

SAI TEACHERS' CONFERENCE:

Bal Vikas—Now A Global Movement

The Bal Vikas programme, which was launched in a small way in 1969, has grown into a global movement for the transformation of the children of today into the moral leaders of their communities in the years to come. The conspicuous growth of the movement within the past 15 years was demonstrated most powerfully at the five-day World Conference of Bal Vikas Teachers and students which was inaugurated by Bhagavan Baba on December 27th in the Poornachandra Auditorium.

Hundreds of Bal Vikas teachers and students started arriving in Prasanthi Nilayam from 22nd December and by the time the conference started, over 3000 teachers and 7000 children from more than 20 countries had been enrolled. The whole Prasanthi Nilayam campus was resounding with "Sai Ram" greetings and Bhajans by children in the morning hours. Dozens of shamianas were put up to accommodate the children and the teachers.

The conference began at 9.30 a.m. in a crowded auditorium which was packed to capacity. Apart from the teachers attending the conference, several thousand devotees from foreign countries who had come for the Christmas celebrations were present.

Major Gen. Mahadevan, President of the Tamil Nadu Sai Seva Samithi, welcoming Bhagavan, the conference participants and others, said that it was a red-letter-day in the history of the Bal Vikas movement. The gathering in the hall represented the world community in miniature. 10942 students and teachers from almost every part of the world were attending the conference. Referring to an incident which had occurred the previous evening, when a sudden gale and downpour of rain had brought down some shamianas in which the children were staying, Gen. Mahadevan said that the children displayed no panic but maintained their coolness by shouting "Jai Sai Ram" and singing Sai Bhajans. He recalled also his experience in Ladakh when a helicopter in which he was flying was disintegrating as it were and he was sustained by Bhagavan Baba's assurance "Why fear when I am near?" The helicopter was able to make a safe forced landing on a riverbank.

Mr. Indulal Shah, Chairman of the World Council of Sathya Sai Organisations, reviewing the progress of the Bal Vikas programme during the past 15 years, said that today there were 3,000 Bal Vikas centres in India and 400 centres abroad with over 50,000 children attending Bal Vikas classes. The entire programme was operated by voluntary workers. Since 1982, under Bhagavan's inspiration, the programme has developed into a global movement for Education in Human Values to be imparted to children in all schools everywhere. In India all States have accepted the Education in Human Values programme and every school in due course will be a Bal Vikas centre.

Bhagavan Baba, who had earlier inaugurated the conference by lighting a lamp, in His discourse to the conference pointed out how Bharatiya culture had survived the vicissitudes of centuries while many ancient civilisations had disappeared. It was the duty of the Bharatiyas to

preserve this heritage and live up to the values represented by this culture. The advance of science and technology had no doubt resulted in many striking achievements, but in terms of improvement in human behaviour and attitudes their contribution has been little. Vijnana (science) without Viveka (the power of discrimination between right and wrong) was dangerous. True education consisted in the cultivation of humility, love, sacrifice and self-respect. Teachers should promote these qualities in students. They cannot do this unless they undertake sadhana and practise what they teach. Teachers should realise that they should be engaged continuously in learning. The universe is a university for everyone.

The teachers should be conscious of the spiritual aspects of education. Thanks to the Bal Vikas programme, many teachers who were ignorant of the Indian scriptures had begun to read the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Bhagavatam and other religious classics. They should be conscious of the divinity within them. The quest for the Divine is really the attempt of the individual to go back to the source from which he came. If Nature is studied properly the divinity in Nature will be evident.

Children's Faith And Courage

Before concluding His address, Bhagavan referred to the incident that had happened the previous night in the camp in which Bal Vikas children were staying. When the gale brought down the shamianas and the children were caught underneath the collapsed tents, they did not shout, "Ayyo! Amma!" Some shouted "Sai Ram" and many started singing Sai Bhajans. When Mr. Srinivasan went to them to find out how they were behaving, they told him: "Don't fear, uncle we, are all well; we are adjusting ourselves." This was the spirit in which the children reacted to a serious mishap. They showed to the elders that their Bat Vikas training had prepared them to face such ordeals with courage and faith. Bhagavan pointed out that the Bal Vikas training had strengthened the moral fibre of children to such an extent that they often helped to wean their parents from such bad habits as smoking and drinking.

Swami exhorted the teachers to fill their hearts with love, teach with love and be an example and inspiration to the children.

The Teachers' Conference held three sessions on the 27th and 28th to review the Bat Vikas programme in the light of past experience and to consider proposals for expanding the movement, revising the syllabuses and teaching techniques in terms of new objectives, and to discuss the suggestions from State Presidents.

Mr. V. Srinivasan explained the new objectives of the programme. Srimati Sarla Shah reviewed the 15 years' progress of the movement. There were talks by Srimati K. Mani, Dr. Leelavati Patnaik and Srimati N. Saxena on the syllabuses for the three groups of Bat Vikas students. Representatives from different States spoke on various aspects of the Bal Vikas programme, including teaching techniques, parents' involvement, expansion of the programme, imparting a rural bias to it and spiritual exercises by teachers and students. Srimati Shanta Diwakar spoke on the programme for research and evaluation.

Six sub-committees were set up to consider detailed proposals for developing the movement under various heads. The reports of the sub-committees were considered by the World Council, whose decisions were announced at the valedictory session of the Conference on December 31.

Simultaneously with the Teachers' Conference, a convention of Pre-Seva Dal students, past and present, was held on December 28th at the Institute auditorium. It was attended by 2000 delegates, men and women, from all parts of the country. The object of the convention was to assess the role of Pre-Seva Dal students (who have completed Group III of the Bal Vikas programme for young persons aged 12-14) in the fast-expanding Sai organisation and to make them effective instruments of the Sai mission.

The opening session of the Convention was addressed by Dr. P. L. Malhotra, Director of the National Council of Education, Research and Training, New Delhi. Welcoming Dr. Malhotra to the Convention. Dr. S. N. Saraf (formerly Educational Adviser to the Government of India) underscored the importance of value-based education. He exhorted the students to live up to the ideals of Bhagavan Baba and make their lives worthwhile in the service of the nation.

In his keynote address, Dr. Malhotra said a system of education that did not help to inculcate basic human values was worth nothing. He saw in Bhagavan Baba's Bal Vikas programme hope for a remedy to the ills of the present system of education and the problems confronting the nation.

The convention considered, in two sessions, the four issues facing the students; (a) Having gone through the Bal Vikas course and received Swami's blessings, are we able to live up to His teachings and be His beacon-lights? (b) How do we become a cohesive force as a new generation of Sai children? (c) Our approach, attitude and duty to the Sai Organisation, (d) What difficulties we face in living up to Sai ideals?

It was interesting to see students coming up with their views during the discussions. The consensus at the Convention was that with Bhagavan's grace, they would be able to live up to His teachings and spread His message by their example.

On the 30th morning a special session of only the Bal Vikas and Pre-Seva Dal students was held in the Poornachandra Hall. Two remarkable speeches were made by a Bal Vikas boy and girl (both below 12 years) in which they described what they had gained from the Bal Vikas programme. They said they had learnt to respect elders and parents; to lead disciplined lives and to avoid waste of money, time, food etc. An American boy said he had learnt basic values and had become a better son and student because of the Bal Vikas training. A Pre-Seva-Dal student said he had learnt "the Sadhana of love" from Bal Vikas and now saw everything in Sai and Sai in everything."

Bhagavan told the students that success in any endeavour can be secured if effort ("Krishi") is coupled with Kripa (Divine Grace). Emphasising the need for discipline and devotion, Bhagavan said the students should cultivate the spirit of sacrifice. They had come to Prasanthi Nilayam out

of their love for Bhagavan. They should regard it as their native home and Bhagavan as their mother. Bhagavan announced that all the expenses of their stay in Prasanthi Nilayam will be borne by the Central Trust. The moneys collected by the Sai Organisations for the conference should be retained for their use. Praising the Seva Dal volunteers for their exemplary devotion to duty, Bhagavan said that such a spirit of service cannot be found anywhere else.

Early on Saturday, all the children were seated in long rows in the open ground around the Mandir. Bhagavan patiently went round, giving Padanamaskar, while the Institute students distributed packets containing sweets, a picture of Bhagavan and a medallion. All the children felt indescribably elated as Bhagavan went round them, stopping now and then to put some questions or give advice.

The valedictory session on the 31st evening was turned into a New Year eve meeting by Bhagavan for delivering His Message for the New Year.

Mr. V Srinivasan presented to Bhagavan the decisions of the Teachers' Conference. Mr. Anil Kumar, a lecturer from Guntur, referred to the conference as an "inter-continental world of Sal" and observed: "Man walking on the, moon is not as important as God walking on the earth."

Bhagavan said that one need not wait for the new year to make resolutions for changing one's self. Every second was new and should be used for giving up one's bad qualities and cultivating virtues. He exhorted all to remember that selfless love is true devotion. "Cultivate Thyaga (sacrifice) and Prema (Love) to realise the Divine." Whatever is given should be offered spontaneously.

Referring to the distribution of dhotis and saris to the Bal Vikas teachers and Pre-Seva Dal students in the morning, Bhagavan said that the affluent devotees should avail themselves of every opportunity to help those in need.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the singing of the bhajan: "*Govinda! Gopala! Prabhu Giridhari!*"

A Rainbow Over Rome

If I had to select one word to describe the impact of the International symposium held in Rome, it would be: inspirational.

It was attended not only by hundreds of eagerly enthusiastic and dedicated Italians, but by representatives of the rapidly growing Sai family from thirty four countries. It was a most impressive sight to see each of their national flags hanging side by side lining the front of the

stage in the huge auditorium. They held out a promise by attesting to a new and very different league of nations quietly coming into existence in a world weary of strife and turmoil.

We are all fully aware that Baba is the Initiator of such a gathering, but He needs people as tools through whom to bring it to actual fulfillment. Antonio and Sylvie Craxi and their band of truly dedicated helpers worked tirelessly, harmoniously, and self-effacingly to carry out Baba's plans to make this first International symposium outside of India a success in every sense of that word.

All old cities, throughout their long history have seen their share of violence and negativity, and Rome is no exception. It therefore seemed significant that the symposium was held at the time of All Souls Day when prayers are offered for the souls of all who have departed this physical plane. Modern cities also wear a grey shroud of smog in which negative emotions are trapped and held down under a tight lid which prevents life-giving air and light from penetrating and reaching us. Sir George Trevelyan, initiator of the Wrekin Trust in England, in his inspiring speech, likened the universe to the human body, and the worlds and planets to the glandular system. He pointed out that if one gland is sick the whole body suffers and strives to heal itself. Likewise, our sick world affects the whole system which he felt would not tolerate such a condition Indefinitely.

I would like to share two dreams which I was given several months ago, and which I now realize are fast materializing in the world. In the past I would have hesitated to mention them, but during an interview last year Baba chided me for not always believing when He came to me in dreams. I explained that I was afraid it might be imagination or ego, but he assured me that he really came, and that I must believe it.

In the first one I seemed to be floating in space looking down at the world. I was shocked and saddened to see so many areas where strife and warfare were erupting, creating dark clouds of hate and fear which blotted out the beautiful landscapes. As I looked around, off in the distance I became aware of a rainbow-coloured stream gently bubbling up and flowing in all directions like long ribbons of multi-coloured light. As I watched it expand I knew that it was emanating from Prasanthi Nilayam, and that each colour represented a positive emotion such as joy, love, hope, compassion, which I realized were the opposite of the fear, anger, and hate which formed the dark blots throughout the earth's atmosphere.

