in such a system human values get eliminated. "Atma Vidya was once highly respected in Bharat. Once Sanat Kumar was with Narada Rishi. Narada said to Sanat Kumar that he knew all the Sastras, all the sciences, astrology and all 72 Vidyas, but he did not have peace. Sanat Kumar advised him to study 'Atma Vidya'. He said that you would know what is 'Atma', Paramatma, Lok, Parlok, Papa, Punya, Swarga and Naraka, etc.

'Vidya Dadaati Vinayam'. Vidya leads to Vinaya (humility). Present-day students, teachers and children are devoid of 'Vinayam'. Once in Bimbisara's court a thief was brought, who had been awarded the death penalty. Somebody told the Raja that the thief had 'Mantra Siddhi', and if he were to be executed the Siddhi would go to waste. So the Raja asked the thief to teach the Mantra to him. The thief tried, but the Raja could not attain the siddhi. What was the reason? There was no 'Gurubhav' in the teacher. The thief was then seated on the throne and was given

the respect due to a guru. The Raja then heard with reverence the Mantra and could get the Siddhi.

This shows that 'Jnana' (knowledge) cannot be achieved without Vinaya (reverence), humility. Today, students, workers, ministers and, let me add, Governors are produced like machines in a factory. Without faith and humility, knowledge cannot be achieved. In our tradition, Vidya, Vinaya, Sheelata and Aacharam are emphasised. A characterless person cannot be purified even by the Vedas. 'Aacharaheenaam na punanti Vedaah'. Therefore the most important thing is 'Aachar', (practice). In modern education these are slowly being neglected and forgotten. Modern education is essential because everybody has to earn a living. But, if we neglect our cultural heritage, our basic values, we are worthless, not even a penny worth in this world. I am reminded of a true story. One of my friends went to a Public School while there was still some time for classes to commence. He asked some boys, 'Who broke the bow of Raja Janak?' The boys replied, 'Sir, we have not done it.' Our people here and abroad do not know our cultural heritage, philosophy, Puranas, Vedas, or our Rishis.

Due to the grace of Bhagavan, this 'Anushtan' (programme) is being started here and we are being enlightened. Again Bharat-Varsh will show the way to the world for right living. Our culture was not born in cities. It started from forests where our Rishis did meditation. The same forests are being foolishly destroyed today. We are indiscriminately cutting our forests, polluting the atmosphere with factories, thereby committing the greatest crime on mankind.

Baba has said that the fundamentals of all religions are basically the same. The minor details, the external practices may be different; we need not quarrel over these points. 'Yama' and 'niyama' are to be practised by us. This is the message of Baba and of our Rishis. Yama includes Ahimsa, Sathya, Brahmacharya, Astheya and Aparigraha. Niyama includes Santosh, Tapas, Swadhyaya and Easwara Pranidhan. Till we promote these qualities in our children and our teachers understand and practise them, our nation building programme cannot commence. We cannot be saved from the volcano on which we are sitting.

Co-operation and mutual respect must become part of one's daily conduct, one's mental make-up, one's nature. This is what the Rishis of ancient India have consistently emphasised. 'Live together, revere each other; let not the seeds of envy and hate grow and choke the clear stream of Love', is the prayer that they have taught the children of this land. Their teaching has been Unity, Divinity, Charity—in thought, word and deed, from the first breath to the last. When teachers transmit this heritage, unspoilt and undiminished to the children, the future of the land is bound to be glorious.

—Baba

Pearls from the Divine Deep

During His fifteen-day visit to nine North Indian States in April 1982, Bhagavan not only blessed lakhs of devotees with his Darshan, but also delivered His divine discourses at

Hyderabad, Delhi, Bhopal, Jaipur and Jamnagar. Significant passages from these discourses have been strung together and will be published serially from this issue:

Tyaga

Man today has to cultivate the sense of sacrifice (Tyaga), to devote his entire life to the realisation of high ideals. Of course, man pursues some one ideal or other for some distance and finding that it is unrealisable, he runs after another. If he is not successful through his lone effort, he hopes to achieve it in association with others. That hope is to be welcomed and strengthened. For, cooperation and united effort are the very basis of human progress. Without mutual adjustment and understanding, no success can be achieved. The seventy crores of Indians can accomplish even the heaviest tasks if only they are of one mind and are prepared to work with each other. India or the Nation to which one belongs is not the extent of land that lies dumb under our feet. The Nation is another name for the community of human beings with which we have to deal every day of our lives. Each must contribute his skill and intelligence to the common pool. The value of one's talents and the potency of one's skill will be increased beyond belief when they are added to those of others in one magnificent work. Then, one can contact the Divine that is inherent in others as much as in oneself. And the Divine in all has to be manifested in unselfish work for the common good.

Social service

Look at a mountain range. You judge it as thick layers of soil. A tree strikes you as a source of wood and fuel only. The human body is composed of the same elements as mountains, soil and trees—the five elements mentioned in the Scriptures—earth, water, fire, wind and sky; But one has to look through these with the inner eye, not the eye which is itself a product of the five elements. When that is done, one can find and become ecstatically aware of the Divine that pulsates in all creation, alive or inert. Moreover, the more we examine Nature through the inner eye, the more the lessons we learn from each object. They teach us that the sense of sacrifice sweetens life, and the activity that does not originate from selfish desire is the height of dutifulness. Turning a deaf ear to these lessons, men yearn to derive joy from the dreary pleasures of the world, even after growing too old to move about without a stick! They cringe and beg so that they maybe employed again and earn some more money to satisfy a few more desires. Or, with depleted resources of physical stamina, they venture on some factory or other and start some enterprise or other. Thus they bring on themselves further anxiety and worry. They do not plan some social service programme wherein they, can utilise their knowledge and skill and thereby promote the happiness of other even while they themselves are happy.

Blood, good red blood, is the life-giver, the life-sustainer. So too devotion, dedication to the will of God, is the source and sustenance of Atmananda, unshakable Bliss. Nowadays, emphasis has to be laid not on speech without heart but on heart without speech. There is indeed too much of talk that emanates only from the tongue or at best from the head but without the feelings of love and compassion that the heart alone can contribute. Man's duty is not something that has to be proclaimed through speech: it has to be announced and achieved through action, through deeds. Whatever the number of texts one has studied or the scriptures one can recite, he cannot be classed as a Vedantin or a philosopher. Those accomplishments help only to inflate his ego and render him useless for society. What exactly is Love for God? It is only another name for the Love for all living beings; for all creation. That Love has as its roots compassion, sympathy and

understanding. That Love has as its sign and symbol a pure and untarnished heart. That is why every religion lays down practices and exercises which can cleanse the heart of lust, greed and spite. Every religious rite and ritual helps the refinement of emotions and passions of man.

Psychonauts wanted

People give up the endeavour to realise the Supreme Godhead since they do not feel equal to the demands of that task. They hear that God is transcendent as well as immanent, that He cannot be measured by human categories or human vocabularies, that He is beyond the intellectual reach of man, attributeless, formless, etc. So many Sadhakas do not pursue their inquiry through sheer self-condemnation. Remember; there is nothing on earth, no adventure, too difficult for man. If man can soar millions of miles into outer space, can he not delve half an inch into his inner space? We want psychonauts today more than cosmonauts. Devoid of the Vision that seeks to explore the darkness within and to gather the treasures therein, man is a mere animal.

Live humbly

Man must live humbly with a sense of divine discontent. He must bend his head low, because he has not done the most pressing duty—discovering who he is! There are some misguided persons who strut about in pride, pretending that that pose is a sign of their divinity. A person might have appropriated a large number of titles and posts of authority. He might live in a huge, formidable castle, and move about in swell cars. And he might even feel that he owns them and has mastered them. But, in reality, they own him and they are lording over him. He is their slave. They suck him dry, they distort his manners, behaviour and desires, they rob him of sleep and appetite and finally they destroy him. They breed in him the diseases of envy, egoism and willful pride and bring about his downfall.

The inner voice

Today, science and technology have expanded beyond calculation. Literary works are produced by the ton every day in every land. Music is on every one's tongue and table. Mathematics has strayed into strange fields and assumed various shapes. All fields of knowledge have expanded into new regions of cognition. But, the one field, the field of the Atman, the Knower of knowledge, is lying uncultivated, pathetically fallow. The urges of the Atma are suppressed by man while the urges of the outward-gazing senses are acquiring priority and licence. Evil thoughts, vicious plans, wicked deeds, these are the individual's gifts to the society which has helped him grow. This is indeed a deplorable sign. Every one must listen to his own conscience, the counsel that the Divine Resident confers, the Inner Voice of Truth, Righteousness, Peace and love. Do not be prompted by others or led by their example. Develop and dedicate your Iccha-shakti (motive power), Jnana Shakti (intellectual power), and Kriya-shakti (creative power) to the fullest and sublimate them for the service of mankind.

Wealth or virtue?

The world today has a surfeit of well wishers, people eager and enthusiastic to repair and reform, reshape and reconstruct, each with his own blue-print and strategy. But, in what does human progress, world welfare consist? Does it need a larger number of factories? Does it mean the exploration and exploitation of more oil wells, even from the ocean beds? No. No. What is needed is the expansion of virtues, the exploration for the sources of deeper human values. How

can more and more earnings help when man has less and less yearning for virtues and for the Love that is the basis of human happiness?

Divine feelings (Divya Bhava) and novel methods of expressing them (Navya Ooha)—these two are the roads to peace and plenty. What is patent in the world situation today is the vast gap between those who toil from day-break to nightfall for their food and clothing and those who command all comfort and conveniences of life. But, the joy and peace that the toiler is able to have is denied to the rich and the prosperous. They are overcome by fear, anxiety and sleeplessness. Work, activity, the full use of one's skill and intelligence, physical and financial resources for the good of all—these alone can justify one's existence on earth.

(To be continued)

NEW BOOKS:

French Book On Baba

L'AUBE DUNE NOUVELLE ÈRE: *By Antonio and Sylvia Craxi.*

This is the first book in French on Bhagavan Baba. Within the space of about 108 pages, the book seeks to provide a condensed but comprehensive account of Bhagavan's life and message to French readers. Beginning with Bhagavan's own declaration of the purposes of His present advent, the book describes in six chapters the early childhood Leelas of Bhagavan, the link between Shirdi Baba and Sathya Sai, the continuing miracles of Baba and their *raison d'être*, the global spiritual renaissance initiated by Bhagavan and its significance to the world to-day. In the last three chapters, we have explanations about Hindu Metaphysics, excerpts from Baba's sayings and discourses, summary of a discourse during Christmas by Baba in which He has thrown more light on Christ's personality, and translations of some poems and letters of Baba written in His early years. Pointing out the similarities between the Message of the Gospels and Bhagavan's teachings, the authors emphasize Bhagavan's basic view that 'All Truth is one and that members of all faiths should unite'. The book is finely printed and carries a few pictures in colour of Bhagavan.

Copies can be had from Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications, Prasanthinilayam, Anantapur District, 515134 (Andhra Pradesh, South India).

SAIGEETHAM: *By Dr. A. GANESAAL. Published by Sri Sathya Sai Education and Publication Committee, 61, Arthoon Road, Madras - 13.*

Price: Rs. 6/-

This garland of 108 songs in praise of Bhagavan Baba is a devotional offering at the Lotus Feet from a Ceylon -Tamil devotee, who is now rendering service as a doctor in Bhagavan's hospital at Whitefield. The songs are the outpourings of a sincere devotee, who has experienced in ample measure the Grace of Bhagavan. Dr. Ganesaal has woven into the songs the message of Bhagavan. There are several songs which express the anguish and yearning of an ardent spiritual

seeker. Even as literary compositions the songs bear the impress of an accomplished poet. Many of the songs are eminently suitable for recitation in Bhajans.

Precept and Practice must go together

“At present we have millions of books that profess to awaken man from the sleep of ignorance. We have countless gurus who preach high ideals. Every nation has institutions which teach spirituality. The fund of knowledge being accumulated is formidable indeed. But the world is sinking deeper every day into moral crisis, for, no one practices "what he knows or talks about," observed Bhagavan Baba, inaugurating a central training camp for Education in Human Values at Vidyagiri, Prasanthi Nilayam, on May 20. (A report about the course appears elsewhere).

Bhagavan began his address with a poem extolling the greatness of purity in thought, word and deed. Bhagavan said:

The man of Truth is he whose thought,
Word and deed, all three, are one.
Such men can earn nearness to God
And attain Heavenly Bliss, for sure.

To be born as a human is indeed a unique gift for living beings. After being so blessed, man must strive to progress to the highest stage of Godhood. Manava must cultivate the Divinity latent in him, unfold it and manifest it in his life. Man has three instruments or Kaaranas with the help of which he can succeed in this task. They are the mind, speech and physical activity, These are together designated, as Trikarana. When these are utilised along beneficial lines they contribute to the fullness of man. Used along crooked, distorted lines they contribute to the bestiality of man. These three are responsible for either humanness or animalness.

How are we to proceed in this task? First, let us take up the mind' instrument. The mind is only another name for a bundle of desires seeking and avoiding, Sankalpa and Vikalpa. The mind is always given to ruminating over something. It is easy to affix the mind on something but it is very difficult to withdraw it. The mind is at all times engaged in an internal dialogue within itself and planning some scheme or other. The dialogue goes on wandering in a wayward manner. The planning (alochana) centres around solutions for a continuous stream of problems that present themselves. We must try to overcome this tendency of endless dialogue inside the mind. Give the mind rest from constant involvement with ideas and solutions. Or else, it suffers pollution through dwelling upon the faults and failings of others and through contemplation on external affairs. The mind, like a carbon paper, gets imprinted with the thoughts that pass through it. So, spiritual progress is halted and the mind is contaminated with the evil on which it dwells. It gets too distracted and disturbed.

There are three methods by which the mind can be silenced and steadied. (1) Pranayama—the regulation of the breathing process. Inhaling and exhaling in measured sequence and with one-pointed attention. This will still the waves in the mind. (2) Social Service—when the mind is engaged in some service programme—instructing people and teaching them holy thoughts and ideals, nursing and comforting the sick or some selfless activity to help others who need it, this will stop the ceaseless talk it indulges in. (3) Sadhana—Kirtan, Bhajan, Yogasanas, Japa—these can calm the mind and quieten the agitated conversations therein. The Gayatri mantra is very beneficial for this purpose of suppressing the wandering mind.

People relish observing the traits of character in others and classifying them into groups, good and bad. Their attention is always roaming in the outer world. This habit makes their minds dirty. Man must be vigilant against this malignant influence. He should be ever eager to cleanse the mind. Since the mind is the only instrument available for preserving and changing human qualities, we must train it to desire the good and detach itself from the bad. If the mind is shattered, it cannot be made whole. An iron plate, when broken into pieces, can be welded and made whole. Hence we must strengthen the mind with faith. Now even petty disappointments and slight troubles affect minds which are weak. We have no courage and fortitude to bear them. Sadhana can confer the strength needed to meet even greater challenges. Our forefathers prescribed Dhyana in order to reinforce the latent strength of man. Shravana (listening), Manana (revolving in thought) and Nidhidhyasana (practical application) of spiritual lessons were prescribed by them in order to cleanse the mind (Manas-shuddhi) and to give it rest (Vishranti) from the chatter of internal talk.

Some people advise the suppression of the mind and even its destruction. This is an impossible task, whoever may try, by whatever means. The mind is the instrument by which man can attain liberation, though he has now turned it into an instrument for bondage. All that we can do and have to do is to cleanse it. An angler catches fish with a hook and a worm attached to a rod. Wild animals are tamed for the circus by the use of spears and whips. Poisonous snakes are handled and played with by men who pluck out their fangs. The mind too can be manipulated with ease and made to obey our wills provided we pluck the six fangs, the Arishadvargas, which now render it a source of danger. Anger, hatred, envy, greed, pride, selfishness—these dominate the mind now and pollute it. When these are subjugated, the mind becomes serene and an instrument of liberation.

The second Kaarana is speech. Speech can raise man high or drag him low. Words have mighty power encased in them. Utter words conveying sudden calamity or terrible disaster before a person. He loses all resources of physical and mental strength and drops on the ground. Utter words that are very pleasant and heartening before a person. He develops strength of an elephant and gets ready to meet any challenge. The words fall on the ear. That is all that happens, but some words make the listener pathetically weak; some words make him enormously strong. Fell down a tree with an axe, the trunk sprouts again. Fell down a mind with a harsh word, the mind does not sprout again. Words have that vicious power.

As regards our speech, there are three guidelines laid down by the seers. (1) Speak the truth; do not speak falsehood. (2) Do not speak the truth when doing so will be unpleasant or injurious. (3) Do not speak falsehood, though it may be pleasant and useful. The truth that is spoken has to be

soft and sweet, and soaked in love. Man must make all effort to possess a body free from violent activity, a tongue unpolluted by falsehood, hands free from the infliction of injury and a consciousness uncontaminated by evil thoughts. Speech should be free from fanaticism or passionate excitement. Remember that the words you utter get recorded in the tape of your own heart. They come up into your memory off and on and warn you against losing control again. They exhort you to speak with your emotions calmed and always in order to do good to others. They advise you to observe silence (Mouna) as the best reaction to situations. Of course, the silence is to be applied not only to the tongue but also to the chattering of the mind.

People today find it as difficult to limit talk, as it is to roll water into a package. Those who talk cannot work; those who work do not talk. Act more, talk less. Be cautious, since every word emerging from you leaves an impact on others, and even more deeply on yourself.

Let us consider the third Kaarana; Karma, action. Karma includes all actions carried on by the limbs, the senses of action and perception—in short, the body. It is the law of Nature that every act results in a consequence. Whether you believe in this law or not, you are involved in the consequence. The weather may be warm or cool, the breeze may be soft or strong. One has to suffer whether one likes it or not. Similarly, you cannot wish the law of Karma away. Do good; you receive good results. Do bad, you suffer from the bad consequences. Our deeds lead us to joy or grief. Deeds direct and decide our destiny. Economic misery, misery due to ill-health of body or mind, family, misery—all are caused by Karma alone. God does not confer joy or inflict misery. They are the consequences of your own Kriya (deeds). "Sin does not arise from outside you; it springs from the activities of your body and mind. God does not reside in any strange land; He can be discovered through the activities of your body and mind."

We proclaim aloud that man is endowed with many unique qualities but how few of them are put into practice? At present, we have millions of books that profess to awaken man from the sleep of ignorance. We have countless Gurus who preach high ideals. Mountain-high stock of books clutter the markets; teachers who instruct methods of manifesting the skills of man are found in every street. But, the world is sinking deeper every day into moral crisis, for, no one practises what he knows or talks about. Teachers borrow ideas from others and codify them or modify them for the convenience of instruction. They do not teach from personal experience.

Life entails swimming in a shark-infested stream and plucking the lotus of wisdom that blooms on the surface. Life is a block of ice, melting fast; before it disintegrates, one has to share one's skill and knowledge with as many as possible. One has to gather in oneself valuable and valid things and ideas to share with society. Have this faith embedded in you—the faith in the inevitability of action and reaction.

The individual is mostly a product of circumstance and continuous effort. The individual multiplied by infinity is God, the Viraat Swaroopa. So too, the individual mind, manas, multiplied into infinity is the Cosmic Consciousness, the Cosmic Mind, the Omniwill, the Hiranyagarbha. The Jivi or the individual is therefore the bridge that serves to integrate the 'seen' with the 'unseen'. Man is really more precious than what man believes himself to be. He measures his value in proportion to the riches owned, the knowledge gained, or even the courage

and stamina that are possessed by him. Man is far more precious than any or all these. For, He can expand the spark of Divine Love in him and enfold all beings in that Love.

You, who deal with children and their upbringing and upliftment, have to be aware of this preciousness and of the need to express it in action. Do not get angry or upset when the child does not respond quickly or correctly. Repeat the instruction again and again. When you direct the child to utter Rama, it may say Lama; do not lose your temper and shout Rama. That will only induce the child to shout back, Lama. Do not parade your weaknesses and failings in the presence of the children. Do not scandalise others or show off your rivalry with others before them. Keep such faults in hiding. This is the great Sadhana, to desist from anger, hatred, pride, and jealousy. All acts of commission and omission serve just one purpose—purification of the Mind. 'Chittasya suddhaye Karma.'

Do not imagine that your service to children is for their sake. It is equally so for your own sake. You do not take food for the sake of another person. This service is the food you take for your own good. This is spiritual truth. When you apply it while teaching and striving after success in any ideal, you are bound to win.

You are all engaged in education. Success in your task depends on one achievement: opening the doors that illumine the mind, and reveal the Reality. 'There is nothing higher than me'—this is the Reality. Wealth, scholarship, reputation, authority, power are all the products of a part of my Personality. Cultivate that insight; do not over-emphasise the out-look.

Do not proclaim and exult over the petty honours you have received from the world. Do not announce with pride the number of lectures you have given. That is no sign of greatness. While defining human values, you may enumerate sixty different points. But, all the sixty are included in these six: Compassion, fear of evil, forbearance, serenity, patience and non-attachment.

We hear much of intellectuals today. It is only through the intellectuals that the world has degenerated in so many directions today. From the non-intellectuals, the world has to learn many lessons in conduct and behaviour. The intellectuals pay no attention to common truths, since they are too low they do not grasp the higher truths, since their intellect is capable only of confusing them by doubt.

Learn to keep your emotions and senses under control. When a house is on fire, one can run out and save his skin. But when the senses are aflame, what can one do to save himself? Keep them cool and calm always, under all conditions. When we are ourselves the slaves of our senses, how can the pupils be led by us into the right path? All the evils of our educational system can be traced to this cause. Those belonging to the Sathya Sai Organisation must be ideals for others to learn from and follow. I am saying this more for your sake than for the sake of the children. Do not consider that you are clothed with the authority of a teacher and that the children are learners. You learn along with those learners. Do not develop pride, imagining them as in need of service. You need them as much as they do. Be learners, all your life. Gather all the information and inspiration you can during this Course and proceed from here to the areas of service, free from anxiety, and free of selfish urges. When one is established in Truth, one is rid of fear. Truth wins in the end. It moves slowly but steadily onward to victory. We have a

proverb, 'Even before Truth steps into its shoes, Falsehood finishes its run round the world'. Gather here all the facets of the Truth of the Sadhana of Educating children and return as persons who know how to make their lives worthwhile, with a mission to make others' lives worthwhile. Return imbued fully with the ideal of teaching as a spiritual Sadhana. Experience the course fully, derive Ananda therefrom, practise the lessons you have assimilated, and contribute your best to the progress of the country. I bless you that you may succeed in this great exercise of Seva.

Sai Family News

In accordance with the directive from Bhagavan, Sri Sathya Sai Vidyapeeth at Srisailam (Kerala) has been offering free supply of milk to children and old people during the holidays when the school is closed. Nearly 400 poor families are benefited by the scheme. Old men and women and children are coming to the campus of the school from the neighbouring areas to receive the milk, which comes from the dairy attached to the school. Recently four Danish-breed cows have been added to the dairy from Ootacamund. The dairy now has 30 cows of which 17 are milking.

An evening class for adults has been started in the Srisailam (Kerala) Sathya Sai Vidyapeeth campus from 17th April. 21 adults are attending the class. They are supplied free slates and other writing materials.

Sai exhibition in Nepal

Sri Sathya Sai Baba Centre at Pokhara, Nepal, organised a three-day Spiritual Exhibition in March last at the Commerce and Trade Centre of Pokhara. The exhibition was inaugurated by Sri Damodar Prasad Upadhyaya, Deputy Zonal Commissioner, who spoke on the mission of Bhagavan Baba in the upholding and propagation of Sanathana Dharma. Besides bhajans and discourses by Swami Rakhal Maharaj of Kathmandu, a documentary film on Bhagavan Baba was shown.

Education in human values

With a view to training teachers in various schools for imparting education in human values, the Institute of Training in Human Values (ITHV), West Bengal has been organising from March 1982 training camps for teachers at the Andhra Hall, Sahanagar Road, Calcutta. The authorities of the Calcutta Corporation have decided to introduce education in human values in all their primary schools. In addition, many primary school teachers of Darjeeling District and Arambag in Hooghly District have come forward to train themselves for imparting education in human values in their schools. The Institute has already organised four training camps. Inaugurating the first camp on March 25, 1982, Sri Barindra Kumar Chatterjee, Chairman of the Advisory Committee for Education of Calcutta Corporation, praised the efforts of the Institute (ITHV). During the six-day education camp, lectures, discussions, practical demonstrations and workshops were conducted to instruct the teachers in subjects such as child psychology, role of teachers, the fundamental human-values, unity of all religions, the cultural heritage of India etc. The Calcutta Corporation is granting special leave to teachers for attending these camps.

Hospital complex near Vizag

The Visakhapatnam unit of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samiti has set up a Hospital Complex for rendering free medical service at the Prahladapuram colony in Simhachalam. The complex, located on a 3.5 acre site, will consist of a hospital, school and a prayer hall. Mr. C. S. Ramana, Chairman of the Visakhapatnam unit, said that a team of doctors would work for the hospital once a week and examine patients coming from 15 villages around the complex. Treatment and medicines will be provided free. Mr. Dronamraju Sathyanarayana, Zilla Parishad Chairman, who inaugurated the Complex, said that service based on spiritual ideals would raise the moral standards of the community.

—Ed

Science and the Spirit

What is the true role of Science? In what way does it relate to the realm of the Spirit? It has been said that the Spiritual teachings lead us to understand the *why*, whereas Science leads us to understand the *how*. But the *how* that is best answered by Science is one that objective Western Science has completely strayed from. It is how to *unify* our experience of the physical world with the great mystical teachings of the Spiritual world. When this becomes the essence of our scientific efforts then Science serves to bring order and understanding into our total experience. For we always live in both worlds—the outer and the inner. The *outer* is concerned with all that comes in through our senses and is processed by our rational, reasoning mind, ultimately for the purpose of satisfying the many physical and intellectual needs of these bodies, as they journey hither and thither in the material plane. The *inner* is concerned with our subtle perceptions, those innate moral and intuitive insights which are the expressions of our deepest yearnings, our Soul's need for spiritual fulfillment, as we simultaneously journey on the finer pathway of the Spirit plane. Outer and inner are rarely in tune; frequently they are out-of-balance and in conflict. The true role of Science then is to reconcile these two worlds of man's experience, bring them into harmony and thereby awaken in man the possibility of an even higher experience, the transcendent experience of Wisdom. This role of bridging from the seen to the unseen, from the rational to the intuitive, and balancing them into a common experience of wholeness and Unity, has been the core function of Natural Philosophy (or Science) since ancient times.

In most great ancient civilizations, Science and the Spirit went together, for theirs is the natural marriage of the intellect and its super-conscious Source ... or, the mind and the Spiritual Heart. To quote Sri Aurobindo, writing of the Natural Philosophers of ancient India, "...Their work was to help man effectuate the highest aim of his existence by systematizing and justifying to the reasoning intelligence the truths of the Self and of man and the world, truths which had already been discovered by intuition, revelation, and spiritual experience." For these ancient scientist-philosophers, therefore, the quest to discover the ultimate truths of Nature was a means of serving man's deeper quest for spiritual liberation.

Unnatural split

It was not until a great schism developed in Christian Europe in the late Middle Ages between the revived Science of Ancient Greece and the Medieval Church of Rome, that Science and

Religion went their separate ways. In Renaissance Europe, Science struggled to free itself from the constrictive dogma of a state religion which looked upon it as a dangerous heresy. In that process of breaking free of its religious fetters, Science also broke all its ancient ties with the broader realm of the Spirit. That split has prevailed to this day and all mankind is the loser. It is a totally unnatural separation, for a scientist without Spirituality is like a head without a heart. Aurobindo speaks of 'Souls drying up in this hard and parched age of utilitarian and scientific thought, when men value little beyond what gives them exact and useful knowledge, or leads them to some outward increase of power and pleasure.'

The ageless knowledge of the Spirit takes up the profoundest questions that haunt men's Souls, questions that Science by itself can never answer.... 'Where did we come from? Why are we here? Where are we going?' In answer, it lays out the evolutionary highway and enjoins us to travel on it. It gives us many hints of how to stay on the road and get to our destination: 'Purify and simplify your life ... Clarify your vision ... Concentrate all of your intuitive faculties on perceiving the Unity underlying all diversity ... Experience the One... See the Divinity residing everywhere, inside you and in all of Nature ... Feel Its Love, Its Bliss and Its Peace.

As we close our eyes to meditate and look inside, we slowly begin to get glimmerings through our own awakened intelligence of the Truth of these great teachings. Our hearts begin to stir in response. But then we reopen our eyes, our outer vision returns to the world, and we again see only diversity and multiplicity all around us, belying our inner experience. The mind begins to waver. What should it believe? Our faith weakens and we stumble on the road. In the Gita, Sri Krishna says, 'When your mind, perplexed by what it sees and hears outside, stands firm and steady in its conviction of the One, then you will have attained Yoga.' But for most of us this steadiness of faith is not available at the beginning of our struggles. Here is where Science comes in.

Underlying unity

Science widens the narrow slit of our worldly perceptions. It shows us a way out of the maze, through a penetrating study of Nature. For, as Bhagavan Baba has reminded many times Nature is our best teacher. By carefully observing Nature, we can discover that indeed there is Unity underlying the whole physical Universe. We see the impermanence and transitoriness of everything material ... We see the same sequence of birth, existence, and death prevail in all physical forms, whether animate or inanimate, microscopic or macroscopic, terrestrial or extraterrestrial. But then we also see evidence of the evolutionary thrust to higher levels of order and organization manifesting throughout the vast Cosmos. And we begin to see the connectedness and interdependence of a host of seemingly unrelated cosmic phenomena. When we look even deeper and more carefully we begin to get hints of the master plan functioning behind the myriads of diverse structures. We marvel at the exquisite handiwork and perfection that could only have come from a superior Intelligence, acting invisibly behind all of Nature. We become aware of the central thread that is the purpose of the Universe ... how each of the bewildering array of details and forms welling up and receding in time seems to have, its part to play in the main theme, the highest and noblest expression of the Creation—that of the emergence of the human consciousness, the ascendance of the human Soul, the awakening of the Spiritual Heart of man from its long sleep, and its return to its natural home in union with God.

These are the great Truths of Spirituality which can find their support in the facts and conclusions of Science. But these facts must be searched for and unravelled and revealed. They are not obvious. They are hidden deep under the surface of physical phenomena. That search is the grand role of Science. As scientists we take the broad-minded view. We look everywhere, high and low, inside and out, big and small, for evidence of His Unity and Purpose. We become inspired. For example ... We observe the evolution of stars, as they synthesize the higher elements and progress on their life cycles and die; but then we discover how the Earth, including the matter making up all life forms, is built out of the composted remains of these heavenly bodies ... We discover how the same basic sub-atomic particles make up all organizations of matter, from the most distant Quasars to the cells in our bodies.... We discover the Unity of the four basic forces governing all physical phenomena everywhere ... We discover the simplicity of the great Conservation Laws governing the flow of energy; matter and information in Nature ... We discover the one genetic code that is used throughout living organisms ... We realize the truth, confirmed by Science, of the most ancient insights into the vibratory, and energetic nature underlying all physical matter and phenomena.

Entropy and evolution

All of these various discoveries are explored not for their own sake, but to gain a deeper understanding and perspective on the fundamental Unity of all physical forms and existences. For all these various fields of investigation, Science provides the framework and rational understanding, but only Spirituality can fill these out with the deeper insights of mystical revelations that confirm the inner experience. For example, through our scientific investigations and observations we can endeavour to discover the role that Time plays in His Scheme. As we search deeply and meditate on our findings we discover the two great opposing principles of *Entropy* and *Evolution* functioning in the material plane of the world... Entropy, characterized by dissolution, decay, disorder, destruction and death; Evolution, characterized by creation, growth, expansion, differentiation and adaptation. We see that in all forms, in all organisms, after birth and after an initial flowering and blossoming of the individual, there is the downward pull of the forces of degeneration and disorganization working to disorder that individual form. The individual, through its inherent nature, resists the onslaught of these noxious forces. But the struggle is a futile one for it can only stave them off for a while. It tries to preserve itself in various ways, and for a time succeeds, but in the end it always succumbs to the inevitable entropic collapse leading to its ultimate death and destruction as a separate entity,

On the other hand, when we observe whole populations of many different individuals, we see that as a result of the cumulative individual struggles and adaptations of many generations and species, there is an evolutionary thrust which lifts up the whole population over a period of time, towards higher levels of order and organization ... Individual bodies die, and sometimes whole species die, but the greater population lives on and evolves. For any individual existing in a material form, there is only the prospect of death to look forward to after a brief sojourn and struggle in the world. Based on our observations, we would conclude that his is a dim future. Even man's efforts to preserve some mark of his passing through progeny or works is doomed, for eventually his name, his family, his community and even the nation to which he belongs is likely to perish in the sands of time. But if we now invoke the deeper insights of spiritual knowledge, we realize that we have existed in many bodies and in many individual lives, and hence are truly One Soul in countless forms, having inhabited a whole population of bodies,

human and otherwise. And we realise each life lived has served an essential purpose as a stepping-stone in an expanding unfoldment. In the light of these revelations we see that our true experience as Spiritual Beings is a positive one of being on a sacred journey flowing upwards in an irresistible surge towards the Divine; as contrasted with the outer perception of the individual body and life's downward journey towards disease and death. Here we see that Science provides the outer view and also the overview, but Spirituality provides the underlying essence view, the inner view which unlocks the deeper and profounder meanings hidden within. Together, Science and Spirit can lead us to the lofty experience of the Divine Life, realizing the Oneness, the Love and Joy that is He, and that is also We, that is the essence of all of His Creation, and that is the basis of all names and forms, everywhere.

The word Dharma can be used to mean both law and right conduct. In both senses of the word, Dharma is very close to the central core of Science. A scientist is a seeker after Truth; but it cannot be a cold, temporal truth that he seeks, unmindful of God's Love and God's Laws. How can one be amoral and be a scientist in the ancient tradition? How can one be unconcerned about Dharma and be a scientist? The pursuit of Dharma and Truth cannot be separated; they are the obverse and the converse of the same golden coin. As we regulate our actions to be in harmony with the Dharma that we know pervades all of nature and that we also know is the very fabric of the spiritual life, we begin to see the reflections of our efforts in new perceptions of Cosmic Truths and new understandings of the make-up and purpose of the Universe. We see that the Universe, far from being a cold, hostile, randomly-developing world, completely unconcerned with the existence of this remote planet and the human life and other life-forms that have developed on it, is in fact a warm and friendly place, filled with the vital energy of the Divine Shakti, and therefore filled with God's Love. We begin to realize from much accumulated scientific evidence that there could be no possibility of Life on Earth if not for distant events in the Solar System, in the Galaxy, and beyond, which set the conditions for Life to flourish here on Earth, as it has. Was it just a random, but totally improbable series of cosmic accidents, synchronicities, and incredibly rare occurrences in many parts of the Universe that permitted these tender and tenuous life-forms to develop, or was it the masterwork of a great guiding Intelligence? One needs only to look at the world with the discerning eye of the spiritually awake scientist to find the answer. We see that whatever is needed to encourage Life on this planet has been provided by the Universe.

Based on recent discoveries in Astrophysics and Bio-chemistry, the whole history of the Universe starting with the Big Bang, the primeval cosmic fire-ball, and the subsequent creation of matter through its many forms, and leading eventually to Life, can be seen as one continuous evolutionary progression, producing ever more complex physical forms and ever more refined living organizations and mind forms, ultimating in Evolution's highest achievement—the human experience. These findings are consistent with the greater spiritual understanding of Evolution, which sees Evolution as the manifestation of the Divine Will acting through the Law of Karma. In the spiritual context, Evolution is a direct consequence of the underlying spiritual nature of matter. It is the outward expression of a profound movement in the subtle Consciousness, that pervades the whole Universe, to provide the appropriate vehicles for each successive stage of the Soul's journey through the world.

Our divine inheritance

When we view the Universe from beginning to end in this grand perspective, we see the great gift we have been given. For, only as human beings do we have the opportunity—as Bhagavan constantly reminds us—to cognize our divine inheritance. Only as human beings do we have the unique chance, through our efforts and His Grace, to free ourselves from the entangling web of worldly attachments and uplift ourselves to merge with God. To reach there we must learn to see Him in all and behind all we see. That becomes, in time, our sole reason for gaining new knowledge, and that also becomes the basis for our study of Science... namely, to reveal to our reasoning intelligence what we already know in our Heart...that permeating and underlying all space, time, energy, matter and form there is only the One ... the One Reality...the One Supreme Consciousness ...that Unity which is the goal of all we seek. All separate existences are just reflections of His Play, His Eternal Delight, as He becomes, and brings forth, this magnificent Universe, so that the One may appear as the Many, and the Many may again realize the One.

This is the happy Song sung by the Spirit, and if we listen deeply we will also hear its lilts in the Song sung by Science...for it is the Song of God...the sweet Song of Sai's Joy and Sai's Love.

May its Melody never leave us, for it will lead us straight on the Path to His Lotus Feet. Om Jai Sai Ram.

—*A. Drucker*

The Love of Light

Having been trained in the art and science of photography, I am particularly pleased when Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba uses our much appreciated but little understood craft to illustrate His own Divine Teachings. 'The body is the camera, the mind is the lens, the intelligence is the switch and the heart is the film,' He has said. This metaphor applies in many ways to my own life.

When I am looking for these tools of my trade, several criteria must be met. The camera must be strong, tight, and able to withstand the rigours of constant use. I also must do my part, in keeping it clean, and sheltering it from abuse. If I care for it, it will serve me. If I neglect it, even by letting it sit on the shelf gathering dust, it becomes rusty, slow and worth little to me.

The lens I use is even more important. The finest camera is useless if the lens is clouded. The glass must be ground to perfection. The different lens-elements must sit perfectly in line. It must be capable of gathering large amounts of light, and focusing the image precisely on the film plane. The lens too must be protected not only from physical abuse, but from a bad environment, lest mold and fungus should creep in and mar its once good qualities.