The second dream came several weeks later. In it I saw Baba dancing as if on a dot, alternating as Nataraj and Krishna, His arms, legs, and head all moving to an inner hidden rhythm. It was an extraordinary spectacle, and as I watched fascinated and awestruck, I noticed wave after wave of rainbow-coloured light emanating from His body and flowing out in long ribbons all over India and out into the rest of the world. As I continued to watch I saw that these coloured streamers encircled the dark patches I had seen in the prior dream, and gradually absorbed them, replacing them with the rainbow-hued light. The tempo of the dance accelerated until a rainbow encircled the world.

As I started to write this article my mind went back to an incident described in Howard Murphet's book, "Man of Miracles". He tells how the late Joel Riorden announced skeptically shortly after arriving on his first visit to Baba that he would only believe that He was God if He could materialize a rainbow, as only God could make a rainbow. Baba graciously acquiesced. Joel saw a perfect arc of a rainbow a few days later in the cloudless Indian sky. Later, Baba asked Joel how he liked it.

A rainbow has always traditionally symbolized the hope of peace after a storm.

In Rome we all experienced another of Baba's rainbows like a long tendril reaching from Him in India and reflected in all of our hearts. It reminds us of His promise to raise the consciousness not only of India but of the whole world, so that this sick gland in the body of the universe may be healed and made whole.

He is not only giving us hope, but allowing all who choose to seek His will rather than follow the dictates of their egos, to participate in this revolution.

The message I brought back from Rome is to let Baba dance His dance in each of our hearts and thus fill us with love, joy, and hope with which to replace such negative emotions as anger, hate and fear, first in us, and thence in the world. In this way each of us can be like a cell of light helping to raise and brighten the atmosphere of the planet.

—*Phyllis Krystal*

Italian P.M's interest

On the eve of the Sai Symposium in Rome, a representative group of participants, headed by Prof. V. K. Gokak, met the Italian Prime Minister, Mr. Bettino Craxi, at his office in Palazzo Chigi, to explain to him the objects of the symposium and the global mission of Bhagavan Baba.

The group included Sir George Trevelyan, Mr. Victor Kanu, Mr. V. K. Narasimhan, Mr. Lucas Ralli (U. K.), Mr. William Harvey (USA) and Mr. and Mrs. Antonio Craxi. Mrs. Craxi acted as interpreter.

The Prime Minister showed keen interest in the educational work of the Sai Organisations and their efforts, under the inspiration and guidance of Bhagavan, to promote unity of religions and harmony among all peoples without regard to race, language, creed or nationality.

The Prime Minister expressed his readiness to extend whatever help was required by the organisers of the symposium. He desired also to have a complete report of proceedings of the symposium.

The Prime Minister affirmed Italy's concern for the promotion of world peace and mentioned that his government had effected cuts in defence expenditure.

Prof. Gokak conveyed the gratitude of the members of the group and the organisers of the Rome Conference to the Prime Minister for his courtesy and his interest in the Sai movement.

God's Magic

Some call Him a magician
and in a sense He is,
for hearts of stone are melted
by a single glance of His.

Some say that gems and holy ash
are hidden in His sleeve,
what is the source of jewels
that makes a doubting heart believe?

The nature of this magic
transcends the mortal mind,
through it we are granted
a glimpse of God's design.

Our Lord will work His magic
until His work is done,
the Divine Magician
shall transform everyone.

—Hollander.

There are precious gems of wisdom within your hearts, which require excavation. In order to be of any benefit to you. Intelligence is the instrument you have to use in order to gain them. At the very start, you will encounter a boulder barring your way—that is the Body Consciousness—the Ego. Desire are the loose rocks that have also to be dug out and kept aside. Then, you come to a bed of sand—good thoughts, good deeds; when this stratum is reached, you are nearing success. If you keep on in Satsang, every day, your hearts will maintain their purity unimpaired; but, if you seek one, only off and on, it will be difficult to win Grace or partake of it, for; the vessel will be tarnished and untidy. In your own households, you must have noticed that a vessel in daily use is bright and clean; but vessels stored and used only, now and then will have to be scrubbed with great vigour to become bright.

You must take all the trouble and welcome all the patience needed, to seek Satsang and remain therein. For, it is not being born a man that is the sign of the Glory; it is living as a man that confers the dignity.

—Baba

Children's Thrilling Rally

The most unforgettable feature of the five-day Bal Vikas International celebrations was the grand rally of over 7000 children from all parts of India and from over twenty overseas countries in all the continents. It was a spectacular, colourful show by any test and a gathering of over a lakh of spectators-equally international in keeping with the character of the celebrations-cheered the children as they marched past, offering their homage to Bhagavan Baba, who blessed them from the Mandap at the foot of the hill which served as a backdrop for the vast amphitheatre. The ample grounds of the Hill View Stadium, between the Easwaramma High School and the hill, had been levelled up and cleared of bush and briar by hundreds of volunteers who worked with devotion and energy to see that the stadium was worthy of the great occasion. The stadium was filled to capacity before Bhagavan arrived at 9 a.m., after opening an international exhibition of Bal Vikas children's paintings and handicrafts in the college foyer.

The rally began with a group chanting Vedic mantras and a band of Nadaswaram players heading the grand pageant. They were followed by a colourful group of young dancers from Tamilnadu who danced on stilts as horse riders, peacocks and bulls. They danced with such verve and vigour that they elicited applause from Bhagavan and the entire gathering.

Groups of children from the different States of India presented a variety of items, representing their respective folk dances or traditional songs and dances. The rich variety of colourful costumes revealed the diversity of the Indian cultural heritage. The underlying unity of this heritage was also brought out by the religious motifs of the different displays and the deep devotion to Bhagavan. In addition to the dances and the march past by children in different uniforms, there were a number of floats depicting different aspects of Bhagavan's message and teaching. The floats were designed to illustrate the basic human values and to project Bhagavan's message of unity of religions and of nations and races.

The message of unity was strikingly presented in the last float of the pageant prepared by overseas children.

It took two hours for the entire pageant to go round the stadium. Everyone felt that it had been a thrilling experience to watch such a unique international rally in the holy precincts of Prasanthi Nilayam in the Divine presence of Bhagavan. Everyone saw in the children of the Bal Vikas movement the heralds of the Sai era, who were bound to play a historic role in the transformation of mankind and the restoration of moral and spiritual values.

Besides the rally, there were two fine cultural programmes on the 28th and 29th, which were staged in a specially constructed theatre at the Hill View Auditorium. Eighteen States presented a variety of dramas, dances and songs, each having a bearing on the spiritual message of Bhagavan. Many of them revealed the superb histrionic and musical talents of the children and showed what fine performance could be expected from them with proper training. Bhagavan was present on both the evenings to encourage and bless the children.

The cultural programme had a grand finale on the 30th, when an unusual item described as "Cosmic Play," was presented, with hundreds of children taking part in the colourful dances to reveal the mystery of creation and the divine glory of the solar system, with the sun and the planets represented by different deities. This excellent piece was well conceived and presented in an attractive and memorable sequence of colourful dances.

After the "Cosmic Play", there was a festival of fireworks in which the clear sky over Prasanthi Nilayam was lit by a continuous burst of multi-coloured rockets. It was altogether an unforgettable experience for one and all.

—N.

VEDA PURUSHA VANI:

Conquest of the Mind

Enquiry into the nature of the Mind will reveal that it has no existence apart from the thoughts that arise through the sense organs. That was why the sages declared: "Sankalpa Vikal-paath-makam Manaha" (Thoughts and doubts constitute the essence of the mind.) To bring the mind under control we have to free ourselves from the entire process of mental agitation. If we want to take a bath in the sea, which is agitated by waves, we cannot afford to wait till the waves subside and the sea is calm. Likewise, it will be foolish to wait for the agitations in the mind to cease for experiencing Ananda.

Agitations are of the very nature of the Mind—"Mananaa Sthithihi Manaha" (The state of cogitation or remembrance is the Mind.) By constant rumination over one's sensory experiences the mind acquires a form. By relating the experiences to the "I" as the experiencer, the consciousness of a distinctive individual (the Ego) arises. From that, desires develop and from the desires the mind acquires a form. In a piece of cloth, when the threads are taken out, only the cotton remains and if the cotton is burnt the cloth ceases to exist. Similarly when desires are eliminated, the "I" and the Mind will go.

It has been said that the destruction of the mind is the means to the realization of the Divine. The cessation of the mind can be brought about by the gradual elimination of desires, like the removal of threads from a cloth. Finally the desires have to be consumed in the fire of Vairagya (Renunciation).

Look upon life as one long railway journey. In this journey it is not good to carry heavy luggage. There are stations on the way like 'suffering' (Aarati), the desire for objects (Arthaarthi), the yearning for understanding (Jignaasu) and Self-realisation (Jnani). The less luggage one carries the more easily and quickly one can get through various stages and reach the destination. The primary requisite, therefore, is the eradication of desires.

Everything in the universe has a form and a name. Of the two, the name is more important than the form. The form is liable to change every moment. The Vedanta declares that whatever is perceived is liable to perish ("Yaddrisyam thannasyathi"). There is nothing in the world which is not subject to change. A man's body also goes through stages of infancy, boyhood, manhood, and old age. Samsara (worldly life) is like a tree with roots, branches, flowers and fruits. The Mind is the tap-root of this tree. If the tap-root is destroyed the tree with all its branches will fall. If the mind goes, the sense of separateness will go.

Man's actions are related to desires and aversions. They are the cause of his joys and sorrows. As the Mind is the source of these actions, it is by cultivating pure and noble thoughts that one can engage in pure and noble deeds. All the world's ills arise from the evil thoughts and deeds of men. It is only when men change that -society will change and the world will be reformed.

Man does not use his sense organs in the right way. He has eyes, but does not see what is good. He has ears, but does not listen to what is good. There is only one way of correcting him. He has to be shown the spiritual path and helped to cultivate the virtues of Truth, Love and Self-sacrifice. He must be weaned away from selfish pursuits and from arrogance and pride. His mind, which is the real culprit, has to be cleansed of all evil. He believes in the false and unreal and does not relish Truth, Goodness and Beauty. He can acquire real peace and joy only when he turns his thoughts to God and away from the petty tinsel of the world. Without faith in God there is nothing that man can achieve, whatever his knowledge and wealth may be.

Modern education does not teach a young man what is essential for making his life worthwhile and meaningful. His mind is loaded with a lot of useless information, but he knows little that is useful for daily living. Even in the spiritual field, there is a wide gap between verbal knowledge and real understanding of spiritual truth. People perform Japa, Dhyana and Bhajan, but there is no understanding of their inner purpose or what they are expected to achieve.

All living beings have the five elements (the Pancha-bhutas,) the five sheaths (Pancha Kosas), the five vital airs (Pancha Pranas,) and the five sense organs (Panchendriyas) in common. What is the form of these five elements? What is the power that sustains the five Kosas (sheaths)? Man does not enquire into these matters. He lives continuously in these sheaths and functions through the sense organs but what is the purpose of this life? What is the significance of human birth? These questions do not bother him. He is content from morning till eve to acquire one thing or another and is concerned about "My house", "My car", "My clothes" and the like. In this pre-occupation with the "I" and "Mine", the basic truth about the Divine that is the real nature of the "I" is not remembered at all.

When a man calls his body, "My body" who is the owner or the indweller of the body? If he is not the body or the mind, what is he? Without understanding who he is, is there any meaning in talking about "my body", "my mind" and the like? Is there any sense in seeking to acquire various possessions without understanding who is acquiring them and for what purpose?

Once it is realized that the Mind is the cause of this "My-ness", and that it is made up of desires, then one will strive to achieve the state of Samadhi in which all agitations in the mind cease. It may be difficult to achieve this state of yogic serenity. An easier way to still the mind is to concentrate all thoughts on God. When that is done, the calmness that comes in the state of Sushupti or deep-sleep will be realised. It is a state of equanimity in which one looks upon pain and pleasure, joy and grief, with equal indifference, unaffected by them either way. In the same manner the identity of the individual self (the Jivi) and the Omni-self (the Brahman) has to be experienced.

(Dasara Discourse on 12-10-83)

A Picture for a Prayer

Down memory lane—with Sai—Golden memories of the many times He has helped me. Sometimes the work was very important, sometimes, He has considered even mundane matters to be important enough to merit His Gracious Help. Take the case of "The Coloured Photograph."

In the photo is a shrine in an American, or western home. The lovely smiling face of Bhagavan Baba, in a picture, hangs on a curtained backdrop. At the top of the curtains is a garland of thick green leaves. Below the picture is a simple chair with arms, and draped on this chair is a Red Robe of Swami's. There is a cushion on the carpet for His Lotus Feet. On both sides of the chair are two low, side tables, each having glass lamps, with candles, and silver baskets, with lemon-yellow flowers. The scene is bright and charming. The photo also shows aggarbatties burning, and cymbals, in readiness for a Bhajan about to begin. The orange curtains, the golden glow of the candles and a lovely white garland on Baba's picture, show the love and care that have been expended in this beautiful shrine.

Where this photo came from, I do not know; in which devotee's home it is and in which part of the world, I do not know I only know that, in response to a prayer to Sai, it came in my hand, while cleaning out my bookshelf. I had never seen it before, and none who borrowed my books now and then, had seen it either.

My prayer was simply this. "Baba, help me to relocate the shrine in my room, so I can meditate in peace and quiet. Show me how to make a simple, yet effective altar, and which wall to use." Time and again I had shifted my shrine in the room and not been satisfied with the result. Either the family members would find it difficult to move around it, or some such obstacle would come

up. Baba answered my request and sent this photo, which answered all my questions in a beautiful and explicit manner!

Today my shrine is located in the same long wall in my room as in the 'magic' photo, and I hope to add to it, exactly, all the other items too.

— *Yasmin Sibal.*

"Holy Christmas" At Prasanthi Nilayam

Each year at Christmas time it becomes clearer and clearer that *the place to be*, if you possibly can, is Prasanthi Nilayam. Of course, it is a wonderful blessing to be able to visit Prasanthi Nilayam at anytime. Yet, what has been developing there over the past years with respect to the observance of Jesus' Birthday is something marvellous to behold. Bhagavan Baba's gentle but firm guidance of every aspect of the entire programme can be sensed, appreciated and savoured. The crowds, too, have grown steadily, adding still another dimension to the excitement, wonder and challenge of this Divine Event.

This year's Christmas celebration was certainly no exception to the splendid recent trend. Tens of thousands of devotees from all over India and from at least 30 foreign countries were present to experience one of the most memorable occasions of their lives. The Planning and Coordinating Committee under the Chairmanship of Mr. Antonio Craxi worked very well together, as was testified by the tremendous success of their efforts and the abundance of Grace showered by Bhagavan.

Activities began at 4.43 A.M. on Christmas morning as several thousand men and women devotees assembled with lighted candles in front of the Ganesha Shrine. The groups proceeded in tandem, joyfully singing Christmas Carols, and in the process thrilling and delighting tens of thousands of Indian devotees who had gathered along the route.

The processions stopped, and fanned out in the courtyard of the Mandir, waiting for Bhagavan to appear on the balcony. Thousands of hearts were filled with ineffable bliss when Bhagavan emerged from the silver gates and blessed everyone with his Abhayahastha and his beatific smile.

The warm glow of those memorable predawn minutes lasted not only throughout the day, it actually increased steadily right up until the beginning of the three-part afternoon programme. The first portion was the presentation of report by the Kingdom of Mother Sai (the organisation of old students of the Sathya Sai Women's College at Anantapur.)

Welcoming Bhagavan and the large gathering in the Poornachandra Auditorium, Kumari Sai Leela, President of K.M.S., said that Bhagavan has placed a sacred trust in the hands of the old students. They have to inculcate and implement the ideals of the Sathya Sai Institute by serving the weak and the suffering and carrying on other welfare activities in the villages. "We will not betray the trust," she declared.

The Annual Report listed the following, among other, service activities of the K.M.S: feeding of the poor and distribution of clothes to children and adults; free tuition to backward children; help to the blind in their studies; monetary help to poor students; eye camps; distributing cloth to members for making dresses. The organisation, started in May 1981, intends to intensify its activities in the coming years.

Bhagavan, in his discourse, which referred to the Kingdom of Mother Sai as well as to the Christmas festivities, said that Dharma (Right conduct) and Jnana (wisdom) are the gifts of the Divine to man. Knowledge of the Divine is the only true knowledge. Science sought to explain the phenomenal universe (Prakriti). But from this knowledge, it must proceed to the understanding of the unity underlying the universe—its Divinity.

Jesus preached Universal Love and the elimination of selfishness. The spirit of sacrifice should be exhibited in every sphere of activity. The sacrifice that should be offered is that of one's evil qualities.

Castigating all forms of hypocritical devotion, Bhagavan said that it was the ingratitude of his disciples which made Jesus decide to give up His life rather than be the Master of such disciples. Devotion that is not steadfast and unchanging is like an unripe fruit. Devotees who turn against God when their desires aren't fulfilled are persons who, instead of giving up desires, are giving up God. Devotees who behave in one way in the presence of Bhagavan and differently behind His back are double-faced mono-actors. Bhagavan's way of dealing with them is "mouna-acting"—reproof through silence (mouna). Even occasional use of harsh words by Bhagavan was intended only to correct the devotee and reform him.

Referring to the Christmas celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam, Bhagavan said that only in the Nilayam was Christmas celebrated as a "Holy Christmas". In other countries it was a 'merry' or a 'happy' Christmas. Bhagavan pronounced His benediction on the entire gathering.

Following the thrilling and thoroughly uplifting Christmas message from Baba, the fortunate devotees received yet another treat in the form of a beautiful play about Jesus, His Mission and His relationship to Lord Sathya Sai. The play featured children from overseas countries, with magnificent musical accompaniments by an exceptionally well-rehearsed choir and instrumentalists under the direction of Mrs. Elizabeth Elwell.

The children, with their eyes fixed on Swami, who watched silently from the audience, gave a flawless performance. The theme was presented in the form of a series of scenes depicting the birth of Jesus and the stages in the propagation of His message, first as the Messenger of God,

then as the Son of God and finally as the Oneness of Father and Son. When the Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer were recited, the entire audience was deeply moved.

The play concluded with the chorus reciting the wonderful 'hit' from the 1982 Christmas programme, "Sai! Sai! Sai!"

—*William Harvey, Prasanthi Nilayam, 25-12-1983*

Kerala Padre at Rome Symposium

Padre Anthony was born a Catholic in Southern India. Educated at Oxford, he became a Dominican Priest in Italy, and later associated with the Theosophical Society, the Mahabodhi Society, the Quakers, the Ramakrishna Mission, and Mahatma Gandhi. In 1962, Pope John offered him an archdiocese. Inspired by Gandhi's example, he turned it down, and instead chose to work in the idealism and voluntary poverty of Jesus, Buddha, and other prophets that he loved. He went to Bombay, and started collecting destitute children from the slums, and cared for them under a few trees. Today, this social work has grown into an educational complex run by Carmelite Sisters and Brothers.

At the Sri Sathya Sai Baba Symposium in Rome, Padre Anthony spoke on the religious unity of mankind. "Behind Catholicism, Buddhism, Islam, is the same thirst; to find fulfillment in the infinite by reconquering the paradise lost, namely, ineffable peace, impenetrable calm, unfailing serenity, and ever-growing cosmic love. God is not outside you, he is not up in the skies, nor is he in shrines. He is in the depths of your consciousness as your true, eternal self. Serving the same God in every human being is a practical religion."

In Padre Anthony's view, Sai Baba, Christ, and Buddha would embrace each other if they were to meet on this earth. It is their "pseudo-followers who would fight and kill each other," for religion is often based on "vested interest, property and position." The real religion is based on a unifying force, one which cements human solidarity, breaks down barriers, and builds bridges between nations, cultures, and systems of thought.

He lives in the spirit of Pope John I who, after "wonderful experiences with the Sufis in Turkey," said to Padre Anthony: "What difference is there between the life of our St. Francis of Assisi and these Sufis?"

Gandhi also saw the unity behind various religious teachings. One day when he was writing, his grand-daughter told him that his pencil was too small. But Gandhi refused to throw away even a pencil. He said, "I can still write with this. Did not Christ say, 'Collect the fragments lest they be wasted?'"

The core of universal understanding within all religions, the complementary aspects between Catholicism and the spiritual teachings of Sai Baba, is that each seeks "knowledge, love of God, and service of God in fellow creatures."

"I am recognized by the Buddhists as a good Buddhist," said Padre Anthony, who has a meditation centre in Assisi, Italy, "by the Hindus as a good Hindu, and by the Catholics as a good Catholic. Wherever there is truth, that is my home."

—*Joan Englandei*

"Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven"

It was Christmas at Puttaparthi. A quiet stillness pervaded the air as we sat at morning Darshan waiting for Baba to appear. The palm leaves rustled gently in the breeze. The sky was clear and blue without any trace of clouds. It had been six years since my husband and I had visited the ashram. This was the first visit for our children Aaron, 18 months old, and Heidi, 31 years old.

As if from nowhere Baba's orange robed figure suddenly appeared. He walked towards the men's side as if His feet "floated" in the air. Moving among the crowds, He accepted letters and gave His blessings. A surge of happiness welled within me as I experienced His profound love, grace, and compassion. Gradually He moved towards the women's side. As He neared our place, my heart sank as Aaron began to fuss. When I looked up, Baba was several rows past us. I hadn't noticed even a glance in our direction.

As we left, Heidi said, "Mommy, He didn't even talk to me or give me a present!" It then occurred to me that she had expected Baba to be like a grandfather or Santa Claus, lifting her up in the air playfully and giving her presents. She had only seen His pictures at our Cambridge Center meetings and in our home. How could I explain to her the true nature of an Avatar? "Heidi," I said, after a few moments of thought, "the only way Baba can hear you is if you pray to Him in your heart."

During the afternoon and evening I began to notice her praying with folded hands whenever she would sit down to rest. Her concentration amazed me. Even the next morning she remembered to pray.