Yet the camera and lens do not a good picture make! The discretion of the switch must be brought into play. It is the element which begins to determine what our final picture will be. It must open at the precise instant, allowing the other elements to gather what is beautiful, and close just as precisely, so that unwanted blurs will not mar an otherwise beautiful scene.

Last, and most important of all, comes the film. Kept fresh, pure and clean, it will hold an image of beauty for eternity. A stale or dirty film is useless regardless of the finest camera, lens and switch. The film comes in various speeds. The fastest film reacts to the least light, though the image may be grainy, less refined. The slower films are slower to react. But the image, once formed, is the clearest of all. Each tone can be seen in an image of subtle beauty and grace.

As a photographer selects and maintains his tools, so too should our spiritual 'tools' of body, mind, intelligence and heart be the very best, so that the light of love will make its most beautiful and lasting impression. These tools are instruments for gathering the light. What is this light on which we continually focus? Can the light gathered and imprinted by the photographer further describe the light of God's love?

Baba has tried to illumine our often-cloudy minds with these words. 'In order to see the moon, does one need a torch? It is by the light of the moon that one sees the moon. In like fashion, if one wishes to see God, it is by love, which is the light of God, that one may see Him.'

When this photographer was a student, one of the most difficult concepts was that of light being invisible.

'Invisible?' I queried. "How can that be?" Patiently my professor explained that light itself cannot be seen by the human eye. It is the reflection of light by which the world is revealed to us.

"What about the light of a flame?" I asked. I thought I had him stumped. "Be it a tiny candle or the mighty sun, what we see as light is the reflection of an infinite energy bouncing off molecules in a state of excited motion."

"Then without light, we would cease to be?" My restless mind continued to ponder.

"Not only does invisible light create an image on a piece of film, it reveals creation to us. It is in fact the fuel of all life. Yes, without light we would cease to be."

The Omnipresent light of love is the very substance of our life. Through it, all is revealed, and sustained.

"I am the light", Baba teaches. Before creation, there was only Him.

"There was no one to know who I am until I created the world." He said. He created to reflect and thus reveal His Light. "I have separated Myself from Myself, so that I may love myself ... I see Myself in you all."

We are the Divine Reflectors. The Light falls equally upon us all. Without light, of what use is a mirror? In the presence of light the mirror becomes a light. Let two mirrors face each other, put a light between, and see. It becomes infinitely multiplied.

"Love all, Serve all," Baba teaches. Does a mirror choose when or upon whom to reflect its light? Let us be as constant and impartial in reflecting God's Light. Selfishness means not reflecting the light which falls upon us. A life lived badly is like a tarnished mirror. We become tarnished when our Rajasic and Tamasic qualities dim the reflection of God's Light in us. Satwic deeds are the polish, forever able to restore us to our original lustre. The brightest beacons of God's Light are merely mirrors reflecting His Omnipresent Splendour. The measure of light in a mirror is the measure of light reflected by that mirror. So too it is with us, the mirrors of God's Love. Let our lives become a guiding light for others.

This lesson was taught to me in a very special way through a photograph taken in the Puja Room of Mr. B. M. De, in Kathmandu, Nepal. It was there that the Power and Glory of Sathya Sai Baba was first revealed to me. The photograph, taken during Bhajan, revealed a light, invisible to those present, but through His Divine Grace, it was recorded on the film. It came in the form of a line, as bright as the light coming from the small oil lamp burning on the altar. From this lamp, the line rises, passing through the heart region of a photograph of Sathya Sai Baba where it seems to glow a bit brighter, before continuing up and out of the frame, towards the Heavens above. When I showed Him the photograph during Darshan at Prasanthi Nilayam, He blessed it with a knowing smile.

The Message of the picture for me, is this. We should use our 'Camera' of body, mind, intelligence and heart, to gather the light of the Universal Soul. We should become reflectors for that Omnipresent Light that is forever within and around us, so that the world can become brighter still. Let us be constantly aware and thankful, for at this glorious time in the history of our Earth, the Invisible has become visible, the Formless has taken Form, the love of light has become the Light of Love.

—Ross Meador

Training for Education in Human Values

With the experience of the training programme in Education in Human Values for primary school teachers held earlier, a need was felt for an increase in the number of trained teachers and therefore a second training programme in Education in Human Values was organised at Prasanthi Nilayam during May, 1982 (between May 20 and 29).

One hundred and fourteen ladies and 108 gentlemen from all parts of India and some foreign countries participated in the course. The topics selected were intensive and varied to help the teachers in their tasks.

The course was inaugurated on the 20th of May by Bhagavan Baba. Dr. V. K. Gokak traced the growth of this programme of Education in Human Values from the year 1980.

During this course, experienced and eminent speakers gave talks in the morning, while the afternoon sessions were devoted to practical aspects of the ideas expounded in the mornings. The

topics selected were directly related to the process of inculcating Human Values to small children of II, III and IV classes.

All the 84 values identified by the National Council for Educational Research and Training for the school curriculum were brought under the five basic values of Truth, Right Conduct, Love, Peace and Non-violence.

During this course, emphasis was laid on an Integrated Approach to Value Teaching through school subjects, and the psychological basis for value teaching. Prof. S. R. Rohidekar and Dr. Usha Sundaram dealt with the subjects very lucidly and made the participants take a lively interest in the course.

Dr. R. N. Safaya (Chandigarh) spoke on 'Indigenous Approach to psychological Studies'. He highlighted the importance and necessity of bringing about a change in the present system of psychological studies, which is more theoretical and not related to the practical needs of Indian life. He drew the participants' attention to the psychological knowledge contained in our scriptures, which are more relevant to life.

A new subject, 'Development of Moral Judgement in Children', was added in this course. An illuminating lecture on 'Unity and Continuity of Indian Culture' was delivered by Prof. Sathyanarayana of Bangalore University.

Mr. Jose Paul from Delhi introduced another new subject under the title "Motivation to Teachers", which aroused considerable interest among the participants.

There were a number of practical lessons in subjects like Attitude Development, Role Play, Demonstration of a moral instruction class, lessons in direct, indirect and integrated approach to value-teaching and micro-teaching, which enabled the teachers to learn how to improve their skills and promote character development through group activities. There was an exhibition of teaching aids.

The highlight of every evening was the Divine discourse delivered by Bhagavan Himself wherein He gave an ideal lesson to the participants and made them realise the responsibility that lay on their shoulders in fulfilling the task ahead of them.

Now that the participants have been fully equipped with knowledge and materials to train the primary school teachers in Education in Human Values in their respective States, we expect to take up this noble task with full zeal and vigour.

The Bal Vikas Education Trust, which has already started its work from 1980, intends to set up 32 Centres of Training in different parts of India for the above purpose.

With the experience gained in 1981-82, which has been quite encouraging and fruitful, we hope to bring more areas under this educational project by 1983. At present the Governments of Karnataka, Andhra and Delhi, and the Calcutta and Bombay Corporations have come forward to cooperate with the Trust and have started training programmes for the primary school teachers

under their jurisdiction. Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Tamilnadu are ready with their plans to implement this scheme in their respective States. We find that the trend in all the States is positive and encouraging.,

—*From the report presented by Srimati Sarla Shah at Prasanthi Nilayam, 9-5-1982*

Readers Beware

The World Council of Sri Sathya Sai Organisations has come to know that Andy Narain of New Zealand is claiming to be a healer inspired and guided by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The said person was warned severely when he appeared at Prasanthi Nilayam. He was not permitted to stay there. Baba has no representatives, deputies, media, disciples or agents. He grants grace directly by Himself and as Himself. All who claim special spiritual relationship assigned by Him or special favours conferred by Him have to be scrupulously avoided as cheats, trying to use His name in reprehensible ways.

—*Editor.*

Vidya Vahini

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Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

The root cause of all anxieties and calamities of man is ENVY. We can find from the Bhagavad Gita that Krishna warns Arjuna off and on, "Arjuna! You have to be envy-less. Do not get infected by envy." Envy is invariably accompanied by hatred. These two are twin villains. They are poisonous pests. They attack the very roots of one's personality.

A tree may be resplendent with flowers and fruits. But, when the inimical worms set to work on the roots, imagine what happens to the splendour! Even as we look on admiringly at its beauty, the flowers fade, the fruits fall off and the leaves turn yellow and are scattered by the wind. At last, the tree itself dries up, it dies and falls. So too, when envy and hatred infect the heart and set to work, however intelligent and however highly educated the man, he falls. He is turned into an enemy of society. He becomes the target of ridicule because he is no longer human. He cannot be counted as a member of the community. In the end, even his trusted friends desert him and become his foes. He loses the respect of his group and does not evoke even ordinary courtesies from others. He spends his days perpetually in misery.

No enemy can be so insidious as jealousy. When one sees a person more powerful, or more knowledgeable, or with greater reputation or more wealth or more beauty, or even wearing better clothing, one is afflicted with jealousy. One finds it difficult to acknowledge and accept the

situation. One's mind seeks means to demean them and lower them in the estimation of people. Such propensities and evil tendencies should never strike root in the minds of students and the educated. These should not pollute their character.

Students must learn to be happy and filled with joy when others are acclaimed as good and are respected for their virtues and the ideals they hold dear. They have to cultivate breadth of outlook and purity of motives. They must be ever vigilant that the demon of envy does not possess them. That demon is certain to destroy all that is precious in them. It will ruin their health and damage their digestive faculty. It will rob them of sleep. It will sap their physical and mental stamina and reduce them to the state of chronic consumptives.

Students must resolve to emulate those who do better than themselves and earn equal appreciation. They should strive to acquire knowledge and score marks as much as others. That is the proper ambition. Instead, if they wish for the downfall of others, leaving them as the only successful ones, they are revealing their brutish nature. It will lead them to perdition. It is a deadly virus.

Praising oneself and condemning others are also equally deadly. Attempting to hide one's meanness and wickedness and putting on the mask of goodness, justifying one's faults and exaggerating one's attainments—these are also poisonous traits. Equally poisonous is the habit of ignoring the good in others and assiduously seeking only their faults. Never speak words that demean any one. When we are friendly with another and like him very much, whatever he does is certain to strike us as good. When the wind changes and the same person is disliked even the good he does strikes us as bad. Both these reactions are misconceived. They are not commendable at all. In the Sumati Sathaka, there is a verse which teaches this lesson. "O Sumati! (Person with good intelligence) Know that wrong is right and right is wrong, when friendship is strong and friendship is lost."

The student has to transform himself into a Sumathi. He should avoid turning into a Durmati (Person with perverted, polluted intelligence). A huge heap of fuel can be reduced to ashes by a tiny spark of fire. A drop of poison can render a pot of milk totally undrinkable. Envy and hatred are the sparks that destroy the cluster of virtues in man.

Students must exercise constant watchfulness over their feelings and reactions. They must keep out selfishness, envy, anger, greed and other such evil tendencies from entering their minds. These are nets which entrap the person. These vices overwhelm and subdue the holiness of man, so-that it cannot influence him any longer. The person will forget himself and behave like another worse individual, an individual caught in frenzy. He will blabber as his tongue dictates, without regard to the effect—good or evil. He will engage his hands in work that the hands favour.

Envy does not stop with this string of mischief. It makes us revel in scandalising others. This evil is widespread among the youth. It comes naturally to them, for it is a sign of ignorance. To get rid of this habit, one must devote some time, early in the day and before retiring for sleep, in exploring the mind and examining faults that have secured foothold therein. One must pray to God to save him from this tendency. When once we have won the Grace of God, we can rest

assured that such absurdities will not deform our character. The discriminating student can be recognised by the good company he keeps, the good works he delights in and the good words he utters.

This is the reason why I am emphasising on many occasions, “Eyes that seek evil, ears that relish evil, the tongue that craves evil, nose that enjoys and hands that delight in evil—these must a totally be avoided.” Whoever has any of these must be avoided. Or else, one’s future is bound to be disastrous. The wrongs of the five indriyas (senses) will result in the destruction of the five Pranas (vital energies) and the killing of the five kosas (sheaths). Of course, the senses yield momentary pleasure and joy but, as the saying goes, 'senility lies in wait'. Sensual pleasures bring about great grief quite soon.

Students require faith in themselves, more than most other qualities. The absence of self-confidence marks the beginning of one's decline. Today, the world is facing ruin and disaster because people have lost confidence in themselves. Self-confidence alone is capable of granting peace and prosperity to each person. He receives good, everywhere; he is honoured in all places. Whatever he touches becomes gold. When a person has no faith in himself, how can he place faith in others? Even when he has such faith, it cannot be sincere and firm. It is at best artificial and superficial. Such a person will not have faith in his mother, father, wife and children. He pretends to believe, that is all. So, he behaves treacherously and might even injure the parents.

So, self-confidence is a must for every student. Students must study books about persons who stuck to justice and led straight lives. They must cultivate faith in moral codes laid down in Dharma Sastras, instead of neglecting them. The Puranas provide foundational ideals for our welfare and progress.

Baba's Three Lessons

In his valedictory address to an educational programme, organised by, the Sathya Sai Samiti in Bombay, for workers and managements, to promote harmonious relations in industry, Mr. N. A. Palkhivala said one of the greatest services Bhagavan Baba was rendering to the country was in the field of character-building. Mr. Palkhivala said:

I have always thought that this country would have a much brighter future even if we had half of our intelligence but twice our character. What is needed in this country more than anything else is character formation. The three desiderata which this country lacks are organisation, education and discipline. And to my mind, a signal, almost an unparalleled, service which Baba is rendering today is by helping us in all these three areas. His service, history will record as of signal significance to the future growth and development of the Indian nation.

Today we are talking about the concept of trusteeship between management and workers. The fault has been on both sides. On the side of capital, there has been greed and if you have read the latest novel of Graham Green you find that there is nobody greedier in this world than the rich man, forgetting the lesson of Tolstoy's story of how much land does a man need. On the side of labour you have again a sense, in some quarters, of irresponsibility. In fact, the cult of violence is the most dangerous portent in industrial relations today. It is not from Management, It is unfortunately from some irresponsible leaders of the trade union movement. There are ways prescribed by law for dealing with the problem of alienation between management and labour. But what the Sai Organisation is trying to inculcate under the inspiring guidance of Baba himself is to cover an area which now only law can occupy. There are areas of significant human endeavour, of significant human activity, where the law cannot intervene and where it would be powerless, ineffective, if it tried to intervene. That is the area where a civilised human being acknowledges what I would call obedience to the unenforceable. You do not need merely to obey the law. There must be in every civilised human being a desire and an earnest will to accept obedience to the unenforceable. It is only then that the nation can grow and prosper.

No law could compel you to be a trustee for your workers. No law can compel the capitalist to hold his mercenary instincts in check and try and work for the betterment of society. You can make your laws for it but the law will be broken. The call has to come from within and that is where a man like Sathya Sai Baba has a far greater impact on the nation than the parliament of the country. Because His teachings can motivate people to do things which no law can bring about. It has to come from within and I have no doubt that if the message spreads, if the people who are trained by the Sathya Sai Organisation train others in their turn, like the ripples in a pond, the message will spread far and wide and every section of people will realise that none of us can live for himself, each one of us is a part of the whole society and has a job to do for the nation, for the society as a whole.

This is a country of spiritual wealth. This is the country which has always believed that the world is less mightier than the spirit, which has always believed that a man's ultimate goal is to raise himself, to evolve and when the end comes, as it must come to all of us, to face his Maker with the consciousness that he has lived not only for himself but for others as well. It is in this spirit that the Sathya Sai Organisation has been conducting the educational process. I have been

following Baba's message very closely and with great admiration and the deepest reverence because I find that He has exactly the right lessons to teach which this country, needs to be taught today. I would say that the lessons of Baba's teachings are these. First, from economics banish hatred and envy and in place of the economics of hatred and envy, have the economics of compassion and justice. Second, train your mind, educate yourself to train your mind, not merely to offer your mind as a commodity for sale in the market place. I have always been engaged in commercial activity but without a commercialised outlook. Third, every one is a workman and each one of us does contribute to the gross national product. But let us remember that it is even more important to contribute to the gross national happiness. I am sure that the trainees who come out of the portals of this organisation will remember and teach others the message which has been given to them. It is only then that we shall help the society where mercenary motives do not impoverish the mind or shrivel the imagination or desiccate the heart. It is only then that economic activity can be for the benefit of society as a whole. India had lived through centuries with this attitude of labour and management and I am sure we would be able to recapture that attitude with the blessings and the guidance, of Baba. I would like to end by one prayer, one wish, for the trainees who have had the benefit of this training. May the spirit of Baba, the spirit of compassion and justice and fairness, abide with you always."

—From address at Rang Bhavan, Bombay, on May 11, 1982

European Satsang at Magenta

Remarkable evidence of Bhagavan's Grace was experienced by European devotees who met on 27th June at Mr. Antonio Craxi's home in Magenta, Italy, on the invitation of the Coordinating Committee for Europe II. Besides a large number of Italian devotees, members of the Sai family from Germany. Switzerland, Greece and Spain attended the meeting.

A day before the meeting, a violent storm had caused considerable damage in the entire area around the meeting place. Rarely had such a devastating storm been witnessed in this area. Trees had been uprooted, roofs had been blown off and the entire area had been flooded. The place of the meeting alone was completely unscathed.

The organisers feared inclement weather on the date of the meeting. Even the invitations that had been sent to devotees had not reached many of them, because of a postal and newspaper strike. Nevertheless, over 2500 persons were present. Contrary to earlier fears, the day was sunny and bright indicating that Swami's grace was there for all of them. The beautiful tent that had been erected was full. This year the stage was decorated with paintings of the Founders of the main religions of the world. A giant portrait of Bhagavan served as a backdrop and as a reminder of the mission of Bhagavan as the unifier of all faiths. As in the past year, Bhagavan's Robe, given to Italian devotees, was placed on a chair on the stage. Some Indian ladies, who had come from Switzerland, strung garlands to be offered to Bhagavan.

The Bhajans started at 10 A. M. and went on for an hour and a half. After speeches by Dr. Hussein of Switzerland and Miss Ruth Ganzer of Germany conveying the greetings of their respective countries, Mr. Bianco conveyed the greetings of all the Italian centres. Dr. Hussein said that humanity is divided broadly into two categories—those who give and those who take. But, in the Sathya Sai Organisation there is only ONE who gives and never asks anything in return except their love.

Mr. Craxi, in his address conveying Bhagavan's benediction to the gathering, dwelt upon the critical situation in the world today and the need for an awakening of the consciousness of each individual to a realisation of his or her divine destiny.

Mr. Craxi announced that the Sathya Sai Organisation in Italy will hold a seminar on "Education in Human Values" in October 1982 for European countries and invite teachers and parents to participate in the seminar.

Mr. Craxi's exposition of Bhagavan's teachings and mission was listened to with rapt attention and greeted with applause at the end.

A team of doctors had been invited from the Magenta Hospital to collect blood from those who were willing to donate blood.

The Bhajans were resumed in the afternoon and some movies on Bhagavan's Life and message were shown. At 5-30 P. M. a sacred flame was lit to mark the conclusion of the Satsang meeting. The Saint Francis song, "Laudato Sai, O Mio Signore", was sung as the Italian version of the Arati hymn that is recited at the end of Bhajans in India. All the devotees participated in the singing of the song with great devotion.

Everyone felt thankful to Bhagavan for his grace and benediction in making this first gathering of European devotees a successful exercise in spiritual communion.

—A. C.

Language of the Heart

"The great tragedy is not the cruelty of the bad, but the silence of the good people," said Martin Luther King, Junior, the great brave champion of peace among us human beings on earth.

I humbly leave it to our Lord to mercifully judge which of us is bad and who is good. Anyhow, as He in His grace has called us all to enter the sphere of His divinity, to listen to His teachings and to feel the radiation of His endless love to us all, I dare believe that we all at least will try to be good.

The silence of the good, Martin Luther King said. Are we so silent? Do we not take every chance to spread Sai Baba's divine message? Do we not enthusiastically repeat His words and

cite His sayings? Of course we try to do so, without missing a single chance to help others up on the path He in His grace and by His example is constantly showing us.

Bhagavan Baba keeps all the time telling us: There is only one language, the language of the heart. We speak with various voices, we talk in different native languages, but we miss to talk the language of the heart. Being the most international of all languages, it is the only language clearly understood by every inhabitant of our world. And Sai Baba has constantly been explaining for us how to speak this language of the heart, namely, by free flowing, unselfish love in behaviour towards all.

Not by words and quotations, but by actions springing out of joyful love can we speak the divine language and break the silence Martin Luther King so righteously accused men for. Only with faith in God and love in our heart will we have the courage victoriously to fight to the end and gloriously finish the game in bliss, in everlasting, all conquering and all embracing Love.

In a wholehearted attempt to be humble, small instruments in the divine hands of our Lord Sai Baba—let us not for a moment be silent!

—*Sisko Ofafiaerd, Stockholm*

Sai Family News

BHUBANESWAR (Orissa); As part of the Zonal convention on Spiritual and Service Activities for delegates from all the units of the Sri Sathya Sal Organisation, Orissa State, held at Bhubaneswar on June 11 and 12, 1982, a symposium was arranged on "The Role of Administration in a Resurgent Society." Sri S. M. Patnaik, I.A.S., Chief Secretary to the Government, and Sri K. Ramamurthy, I.A.S. Member, Board of Revenue, and others initiated the discussion and provided guidelines. Another symposium on "The Image of the Ideal Social Leader and Nation-BUILDER for India" was held on June 12, when the Governor of Orissa State, Sri C. M. Poonacha, presided and Sri Brahmananda Panda, State President, led the discussion.

BANGKOK (Thailand): The Sathya Sal Centre of Thailand has now four units in the outlying provinces. At Bangkok, the Centre is training Bhajan singers and rendering Bhajan songs into Thai. Bala Vikas books are also being prepared in Thai language for the use of the pupils.

MEXICO Dr. Luis Alonso Muniz, of the Sathya Sal Baba Centre, Mexico city, writes that the first collective experience of service to the community was achieved at Camulco with children as the main recipients. During the last week of May, when Bhichonal Volcano (South Mexico) erupted, food was collected and shipped as emergency aid to the affected people.

The Centre is acting as an Information Centre, sending informative letters and official documents to an increasing volume of correspondents from inside the Mexican Republic as well as outside in Northern, Central and South America. The Bhajanavali is being translated into Spanish. Study circles in the different units are active and are being evaluated continuously. The centre is bringing out "Sabidurfa Sal" magazine as a quarterly publication.

Human nature has to be chastened, controlled and guided along certain channels; otherwise, like the flooded Ganga, it will bring disaster to millions who rest in security, believing it to be harmless. The eagerness to secure an immediate advantage has to be curbed, the slower advantage may be more lasting and more healthy. Benefits to the individual have to be given up in favour of benefits to the group, the village, the community, the country or the whole of mankind. Ideas, principles, laws, customs, codes, habits, actions—all are to be judged on the twin bases of intention and consequence. Is the intention pure, is it born out of Prema, and is it based on Truth? Does it result in Santhi? If yes, Dharma is enshrined in that action or law, custom or conduct.

—Baba

The Divine Surgeon

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba came into our lives during the latter half of 1978 when we were transferred to Raub, Pahang, Malaysia. Prior to that, although hailing from a Hindu religious family, much controversy and corruption of religious ethics, coupled with fanaticism of a certain ideology, shattered whatever belief and devotion I had for Hinduism.

Light came after a short period of darkness when in Raub we were 'introduced' to Bhagavan Baba in his own way. Love sprouted spontaneously for Bhagavan and my family was put in the right direction and devotion. Things began to fall in the right perspective and our lives have become smooth and peaceful under the guidance of the Divine Guru.

Bhagavan's miracles were many and amongst others the latest is when Bhagavan became a surgeon to correct a bone deformity of my youngest child—Roshan.

Roshan, a boy of 8 years, is the youngest of my three children. This boy was born with a bowing deformity on both legs, but more pronounced in the left. It never struck us that the boy, who was walking by throwing his left foot across the right in the form of a 'T', needed treatment until one day on 7.10.81 he was referred to the Orthopaedic Consultant in the Kuala Lumpur General Hospital. The consultant, who was from India, on examining the boy opined that he was having a rare bone deformity which can only be corrected by surgery. The consultant fixed an operation date, but on our plea, he arranged for a second X-ray. He had a good look at a set of X-ray pictures taken prior to seeing him.

With heavy hearts we returned home thinking to ourselves the pain and agony the child would be undergoing if surgery was to be performed. We were more worried about the outcome of it. What would happen if something were to go wrong? Thoughts of the consultant's words that the leg bones have to be "reset" sent cold waves down our spines. We prayed to Bhagavan Baba for help.

My wife, who easily breaks down due to motherly affection, was expressing her sorrow and simultaneously endeavouring to conceal it. As the father, I was trying to put up a bold front. However, both of us had one common stand. Leave it to Bhagavan Baba and apply his BLESSED VIBHUTI on both his legs before he goes to bed. My wife did it continuously for three days.

On the fourth day, as usual, the boy was having tuition from his mother at home. Suddenly he complained of severe twisting pains in both his legs, but more pronounced in the left. The pain, according to him, was felt right up to his hips. The mother doubted the words of the boy, as he was known for his tricks to avoid his lessons. He would seize the slightest pretext to run away. But continuous pain inhibited the boy from learning further and he went to bed in tears. The whole matter was left at that stage and I was not made known of it either.

The next day, when I was having my lunch, my son happened to pass by and something caught my eyes. It appeared that there was some change in the style of his walking. Without making him aware, I asked him to walk to a certain point in the house and what did I see? The boy walked perfectly normally. There was not the 'T' formation when he walked. I called my wife and, even without informing her about my experience, requested her to observe the walk. We could not believe our eyes. We asked the boy to run a short distance on the road opposite our house. It was done. The Divine Surgeon, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, had done it. What shall we say? How shall we express ourselves over this MIRACLE?

On 9-12-81, we had an appointment with Dato Dr. Sivanantham, Head of the Institute of Orthopaedics and Traumatology, General Hospital, Kuala Lumpur, as the previous consultant had returned to India. We went into the doctor's room loaded with a fresh set of X-rays taken on that very day. We informed the doctor, that we are Sai Baba devotees and told him of Baba's miracle that had taken place. We requested his professional opinion even though we needed no further proof. The X-rays were seen, the boy's legs were thoroughly examined and a brief silence preceded before the doctor commented that the legs were perfect. In his own words 'I wish the doctor (from India) was here to witness this'. We requested Dr. Sivanantham for a statement of his professional findings, which he kindly consented to give. I reproduce below, with his permission, the report he gave to us

'Roshan, an eight years old Indian male, was seen in the Orthopaedic Clinic on 2.9.81 with a complaint of bowing deformity of his left leg since the time of his birth. He is handicapped by this deformity in his games in school and was shunned by his classmates as he could not run fast. He was seen on the 7th October 1981 by a Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon in my Institute who confirmed that the boy had a medial torsion deformity of both tibiae (leg bones) more pronounced on the left than on the right. Patient was advised to undergo surgical treatment but the parents wanted time to think over it before giving the consent for surgery.

'Patient was seen again by me on the 9th of December 1981, and to my surprise I was not able to detect any deformity in both the legs. X-rays of the legs done on 9 / 12 / 81 did not show any deformity in the bones.

'It is a well-known fact that deformity in children can get corrected spontaneously but this process takes many years. In this particular case the deformity has corrected itself within two months. According to the parents the boy complained of twisting pain in the legs for a few days and suddenly one fine morning they noticed him to be walking and running normally without any deformity in the legs. I cannot explain it in any other way except by saying that this is a miracle that is to be seen to be believed'.

How can we thank Bhagavan Baba for this? We only pray that Bhagavan Baba gives us strength to follow all HIS teachings and be worthy of HIS LOTUS FEET

—K. Karthikeyan, Raub, Malaysia

Thus spake Bhagavan:

The Higher Learning

*Can poring over letters writ on paper
Ever make man able and wise?
Those who delve beneath the words
And grasp the truth are truly great.*

Students! Teachers!

Education must result in purifying one's perceptions. It has to develop and coordinate moral and spiritual urges and ensure good character. While discriminating between 'good' and 'bad', the educated person must apply the criterion of service to humanity. Along with worldly knowledge and experimental knowledge, man must acquire also experiential knowledge. Knowledge gathered from books is but second hand. But, for persons involved in the problems of living, first-hand knowledge alone is helpful. And this has to come from the urge for love and light. Unfortunately, education today has as its aim the earning of wealth, attaining a Comfortable life of leisure and pleasure.

Education can be both material-oriented and spirit-oriented. It can have as its aim the achievement of a high level of living for oneself, one's family and one's kith and kin. But, living involves more than flesh and bone, food and shelter, more than even sensual satisfactions. Man has certain intangible equipment like the mind, the intellect and the consciousness in various levels. These have to be clarified, cleansed and strengthened and directed along beneficent lines. This is done by spirit-oriented training. Now, material education has grown much too high. Spiritual education has lagged behind and even disappeared. So there is no integration in the personality of the educated person. He lacks conviction and completeness of understanding. Doubts and distractions are bothering him all the while. The process of education has become too

mechanical; it is not vitalised by the consciousness of ideals or elevated by a high purpose. Ask any student, he replies that he is pursuing education for the sake of earning a living, (Jivan-opadhi). But what of the very goal of human life, the Jeevana-paramaavadhi? To understand it and struggle to reach it, is even more important.

Man earns riches; riches attract kith and kin, who attach themselves to the person until the riches get dried up. Respect is offered to the rich by the kinsmen and by the world so long as they are in possession of wealth. But respect should be offered to the aged, especially those who have gathered wisdom through the years. Age is not merely a matter of time. A highly spiritual person must be revered irrespective of his age. The wise should be respected, regardless of any other consideration. Valmiki belonged to a 'low' caste; Nanda was from an inferior clan; Dhruva was quite a boy; Sabari was a weak old woman; Vidura was 'a simpleton'; Thimma had no scholarship. But all of them rose to venerable heights.

Karma has to be revered even more than the wisdom of elders. That is to say, activities that develop humanity in man, that raise the level of one's character, that have loving service to others as the motive, that uplift the society in which one lives—these have to be adored and adhered to.

Higher than even these is Vidya, illuminative education which makes us aware of the Truth of the outer and inner worlds, which fulfils the very destiny of man. Without Atma Vidya, scholarship is a beautiful flower with a stinking odour, a charming fruit with worms inside it. Students might strut about in clothes of the latest fashion, but in reality they are filled with obnoxious ideas and desires. There are many who wear the monastic robes but people revere them only for their spiritual attainments and attitudes. In all climes and at all times, spiritual eminence receives the homage of the people. From far distant places, kindred souls approach each other and are bound by common loyalty to the spirit. This is the reason for inclusion of Atma Vidya in the courses which this, our Institute provides.

You might keep a cobra as pet and feed it lovingly on milk but it will not give up its poisonous bite. You might deal affectionately with a small-minded man but he will not give up his inclination for mischief. The poison of smallness can be destroyed by installing name of God in the heart.

The other day, I placed before the Seva Samitis certain lines of activity and emphasised the importance of some ideals. Students know that the army recruits cooks, barbers, dhobis, watchmen, drivers etc ... But, whatever may be each one's assignment, every one has to attend parades, take part in drill and be proficient with the rifle. Without these, no one can serve in the Army. Similarly, you may be a student of chemistry or physics or botany or mathematics or history, but, every one must be proficient in Atmic Sadhana. Without this qualification, no one can be part of this Institute. If man is the crown of creation, spiritual sadhana is the Brightest Gem on the crown.

Students! Bharat is a Karmakshetra, a Field for Action. You are initiated into participation in a grand Yajna, a colossal festival of Renunciation. Do not long for jobs where you can recline on sofa under whirling fans and engage in work that will keep your hands clean and the folds in your clothes undisturbed. In Telugu there is a proverb: “When the wings are active, the bird gets

fed.” When you work until the bones break, you can crunch food until your teeth break” is another proverb.

Our Vice-Chancellor announced just now that marks are assigned for many achievements. You have to serve in the gardens, in the kitchen, in the sports field, in the villages around. You must utilise opportunities to clean the village streets and lay roads therein. You have to share in group prayers. Fraternise with the students who come to this Institute from the villages around and expand your experience of loving service. Prasanthi Nilayam is situated in a rural area; those who belong to cities must join others who have the village as their base and enthuse them, encourage them in all ways in their studies.

Do not believe that education ends with school and college. You are educating yourselves and learning skills and attitudes wherever you are—be it on a street, in a bazaar, on a farm or in a shop. You can never say 'finis' to the process of learning. It can end only when death arrives. But, you cannot wait until death to start practising what has been learnt! Hence, the educational system exhorts you to learn the maximum of skills and knowledge, and methods of achieving insight and delight, until you reach the age of twenty or twenty five, so that during the rest of your lives you can put them into practice and derive joy therefrom.

Students! Uproot from your minds the idea that you are undergoing education for the sake of money and the prosperity one can enjoy while spending it. Do not be enslaved by money. Educate yourselves in worthy character, in earning virtues. Learn to give in plenty and not receive in plenty. Develop renunciation, not acquisitiveness. The ocean spreads itself on the lowest level, because it knows only 'receiving' and not 'renouncing'. But the clouds rejoice in renouncing and therefore they rise to great heights and announce their presence in thunderous tones. Ever be eager to share with four or five all you have acquired. When the water in the well is baled out, the springs at the bottom will fill it in time. Share your knowledge and it will grow more and more.

Try to partake in social service for half the number of hours you devote for your studies in the Institute. During the years you are here, you must try to provide the villages around the Institute the amenities they lack. With the students coming to this campus as the core workers, form a service-group in each village. The village cannot be happy with the feeling, “A boy from our village studied at college and won a degree.” It can be happy and grateful only when it can declare, 'A boy from our village studied at college and our village has benefited very much through him.'

Students! Be eager to share enthusiastically in activities for helping others, even more than in activities for helping yourselves. And pay most attention to activities that can 'please' God. God is in every one. So, when God is pleased, every one is pleased.

This Institute has been established to supplement the study of academic subjects with a wide range of service activities. The Institute is dedicated not to the promotion of 'Aasa' (Desire) but for the promotion of 'Aasaya' (Ideals). Without spiritual ideals, man becomes a kite with the string snapped—the victim of every gust of wind.

Educated people are today reducing themselves to the level of 'shadows' of foreign cultures. Do not hope to shine in borrowed clothes. Follow the urges of your own hearts; do not pursue the pleasures the senses crave for. Do not be enticed by riches and spend your lifeblood in the struggle for gathering them. This Institute too has to produce I.A.S. officers—with a difference. The officers you must aspire to become will be of the inverse, S.A.I. Cadre!

All of you must have firm faith in the teachers, in the curriculum and course of studies and other educational projects, and in the Institute that is fostering you. The discipline which is laid down is intended to develop your faculties on right lines, not for our sake. It may appear rigorous at first but, in time, you will experience its beneficial effects. Even after leaving this Institute, you must uphold, by your conduct, its dignity and demonstrate in your actions that you have imbibed the lessons that Swami has taught you, thus becoming shining examples to the youth of the country.

**—Bhagavan's address at the Institute of Higher Learning
on the commencement of the new Academic Year on 8-7-1982**

"The New Era Has Come"

"The worldwide problem today is that of rebut/ding humanity on a moral basis, having the deep faith and conviction that God is omnipresent, that the human being is essentially divine, that the impulses which drive him to act are the search for peace and happiness, and that the latter are found only in the world of the Spirit," observed Mr. Antonio Craxi, in his address to the European Satsang of Sal devotees at Magenta on June 27. He declared that with the advent of Bhagavan Baba, a new era has begun for mankind. He said:

Here we are again this year in this great "Satsang", this gathering of people united by the same ideals and by common aspirations and devotion towards GOD.

This meeting is blessed by Bhagavan Sathya Sai Baba who entrusted me with this task one hour before I took off on the plane to Italy. He told me: "Go and take my blessing to them and tell them that I shall come. Take my message and organize a meeting and tell them that I have ordered you to do so."

If He had not ordered me to do this and if the faith that I have in Him did not sustain me every minute of my life, how could I speak to you of the greatness of this message and convey to you the joy and the emotion which such a message brings?

This is the reason for this meeting which strengthens our faith and enlarges our horizon in a common feeling of brotherhood and love. Your thirst for Him is not of to-day; it is ancient! 'How many lives have you spent in searching for me,' says Sai Baba, 'to arrive here to me!'

His coming on this earth has reawakened in good men's hearts feelings of love and compassion which lay latent and asleep. This reawakening of Consciousness, which blooms like the lotus flower at sun-rise, is the great miracle that the Avatar of our Era has performed daily for over forty years.

Now that He has come to show us the way we no longer have the right to go wrong. Those who have had the great privilege of speaking to Him have certainly heard him pronounce this phrase: "The past is past!" From the moment that you have known Him your life has changed, new horizons open in front of you, a new perspective in the way of facing the world and our fellowmen, a new page to write knowing full well that he is here beside you and helps you and guides you in the difficult path of life that leads you right up to Him.

Recently I followed Him to the northern States of India, where He went to visit his devotees and to inaugurate a series of educational institutions. There is no need for me to describe to you now all the marvellous experiences that I had on that trip, but I know that I have seen in a split second only an infinitesimal part of what will be the splendour of His glory in the future.

I have seen India's people, coming from all levels and classes, from those who hold political power in their hand, to those who wield economic power, from the scientists to the uncultured, from the religious to the curious, I have seen them all without distinction, I have seen them prostrate at His feet, search for His glance, trying to touch him. I have seen tears and smiles, uncontrollable weeping, which is a sign of internal awakening, and such a vision brought to my mind the prophesies of the Apocalypse when St. John defines Him as 'the King of Kings, Lord of Lords!'

Rejoice then and be happy, because the new Era has come with the arrival of the Lord! He has come as man among men and God among Gods. He has come in a mortal body so that we may love and adore Him; to save us all.

Due to the confusion created by a partial and distorted teaching of the great religious truths some of you have interior conflicts with regard to the form of divinity. Follow your heart, since it reaches above the intellect, that you may be guided by inspiration and intuition, for God manifests Himself through your heart. There is nothing wrong in loving Christ's figure, since in it we find the fulfillment of our spiritual aspirations—but sooner or later we shall have to pass over the form and recognize that all forms belong to GOD.