Morning Darshan found us in the third row with our friend Indira beside us. Baba appeared and walked towards the men's side accepting letters and blessing various items with a touch of His hand. As He neared the women's side my heart began to beat faster. He paused a second in front of us. With a rapid movement of His hand He materialized a small object which landed with a thud in Indira's lap as she still held out letters that He never took. It all happened so fast that by the time we looked up He was several rows down the crowd of people. Indira picked up the small piece of candy in the wrapper and looked at Baba with a puzzled expression on her

face. He looked back at us with a playful smile and said in His sweet sing-song voice, "Not for you, for the little girl." Heidi was thrilled. Her prayers had been answered. At the age of 3 she had learned that God hears and answers our prayers. We too can learn from her faith the importance of becoming like children before God. "Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

—Cathy Daub (New Jersey)

JANMOTSAVA SANDESH:

Perpetual Bliss

*Who can ascribe a form to Him who is beyond all bounds and shapes?
One can only laugh at those who babble that He is thus and thus and thus.
He has no hands or feet or limbs or parts; how then can humans picture Him?
His radiance is that of a billion Suns and more:
How can the mind hope to reach Him?
'Tis formless Force—to grasp It whole
Who can venture? who can claim success?
'Tis Atma, with no fixed Form, since Time began,
Illumining Space and the boundless vast.*

*He, the Ever-existing, with no birth, no death,
Sans beginning, middle or end,
Unborn, undecaying, deathless
He is the Atma, the Timeless, the Eternal Supreme.*

Embodiments of Love,

Since dawn this day, from every tongue, the words, "Happy Birthday," "Happy Birthday," have been resounding. What exactly do these words mean? Are the words used with awareness of their significance, or, are they spoken as a conventional form of social etiquette? Such doubts do arise.

The English word "happy" has as its equivalent in Telugu "Santosham". We shall probe into the implications of the expression San-tosham. 'Thosham' signifies 'delight' (prasannatha). The prefix 'Sam' denotes that the delight has been won through righteous and honourable means, that is to say, through 'detachment' and 'sacrifice'.

One has to give up desires that enslave and imprison, that bring sorrow in their train. Desires can be grouped under two heads: desire for an object or experience that no one else has earned, and desire that the object or experience one has earned should not be earned by any one else! Both these desires are indeed ridiculous. What is desired is as illusory as one's shadow. The faster you run towards it, hoping to seize it, the farther it is from your reach. When you pursue

desire, it flees; when you scorn its hold, it submits—like the shadow that follows you when you turn your back on it. Desires are born of greed. When greed is weakened more and more, discontent declines in equal measure. And, when discontent disappears delight is established.

Prahlada, as the Bhagavata text declares, was rooted in the faith in God Narayana and His Universal, Absolute Reality. His father, Hiranyakasipu, however, was drawn by external forms and the limiting names. Therefore, Prahlada was rooted in Bliss (Ananda) wherever he was, in whatever set of circumstances. Hiranyakasipu was ever worried and anxious, caught up in the multiplicity of names and forms.

Those who are in such bliss as Prahlada had will have an aura around them and an effulgence on their faces. People can derive joy watching their faces and yearn to have that experience again and again. The faces of the worried and the anxious will infect others too with similar feelings.

Besides, Delight or Bliss (Ananda) endows one with great power also whereas anxiety robs one of the strength he has. True delight cannot be acquired by effort or produced artificially or maintained by design. No course of sadhana can be prescribed to enable one to gain Ananda. For, one is, in fact, the very embodiment of Ananda! But since he has failed to identify his truth, he is seeking it from outside, from the objects around him. For those who have realised that they are the Eternal, the True and the Pure Atma, Ananda is ever accessible.

'Ananda is Brabmam'—the Bhagavad Gita teaches this truth in many ways. The very name Prahlada has Ananda soaked in it. 'Hlada' means Ananda and the prefix 'Pra' indicates that the Ananda is 'full'. Prahlada means 'Full Bliss'—"a person who is full of Ananda." How could Prahlada attain that state? He gave up attachment to his name and form and sought the Atma as the only reality and identified that reality with Narayana.

Every man is privileged to taste this Bliss during deep sleep, (Sushupti). In that state, he is not conscious of his name and form, nor do any of his senses function. So, he is then in full Bliss, his native core, his very birthright. This is the reason why he seeks it so restlessly from the moment he awakes until the moment of sleep, unaware of the inner spring which is its unfailing source, engaging himself in the pursuit of knowledge and skills for earning a living.

Knowledge, wealth, power and status are all capable of granting only worldly pleasure or joy or exultation. Of course, whatever the extent or nature of this joy, it must be realised that it is a particle (amsa) of the supreme Ananda of the Atmic Awareness, the impact of the Limitless Vast, the Brahma Ananda. The mansion of a millionaire may have many evidences of his wealth but each is a particle of the Grace of the Goddess of Prosperity (Lakshmi). Men may derive joy from their enormous wealth, deep scholarship, or physical prowess, but each of these is really a ray emanating from Brahmananda. The ray is reflected differently from different media but the source is One and the primal essence is one.

Supreme Bliss (Ananda) is immanent in every thing in Creation, for Ananda is Brahman, the Universal Absolute. Every thing is Sat (Being), Chit (Awareness or Consciousness) and Bliss

(Ananda), that is to say, Divine. Everything IS, the IS-ness is the Being (Sat) capable of Becoming. Next about Chit, Awareness: The capacity to be known and to know, to gain awareness and to grant Awareness is Chit. When we take with us a child to a fair or market or an exhibition, it asks for answers to endless questions, "What is that?" "Why is it so?", "What is its name?". This yearning to know is the sign of the 'Chit'.

In spite of our seeing so many dying around us and hearing about as many more deaths, though we witness the misery and the suffering of so many, we long for a death-less and sorrow-less life. We spend fortunes to lengthen our lives. That is the urge of the "Sat" in us. The other longing to know is the expression of the "Chit" in us. The third proof of our innate Divinity is the urge of Ananda in US. Without exception, every one is motivated by this Ananda urge.

However, these urges have each two aspects—the *impression* (internal) and the *expression* (external). Sat has, for example, the *being* and the *becoming*. The process of becoming is what the Gayatri prayer asks for "Awaken my intellect, heighten and expand my Awareness" (prachodayaath). Becoming is through expanding, manifesting wider and more varied forms. The Upanishads declare, "He is everything that exists both inside and outside" (Antha-bahishcha thath sarvam vyaapya Narayano sthithah: Narayana permeates everything inside and outside all this). He cast His look and it happened. The Become is a reflection of the will that urged the Being; so, the Being IS, the Becoming changes from Is to Was; it is unstable while Being is stable. Being is the screen and Becoming, the pictures that flit across the screen. When there are no pictures, who will be drawn to the screen? How can pictures be seen, when there is no screen? The fleeting and the fixed are inextricably dependent on each other.

The objective world is but a series of momentary pictures impinging on the mind. The mind is active in the waking stage of the body. The body is built up by food (Anna), maintained by food (Anna) and disintegrates through food (Anna). The body has five sheaths, the outermost one, the Food Sheath (Annamaya Kosa). It is known also as the gross (sthoola) body. The next three sheaths, the Vital Air (Pranamaya), the Mind (Manomaya), and the Intellectual (Vijnana) form the subtle (sookshma) body. The subtle body is active in the dream stage also. The fifth and the inner-most sheath is the Ecstatic, the Blissful (Anandamaya), the Causal Body (the Kaarana).

The expression of the urge of Ananda is as Love and Delight. Delight is the product and projection of Love. The expression of Chit is Awareness. The expression of Sat is Becoming. Divinity is the Unity that manifests in Diversity, the One as the Many. The One is the efficient cause as well as the material cause of the Many. The One is inherent in the Many and shines in the Many which It has become. The ONE is the source of the highest and the most lasting Ananda.

The Ananda we get when hunger is appeased by a meal is short-lived. Hunger afflicts us again before long. However sweet and tasty the food may be, it causes nausea when consumed in quantity. The mythological bird Chakora is said to feed on moonlight only but we can be sure a surfeit of that will certainly be unwelcome to it. Even nectar will cloy when one continues to eat it endlessly.

Brahmananda, however, is different. For, it is native to Man, his very Source and Sustenance. The purpose of human striving, through stage after stage of spiritual progress, is to attain that. A fish placed in an artistic golden gem-studded bowl is miserable. It has no Ananda, for it has no water. Water is its home, its real source and sustenance. Man too must reach his original home, however far he may wander. Thyagaraja sang: "Birds, big and small, before nightfall seek the tree where they can rest. I hold Your Feet In my grasp; save me, O Rama." The Bhagavata makes it more explicit, "For every living being, the best course is to attain the source from which it originated."

There exist many flooded streams on the globe. Where has the water come from? The ocean, of course. Consider the impediments the streams have to overcome before they attain the source! The flooded stream of human life has originated from Brahmananda and it has to attain the source from which it has come away. In order to succeed, man must recollect the ecstasy of Brahmananda every moment, in every activity.

Thyagaraja revelled in the Ananda that poetry, music and scholarship can confer but since the Ananda that learning can confer (Vidyananda) was liable to weaken, he considered it only as a particle or foretaste of the Brahmananda he sought most—the Ananda derivable from the Universal Eternal Delight, the Nirguna Ananda Brahman. That Ananda is man's reality, for, man is God.

God is neither distant, nor distinct from you. You are God. You are Sat-Chit-Ananda. You are Being (Asti), Awareness (Bhaati), Priyam (Bliss). You are all. When do you cognise this Truth? When you shake off the delusions which hide the Truth. If your yearning to experience Brahmananda, the Sat-Chit-Ananda is sincere and pure, from this day, keep ever in your memory what I am about to tell you:

(1) "I am God; I am not different from God." Be conscious of this always. Keep it ever in mind. "I am God; I am God. I am not different from God." Be reminding yourself of this. Pray that you may not fail in this spiritual exercise (sadhana).

(2) "I am the Indivisible Supreme Absolute (Akhanda Para Brahman)." This is the second Truth to be established in the consciousness by unremitting repetition and prayer.

(3) "I am Sat-Chit-Ananda (Being, Awareness, Bliss)."

(4) "Grief and anxiety can never affect me." Develop this faith and convince yourselves of this Truth by repeated assurance and prayer.

5) "I am ever content; fear can never enter me." Feel thus forever. Pray that this conviction grows stronger and stronger. Exhort yourself, "O self! Utter 'OM TAT SAT', 'Om Tat Sat'" the threefold symbol of Brahman. As the physical body is maintained healthy and strong by the five

vital airs (Prana), these five prayers will endow you with the "awareness of Brahman," which is the same as "the status of Brahman Itself."

Do not demean or condemn yourself as low or small or weak. The body is but a vehicle for the journey through life. Do not mistake it as your self and impose on your self its ups and downs. You purchase a car and possess it for the sake of its usefulness, not for keeping it under lock and key in the garage. The body-car should be put to the best use, for attaining Brahmananda. The four goals of human life—Right living, right earning, right desiring and release from worldly bondage (Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha)—are the wheels of the vehicle; the wheel inside that steers these four is the mind. The intellect (Buddhi) is the switch. The air which fills the tubes in the tyres is Faith and the destination Ananda.

Ananda is the breath that sustains life. That is the goal which has to be ever in view, while navigating the ocean of one's life. Even the least trace of Ananda that one derives is but a reflection of Brahmananda. One has to keep this in mind. Anything done or said or seen is but the prompting of the Brahman that is one's reality. Have faith in this fact.

In order to develop and deepen this faith, certain spiritual practices can be undertaken. Do not feel separate from God and consider Him as the Giver and yourself as the Recipient. This smacks of commerce. It is wrong to plan for getting some wish granted in return for what you offer. God will not pay any attention to your material greed; He watches the heart and its contents. Believers in God have not understood God if they bargain with Him and clamour for worldly goods. Hence, from ages past, they have suffered misery. The Divine seeks and rewards only Divine qualities, virtues and conduct.

The body is transient and the joy it seeks and gets is equally transient. The Ananda one gets through meditation on the Atma is as lasting as the Atma. When Godhead assumes a body, It too is unaffected as the Atma. Nothing can confer as much Ananda as virtue, neither wealth, nor material power, nor fame nor scholarship. The highest virtue is humility, surrender to God. People speak of those who have no one to look after them as 'orphans' but God looks after every one. So, no one can be an orphan. God alone is the orphan (Anaatha), for who can claim that he is God's guardian?

Dedicate thought, word and deed to God. Do not treat some of your activities as done for God and others as done for yourself. They are both like the two halves of a pulse grain. The plant sprouts from the middle of the grain, drawing sustenance equally for both halves. The alert and the inert, the living and the non-living, the moving and the non-moving are all God. Strengthen this faith, live in this faith. This is the prescription for perpetual Brahmananda.

—Bhagavan's Birthday Discourse, 23-11-83

Sai Family News

Biratnagar (Nepal): A notable feature of the Akhanda Bhajan programme this year at the local Sathya Sai Centre (November 12-13) was the participation in the 24-hour bhajans of a group from the "adopted" village of Baidyanathpur. The local centre has been carrying on the village uplift programme among the weaker sections of the population in this village, including Bal Vikas classes, bhajan sessions, road building, digging of wells, health education and medical check-up. The village contributed ten singers to the Akhanda Bhajan.

Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh): A series of symposia on "Science and Spirituality" were organised by the Sathya Sai Seva Samiti, Madhya Pradesh, at Indore, Raipur, Jabalpur and Gwalior during the period July to September 1983, with a view to interesting intellectuals and professional people in the spiritual approach to the problems facing India and other countries. Leading persons from different professions including doctors, engineers, teachers, administrators and scientists were invited to participate in these Symposia. While they were urged to express their opinions freely, Bhagavan Baba's views were explained by Dr. V. S. Jha, Member of the University Grants Commission, who presided over two of the symposia, and by Swami Atmanand, who presided at Raipur, and Mr. Justice T. C. Verma, at Gwalior. The response to the symposia from the intellectual elite was gratifying. Members of the public were also present at some places and took keen interest in the discussions. At Gwalior, a girl student from the Sathya Sai Institute's Anantapur Campus spoke at the symposium, indicating how the Sai system of education promoted human values and developed the moral character of the students.

Similar symposia are to be held in other cities in the State.

Canadian Summer Course on Human Values

The fourth Canadian Sai course on Human Values took place again in the beautiful forest of Wesceneaskin, north of Toronto.

The course was structured for three different age groups: adults, young adults and children. The adults served as guides for the university students, and the young adults supervised the day-long activities of the children groups.

The day was initiated each morning by the chants of a specific religion—Vedic mantras, Buddhist chants, Gregorian chanting and Muslim prayers. After meditation, all participants went around in the forest chanting.

The adults studied the following subjects for the six-day course: (1) Crisis of the modern world, (2) the condition of man, (3) Who am I? (4) Knowledge of the Absolute, (5) How to attain Virtue? (6) The daily life. All participants were divided in small groups with a leader who was changed daily. Instead of formal lectures, everybody read the recommended chapters of selected books. Each reading was followed by one-hour discussion sessions. Principally, the participants studied some fundamental texts: Sathya Sai Baba: The Stream of Virtue; (Dharma Vahini); Lord

Northbourne: Looking back on Progress; Rene Guenon: Crisis of the modern world; Mihail Naimy: The book of Mirdad; Idries Shah: The Perfumed Scorpion.

The teen-agers met on islands and in lovely spots of the forest. Full programme for leadership courses was developed, analyzed and structured. Teaching stories were written on the 'American Red Indians. The corresponding puppet plays were planned, the puppets prepared and the rehearsed plays were presented in the evenings.

The University students prepared eight stories on parents-children relations. All these stories were dramatized for the parents, producing great impact and very constructive conversations between the older and younger generation on loving relations and meaningful family life.

The young adults summed up at the end of the summer course their ideas about "what recommendations to leave for the future generations if they were the last group of people surveying the flood in the American continent."

The children did crafts, mastered roles in puppet plays, made decorations for theatre presentations. Also there were many exercises in character development and discipline building. There was swimming and canoeing daily, under the supervision of the young adults. No "picking and choosing" nor wastage was permitted with regard to food.

One notable outcome of the summer course was the acceptance of the need for a disciplined life and a better way to develop children through proper education and shining good example given by the parents about how to behave in every circumstance. At the end of the course stress was laid on the necessity of banishing the idiot box: the television from the home.

Immediately after finishing the fourth value course, a cycle of full-day seminars were initiated. These seminars are taking place in Toronto with the active participation of Seva leader candidates. The candidates are University students keen to advance towards selfless life and constant service to fellowmen. In twelve Sunday seminars the topics of: "who is a servant leader", "self-knowledge", "character building", "daily good deeds", "life plan", "simple life", "team work", "how to teach", "courage", "integrity" are studied through brainstorming sessions and practical exercises.

The leaders formed during the twelve months will direct various two-week long seminars in Wesceneaskin camp during August 1984 to teach boys and girls value-oriented, selfless, useful life.

—George Kibedi, Toronto

Human Values Society: The Rt. Hon. the Earl of Listowel, Chief patron of the Education in Human Values Society (U.K.) speaking at its second anniversary on November 26, at Wandsworth Town Hall, deplored two evils of modern society—violence and racism. "Violence is allowed in our homes through the media of television and video." He said that racial attitudes cannot be altered by a change in the law, but only by a change in the individual's values.

Thirty four schools were represented in the Society, which has been active in promoting Bhagavan Baba's programme of education in human values.

Bokaro Steel City: The Sathya Sai Seva Samiti, Bokaro Steel City (Bihar), organised an immunisation campaign against polio for over 1000 children in and around villages in Bokaro Steel City. In addition, free homoeopathic medicines and vitamin pills were distributed.

Blood donation: A mass blood donation campaign was organised by the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Madras, in July at Abbotsbury. One hundred and seventy eight donors including 60 women gave one bottle of blood each: Bhajans were sung continuously while the blood donation was going on. The blood was handed over to the heads of the Government General Hospital, Madras, the Railway Hospital, Perambur, and the Anna Cancer Hospital, Kancheepuram.

Free Eye Camps: We have received reports from several Samitis all over the country about the free eye camps conducted by them, with the help of public-spirited doctors, to examine the patients suffering from cataract or other eye ailments and to carry out necessary operations or other treatment. In Hyderabad, several hundred patients were examined in November and 103 cataract operations done at a medical camp in "Sivam". Mr. Venugopala Rao, State President, states that a comprehensive programme of rural development is being implemented in 200 villages in the State.

The Sai Seva Samiti, Calcutta, conducted the eighth free eye operation camp in October. 96 cataract operations were done.

A free eye camp was conducted by the Malappuram district organisation in Kerala, in October. 752 persons were examined and 31 persons were operated on for cataract.

Blankets Distributed: On the occasion of Bhagavan's birthday, the Chittoor Seva Samiti distributed 115 blankets to lepers in the town, besides organising Narayana Seva for them.

Flood relief in West Godavari: The West Godavari Sai Seva Samithi organised ten refugee camps for the victims of the floods in Polavaram taluk in August. Besides sanitary measures, free food packets were distributed to 10,000 persons.

Two dental camps were conducted at Dirusamaru and Penumantra.

In appreciation of the flood-relief activities in West Godavari, Bhagavan Baba gave a donation of Rs. one lakh to the West Godavari Samiti to be used for providing clothes, food, etc. to the flood stricken people. The cheque was handed over to Mr. K. Bhaskar Rao, District President, on Bhagavan's birthday.

Star of the East

STAR in the EAST, once BETHLEHEM'S STAR,
Guiding us still to Heaven afar!
Again now on Earth to rescue and guide
Our Pilgrim feet from Ego's False Pride!
Sorrow and Grief transmute in THY LIGHT.
LIGHT of each Mort'l in Earth's lonely night!
Fearless and tranquil, our way now we see
Serving our fellows will merge us with THEE!
OH STAR, that Lights the God in Us
WHOSE RAYS are TRUTH and RIGHTEOUSNESS,
Beam THY PEACE and LOVE through Us!
O GLORIOUS AVATAR!!

—*Elizabeth Hunt Skelly, D.D., Ph.D.*

What is Prayer?

It's an honest talk with God,
That's what Prayer really is,
It's speaking with Him
About your doubts and fears...

I tell Him all my sorrows,
I tell Him all my joys,
I tell Him what pleases me
I tell Him what annoys...

He tells me what I ought to do,
He tells me how to try,
And so we talk together
My precious Lord and I...

Prayer is hoping for yourself,
And for your dear ones too,
I just can't do without it
How about you?

SAI is the solid rock,
All glory to His name,
Wherever my footsteps lead me
My solid rock remains the same...

If you stand on that solid rock,
Your foundation is secure,
You'll have no fear of tomorrow
For that rock is safe and sure...

Tell Sai, tell him anything,
He listens to every sigh,
He even sees a little tear
For He is always nigh...

Sai is our own dear Father,
With power from above,
And He offers many blessings
Because He Is a God of L-O-V-E!

—*S. Lithopoulos, Ottawa, Canada.*

Sutra Vahini

16

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Praanastha tthaanugamaath: (Prana is Brahman, because it is comprehended as such.)

Prana, meaning the vital breath or air, refers not to the ordinary sense of the word, but to Brahman only. That word is also often taken to mean the deities presiding over the Breath and Vital Airs, like Indra, Rudra, Vaayu etc. Even that meaning is inapplicable.

On one occasion, a seeker named Pratardana approached Indra, the Lord of the Abode of Gods, and prayed to be instructed about what can endow man with that which is most beneficial to him. Indra directed him to know Him as life and meditate on Him as "Prana".

Defining Prana and elaborating on its Glory, Indra told him, "This Prana is identified with consciousness" (*Sa Esha Praana Prajnaatma*). "It is Bliss, Ageless, Deathless" (*Aanando-Ajaro-Amrithah*). That is to say Prana is the very embodiment of Bliss (*Anandaswaroop*), it has no decline or diminution (*A-Jara*), it is immortal (*A-Mrita*). That is the teaching. These characteristics belong to Brahman alone, not to Prana as commonly understood. "Prana" is only a symbol to bring Brahman to mind and not any other entity.

The question was about the most beneficial, the most essential entity, which man has to know and possess. Brahman alone is the source, substance and sustenance. So, "Prana", the word used by Indra, can mean only Brahman and nothing else. The gross meaning of the word has to be discarded and the subtle meaning accepted. Men, generally speaking, consider wealth, power and fame as most essential and pursue these goals through every possible means. In this struggle man is wasting invaluable human qualities with which he is endowed. Besides this waste of allotted years of life, he plunges deeper and deeper into the darkness of ignorance (*Ajnana*). He ignores and loses the awareness of his real nature (*Swa-Swaroop*).

On another occasion Indra instructs, "Know Me alone." (*Maam Eva Vijaaneehi*), that is to say, "Understand Me well; be aware of Me in full." The Indra referred to here cannot be a particular deity having a body with limbs. We cannot infer that the word "Prana" indicated the speaker Indra himself. One may argue that the entity who has to be meditated upon is either "Prana" or Indra, for Indra is Prana and Prana is Indra: it cannot be Brahman. This inference is not correct. Prana means Brahman and nothing else. Some interpret the statement "Know me alone" as a direction to the listener to "Know the Brahman that is My Reality, My Truth, My Core"—so Brahman alone is denoted by the word used by Indra while instructing Pratardana.