The avatar

Sathya Sai Baba is the Avatar of our Era. What is the meaning of the word Avatar? It is a concept which is derived from the sacred Hindu scriptures and means incarnation of the transcendent Divine Being or GOD on this Earth. It is the Word made flesh of St. John's gospel. In the Bible we read: 'God made man in his image and likeness: perfect.' What is the meaning of this statement if not that man in his essence is equal to GOD? We, all of us, human beings are the incarnations of GOD, we are the divine imprisoned in a body through the effects of our ignorance. What is the difference then between Sathya Sai Baba and us? The difference is not in the substance, since we are He and He is us, but in the vision of the world and of things which seem real to us, in our incapacity to see GOD behind this multifarious manifestation which is His

creation. The Avatar comes on this earth to correct this vision for man and to render him aware of his divine nature.

The scientist's failure

Today there exists a great crisis in every field, in politics, in religion, in economic and scientific circles and in international relationships. Everybody is talking about the crisis in society, but no one is able, after having pin-pointed the cause, to suggest the appropriate remedy which could seal the leaks which are sprouting everywhere in every field of human activity. In the last century science has developed incredibly, giving man ever increasing comforts for his body but at the same time putting at his disposal deadly weapons for his own destruction.

If science is not able to promote better understanding between people, says Sai Baba, its aims will be of no use and it will nourish chaos and fear instead. This is what has happened in the last few decades and now we find ourselves on the brink of a third world war. The crisis of science is the crisis of the scientific man, who has not known how to find within himself the basis which would have justified his own research. If science is not sustained by spirituality it can create such an upheaval that life itself on this planet will be in peril.

Whither religion?

Religion has lost its meaning and its sublime purpose. It is reduced to a mere cult devoid of any spiritual power. Religious leaders, instead of feeding the roots of love, tolerance, truth, patience and peace, have allowed them to dry out, and now they also must suffer the negative effects of fanaticism, intolerance and discord.

Religious institutions, especially in our country (Italy), are numerous and embrace many fields, from education to health services, from banks to industries and, despite this, it is natural to ask oneself with so many institutions claiming to follow the sublime Christian message, why is society going towards complete bankruptcy, and why are the people more inclined to follow materialistic ideas, which are the exact opposite of the message of Christ!

The truth is that Jesus' message has been lost bit by bit during the long course of its history up to this day, and nothing of that message remains except for a few fragments, badly understood and even that used for personal gain.

Crisis of the spirit

Society's crisis is a crisis of human values. Men have forgotten the Divine essence, they have let themselves be led by animal instincts which have always been dormant in their nature. The consequence of their behaviour has been the corruption of family life and society, with the result that the world has been precipitated into chaos. Today we are witnessing such an extreme aberration in the way in which many lead their lives that, without wanting it, even the good man risks getting himself pulled down. A cry of desperation has risen from every corner of the Earth; wise men and saints have prayed and God has come. Bhagavan Sathya Sai Baba has come to help us overcome the difficulties which we ourselves have created.

Human Reformation is the gigantic task which the Avatar has taken on Himself in our Era. He has promised us that He will not fail and will never abandon the purpose for which He has come; that is, the restoration of Dharma and peace in the world.

The young generation must acquire an education which shapes their character and makes them masters of their destiny. To-day's youth is no longer happy with symbols, but wants to grasp the meaning of these, scientifically. It needs more than "churchness". Herein is the importance of the education of youth in the mission of the present Avatar. Education should teach basic human values and promote faith in God as living presence in all creation. It should develop in the young a sense of human brotherhood, founded not on social status or on the equality of rights and duties, but on something which is much more deep, in the Fatherhood of GOD. For this reason the Sathya Sai organization has decided to organize a seminar on education in human values which will take place in October this year.

THE REASON TO ENQUIRE

*Who gave us the mind to think, the will to act,
The thoughts to inspire and the reason to enquire
In all our deeds in this life, both good and bad,
why the consequence when originally it was only
Him before there was a past life?*

*How can this Jiva come to know of Him & His Glory?
How can we look down upon another when we are only here
through GRACE, not our own deeds or effort but Grace*

*Let his All-Mighty Love encircle the globe!
Let His Wisdom penetrate each heart
Let all beings be under His Care and
His Guidance.*

*LET the whole world quaff the cup of His Divine Nectar!
Now is the time
Let His Kingdom come! Let His Will Be Done!
OM Shanthi Shanthi Shanthihi
—M. H.*

LOOKING TO THEE

In the face of trouble, O Lord
when confusion arises,
or any other discouraging thought,
before I look to another
let me look to Thee

If the words of another are harsh and ill-tempered,
O Lord, let me not seek revenge
but take refuge in Thy Name

In the face of testing that causes me to
shake and be uncertain,
somehow, O Lord, let me look to Thee

And when, O Lord, I am unable to look
to You—when the burdens have
become too heavy—then, O Lord, please look to me.

—*Michael Hollander*

The Revolution the World needs

"The world is witnessing great revolutions in the political, social, economic and technological fields. All these tend to mechanise and vulgarise the human race. A moral regeneration and a spiritual awakening are most essential. Material prosperity and scientific advance are dangerous without a sense of moral responsibility and faith in the Oneness of the Spirit," declared Bhagavan Baba, in a stirring 90-minute discourse to an overflow gathering in Poornachandra Auditorium on Gurupoornima (6th July).

*Can the guru who teaches Bhukti Vidya,
the skill to earn rich livelihood,
give lasting Peace and Joy?
But the guru who teaches Mukti Vidya,
the skill to avoid desire, delusion,
can ensure lasting Peace and Joy.
A mind infested by vice, sans mercy,
sans honesty sans charity, morality,
A person playing with a pack of wickedness
Ruins his life here and hereafter.*

Embodiments of Love,

Time flows eternally. It does not linger or stop on any one's account. We have to conform to it; it won't adjust itself to our whims. 'A hundred years may you live' is the benediction. But we cannot place faith in that pronouncement. For, death trails behind us to bag us at any moment. So, the intelligent person fills every moment

with pure thoughts and holy deeds. He recognises that the past is lost, the future is uncertain*and the present is ephemeral. But he does not yield to despair. Seconds add up to hours, hours become days, days gather into months and years and years, when they accumulate, are Eras or

Ages. Time rolls on and on, and the body that is born proceeds from growth to death. Time sent Rama into exile and slayed Ravana. Time decided the decline of Emperor Bali. Time consummated the downfall of the Kauravas and sent their cousins, the Pandavas, into the forests.

Everything in the Universe is suffering perpetual change. The thing that confers joy and the person who seeks the joy are both changing ceaselessly! Both are transient and temporary. How, then, can the joy be lasting? How can the one that is changing understand the other that is also changing?

Scientists are struggling with a variety of theories to unravel the mystery of the Cosmos. They have devised many contrivances which promote comfort. They are controlling and exploiting the elements. They find that the theories that stood the test today are falsified tomorrow. Every moment they are confronted with newer and deeper Mysteries. In fact, human intelligence can never grasp the secret key to the full understanding of Nature. Unless the Creator, whose thought projected itself as Creation, is known, the nature of the Created Universe will be eluding man. Attempts must therefore be made to understand the Omniwill, the Supreme Person, His Power and Glory.

Coming to the nature of man, he is a mould of the three characteristic modes: Satwa (Serene), Rajas (Active) and Tamas (Dull). Beyond all these three, unaffected by the three qualities, is the individualised Atma, a wave on the ocean of Param-Atma. When Satwa predominates, the other two modes are latent; so, too, when either of the other two is dominant. Man is in stable delight when Satwa overwhelms the Rajas and the Tamas. While being tossed about on the waves of these three Gunas and their permutations, man finds it impossible to cognise the waveless, changeless, basic ONE. The scriptures do help him to a large extent. They are the eyes through which he can glimpse the Truth. To interpret the scriptures aright, the Guru will be of great help. Indeed, the Guru is a must. But, at best, the Guru can only indicate the path. He is just a guide-post showing direction, distance, and destination. The Disciple has to journey along the path recommended, without wavering and hesitating.

Who is the guru?

Who is the Guru? The Guru is the person who uproots the incorrect knowledge, the perverted, distorted knowledge one has about oneself, the objective world and God. Unfortunately, such Gurus are not available now. The counsel of present-day gurus only distorts further the knowledge which has to be clarified. In Bengali the word 'Guru' becomes 'Goru' which means also a cow. The disciple, therefore, reveres the Guru only as long as he benefits by the association, just as a person nourishes a cow only so long as it yields milk. When the Guru insists on some line of thought and action which, the disciple finds too hard, he deserts that Guru and seeks some other more congenial teacher! In Marathi, the word is 'garu', meaning heavy, burdensome, etc. He who relieves us of the burden of Ajnana is the Guru; the Jagadguru is He who bears the burden of the world, so as to make the lives of mankind lighter.

This day is Gurupoornima, the day on which you desire to worship the Guru and to please him by praise. But that is not the significance of this holy day. Every one has in him the Mind. The Mind can plunge him into bondage or float him on freedom. When it helps him to attain liberation, it becomes the Guru. The Mind has to shine in serene splendour, without trace of evil,

fixed on the Highest alone. When that victory is won, that day is Gurupoornima, the Full Moon of the Mind, for the Moon is the deity presiding over the Mind. To carry about a mind infested with evil and worship a Guru, giving him the tribute of a purse—that cannot be Gurupoornima. The monkey mind has to be chained and trained: Instead, people cater to its waywardness, adore it with garlands, clothe it in silk and brocade and seat it in gemset thrones, hoping it would sit quiet. But off it goes on a jumping spree, nevertheless. Training the mind implies practice of the teachings enshrined in the Sastras, not the mere learning by rote of their contents.

Moral regeneration

The value of a Sadhana is evidenced by the transformation it effects, the Divine qualities it implants and fosters. The mind has to be transformed, and turned towards the Sadhana of Practice. The world can be saved only by this transformation of individuals, into Divine personalities. Of course, the world is witnessing great revolutions in the political, social, economic and technological fields. All these tend to mechanise and vulgarise the human race. A moral regeneration and a spiritual awakening are most essential. Material prosperity and scientific advance are dangerous without a sense of moral responsibility and a faith in the Oneness of the Spirit. These alone can check the conflagration of pride and greed, envy and hatred, anger and rivalry, which mere prosperity can cause.

Story of Satyakama

The Guru is aware of the yearning of the pupil; he teaches just those maxims that can lead him forward. During a period of extreme drought, Sage Gautama gathered his pupils and said, 'The 400 head of cattle we have in this hermitage are stricken with hunger and thirst. Is there one among you who can lead them to some region where there are green pastures and flowing streams?' Most of the pupils were too lazy and too pleasure loving to respond. But, Satyakama stood up and accepted the assignment. The Guru told him not to return until he could bring back 1000 cattle. Satyakama did not flinch. He took it as a command he should obey. While he was caring for the herd in a distant state, Indra, the Lord of Gods, was struck by his faith and sincerity. He blessed his herd and its number reached a thousand. He made him a master of the four Vedas, as a boon, and accompanied the young man to the hermitage of the Guru. The Guru was so overjoyed that he embraced Satyakama, and blessed him with a vision of the Reality which liberated him from bondage.

Vishwamitra had won immense power to shape the material universe and even create new worlds and, in his pride, he challenged Sage Vasishta, but was forced to accept defeat. Material acquisitions, worldly power, and physical strength are as broken reeds before spiritual and moral greatness. Vishwamitra designed and constructed a new Heaven, but it did not last, nor could it equal the real one. For, Heaven is here, amidst us, where virtues prevail and mould the acts of man. Learning promotes pride and encourages argumentativeness and sectarianism. Knowledge is not power; character is power. Leading exemplary lives in accordance with the ideals laid down by the culture of this land, many persons have won great renown. The Avatars, Rama, Krishna, Buddha, have also shown through incidents in their careers how to translate ideals into practice

The saints' bomb

Whereas scientists have put together a bomb which can reduce into ashes a million people, saints have discovered a bomb that can destroy all the evil, the wickedness, the cruelty, the lust and littleness of man in one stroke; that Bomb is the Name of God. Plant it in the well-tilled heart, they say. Feed it with water, Prema. Protect it from harm by putting up a fence around the fence of Discipline. Then, it will grow, blossom and yield the fruit, Ananda.

Sadhakas too are multiplying desires. "Let me get the first prize in Karnataka State Lottery. I shall offer you as many coconuts as you want," they pray! "If I am chosen as Minister, I shall arrange a Floral Palanquin Procession for you," they pray. They believe God can be tempted by these promises and these attractive presents. They hope to deceive the Divine by their trickery. They hesitate to fulfill their vows, once they gain their ends. They are gilt, not gold. In Andhra Pradesh, we have gourds named Nethi Beerakkai, meaning 'Ghee gourd', but there is not a single drop of ghee in it! The name devotee or Bhakta is a misnomer, a deceptive word. Bhaktas in outer form, they have only the thin polish. They are soaked in evil thoughts, pride, envy, and even downright cruelty. As the saying goes, you can be in bed with a cobra, be in the company of an angry person, but to befriend a person who nourishes hatred in his heart is more dangerous than fondling a wild beast.

Who hates another is really hating God. When you slight another, you are slighting God. The Lord has announced Himself in the Gita as the "seed from which all beings arise." So the Bhakta has to love all beings, revere all beings. Since all grow from the same seed, no one is inherently different, from another. There is no 'other'. You get anger, fear and envy only as long as you conceive of 'another' person, separate from you. When you recognise in all the same Atma, not even a trace of anger or fear can tarnish you.

Embodiments of Love! Man's mind spins various strategies. Japa, Tapa, Yoga, Asana, Bhajan—where lies the urge to partake in these? Japa cannot confer Liberation. Dhyana too cannot make you realise the Reality. Yoga cannot carry you to Heaven. That idea is but a dream. Then, why have sages and elders advised us so? They have prescribed these methods in order to suppress the 'chatter' in the mind, the ceaseless internal talk that goes on inside us, the questions formed and the answers manufactured, the doubts raised and the solutions offered, all by us and for us inside us. This conversation blocks the path of meditation and the spring of Ananda.

The gurus in everyone

The guru is not one who utters the mantra into the ear and extends the palm for cash. The Guru and the Disciple are both within you. Prajnana is the Guru; he is in you. Ajnana is the Shishya; he is also in you. You have darkness and you have a torch, both within your room. To get rid of the darkness, you have to switch the torch on that is all. The Karnataka Governor, Govind Narain, just recited the verse, "Guru Brahma, Guru Vishnu, Guru devo Maheswarah, Guru saakshaath Parabrahma, Thasmai Sri Gurave namah". One meaning of this verse is, "The Guru is Brahma to us, the Guru is our Vishnu, the Guru is our Maheshwara, and the Guru is the Parabrahma for us." But, the more significant interpretation is that "Brahma is my Guru, Vishnu is my Guru, Maheshwara is my Guru. Parabrahma is my Guru." And, all three are in us, every one of us.

Vishnu (symbolic of the waking stage) is in the Head, where all the senses function—the sense of perception through which knowledge is acquired. The senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch are all active. Brahma (symbolic of the dream stage), the other facet of the Trinity, is in the throat region. In the dream, a multiplicity of events and things are produced and projected. Siva (symbolic of the deep sleep stage) is in the Heart. The gross and the subtle bodies merge in the causal, the senses, the mind and the intellect are inactive in this Stage. Siva is white in colour, Brahma is red and Vishnu blue. All the three are in each one. They are the Gurus whom you must seek and serve for achieving awareness of the Reality.

You need not roam around for an external guru. Cleanse your hearts of evil, follow the Divine Path with steady faith, and attain the Goal. The Divine Path is the path of Love. It leads you to the Source of Love.

Vidya Vahini

18

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Teachers reveal the direction and the goal. Students lay the road and journey into the future. The skill and strength, the status and stature of mankind are shaped and furthered in proportion to the quality and character of its teachers. Character is the hall-mark of man. Teachers must dedicate their learning and wisdom to the great task of uplifting pupils to higher levels of knowledge and action. The virtues which they help to inculcate in their pupils are essential for the uplift of society also. When virtues are rooted in the heart, man shines in full glory. A life without good character is a shrine without light, a coin that is counterfeit, a kite with the string broken.

Teachers who teach with the salary paid to them in their minds and students who learn with the jobs they may procure in their minds are both pursuing wrong paths. In fact, the task of the teacher is to discharge his duty of instructing and inspiring the students so that they develop their latent talents and advance in the perfection of their skills. The task of the student is to unfold the divine in him and equip himself for serving society with his skill and knowledge.

Man has three instruments gifted to him: the mind which involves him in thought, the power of speech which enables him to communicate his thoughts, and the power of action by which he can execute his thoughts, alone or with others, for himself and for others. The mind designs thoughts which are either helpful or harmful. The mind can lead man into bondage, deeper involvement in desires and disappointments. It can lead man into freedom, detachment and desirelessness. The mind is a bundle of likes and dislikes. Manas (mind) is the seat of Manana (chewing the cud of sensual and mental experiences.)

The mind is engaged in two activities: Aalochana or planning and Sambhashana or dialogue. Both these follow different lines. Planning is intent on solving problems that present themselves before the mind. Dialogue multiplies the problems and confounds the solutions, causing con-

fusion and adoption of wrong and ruinous means to solve them. The inner conversation and controversial chatter continues from morning till night, until sleep overtakes the mind. It causes ill-health and the early setting in of old age. The topics on which the chatter is based are mostly the faults and failings of others and their fortunes and misfortunes. This perpetual dialogue is at the bottom of all the miseries of man. It covers the mind with thick darkness. It grows wild very quick and suppresses the genuine worth of manhood.

The talk that inhabits the mind during the waking stage persists even in dreams and robs man of much-needed rest. And the sum-total of all this exercise is, to speak the truth, nil. No man can call himself full and free unless he succeeds in stopping this evil.

The Upanishads announce certain remedial Sadhanas to get rid of this obstacle to inner peace. The first sadhana is Pranayama, Regulation of Breath. Pranayama is no gymnastics, nor a formidable exercise. The inhaling of air is Pooraka; the exhaling is Rechaka. Retention in between is Kumbhaka. The mind has to concentrate on the period of retention, on the process of inhaling and exhaling. When attention is fixed thus, the inner talk on other irrelevant matters will end. And mental strength is acquired.

The second Sadhana is: immersal in Karma, beneficial activity—that is to say, service to people which will help diminish the ego sense, acts that are good and godly. When one's thoughts are engaged in such activities, the mind turns away from the talk it indulges in.

Again, the Sadhanas of Shravana (listening to spiritual advice), Manana (reflection on spiritual directions), and Nidhidhyasana (discovering ways and means of confirming faith in the Spirit), also of Japa (recital of the names of God) and Tapas (withdrawing the mind from sensual pursuits) have been prescribed by the scriptures more for the silencing of this mental chatter, this inner talk, as a preparation for attaining the Reality than for its Realisation. For it is only when the mind is cleansed and clarified that it can achieve such a profound task. Only then can the lessons taught and the experiences undergone be pure and unsullied.

The second instrument that is gifted to man for uplifting himself is speech—the use of words. Speech is charged with tremendous power. When through speech, we communicate to a person something which upsets his balance or shocks him into grief, the words completely drain off his physical strength and mental courage. He falls on the ground, unable to stand. On the other hand, when through speech, we communicate something happy, or unexpectedly cheering, he gets the strength of an elephant. Words do not cost anything but they are priceless. So, they have to be used with care. They must be employed not for gossip, which is barren, but for pure and productive purposes only. The ancients recommended the vow of silence in order to purify speech of its evils. A mind turned inwards towards an inner vision of God and speech turned towards outer vision, both will promote spiritual strength and success.

(To be continued)

Back to Thee

Bereft, I stood before Thee.
An understood silence
Hits one like a stone, from nowhere.
In the stillness of pain,
The darkness of separation,
Moving in a circle
Reaching nowhere
I wandered back to Thee.

Thy query hid in half laughter
Put me back to Thee.
Wondering, Thy mystery
envelops like a dream.
Awakening—I rub my eyes
To find the light streaming in.
Once again, my arms outstretched
In reverence, I kneel to Thee.
The doors wide open
My temple decked for Thee,

Lamps are lit,
Awaiting Thy Presence
Come Lord, quench for me
The thirst unending.
Let me wash Thy Feet
In the joy of being back.
With a garland of prayers
I ask to dwell in Thee
begging forgiveness at Thy feet
May I blossom, Lord,
with Thy touch of grace.
Fill my heart,
an island of darkness
with Light—
Thy touch is all that I need
to awaken the hidden splendour
of my supreme dream,
while the pain flows past
into a tenderness of tears.

—**THARAKI**

"CHILDREN OF SAI"

Rise, O children of Sai,
Glide on the river of good Karma,
Row the boat of Sathya and Dharma,
Acid bring to light the flame of Shanti and Prema.
Pour all that you have at His lotus feet,
He will rain love the sweetest of sweet.
Keep your hearts clean purify your soul,
And let our beloved Sai lead you to the ultimate goal.
Get up, O boys, and start, it is never too late,
Care for nothing, come what may, the reward is great.
Eat Love, drink Love, sing the song of Love, for Love leads to Him,
And without His Grace we are but a mere whim.
Caught in Maya, don't be led astray,
The Lord is here to show you the way.
Cry, cry and sing his glory till your voice is hoarse,
It is His name that liberates man and shows the right course.
Faith, hope and love have brought us here,
So pray, my brothers, to the Lord who reigns for ever
Pray, 'O Lord! Let us be at Thy Lotus Feet forever.'

—**Nandan Mer**

Bhagavan's Universal Mission

"Bhagavan Baba has come with a Divine Mission to release from bondage not only this country, but hundreds of countries around," declared Sri Govind Narain, Governor of Karnataka, addressing a vast gathering in the Poornachandra Auditorium on Gurupoornima day (July 6).

Sri Govind Narain said: According to our tradition, the guru occupies the highest place. I remember a verse which says: 'If the Guru and the Lord stand together, to whom should I offer my salutations first? To the Lord Govinda or my Guru?' The author of the verse says. 'I shall first honour the Guru because it is through his grace I have the vision of the Lord.'

The great Sanskrit sloka says: "Guru Brahma, Guru Vishnu, Gurudevo Maheswarah: Guru sakshaat Parabrahma, tasmai Sri Gurave namah." Guru is Brahma, the Creator; Guru is Vishnu, the Preserver; Guru is Siva, the Principle of Time and Joy. Such a guru is difficult to find. But that Great Guru is ALL IN ALL.

Fellow-devotees! It is a rare privilege to be in the immediate presence of a Divine Personality, particularly a Personality so great that we give Him all thought, all love and all our ideas and meditations. That Personality is beyond all religion, is beyond all belief—that is what Bhagavan

is. Whoever prays to Him, Bhagavan makes His Presence mysteriously felt. Bhagavan is always with the devotees when they pray to Him with sincerity, with devotion and without pride.

The phase in which He is at present involved is the removal of poverty, distress, disease and ignorance. He has built a vast complex of educational institutions. The teaching that we find in these institutions is much different from the teaching that we find in any school, college or university in the world. These institutions impart a multi-dimensional teaching which involves the very personality, the very soul of the being, right from childhood till the time of retirement. I have myself seen how Swami has been able to attract a band of devoted, dedicated, teachers and equally devoted dedicated brilliant students. This is an opportunity that Bhagavan has created to all humanity.

Bhagavan believes in Universal Religion, not in a narrow sectarian religion. You must have observed this from the trend of the bhajans, the emblem and from Swami's sayings. He believes in the direct relationship of the human with the Divine, that Great Creator, that Great Blissful Master within—whatever name you may give Him. According to Swami Divinity is with you, within you, right in your heart. That is the Religion Bhagavan is spreading and He is spreading it fast.

Actually to say anything about Bhagavan is like showing a feeble light to the great dazzling Sun. The Sun shines on all and sheds his light on all. That is what Bhagavan is. His grace goes to all alike.

COMPASSION

When the silent night is waking
And home-bound birds serenade
The dusty day is quaking
Among the starry songs to fade.
The drooping sentinels of night
In silhouette shadows melt
At the end of day they might

The drooping dreams have smelt.
Slowly a day is left behind
Time is gathered in a bow! of sleep
Then whispers my Lord, ever so kind:
Sleep well, my child, and let me keep
A vigil over your soul dear to me
shrouded in dreams of none but me.

—*B. K. Misra. Prasanthi Nilayam.*

THE SEED

All these worlds have one centre
And all these many trees
That send their roots deep
Into the bosom of earth
To stand up leafy green
Intertwine themselves around
That one seed
Which they never outgrow.
All these myriad voices have one centre
Our ecstasies and groanings
Our furies and silences

Have one reference, one hum
Like a dream all day long.
All our dawns and dusks
And springs and summers
Grow out of the selfsame centre
Which hides itself
Among these million sands
And among million galaxies.
Yet, it is in front of me
As a sweet, simple smile.

—*B. K. M. Prasanthi Nilayam*

Grace on God's Doorstep

Meditating at Prasanthi Nilayam near the Mandir is like no other hallowed place I have had the good fortune to enjoy. There is a sweet blissfulness that permeates every breath taken in.

Then there is that highest of high happiness just knowing I am at the very doorstep of the Lord. And when I catch glimpses of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba lovingly tending his flock, the view from the Darshan line becomes an ethereal vantage point.

It is here that the wonder of the Abode of Highest Peace settles deeper and deeper within one's heart of hearts as time without end becomes one's own. You know you have arrived at the place where you have always longed to be. Yes, the Mandir at Prasanthi Nilayam is a very, very sacred place to be.

One can wonder just what extraordinary happenings take place there where the lotus feet of Sri Baba make such a divine impression; where devotees in a high state of bliss have their dreams come true.

I believe that at this sanctified place the sweetest miracles happen day after day, for the Lord knows our every desire and to our joy of joys oftentimes quietly grants them.

Those glorious soul searching days just before and after Baba's 55th birthday were very special to me as I was able to worship at this front door and also in the Mandir at bhajan time.

Baba showered his grace upon me granting many boons, or wishes, during those precious days in November, 1980, when whole world sent representatives to participate in the Third World Conference and the divine birthday events.

It was on one of those beautiful mornings that I found a place near an area occupied by the college boys who all looked so crisp and pure in their very white creaseless trousers and open-neck white shirts.

I have always known that Baba is nestled in my heart. This sweet knowledge I am sure you, dear seeker, also have. I had been away from his divine concrete presence all too long, ever since his 50th birthday.

On this particular soft sunny morning I glanced at my digital wristwatch and noticed that the numbers read 10:04. Almost unwittingly I leaned forward and drew a heart shape with my forefingers. The space just in front of me was narrow, just wide enough to be used as a pathway to the area where the college boys silently sat in rows.

Perhaps I was feeling how for years I contended with thoughts and daydreams of my beloved from afar, when I looked at the time and made a very happy wish. I whispered to myself, 'Swami, the time reads 10:04 on my wristwatch and 10:08 is such a precious number. How I would love that you would step into my heart.' I was thinking of the imaginary heart I had drawn moments before. My inner prayer continued. "Swami, if you stepped into my heart this would give me such happiness." Through my mind wafted the sweet thought of Padanamaskar this early morning.

At that moment Baba was not in view. I was also quite unaware whether he was near the Mandir or giving Darshan over towards the Poornachandra.

Padanamaskar—to pay homage at the feet of a great spiritual being. Momentarily my fanciful but loving prayer vanished from my mind. Then I felt a stir among the devotees and caught a brief glimpse of the red robe as he came towards the Mandir. He paused near the beautifully carved door and was about to enter.

Quietly he turned and began to walk between two rows of devotees. He came closer and closer. My eyes fell upon the "heart" I had drawn. Next instant his lotus feet were there right in the center of the heart. I had that precious moment to touch his feet and allow my fingers to

brush his gown. I was filled with his love as he stepped to the area among his college boys. I took a quick glance at my digital watch which read 10:08.

Baba has said, *Prayers are always answered: that is the rule.* I have never doubted this and especially since the love and grace he gave to me that November morn.

The lotus feet of Jesus

After the early morning devotion I and the other devotees would go into the Mandir to feel the depths of the spirit during the bhajan singing. The first time I went inside the open door, just moments later Baba looked in and his smile seemed to say, *Yes, that is right. While here you should take every advantage of the worshipful moments you have.*

One morning I found myself directly in line with Baba's chair way in the front. All at once my heart became filled with Jesus. Perhaps the wonderful enactment of the story of His life in the Poornachandra by the college boys the previous night, had something to do with this consciousness. My eyes turned to the tiles on the Mandir floor. Each tile measured nine inches by nine inches in size. Silently I counted nine tiles in a straight line ahead of me and then in my mind's eye placed two more on each side near the top to form a cross.

Then I found myself in quiet prayer saying, "Swami, if I had been at the crucifixion of Jesus, I would have wanted to kiss His lotus feet when He was on the cross."

The words came to me as I looked upon the form of the cross on the floor of the Mandir. I dwelt upon this for a moment and then meditated. The bhajans were especially heavenly and my love for Swami wafted over the heads of the devotees to where Swami now sat beating time with his hand poised in rhythm.

The next morning I again entered the Mandir for the bhajans. I sat at the same place, far back against the wall. This time I began to feel a deep conviction that I had been overstepping my bounds with Swami. My prayer this time was one that asked to withdraw my desire to kiss the lotus feet of Jesus. Not that I did not want to, but I felt I had to stop all these requests. Of course, I had no idea how the feet of Jesus could be kissed and so in my mind I erased the wish before leaving the Mandir.

Now it was the next morning. Again I went into the Mandir for the bhajans. I felt so lovingly the divine presence. Bhajans had not begun.

I cast my head down and entered into that blissful state of surrender. Sweet peace of peace existed. Within a short time I opened my eyes as though directed to do so. I still looked down towards the tile floor.

Then to my surprise, I found myself looking at the lotus feet of Sri Baba. His feet were on the tile where I had imagined Jesus, feet might have been.

Without looking upwards or pausing I fell forward and kissed the "lotus feet of Lord Jesus". Almost 2000 years were erased as I gently clasped those precious feet affixed to the cross. How divine is He who hears our every prayer and fills our hearts with His love.

—Charles Penn

Thus spake Bhagavan:

Refrain from Asking

*Heaven is not on high, beyond your ken.
It is very much here, in the world of men:
Just kill the ego, deep-rooted in you
And, you are 'there' in Heaven on Earth.*

*For liberation, O man, why plead before
Three crores of Gods in despair?
Just kill the ego, deep-rooted in you—
And you are free, no pleading thereafter.*

The attainment of the Absolute or Brahman is not the end result of a course of spiritual effort. The Jivi (individualised soul) is the Brahman. 'Jivo devassanaathanah' The Jivi is the Eternal Godhead. Even when involved in worldly activities, the individual cannot discard this reality of his. His belief that he is just a man arises from delusion. The water coming down as rain from clouds is pure but after contact with the soil, it becomes dirty. But its nature is purity. The Ocean may be known by many names in many areas through many ages, but its nature is unaffected thereby. So too, however long a person is attached to the body, the senses, the mind etc., however many forms and names he assumes and adopts, the Brahman Principle persists in him and remains the goal of awareness.

"Mamaivaamso Jeeva loke Jeeva bhoothassanathanah", says Krishna in the Gita. 'The Eternal I, My part, has manifested as all individuals'. This is what that statement implies. 'Srunvantho viswe Amrithasya Puthraah' is what Mother Veda declares in raised voice to all the worlds. Since a person is limited by a body and entangled in the senses, he is bound by ignorance and led to believe he is a mere man.

Ignorance is caused by attachment. Attachment results in identification of the I with the body, senses, mind etc. and the person ignores the Divine which is the Reality. Attachment leads to desire; desire results in anger; anger blinds reason and promotes ignorance; ignorance breeds dualities, mine and thine, good and bad etc; these lead to activities to make gains and avoid losses etc; these produce consequences, merit and demerit; they have to be consumed through birth in life; thereby one has suffering. So, Dukham (suffering) is caused by Janma which presupposes Karma due to belief in duality (Dvaita). Dvaita is the result of Ajnana, the product of Krodha. Krodha is the child of Raga and Moha is the parent of Raga.

Even Arjuna, the greatest bowman and warrior of his age, became a victim on the battlefield itself of this insidious Moha or false but enfeebling attachment (Moha). The mind obeys the senses and defiles man. It is well-nigh impossible for man to master the mind and turn it away from the objective world. Arjuna confessed to Lord Krishna that the mind was uncontrollably wayward and could not be stilled. The mind has two phases: the unpolluted and the polluted. The mind affected by desire (Kama) is polluted; when it is unaffected by desire, it is unpolluted.

For liberation from bondage to desire, the mind is the only instrument available to man. Turn it towards the objective world, you are bound; turn it towards God, you are on the road to liberation. The mind refuses to be calm even for a fraction of a second. When a continuous shower of stones is falling on the waters of a lake, how can the surface be calm and unruffled? So too, man is throwing stone after stone of desire on the Manasa Sarovar, the calm lake of the, Manas or Mind. Bhaktas—indeed all Vyaktis, that is, those who seek to manifest their inner Reality—should therefore prevent the stones (desires) from disturbing the equanimity of the mind. The fly rests one moment on the sacred food offerings placed before the altar of God and the next moment, it rests on a pile of garbage. One moment the mind seeks refuge in holy thoughts and things; the next moment, it revels in some fearsome foul ideas. The mind is like the elephant. The mahout gives it a nice bath, he scrubs it clean and chains it to a shady tree. But, it gathers dirty dust with its trunk and scatters it all over itself! Man too, urged by the senses, pours into his own mind dust and dirt.

In fact, the function of the mind is to act as controller of the senses. The role of the senses is to serve the mind. The right relationship is for the servants to obey the master and for the master to rule over the servants. But when the master falls into the hands of his servants, he becomes the victim of all varieties of loss and grief.

The Ramayana provides a fine illustration for this danger. Kaikeyi, the Queen, was the mistress; Manthara was her servant, her maid, but since the Queen was subservient to her maid, a whole series of tragedies happened. Kaikeyi came from a famous Royal dynasty; she was the favourite consort of a famous emperor; she was the mother of a son, Bharata, famous for his dutifulness and righteousness; she loved Rama as dearly as her life-breath, yet, despite her own virtue, learning and authority, since she gave ear to her attendant Manthara, she drew upon herself eternal infamy from everyone. She landed in a situation where her beloved son came to despise her. Even the names Kaikeyi or Manthara have become obnoxious.

The lesson is we should not allow the senses, who are only servants, to lord over us. If we do so we invite the fate of Kaikeyi. Wherever you are, however rich, learned or powerful, when you advise some one to do wrong, you invite on yourselves the fate of Manthara. Since men yield to the blandishments of, the senses, they are becoming Kaikeyis today and losing the Divine Nature, the Quality of the Master.

The waters of the flowing river are stored by us in a reservoir. 'But, one has to take care to close the sluices before water is let into the reservoir. Or else, the water will flow out through the sluices and cannot be stored for use. Likewise, the Atma-Shakti, the Inner Soul Force, has to be let through the Buddhi channel into the reservoir, Manas or Mind. But, that force can be utilised by us for our benefit and for promoting world prosperity and peace only when the five sluices,

the outward bound senses, are closed tight. The closing of the sluices is the process of yoga which the Yoga Sastra of Patanjali describes as 'Chitta Vritti Nirodhah', preventing agitation in the mind.

The mind is designed for a specific purpose: achieving the four goals of human existence, Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha, the Attainment of a Happy life through righteous means (Artha through Dharma) and the cultivation of Kama (desire) for Moksha (liberation).

It has not been designed to promote greed and hatred, pride and possessiveness. This Truth has to be believed. The wind gathers clouds and equally swiftly, scatters them. The mind can create conditions of bondage or of liberation. So, one must slowly loosen the bonds of attachment to the physical body and its components, the senses, mind etc. The senses rob us of physical and mental strength.

A doubt may arise whether all who live in the body and move about with the body are attached to it and the senses etc. that go along with it. For, God too comes with a body, as Avatar, and when He moves about, He seems to be only human as far as one can see. But, there is a fundamental inner difference. The incarnate God, the Avatar, is unconcerned, has Upeksha. The ordinary man with the body has Apeksha, yearning for the result. Mamatwa (Ego principle) is human; Brahmatwa (Brahman Principle) is Divine. You cannot discern the distinction when you look or even listen to. You can understand only by experience. The Avatar has no wants; It has no egoism. It is ever alone in the Brahmatwam.

Look at a record or tape
It is blank, silent, same
Activate it with sounding box
It sings and speaks with fluency.

The Avatar appears as any other human being, equipped with body, senses, mind etc. But, consider the vast difference in thoughts, feelings, emotions etc. The Avatar is the total, the All-Comprehensive, the Poorna. The human is nought, narrow, negative. But, in the human, the Divine exists as the Core and can manifest totally as Bliss. We pay all attention to the external trappings of knowledge, power; we do not transform the deeper instincts and impulses inherited from animal ancestors.

Place jasmine garlands round a monkey's neck
Dress it in shiny silken robes
And seat it on a gem-set throne;
Can it forsake its apish tricks?

Once it was Vanara; now, it is Nara. And as Nara (man) through many lives, crookedness and cruelty have struck deep roots. These cannot be destroyed soon. It is a very difficult task indeed.

This is the reason why God assumes the Avatar form and decides to award mankind the power to discriminate between right and wrong, between truth and falsehood. The Avatar does it through precept and example. Though scriptures teach these lessons, the effect of studying them

is unfortunately short-lived. So, the Gita advises man to appreciate three facts: (1) To be born as a human being is a precious opportunity; (2) To yearn to realise God is another precious piece of good luck; (3) The greatest good fortune is the chance to be in the Presence of God, to be immersed in the service of God and to be engaged in fulfilling the Divine commands.

Sathyabhama, in her pride, imagined that her Lord Krishna could be appropriated by her if jewels and gems were presented. She piled them on one pan of the balance which was weighing Him. But this was of no avail. Rukmini had effaced her self and knew only the Krishna Principle. So, when she placed a single Tulsi leaf with her prayer on the pan, Krishna could be weighed and the pan rose!