In common usage, in worldly parlance, Prana and Indra are associated with each other. In the vocabulary of spiritual enquiry, the Vast (*Bhoomaa*) is descriptive of Brahman which also means "The limitless, beyond even the Cosmos." Commentators have investigated the superficial and deeper meanings of these expressions and attempted to reconcile them as denoting one principle.

Prana and Brahman, they laid down, are two faces of one coin; they are inextricably interpenetrative (*Avinabhava Sambandha*). What has therefore to be meditated upon is Brahman and nothing else.

Saasthra drshtyaa thu upadesha Vaamadevavathu: (The instruction is in consonance with the point of view of the scripture as In the case of Vamadeva).

The sage Vamadeva adhered to the teachings of the scriptures—I am Brahman (*Aham Brahmasmi*), That thou art, (*Tat twam Asi*); Brahman is the highest wisdom (*Prajnanam Brahma*); This self is Brahman (*Ayam Atma Brahma*) which he listened to and thereby attained direct awareness of Brahman. (*Aparoksha Brahma Jnana*) He meditated on the Truth "I am Brahman" (*Aham Brahmasmi*). So too when Indra instructs, "Know Me alone"—the real Me—Brahman is meant not the vital force Prana. Before the awareness dawned on him, Vamadeva too could well have understood by Prana, the deity Indra. His announcement after realization was, "I was Manu" (*Aham Manurabhavam*), "I am All" (*Sarvaatmakam*). In the same manner since the deity Indra possessed total wisdom, he could declare Brahman as equivalent to the Prana or the vital force in all. There is no inconsistency in this.

In fact Brahman can be indicated as any entity. All is Brahman. (*Sarvam Brahmanam*). Truth, Wisdom, Eternity is Brahman (*Sathyam-Jnanam-Anantham-Brahma*). In accordance with these expressions of intuitional experience, each and every thing can symbolise and denote Brahman. All things have emanated from Brahman, all things are projections of Brahman. Gold does not lose its nature, however many names and forms it may assume as jewellery. No one should be misled by the multiplicity of name and form in the objective world, the variety of sights and sounds. When the truth behind the diverse is identified one is aware of Brahman as the Prime Cause, the Basis, the Goal. Indra the deity is none of these.

The Sutra with which the enquiry started "*Janmaadi Yasya Yathaha*" (That from which is derived the birth of the universe)—laid down that Brahman is the cause of the entire cosmos, space and all the vital forces. So the word Prana applies to Brahman Itself

(To be continued)

National Chairman for Bal Vikas

Following discussions at the International Bal Vikas Teachers' Conference at Prasanthi Nilayam in December 1983. The World Council has nominated Smt. Gita Ghosh as Chairman for Bal Vikas at the national level to give better direction to the Bal Vikas movement.

There will be National Boards with specific responsibilities to achieve the new objectives of the movement. Each Board will consist of not more than 5 members drawn from each State. Three boards have been constituted to deal with: (1) Research and Evaluation, (2) Publication, Sales and Training, and (3) Examinations. The Conveners of these Boards will be responsible to the All India Chairman. The World Council has nominated the following persons as Conveners: Smt. Shantha Diwakar, for Research and Evaluation, Mrs. Kamala Pandya, for Publication, Sales & Training, and Smt. Vidya Srinivasan for Examinations.

In view of the growing importance of Bal Vikas Gurus, Refresher courses with new techniques are to be completed by June 1984. An up to-date Bal Vikas Teachers' Manual is to be brought out by June.

It was felt that Bal Vikas should have close interaction with the other wings of the Organisation. There should be close coordination between the Samiti, Seva Dal and Mahila Vibhag with a view to opening Bal Vikas centres in the adopted villages and slums.

The administration of the Education in Human Values Programme has been entrusted to a separate Trust, the Sri Sathya Sai Education in Human Values Trust, in order to distinguish between the Bal Vikas and Education in Human Values Programmes.

AVATAR SANDESH:

Devotion and Divine Grace

"Every second is a new moment in your life. Do not wait for a whole year to celebrate the New Year and make new year resolutions. Utilise every second to purify your hearts and fill it with love. You will then realise that God is yours and you are in God", declared Bhagavan, in His discourse on the eve of the New Year, to a vast gathering of devotees in the Poornachandra auditorium on December 31.

True devotion, said Bhagavan, is the means to realise the Divine. Devotion means love of God without any desire for reward. Such devotion can be developed only through good conduct. There can be no devotion without righteousness. Purity of mind is as essential for enjoying divine bliss as purity of body is essential for bodily health.

Higher than all the knowledge that can be acquired in the world is the knowledge of the Self

(Aatmajnana). There is nothing equal to the bliss that comes from Self-realisation. It is attained only when the ego-sense is destroyed and there is prayerful submission to the Divine. Prayers must issue not from the lips but from the heart. Prayers from the lips are like a telephone number call. They will not reach the person you want. Prayers from the heart are like a "particular person call". They will go straight to God.

Prayers, again, are used for seeking fulfillment of material desires. Out of the millions who offer prayers, very few seek, God Himself with pure hearts. The happiness derived from material benefits is lost when these are lost. Life is a constant succession of happiness and sorrow. To be free from these opposites one has to cultivate detachment. This detachment is renunciation (Vairagya).

In a life filled with desires, the pleasures one seeks are inevitably followed by grief and disappointments. All unrighteous actions lead to sorrow. It was for this reason that Buddha emphasised the need for discrimination. The first prayer, "Buddham Saranam Gachchaami" is a call for cultivating wisdom and discrimination the Buddhi. But unless the power of discrimination is used for doing right action for the good of society it is of no use. Hence the second prayer, "Sangham Saranam Gachchaami" (I surrender myself to society). What is this right action that must be done? That is indicated by the third prayer: "Dharmam Saranam Gachchaami" (I take refuge in Dharma). To reach your goal, the royal road is Dharma—Righteousness. It is only when these three are combined—Wisdom, social service and Righteousness—that there is fulfillment in life.

Nature, Man and God

Everyone should realise the integral relationship between Nature, Man and God. They are inextricably interrelated. Take a simple example. Here is a tumbler. It contains water. It is on the table. The tumbler has been placed for the sake of the water. If one does not need water, there will be no need for the tumbler. If there is no table, the tumbler cannot be placed on it. You may ask the question: Is the table important, or the tumbler, or the water in it? Water is important. The water needs the tumbler as a container. The tumbler needs the table as a support. Nature is like the table. The Jivi (individual) is the tumbler. The Divine exists in the form of water (Naara). There is no use for the tumbler unless there is water.

"Naara" is the water that cools the heat generated by the agitations arising from the body, the mind and the life breath (the Adibhoutic, Adhyatmic Adidaivata factors). This "Naara" is Narayana—the Supreme Universal Consciousness. Narayana is present in everyone. If man did not have the cooling power of the Divine, he would not be able to bear the heat generated by the body, the mind and the vital air.

How far is the divine?

Where is this Divine? The shastras say the Divine is twenty feet away from the Brahmachari—the bachelor. The reason is a youth suffering from the fever of adolescence cannot perceive the Divine. He relies on his mental abilities and the power of his muscles and heart. He has no faith in the power of Dharma or God. Hence, one who is remote from Dharma is

also distant from God.

For the Sanyasi (the ascetic), God is said to be three feet away. Wearing the yellow robe and having a shaven head cannot make a man a genuine ascetic. He must have renounced all bodily attachments and all material desires. Although he may have renounced many things, because the sanyasi has still some delusions regarding the body, God is said to be three feet away from him.

Only in the case of the householder (the Grihasta) is God said to be residing in his heart. But even if God dwells in his heart, till the Grihasta sheds vices like greed, hatred and envy the Divine will not be visible to him. Attachment and ego will make him blindfolded.

To secure the grace of the Divine, it is not necessary to seek knowledge, wealth, power or position. Purity of mind alone is enough. Every cell of one's body will be filled with the Divine when God Is worshipped with pure and single-minded devotion. To the self-sacrificing devotee, the Divine will be omnipresent.

[Bhagavan spoke at length on the Bhagavatam episode in which the Lord responds to the desperate appeal of Gajendra—the chief of the elephants—to show how nothing else matters for God when He hears the heartfelt prayer of the devotee. He hastens to save the devotee.]

The Lord is ever ready to answer the prayers of the devotees. But what passes for "devotion" nowadays is only "deep-ocean" (submergence in the ocean of worldly life). People talk about the "Divine", but are interested only in "deep wine". They talk of "compassion", but are concerned only with "fashion". They mouth the word "Co-operation", but indulge only in "operation". Devotion has been reduced to a pompous show.

True knowledge can come only when one is confronted with an extreme moral crisis. This was the situation Arjuna faced when he was placed between the two opposing armies. Parikshit faced a similar crisis when he learnt he had only one week to live. It is at times of such crises that one thinks of God and seeks Divine help.

— *Prasanthi Nilayam, 31-12-1983*

SATHYA SAI VANI:

"Know your Lineage"

"It is everyone's duty to develop faith in God. With the growth of faith, if one leads a life based on Truth, Righteousness and Justice, he will be achieving the purpose of life", observed Bhagavan, in His exhortation to thousands of devotees who had gathered in "Abbotsbury", Madras, on January 19th.

In the course of His discourse, which lasted more than an hour, Bhagavan said:

Dharma and Jnana are two eyes given to man to discover his uniqueness and his divinity. Dharma indicates the right path which every individual, group or society should follow. Dharma destroys the one who violates it. Dharma also protects the one who protects it. The scriptures have declared, "Where there is Dharma there is Victory". There is no Dharma greater than Truth. The edifice of Dharma is erected on the foundation of Truth. Nyaya (justice) is an essential attribute of Dharma. A society or nation or an individual shines with glory only when they adhere to justice. Just as one acquires wealth by the pursuit of agriculture, business or profession, one must acquire merit and divine grace by adhering to Justice (neeti) and Dharma.

However, Dharma alone is not enough. While Dharma leads to right action, it is necessary also to acquire Jnana (spiritual wisdom). True knowledge consists in understanding the unity that underlies the Cosmos. All the sufferings and problems in life arise from the sense of duality. Once the feeling of 'I' and 'mine' is got rid of, consciousness of the all-pervading Divinity will be realised.

Today, it appears as if there is a revival of spiritual activity everywhere. Religious associations are coming up all over the world. But much of the activity of spiritual aspirants is motivated by self-interest. Devotees address prayers to God for the fulfillment of their material desires. All the study of scriptures is of little avail if genuine love of God does not flow spontaneously from the heart. It is only through such love that the Divine can be realised. Love and sacrifice are the two greatest qualities in life. It is on the basis of these qualities that our ancestors dealt with the problems of society so that the individual, the family, the community and the nation may pursue the path of Dharma.

In the world the progeny of Dharma and Adharma are continually growing. Adharma (unrighteousness) married Mithya (delusion). Mithya is neither truth nor untruth. This couple had two children—a son called Ahamkara (egoism) and a daughter called Moha (passion). As both Ahamkara and Moha are the children of Ignorance, with no capacity to judge what is right and wrong, the unholy alliance between them resulted in the birth of Lobha (avarice) and Vanchana (Deceit) as son and daughter. From the wrongful union of these two, Eershya (jealousy) and Krodha (hatred) were born. Out of their union, Bheeti (Fear) and Mrutyu (Death) were born. This lineage is known as Adharma Santhathi, the progeny of unrighteousness. In this lineage, every union was improper.