Unadulterated devotion, total renunciation—these alone can help us to achieve the awareness of our Divinity. Kooresa was the headman of a village in the days of Ramanuja. His other name was Sreevatsaanka. He revered Ramanuja, the Acharya of Visishtadvaita, the great Master of Vaishnavism, as his Guru. He renounced his riches, lands and home in the village and proceeded to the Holy shrine of Srirangam on the Kaveri River. His wife Andal accompanied him. They had to walk through a thick jungle when night fell. The wife asked him, her voice tremulous with fear, "Are there robbers around?" He replied, 'Why should we fear? We have nothing with us for them to rob.' The wife confessed that she had with her a small gold cup, which she had brought along to serve water to her husband. Kooresa did not approve of her action. He asked for the cup and threw it far into the jungle. And they proceeded in peace.

They lodged in a choultry, near the temple at Srirangam. Kooresa was far too exhausted. He had no food throughout the three-day long trek. The wife heard the temple bells ringing to announce the "Presentation of Food Offerings to Lord Ranganatha." She cried out to the Lord, "Your servant is stricken by starvation. How can you, O Lord, feast on the offerings, knowing how he suffers?" In a few minutes, a procession from the Temple reached the choultry. A band of pipers and drummers led the long line of priests and pundits. The Lord had commanded them to take the food offerings to his devotees at the choultry. They brought silver plates and vessels full of a rich variety of dishes.

Kooresa rose and sat up. He protested, "I did not pray for food. The Lord should grant me what I need and pray for. He cannot give me what I do not ask for! How can this Atma ask the Paramatma for something to fill the stomach?" Because the temple priests pressed him to partake of the Prasad, he tasted a little and gave a little to the wife. Then he questioned her, "Did you commit the mistake? Did you pray for food?" She replied, "Lord! I did not ask so. I only had a feeling in my mind, 'How could you, O Krishna, accept those offerings when your servant is starving?'"

He who gives when asked and what is asked is the Prabhu. He who gives unasked, what one knows not to ask, is the Vibhu. Prabhu means a lord, Vibhu means the Cosmic Ruler. We should not use the Vibhu to acquire what we feel we most need. This is the reason why the poet has sung:

Refrain from asking, O Mind I
The more you ask, the deeper it plumbs
And the longer it takes for the answer to rise.

Did He not, without being asked,
Fulfill Sabari's anguished wish?
Did He not bless the bird Jatayu
Who died for Him, unasked,
Asking for nought instead?

Thus, Koorasa instructed his mind and earned peace. Every Avatar seeks to raise humanity to the level of Divinity by laying down such paths of devotion and holding forth such examples of surrender.

"I do not know anything other than you." "You are the one and only." When one has this faith, why allow desire to creep in? Why ask for this or that?

In the Ramayana too, this lesson is emphasised. Renouncing every source of sustenance and sweetness in life, Rama, Sita and Lakshmana entered the forests as exiles. Nevertheless, when Sita saw a golden deer, she asked for it! And, as a consequence she was, exiled from Rama Himself. Have faith in God, the Giver of All, the only Treasure we need; then, He will fill you with contentment

(To be continued)

—Gokulashtami discourse at Prasanthi Nilayam on 12-8-82

Sai Family News

Tamil Nadu:

A free dental camp was held at 'Abbotsbury', Madras, on July 25 at which 1590 patients—from 3-year-old children to septuagenarians - were treated for all types of dental ailments. Nearly 40 doctors from the Madras Dental College, led by Dr. B P. Rajan, and a few private dental surgeons served in the camp. About 200 volunteers from Tamil Nadu Sathya Sai Seva Organisations served as para-medical workers. All the latest gadgets were used, including an ultrasonic motor. The preventive dentistry section, wherein an exhibition and a film show were held, attracted large crowds. Apart from giving free medicines, free food packets were provided for the patients and their relatives. Mr. S. Ramachandran, Minister for Electricity, who inaugurated the camp, appreciated the way it had been organised and commended the spirit of service of the doctors and the Sai volunteers.

North India

In the Sai Programme of spiritual sadhana, bhajans occupy an important place. With a view to enabling Sai Samitis to develop their bhajan activity more meaningfully and effectively, the Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, New Delhi, (which covers Delhi, Chandigarh and Himachal Pradesh), organised a two-day seminar-cum-training programme on March 13 and 14 last, at Chawla Sat Sangha Bhavan, Kirti Nagar, New Delhi. Delegates from the neighbouring states of

Haryana (20), Punjab (17), Uttar Pradesh (28), Madhya Pradesh (19), Rajasthan (25), Chandigarh and Himachal Pradesh (2) participated. Delegates from Delhi numbered 82. The total number of participants at one time was about 400.

There were lectures on the two days on topics like 'Namasmarana Movement', "What is Nama Mahima and its Objective", "Inner meanings of different names and forms", "Nagarsankirtan—its aims and objectives", "Whom to worship and Modes of Worship", "Effect of Bhajans on Health", "Power of Bhajans and Prayers", "Why group singing and its importance", 'Rituals in the spiritual development of man', "Om-karam and its significance in Bhajans", "Realisation of God-Karma, Bhakti and Jnana." The lives of saints like Thyagaraja, Meera Bai, Kabir, Nanak, Chaitanya, Surdas, Tulsidas, Namdev, Adisankara and others were highlighted by the speakers in their talks. The afternoon sessions were devoted to practical demonstrations of bhajan singing, its technique, musical aspects, and the Do's and Don'ts of this Sadhana.

As a souvenir for the occasion the Delhi Samiti published a small booklet of Bhajans, based on the recommendations of the World Council.

Ibadan (Nigeria)

The Sathya Sai Baba Centre is constructing a Prayer Hall and Service Centre. The front facade defines the Presence of all-important religions in the world and the fusion of each of them, which is the very basis of Sai Faith.

N. Lakhimpur (Assam)

The Sathya Sai Seva Samiti, finding that the Bangladeshi Muslims who have infiltrated into-the area, had the, problem of rehabilitating their children through schooling, has started pre-primary and primary classes for about 70 children in the Samiti Hall. The syllabus of the Human Values course is also followed. The parents of the pupils have felt the impact. They are now attending literacy classes and vigorously adopting savings schemes.

Keonjhar (Orissa)

The Seva Samiti has started at the Sai Nilayam premises a Crèche for the children of female wage-earners at the mines and quarries in the mine area. It gives to children milk and eatables, dolls and toys, as well as medical care. It works from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M. on 6 days in the week.

Gauhati (Assam)

A pilot course on the Syllabus for the teaching of human values prepared by the Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas Trust was inaugurated by Sri Saran Singh, Adviser to the Governor of Assam. Sri V. Natarajan, Adviser to the Governor presided. Dr. J. M. Choudhury, the Vice Chancellor of the Gauhati University addressed the gathering. Smt. K. Mani Amma, of the Bal Vikas Trust, explained the significance and implications of the course and the syllabus. 40 teachers from various primary schools attended the course.

Ghaziabad (U. P.)

During His recent visit to the States of North and Central India, Bhagavan blessed a unique Sai Mandir at Ghaziabad, built in the form of a Siva Linga. In 1978 He had given a Ganesha Murti to be installed therein.

Kalimpong

The Sathya Sai Seva Samiti at Kalimpong (West Bengal) has just completed construction of an auditorium, in which bhajans are held every evening. The Samiti adopted a remote village, Shahujigaon, for development along Sai lines. The Seva Dal members have constructed a link road for the village and erected water tanks and latrines. Bhajans have been taught to the children and adults.

Satsang—the Key to Sadhana

To thousands of devotees who gathered at 'Sundaram' or on the spacious grounds of 'Abbotsbury', Bhagavan's all-too-brief visit to Madras in August was like a refreshing summer shower of grace, cooling their hearts and illumining their spirits.

Bhagavan's unexpected visit was availed of by the Tamil Nadu Samiti to organise bhajans at 'Sundaram' on August 1 and 2 and to hold a children's rally and a public meeting in 'Abbotsbury' on August 2. In addition there were Nagarsankirtans on Sunday and Monday in which hundreds of devotees, men and women, participated, going round the streets near 'Sundaram', before sunrise. Bhagavan gave them all graciously His blessings from the balcony of the Mandir, filling them with ineffable bliss.

Although the meeting on August 2 was scheduled to begin at 5-30 p.m., crowds started pouring into the Abbotsbury grounds from 2 p.m. and the Seva Dal volunteers had a tough job regulating them.

Bhagavan arrived at 5 p.m. at Abbotsbury to witness a Bal Vikas children's rally. Swami was visibly moved when he heard the children—boys and girls, including tiny tots—taking the pledge to live up to His ideals of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema and prepare themselves for a life of dedicated service.

The Abbotsbury hall was packed with Samithi members and special invitees, besides devotees from the City and outside. After the bhajans and the welcome address to Bhagavan, Dr. P.K. Sundaram, Professor of Philosophy in the Madras University, spoke in Tamil on Bhagavan's mission today when the world was passing through a crisis of the spirit. Bhagavan's aim, he said, was to create a new Dharmic society, based on the eternal verities of Sanathana Dharma. More than political Swaraj, we needed 'Atmaswarajyam'—spiritual freedom.

Bhagavan's discourse, beginning with a poem extolling the supreme value of unity in thought, word and deed, was punctuated with more than a dozen poems, sung in His own mellifluous voice, making the evening a memorable spiritual experience for one and all. Deprecating mere book knowledge of the scriptures or Puranas, Bhagavan emphasised that knowledge gathered from personal experience and practice was the only thing that mattered.

Bhagavan devoted a considerable part of His discourse to emphasising the importance of Satsang—the company of the good and the righteous—for all spiritual aspirants. “Avoid evil company and cultivate the association of the good.” How disastrous contact with the evil-minded can be was illustrated by Bhagavan by a reference to the way Queen Kaikeyi's mind was changed by Manthara. The words of the malicious can poison the minds even of the best persons. Bhagavan recalled the Sage Vasishta's advice to Sri Rama regarding the value of Satsang. Bhagavan advised Sal devotees to eschew the company of the wicked, the proud and the arrogant, and associate only with “Sajjanas”—good people who radiate goodness in their thoughts, words and deeds.

In a discourse replete with practical advice about daily life, Bhagavan drove home the point that "Guna" (character) was more important than 'Dhanam' (wealth), that 'knowledge without action is useless, while action without knowledge is foolishness', and that the only true relative to whom one should adhere in life is God.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with an appeal to every one to cultivate respect for other people's faiths and beliefs, while following one's own Dharma with devotion and faith.

After the discourse, there was a delightful entertainment programme by Bal Vikas children, who presented “Meenakshi Kalyanam” as a ballet and a play based on one of Bhagavan's parables to illustrate the difference between genuine Bhakti, which expressed itself in love to one's fellowmen, and showy devotion to God, devoid of compassion.

Saving Grace

The storm which hit Paradeep port on the night of June 3 with such devastating violence, was a great spiritual ordeal for the local Sathya Sai Seva Samiti, which had organised a free eye camp for that day after two months of preparations. Here is a Seva Dal member's -account of his experiences on the occasion:

Our patients, about 50, were being prepared from yesterday (June 2) evening to lie on the operation table in an improvised operation theatre set up for the purpose in a long asbestos shed of a local school.

There was torrential rain in the morning. As the weather worsened, the doctors debated if the operations could be gone through. Save Dal workers and more local doctors arrived thoroughly drenched. The operations started at 10-30 a.m. The doctors did an excellent job, foregoing their lunch, of operating by the help of powerful torch-lights, about 50 patients. By 5 30 p.m. the patients were dressed, and taken to their respective beds.

And then the storm broke. An unprecedented cyclone struck the entire coast, spelling devastation all round. Suddenly the wind rose and we heard a loud roar—perhaps the surrounding compound walls had fallen or the trees near had been uprooted! We, who were in a

small room, huddled together calling out Sairam as loud as we could, were feeling desperate! We heard some women patients cry. We pushed open our door, and crossed over to the hall where some of our brothers were struggling hard to save the patients from direct rain and wind which had already broken two windows. Almost all patients were drenched, and were sitting in a corner dazed, terrified, trying to save the bandaged eyes.

We somehow transported them to another room and seated them on chairs, stood around them and started Bhajan. The doctors who operated and the patients operated upon had no lunch, and there was no possibility of getting any lunch for them now. Someone remembered that there was a tin of biscuits in the storeroom and some Amul spray. Provisions were retrieved with great effort, but no biscuit was in the tin except a sticky pulp! Somehow the hungry mouths were fed by 2 a.m. in the night and we had to go through the rest of the terrible night only singing bhajans.

A long-awaited morning dawned. The storm had passed and the rains had stopped. We started walking out only to stumble over a thoroughly devastated area! Walls had fallen, trees had been uprooted, roofs had been blown away, and roads were unrecognizable. A ship had run aground! But our lone asbestos hall stood proudly among the wreckage. The Chief Medical Officer of the Port arrived along with a few others with sleepless and anxious eyes. The supervising doctors had already examined the patients and declared that everyone was fine and wonderful, quietly tucked away in freshly spread beds! We were speechless with gratitude to our Lord for His profound concern for His suffering children.

Thus spake Bhagavan:

The Fourteen

The Puranas speak of Fourteen Lokas. People have adopted the superficial meaning of the names given to these and they classify them into sacred lokas and condemned lokas,—Deva Lokas and Patala Lokas. But, all these lokas do exist in reality, in our own bodies, the bodies which we carry about and care for, seven in the upper part and seven in the lower part.

Which is the upper part of the human body? It is the head, the Trikuta Peak, the Crown, the Higher Region. Seven lokas are situated therein. They are the Garuda Loka, the Gandharva Loka, the Yaksha Loka, the Kinnara Loka and the Kimpurusha Loka. They are all situated in the Head. The Garuda Loka is in the Nose, the seat of inhalation and exhalation. The Gandharva Loka is in the Eye. The Yaksha Loka is in the tongue. Kinnara Loka is in the Ear and the Kimpurusha, the skin, seat of the Sense of Touch. Though the names of the Lokas are five, there are seven regions to which the name applies. The Nose is the first, the eyes are the second and the third, the tongue is the fourth, the ears are the fifth and the sixth, and the skin, the seventh. These seven are the Upper Lokas.

Those who sanctify these lokas by recognising the respective organs as instruments for higher ideals can be deemed worthy of human existence. That is to say, inhaling unpolluted air, seeing

auspicious sights, hearing heartening sounds, etc. These Lokas when properly cultivated, can make man divine.

Dost thou know why you are given eyes?
To see whatever can be seen!
No! No!
To fill the eye with Vision of God
Who resides on Kailash Mount.

We have to cast our looks at sacred sights. We must visualise in every one only the good and the godly. That is the purpose for which God has equipped us with eyes. He has not gifted them to us to observe and judge others, to follow people into the bazaar, to see unsightly things like films.

Dost thou know why you have a tongue?
To dispatch tasty foods in?
No! No!

The prime purpose is not to enable us to swallow our meals. The object is to utter holy words. When some one is narrating some good incidents, the ears show no inclination to listen. But when one whispers something confidential to another, the ears jointly seek to overhear. Is it for this that God has blessed us with ears?

Therefore, the seven higher lokas have to be utilised for Divine ends. When that is done, one becomes divinised, one is liberated.

The rest of the Lokas are intended for the maintenance of the physical frame in which we are enclosed. The stomach is the petrol tank, so to say. When that is filled, every limb and cell of the body is supplied with energy and activated, to execute the beneficial duties assigned to each. With the two hands and the two legs, these make five lokas. The two others are the anal and the urinal parts.

These Seven nether Lokas maintain the physical body.

Both the higher seven and the lower seven are necessary; they complement each other. The lower lokas are the Patala lokas according to Puranas. They form the foundation, the base. Those who long for flowers and fruits have to feed the unseen roots. Patala too should not be neglected merely because they are described as "low". Joy has to be churned from grief. Pleasure is a product of pain.

—*From Bhagavan's Discourse at the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning,
Prasanthi Nilayam, 28-5-82*

The True Friend

Of all human relationships in this world I am convinced, the most valuable one is that of a friend. It is when a parent, a spouse, a child or a colleague becomes a friend that these relationships take on a special meaning and are cherished. So, by nature, one searches constantly, knowingly or unknowingly, to find a friend in all encounters.

I have searched high and low, far and wide to find a friend: a friend whom I could depend on to share my joys and sorrows without reservations: a friend in whom I could confide all my weaknesses without fear of being judged: a friend whose wisdom I could depend on to guide me when I was at the crossroads: and most of all a friend whom I could trust to be honest to my face, to point out my shortcomings lovingly.

The search must have started when I was still young, I do not recall. It led me to my father. I was contented, but only briefly. The search started again, now with more vigour, till I was blessed with my companion for life. I felt I had found what I had been looking for. That satisfaction did not last very long. There was a strong conviction that there was a greater friend yet, that I had not met. It was at this point that I was pulled to the feet of our dear Lord Sai. I sighed. At last the search was over.

'No', He said. 'Look again and search more and you will find your true friend.' 'How can I have a better friend?' I asked myself. Who can be more loving, honest, wise and strong than this friend I had found? I was contented with this unselfish, totally giving friend and did not want to search more. But He insisted that I had to search and I would truly know when I could stop. Reluctantly I started again, always looking back over my shoulder to my Sai whom I was leaving. He kept reassuring me, every time I looked back, that the search was worth its while. Suddenly, in a brief flash, I realized what Sai Baba had been urging me to find. Sai had wanted me to find myself as my true friend. It was I that I could depend on, I that I could share my all with and I that I could look up to for guidance. The confidence and love of my Sai is giving me the confidence in myself. I still look back over my shoulder often and find Sai is there to guide and love, but insisting to learn to look on.

With their love for me and their confidence in me, my earlier friends—my father and my husband—had paved my way to befriend Baba and myself. If I could offer such a friendship, even for a brief period, for even a few, I would have made my sojourn on this earth worthwhile.

—Hema Gopinathan, Windsor, Canada

Egoism is the seed-pot of greed, envy, malice, conceit and a host of other down-dragging tendencies. They cloud his intelligence; they divert the attention from truth and make the false appear as real, the real distorted as false. So, it becomes essential to cleanse the mind of these, through regular Sadhana, to tune the little will to the Infinite will of God, so that it becomes merged in His Glory. Scholarship or skill, however deep and varied, have no cleansing power. They only add the alloys of pride and competition. Learned men are not necessarily good, nor

are men with spiritual powers over nature above pride, envy and greed. Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema d re the hall-marks of a purified heart, a heart where God is enshrined and is manifest.

—Baba

Unto Him a Witness

As a prelude to this account, I would like to state that attempting to realize the true nature of life has always been a prominent aspect of my life experience-on a fairly constant basis. The prayer below was written by me in the late fifties.

Help me Lord
I search for truth
Beyond the world of sight
And the thoughts of 'me'
Help me, Lord
For if I exist I am
All People, and
All People are Thee

My earliest memory of "seeing" Swami was in 1968 or 1969. I was in Vancouver, British Columbia, and spent much of the time practising a very ascetic regimen of spiritual and "psychic" inquiry.

During this period I was experiencing telepathic communication, dream prophecy, limited 'astral' travel, long distance viewing and hearing, and "retro" viewing (that is, dream-witnessing events which had already happened but of which I had no prior knowledge but of which I would later get confirmation through oral or written accounts).

In one meditation session I had the blissful experience of myself as a body-less, placeless center of "light".

Much information was coming into my consciousness regarding spiritual guides and teachers. On one such occasion I witnessed a scene in which there appeared to be an East Indian Guru with devotees sitting around him in an informal but reverent manner. The night was clear and the Guru looked up into the sky as a star fell from its position with a trail of light behind it. The Guru told the disciples that some other Indian mystic (I can't recall the name) had just "given up", or "Spit out" his body. The man who spoke did not have long flowing hair, but bushy "Afro" type hair. I did not receive his name.

I saw another scene (different night?). The setting was outside a factory somewhere in India. There was an old bearded man sitting on a bus stop bench outside the factory yard fence and a factory worker was standing in front of him. I seem to recall that the worker got on a bus that came, but before he did, there was some sort of exchange between him and the old man. Later,

this worker had the occasion to be in the presence of the same Guru of the first dream, who told him that he (the Guru) had changed his form and was the old man on the bench.

Several months later when I had returned to the U.S., I was visiting a friend who showed me a book about an incredible Indian mystic named Sathya Sai Baba. As I looked through it I discovered accounts of the two incidents I have related above, and I recalled having the dreams. It was both wondrous and a puzzlement that this information was in a book that had been published for some time—which meant the dreams I had were some sort of look into the past!

Since then, I have had many such 'past' and 'future' encounters with Swami which have been verified either by passages in books about Him, photographs, or oral accounts from devotees. From that initial experience in 1969, Swami was definitely a part of my consciousness. I had no doubt that He is a True Teacher, but I still did not consider myself His student or devotee, nor did I even entertain the possibility. But I know that I was graced in so many ways: I had a film about Him for a while that my family and I enjoyed and shared with others; I had the opportunity to hold a photograph on which he had placed a "psychic charge"; I heard about Indra Devi; and also, my friend (who is a gifted jeweller) placed some Sai Vibhuti in the wedding rings he made for my wife, Lorraine, and me. On one occasion I held a Sai "manifested" gift that He made for a friend who visited Him around 1970.

However, it wasn't until December of 1980 that I had the experience from which I was to emerge as a Devotee.

Lorraine and I operate a modest food processing business, and as one can imagine, small business ownership is very demanding—'25 hours a day, 8 days a week,' I always say. And some times it really feels that way. In the Fall of '80 we had a heavy schedule between a thankfully busy period at work and numerous social functions. I am usually in fine health, but evidently this time I had let my guard down, and my resistance was low. I started getting the signals at the end of November, but I hardly took notice. In December we made an arduous business trip to Florida—to participate in an industry trade show. My chest pains were increasing. Sensibly, I should not have gone. I worked the show with intense fever and tried to do the follow-up regional field event as planned—lasted one day and ended up flying back to L.A. on the first flight out I could get. I was in a semi-delirious state. The doctor at home sent me to bed with a pulse rate of 100 and a temperature of 105! He diagnosed a bronchial virus with bacteriological complications. I can't recall ever having been so sick. It was during this period that Baba became prominent in my consciousness. I felt frightened and lost. I was not able to derive much comfort from Lorraine's devoted attention or from anyone else I could think of. I had an overwhelming yearning for contact with someone whom I could communicate with about God-reality outside the endless, futile world of illusion in which I felt trapped—because it seemed to demand so much of my attention. I felt a despairing sense of dark loneliness.

Swami's name came to me and I began chanting it to slow down my pulse rate. I was sure that it would work, but in any case it gave me great comfort to do it. One night Swami appeared in the "middle distance" of my mind and I felt immediate assurance. I intuitively understood that He was rescuing me (though I have no memory of experiencing Him since the time spoken of at the beginning of this account).

He took my right hand in both of His and I felt an incredible "charge" of energy flow through me. I knew then that I would heal, and soon.

He was restoring my physical health, but more importantly, He was answering my other call, too—the longing of this soul to know God-Truth. I knew that I had found a genuine Teacher and Friend. I also had the revelation that the only action, or true value, in the world, is loving service to others. This world is God's altar. I knew that when I got up from that bed I must do service in the world. I had been a "taker" most of my life, and it was time to grow beyond that.

And so, for the first time, still not knowing of the vastness of Swami's great Works, Teachings, Generosity, Compassion, Power or Fame, I sought out a Sai Center—and that was when this person's story truly began.

I am a constant witness to Baba's great Works in my life and in the lives of others. Not Baba, the little figure somewhere way off in India, but Baba who is the Formless Essence of Creation, who is everywhere present and, indeed, the Tender Shepherd.

—*K. L. D., Los Angeles*

Vidya Vahini

19

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Of the three instruments used by man for thinking, speaking and action, the third instrument is the body with its hands ready to execute the thought which is expressed in words. The deed, the work, the labour that the hand of man is engaged in are the source of all the happiness or misery that man is involved in. Man asserts that he is happy, or that he is anxious and afraid or that he is in trouble: And he attributes the cause of these conditions to some person other than himself. This belief rests on a wrong basis; happiness and misery are due to one's own actions. Whether one accepts this truth or rejects it, one has to go through all the consequences of one's action. This is the law of nature. One may not believe in summer or winter, in fire or rain, but one cannot escape from heat and cold. Their effect will affect him, nevertheless. Therefore, the best course is to direct our activities along proper lines.

Hands are not the only limbs or agents that are involved in human activity or Karma. Whatever is done, whatever is seen, whatever is heard, one should be vigilant about its purity. Thought, word and deed must be free from pride, greed and hatred. The words that one utters must be free from these faults; things that one yearns to hear must be free from these superficially attractive qualities; the pleasures that one seeks must not be polluted by evil. Students must first assimilate these mental lessons and demonstrate their effect in their speech. The lessons that are taught by words must be translated by them into action.

Today, however, education does not transform the mind. It stops with listening process, through the ear. What enters the ear might not be clear to the mind; it might reach the mind in a hazy form only. So education has to be so imparted that it is received by the mind clearly. To achieve this aim, it has to be transmitted through heads, tongues and hands that are pure, with no blemish that warps. Then only can the learning be clear and the wisdom bright.

Students study only for a few years but teachers, in order to justify being in the profession, have to be engaged in studies always, without stopping. So teachers are to be reckoned as the only genuine students. To the question, who is a real student the answer is, 'The teacher'. 'I shall be the ideal student which my pupils can emulate': this must be the motto inspiring the teacher. Such a teacher has surely recognised his duty. The teacher must come down to the level of the student; if he does not and still continues to teach, the fate of the student is best left to the imagination.

This is the process called 'Descent'. It does not mean stepping down from the top to the ground. It means only accepting the level of the person who is to be benefitted. The baby on the floor cannot jump to the arms of the mother, when she calls upon it to come up. 'I am a great person; I cannot stoop'—if the mother feels like that she cannot possess the child. Stooping does not make a person small. The teacher too, is not demeaning himself when he comes down to the level of the pupil in order to teach him. It is only a laudable sign of Love.

Many teachers, at the present time, have fallen into the habit of asserting, "Well! I have got ready one lesson on one topic for today. My duty is to speak on that. I will do just that and go." Have the pupils grasped the lesson aright? Which subject has to be taught in which way, through which method? These problems do not seem to bother them. Moreover they should conduct themselves just in the same manner as they advise and expect the students to behave. When they are taught the lessons through love their reverence for the teacher will also be deepened. Each teacher should strive to encourage the all-round development of the student. He must expand his own heart through Love, and not waste the years of his life in furthering his own interest.

The teacher should not cultivate divisive traits. The Rishis and sages of ancient times treated their own sons and their students with equal affection. Today we have lost faith that our teachers are of this nature. When the principal's son is answering question papers for an examination in one hall, the principal will not be posted as invigilator there, lest he should dictate the correct answers and help his son to get good marks! But, in the hermitages of old, there would be no suspicion that the guru would show such preference or partiality. Today corruption has crept into thought, word and deed at all levels. Hence these precautions. Teachers have to adopt the Sadhana of purifying their emotions in order that they may earn the status and authority of gurus. The true guru must lead the pupil into worthy and happy life. And the true pupil must respond with eagerness and adoration.

Teachers are responsible for the nature and quality of the activities and character of students. For they impress the youth by their scholarship and leadership. So, they must keep clear of selfish aggrandizement and political manoeuvring and have spiritual enlightenment alone as their ideal in life. The members of the teaching staff must move among themselves as brothers. Students become aware of differences and rivalries between their teachers. Of course, differences

are inevitable and may even be useful. But, they should not pollute mutual relations, hinder the progress of the institution and affect adversely the processes of teaching and learning. In these fields, they must consult each other and cooperate with others.

Among students too we do not find this spirit of singleness of purpose and fraternal cooperation. Sadbhav and Satsang have become rare; mutual love and yearning for good company have weakened. "As the ruler (Raja), so the ruled (Praja)", says the proverb. "As the teacher, so the pupil" seems to be equally true. Teachers, therefore, have to be interested in high thinking and a life soaked in renunciation. The person who is an expert in chemistry or physics may not know as much of biology as an expert in that science. But there is every need for them all to be friendly and work as a team. For, whatever the science one specialises in, the science of the spirit, the science that leads to the ultimate Truth has also to be mastered. At the Atomic Research Centre, I said that everything has energy latent in it—a piece of paper has it, a strip of cloth has it. When the latent energy is exhausted, death results; when energy fills, birth happens. Sat-chit-ananda is energy. We (Sat) are (Chit) happy (Ananda). Energy is all and energy is derived from God. That is the very basis of man. Now, we are building superstructures somewhere else, not on the basis. The foundational Divine Principle is being ignored. We are fascinated by subjects and studies that promise to feed out stomachs and make us materially happy and powerful. But, the hard truth is the Divine beneath all. Man must either know the supreme Truth of the One Being behind all Becoming or at least know the practical Truth of Love and Brotherhood. These two points are the limits which education must even keep in mind—the starting point and the goal.

(Concluded)

Balaram, Krishna and Sudama

The teaching profession bears the largest burden and has the greatest responsibility. That profession decides the destiny of nations. The duty of transforming the country into the home of festive delight and ever-green contentment is the teacher's own. But, education has become confined to laboratories and blackboards, lecture-halls and classrooms. Awareness is Life. The student must be aware of every subject that arouses wonder and attracts attention all over the world and even in the cosmos. He must be keen to have clear knowledge of all varieties of things.

This is the reason why in ancient times pupils were trained by the Gurus in hermitages. The best example of that system of teaching and learning is the education given to the two brothers, Balaram and Krishna. Though they were the children of a rich chieftain, they were entrusted to the care of the Guru who moulded them into highly venerable personalities. They lived in the home of Sandeepani, the Guru; they took their food mere, they served the teacher and spent the years of training with him. They ate their food only after the Guru had finished his meal; they received their meal as his boon. They washed and dried his clothes and learnt many things through the path of reverential service. Sandeepani instructed them in material, moral and spiritual sciences.

Of course, his home contained no blackboard or laboratory or even a library. Through loving dialogue, through the process of question and answer, the Guru taught them the skills and the knowledge that were most worthwhile. There were no printing presses then and no paper. So, listening, reciting, recollecting, presenting doubts and accepting the explanations offered—these were the means used to teach and learn. The pupils developed single-pointed attention and fixed in their minds the lessons thus imparted.

In order that the pupils may learn more things about Nature and the World, the Guru used to send them out into the thick jungle to collect dry sticks from sacred trees to feed the ritual fire he worshipped at home every day and the sacrificial fire he had to light on holy days. He sent the Brahmin boy Sudama with them, since Balaram and Krishna could not identify the sacred tree from which the dry twigs had to be broken and brought. The Guru sent them on these expeditions in order that they might learn about Nature, about growth and decay, about the mystery of seed and soil. Of course, the Brothers knew all the mystery. But, they drew the attention of their young companion to the beauty and the wonder. "Look at this plant, Sudama!" Balaram said. "When it secures a tree near by, it clings to it and winds round it. It uses the chance without delay. We too must learn to benefit from every opportunity as soon as it presents itself. A few minutes later, Balaram induced Sudama to look at a flower. "See how this beautifully coloured flower makes the forest itself shine with its charm!" He helped Sudama to glimpse the truth that Beauty is God. God delights in Beauty, he told him.

Later, pointing to a wide-spreading tree, he told Sudama how that tree was proclaiming, "Your Ananda is my Ananda," while putting forth branches in many directions in order to provide

shade to animals and men. "Therefore, we too must try to make others happy, others contented, others delighted, so that we can be happy, contented and delighted," he advised.

Krishna intervened rather mischievously to teach another lesson. He fingered a beautiful flower and even as he touched it, the petals fell apart and dropped down. He said, 'Sudama! See! Our touch was enough to destroy the flower-the petals fell off to fade and rot. Man's hand can pull apart and destroy. God's hand alone can create a flower and make it blossom into beauty and fragrance. Who, do you think, painted these brilliant colours, these Varnas?' he asked Sudama. 'Sudama! By the word Varna, you may infer that I am speaking of what are called castes, segments of society, distinctions based on race; profession or nature, the Brahmin, the Kshatriya, the Vaishya and the Shudra. You declare you are a Brahmin. But remember,' said Krishna, "every Varna arises out of the Ananda of God. Each one contributes to that total beauty of His Creation. Every creed teaches only good; know this and pass through life. What can creeds do to divide you if your mind is strong and pure?" "So, Sudama, do not feel superior on the basis of your Varna," Krishna told Sudama. That was the lesson taught by the Gurus in the past. His pupils were brothers of one another. They were all free to move as brothers of one family.

The Guru placed before himself three duties to his pupils: (1) to develop in them the, joy, of physical labour. Only those who have gone through pain and suffering can understand and sympathise with those who are in pain and those who suffer; (2) To ensure the physical health of the child so that it can have a healthy mind; (3) To promote sharpness of intellect. Intelligence is not to be measured or promoted by placing 'question papers' before them and challenging them to write the answers. What the pupil has learnt has to brighten or modify his conduct and attitude.

The Guru sent the three boys into the jungle with these three aims in view. It was an educational excursion. Even today, teachers of Botany and Zoology take their students on such excursions but they have little educational value. They are spent more in sight-seeing and picnics than in learning and improving knowledge. The pupils in the Gurukula had to study the characteristics of trees in order to collect twigs from the right ones. Each one of the three sent by Sandeepani climbed a tree and broke off as many dry twigs as each could carry back to the hermitage.

Balaram and Krishna appeared exhausted since they were not used to such exertions, Krishna pleaded with Sudama, who was sent as their guide, "Sudama! I am acutely thirsty. Get me some water.' Sudama replied, 'Krishna! You have apparently forgotten what our Guru has taught us. Has he not told us that, before you drink water to allay thirst, you must eat some solid item of food?' Krishna responded innocently with the question; "Where can we get solid food? Find some fruit." But Sudama said, "This is early spring. Leaves are falling and buds are emerging. How can fruits come so soon?"

Krishna said that he must rest a while. "Sudama! At home I used a pillow to rest my head. Please allow me to use your thigh as a pillow. Sit down and allow me to stretch myself." Sudama sat with his legs folded in the lotus posture. Students, in those days, generally sat in the lotus pose. Then Krishna laid himself on the ground with his head resting on one thigh of Sudama and Balaram too rested with his head on the other. After some time, judging that the brothers were sleeping, Sudama started munching a handful of parched rice which he had brought with him

from the hermitage. Krishna knows everything that happens. He pretended to be waking and rubbed his eyes with his palm. He asked, "What are you eating, Sudama?"

Sudama could not make up his mind to speak the truth. He invented a lie. 'Krishna! What have I here to eat? I am also tired and thirsty. So, I am reciting to myself the 1008 Names of the Lord Vishnu. The movement of face, tongue and lips has led you to conclude that I am eating something, that is all,' he said. Krishna understood the situation. He said, 'Sudama! It was an interesting dream that I had just before waking up.' Sudama asked, 'What was the dream?' Krishna began describing it. "Three friends journeyed through a jungle. Two of them got so exhausted that they laid themselves to rest and sleep. 'This is the chance,' the third man thought, 'to eat what I have kept hidden so long,' and he started munching the parched rice. When one of his companions asked him what he was eating, the man who was munching in my dream said the same thing, 'I am reciting the 1008 Names of the Lord.' While I was dreaming thus, I wanted to ask that man, 'is it right for you to speak a lie?' but before I could do so, I woke up. I found you."

In those days pupils never uttered falsehood while talking or playing or even while joking. When anyone spoke a lie it caused a shock to all; they treated it as very unnatural and strange. So Krishna warned his friend, 'Sudama! When we plant a seed in the soil, it does not immediately produce fruits.' Sudama agreed. 'It is true,' he said. "The seed sprouts, puts forth leaves, grows into a tree, flowers bloom and at last we get the fruits." Krishna said, "Take care. You have planted a lie today. You will get the fruit some day."

Well, all three returned to the hermitage of the Guru. Later, when they completed their education, Sudama went his way and the two brothers went to their native town.

Krishna grew to become a world figure; he was at Dwaraka, resplendent as an imperial ruler. Sudama, the boyhood chum, was steeped in poverty, having many children to feed and foster. One day his wife said, "You are aware how our children suffer for want of food, clothing, and shelter. Go to your boyhood companion Krishna, and pray to him for some help to relieve us of this distress." Sudama was obsessed by doubt. "I am miserably poor," he thought. "Will Krishna agree to see me?" he asked himself. "Will he recognise me after so many years and such a plight? Will he deign to come to my rescue?" he argued and grieved. Women in those days were not scholars, but since there were resident pupils learning lessons from their husbands, they heard and remembered the mantras, hymns and texts that were taught. The home itself was a valuable school for them. So, she persuaded Sudama to proceed courageously and confidently to Krishna's Presence. He knew that since boyhood Krishna liked eating parched rice and so directed her to get a little ready. With that offering safe with him, he started on the journey to Dwaraka. Those at the entrance to the palace stopped him there itself, as his appearance was slovenly and his body was emaciated. He pleaded with them, announcing that Krishna was his chum, his companion in boyhood while they were together under the same Guru. Even while he was entreating them to admit him into the palace, Krishna came in His splendourous chariot on His way to the suburban gardens. At this, the soldiers at the gate forcibly pushed Sudama aside and he fell on the ground. Krishna saw the fallen man; He knew it was Sudama; He stopped the chariot and came down; He hurried to where His friend lay. He sat in the lotus pose and placed his head raised on His thighs. He shook him saying, "Sudama! It is I, Krishna." He had cold

water brought and held it in a cup for Sudama to drink. Sudama regained consciousness. Then Krishna re-entered the palace taking Sudama with Him.

We see here the working of the law of cause and effect, of action and reaction. We receive what we have given. That is done to us which we have done to others. Sudama did not offer parched rice to Krishna when he wanted it, so he had to go to Krishna to beg. That day Krishna was given as pillow Sudama's thigh; so, he could get Krishna's thigh as his headrest.