Now for the progeny of Dharma. Dharma married a great soul called Sathya (Truth). Out of the union of Sathya and Dharma eight children were born. These are Shraddha (Earnestness), Daya (Compassion), Santhi (Peace), Pushti (Prosperity), Santushti (Contentment), Vriddhi (Progress), Lajja (Modesty), Gouravam (Honour) and Mukti (Liberation). It is now for each one to determine to which lineage one belongs. It would seem that ninety percent of the people in the world belong to the line of Mithya and Adharma.

When we practise Dharma, the Divinity in us will manifest itself spontaneously. One should not limit Dharma to mere words. Man is regarded as the very embodiment of righteousness. But

he will not be worthy of this appellation if he does not lead a life of Dharma. Everyone should realise that to attain oneness with divinity is the goal of human life. Hence it is everyone's duty to develop faith in the Divine. With the growth of faith, if one leads a life devoted to Dharma, Sathya and Neeti (Righteousness, Truth and Justice), he will be achieving the purpose of life. The man who does not follow Dharma is a burden on the earth. All the wealth he may accumulate will not accompany him when he leaves the world. It is more important to earn the grace of God than earn all the wealth in the world. Develop the love of God and realise the bliss that is beyond all words.

—*Madras, 19-1-1984*

SADGURU VANI:

"Be exemplars of Sai Ideals"

"Truth, equanimity, absence of conceit and freedom from envy are noble qualities which have to be cultivated from childhood. Suffusing them all is the feeling of love. Children in the Sai fold must develop these qualities and become the moulders of the future of the world," declared Bhagavan, in a stirring call to thousands of Bal Vikas and Pre-Seva Dal students gathered in the Poornachandra Auditorium on December 30.

Thousands of Bal Vikas gurus, who had come for the World Bal Vikas Teachers' Conference, were also present. It was a thrilling sight to see such a large gathering of students and teachers from all parts of the world listening with rapt attention to Bhagavan's message.

Recalling the words of the Shruti, "Shrunvanthu viswe Amruthasya Puthraah" ("Listen, all ye children of Immortality!") Bhagavan said: You, children of the Eternal! You are not lumps of flesh. You are embodiments of the Eternal. You are repositories of Bliss. Your hearts are shrines of the Divine. The whole of Nature is your playground; all the things in it are your play-things. Regard yourselves as masters of the universe and not its bond-slaves.

As long as you are bound to your desires, you cannot escape being subject to the material world. With all his prowess, Ravana could not save himself from disaster because he was a slave to his passions. Once you surrender to the Divine, Nature becomes your servant.

The boys and girls of today should realise this basic truth. They represent the future of humanity. They are the guardians of the nation's culture. The greatness and prosperity of the country depend on them. The nation's future will be determined by how the lives of the young children are shaped. Today the world is plunged in chaos, violence and wickedness. It is for the young people to see that these demoniacal forces are routed.

For accomplishing any objective two things are needed: individual effort (Krishi) and Divine Grace (Kripa). The two are like the negative and positive poles of a magnet. If there is only Divine Grace, but no proper effort on the part of the individual, the object cannot be achieved.

Divine Grace is always there. We need not go far to seek it. The efforts made to secure it are called sadhana.

Every person should possess four important qualities: Santhi (peace), Sathya (Truth), Nirahankara (absence of egoism) and absence of Asuya (envy). These four are essential. Suffusing all the four is Prema (love). These qualities are not got through studies or from a teacher or as a gift from someone. They can be acquired only by one's own effort. These noble qualities have to be developed from childhood itself. Only then will they stand in good stead in later years.

The first quality is Sathyam (Truth). "Sathyameva Jayathe", says the Upanishad. Truth alone triumphs. What is this Truth? It is adherence to what is true in thought, word and deed. Often many untoward situations arise which render such adherence difficult. Children, for instance, out of fear of punishment or scolding by parents or teachers indulge in prevarication or falsehood and avoid admitting the truth. This tendency results in due course in vitiating their entire life by making them lead double lives. Having regard, therefore, to their future, they should learn from their boyhood to admit their mistakes and speak the truth. There is nothing wrong if they are punished by their parents or teachers for their misdeeds. Through such corrective measures, they will learn to behave properly in their later years. If from the beginning you learn to speak the truth, you will find it easy. But once you take to lying, to return to the ways of truth is very difficult. Hence, when you are still young and your minds and hearts are pure and untainted, you must cultivate the habit of sticking to truth. By speaking the truth always, your minds will be filled with good thoughts.

You should not give up truth, whatever difficulties you may encounter, whatever troubles or trials may come your way. This is the lesson to be learnt from the inspiring story of Harishchandra, who won undying fame because of his preparedness to sacrifice everything for upholding truth. Material prosperity or positions of authority may come and go. But the reputation for truth and integrity will last forever. If you install truth and righteousness in your hearts, your lives will become eminently meaningful and worthy.

Next to truth, you must cultivate forbearance. Forbearance endows you with the strength to face "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune". A man without forbearance easily succumbs to reverses and difficulties.

No Room for Envy

Together with truth and forbearance, you have to cultivate freedom from envy (asuya). Envy is like the pest that attacks the root of a tree. It can destroy one's entire life. We may be enjoying many things in life—knowledge, wealth, position, power and the like. But if the virus of envy enters our minds, it can pollute every thing. We should not give place to envy even in the Smallest matter. If a fellow-student scores more marks than you, you should not feel envious. If others do better than yourself, you should feel happy rather than allow yourself to be consumed by envy. If someone is better dressed than yourself or is more wealthy, you should feel that he is enjoying what he has and you should be content and happy with what you have. To be free from

envy is a divine quality. It makes you feel happy over others' happiness or success.

Need for Discipline

And, then, there is Discipline. Without discipline, your life will be beset with pitfalls. Children of Sathya Sai educational institutions must set an example in discipline. In big gatherings, they should observe silence and order and restrain their enthusiasm. If children who have gone through the Bal Vikas course indulge in chatter and frequent clapping of hands, they bring discredit to the movement. Whatever the situation, you should observe strict discipline and obey the orders of your teachers or elders. You should also learn to make sacrifices for the sake of others in need. Sacrifice means going to the help of others to the extent of your capacity. If you are not in a position to help others, you must at least refrain from Doing any harm. Even that is a form of sacrifice (giving up the tendency to do harm to others.)

Lest They Forget

Those in power today are engaged in many activities which inflict burdens on the people and create hardships for them. But they are doing precious little to provide facilities for the improvement of children. Even the so-called developed countries are wasting crores of rupees on all kinds of projects, but they do not pay enough attention to the health and welfare of the younger generation. They try to exploit the young in one way or another for their own selfish purposes, but have no concern for the long-term future of these children. What the big powers spend on armaments for six days will be enough to keep in comfort lakhs of children in a whole year.

It is highly important to take care of the health of children. Good health is the basis of everything else in life. The condition of the children in the backward countries is pitiable. Most of them lack nourishing food, proper clothes and roofs over their heads. They are undernourished and weak and suffer from many ailments. Every day 40,000 children are dying on account of malnutrition in the Third World countries. I wish the affluent people did something to help these hapless children. They should not be satisfied with their own prosperity and welfare. They have a duty towards those less fortunately placed than themselves. They should go to the help of the poor and the weak not in a spirit of condescension or of extending patronage. They must offer help out of genuine sympathy and fellow-feeling. They must regard such sympathy as one of the primary aims of meaningful living.

(Addressing the teachers, Bhagavan said):

"Your mother's home"

Dear teachers! When you teach the children, you must remember that you are engaged in a noble task for the sake of the children entrusted to your care. You must feel that you are educating yourselves when you are educating the children. For instance, when you impart some knowledge to the children, your own understanding of the subject Improves. Even when you study books for teaching the children, you also derive joy from the study. Hence you must always have the feeling that whatever you do for others is in reality a service done to the Divine that resides in every one. When teachers do their duty in this spirit, they will be imbuing the

children with the spirit of universal love. Remember that the children have tender hearts and innocent minds. Only if you fill their hearts with love will the world have genuine peace. You have brought these children from distant places, away from their parents, out of your devotion to Bhagavan. This testifies to your devotion. The children have put up with many difficulties and discomforts out of their devotion to Bhagavan. They have all come to Prasanthi Nilayam, out of their love for Bhagavan. Prasanthi Nilayam is their native home. Here they can experience a bliss they can find nowhere else. Bhagavan is more than a mother for all of them. I want you all to go back with joy and with the feeling that you have spent a blissful period in your mother's home. All the expenses of your stay will be borne by the Sai Trust. You may use the money you have brought for the Bal Vikas activities.

I bless everyone who has contributed to the success of this great conference—the Sai Organisers, the Seva Dal volunteers, the teachers and students—with long life and all health and happiness.

Prasanthi Nilayam, 30-12-83

THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS: I

'Part-Time' Devotion

It is a pity that our devotion to God is conditional. We try to barter our devotion for temporal benefits. As a sacrifice on our part we take vows to offer material gifts to Him. The 'deal' is, of course, unilateral. Yet, the Lord is compassionate. His grace is conferred on every devotee according to his Karma and Sadhana. This is evident from the Hundi collections of the famous temples in India. It is not possible to worship Bhagavan Baba in this conventional fashion of offering allurements of gold, jewels or money. Where can we deposit these, even if we wish to offer them? There is no hundi kept anywhere in Prasanthi Nilayam and no tickets are sold for acceptance of such gifts.

If we recall our first pilgrimage to Puttaparthi we will remember that most of us went there with our "Korikas"—solutions for cure of diseases or seeking solutions for our personal problems. Of course, some of us were drawn by the genuine urge to have the darshan of the Avatar whose mahima we had witnessed and experienced hundreds of miles away from Puttaparthi. We were emotionally charged with reverential awe and devotion. We came and enjoyed the thrill of his darshan and the peaceful atmosphere Prasanthi Nilayam. We returned home with his pictures, lockets and vibhuti packets. We began his worship.

“You come to Puttaparthi, secure a picture and taking it home, begin worshipping it everyday or Thursday, but all that is simple satkarma—a good activity. They won't take you far. You must; always develop satwagunas, virtues and good habits, good attitudes, good characteristics—a good character. Otherwise your life is a chain of pluses and minuses, one canceling the other out, totaling up to a mere zero. When you say, 'Tattwam Asi' 'Thou art That', you must have traits of That which you claim to be—you say 'That' and 'This' are the same, then reviling 'That' or

'revering' 'That' is the same as reviling 'This' or revering 'This' (Baba—Sadhana The Inward Path).

Our devotion and enthusiasm start fading with the passage of time. Because we are not steady, we are drowned in worldly affairs. Like a pendulum in a wall clock our faith in Him wavers. He comes to our rescue and puts us back on the track. He says: "Stick to your faith; do not change your loyalty as soon as something happens or someone whispers. Do not pull down Sai Baba's pictures from the wall and hang some other pictures there at first disappointment. Leave all to Him, let His will be carried out, that should be your attitude. Unless you go through the rough and smooth, how can you be hardened? Welcome the light and shade—the sun and the rain. Do not think that only those who worship a picture or image with pompous paraphernalia are devotees. Whoever walks straight along the moral path, acts as he speaks and speaks as he thinks, melts at another's woe and exults at another's joy—is a devotee, perhaps a greater devotee" (Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. II.)