Sudama was led into the inner apartments. He had his bath. He was given new clothes. He was entertained at a big feast. All that you do is imprinted as a picture in the mind of God. So Sudama was blessed with boons of health, happiness and the constant Presence of the Lord. Reaching home, he told his wife, "As soon as He saw me, He alighted from His chariot and drew me to Himself with a broad smile. With a face glowing with joy, He looked at me from head to foot. He embraced me most lovingly! How can I describe His love towards the weak and the poor! Love is He; He is Love. Can anyone else accept and eat a handful of rice given by this poor ragged Sudama, except Krishna?"

This is how fellow-students came together and loved each other in those days.

—*Bhagavan's discourse to Students at Vidyagiri*

THE MESSAGE DIVINE:

Buddhi and Siddhi

*Without charitableness and virtue,
devoid of truth and mercy,
With a barren mind that knows no justice or law;
With hands engaged ever in wicked deeds,
If man lives on earth, he loses this world and the next.
As evanescent as a dewdrop on a lotus leaf
That glistens for a little while,
Is life! Beware! Do not get attached
To this world of grief and fear.
Can you not call on Hari Narayana?
Say Hari Govinda, Hari Govinda!
Hari Govinda! Can't you say, you fool!*

Embodiments of Love!

Life is a series of ups and downs. It is disturbed by illness and obstacles, pain and anxiety. The world has an attractive appearance, but it is the breeding ground of sorrow. The sword of the God of Death dangles over the head of every human being. One does not know when it will strike him. Life glistens like a drop of dew on a lotus leaf. The dew-drop, resembling a pearl,

teaches us a lesson. The lotus leaf on which it shines is not affected by it, though the lotus plant is born in water, grows in water and lives in water!

The-Brahman, the Sat-Chit-Ananda, the Sathyam-Jnanam-Anantham, blossoms in its subtle form like the lotus. It is referred to as Narayana, that is to say, emerging from water. Narayana is also lotus-navelled. He has a lotus palm. He has eyes like lotus. So, He is Narayana. And Brahma, all Creation, is in the Lotus wherein Brahma was manifested.

Life is like the dewdrop. The leaf is Maya or Ajnana or nescience. So, what man seeks and secures as joy is not genuine at all. Any moment, the drop may roll off the leaf and merge in its source below. This is bound to happen. So long as it is a drop, it is separate. The moment it (the Jivi) falls into the lake, it merges in the Atma principle. As a drop, it is enclosed in a form and has a name, and it is in ignorance when it recognises that form and that name as its own. And sorrow will persist as long as Ignorance continues, that is to say, as long as you believe you are the body, with the senses, the mind, the reasoning faculty, etc.

The truth is: The person who seeks Ananda desperately in the outer world is himself all Ananda; only, he is not aware of the Ananda he is. He believes he can gather it or gain it from others or from objects exterior to him. Knowing oneself is wisdom. The mind of man lays obstacles in the path of self-knowledge. Life passes through four stages and the mind too operates differently during these stages. In boyhood, man finds joy in pranks and play, running about freely. In youth, proud of muscular strength and overpowering ambition, man behaves wildly and with no consideration for consequences. He longs for setting up a family. When he reaches middle age, he is immersed in anxiety and worry about his wife and children and in earning the wherewithal to maintain himself and his kin in comfort. He welcomes extra work to earn a little more. Even while struggling thus, old age creeps in. Even his children do not revere him or care for him. They treat his advice as outdated. Then he prays, 'Lord! Bless me with death.'

The mother's lap is the child's happiest resort. But, it has to leave it soon. It feels the playground as the happiest resort. Later he finds happiness in wife and children. Soon, he is fascinated by possessions and wealth. At last, he finds that God is the richest treasure. But it is best to cultivate devotion to God even from boyhood.

Yearning for God and constant contemplation on the Divine arise from innate urges derived from past lives. Some children evince musical skill early in life. When it is encouraged by the parents, educated by the Guru, they become great musicians. So too, others evince poetic tendencies. The yearning for God is also seen in children. This has to be fostered and fed. Worldly knowledge is not enough to make life worthwhile. Spiritual knowledge alone, won through sadhana can fulfill its need. Bhukti Vidya (worldly knowledge) is now imparted with great Bhakti! Mukti Vidya is nobody's concern!

Narada approached Sage Sanatkumara as a student. The sage asked him, 'What are your credentials?' Narada replied, 'I have mastered the four Vedas, the six subsidiary Angas.' The sage enquired, 'I am glad you have mastered all these. But, have you known yourself? Have you mastered yourself? This knowledge alone can save you,' he said.

Well I When can we earn this knowledge? Life is lost in a continuous struggle with recurring problems. Birth makes death inevitable. Joy is enclosed in grief. Each experience confers its opposite also. We become our own foes or our own best friends. When the Lord sees a devotee saturated with love, Grace flows freely and fully. To feed on the nectar of Divine Wisdom, Love is the only credential needed. That nectar is the nectar of Ananda.

Some people complain, 'Swami! Some days I get nice Ananda while in Dhyana. But on other days, I do not get Ananda. Why is this, Swami?' Ananda does not come one day and go another day. You are not aware of it. It is the mind that deceives or confirms. The mind presents even God indifferent ways to us. And God rewards according to the manner in which He is conceived or approached. Annamacharya, the singer-saint, has pictured this correctly in his poem

How much you think You are
So much, not more, are You.

When you think He is fully Divine, He is fully so. If you think He is less, He acts as less.
Annamacharya said,

The mind that longs, moulds you so,
As God, as Titan or as Man.

This day we have to accept the ideal that is demonstrated by Ganapati. Ganapati means the pati (lord) of gana (group). He is accorded the first place among the gods that are worshipped. He is the Mooladhara Shakti in the Kundalini Yoga. He is the Pranava, OM. All words emanate from OM. The footprints of all the beasts of the jungle are wiped out when the elephant's foot tramples on them. That is to say, it subsumes the pathways of every being. The elephant is the path-finder, the path-maker in the impassable jungle. When it moves through it, a trail is opened for all.

Ganapati is Vinayaka; He has no Nayaka or Superior. He is also adored as Siddhi Vinayaka and Buddhi Vinayaka. In some texts, Siddhi and Buddhi are referred to as the consorts of Ganapati. This is very wrong. They are two manifestations of the Divine Power of Shakti that Ganapati has. When Buddhi supports and guides, Siddhi is won. These two are like two wings. They carry out His will. They place obstacles before bad activities and remove obstacles from the path for good activities. Worship Vinayaka, you acquire Buddhi (pure, clear intellect) and Siddhi (success) and even Mukti (liberation).

Man stands in need of pure intelligence. Once he attains it, he can achieve success in all undertakings. That is why students pray to Ganapati, after installing Him in a shrine. He grants intelligence by which man can know even beyond the realm of the senses. When any sense or Indriya drags man towards certain objects or plans, the intelligence must step in and examine whether they are proper or improper. All the sciences and Sastras we study or teach today are concerned with gaining something. The scriptures characterise these Sastras as jungles, because one loses one's way therein on account of the multiplicity of theories, hypotheses, objections, arguments and conclusions. Each word used in the Sastras has many meanings; it is a great bother to explore their meanings and choose the right one. The meaning of many statements is

conditioned by time, space and circumstance. This involves great labour. The best way to success is to fill the heart with love and the head with light.

When the heart is full of love, one can easily become aware of the Divine Principle. For example, we hear some people bewailing that the world is filled with injustice, violence and vice. But, who has the right to condemn the world thus? The person who pronounces that judgement is judging it from his own individual perception only. He is applying his personal experience to all places and all men.

The world is the body of God; it is holy and divine. There is no lack of peace in the world. Nor is there a lack of good men, nor of Truth. It appears so to some because of narrow vision. The world is in God and with God. Who has the authority to condemn it as evil? No one has. What is to be done is to correct the vision? The heart must expand to take in all mankind as one's kith and kin.

Ganapati is known not only as Vinayaka. He is also worshipped as Vighneshwara the Lord who subdues obstacles. He is the image of His parents, Siva Shakti, having the power and characteristics of both. An atheist was once advised by a theist sympathiser thus: 'It does not matter if you have no reverence towards Siva-Shakti. Revere your parents, the persons who gave you this body.' The atheist queried, 'So, what?' The theist explained that gratitude is due to them for bringing him into the world and caring for him until he could fend for himself. But, it all fell on deaf ears. The theist left his presence saying, 'Remember them at least when you are confronted by disaster.' One day the atheist climbed a big tree to pluck its fruits and was swinging from a branch, dangerously near a fatal fall. Siva and Shakti were passing through the sky. Shakti noticed him and drew Siva's attention to the poor fellow. Siva asked her to save him, but Shakti argued that it was Siva's duty, more than hers, especially when He was at the spot. Seeing that the moment had come to shower Grace, they arrived at a compromise solution for the problem: "Who ought to confer Grace?" It was agreed that if the fellow cried out as he fell, 'Amma' ('Mother'), Shakti would save him. If he cried out 'Appa' ('Father'), Siva would save him. But the atheist fell shouting 'Ayyo', and so, he got no help. This story has the moral that one must revere, if not the Divine Parents, Siva-Shakti, or the son, Vighneshwara, at least one's own parents. Gandhi prayed, 'Lord! Grant every one good Buddhi so that they can win Your Grace.'

Shraddha (Faith) and Bhakti (Devotion) are as Siva and Shakti. Both are absent today. Nor is Buddhi evident. How, then, can mankind be saved? Faith in God must be manifested in and through the work one is engaged in. Today, there are many who proclaim aloud their faith, in God, but their actions do not reveal that faith. They speak of God as knowing everything and being present everywhere. They say, 'Swami is all knowing', but yet they start doubting, 'who has carried the news to Swami!' Is this a sign of Faith? No. It is laughable behaviour.

This body has millions of cells and each cell has in it the Divine. God is Rasa, Delight, and Sweetness. Every limb and every cell is controlled and regulated by Buddhi, the highest level of consciousness. Since Vinayaka is Buddhi Vinayaka, worship directed to Vinayaka renders the relish of every cell active and satisfying.

Vinayaka is pictured as bearing the elephant head. The elephant is reputed for its intelligence; it examines the condition of the ground before putting its foot forward. His belly is hugely rotund, because he commands or consumes all the worlds. He does not eat the food offerings you place before Him; you thrive on them after keeping them before Him. As the poet says

The Cosmos is in your belly; how can I feed you, then?
You are present in every being; how can I fix a name on you?
You journey through every water-flow; how can I plan to bathe you?

The elephant, such a huge heavy beast, swims in water, and its body becomes very light. Vinayaka therefore is intelligence, but, He is also free from attachment.

Thus, Indian culture seeks to unravel the inner meaning of every name and symbol in mythology. It emphasises that the human has also the animal in its composition. Narasimha symbolizes the combination of the human with the leonine. God punishes the wicked and protects the good. So, He is pictured as these two symbolic forms in one body. When we engage in vice, He tears us like beasts; when we are good, He blesses us as God alone can.

The Ganesha festival is observed for the acquisition of Buddhi and Siddhi, Intelligence and Power. Intelligence is the basis for all knowledge. Students must strive to acquire, purify and develop it. Not only students, but every one, always. And students, even after they finish the years in College. In the Gita, Krishna says that He is the Buddhi, which men seek and share, when He allowed Arjuna to experience the Cosmic Aspect of God. Vinayaka is the embodiment of Buddhi, the Buddhi that makes us aware of the Truth which is beyond the reach of the senses.

The idol of Vighneshwara is a concrete symbol of all the characteristics He possesses. We must foster them in ourselves stage by stage. Or, the Sadhana of Love is alone enough. Pure love, selfless Buddhi—attaining these two, meditate on God. That suffices. Take great care that you do not harm, injure or insult another. 'Those who injure will be injured thereby,' is an axiom. Those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword. To keep the spoils of victory in one war, another war has to be fought. Some Ganesha idols show Him as holding a Sword in one hand, a Rope in another, and a severed head in a third—to teach this lesson that violence breeds further violence against the person resorting to it. The Ganesha Festival must be an opportunity for us to understand the significance of His Form and Name and the proper way to adore the Ganesha Principle.

—*Bhagavan's Discourse on Ganesha Chaturthi at Prasanthi Nilayam 22.8.82*

AVATAR VANI:

Divine Love

The mind yearns to secure whatever attracts it. It is daring enough to venture into the most impossible places. But let it rest upon the Lotus Feet of the Lord. It feeds upon the nectar and

cannot pull itself away I One should therefore encourage the mind to seek the Lord instead of allowing it to browse on the outer world and wander listlessly among the objects of sensory attachment.

The mind is a foe under the guise of a friend (a hitha-sathru). The sweeter the words with which it entices us, the more poisonous they really are. Therefore, one should listen to Buddhi and turn a deaf ear to Manas. Animals follow the promptings of the mind; the wise follow the counsel of Buddhi. The Buddhi analyses the thoughts that arise in the mind and judges them—are they good or bad, are they right or wrong? How will this act or react on me? What will it lead to? Even when the mind urges one to do a good act, discrimination about the means and ends is essential.

Consider what happens when the Buddhi does not discriminate: 'The gift of a cow would help you cross the Vaitarani River, which flows across the path of the soul after the death of the body,' a Brahmin advised a king. "The cow represents Dharma; she has four legs; Dharma has four props. Holding its tail, one can swim across the flood of sin and vice." Believing in the efficacy of this gift, the king gave away as charity a cow every day, as a meritorious spiritual act. One day, as usual, he gave a cow from the royal shed, to a Brahmin, who led it into his own home. But the animal, without anyone's knowledge, came back to the shed and joined the herd from which it had been separated. The next day the king gave away the same cow to another Brahmin, unaware that it was the cow he had given the previous day as charity. While the second Brahmin was leading it to his place, its legitimate owner recognised it and demanded it. To settle the dispute, they came with the cow to the king himself.

The king was involved in a conflict of Dharma. He told the Brahmin, 'the thing happened through my mistake. I shall give you as much money as you want instead of the cow you lost.' But the Brahmin protested, 'That cannot be the gift of a cow, which alone has the sanction of the scriptures.' The king thought he could purchase the cow from that day's Brahmin and restore it to the previous day's Brahmin. But that would be taking back what he had given. So the king incurred a double sin—giving the same cow to two Brahmins and provoking two Brahmins to fight against each other. Here the king was doing the spiritual activity of giving a cow, in order to gain merit. So the act is tainted by a trace of egoism. Man has got a right to work, but he has no right to the fruit thereof. Do work for the love of it; love the work, do not get attached to what ensues from the work; love is the best reward. Love is Divine; nothing else is.

The full embodiment of the Divine—Krishna—was drawn only by love. Love gives; it does not plan to gain. It knows no bargaining. When man shines with this Love, he is evincing the Divinity which is his true nature. Love often gets attached to the human vesture of the Avatar. Sahadeva was watching the discussions between his brothers and Krishna which preceded Krishna's journey to Indraprastha as an ambassador to the Kauravas soliciting peace and offering terms. He loved Krishna so intensely that he felt like warning Him against proceeding to the enemy's capital city. He was afraid He might come to harm. But he refrained from uttering it aloud, since it might be interpreted as a bad omen. Krishna and Arjuna were knit by the bond of Love. They were designated as Nara-Narayana. Their bodies were two but the Chaitanya, the Consciousness, was ONE.

Each Avatar has embodied the message of Love and propagated Love as a cure for individual and social ills. But it is indeed tragic that their birthdays are celebrated with great pomp and no attention is paid to the very principle which they represented. Krishna has announced, 'Mamaaivaaamso jiva bhuthas-sanaathanah.' (All beings are part of me.) So no one should be hurt or hated, neglected or disgraced.

God's Love is more intense than the love of a thousand mothers. It is not offered to satisfy any desire; He offers Himself. Devotees should reciprocate by equally pure Love. He loves because the happiness of the loved one is loved by Him as His own happiness. When Koorasa was afflicted by hunger, He sent him food offered to Him. Koorasa's joy was the Lord's joy. When Sakku Bai longed to visit Pandharpur, He sent her to that shrine and Himself became Sakku Bai to serve her people at her house, until she returned!

God's Prema is showered on Rakshasas (Prahlada), birds (Jatayu) and monkeys ,(Hanuman). For Him there is no high or low. He is concerned only with good and bad, right and wrong. The Yadavas proudly said, "Krishna is ours." They suffered destruction. The Gopis humbly announced, 'We are Krishna's,' and they were blessed. When Vibhishana, the brother of the arch-enemy Ravana, came into Rama's camp and sought asylum, Sugriva and Jambavantha, who were with Rama at the time, warned Rama against accepting the request. Rama said. "No. Whoever approaches me and falls at my feet seeking asylum and protection will be accepted and protected by me." Rama not only accepted Vibhishana, but He promised to crown him as the Emperor of Lanka, in the place of Ravana! At this Lakshmana asked Rama, "Brother! You declare you will accept all who surrender. You have also offered Vibhishana the throne of Lanka. If Ravana comes now and falls at your feet, what can you do? You have given away his empire to Vibhishana! What will you give Ravana to rule over?" Rama smiled; He replied, 'I will hold Bharata by the hands and pray to him to make way and install Ravana as Emperor of Ayodhya.'

God's Love is so soft and sweet. He who asserts, "I am Yours," will never be neglected by Him. When God convinces Himself that you are sincere in surrender, you have earned the *summum bonum* of life. You may announce aloud, "I love God," but God must acknowledge the Love. So, you have to so conduct yourselves that God's love is drawn towards you and is constantly on you. Discover that path and adhere to it always. Identify the ideals and follow them. This is the resolution with which you have to celebrate the birthday of Krishna. The day you become aware of the Principle embodied in the Avatar and decide to practise the Principle in daily life, that day is the Birthday of the Avatar for you.

—*Gokulashtami Discourse, Prasanthi Nilayam, 12/8/82*

"Science Cannot Explain"

'I have travelled seven times to meet with the fascinating Baba at his home in Puttaparthi, India. I have studied and filmed the miracles of Sai Baba. They are absolutely genuine. Science has no explanation for them—but that doesn't make them less real', says Professor Erlander Haraldsson, the Psychologist from Reykjavik, Iceland.

'There is simply no doubt about Sai Baba's incredible powers. I spent day after day observing him', says Prof. Haraldsson. 'He doesn't like to talk about his psychic feats; he'd rather talk about spiritual matters'.

Sue Jimison, in an article written on Baba, quotes these sentences from the interview with the Iceland Professor. The article continues: 'He can see into the past and future, and can accurately describe every aspect of the lives of complete strangers who come before him; materialise a variety of objects out of thin air, including fruit, rings, pendants and sacred ash; diagnose illness and heal it—even if the sufferer is miles away; appear in two different places at once, and often presents himself in the dreams of his followers, in order to advise them.'

Baba 'has shunned public exposure but news of his work has travelled across the globe attracting people from countries as far away as America, Sweden and Brazil.'

Rules of the Road

Why is it that Baba is always stressing the necessity of our starting early, driving slowly, in order that we might reach our intended goal safely? Like so many of our Lord's teachings, it is on the surface deceptively simple. While I find its words occurring to me from time to time, I tend to translate it somewhat simplistically, relating it mostly to short-term events. Although this undoubtedly has its place, on further investigation one is able to find many layers of spiritual meaning emanating from this rather brief recommendation.

For purposes of greater clarity, let us break down this teaching into its three separate parts. Part one says 'Start early', but when you think of it, our earliest conscious efforts on the road toward a higher life result directly from grace. For as Baba says, 'You can only come to me if you are called.' In a very obvious and real sense we cannot make any significant movement toward the Divine without God's grace. So in essence, the start, whether it be early or later, is entirely out of our hands.

Let's go on to part three—'Reach Safely', which is indeed a great idea. I doubt that anyone would quarrel with that. And while we all do want to reach the goal safely, this too is out of our hands. Baba tells us, 'Above all, do every act as an offering to the Lord, without being elated by success or dejected by feat; this gives the poise and equanimity needed for traversing the highways of life.' So, while we all wish to reach, we are given a strong warning not to be attached to it, which is to say that we must immerse ourselves in a special kind of Karma called Nishkama-karma. This, according to Baba, is the highest form of Karma, where one remains detached from the fruits of one's actions.

Finally, that brings us to part two, the phrase commanding us to drive slowly. For is this not the only part of the trip over which we have any control (if indeed we do), the actual journey itself? That does bring up an interesting point. Do we even have any control over the journey

itself? Yes, I believe we do. If we examine that journey (our lives) in microcosm, we can see that it is nothing more than the sum-total of its parts, namely all of our acts, all of our words and all of our thoughts.

Before departing on any journey, whether it be to a particular place or the lotus feet of the Lord, we need to satisfy the rudimentary requirements for a successful trip. It is not always sufficient merely to start early. It is essential, whether the path be physical or spiritual, to know where we are going and to keep that objective uppermost in our minds. Baba says, 'You must have that yearning, the yearning of the stone to become a diamond. You must hold the hand of the Mother and walk safe by her side. Be like the infant monkey that clings to the mother and so is guarded and guided by her superior strength and wisdom.'

In the context of driving slowly on the way to God, that yearning translates into stamina and the slowness of speed into a workable pace. So it is that spiritual stamina, dogged persistence, and the ability to pace one's self are essential criteria. It is almost as if Baba has posted a speed limit in the spiritual high-way in order to safeguard us. Fortunately, on the freeway to Baba's feet there is never a fuel shortage since the Lord has erected ever-full filling stations in each of our hearts.

However, one obstacle against which there can be no guarantee is the roadway upon which we travel, ever rocky, ever under construction. Baba says, 'true Bhakti alone will overcome all obstacles and like a swollen river leap over bunds and banks and overwhelm all by its strength. Difficulties are created to increase the yearning and to sift the sincere devotee from the rest.'

There is yet another aspect of critical importance regarding the speed at which we act. Were we all perfect Yogis at every moment, ever in union with God, we could move at great speeds and never do harm. But since, for most of us, this is hardly the case, it behooves us to proceed with great care no matter what the task. Baba so often cautions the crowds at festival times to have respect and love for every person present and most importantly not to injure another in a frantic attempt to approach Him, for in so doing, He warns, we injure that selfsame Sai.

How many times I can recall being thoroughly engrossed in performing acts, which on the surface were offerings of service, but the manner in which I carried them out was contrary to the intention of the deed e.g., driving hurriedly to the home of a sick person, but forgetting to acknowledge the ever-present Sai, perhaps actually being downright unsafe.

Life is made up of just a limited number of chances to do huge beneficial acts, but rather an infinite number of opportunities to remain focused on the goal. So, to remain ever conscious of the infinite Lord and to express that attitude unswervingly is of course most desirable.

One time Baba asked a Western woman, 'Are these things which Swami does miracles?' She answered without pausing, 'Yes, Baba, of course they are!' to which Baba instantly replied, "The real miracle is that I am always happy, never hurried, never worried, never borne down by thoughts of anger, greed, fear or lust."

If the rules of the road become too difficult there is a shortcut with which Baba has provided us that in and of itself will enable every one of us to reach the goal safely. For the ultimate decision we can make is to allow Swami to be our Sanathana Sarathi, our eternal charioteer, because as Baba has often been heard to assure devotees, "I am your driver for life!"

—*Dr. Jeff Baker, Oregon, U.S.A.*

Sutra Vahini

1

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

All the Sastras derive their value and validity from their source—the Vedas. They lay down mores and norms in consonance with the principles and purposes defined in the Vedas. To discriminate between good and bad, the Sastras have to be resorted to.

The Vedas are A-pourusheya; that is, they have no identifiable human authors. They have emerged from God Himself and they were 'heard' by sages attuned to the Voice of the Divine. They communicated the Word to their pupils and they in turn taught them to their disciples. This process of imparting the Vedas and the Wisdom enshrined in them has continued through generation after generation of gurus and disciples up to our own times.

The Upanishads are the very core of the Vedas, the very essence of their teachings. The Brahma Sutra and the Bhagavad Gita contain the very essence of the teachings of the Upanishads. These three scriptural texts are, therefore, designated as the Prasthaana Thraya, the Three Source Texts. Since these have been learnt by listening to the Guru, they are, along with the Vedas, named Shruti, the "Heard".

Acquisition of the Higher Knowledge alone can fulfill the main purpose of human life. Such knowledge makes one aware that he is not the inert non-sentient body etc., but that he is Consciousness Itself—manifesting as the embodiment of Sat-Chit-Ananda, Existence-Awareness-Bliss. When this Truth dawns and is experienced, man is liberated; he is freed from the fog of ignorance, Ajnana, even while life endures till its term ends. He becomes a Jivan-Mukta.

The Kaivalyopanishad declares: Na Karmanaa (not by means of Works), na prajayaa (not by means of man-power), dhanena (or by means of wealth), thyaagena ekena (by renunciation alone) Amrthathwam (immortality) aanasuh (can be attained). The Works referred to are rituals like sacrifices, sacred fire rites, vows, charities, donations to holy projects, pilgrimages, ceremonial baths in rivers and the sea. Through such activities, one cannot achieve Moksha or Liberation—that is to say, getting rid of the veil of ignorance. Na prajaya, (not by means of man-power) means: the acquisition of positions of authority and power, of skill and intelligence, which can manipulate men and things, of fame and supremacy, of personal charm, of full health and happiness, of a large family with many children cannot confer on, man Moksha or Liberation.

"Na dhanena" (not by means of wealth) means: The works and activities mentioned above and the acquisition referred to can succeed only when man has wealth at his disposal. If one is not rich, he cannot venture into Karmas or acquire authority, power etc. But, the Upanishad announces that And Jnana is not related to riches or dhana. And Jnana alone can lead to liberation. So, liberation cannot be earned by means of wealth. Wealth is not a means to attain Moksha.

Then, what exactly is the means? The answer is, Thyagena ekena amrthathwam aanasuh. Renunciation alone can confer Moksha or Immortality. The Jagat (the objective world) is unreal, non-existent; the misunderstanding that it is real has to be renounced. The understanding that the idea of Jagat is a superimposition by our mind on the Reality is the Jnana. Though the Jagat appears real, one must be aware that it is deluding us so. And as a result, one has to give up the yearning for deriving pleasure from the objects that appear and attract, both here and hereafter. That is to say, one is liberated as soon as one renounces all attachment and all desires. Sarvam Tyagam. The Ajnana or false knowledge can be destroyed only when one knows the Atma Principle. When the false knowledge disappears, the sorrow produced by one's involvement in the ups and downs of Samsara or the World of Change, also gets destroyed.

Ajnana and Dukha (sorrow) cannot be destroyed by rituals and rites (Karma) this is the lesson the Upanishads teach us. In fact, what is happening now is Man has forgotten his real nature. He believes that he is the body, the senses etc. *They* crave for objective pleasures and he convinces himself that this is wanted by *himself* and under this mistaken notion, he seeks to fulfill their cravings. He deludes himself that he can secure Ananda by catering to the body and the senses. However, he cannot earn Ananda through such attempts. Instead, he is rewarded with disillusionment, defeat and even disaster. He reaps sorrow, and not joy.

Involvement in objective pleasure ultimately leads to grief. So, man needs to be directed towards the right means to attain Ananda. Wherefrom can one gain Ananda! It does not inhere in external objects. The pleasure one can obtain from external objects brings along with it grief also.

The Brahma Sutra, the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita—the Three Source Texts—clarify the Truth that *you* are the very embodiment of Ananda. These three sources stand as one to help man attain the highest wisdom.

It is a hard task to grasp the meanings of the aphorisms contained in the Brahma Sutra. Unless one has acquired the necessary qualifications, one cannot unravel them and master them.

What, then, are the qualifications? Four Sadhanas are laid down by the scriptures. When one is equipped with these four, the meanings become as patent as a fruit on the palm. For, these four have to be earned by man as a preliminary for knowing the truth of oneself.

The Brahma Sutra is also known as Saareeraka Sastra and Vedanta Darsana. Sarira means the Body. Saareereka means all the components of the Embodied-Atma: Ego (Jivi), Senses etc. Sastra implies "examining the nature of all these to the greatest possible degree." That is to say,

the Sastra establishes that the Brahman (the Cosmic Self) is the basis on which all else is imposed, that one's Reality is Ananda itself.

Now about the name Vedanta Darsana: Darsana means 'sight'. Darsana promotes the sight or experience of the Truth. The Darsanas are well-known. They have been propounded by vision-blessed sages. Sankhya Darsana was established by Kapila. The Nyaya Darsana was authored by Gautama, the Vaisesika by Kanaada, the Purva Mimamsa by Jaimini and the Uttara Mimamsa by Veda Vyasa. Among these, Kapila and Vyasa are believed by the sages to be partial embodiments of Vishnu Himself. The Brahma Sutra of Veda Vyasa is the text that has confirmed and consolidated the Uttara Mimamsa.

The Brahma Sutra adopts the technique of Objection (Purva Paksha) and conclusion (Siddhantha) to expound the Vedantic truth. The aphorisms discuss contrary points of view in order to remove all possible doubts about the validity and meaning of Vedantic or Upanishadic statements. The body is taken to be the encasement (upadhi) for the 'person', the Jivatma, and the Brahma Sutra explains its Reality. Hence, the Sutra is called Vedanta Darsana.

The Sutras in the text number 555; some schools count them as 449. The word Sutra means "that which, through a few words only, reveals vast meanings." The word Mimamsa, as used in ancient Indian Philosophy, means the conclusion arrived at after inquiry and investigation, the inference adopted as correct after deep consideration of possible doubts and alternatives.

The Vedas deal with two concepts: Dharma and Brahma. The Purva Mimamsa deals with Karma, rites and rituals, as the Dharma. The Uttara Mimamsa deals with Brahma; its emphasis is on Jnana, Understanding. Purva Mimamsa starts with the aphorism, "Athaatho Dharma jijnasa" (Now, the inquiry on Dharma); the Uttara Mimamsa starts with, "Athaatho Brahma Jijnaasa" (Now, the inquiry into Brahma).

The awareness of Brahman cannot be won by the accumulation of wealth or even by the giving away of riches. Nor can it be achieved by reading texts, or rising to power, or acquisition of degrees and diplomas or by the performance of scriptural sacrifices and rituals.

The body is an ant-hill which has inside the cavity, the mind. And the mind has hidden in it the serpent named Ajnana. (Nescience). It is not possible to kill the serpent by resorting to satisfaction-oriented works (Kaamyas Karma). Jnana is the only weapon that can kill it.

"Sraddhaavaan labhathe jnaanam" That person alone who has Shraddha can secure Jnana. And Shraddha means steady faith in the statements laid down in scriptural texts (Sastras).

(To be continued)

The Finger and Moon

On a Full Moon evening a friend lifts his hand and points to the glorious moon above. We gaze enjoying its radiant perfection. How foolish a person would be to mistake the finger for the moon.

Sathya Sai Baba is a Sun among men, illumining the darkness of those bound in the net of desire and unable to free themselves of greed, hate, and spiritual ignorance. His message of Love and Compassion penetrates the hearts of those who listen, causing them to change from the deviant and return to the proper path. To drink the nectar of Baba's Divine Grace you need only open your heart.

Sai Baba's message is not new; it is as ancient as the Vedas. But an Avatar, a Divine expression of these Teachings, appears rarely. In this time of moral decline Baba is unique, honoured among sages. He is indeed fit for the title, 'Bhagavan', World Honoured One. His miracles and Siddhis are a natural outflow of His nature reflecting absolute unification of man and spirit. Never did he strive to attain them. His natural state is oneness with the Supreme: even the word meditation is a stranger to Him.

In this age of moral decline, an experience of Divinity is needed to uproot the creepers of deviant knowledge that disturb the mind of man and separate him from the spirit within. Baba's miracles are an expression of Divine powers. Experience of His Divinity has changed the lives of many. It has provided the inspiration to change what is not easily changed and make the kind of personal sacrifices that are difficult to make.

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba Himself has said, 'My life is my message'. This message is not confined to Baba's five-foot physical form, nor is it confined to Baba Himself; it is the timeless message of humanity; the innermost message of Truth eternally speaking in the Hearts of all with breath and life.

The 'Man of Miracles' cannot be seen when we gaze at His physical form, or the wonders that flow so graciously from Him. The real 'Man of Miracles' can only be seen when we look within ourselves. Baba's life that He leads so openly points to the full moon shining in the heart of all. His Divinity gives us the courage to lead virtuous and upright lives and conquer both inner and outer foes. His life of Truth, Love, and Intelligence shows us the way to Him; and by walking it we find out that this is our way also. Baba's body embraces mankind; it is the pure clear Dharma Body of Truth. It is Omnipresent.

Baba's message is our message also when we lead the kind of lives that inspire others to higher principles of action, personal integrity, and morality. By uplifting the world about us we uplift ourselves. Every time we take a bit of darkness out of the eye of a friend or associate we come closer to Baba. When we reveal the Truth to another and cause his face to beam it is Baba. Yes, the twinkle in the eye, the shine of the face, that we see in those who see something in a new Light is Baba. And the Joy that we feel uplifting our heart as the darkness of another disperses is really Baba. Baba is in the Heart of all, only waiting for us to recognize it. Surely this recognition will come when we let Baba out of prison; the prison we create by thinking that air miles must be traversed and his physical form perceived in order to reach Him. He is reachable by all at all times, and in all places.

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is Divinity and His Life points the way to Divinity. But most important is the inspiration he gives to find this Divine reality in ourselves and those about us. It is an inspiration to recognize Truth in Life, and separate from falseness. Those, who know this will not separate from His presence no matter how many miles away they maybe.

—*Richard Josephson, Riverwinds, San Francisco*

The Message in Sand and Rock

Then it was moon time. There were a hundred people sitting there. He lifted a handful of sand with both hands and He asked one of the men gathered there to stretch out his hands. And He put the sand into his hands. And behold, under his very eyes it turned into a small book of the Bhagavad Gita.

Then on another occasion, in Puttaparthi, He picked up a rough piece of broken rock (granite) and handed it to a geologist. Then He took the rock back from him, blew on it, and handed it back to the geologist. He was flabbergasted, for the rock had turned into a statue of Lord Krishna playing His Flute. There was also a change in the colour and structure of the substance. Then Baba said, 'You see, beyond your molecules and atoms, God is in the rock. And God is sweetness and joy. Break off Krishna's foot and taste it'. The geologist found no difficulty in breaking the 'granite' foot of the little statue and tasting it. The taste was the sweetness of sugar candy.

Bhagavan is illustrating to us through those two miracles the presence and sweetness of God and His Word in all His creation. He and His Word are One. His Word is His message and the two are One.

His Word came from sand and His form from rock. The eternal 'I am' in His creation; the same 'I am' individualised in the form of Krishna and now as the living Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The same teaching is in the Bible. Moses came to proclaim the Eternal 'I am' and Jesus proclaimed the personal identity of the 'I am' in Himself and man.

The God who is the origin and the goal can be cognised and heard only by the pure in consciousness as we are told by Bhagavan. The cleansing of the mind must start early in life; hence the particular interest Baba shows in the young. Jesus said, 'Unless ye become as a little child, ye shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven'. For, it is much easier to learn to destroy the ego in the formative years of life, than in adult life. It is also easier for children to surrender to authority than adults. Krishna said, 'Fill your mind with Me, be devoted to Me, renounce for My sake, surrender to Me.' Even though God is in all His creation and can be worshipped as such, Krishna warns us in the Gita against the worship of low forces. He said those who adore the Devas attain the Devas, those who adore the Manes attain the Manes, those who adore the low forces attain them, but those who adore Him attain Him.

When you purify and cleanse the consciousness, then wherever you turn, not only in the shrine, rock, sand or idol, but in everything and at all times you will see only God. "The manifold creation is only He and He alone." To see Him in His creation requires surrender.

You and I have a free will and we are responsible for our actions. But for God to be responsible for our actions, we must surrender to Him. The surrender implies selfless motives in our thoughts, words and deeds. This surrender is illustrated in the words of Jesus when Philip asked Him to show them the Father. Jesus said to him, "Philip, have I been with you all this time, and yet you do not understand Me. He who has seen me has seen the Father. What do you mean by saying 'Let us see the Father'. Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words I speak to you all, I do not speak of my own accord; it is the Father who remains ever in Me, who is performing His own deeds."

To surrender means doing the will of God. The free will has therefore to be subjected to His Will. Then we can also quote Jesus, 'I do the Will of the Father; the Father's will is done in me'.

Baba says that before we experience the divine in every being in the Universe and in every cell and atom, we have to experience it in ourselves. Each act, word and thought must be charged with that awareness. And we can only achieve this by surrendering to His Will.

—*Dr. H. K. Takyi, Accra (Ghana)*

THE THREE-IN-ONE

How sweet it is
To sit by your feet and hear you
Call me thy erring child.
How sweet it is
To look upon thy fathomless face
With eyes glued to the pathless peace

Reflecting the Cosmic Balance.
How sweet it is
To see your gaze caress my neighbour
And never know my presence!
For, you are Three-in-one
Love, Unconcern, Rejection.

—*B. K. M.*

The Yoga of Love

—Bob Nejemy, Athens.

We use the word love to represent many different feelings and states of mind. Love could mean any of the following words: lust, desire, attachment, fascination, selfish love, selfless love, pure love, unconditional love, universal love or Divine love. We could even extend our imagination to think that the electron is in love with the proton and the earth is in love with the Sun. Thus the forces of electromagnetism and gravity become physical manifestations of the LAW OF LOVE. The law of love is the force which attracts things and beings together toward union. We could also imagine that the forces which hold the various particles of the atomic nucleus together are also the manifestation of this law of love, the law of attraction, the Law of UNION. To the scientist this would be the Law of negentropy which prevents dissolution.

Let us consider the types of Human love. Most human love is based on emotionally immature motives. Most human relationships are formed out of insecurity, desire, loneliness, social pressure, habit or feelings of incompleteness. Very few relationships are based on pure unconditional love. Most are seeking to take rather than to give in their relationships. Most are wanting the other to change in order to fit their own image of how the other should be. Relationship partners imagine that it is the other's responsibility to make them happy. They unreasonably believe that even though they are not happy within, that the other can make them happy by being as they want them to be.

But, no one can really make anyone else happy. Happiness, security and completeness can come from within only. When we expect the other to make us happy, and they fail to fulfill that expectation, then we blame them. We begin to complain and argue and try to make them change in such away which we think will make us happy. If we on the other hand thought more about how *we could help the other* to feel more happy and secure, then the relationship would be much more successful and loving. Relationships fail because they are based on need, desire and selfishness rather than love. Sathya Sai Baba says, "LOVE IS GIVING AND FORGIVING. SELF IS GETTING AND FORGETTING." We will do well to examine the motives our relationships are based on.

The ideal kind of love is called unconditional love, or universal love, or pure love, or selfless love. Very few of us are able to feel this kind of love. We have, however, been encouraged by the great spiritual beings of all religions to develop this kind of love in our lives. We are told that this Love is latent within us, that in fact it is our own intrinsic nature, which will bubble up when we are completely at ease. Let us look at some of the qualities of this kind of love and how we may work toward developing it.

In order to love selflessly, we have to *feel/ secure and content*. Otherwise our fears and needs will drive us to try to protect ourselves from or manipulate others so that we can obtain that security or contentment which we lack. We can love selflessly only when we do not need or desire anything. Of course none of us have yet reached such a level of self-sufficiency and self-realization so that we might love in this way. The most we can hope to do is to use the technique of Yoga along with the various spiritual philosophies and religions to help ourselves

become more relaxed, secure and content so that we may love more and more selflessly as we gradually become more emotionally mature.

Loving unconditionally means to learn to *accept others as they are*. It means not making expectations and demands on them so that our love increases or decreases depending on their behaviour. It is possible to love and accept a being totally without having to accept the behaviour. The behaviour is something separate from the being. It is especially important to show unconditional love to children. Explain to them that although you may not be able to approve of their behaviour, that you accept and love them as beings, and that that love will never be diminished by anything that they might do. Forgiveness is an essential part of this kind of love. Jesus Christ repeatedly warned us not to judge others, and encouraged us to forgive all and everything that anyone might do to us. He gave us a living example by asking God to forgive those who were crucifying Him.

Loving unconditionally means being mature enough to see that the *harm others do to us and others is a result of their ignorance, their fear, and their immaturity*. It means being wise enough to see through these externally aggressive actions and to perceive the sacred child which is within that being. We may then let our love persist and penetrate through that outer show of hardness. This takes great strength which comes only with greater inner security and faith in God.

Selfless love requires *self-sacrifice*. This means learning to compromise one's own needs in order to help the other. We must analyze in each situation whether it is more important to fulfil our own needs or the needs of the other at that moment. Are our needs really so important? Are they really needs, addictions or desires based on insecurity or discontentment? If we decide that in truth our needs are more important, then let us fulfill them. If not, let us sacrifice them lovingly. At the same time, we must be careful to analyze whether the other being really needs what he is asking for. Sometimes we can harm others and keep them from growing themselves by taking care of all their needs as if they are children.

Reducing our own desires and needs will help us to become more loving. The less time, energy, money and thought which we require for ourselves the more we can dedicate to serving others. No amount of Yoga exercises and meditation will help us to find God if we do not learn to sacrifice the ego needs and desires and love others. We can pray daily that God may help us in this transformation. When we have found LOVE, we have found GOD because LOVE IS GOD and GOD IS LOVE.

(To be continued)

A temple where God is adored as a living Entity is as the heart to an individual. It is said that you should not sleep in a village where there is no temple; for, the people there are sure to be so ungodly that your life is in danger amidst such unbelievers. God is the guardian, the corrector, the admonisher, the saviour; so, people must get into the habit of calling on Him as a living Presence. The temple helps soften the hearts; it instills the virtues of compassion and charity. Greed and cruelty will spread in an atmosphere that has no devotion and adoration to God. Make yourselves into moving temples. Become aware of the God that resides in you. It is

He who protects you, provides for you, and prevents you from falling a prey to pernicious propensities.

—Baba

Total Insurance

There are many kinds of insurance available for people: life insurance, disability insurance, sickness insurance, etc. All these have certain limitations. But there is no human insurance that can equal the total protection provided by Divine Grace. That is the promise of the Lord to Arjuna who received the message on behalf of all humanity. The only premium that the Lord wants is our faith and devotion.

One of my patients found herself at the depths of despair because everything seemed to go wrong in her life. I counselled her and told her to have faith in God and talked to her about the value of prayer. In such situations, the counsellor can impart faith in the mind of the suffering client only if he himself is deeply imbued with faith. Thanks to Bhagavan, my faith in God has become solid, and I sound sincere when I advise people to resort to prayer with faith and belief. My patient said, 'I pray every day, morning and evening, yet nothing seems to go right. Besides, you can talk about prayer very well because everything is going well with you.' I answered, 'it is not that I pray because everything goes well with me. It is the other way around. I pray, therefore everything goes well with me.'

I wondered later why even those who say they pray seem to be unhappy. The reason, I understood later, was that prayer is not an isolated action to be done once or twice a day. Prayer is a way of life. It is a constant awareness of the Presence of the Lord. The Lord is as close and as dear to ourselves as we wish Him to be. In happiness and distress, day and night, let us call on Him and remind ourselves of His Omnipresence, Omniscience and Omnipotence.

—Dr. Y. Gopinathan, Windsor Canada

Live With Love

Yesterday, variously defined, is gone
and non-changeable.

Today thankfully, is the very first day
of all the rest of my life.

I want to start each day with Love,
Live each day with Love,
End each day with Love.

Love is letting go of fear.
Love is helping others.
Love is Joy and Peace.
Love is GOD.

Start with GOD
Live with GOD
End with GOD.
Know GODLINESS!

—*Robert R. Granch*

Love of the Motherland

*To achieve release, man prays before
A million gods, in frantic pain.
If he but blasts the ego within
The goal is reached; he is freed indeed!*

It is difficult indeed to understand the ego-its depth and devious ways. It is an inert entity, that is to say, it cannot know itself nor can it know others. It has no fear; it will not bend before others. It degrades man from the golden glory, which is his due, to the level of lowly dust. Snakes hiss, pigs grunt, bulls moo! They are asserting their egoistic pride, intent on keeping others away. Of the traits of ego, a few can be corrected and sublimated. But, the pride of scholarship, the pride of pundits is so thick that it is impossible to get rid of it.

The dog feels proud of its master's home. So it barks at strangers trying to enter it. Man too is so attached to 'my home', 'my people', 'my property' that he too keeps people away from the moment he awakes to the moment he sleeps. But, egoism is contrary to genuine human nature. In fact, it is a trait of the animal.

The fully blossomed flower fades and falls apart within hours. Even while a person is proud of his physical strength, mental freshness and intellectual sharpness, old age creeps in, with its debilitating effects. And wealth? And power over men and things? They are like lightning flashes, illumining only a fraction of the moment. They are here today; they are gone tomorrow

These transient natures and possessions, interestingly, produce lasting impressions! Man's enemies are not outside him; the sins he commits are his greatest foes. They prompt him to act contrary to all codes. Ravana was prompted into sin by his nefarious ego and his crime reduced his splendourous kingdom to a heap of ash. Hitler rose to be the Dictator in Germany, victory over sundry neighbouring states boosted his ego and made him power mad. He caused a World War and died amidst the ruins of his own capital city. Egoism is an infection that ruins all chances of expanding and elevating one's consciousness. It can only undermine genuine human qualities. So, educators must take special care that the tender hearts of children are not polluted by this virus.

The tripod

Every nation depends on three sections of its people for its progress—the producers, the protectors and the preceptors. All three are equally important and closely interdependent. This is the tripod on which prosperity rests. Love is the seat placed on the three legs and the nation can be happy and peaceful if all three sections work together in mutual love for the nation.

This day, we find devotion which has no human sympathy and patriotism which has no morality. Both are barren. Egoism cannot tolerate love for others, nor will it be happy with itself. If the harvested grain is neither consumed nor shared, it will only rot away. Egoism reduces man into a demon. At the least provocation, egoism gets irate against one's parents, children or wife or teacher! It thrusts aside every one who comes in the way.

God is the vastest among the vast, the minutest among the minute. Yet, God has no ego. How then can man who has no claim to even the tiniest glory parade himself as great? It is really a ridiculous pose. The egoist ignores the real source which can bring respect to him. He loses the chance of developing his skills and talents.

Education must result in humility. Humility is the best credential for success in life. That yields wealth and through wealth one can promote righteousness and engage in charity. This ensures happiness here and hereafter. Humility cannot come through poring over books. The educational process prevalent today does not promote humility. It confers degrees which swell the heads of recipients. It does not sanctify the person who is educated. It does not promote the nation's progress. But, really speaking, education has to encourage the exploration of the true needs of the country and the methods by which they can be met. The youth must dedicate themselves to this work. But, what we find even in persons, who have grown old, and who move about with sticks, toothless and grey-haired, anxiously trying to squeeze a drop or two of joy from life? After having retired from Government service, they still seek jobs and start circumambulating likely patrons. The idea that they should spend the remaining years of their lives in serving their fellowmen does not dawn in their heads.

"Educated" beggars

The uneducated may not be patriotic; but, the country is harmed more by the educated! As soon as they are awarded the degrees or diplomas entitling them to pose as doctors or engineers, they run after some agent, and secure passports and try to bribe their way to Iraq, Iran or Dubai. Of course, money is desirable. But, only as much as is, essential. Cannot one earn enough in this country itself and, at the same time, cannot one serve one's poor and struggling brothers and sisters in the villages? Can it ever be a sign of education when one has no love for the land where he was born and where he grew up? Consider for a while the wisdom of disliking one's motherland and becoming fascinated with another land. One must serve not only one's own people but also the people of other countries. But what are we to say of those who hate some and love others? How can a person who has no respect for the land of his birth be respected by any land he attaches himself to?

This distortion is the result of the educational system. The beggar at the door wails "Maa! I am a stranger, a Para-Desi! Give me alms." He means that he does not belong to the village, that he has no one to support him or feed him at the place. Para-desi means a person who has moved into a new place from his own desa or country. The beggar hopes to get a roti or a rupee. The educated person in the strange land hopes to get a hundred or a thousand or even a lakh. They too belong to the same profession. Our students should avoid such demeaning temptations. They should not give up their mother country and proceed overseas. And, they must not commit the mistake of believing that a person becomes great when he goes overseas and returns. Airhostesses do it every day. Have faith and love towards your home, your village, your part of India, your Motherland. But that does not imply hatred of other countries. On no account should hatred of enmity or intolerance pollute your minds.

Consider an example from the Ramayana. After the death of Ravana on the battlefield, Lakshmana asked Rama, "Brother! Our brother Bharata has been ruling the Kingdom of Ayodhya very well, for 14 years. That kingdom, though poor, is happy under his rule. Now, Lanka has come into our hands. This seems heaven when compared to Ayodhya. I pray that you assume rulership over Lanka and reform the Rakshasas." Rama smiled at this suggestion. He replied, "Does any son give up his mother because her features are ugly? My motherland may be poor but it is my mother. Can I adopt a woman as mother, if she is more charming than my own? However rich and prosperous this Lanka is, I do not wish to be here." Rama held up the ideal of a patriot eager to serve his native land.

Sakamma's offer

I shall relate an example in which I am myself the subject. Forty years ago, a rich lady named Sakamma (famed as a big coffee planter and manufacturer of Sakamma Coffee) used to come to Puttaparthi from Bangalore. In those days, journey to this isolated hamlet was a very difficult venture. Those who came by car had to negotiate mud tracks and park the cars on the right bank of the river and trudge across. On one occasion, Sakamma came with two maternal uncles of the Maharaja of Mysore, and prayed, "Swami! This place is very inaccessible. Devotees are undergoing much trouble. We shall purchase a few acres of land in Bangalore City and spend a few lakhs to build a fine spacious Mandir for you there. Swami must agree and must move over to that city." I told her, "Sakamma! What is the greatness in promising water to those who come to the River Ganga? The greatness consists in promising water to those who come to the desert.

Listen! This is the place where this body was born. You may build the Mandir as you plan anywhere. I shall come there and be there for some days. However, I shall not forsake this place." Now, this tiny hamlet which was difficult to reach has become the centre of even a University. Can mere man transform it so? Through whom has this village gained every modern convenience needed for a happy life?

Back to the villages

Students today are deserting their villages and entering the cities. They sell off their hereditary lands and homes and live miserable lives in congested towns. And, many prefer city institutions for their studies though cities do not provide proper atmosphere for study. They are enticed into the undesirable company of bad people wherein their minds are ruined by bad thoughts and their bodies are ruined by bad habits. Keeping oneself alive is a difficult process in cities. And, reaching the real goal of life is quite impossible.

Traces of goodness, reverence and sympathy do still survive in villages but they have disappeared in cities. The methods of education are responsible for this sad situation. Confining education to worldly and material knowledge, children are being exiled from their heritage of courage and strength. They grow without either general knowledge or common sense. It is hard to understand how they pass examinations and administer the country after getting jobs. They concentrate on self every moment; they have no thought for the welfare of others.

Technological education has become valuable today but even here, human values have to be emphasised. Technology must be dedicated to the promotion of high ideals, those which are cherished in Bharatiya culture. For, without the background of that culture, educated people are being turned into slaves of western culture. Those who belong to a country have to proceed along the special circumstances and resources of their own country. Of course, one must love all mankind, all the children of God. One must not emphasise the differences between nations, or between castes and colours. Cultivate universal heartfelt Love.

Human values

In the universities of past ages, each one specialised in learning and teaching one subject only. But, in our University, we must teach the importance and meaning of human values. We do not value education which does not uplift man and make him aware of his Divine Reality. Means of Living and Goal of Living are the two wings; the two wheels are material and spiritual, skills and Sadhana.

*The wind, the reason, the Knowing one,
The ego bawling, brawling one,
When will these bend low and yield?
Then, Siva is revealed, the Atma seen.*

The Atma is in every one, vast and expansive. We fancy that the Atma is in us, in each of us. No. We are in Atma, we are all in Atma. The Atma is not in us! All beings are alive and active, moving and resting in the all-pervading Atma. We are all in this hall; the hall is not in us. To say 'the Atma in me' and the 'Atma in you' is to declare your ignorance of the Truth.

Once we establish ourselves in this Truth of Unity, we will not be afflicted by scandal-mongering, jealousy and other low thoughts. Students can be freed from these shackles, even at this tender age. They can be helped to lead happy, healthy useful lives and promote, by their actions, the prosperity and welfare of the world.

—*Bhagavan's Discourse at Orientation Course for Teachers, Vidyagiri, 25-5-82*

AVATAR VANI:

Mahabali

*What does 'incarnating' mean?
It is God appearing on earth
Filled with affection and love
For mankind, everywhere
Divine Consciousness in human form.*

Bharat has gained wide renown through many sons and daughters who have sacrificed their all for the common good. The seed has to renounce its identity and become one with the soil so that the tree might emerge: So too, the ego has to sacrifice itself so that man's divine nature can manifest itself. "Mama iti mrthyu" "The feeling of mine causes death." "Mine" is death; 'not mine' confers immortality. Thyaagah saanthih anantaram: Renunciation results in Peace. The golden key of non-attachment opens the lock which keeps the door to heaven shut. "Give up; I shall fill the gap" says Jesus.

Today, renunciation has become a means for success and fame! It has become a bargaining point. Renouncing animal and even human failings and earning the awareness of the Divine which is the core is the most valuable Sadhana. Consider the heroes of renunciation in the past; they were mostly rulers and the rich, who could afford power and plenty—Emperor Sibi, Emperor Mahabali, King Karna. Consider also later heroes—Tanaji and Bhagat Singh. These two sacrificed their lives for the sake of the nation and the world.

Mahabali, the Asura ruler, renounced everything for the sake of God. His father and grandfather were also very famous for the same quality. The great-grandfather, Hiranyakasipu, did not tolerate the very mention of the name Hari. For he swore that he was himself God! He was a fanatical rationalist. And, he had a son named Prahlada who was devoted to Hari and whose dedication and surrender to God was complete, without any reservation. He came out triumphantly through troubles and tortures. He performed huge sacrifices and gave away enormous riches in charity. The name, Hari, was the armour that saved him from the shafts of angry hatred aimed by his father. The persons who tortured him in obedience to his father's command were struck at the calm heroism and the uttermost peace he enjoyed as a consequence of his steady repetition of the Lord's name.

His son was Virochana. He ruled the kingdom righteously and he became popular and famous on account of his gifts to the poor and the learned. Mahabali was Virochana's son. He celebrated the efficacious and complicated Yagna named "Vishwajit" (Cosmic Victory) and as a result, he

became Lord of Heaven, displacing Indra! While Mahabali ruled over the world, no one suffered from hunger and thirst; no one had fear or anxiety; the earth yielded rich harvests; the people had holy thoughts and intentions.

God willed at that time to teach the world a valuable lesson—renounce and win. The ocean collects all the rivers and is always receiving offerings. It does not give up of its own free will pearls and corals; it hides them from gaze and gives out only shells. Its waters cannot quench thirst; it only inflames thirst. But the cloud is anxious to give itself fully as rain; so it rises high while the ocean lies at the lowest level. God decided also to grant salvation to Bali, for he had become worthy of that supreme gift. He had through his good actions purified his mind; he had through his devotion realised the Divinity in every being and he had achieved the wisdom which can liberate him from illusion.

It is generally believed that God incarnated as Vamana in order to uproot the ego of Bali. This is not the truth. The incarnation had as its purpose the conferment of the boon of liberation. For, Bali had no inkling of ego in him. When Vamana asked for "three feet of ground" from him, his Guru tried his best to prevent him from giving it to Vamana. "My dear fellow! This is no ordinary mendicant. He is Narayana Himself. If you agree to give Him what he asks for, you are certain to be ruined!" But, Emperor Bali replied, "Whoever it be, he has asked and giving what is asked is my duty. It is my great good fortune that God Narayana has come, with hands extended to receive a gift from me. I shall not listen to your teachings now." "The hand that gives is on top of the hand that receives. This is indeed a unique luck," he said.

And the mendicant was the Trinity in ONE, requiring three feet of ground. The three steps are the physical (Adibhoutic) the mental (Adidaivic) and the spiritual (Adhyatmic). The first two steps covered earth and sky and for the third, Emperor Bali's heart was the most appropriate gift! Since the heart was offered to God Narayana the body sank into Patala, the Nether Regions. The first two steps mean the identification with the body and the mind was eliminated. (Santhi is uttered thrice at the end of every Bhajan session or ceremonial rite to invoke Peace on Body, Mind and Spirit, all three.)

Bali had achieved the stage of total surrender. His heart, mind and intelligence were the Lord's; he had dedicated the results of all his actions to God. The 'I' in him had been displaced by 'He'. He had realised the triviality of worldly power and decided to give up every desire except the longing for the Lord. Through his sacrifice, the sins of his great grandfather, Hiranyakasipu, were washed away. The entire dynasty was sanctified. The three flowers of that clan—Prahlada, Virochana and Bali saved him, who was but a mere thread, to reach the Lord's chest.

Bali alone had the resources and the renunciation to give the Lord what He solicited. That is the reason why the Lord approached him. There are many in, history who have renounced their wealth and even their lives. There are many who have given away gems, houses and land. But, Bali surrendered all of himself.

Emperor Sibi saved a dove from being eaten by a vulture but the vulture claimed flesh equal to the weight of the bird. He cut out from his own body portions of flesh, but, the dove appeared to be too heavy to be weighed against even the biggest slice. So, he sat himself on the pan, and gave

himself up as food for the vulture. Tanaji heard the call to fight for his country, even while he was on the altar of the wedding ceremony. He plunged into battle clothed as the bridegroom! He died, happy that he had done his duty to his family, his community and his country. Bhagat Singh ascended the gallows, full of joy that he was able to offer his life for the liberation of his motherland. Bharat had millions of such sons and daughters who sacrificed their lives for her sake.

But, this day, we do not notice this spirit of Tyaga. We find only raga and Bhoga—attachment and enjoyment. Tyaga alone can promote *Yoga*. It is indeed the good fortune of the people of Kerala State that they adore the personality and ideals of Mahabali every year during the ONAM festival. We have to celebrate the festival not only with feasting and song but also with acts of sacrifice, charity and renunciation.

The Sadhana of Tyaga involves the elimination of the feelings of I and Mine. The 'I' will persist so long as we are embodied, but one has to minimise its hold on thought, word and deed.

So long as man is bound to the body sense his God too has to be in a body like his own. It is often said disparagingly that God is conceived as having eyes, nose, tongue and limbs. When the person who worships, has these, the worshipped too must have them, in order to make the worship meaningful. Only when one is unaware of his 'form', can he adore the Formless! It is indeed surprising that those who laugh at God being pictured as having a body do not laugh at their being enclosed in a body! When man has to be corrected and liberated, God has to come as Man, as Narayana had to do to save Mahabali.

Bali had understood the glory and majesty of God. He told his Guru, "The Hand that blesses Goddess Lakshmi, the Hand that grants boons to countless devotees, that Hand is stretched to receive what I offer in answer to the Lord's desire. That Hand has all the worlds in its grasp. And, what does the Lord wish to get from me? He is asking only for that which He has given me! He has come to me in this Form to ask from me all I have because it is the same He that has given me all I have." Bali had convinced himself that the Lord gives and the Lord takes, that he is but an instrument, that his destiny is to merge in the Lord.

So, on this festival day, when we celebrate his dedication and renunciation, we must strengthen our faith that God's will must prevail and is prevailing over all human effort. And, we must realise that Tyaga is the highest Sadhana. Be like Prahlada and Bali. Do not be Hiranyakasipu, for these are blinded by egoism. Prahlada and Bali received blessings from God. Hiranyakasipu earned curses. Pray to God; let prayer be your breath. Do not confront God and be cursed. Take this as the message on this ONAM Day.

—*Prasanthi Nilayam 1.9.82*

Geriatric medical camp

A free Geriatric Medical Camp for the benefit of aged people was conducted by the Sathya Sai Seva Organisations, Tamil Nadu (Madras Dt.), at Abbotsbury, on September 26; 1982. 'The first of its kind to be held in Tamil Nadu State, the camp attracted more than 2000 persons aged 50 years and above. Eighteen clinics manned by eminent experts in their respective fields were provided for the various specialities such as Geriatrics, Cardiology, Neurology, Eye, E. N. T., Chest, Dental, Audiology, Dermatology, Gynaecology, Diabetology, Urology, Psychiatry, etc. Arrangements were also made for screening them for detection of Cancer, TB, etc.

The Camp was unique in that screening, check-up, diagnosis and treatment were made available for all types of disorders of aged people under one roof. As many as 160 doctors were in attendance, assisted by nearly 250 Seva Dal and other members from the Organisation.

The Health Minister of Tamil Nadu, Dr. H. V. Hande, inaugurating the camp, expressed his appreciation of the efforts that had gone into the successful organisation of a medical camp of such magnitude, and the services rendered by the team of dedicated doctors and workers of the Sathya Sai Seva Organisation. He expressed his gratitude to Bhagavan Baba who was the source of such great inspiration for the members of the Sai organisation. He stressed the need for making the aged feel that they could still be useful to society and were not alienated from it.

Artificial aids such as aluminium walking sticks, cervical collars and spectacles were presented free of cost to deserving patients. Several handicapped persons of very advanced age also attended the camp and were escorted to the various clinics in wheel-chairs by volunteers.

The patients were provided with individual case-sheets facilitating entry of the details of diagnosis, investigation, prescription, etc., so that they can be provided with follow-up treatment in 'Sai Krupa', functioning at Abbotsbury every Sunday, or in other Government Hospitals.

Bal Vikas retreat

A two-day Retreat for 130 Bal Vikas students, teachers and parents was organised by the Sathya Sai Baba Centre of Windsor, Ontario, Canada, on August 27 and 28 at Point Pelee National Park, Leamington.

The programme consisted of Bhajans, Nagarasankirtan, study circles, talks by Bal Vikas gurus and dances and dramas by the children.

Pan-Malaysian teachers' training programme

Malaysia held its first National Bal Vikas Teachers' Training programme for Education in Human Values during August 1982. Malaysia is the first country to which Indian specialists on "Education in Human Values" have been sent overseas to instruct and guide in a Teacher Training Programme.

The venue for the Course was the Thiruvalluvar Mandapam at Port Klang. Malaysian teachers, who had attended the Overseas Teachers' Training Camp at Prasanthi Nilayam in 1980, were selected as lecturers to train the Malaysian participants (i.e. gurus and aspiring gurus), who had not the opportunity to participate in the Course in India. Three Indian Gurus were invited to

observe the local lecturers and then to expand on the topics, to give broader scope and depth, as they felt necessary. Among the topics discussed were (i) Character Development as an end of Education; (ii) Unity of Faiths; (iii) Role Play and Attitude Test; (iv) Teaching and significance of devotional group singing (v) and Parent-Teacher participation. There was one guest speaker, Rev. Jambunathan, an expert in child psychology, whose talk gave penetrating insights into the problems of teaching a multiracial, multi-religious group of children. The lectures of the Indian Bal Vikas Gurus, Shrimati Manjula Chakravarty and Shrimati Kamala Bharwani, and the guidance of Srimati Sarala Indulal Shah, gave the participants a better understanding of how to motivate children towards imbibing the values taught.

A total of 65 participants from 15 centres throughout Malaysia including 4 devotees from Singapore attended the two-day Course. At the end of the Course, each participant was given a 'Certificate of Attendance', a photo of Swami and a miniature container of Vibhuti blessed by Bhagavan.

The course has fired the enthusiasm of Malaysian gurus who feel that now that they have been equipped with the proper concept and direction of "Education in Human Values", they should go forward with efforts to impart to wider groups of children the qualities of Truth, Right Conduct, Love and Non-violence.

Vocational guidance

On 16.8.1982, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Dal, Bangalore city district, started a free AMIE (Part A) course as part of their vocational guidance and youth services programme. Out of the 250 applications, 50 were chosen. Most of these students belong to various State and Central establishments in Bangalore and nearly 40 of them are I Class Engineering Diploma holders. Since the Bangalore Seva Dal has more than 20 qualified engineers, it could start this Seva with their enthusiastic cooperation.

A country needs an ideal as a human body requires recoupment. Body is an assembly of various organs. No single organ can constitute a body. When the various organs get separated, the human body gets weakened and even loses its existence. Similarly, if a nation is split up into different parts it gets disintegrated. There may be different states in a nation but there should be a feeling of 'one nation' throughout the country. We should develop a habit of visualising unity in diversity and not diversity in the unity that is divine. God is everywhere and in everyone. The whole universe is inhabited by Him. One should find God in every object. These are the ideals we find in our scriptures. There are bulbs of different colours and their voltage also differs, but whatever the colour and whatever the voltage, the current that flows is the same. This kind of thinking is highly essential today.

—Baba

Sutra Vahini

2

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Sutra (aphorism) enshrines, in a few words, vast expanses of meaning, vast depths of fundamental significance. The Brahma Sutras build up the science of Vedanta. They gather multicoloured flowers from all the Upanishads and string them together to form an enchanting garland. Each Sutra can be elaborated and explained in a number of learned ways, according to each one's understanding, faith, preference, experience and pleasure.

The very first Sutra is Athaatho Brahma jijnasa. The initial Atha has many literal meanings. But, in this Sutra, the most appropriate sense is: "Thereafter." So, "After what?" is the question that arises. It is obvious that it refers to Brahma Jijnasa, 'the yearning to understand the nature of Brahman'. It means, "After such a yearning has dawned." How can this yearning emerge? It can come into the mind only after one acquires proper qualifications. "Thereafter" means, "after equipping oneself with these qualifications."

Jijnasa cannot yield fruit if the Vedas are merely studied. The Vedas deal with Dharma. For understanding Brahman, Vedanta has to be studied.

Among the preliminary qualifications for Brahma Jijnasa, the first is Viveka: Discrimination between the transitory and the eternal. In other words, the discovery that the Atma alone is beyond Time, and that all objects perceivable by the senses of sight etc. are only transitory. The Atma alone suffers no change. It alone is Nitya Sathya (Timeless Truth). As a result of prolonged investigation, one has to gain this unshakable conviction and be established in it.

The second qualification is: Ihaa-mutraphala-bhoga-viraagah (renunciation of the desire to enjoy here and hereafter, the fruits of one's actions). This is also known as Vairagya (non-attachment). One must reason and realise the transitoriness of joy and grief, pollutions that affect the mind. One will be convinced, then, that all things are caught in a flux; they are all momentary, they yield only grief. The feeling of non-attachment will next dawn in the mind. Vairagya does not involve giving up of hearth and home, of wife and children and taking refuge in forests'. It involves only the awareness of the Jagat (world) as transitory and, as a consequence of this awareness, discarding the feelings, "I" and Mine".

The third qualification is: *Sama-damaadi Guna Sampath*, the Group of six virtues, Sama, Dama and the rest.

There are six virtues in this group-Sama, Dama, Uparati, Titiksha, Shraddha and Samadhana.

Sama means mind-control. This is very hard to achieve. The mind can cause bondage; it can also confer liberation. It is an amalgam of Rajasic and Tamasic modes, the passionate and dull attitudes. It is easily polluted. It relishes in hiding the real nature of things and casting on them the forms and values which it desires. So, the activities of the mind have to be regulated.

The mind has two characteristics. The first is: it runs behind the senses; whatever sense the mind follows helplessly, it is inviting disaster. When a pot of water becomes empty, we need not infer that it has leaked away through ten holes; one hole is enough to make it empty. So too, among the senses, even if one is not under control, one will be thrown into bondage. Therefore, every sense has to be mastered.

The second characteristic of the mind is: the potency of the mind can be promoted by good practices like Dhyana, Japa, Bhajan and Puja. With the strength and skill thus reinforced, the mind can help the world or harm it. So, the oriental power gained by such Sadhana has to be turned away from wrong paths and controlled by Sama. The senses have to be directed by the principle of intelligence, the Buddhi. They must be released from the hold the mind has on them. Then spiritual progress can be attained.

Manas or Mind is but a bundle of thoughts, a complex of wants and wishes. As soon as a thought, a desire or a wish raises its head from the mind, Buddhi must probe into its value and validity—is it good or bad, will it help or hinder, where will this lead or end. If the mind does not submit to this probe, it will land itself in the path of ruin. If it does and obeys the intelligence, it can move along the right path.

Man has three chief instruments for uplifting himself: Intelligence, Mind and the Senses. When the mind gets enslaved by the senses, man gets entangled and bound. The same mind, when it is regulated by the intellect, can make man aware of his Reality, the Atma. This is why the mind is reputed to cause either bondage or liberation.

Now, for the second of the six virtues Dama. Dama means keeping the body and the senses under control. This can be achieved only by Sadhana or spiritual exercise and not by any other means: One has to avoid spending precious time in useless pursuits. One has to be ever vigilant. One has to engage the senses of perception and of action and the body in congenial but noble tasks which would keep them busy. There should be no chance for Tamas or sloth to creep in. And, every act must also promote the good of others. While confining oneself to activities which reflect one's natural duties (Swadharma), it is possible to sublimate them into Sadhana for the body and the senses.

(To be Continued)

The Yoga of Love

Universal love must extend outward to include an ever widening circle of beings. Each of us has a certain limiting circle of identification where we allow ourselves to accept and are open and loving. Some people's circle ends within themselves. They feel alienated, lonely and separate from everyone, and love no one, perhaps not even themselves. The secret is that you cannot really love others if you do not love yourself to a certain degree. Some feel comfortable with and love (not really unconditional love) the members of their family, but feel alienated from or actually reject everyone else who is not a part of the family. Still others are able to let their love expand outward to their friends, or even business associates. Some have managed to let their love extend out to encompass all those of the same nationality or religion or social class. Universal LOVE must continue expanding to encompass all of humanity and even animals and plants.

Sai Baba says Love is expansion. Self is contraction. If we want to develop Universal Love we must see through every form and realise our ONENESS with each and every being in all of

Creation. We will have to overcome our conditioning which has caused us to accept and reject others on the basis of their appearance, religion, nationality, race, social class or any other factor.

When we love Universally, we will not be capable of harming others. We will realize our inherent oneness with all beings and realize that whatever we do to others we are really doing to ourselves. Such love creates within us a natural morality, removing violence, untruth, theft, envy, jealousy, anger, and other harmful emotions and activities from our nature. There is no need for external controls and laws when one has developed Universal Love and sees all beings as himself.

In the Bible, Jesus Christ has given us three commandments which will guide us toward Union with God. The first is to "LOVE THE LORD, YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH." Sri Krishna offers the same advice in the Bhagavad Gita to those who want to have GOD-REALIZATION.

*"Give me your whole heart,
Love and adore me,
Worship me always,
Bow to me only,
And you shall find me.
This is my promise.
I love you dearly."*

Since Love is the power which creates union between the loved and the lover, *love of God will result in Union with God*. But how much time do we spend thinking about, or communicating with God? What proportion of our time do we spend on God and what proportion do we spend on our earthly desires and preoccupations?

God is obviously residing in each and every living being. How else could such a being survive or exist, if God's creating and sustaining power were not within? Is there any other power which gives and sustains life. At least science has not discovered any other power if it does exist.

Thus in order to love God we must also love all other beings. It is impossible to love God and not love the people around us. If we say we love God and harm the people around us we are simply hypocrites. Love of God means love of humanity.

Even animals love their children and their own groupings. Men must bring the evolution of love to a higher level by learning to love even those who are different and even those who may try to harm him. Yes, without doubt, this is extremely 'difficult, but let us try. Let us give it the best effort we can and pray for help in overcoming our tendencies to become dominated by feelings of hurt, fear, envy, jealousy and anger. Let us forgive. And while we are forgiving, let us also forgive ourselves.

Ken Keyes in his Handbook to Higher Consciousness, states that the law of higher consciousness is to LOVE EVERYONE UNCONDITIONALLY—INCLUDING YOURSELF.

There is great wisdom in adding the words "Including yourself". Christ said Love others as you love yourself. That implies that one loves oneself. This may not always be true. Many of us have very negative feelings about ourselves, based on early childhood programming. We have learned to think about ourselves as guilty, weak, helpless, evil and in other negative ways. How can we love others if we do not love ourselves. Let us learn to accept and love ourselves, and then we will be able to accept and love others.

Daily prayer, meditation, and study of the scriptures will help us to identify with our higher nature which is beyond whatever mistakes we may make so that we may love ourselves and others.

Sai Baba explains that "The deeds, good and bad, performed by the body do not infect the Soul. All that is done with the body is experienced by the body itself. It is not proper to think that the sins performed by the body and experienced by the mind can be attributed to the Soul. The Soul has got eternal contentment. The sins committed by the body do not affect it. The various spiritual practices are not really for Self-realization but for attaining and appreciating this distinctiveness of the body from the Soul and get over the illusions of relating to the body."

If we can develop this discrimination, we will be able to see that we and every other being is pure consciousness and pure love, and that all the drama of life is but a temporary relative reality which hides the truth of our oneness with all beings. We will then be able to love ourselves and others unconditionally.

As Khalil Gibran so poetically puts: "God, I am your Yesterday and you are my Tomorrow." We are divine seeds dropped from the Divine being which will someday evolve into that Divine Tree from which we have come. No matter what we may do, God's love will always be there. When we perform harmful actions to others, we simply remove ourselves from that Divine Radiance, through our ignorance. God's love has not stopped, we have simply cut ourselves off from it.

Sai Baba confirms the irretractability of God's Love. "Spiritual aspirants in the midst of their efforts sometimes imagine God to be less glorious than He really is. They feel that the Lord differentiates between sinners and saints, good and bad, the wise and the ignorant. These are unsound inferences. The Lord does not separate men thus."

In order to be able to love others as God loves us we will have to steadily develop our own latent divine nature. The techniques of Yoga and teachings of Christianity are given to us for exactly this purpose. Let us each move forward, reducing the pull of the ego and all its demands and desires, and identify more and more each day with our higher soul nature which is Pure Love and Pure Consciousness.

LOVE IS GIVING AND FORGIVING
SELF IS GETTING AND FORGETTING
LOVE IS EXPANSION
SELF IS CONTRACTION.

—Bob Najemy

A country needs any ideal as a human body requires recoupment. Body is an assembly of various organs. No single organ can constitute a body. When the various organs get separated, the human body gets weakened and even loses its existence. Similarly, if a nation is split up into different parts it gets disintegrated. There may be different states in a nation but there should be a feeling of 'one nation' throughout the country. We should develop a habit of visualising unity in diversity and not diversity in the unity that is divine. God is everywhere and in everyone. The whole universe is inhabited, by Him. One should find God in every object. These are the ideals we find in our scriptures. There are bulbs of different colours and their voltage also differs, but whatever the colour and whatever the voltage, the current that flows is the same. This kind of thinking is highly essential today.

—Baba

The "S" on the Plane

It seemed that Bhagavan was calling only large groups for interviews on that day. At the morning Darshan, he had called a Swedish group of about eleven people. At evening Darshan, he called an even larger group from another country. I prayed for a dream. An interview seemed out of the question.

I had found myself in a fortunate position at evening Darshan, as I was seated exactly three rows from the end, and three from the front. I was startled when my position for Darshan the next morning was identical. I had brought a book, "Prasanthi Vahini," to read while awaiting Swami's appearance. I am generally not an outgoing sort of person, so I surprised myself when I stood up to offer Swami my book for His autograph. I proceeded to shock myself even more by inquiring, "Wedding, Swami?" as he signed the book. As He handed me back the book, He asked, "Where are you from?" "The Hollywood Center," I replied. "How many are you?" he asked. "Two, Swami," I answered. "Go!" He said, motioning to the interview room. I stood there, thunderstruck. He took several steps, looked back, saw me still standing there like a statue, and repeated, more forcefully, "Go!" I went.

Nancy, watching from the women's side, could hardly believe her eyes. As I walked toward the Mandir, I tried to spot her in the crowd. Finally I gave up and just signalled in that general direction for her to join me. I was relieved finally to see her, as she stood up and walked over to where I waited. All we could do was to sit there, feeling complete love and fear all at the same time. I had never experienced anything like it, and the interview hadn't even started yet.

There were five women and three men in the outer room. Swami called us either individually or in couples into the private interview room. I shall not detail our entire interview, which lasted about twenty minutes and seemed like a lifetime. In fact, I'm not certain that I could relate all the details. One begins to understand biblical references to God as a whirlwind or a burning bush

after being in that room with Bhagavan. All pre-formulated questions and requests become like mindless voices from another world, lost in the intensity of the transformation that is taking place. And, regardless of degree, a transformation does take place. No one is precisely the same-person as one leaves the interview room.

As we sat at Swami's feet, He instructed us in various aspects of our lives; the ultimate parent, gently chastising and simultaneously holding out hope for the future. He reached out for the package of letters that Nancy had brought with her from the Center. She was also holding a photograph of her brother, pictured in flight gear, with his trainer plane in the background. Swami asked his name and then pointed to the plane and asked, "What is this?" Nancy looked puzzled, and Swami repeated the question, pointing, "This, what is this?" Nancy replied that it was a trainer plane. We knew, by His look, that this was not the answer He was awaiting. It was with a look of fatherly tolerance for his slightly silly children that He continued with the interview. We realized what He had been asking about later, upon re-examining the photograph. Because of the angle of the photo, the "U" of "U.S." (United States) had been cut off, leaving only the "S" on the front of the plane. It was to this "S" that Swami had referred when he had asked, "What is this?"

Swami had earlier said to Nancy, "You have many doubts, too many. Be confident. Be sure." He now reiterated, regarding her missing brother, "Here, too, you have doubts. Is he alive? Is he dead? Yes or no? At first you knew, but now you are not sure." Nancy said, "Yes, Swami. I do not know." And He replied, "Yes, you do know. Yes, yes, he is with life." Nancy, in a voice choking with years of pent-up emotion, asked, "Swami, do you mean he is alive here, in your heart?" "No, no," said Baba. "He is with life. He is happy and healthy, and now, for you, he is coming home soon, very soon."

As tears of emotional release streamed down her face, Swami said to Nancy, "No, no more crying, no more doubts. Now you can be happy." He repeated this from time to time as Nancy's tears continued flowing. He blessed our marriage and spoke some more with us before ushering us into the outer room and leading in the next couple.

—*Shep Sandel*

People who run helter-skelter clamouring for donations for mandirs are really promoting Atheism, for they are urged by greed, malice and egoism, rather than by the dedicatory spirit of devotion. When these self-styled promoters of the Cause come to you, do not give even a paise. Why do you need a hall for japam or dhyanam? Make your house a small Mandir for yourself; meditate in your Shrineroom, sing Bhajans with your children. Impress others by your sweet speech, your humility, your universal love, your steady faith, your truthfulness. Then, others will come into the fold of believers, in numbers larger than any hall could bring.

—**Baba**

"DASARA" Celebrations—a Profile:

Veda Navaratri

Every one who was present at Prasanthi Nilayam, during Dasara 1982, realised that the Mother worshipped during the nine days as Mahadurga, Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati was also the Veda-mata, the Mother who conferred on her children (mankind) the strength, intelligence and vision necessary to overcome obstacles to progress, sustenance to maintain health and happiness, and discrimination to acquire Awareness of One's Reality. Bhagavan directed the attention of the thousands who had gathered in His Presence to this central fact through elaborate description of Vedic scriptures during His daily discourses, probing into the significance of the aphorisms and axioms that illumine vast vistas of Knowledge of God, Nature and Man.

This year, Dasara extended astrologically over eleven days (Oct 17 to Oct 27). On Oct 17, the symbolic Kalasha of the Festival was installed at the Nilayam. That day, more than 5000 indigent and handicapped persons were given new clothes (dhotis, towels and saris) besides a sumptuous fast.

The Annual Day of the Sri Sathya Sai Hospital was celebrated on the 20th October. Bhagavan includes this day as part of the Dasara Festival, not only because the Hospital was opened on the First Day of Dasara, 24 years ago, but more because the human personality is enclosed in five sheaths (Kosas) of which the first three—the annamaya (the food sheath), the pranamaya (the Vital Air Sheath) and the manomaya (the mental sheath) are diagnosed and dealt with in the Hospital. The other two sheaths, the vijñanamaya (the Intellect Sheath) and the anandamaya (the Spiritual Sheath) are the province of the Guru and the Godly. Dr. Alreja, the Medical Officer of the Hospital, informed the vast congregation at the Poornachandra Auditorium (resplendent with freshly fitted suspended ceiling) that the Hospital, under Bhagavan's compassionate guidance and ever-present Blessings, was catering to the needs of the Nilayam complex, the Vidyagiri campus as well as about a dozen villages that lie around, besides attending on the huge gatherings that festive occasions and even normal days attract to the Presence of the Avatar. Sri Maharaj Krishna Rasagotra, Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, a staunch devotee since many years, was present as the Chief Guest. He spoke of the serious maladies that are at present rampant among the peoples of the world. Giving instances of Bhagavan's omnipresence and potence, he appealed to Bhagavan to assuage the passions and allay the fears of mankind. Bhagavan, in His Discourse, laid stress on the effects of contentment and self-awareness as surer cures for the illnesses of man than pills and capsules.

The Vedapurusha Saptah Jnana Yajna was inaugurated at 10 A.M. on 21st October. A large group of Vedic scholars and experts in Vedic ritual had come to the Nilayam to participate in the ceremony which was directed to the promotion of peace, prosperity and welfare of the whole world. Bhagavan, who is the Embodiment of all Divine Forms and Norms, proceeded to the Yajna Vedika on the dais of the Auditorium in procession preceded by the richly caparisoned Sai Geeta and rows of College students from the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning chanting in authentic orthodox style the Vedic hymns they have mastered. He was accompanied by Vedic savants and pundits. The Governor of Karnataka State, Sri Govind Narain, who later delivered the Inaugural Address was with Bhagavan. The dais had a shrine where Kalasa in which Devi was invoked was worshipped with conventional Puja on all the seven days. In another shrine, the Sahasra Linga Puja was taking place, the lingas being formed with appropriate mantras and

massed together after worship, every day. There was continuous recitation by a batch of learned Vidwans of the entire Yajur Veda, with the stresses and stops, emphases and intonations that have come down the ages since Vedic times. The sacrificial altar was lit with fire evoked in Vedic style by the churning of hard wood and it was fed with ghee poured while Vedic hymns propitiating Rudra and other Gods were chanted by scholars. Suryanamaskar was also performed by a devotee who repeated hymns on praise of the "Cosmic Eye", "the-life-giver" while going through the stages of prostrating full length towards the Sun. On the dais could also be seen pundits reading the Ramayana, the Bhagavata and the Devi Bhagavatam.

Sri Govind Narain referred to the universal love and tolerance which Bhagavan was emphasising, while encouraging the study and practice of the ancient scriptures of this land. Bhagavan announced that the Vedas—the Karma Kanda (dealing with rites, rituals and sacrifices), the Upasana Kanda (dealing with Japa, Dhyana, and Puja) and the Jnana Kanda (dealing with meditation on the Reality, that is the very core of man, nature and God)—are the source and spring, the soul and substance of (Dharma) all codes of morality and all guidelines for good living. He said that they are the most precious treasure in the heritage of India, and it is capable of establishing peace and progress for all mankind. He spoke on the fundamental role of Fire and Water in creating and maintaining life. He described the role of the other elements and condemned the attitude of exploitation and conquest which science is fostering. "Approach them with reverence, humility and fear," He said. He mentioned how critics carp at Yajnas as waste of ghee and other valuables. He explained that when the assigned mantras are recited and the blessings of the deity are prayed for, the offering reaches the goal and the result is assured. "It is like scattering seeds on the ploughed field; they are not wasted or lost; they yield, if cared for and tended with loving attention, a ten fold harvest," Baba said. Bhagavan asserted that all activities must be dedicated to God and must be so motivated that they conduce to promote Godly virtues and Godly harmony." For, what can man offer God except what God has given him? And what greater boon can man ask for than the illumination which God can give from every heart?

On the evening of the 21st, The Annual Day of the All India Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha founded by Bhagavan as an Academy of Vedic Scholars dedicated to the preservation and propagation of the ancient scriptures of Bharat was celebrated. Brahmasri Kuppa Bairagi Sastry, one of the Foundation Members of the Mahasabha, addressed the gathering. He described the several units of the Yajna as parts of one United whole, dedicated to the One God, whom the Rg Veda denotes as being known through many Names and Forms. On the 22nd, the senior-most Vedic scholar, honoured by all lovers of scriptural texts, a reputed expert in Mantra Sastra, a Vidwan nearing his hundredth year, Brahmasri Sishtla Chandramouli Sastry, another Foundation Member of the Sabha, spoke on the efficacy of the recitation of the Name of God as a Sadhana to raise the level of one's consciousness. On other days, Sri N. Kasturi, Sri Anil Kumar, Botany Faculty, Christian College, Guntur, and Sri V. K. Narasimhan, Formerly Editor, Financial Express, Indian Express and Deccan Herald and now Associate Editor, Sanathana Sarathi, addressed the Evening Gatherings, on the basic human values which Bhagavan is stressing as essential for individual and social salvation. Sri C. Srinivas, M. Com., M. Phil., Warden of the Sri Sathya Sai College Hostel, Brindavan, and Sri Nityananda Menon, M. Com., M. Phil., Warden of the Sri Sathya Sai College Hostel, Vidyagiri, Prasanthi Nilayam also inspired the assembly with their heartening account of the teachings of Bhagavan and the impact they have

on youth. Three students—S. Ramesh of the II B. Sc. class and Sanjay Sahani of the I B. Com. class, both of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning and Ruchir Desai of the II B. Com. class of the Sri Sathya Sai College, Brindavan, demonstrated by their speeches the qualities of devotion, dedication and discipline, the keenness to imbibe knowledge and the humility to pine for more, that Sai Education promotes.

Hon'ble Sri S. B. Chavan, Minister for Planning, Government of India, was present at Prasanthi Nilayam, for three days during the Dasara Festival. On 26th October, the Mahanavami day, Sri S. B. Chavan was the speaker at the evening gathering. Dr. V. K. Gokak, the Vice-chancellor of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, while welcoming the Minister, acknowledged the devoted interest that he had taken, as the Minister of Education, for the establishment of the Institute. Sri S. B. Chavan confessed that it was Bhagavan's Will that worked itself, out, for it emerges out of Divine Power. He looked forward to the day when similar Institutes will be established in many parts of India, so that youth equipped with high ideals, high attainments and high patriotism can serve the country intelligently and efficiently. He was hopeful that peace and prosperity will be ensured for the world when students trained and shaped in the educational institutions guided by Swami go forth to serve humanity.

The Valedictory Offering (Poornahuti) of the Yajna was the happy occasion for thousands to feast their eyes and furnish their minds with the ecstasy of Bhagavan's revelation that He is the Vedapurusha. The Discourse He delivered after conferring blessings on, the vast concourse of devotees and the pundits, ritualist experts and the scholars who participated in the Yajna, was the last and most comprehensive of the eight with which He blessed this Navaratri gathering. It was for the thousands a substantial but simplified Course on the Four Vedas, and the supplementary scriptures on Morality, Law, Grammar, Music, Astronomy, Weaponry, and even Archery. He probed into many levels of meaning of many cardinal words found in the Vedas. He enumerated and elaborated the many names by which the Vedas are known, the many styles of recitation, and the many deities that are invoked. He impressed on the thousands ` who heard Him that the Vedas possess the key to the good life, to peace among peoples, and to the awareness of the innate Reality. In fact, His exposition transformed this Navaratri into a Veda Navaratri.

The Jhoola Festival on the 27th, in the evening, afforded the most fascinating finale to the celebrations. The Darshan of Bhagavan, in immaculate white, reclining on the shining silver swing, listening to song offerings devotedly rendered by devotees (Smt. P. Suseela, P. Leela and Sri Ramakrishna Rao and Rajeswara Rao, Music Directors and renowned Artistes) was a boon which one can secure only rarely in one's lifetime. But, that was the parting gift that Baba conferred on about fifty thousand yearning souls.

—Ed.

"Cultivate comradeship with the good, develop compassion for the distressed, foster the feeling of elation at the happy and prosperous, and deepen indifference towards the evil-minded this is the ancient, well-tried prescription for a calm peaceful life. God will bless such men and award them Grace."

—Baba

What Art Thou?

My mind is puzzled, and tossed in a maze. I cannot figure out. When every inch of grass is pricking you, when blossoming sunflowers appear to tease you; and when all scorn and mock ostentatiously, there appears a figure in a silken red robe with beaming smile turning our tears into tears of joy. The twinkling eyes are filled with concern. The majestic form is confident of success. The soft feet serve as comfortable refuge. The perfect hands use you as a loving instrument. The lips are whispering love, "Be joyful and leave all to me." I guess the burden will be heavy for Sai. But Sai says it is a light burden of love.

Sai, you are the son of Easwaramma. But then why should the son of Easwaramma care for me?

Swami, are you our father? Swami, are you our affectionate mother? Are you the Lord of the fourteen worlds? Or are you my own dear self? No, you are much more.

Baba you have the personality of a man, the delicacy of a lady and the innocence and mischief of a child. You are all in one. But you are yet above everything.

I know you are the Master with the string of the puppets. Or may be a big Monarch, whose will prevails. But why, Sai, why should Masters and Monarchs love me, care so much for me? Swami, you must be the beneficial guardian whose benevolent care I am enjoying.

Baba! You are all that I wish to love and adore. In fact, you do through us all that is required to attain You. Your infinite compassion and grace can make us capable of your love, protection, guidance and guardianship.

You are immanent in all beings. You are the Divine Spark in all. You are all the goodness, kindness, greatness, love, purity, patience, perseverance that exists. Your task decided by your cosmic mind is accomplished within a minute. Why then are you lingering on the task of taking your children close? We do not like to be in disillusion, distress, troubles and Maya.

Let the Rain of Sai Love irrigate my heart and yield good harvest.

—Shikha Kapoor (aged 14)
S. S. S. Higher Secondary School, Vidyagiri

A Unique Convocation

In the afternoon, the First annual Convocation of the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning was held in the Poornachandra auditorium. Precisely at 4 P.M. students of the Institute, dressed uniformly in white, came in procession and took their stand in a semi-circle in front of the Mandir. When the Chancellor (Bhagavan) appeared in front of them, all the students bowed to Him with folded hands and chanted the University Community prayer. Then the convocation procession was formed headed by two students bearing the Institute emblem and followed by the Registrar, the members of the Academic Council, the Deans of Faculties; members of the Governing Body, the Vice-chancellor, the Chief Guest, Mr. N. A. Palkhivala, and the Chancellor (Bhagavan Baba). On arrival at the auditorium, the members went up to the dais and took their respective seats.

The Convocation began with an invocatory chant by the students from the Taittiriya Upanishad. Professor Gokak, Vice-chancellor, welcoming the gathering, said that this Convocation was very different from the usual types of convocations held by the Universities. Such a varied audience could not have been seen anywhere else—an audience drawn from all parts of India and from many foreign countries. Dr. Gokak explained the special features of educational courses at the Institute and referred in particular to the Awareness Courses in Indian Culture. He claimed: 'We are in the vanguard of the movement for educational reform'. The Institute included among its teaching methods lectures, seminars, projects, practical periods for Humanities and Social Sciences. Its evaluation system was a significant departure from the traditional system. It sought a complete evaluation of a student's performance. By the introduction of moral and spiritual education, the Institute aimed at "awakening the soul in man". In addition to meditation and prayer, the students attend discourses on the scriptures and practise Yogasanas. Above all, Bhagavan's meetings with the students formed the most important part of their education, creating in them a love for the higher values.

He then requested the Chancellor to declare the Convocation open. The Chancellor, after declaring the Convocation open, called for the presentation of the candidates for various degrees. The Deans of the Faculties of Arts, Science and Commerce presented respectively the candidates for the degrees of the Master of Arts, Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Commerce and prayed that they may be admitted: The candidates stood up in their seats and bowed with folded hands till the Chancellor pronounced his benediction. The Vice-chancellor then administered the following Pledge to the new graduates:

"I hereby solemnly declare that, if admitted to the degree for which I have been duly recommended, I will, in my daily life and conversation and in thought, word and deed, conduct myself as befits a member of the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning; that I will, to the utmost of my capacity and opportunity, support the cause of sound learning, humanity, morality and spirituality, and that, as far as it lies in me, I shall uphold and advance the social and, indeed, all-round welfare of my countrymen and fellowmen."

The Pledge was taken by the candidates as the words were uttered by the Vice-chancellor. The Vice-chancellor then read out the Convocation commandments from the Taittiriya Upanishad ("Sathyam Vada; Dharmam Chara" etc.)

The Chancellor then gave the prizes to the following candidates, who had distinguished themselves in the, public examinations: Kumari Vani (First prize in; B.Sc.), Kumari K. Subhadra (First prize in Home Science), Kumari K. R. Jyothi (First prize, B. Com.), A. Viswanath (First prize, B. Sc.), Prakash Sarin (first prize, B. Com.), Kumari Nagaprabhavathi (First prize, M. A. Telugu)

Donations of Rs. 10,000 each for instituting gold medals were announced from the following past students of the Sri Sathya Sai College, Brindavan: M. Radhakrishna, Rupak K. Changkakoti, C. Srinivas and Nithyanand Marion.

Dr. Gokak then invited Mr. N. A. Palkhivala to deliver the Convocation address.

In a scintillating address, Mr. Palkhivala said that the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning marked the beginning of the moral and spiritual regeneration of the country. It was a great experiment. The Institute stood for the five ideals of Bhagavan—Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa. There were no correct equivalents in the English language for these five terms. Dharma, he said, is "obedience to the unenforceable." The students who have imbibed Dharma will contribute to "the gross national happiness." They will "stay in business to do good," not merely to make money. India had been held together through the centuries by adherence to Dharma. Santhi does not mean mere Peace. "It is to know how to possess your soul before the last hour arrives." The concept of Prema embodied the ancient Indian ideal of one human family knit together by love of the Divine. Ahimsa represented the feeling, of kinship with all living things.

Mr. Palkhivala concluded that the Institute will produce dedicated and well-equipped men and women who will build the nation. It will produce the leaders who will rescue the nation from the moral and spiritual recession that has overtaken it.

The Chancellor then delivered his benedictory address. He exhorted the students to live up to the Sai ideals in every situation in life, uphold the honour and reputation of the Institute wherever their destiny might take them. (Details of Bhagavan's address will be published in a later issue).

After Bhagavan's address, the Convocation procession was re-formed and left the auditorium for the Mandir.

—*Ed.*

Xth All-India Conference

Programmes for the intensification of the spiritual and service activities of the Sathya Sai Organisations over the next three years were decided upon at the tenth All India Conference of Sri Sathya Sai Organisations held at Prasanthi Nilayam from November 19 to November 21.

The conference, which was attended by over 6000 delegates from all parts of India, considered during the three days, the following four subjects:

- (1) Re-orientation of the three wings of the organisation;
- (2) Importance of spiritual foundation for all activities;
- (3) God and Rationalism;
- (4) The Sai system of integrated education.

Prof. Pappu spoke on the World Council's publication, "Lessons for Study Circles." Prof. C. Srinivas presented to Bhagavan a copy of 'SMRUTI', which had been brought out to commemorate the inclusion of the Sathya Sai College at Brindavan in the campus of the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning.

Inaugurating the conference, Bhagavan exhorted the Sai workers to develop Tyaga and Prema as the essential requisites for realising true human qualities and for rendering Seva in the right spirit. There were keynote addresses by Mr. Nityananda Marion, Mr. Mavinkurve, Mr. Hariharan, Dr. D. R. Bhagawat, Dr. Muralidhara Rao, Mr. K. Chakravarthi (Registrar of the Sai University), Mrs. Khastgir, Judge of the Calcutta High Court, and Prof. V. K. Gokak.

The recommendations of the various State Groups were consolidated into four reports and were presented to Bhagavan by Maj. Gen. S. P. Mahadevan (on Spiritual activities), Prof. D. Narender (Promotion of Sai Ideals), Mr. Gangadhara Setty (Ceiling on Desires) and Smt. Shantha Diwakar (Mahila Vibhag and Bal Vikas). (Details of these decisions will be published in the next issue.)

"Smruti"

This beautifully produced volume, with its attractive pictures of Bhagavan in colour on the cover pages and inside, was presented to Bhagavan, on the eve of His 57th birthday, as an offering from the students and staff of the Sathya Sai College at Brindavan, which has now become part of the Campus of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning.

More modest in size and contents than the luxurious and massive 'Golden Age' volumes of previous years, 'Smruti' is nevertheless a happy reminder of the affection and devotion which the students, past and present, of the Brindavan College have for Bhagavan.

At first sight, I wondered how another book of this type could match the marvellous volumes of the "Golden Age". On closer examination it became evident that this newest bouquet of tributes to Swami is embellished with wonderfully clear and striking photographs of Swami. Some of the pictures show Him looking quite playful and charming, while others reveal a sense of wonderment and power. After being tempted by the photos, one is drawn to read the text, and

that is where the real treat begins. More than one story brought tears of joy to these eyes. Others are amusing and thought-provoking, but all bear testimony to the varied impact of Bhagavan on the writers. "Smruti", printed superbly on art paper by the Vraj Brindavan press, is certainly a book all devotees will wish to read, possess and share with others who may want to know more about the many facets of this Avatar. It is priced Rs. 15.

—*Mrs. B. Bozzani Editor, Sathya Sai Newsletter, U.S.A.*

SEMINAR AT MAGENTA:

"Human Values" for Europe

Bhagavan's programme of education in human values, as the primary means of imparting an ethical and spiritual content to the education of children, marked a notable advance towards expansion beyond the boundaries of India, when, with Swami's blessings, the first European Seminar on Education in Human Values was held at Magenta in Italy on October 30 and 31.

The groundwork for the seminar was laid in the summer of 1982 when Mr. and Mrs. Craxi, Swami's Italian devotees, prepared a comprehensive brochure on different aspects of education in human values; on the basis of the discourses delivered by Swami and the addresses and discussions at a training programme held in Prasanthi Nilayam in May. This brochure was translated into Italian and French and the approval of Bhagavan was sought for holding a seminar in Italy in October this year. Invitations were issued to all the European Sai Centres and thorough arrangements were made for the seminar at Magenta, where previously conferences of Italian devotees had been held. The response was highly gratifying. Reports and papers were received for the seminar from participants from Sweden, Switzerland, Germany, Denmark and Greece, besides Italian participants.

Bhagavan's presence at the seminar venue was evident to all the participants, when after many days of very foggy weather, rain and snow, the sun shone brilliantly on the 30th. Registrations for the Seminar exceeded 400 by the time the first session began in the morning. A full-size portrait of Swami and a placard displaying the five human values of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa, besides the national flags of nine countries, were prominently displayed on the dais. A chair with Swami's robe conveyed to the participants the presence and blessings of Bhagavan.

After paying a solemn homage to Bhagavan and reciting in chorus the Vedic prayer, "Asato Maa Sadgamaya..." the seminar began with a welcome address from Mr. Antonio Craxi. At the outset, Mr. Craxi read the Divine Message to the seminar given by Swami to Mr. Craxi in September. It had been translated into Italian, German and French. While conferring His benediction on the seminar, Bhagavan declared:

Because man is a social animal, the good or evil prevailing in society act and react upon him. As a fish cannot live out of water, man cannot live outside society. It was to teach man his social obligation that the institution of family came into existence. The welfare of a family is dependent on the behaviour of the individuals composing it. It follows that the welfare of a village is based

upon the welfare of the families in it and a nation's welfare is based upon the state of its villages and towns. There is thus an integral connection between the state of the individual and the state of the nation. The individual must first of all be prepared to sacrifice himself for the interests of the community. Society will, be duly grateful for such persons. Just as the individual depends on society for his welfare, the nations of the world are dependent on each other for their prosperity and even as the individual must be prepared to make sacrifices in the national interest, the nations should be willing to sacrifice their narrow interests for the welfare of the world as a whole. Inter-dependence is the hall-mark of the world.

"Mankind should realise that the world is essentially the projection of the Divine Will. It is the creation of the Lord. If one looks at the world with a sacred vision as the creation of the Divine, he will begin to experience in it the power and majesty of the Creator. Realising that creation is a manifestation of the Creator, man must make love the basic principle of his life to realise the Divine. Violence, hatred, envy and selfishness are animal qualities. As long as they remain, one cannot experience Divinity. Love alone is the means: Love leads to God and when one has the strength of Divinity, he need have no fear. A society filled with love will be strong and invincible. *Where there is Faith, there is Love. Where there is Love, there is Peace. Where there is Peace, there is Truth. Where there is Truth, there is God.* Dedicate yourselves to the service of society with unalloyed love and realise the Divine that is in you all."

Mr. Craxi, in welcoming the participants, said: "A century ago on this very spot a cruel and bloody battle took place in which Europe lost her best sons' blood. Today, at the same place—Magenta—the best sons of Europe are meeting again with a different purpose, with the symbol of all religions as their weapons, looking for new, ways for inner progress and the uplifting of humanity. The battle we now have to fight is far nobler and greater. Its aim is the spiritual victory and realisation of Truth." Mr. Craxi explained at length Bhagavan's educational philosophy, which is related to his Divine Mission of establishment of the reign of Dharma on earth. He said: 'Bhagavan Baba's presence amongst us has blown a purifying breeze of spirituality across the lands. Very soon we will see the results. The devotees of the Lord all over the world, no matter what their beliefs or ways of worship, will remain as the seeds producing the new harvest of the Golden Age.'

Emphasizing the global significance of Bhagavan's educational programme, Mr. Craxi said: "All of us, parents and teachers, need to inwardly reform ourselves through discipline, prayer, good company, good reading and genuine practice of human values. Only then will true teaching be carried from heart to heart and enrich man and society. Teachers must become aware of the role that they have assumed and must know that this role has been given them by the Divine Will. The school, considered a temple of knowledge, must also become a Temple of Spirituality. Teachers must become apostles of human values."

Mr. V. K. Narasimhan, Associate Editor, 'Sanathana Sarathi', who had been deputed by Bhagavan to act as an "Observer" at the seminar and to visit Sai centres in Europe, then conveyed to the seminar participants Bhagavan's blessings for the success of the seminar. He described the progress which the programme of education in human values had already made in India and the adoption of the programme by several State Governments and Municipal Corporations in India. Swami's educational programme was not meant for any one country or

people, but for mankind. Swami was the greatest unifying force to-day among peoples of all creeds, languages and races.

Greetings to the seminar were conveyed by Dr. Meyer, Chairman of the European Sathya Sai Group I, and Mr. Paolo Ceresa, Chairman of the European Sathya Sai Group II, and by representatives from Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, Greece and Sweden.

The seminar proper began with the presentation of papers on different aspects of human values by Francoise Boucherau, Laura Coris (on Prema), by Mrs. Carla Caratti (on Sai Education), by Mrs. Milena Kunz (on Human Values), by Noris Rossetti (on Dharma), Guiseppe Trumbadore (on Education and Peace) Mrs. Myriam Vannoni (on Peace), Mario Bianco (on Ahimsa), Mrs. Lydia Halsey (on Family-school relationship), Mrs. Sylvia Craxi (on Devotion and Self-Confidence), Mrs. Daphne Taboureas (on Situation of the school today in Greece).

The reading of papers and delivery of keynote addresses occupied the afternoon session also.

Discussions on the papers were held on Sunday morning (31st October)-. A lively debate ensued over an interesting account given by Mrs. M. Casietarro a teacher from South Italy, describing her experience in the teaching of human value to children. In her exposition of education according to Sai ideals, she explained how she carried out a specific programme with the help of two other teachers of her school and the various ways she used in order to teach the children to control their emotions, including respiratory exercises, correct diet and concentration on the 'Jyoti'. She illustrated in her programme the Sathya Sai ideal about the one God worshipped by the different religions. She helped the children to have a better contact with nature, explaining to them the One Reality behind the multiplicity of the universe.

The session concluded with an address by Mr. Craxi, in which he explained that what had been attempted in that seminar was only the beginning of a broader movement aimed at transforming education so as to make the educational process not merely a means of imparting information and skills to the children but also making them morally responsible citizens capable of leading meaningful lives in the service of society and in the development of their own spiritual destiny. He announced that the Magenta seminar was likely to be followed by a larger European seminar, perhaps in Stockholm, with the blessings of Bhagavan.

All the participants, the majority of whom were women teachers and parents, were extremely satisfied with the seminar for the new insights it had provided into many neglected aspects of education.

Devotees' homage

On the suggestion of Swami; Mr. Craxi had arranged for a meeting of devotees on the afternoon of October 31st to convey to them Swami's gracious Message and distribute the Prasadam which had been specially sent by Bhagavan. As it was a Sunday, devotees started pouring into Mr. Craxi's Estate from early in the morning, and by 3 P.M. over 3000 men; women and children had gathered from all parts of Italy, coming by air or automobile.

An improvised pneumatic dome capable of accommodating nearly 4000 persons had been set up on the vast lawns of the estate, with the slogan "JAI SAI RAM" on its top. A beautiful dais had been erected inside the dome with a big portrait of Swami and an ornamental chair bearing the Robe of Swami with its bottom folds resting on a foot-stool.

Precisely at 4 P.M. all the devotees had assembled in the hall and the proceedings started with Bhajans. The men and women groups rendered the Bhajans with remarkable fidelity and fervour. After the Bhajans, Mr. Craxi welcomed the gathering and conveyed Bhagavan's blessings and Message to the European devotees. Swami's Message concluded with the words: "Mankind will have a great future when human society is built up on the twin principles of Love and Sacrifice—Prema and Tyaga. This is Sai's message to you. You have to exemplify in your life the two spiritual qualities of Love and Sacrifice and show the way to the building up of a society based on Truth, Righteousness, Love and Peace. Go forward with faith, unity, confidence and courage: Swami's grace will always be with you, wherever you may be, because Swami and you are one."

Mr. V. K. Narasimhan conveyed the personal Greetings of Swami to everyone of the devotees and said: "Everyone there could feel the presence of Bhagavan in the holy atmosphere prevailing in the assembly."

After speeches by the Chairmen of the two European Groups, there was a music concert by Vemu Mukunda (Veena), and party. At the end of the meeting, all the devotees present formed into queues to offer homage to Bhagavan and receive the "Vibhuti" packets which were distributed by Mr. and Mrs. Craxi. It was a heartwarming sight to see each devotee go up the dais, kneel reverently at the chair and kiss the Robe of Swami with the feeling that Bhagavan was visibly present in the chair. Each devotee then received the packet, regarding it as a treasured possession. It took more than 90 minutes for the distribution of Prasadam to be completed.

When the time for parting came, many devotees were deeply moved by the experience they had had and there was a universal yearning that Bhagavan should visit Italy and bless them in person.

—V. K. N.

"Messiah"

(The Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's "Messiah" was performed in the Presence of Bhagavan, on Christmas Eve, 1981, at the Round House, Prasanthi Nilayam, by a choir of amateur ad hoc singers who volunteered, to rehearse it with devotion and discipline and who had come from America, Australia, Canada, Denmark, England, Germany, Italy, New Zealand, Switzerland and a few other countries. In the February 1982 number of this magazine, an article by Richard Del Maestro of New York on the event was published. We are looking forward to Christmas again in the Presence and this account

of how the presentation of "Messiah" was impelled by Bhagavan and what it has made devotees to expect in future years will be quite revealing to our readers.)

Coming back to the twentieth century and Puttaparthi, I found the persistent little tune still chirping away in my head, asking to be identified. But morning Darshan did not seem the right time or place for games of 'Guess the Theme'. Sternly banishing the motif as if it were some kind of friendly but superfluous mosquito, I resolved to calm my spirits by looking up an inspiration for the day. Usually, I do this with one of Baba's recent books, but today all I had with me was 'The Messiah'. Being full of sacred writings, it should do very well for a change. I then opened my score at random, and found myself looking at none other than my 'lost' theme, which had been set to the words, "He is the King of Glory! He is the King of Glory!"

At that precise moment, just as I had read and marvelled at these words, Sai Baba Himself strolled into view on the other side of the courtyard, moving majestically in rhythm to the theme, and glowing in the gold of the morning sun in His scarlet robe. All through in that unique and splendid Darshan, while Baba visited the hosts who had been awaiting him, and faces opened up like flowers to the sun, I could "hear" with incredible clarity the mighty chorus from which comes my "little" theme:

'Lift up your heads, O ye gates,' sing the higher voices of the choir, like herald angels, "And be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in!"

"Who is this King of Glory? Who is this King of Glory?" inquire the lower voices, those of the men.

"The Lord of Hosts, the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle," comes the reply from on high. Then all the voices, high and low, unite as if heaven and earth had joined forces, to exult: "He is the King of Glory."

On the Sunday morning before Christmas, 1980, as I sat on the sands outside the temple of Sri Sathya Sai Baba in Puttaparthi a small tune came into my head. It was a lilting refrain, and it played itself over and over again, insistently, as if asking to be recognized. But I could not remember exactly what it was, nor what words went to it, although this seemed important. All I knew was that it came from somewhere in Handel's "Messiah". When I was younger I used to hear this work every year, then later I sang in the chorus on a few occasions. My singing teacher had given me two soprano arias from "Messiah" to practise. And in my own music classes, we often studied it. I had grown to appreciate the magnificent music more and more, but the full impact of the words had come upon me only a few weeks before Christmas, 1980.

Before, I had always assumed the entire "Messiah" was about Jesus. But one day six years after knowing about Sai Baba and three years after seeing Him for the first time, I began to wonder. The parts about Jesus were all in the past tense, and the parts about the Lord, for whom a new highway would have to be made in the wilderness, were in the present and the future. Not many days before, I myself had used a road that had only been in existence for a few years, to reach the courtyards of Sai. With me I had brought my musical score of Handel's "Messiah", rather the worse for wear, and it lay on my lap as I waited for Baba to come out. With it was a

letter asking Baba to confirm my belief that a great deal of this oratorio is about Him, and also asking Him to bless a performance of it one day in His presence. I had begun to envision this grand event, complete with choir, soloists and orchestra under a certain world-famous conductor. The idea seemed fantastic, but not unrealizable. I pictured people all over the world practising their parts, then gathering in Puttaparthi to put the finishing touches to the whole, all in the same spirit of love, service and devotion with which Handel wrote the music and Jennens found the words for 'The Messiah'.

My mind travelled back in time and space from India, 1980, to London in the late summer of 1741. The Governor of Ireland had asked "The Great Mr. Handel", as he was often called, to write an oratorio for a charitable benefit concert. Handel was wondering what material to use, when a certain Charles Jennens came to him with a libretto for an oratorio made up of texts from the Old and New Testaments that said, in essence: "Prepare for the coming of the Lord in all His glory, for the sacrifice of Christ Jesus was not in vain."

Jennens could not understand himself why he had been impelled to begin selecting texts from the Bible, nor why he had selected those particular ones. An atmosphere of wonder surrounded the entire creation of "The Messiah". Handel was so inspired by the libretto that he composed the music in 23 days, hardly stopping to eat or sleep. A servant, tip-toeing into his room one evening to take away an untouched supper tray, found him in a state of ecstasy. A glorious vision seemed to be still hovering before his inner gaze, and he said, "I did think I saw all heaven before me, and the Great God Himself." He had, the legend says, just composed the "Hallelujah" chorus.

Following its premiere for charity in Dublin, 'The Messiah' came to London for a royal command performance in a full theatre, before King George II. The first stirring notes of the "Hallelujah" chorus brought the King to his feet, followed by the entire audience. It is still traditional for audiences to rise for this particular chorus.

Having originally composed this music for charity, Handel continued to use it in service of society throughout the rest of his life, giving benefit performances regularly for charities dear to his heart. In his will he left a copy of the musical score and several sets of words to the London Foundling Hospital.

The music was over, and Baba had now nearly completed His stately progress around the ladies' courtyard. As He arrived at my place in the Darshan line, I held out the score and the letter, wondering what He would do. What He did was beautiful in its simplicity. He placed His hand firmly for a moment on the tattered pages full of the hopes of generations and the visions of prophets since Isaiah, and gave His blessing.

—*Helen Heubi, Geneva, 1982*

For the conquest of mind—the first step is the control of senses, the second is the control of emotions and impulses. The third is the mastery of balance and equipoise. The next is the regulation of breathing and movement of the vital airs, the fifth is the preventing of outer

influences, from deviating the mind, the next is one-pointed attention on one's own progress, and then, we come to real Dhyana, or meditation on one's real Reality which easily leads to its realisation in Samadhi. Without the preliminary rungs, you cannot hop straight on to the seventh! And then, skip on, to the eighth!

—Baba

AVATAR VANI:

Sacrificial Fire

*One can make scholars study and recite
the Vedas and Sastras, and himself, study and recite;
One can get experts to perform Yagnas and Yagas
and himself perform them well.
One can persuade pilgrims to visit holy places
and himself journey to every spot.
One can instruct proper candidates in eight Siddhis
and himself demonstrate them all.*

*But, one cannot master his senses five
and turn his mind to inward path
And be in steady Samadhi Bliss
Steeped in Awareness of Self alone.*

The Vedas are the foundation of Bharatiya Culture. If in modern society, a trace of spiritual illumination is visible everywhere, we can ascribe it to the Vedic basis and the way of life they demarcated. For, all moral codes (Dharma) have emanated from the Vedas, and all the worlds have Dharma as their sustenance. 'Veda moolam idam Jagat.'

The Yajur Veda elaborates the importance of Yajnas. These promote the peace and prosperity of the world, for that is the primary aim of all the Vedas: The Yajur Veda hymns extol the glory of the Gods and propitiate the Divine Forces. As a result, gold and grain, wealth and welfare, plenty and progress are secured by mankind.

The Yajna is centred on the adoration of the Fire. Man is bound intimately with Fire all through his days. Man is a warm-blooded creature; warmth promotes intellect and intuition. Calling upon God and placing the offerings sacrificed by us in the Fire are acts which bring about rain to provide rich harvests. Fire is thus a valuable medium for gaining safety and security, for preservation of morality and goodness. The Ocean too has agni (Fire) latent in its loins. Man has in his stomach the latent Fire that digests food. God resides in man as this Fire. 'Aham Vaiswaanaro Bhoothvaa Praaninaam Deham Aasrithah', says Krishna. 'Having become the Vaishwanara Fire and entered the body of living beings...' So, it is God that keeps all the limbs trim and makes keenness and knowledge possible. The latent Fire in water causes eight

functions: It adds brightness and splendour. It hardens and strengthens the muscles. It develops nervous energy. It ensures healthy progeny. It makes one more patient and therefore a better instrument. It increases the duration of life. It sharpens and deepens memory. It confers boldness of thought and action.

In order to light the fire in the sacrificial altar, a churning rod of hardwood is used on a block of similar hardness. The timber has to be banyan or Peepul. The block is the mother and the churner is the father. Agni or Fire is the child. It consumes the parents—Urvashi the mother and Pururavas, the father—when it is born! They are reduced to ashes, that is to say, that child is subsumed by the parents. The child is one with them and they become one with their progeny. All three are inseparably related. The Son of God, Jesus, declared, 'I and the Father are One.' The religion of the Parsis also considers the highest truth as 'I am the Light' and 'The Light is in Me.'

The Yajur Veda has a name for Agni—Tiger! When Agni is treated without faith and reverence, it destroys the very person who feeds it, just as the tiger which tears its own cubs with its deadly claws. Another characteristic of Agni is its presence everywhere. Scientists and technologists today are proud that they have grasped the secrets of the five elements—sky, wind, fire, water and earth-matter. But, they are still unaware of the intimate kinship each of them has with man and his daily life. The sages of the past have delved into the mystery and revealed it to the world. Notice, for example, that birds do not rest on the ground at night. They prefer treetops. Why? The Rishis of Vedic times explain that they seek to avoid the heat latent in the earth and patent to them, Man is unaware of this fact but birds know it.

The norms of action and behaviour in this land, of those who are cognisant or not cognisant of the reason, are all in conformity with the Vedas. They have penetrated the nature of the people so deep that no one can act in contravention. Every phase of their activity from dawn to dusk and nightfall are as dictated by the Vedas. Living is in fact a real Vedic Yajna, whether one knows it or not.

In the Yajna that is being performed here, every formula that is uttered and every offering made has to be suffused with renunciatory feelings and the awareness of the Divine. We have here Suryanamaskar on one side, Rudrahoma on another, Vedaparayana in another place, Sahasra-lingarchana nearby, worship of the Shakti at that end, and pundits reciting Devi Bhagavatam, Ramayana, etc. Why are these varied items gone through? Among these priests, the chief is termed Brahma. One of them will be reciting the Rg Veda, another will be reciting musically the Sama Veda, and the third person will be reciting the Yajur Veda. The Atharva Veda includes the very essence of the three Vedas and it is recited by the Brahma. The deities extolled in the Vedas are thereby invoked and invited to shower Grace on all mankind. One priest designated as Adhwaryu watches the activity and sets right any fault or failing. His is the overall supervision of the sacrificial fire, its upkeep and worship and his, the responsibility for meticulous performance.

Behind this ritual of Fire, there lies a small mystery, which has to be cleared, so that you can understand how the offering, addressed to the deity which is invoked by the mantra uttered while placing it in the Fire, can reach that very deity. Well. The Yajur Veda describes the Flames of the Sacred Fire as the Tongue of God. When the offering is dropped into Fire, in the name of the

god, it cannot reach. The place of residence, the proper name and address have to be uttered at the same time. It is like the post box. When a letter is properly addressed and dropped into the box at Prasanthi Nilayam, it will reach any place, even as far as Japan or Russia. If the address indicates Prasanthi Nilayam, it will be delivered to the person at Prasanthi Nilayam. The address has to be full and correct, and that is all. And, the stamp has to be of the correct value.

There are people who observe only the outer acts of the Yajna and blame the Brahmins for wastefully pouring so much ghee into, fire, when men are miserably underfed and starving. 'They are foolishly spending money over profitless pursuits.' Even educated persons join in this ignorant condemnation,

The ryot ploughs the field; prepares the plots, lets water into them, and makes them fit to receive the seeds. Then, he scatters four bags of paddy on the land. An ignoramus who does not know agriculture laughs at him. 'You have gone mad. When, people are starving, you throw the paddy they would gladly eat into the soil!' But, in return for the four bags lost, the 'mad man' will bring home forty bags after harvest. When two tins of ghee are poured ritually into the sanctified Fire, the world will gain two hundred tins of ghee. Whatever is dedicated and offered to God can never be lost. People can gain enormous benefit by offering even a little to God. 'A leaf or flower, a fruit or little water'—that is enough, if offered with devotion. Draupadi gave Sri Krishna the fraction of a leaf sticking to the side of a vessel and God granted her endless good fortune. Kuchela gave a handful of parched rice and received from the Lord awareness of His endless Glory. The Yajna bears witness to this inner significance of the Yajna. Offer love and receive love. Give and take. But, the educational system today lays stress only on taking, on that one-way traffic. Giving is taboo, totally absent. As a result of this, when one does not look at God, God too does not look at one. When you look towards me, your form appears in my eye and my form appears in yours at the same time. If you do not look towards me, your form cannot appear in mine. One way traffic will not help.

The Rg Veda that is recited here by the Hotha priest is fully hymnal, adoration of the Divine. The Udgatha sets the same hymns to music and recites them musically. The Adhwaryu repeats the Yajur Veda. All three are propitiating the only One. Governor Govind Narain quoted in his speech the Vedic declaration, "Ekam Sath; vipraah bahudhaa vadanthi." 'Only ONE is; the wise describe it in different ways.' It is like the head of the family, being addressed as Father by the son, Father-in-law by the daughter-in-law, Grandpa by the grandson, and Lord by the wife. Though four persons use four different names, he remains the same. Similarly, Yogis, Bhogis, Bairagis and Rogis, the Artha, the Artharthi, the Jijnasu and the Jnani use different names for the ONE, without a second. Whether you offer to Agni or Surya or Aditya, it reaches the same ONE. Theists, atheists, agnostics, polytheists, henotheists all accost God by various names, but they all refer only to the ONE. In this Yajna, offerings are addressed as Rudraya namah, Varunaya namah, Indraya namah, Vayave namah and placed in the Fire for Rudra, Varuna, Indra and Vayu. The sages visualised God in those forms and with those names and so, the One receives them in those forms. After the fields are ploughed and the seeds are sown, we want rains to help in getting a rich harvest. So, prayer is directed to Varuna, to the address of Varuna (not to the address of Kasturi or Kutumba Rao). When you desire Kasturi to come and call Kutumba Rao, how can you succeed? For rains, you have to call on Varuna, and not Agni! That is to say, the proper mantras have to be uttered and the utterance must emerge from the heart.

The sages of the past were not ignorant fools and the mantras and rites they framed and prescribed were not born of amateur enthusiasm. They are the results of wisdom and actual experience. Reciters who are not aware of this truth will mouth the hymns and mantras in a casual manner. Others who ruminate over the meaning and feel the emotions of exaltation and supplication are able to derive delight: Recitation without understanding the meaning might grant a little superficial benefit but the hymn can move the heart only when the meaning is sensed.

The inner meaning of Yajna is 'renunciation', 'sacrifice or giving up.' For whom? For the Divine. "Lord! The heart that you gave me, I am offering it in return," is the spirit of that renunciation. The heart He has given, the feelings He evokes, the wealth He has conferred, the fame He has awarded—these have to be gladly offered back. As part of these Yajnas, it is laid down that a human being, goat, or a horse has to be 'sacrificed', that is to say, 'given up'. People ask whether it is not a cruel act. Scriptures dealing with rituals are comparable, it is said, to Aranya, the jungle. They are called Aranyakas. It is difficult to trace a straight path and prefer it to a crooked deceptive one. The terms used in the scriptures have many meanings and it is a hard job to trace the straight meaning and prefer it to the crooked and deceptive one. For example, the Ashwamedha or Horse Sacrifice does not mean the ritual killing of the horse. The name Ashwa given to the horse describes it as an animal which is restless all the time—symbolising the mind which is agitated both while awake and while dreaming. The horse can never be calm and quiet. Its legs, tail, or ears will be quaking or shaking always. The banyan tree is called Ashwatha, since its leaves will ever be shaking, wind or no wind. What is recommended is 'sacrifice' of the wayward mind, dedicating it to God so that it becomes stable and calm and not bringing a living animal and killing it. That is adherence to the outer literal meaning of the injunction, not the inner and valid import. These symbolic significances of Vedic aphorisms and rituals and scriptural injunctions will be explained to you in the evening discourses everyday during this festival. Listen to them with selfless, pure and joyful concentration, and treasure them in the heart for practice in daily life and for sharing with earnest souls.

—Prasanthi Nilayam, Inauguration of the Veda Purusha Saptaha Jnana Yajna, 21-10-82

Sathya Sai Institute Makes History

November 22, 1982, was yet another red-letter-day for Prasanthi Nilayam whose landscape has been changing unrecognisably from month to month during the past few years. Two notable events occurred on that day—the first one, in the morning, was the inauguration of the magnificent new administrative building of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, the foundation for which was laid exactly a year ago. The other event was the first Convocation of the Institute (a "Deemed University").

Unprecedented crowds of devotees had assembled in the Poornachandra auditorium and filled the rest of the Nilayam area for the morning function. Mr. Gundu Rao, Chief Minister of Karnataka, who flew, from Bangalore, by a helicopter, arrived around 9 a.m. Bhagavan, who is

the Chancellor of the University, and Mr. Gundu Rao, seated in Swami's gleaming chariot, went from the Mandir to the Administrative Building, where. Mr. Gundu Rao cut the ribbon and went round the building with Bhagavan. The entire route from the Mandir to the Administrative Building was flanked by thousands of devotees who cheered Bhagavan as he went up to the top of the hill. Returning to the Mandir Bhagavan and Mr. Gundu Rao came in procession with other dignitaries to the Poornachandra auditorium, headed by the police band. The Auditorium dais had been tastefully decorated for the occasion.

Dr. V. K. Gokak, Vice-chancellor of the Institute, welcoming Mr. Gundu Rao and others, recalled that exactly a year ago Bhagavan had laid the foundation for the administrative building on the top of the hill, which overlooks the entire area for miles around. The imposing edifice that has come up within 12 months is nothing short of a miracle. It beckons people to come to Prasanthi Nilayam to embark on a spiritual adventure. It is a beacon light for educationists all over the world. Its architecture is a blend of the Indo-Saracenic and other styles which have been integrated in a way, which reflects the architecture of all the great religions of the world. Like Bhagavan himself, it is a blending of tradition and modernity. Dr. Gokak recalled the part played by Mr. Gundu Rao in getting the Sri Sathya Sai College at Bangalore detached from the Bangalore University, so that it could form part of the campus of the Institute at Prasanthi Nilayam. The Sathya Sai Institute has become unique in the sense that it has now campuses spread over more than one State.

Mr. C. Srinivas, Warden of Sathya Sai Hostel, Brindavan, said that the administrative building built in record time had one engineer, one architect and one planner—Bhagavan Baba Himself. The Sathya Sai Institute had three gifts, to give—the gift of secular knowledge, the gift of food and drink and the gift of spirit. Every child who comes under its wing is treated as a child of immortality. He recalled an incident in which Baba, after offering grapes to a child, remarked, 'I give you grapes, but to humanity I give myself.'

Mr. Indulal Shah, Chairman of the World Council of the Sathya Sai organisations, read messages received from the President of India, the Prime Minister, the Chief Justice of India, Mrs. Sheila Kaul, Union Minister for Education, Dr. Madhuri Shah, Chairman of the University Grants Commission, Mr. S. B. Chavan, Union Minister for Planning, and the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka. President Zail Singh said in his message: 'I am sure the University (the Sathya Sai University); will prove a good centre of learning. I send my greetings to all those associated with the Sai University and wish the institution a bright future.' The Prime Minister in her message of good wishes to the Institute, commended the work of voluntary institutions engaged in the promotion of education. Dr. Madhuri Shah, commending the laudable progress made by the Institute in one year, stated: "Under the inspiration and blessings of its Chancellor, the creative and humane administration of its Vice-chancellor and the dedication of the members of its faculty, I have confidence that the Institute will—in the years to come—become a pace-setting institution which would lead to harmonious development of the cognitive, effective and connative abilities of its students." Mrs. Sheila Kaul said: 'The Deemed University status was given to the Institute because of the innovative work done by the Institute in the field of value-oriented education, in various parts of the country including Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. The new status should enable the institution to strengthen and diversify its work in the field of higher education'.

Mr. Gundu Rao, in a frank and openhearted speech, observed that although he had long been wanting to visit Prasanthi Nilayam the opportunity had come only on that day in that particular manner. It was a memorable day for him and it was a privilege to inaugurate the building of an Institute like the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. He asserted that if such institutions came up under the influence of Baba all over the country, the future of the country would be safe. The Indian people were not lacking in abilities and skills of a high order. One thing they lacked was discipline. Because of lack of discipline and integrity "we could not progress as much as we wanted." Deploring the prevailing atmosphere in the sphere of education, Mr. Gundu Rao said that once upon a time the position of Vice-chancellor was a highly coveted and respected one. Today, no decent person wanted to accept the Vice-chancellorship because of the perils it carried with it. He felt that discipline should start from the primary school. He prayed to Baba to start such institutions for everybody including politicians. He told the students of the Institute that they were extremely fortunate. "I may come more often to Prasanthi Nilayam to receive the blessings of Baba," he concluded.

Bhagavan then delivered his discourse. Deploring the state of modern education Swami said that its primary defect was that it promoted selfishness and, hatred. The role of Sai educational institutions was to rectify these defects and promote the revival of Aryan culture. Referring to the coming together of the Women's College at Anantapur, the educational institutions at Prasanthi Nilayam and the Sathya Sai College at Brindavan under the umbrella of, the Sathya Sai Institute, Bhagavan compared it to the Triveni Sangam—the Anantapur College being the Ganga, the Brindavan College being the Yamuna and the campus at Prasanthi Nilayam being the Saraswati. (Details of Swami's discourse will be published in a later issue). The meeting concluded with the playing of the National Anthem by the police band.

Sutra Vahini

3

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

The third qualification with which one has to be equipped is UPARATHI. This implies a state of mind which is above and beyond all dualities such as joy and grief, liking and disliking, good and bad, praise and blame, which agitate and affect the common man. But, these universal experiences can be overcome or negated by means of spiritual exercises or intellectual inquiry. Man can escape from these opposites and dualities and attain balance and stability. UPARATHI can be achieved, if one is careful, while engaged in day-to-day living, to avoid entanglement with and bondage to differences and distinctions. One should free oneself from identification with castes like Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra, or clans like Gotras, or conditions like boyhood, youth, adult and old age, of genders like masculine and feminine. When he succeeds in discarding these and is firmly established in the Atmic Reality alone, he has really achieved UPARATHI.

Do not look at the world as the world with a worldly eye. Look upon it with the eye of the Atma, as the projection of Paramatma. That can make one cross the horizon of dualities into the region of the One. The One is experienced as many, because of the forms and names man has imposed on it. That is the result of the mind playing its game. UPARATHI promotes inner exploration, Nivritti, not outer enquiry and activity, Pravritti. Along Nivritti lies the Path of Jnana (Intellectual Inquiry); along Pravritti lies the Path of Karma (Dedicated Activity).

The sacred activities like rituals and sacrifices (Karma) laid down in the Vedas cannot confer liberation from bondage to birth and death, Moksha. They help only to cleanse the Consciousness. It is said that they raise man to Heaven; but Heaven too is but a bond. It does not promise eternal freedom. The freedom which makes one aware of the Truth, of his own Truth, can be gained only through Shravana (Listening to the Guru), Manana (Ruminating over what has been so listened to) and Nidhidhyasana (Meditating on its validity and significance). Only those who have detached their minds from desire can benefit from the Guru. Others cannot profit from the guidance. Those who expect and look forward to the fruits of their actions can engage in them until their consciousness is cleansed. After that, their actions are of no value. So, one must be ever conscious of the Atma, as pervading and penetrating everything, so that attraction and repulsion, the duality complex, cannot affect him.

The fourth qualification is TITIKSHA. This is the attitude of forbearance which refuses to be affected or pained when afflicted with sorrow and loss, and the ingratitude and wickedness of others. In fact, one is happy and calm, for one knows that these are the results of one's own actions now recoiling on him, and one looks upon those who caused the misery as friends and well-wishers. One does not retaliate nor does he wish ill for them. One bears all the blows patiently, and gladly.

The natural reactions of a person, whoever he may be, when some one injures him is to injure in return, when some one causes harm to do harm and when some one insults him to insult back by some means or other. But, this is the characteristic of the Pravritti path—the path of objective involvement. Those who seek the inner path of sublimation and purification, the Nivritti path have to avoid such reactions. Returning injury for injury, harm for harm or insult for insult only adds to the Karmic burden, which has to be endured and eliminated in future lives. This burden is termed Aagami or lineal. One cannot escape the task of undergoing the consequences of one's thought, word and deed in due course. Paying evil for evil can never lighten the weight of Karma; it will only become heavier. It might confer immediate relief and contentment, but it cannot but make the person suffer later. TITHIKSHA, therefore, instructs man to do good to the person who injures him.

The fifth among the virtues to be cultivated is SHRADDHA. Shraddha means unwavering faith in the sacred scriptures or Sastras and in the moral codes they contain as well as in the Atma and the Guru. Faith is the sign of Shraddha. Gurus are worth worshipping. They show us the path of fulfillment, the Sreyomarga. The Sastras are designed to ensure the peace and prosperity of the world and the spiritual perfection of mankind. They have before them this great aim. They show the way to its realisation. So, one must place faith in such holy Sastras, Gurus, and elders. The Gurus, on their part, must instruct people only in the knowledge of the One Atma that is immanent in all Beings. (Sarva jivaatmaikya Jnana). He who has Sraddha will achieve this

Jnana. They must themselves have full faith in it and live according to that faith without the slightest deviation.

The sixth qualification is SAMADHANA. One has to be irrefutably convinced that what the Sastras make known and what the Guru teaches are both one and the same. One's intellect must rest upon and draw inspiration from the Atma, at all times and under all circumstances. The aspirant for spiritual progress must be attached only to the unchanging universal Consciousness. All actions of his should have as their goal: the Joy of God. He must place implicit faith in the Sastraic dictum: All living beings are amsas (facets, fractions) of Easwara (God). In order to confirm this faith and strengthen it, one must look upon all beings as equal. The above sixth form, termed Sadhana Sampat, is the Treasure of spiritual Struggle.

Next, we shall consider MUMUKSHUTHWAM—the longing for Moksha or Liberation. This longing cannot arise from either riches or from the scholarship that may be won at great expense of money. Nor can it emerge from wealth or progeny, or rites and rituals recommended in the scriptures or acts of charity, for Moksha (liberation from grief and acquisition of bliss) can come only from the conquest of Ajnana (Ignorance). A person might master all the Sastras along with all the learned commentaries written on them by experts; he might propitiate all the gods by performing the prescribed modes of worship and ceremonies; but these cannot grant the boon of Liberation. These are all motivated to earn benefits and boons, other than the supreme knowledge (Jnana). Success in the path of knowledge alone can confer salvation. A person might have every article needed for cooking a meal but, if fire is not available, how can the meal be prepared. So too, if Atma Jnana (Awareness of Atma as the only Reality) is not won, Liberation cannot be earned. If it is declared that one can attain Mukti or Liberation if he bathes in the waters of sacred rivers, what shall we say of the fish and other aquatic species that spend all their lives in the rivers! If it is believed that spending years in mountain caves will lead to Liberation, what do mice, what do wild beasts attain? If, by means of ascetic practices like eating roots and tubers and chewing leaves for sustenance of the body, one can attain Liberation, must goats who feed on leaves and pigs that dig out tubers also attain Liberation? When plastering the entire body with ash is hailed as asceticism, can dogs and donkeys which roll on ash heaps claim Liberation? These beliefs and practices are signs of poor understanding. One must concentrate on achieving Atma Jnana, the Awareness of the Eternal Universal Atmic Reality.

(To be continued)

AVATAR SANDESH:

The Birthday Gift to Me

A clarion call to Sai devotees to dedicate themselves to the service of the poor and the suffering as the only form of offering that He desired was given by Bhagavan Baba n a moving discourse which He delivered on November 23, to an unprecedented gathering that filled the Poornachandra Auditorium and all the grounds in Prasanthi Nilayam.

Bhagavan announced His intention to tour the villages of the country for the restoration of Bharatiya culture and the reestablishment of Bharatiya Dharma.

Bhagavan declared that the time, is coming soon when the whole world will experience the Sai Principle and will be transformed into Prasanthi Nilayam.

After garlanding by members of the Central Trust and others Bhagavan addressed the gathering:

You must think about the gift you have to offer Swami on this Birthday. You can feel that you have given Swami a proper gift only when you love your fellowmen, take a share of their sufferings, and engage yourselves in fruitfully serving them. That is the only gift I wish for. The present to be given to God is pure, steady and selfless Love.

On this Birthday Festival I have only one desire. This is not just, my desire only. I am desiring this only to promote your Ananda. You are planning programmes for the coming 60th Birthday. Even before the 60th Birthday, you must adopt at least 6000 villages and improve them through proper means into ideal villages. Rich people and people in power will have plentiful servants. But the distressed, the poverty-stricken, and those who suffer have no one to serve them. Go to such people and be their friends, their kith and kin, their closest well-wishers. Let them welcome you as such. If you pour spirituality into the ears of those who are tortured by hunger, it will not be assimilated. First, quench the hunger. Give them God in the form of food. Give them God in the form of clothes. Give God in the form of peace to those who are afflicted with anxiety. Give God in the form of medicine to those who are suffering from ill-health. Give God in whatever form which will assuage fear, pain and sorrow. It is only after this is done that spirituality can soak into the heart. If you act contrariwise, instead of spiritual feelings, you will be promoting atheism itself.

Therefore, units of our organisation have to provide and increase in these 6000 villages, education, medical service, communication facilities. There are villages where people struggle for want of water to drink. The Government cannot by itself provide all these conveniences. Without the cooperation of the people the Government cannot do anything. Government is not a free entity. It is based on people's support. It can work only when the people cooperate actively. Without depending on Government, you must carry on the development of society through your own strength. That is real sadhana, real save. Strive to become embodiments of Prema, eager to win the boon of Divine Prema, and ready to offer all your capabilities and skills to the Lord, of All. It is God's Love that rewards you when you engage yourselves in Japa, Tapas, Yajna or Yaga. What greater achievement can you strive for than receiving the Love Divine from God?

However, you must understand well the nature and significance of this Love. You are now experiencing and sharing this Love at the level of your awareness of the Principle. This is a mistake. It is too literal an interpretation. The Principle of Love has no trace of ego or blemish. It is fully free from selfish attachments. Whatever Sai does, whatever Sai thinks, whatever Sai says, whatever Sai observes, it is all for your sake, not for Sai's sake. My selfish attachment is for your Ananda only. Your Ananda is my Ananda. Else, I have no Ananda apart from yours. I have no desire as such for my Ananda. In fact, I have no desire at all.

You might infer, 'Swami is doing this... is doing that.' But, it is not for my sake; it is for your sake. Last year on the Birthday, I spoke on this point. For my sake (believe it or not) I do not spend even a naya paisa. Whatever I do, I do for society only. Though 56 years have passed, I have not got stitched even one shirt or gown for me, spending a naya paisa. I am wearing only what is given by a student, Radhakrishna of the Kingdom of Sathya Sai. Not today, but since the beginning, the thought that "I must have this or that" has never arisen in me. It is not rising now. It will not arise at any time. Whatever thoughts arise in me are only for the peace and welfare of the world, for the progress of youth, and for transforming boys and girls who will lead others along the path. You must dedicate yourselves for rendering enthusiastic service to the people of the world, recognising that the Sai principle has no egoistic urge.

The next month onwards, I will be journeying all over Bharat, blessing those who are unable to come here because they have neither the strength nor the resources to do so. I wish to afford them the chance and give them joy. An important point. Instead of arranging programmes for Swami in towns and cities, have them in villages. Reduce expenses and save money, in order to spend it for providing facilities in the villages. I desire to move about in every village. But, you have to make proper preparatory arrangements. I can even come on foot but hundreds of thousands of people are bound to gather and you must see that they are well looked after. When you undertake to fulfill this need in every village, there will be the possibility of spreading among the villages the principles and practice of Bharatiya culture. I am resolved to foster Ananda through the revival and re-establishment of the Bharatiya way of life. This will happen without fail. Bharatiya dharma can certainly be offered to many, other countries. There is no need to despair or indulge in self-condemnation. The days of victory are coming soon. We shall sound the drums of triumph.

Embodiments of the Divine Atma! You may not be able to see it, but it is clear before my eyes. As days pass, even those who are not now able to recognise the truth of Swami will have to approach with tears of repentance and experience me. Very soon, this will be worldwide. Swami is now firmly restraining this development. When once it is allowed to manifest, the whole world will be transformed into Prasanthi Nilayam. So, come forward, all of you, determined to practise in daily living the ideals laid before you. In the coming years, you may not get the chances you are having now. You will not have the opportunity to be so near. Millions will rush to this place and gather here. This will happen soon and so, earn the compassion of Swami and his Love through Seva activities and fill your lives with meaning.

The diamond is cut into various facets. Its price increases with each facet added unto it by the cutting, for its beauty shines better and better. Those who cannot tolerate the progress of the Organisation or of the Sai Principle it embodies and unfolds might decry or defame, ridicule or obstruct; the movement will not falter. It will advance more triumphantly the more the obstruction. These will only foster and help the spread and the splendour, This springs from evil nature, from envy, Asuya. But the movement is based on the absence of envy—Anasuya. Do not pay any attention to such things. Vow among yourselves to follow the ideals and the duties that have been laid down and devote yourselves to the Organisation and its aims and programmes.

For having, come to this place and availed yourselves of this opportunity, treasure in your hearts the things you have seen and heard and resolve to plunge into practising them. Your resolution and your practice must happen simultaneously. Have a master plan and start from tomorrow the execution of a programme, drawn in consultation with others. This must happen in all countries. Do not think that only the Andhra State is Sai's. All are Sai's. All are one. We must endeavour by all means to realise and establish this Truth in this Kali Yuga.

This is the message I am giving you today. I am fulfilling all your desires. All of you fulfill this one desire of mine.

I bless that you will have long life, good health, Ananda, Peace and Prosperity and that you will devote your physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual strength and skills for the service of the country and of all mankind.

AVATAR VANI:

The Ultimate Attainment

*When man acts on earth the way he talks
He is no longer man, he is a noble soul.
When man doesn't act the way he talks
He is no longer man, he is only a beast.*

Embodiments of the Divine Atma,

Bharat has ensured the peace and security of nations for generations through instructions on spiritual development. She herself has been an example to others for spiritual virtues. 'May all the worlds be happy' is the prayer echoing from the Vedas through centuries and over the globe. In order to solve the fundamental problems of the human situation and promote world prosperity, the sages, monarchs, scholars, and women of past ages dedicated their lives. They accepted sacrifice as their duty and destiny. Due to the degenerate time-spirit, today, self-interest has polluted the thoughts, words and deeds of man! He acts as if things and persons have to be sought and loved, for they are useful for him. This is only another instance of selfish love.

Man is activated by desire and plans the designs to win what he desires. Human life is a process where man awaits the harvest of the desires he sows. The desire has to be not for self-advancement but for peace, happiness and prosperity for all. Only then can the Vedic prayer mentioned above be realised.

Time is but a mirror that reveals to us our fancies or our fantasies. It has no preferences or originality. It has no ideas of its own or sympathy with others. The joy or grief that time presents to us is only the reflection of our own deeds, good or bad. The reflection may appear in the mirror quickly or delayed. The seed turns into a tree only after years, and the fruit takes a few

more. Every deed is a seed that inevitably yields fruits, either sweet or bitter, which one has to eat in joy or grief. So, man has to resolve to do good, see good, hear good and be good.

For, goodness is the real nature of man. Bad tendencies are unnatural; they are imposed by circumstances. Through sheer bad luck, man is welcoming the accretions and ignoring the core. One has to place his faith on Divinity that is in everything, always and everywhere. The Vedas declare,

Poornam adah Poornam idam
Poornaath Poornam udachyathe
Poornasya Poornam Aadaaya
Poornam eva avashyathe.'

"That is wholly Divine, This is wholly Divine. From the totally Divine arose the totally Divine. When the totally Divine is taken from the totally Divine, the total remains. "That" means "the thing afar, apart", "the entity that is beyond the reach of the human instruments of perfection." "This" means the visible world, the objective world cognizable with the senses and amenable to experience. This too is as divine as the rest. Asti (Existence-is-ness), Bhaati (Knowability) and Priyam (Likeability), Sat, Chit and Ananda, are the characteristics of Divinity and these three are found in everything. Name and Form which everything possesses are transitory, subject to change. This silver tumbler can be converted by the smith into a cup or plate or just a lump of metal. But, silver *is*, is knowable, is likeable. It is Asti-Bhaati-Priyam. A piece of silver taken out of the lump is also 'totally silver'. A lump of jaggery is sweet; a kilo taken out of it, a bit, a pinch of jaggery is also as sweet as the lump. They are all 'totally sweet', 'totally jaggery'. Similarly, the Cosmos which the Divine projected is Divine; the Jagat is Brahman; nothing is outside It or beyond It. This is Truth because That is Truth. This is as true as That. No one can assert that this cannot change and that has to change. A person decides out of his own limited _ experience that this is bad and that is good but since all is equally divine, the distinction is not real.

What exactly is the Divine? What are its characteristics? How can it be defined? No person can claim authority to announce the attributes which mark out Divinity, the activities through which Divinity can be identified, and the Form in which Divinity can be recognised, and no one has the power to assert that no other attributes or activities or forms can be divine. It is sheer effrontery and foolishness to make pronouncements on the nature and work of God. When Divinity is immanent in everything conscious and unconscious, in every form of being and becoming; how can a thing be condemned as bad or commended as good? Water quenches thirst and drowns people. Fire gives light and warmth but also burns and reduces things to ash. Sound terrifies and also thrills sweetly. They are all three Divine and so, Divinity becomes inscrutable. The Divine Will is ever free and fresh. The Divine has no selfishness or pride or greed or envy. But, you suffer from all these illnesses. So, your judgement is narrow and crooked. The Divine can function as It pleases and wills, for, It has no wants.

Every object maintains its inner genuineness. When it does not, it degenerates. When fire loses its capacity to burn, it reduces itself to cold coal. Sugar can no longer be sugar if it loses its sweetness. God is identified with heat in fire and sweetness in 'sugar. You may deny God or affirm God—that is dependent on your predominant mood. But, God is *in* all, God *is* all. You

may accept or reject but Divinity will adopt any means it wills in order to revive reverence for scriptures and observance of morality. You cannot gain by discussing about the means and pronouncing your opinions on them. You have only to cultivate Faith, watch and exult.

'Vishnu'—the Name of the Lord—means 'Present everywhere'. The question is asked, 'Why then is He not seen anywhere?' But, do we see the air which is all around us? Can we say then that there is no air at all. God is also said to be minuter than the minutest and vaster than the vastest. The Taittiriya Upanishad describes God as "that which has nothing bigger, and that which has nothing smaller." It is in accordance with this statement that Thyagaraja sang, "Thou art in the ant, as in Brahma, Siva and Keshava. O Rama! Save me." The Vedas also describe Him as the farthest and the closest! Some one dear to you may be in America but your love keeps him close to you. When your neighbour is an enemy or a stranger to you, he is 'far' away. It is the mind that pushes and pulls, hates and loves. You are what you feel. Take my example:

I am 'yes' to those who say 'yes';
I am 'no' to those who say 'no,'
'No and 'yes' are words from you;
From Sai it is always 'yes', 'yes', 'yes'.

Due to one's attachment to the body in which one is enclosed, egoism grows deep and the Atma is not believed in. The Telugu proverb says, 'When boiling milk rises, it falls into the fire.' The lesson it enshrines is, 'Pride reduces one to ashes.' Humility can be built only on a foundation of charity, detachment, Tyaga. Tyaga gives man the greatest joy. He who is ever ready to sacrifice his comfort for helping another, is the genuine devotee, Bhakta. People cling to comfort and luxury and high worldly life. But, for how long can they so cling? You cannot run a race, when a mountain faces you. The world is bound by time and space and their stay too is for limited periods. To seek joy in the world of objects is as foolish as gathering dewdrops from lotus leaves mistaking them for diamonds or wading through mirages hoping to collect water in pails. Joy, pure and plentiful, can be, earned only from God and through obedience to Divine laws and directions.

While they were in exile living in the forest, one day Sita noticed a golden deer. She was fascinated by it and she prayed to Rama to go behind it, catch it and bring it for her. Rama set out from the hermitage, directing Lakshmana to be on guard at the place and not to leave Sita alone on any account. The golden deer was the decoy employed by Ravana to draw Rama away from the hermitage, so that he might kidnap her. The deer (Maricha, the demon) cried out, imitating the voice of Rama, as if Rama was in great pain, 'O Sita! O Lakshmana!' Sita believed that Rama was hurt and appealed to Lakshmana to go to his rescue. Lakshmana knew Rama too well to be scared and he was a true servant of the Lord. So, he stuck to his duty as guard of Sita. When the call was heard again, Sita could not contain her anger at Lakshmana's intransigence. She used certain unspeakable words to persuade Lakshmana to disobey Rama. "Are you plotting to possess me on Rama's death?" she asked. Lakshmana could not bear the imputation; he left her alone and moved towards the place where the voice came from. Therefore, what was to happen, happened. When the brothers returned, the hermitage was empty, and Sita had been kidnapped. Rama told Lakshmana, "You disobeyed me, acted against my order and this calamity was caused." Whatever happens, however critical the situation; one has to discharge fully, and

correctly the duty laid upon him. Whoever speaks, however harshly, one should not weaken one's resolution. Whatever the enormity of the calamity that threatens, one should not budge. Lakshmana repented all his life for the lapse.

A question may be raised here about the golden deer. Did not Rama know that it was a decoy, a demon in that form, sent by Ravens to help him in his evil design? Of course, he knew it all. He knew that the episode was but the prologue to the completion of the task on which he had come. He could bring Sita back from Lanka and, in a moment, he could turn it into a heap of ash. But, he got Sugriva as his ally and did various other things to retrieve her and punish Ravana. Why? In order to accomplish the welfare of the world, foster righteousness among men, and cause destruction of the wicked, the Lord can freely choose any path, any time, any person or persons, and any means or method which he chooses. Ignorant persons who are unaware of the ways of God cannot understand this. He might on His own involve Himself in activities which serve as ideals and guides for mankind. If Rama had not devised the drama of the golden deer and Sita's abduction, how could the devotion of Hanuman be immortalised?

Take the Krishna Avatar. Are there grounds to doubt His divinity and suspect Him to have been a thief, a liar or a gallant? God has no prejudice or partiality, no preference or aversion. When He is All, what can He steal? Whom can He desire to possess? Imputations such as these emanate from individuals suffering from greed, envy and lust. One moment you declare 'God, is One, God is Truth, Purity, Stability, All-Knowing, the Witness Beyond Feelings and thoughts, Devoid of the Three Gunas' and the next moment, you impose feelings and faults on the same God! How, then, should we understand the acts of God? You must welcome them gratefully and gladly, for whatever is done, whatever is got done, are for the world's good. People who picture God as partial and unjust are only describing themselves. People assert that God is in the ant, as much as He is in the Cosmos. They adore ants and feed them, place rice grains around ant-holes on the ground. But, let an ant be bold enough to sting, it is killed that very moment! The animal in man overpowers him and he cannot restrain himself to act in accordance with his declared beliefs. Man must speak sincerely what he thinks and act in conformity with his words. That alone can reveal that there is a spark of Divine in him. You should not construct a picture of God according to your needs and norms and then complain that God does not conform. God is all-powerful, all-knowing and all-pervading. How then can limits be prescribed for Him? It would be foolish to judge Him; it would be sinful to impute blemishes. The evil tendencies, attitudes and habits that have persisted through many lives and continue in this life also prompt people to hold such conclusions. No one has the authority to lay down rules regulating God's deeds. God is inherent in every living being, in every non-living thing. No distinction can be posited, for all are God. In order to grant joy or enable man to derive joy, God plays pranks, designs and directs dramas. He causes tears and quenches tears; he cures madness and inflicts madness. He exercises mania for fame and fortune; He inflames the mania for God and Grace.

This day is a Poornahuti Day when the valedictory offering in the sacred fire concludes the seven-day-long Yajna (or what maybe called also Tapas or Sadhana). Samapti is the word used for 'conclusion'. But that word has a more significant meaning in aapti or attainment of Sams or equanimity or balance as when the river merges in the sea or the self merges in the Self, the Jivi merges in Brahman. The river loses its name and form, the water loses its taste and flow, when the sea is reached. All acts of ours must be elevated to the level of Yajna, offering to the Lord.

That is to be the goal, the consummation and nothing else is to be desired or expected. When the offering reaches God, the person is most happy, because the God is in Him. When one yearns to please the God residing in him, one has to please others, for He resides in them also. Also, one has to be ever conscious of the Name of God.

—*Vijayadasami—Vedapurusha Saptah Yajna Samapti 27-10-82*

To God

God in His endless love for us
descended down to earth
in figure small but loving all
which makes Him look so tall

He loves all equal, black and white;
for Him there is no social right;
this teaching goes around the world
to countries might and small.

I had heard of Him for many months
my heart forced me to go and see
Him whom they call Sri Sathya Sai
the God who came in human form:

My journey brought me to the east
in a land of ancient past.
And there, I saw the God of man
so perfect and so pure. .

Heart and Soul went out to Him
as on my knees I prayed,
"Oh Lord Sai Baba be with me
till I can merge with Thee!"

—*Heidiun Gulyas*