No doubt, the seed of devotion is sown in our hearts. But is there a favourable environment for our devotion to sprout and grow? What is our progress? Unfortunately our social and family background is discouraging. We do pick up some good habits in our subsequent trips to Prasanthi Nilayam. We say 'Sai Ram' to each other. The primary need is mutual respect and love among the members of the Sai family. Normally Sai family members should greet each other with brotherly smiles whenever we happen to meet the eyes of brother devotees. We should entreat them with the salutary word, 'Sai Ram'. In fact it is a practice of Namasmaraṇa. Our utterance of the word 'Sai Ram' should be sweet, not harsh and not in a very loud voice. Because the name is holy, it is to be said in a humble and reverential manner. There should be no trace of egoism towards persons in low status or young in age when we say 'Sai Ram'. The Sai family etiquette has taught us to use the word 'Sai Ram' whenever it is required to call the attention of any devotee for any favour or for expression of thanks. Whether it is a 'request' or 'thanks', the word 'Sai Ram' replaces the expressions, 'please' and 'thanks'. This is the beginning of our sadhana in the Sai path. We start with Namasmaraṇa.

After several trips to Puttaparthi we learn and try to understand the various spiritual activities of the Sathya Sai organisation and their aims. We enlist ourselves as associate members of a local Sai Seva Samiti. We take part in all activities of the Samiti. Yet our sadhana does not take us far; Bhagavan tells us why it is so. Is our spiritual sadhana a snake-and-ladder game?

"Years of bhajans and meditations have not borne fruit in you. You are where you are. How can fire be struck from a wet matchstick? You may strike all the sticks in the box; you cannot strike fire. Soaked in worldly desires and caught in material entanglements, how can the light of wisdom come into your heads? You cannot generate the fire, jñāna Bhajans, Nagarsankirtans, Japa and other activities cannot yield fruit unless the heart is softened by love and moved into constructive channels of seva"—(Baba)

—S. Narayanan

Sai Family News

Janmotsav at Ibadan (Nigeria):

Over 250 devotees and invited guests gathered on 27th November, 1983, In the newly constructed temple of Sri Sathya Sai Baba Centre, Ibadan, to sing Bhajans and give thanks to Bhagavan Baba.

Dr. (Mrs.) S. Olu Oduntan, speaking on the occasion, said: "We are lucky to have been born into this period when Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has reincarnated. We are also lucky to have tried in our own limited ways to follow His teachings. There are millions who have not got that privilege; many have heard of Him, but are still doubting His Divinity, and are holding themselves back. To this group, my simple advice is, please try Him. Just take one small step towards Him, and taste the blissful nectar of Divinity forever flowing from Him.

"For those of us who have believed—How far has our belief taken us? Have we been able to surrender completely to Him? Have we been able to exterminate Hatred, Lust, Greed, Selfishness, Jealousy, Pride, Feeling of Duality from our everyday life? How do we expect ourselves to be able to experience Baba fully when we have encased ourselves with our egocentric worldly pursuits? When things go wrong in our daily lives, we blame Baba; doubts about Him arise. Many of us in this temple have been wondering silently and even loudly, why we have not yet felt Baba's presence either physically or ethereally here with us; why He hasn't showered us here with vibhuthi and flowers? Why hasn't the garlands around His pictures shaken and broken into piece? The questions are why, why, why hasn't Baba done this or that? But let us ask ourselves, have we fully prepared the ground for Baba? We have constructed this beautiful building, we have brought the chairs, but they are still plied outside; we have not yet arranged the 'Reception Hall' for His coming here physically. Do not be mistaken, Baba is here, here now with us. He is in our hearts within us and around us; the pity is that many of us do not realise this. Many of us have experienced Him in their dreams, beautiful to feel, impossible to describe. Many have even talked with him, and have been blessed physically by Him.

"But we need to join hands together, collectively to usher Him physically into our fold. This we can achieve through selfless Love towards each other, through divine worshipping and through selfless service to the less privileged of our societies".

— *From a devotee.*

A miracle in Milwaukee:

When our members decided to move the location of our Center in June 1983 from the cold damp basement of an old church to the cozy recreation room in the home of a new Sai Baba devotee, a new altar (table) was in order. The actual visualization of the design of the table occurred to me and lo and behold—a few days later there it was being advertised in the Sunday newspaper—a lovely graceful Queen Anne table made of fruitwood with elegant lines, curved legs. It was offered at much less than the regular price. Baba's Altar would be beautiful to behold! Simple but elegant! It was exactly as envisioned—a perfect altar upon which to rest the

incense, flowers, candles, Vibhuti and lace tablecloth! The perfect centerpiece upon which to display Baba's picture!

We celebrated the first birthday party for Baba in our Center on November 17, 1983. Bhajans were sung with great devotion—and there was much love and a sense of great peace, quiet joyfulness and at-one-ment among all present! The table was laden with flowers and an offering to the Lord. A lovely prasad followed the recitation of 108 names of the Lord.

The party was our gift to the Lord and though quite unexpected, the Lord gave us all a very precious gift. For the day after the party, the host in whose home the Center is located noticed something on the table. At first he thought it was dust. But treasure of all treasures—our Lord's gift to us is the manifestation of vibhuti ash on the crevices all around the table. There was also some vibhuti on the legs and side of the table.

Our lovely table is no longer just a table...it is now truly the Altar of the Lord!

—A.M., *Milwaukee Center, U.S.A.*

Birthday Celebrations in Australia:

Australia joined the world family of "kindred souls" in celebrating Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's birthday from Nov. 12 to 23, 1983. Celebrations were organized in different states and took the form of Bhajans, meetings, film shows, distribution of food to the needy. In the State of New South Wales the combined celebrations of all the Sathya Sai Centres—Blue Mountains, Coogee, Greenacre, Homebush, Stratfield, Wahroonga—took place at the Boys' High School, Ashfield, Sydney. In the State of Victoria the celebrations took place at the Prahran Migrant Resource Centre, Melbourne.

The Birthday was celebrated with reverence, adoration, and expressions of gratitude. Speakers at various meetings explained the universal mission and message of Bhagavan. They urged that Swami's teachings should be practised in daily life.

—T. S. Rarnanathan, *Sydney.*

Malaysian Devotees' Aid to Orphanage

In a spectacular event held in the Hilton hotel, Kuala Lumpur, Sai devotees in Malaysia concluded a massive fund raising campaign for the Pure Life Society Orphanage Building fund on 22nd November, 1983. Also for the first time the sound of Bhajans and Devotional Group songs were heard in the massive hall of the largest hotel in the city, which has been the venue of International and national business conferences and political conventions.

The premises of this Home for Orphans at present houses 144 children, ranging from 6 years to 20 years, who live in very cramped quarters. The authorities of the Home had taken up a building programme—but the expected public funds did not materialise. It was at this stage that the SAI devotees of the Sathya Sai Seva Centre, Kuala Lumpur, came into the picture.

At first they organized a "Founders Day programme" for the children at the Kuala Lumpur Town Hall. A team of SAI devotees trained the children for dances, songs and plays portraying Human Values. It was the first time in more than a decade that the children were given an opportunity to show to the public the extent of talent available in the Home. The event was a success. Subsequently the devotees initiated a "Study Circle in Spirituality" for the elder children of the Home teaching them basic concepts of various religions—so valuable in a multi-racial, multi-religious society like Malaysia. A weekly "Education in Human Values" programme was started for the younger children by one of the Bal Vikas Gurus—Mrs. Saras Selvanayagam.

In August 1983, the SAI centre decided to help the Home in the fund raising campaign. An Organizing committee composed entirely of SAI devotees was formed and a prodigious target of \$400,000 was set. A firm condition that was imposed by the Centre on all devotees was that *Bhagavan Baba's Name should not be used in any form whatsoever to solicit funds.*

By a strange coincidence the only day available for booking the Hilton Ballroom was 22nd November, the eve of Swami's birthday. For the devotees this was a clear sign that a home for orphans was what Swami wanted as a birthday gift.

The Prime Minister of Malaysia agreed to be the Guest of Honour for the occasion. A prominent businessman and member of Parliament, a Malaysian of Chinese origin, agreed to be the Patron for the Charity Nite. The Chairman of the Organizing Committee was a Malaysian of Indian origin. A fully multi-racial effort for a worthy cause.

The 22nd November saw a gala event, with the Ballroom packed with more than 1,200 participants. While the Charity Nite itself was held in the name of the Pure Life Society, outside the Ballroom a "Donation of Liquid Love" (blood donation) programme was underway under the banner of the "Sri Sathya Sai Central Council of Malaysia". The children of the Pure Life Home, trained by Bal Vikas Gurus, presented dances that delighted all!

The Prime Minister, Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad, in his message congratulating the organisers, said: "Philanthropic and good deeds are required from those who have. This requisition is not only made by all religions, but by the humanity in all men, and is enhanced by the awareness that many in our society are unfortunate and need help."

Mr. Tan Koon Swan, M.P., said: "The Sathya Sai Organization is multi-racial in character, universal in religious concept and is based on the belief that basically all religions lead to the common belief in God, even though their outward forms could be different. This organization engages itself actively in spiritual pursuits through service."

The President of the Pure Life Society, Sister Mangalam, warmly commended the relentless efforts of Sai devotees to raise funds for the orphanage building.

The Chairman of the Organizing Committee, Mr. J. Jegathesan, informed all present of a miracle that had helped it to meet the target set by the Committee. On the morning of 22nd November,

the total donations stood at \$312,000—far short of the 400,000 target. A mental prayer was sent to Bhagavan that He should help them to meet the target. At 10.30 a.m. on the morning of 22nd an accidental phone call was made by the Chairman to a friend in London. This friend expressed his appreciation of the work being done for the orphanage and offered to raise 100,000 as contributions from himself and his friends. Thus by 11.00 a.m. the target of 400,000 was met and exceeded.

After the Charity Nite Dinner programme, the SAI devotees held a Bhajan in the Hilton itself. "Happy Birthday! SAI" was sung, a cake was cut, the children presented a dance programme on the Dasavatharam and the bhajan concluded at 2.00 a.m. on 23rd November 1983. The happy group of SAI Devotees thanked Bhagavan for the success of the event—an event that none would forget for a long, long time.

—J. J., Kuala Lumpur

Sarva Dharma Emblem for Malaysia

This is the new Sarva Dharma Emblem to be used in Malaysia, as approved by Bhagavan. Instead of the symbols of the five major religions, the emblem carries the Five Sai Principles—Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa—in five panels, with translations in the three languages of Malaysia—Malay, Chinese and Tamil.

BHAGAVAN IN TAMIL NADU:

Sai Transformation in Rural Areas

Tens of thousands of Sai devotees, who had been eagerly looking forward to Bhagavan's tour of Tamil Nadu in January, were delighted by Swami's Darshan, Sparshan and Sambhashan during a 10-day tour, which covered, besides Madras City, six districts: Chingleput, Trichy, Madurai, Coimbatore, Periyar and Salem. During the tour, Bhagavan had magnificent reception from devotees and could see for Himself the very good work done by Sai organisations in the areas of rural development and spiritual and social service to community.

Wherever he went, Swami found the crowds lined up in a disciplined and orderly way and offering pranams to Bhagavan without pushing each other or rushing to touch Swami's feet. Swami visited several villages among the three hundred in Tamil Nadu State which have been "adopted" by the State Samiti for all round development. In each of these villages Swami found the roads and houses kept neat and clean and the cheerful faces of young and old greeting Him with devotion.

The Sai organisers in each district promoted local initiative while rendering service to the villages according to their most urgent needs. Thus, where a village needed a school, a school was provided. Where it lacked water supply, they dug a well. Where it needed roads, roads were

constructed with the cooperation of the villagers. In all the adopted villages the accent was on education, health and hygiene. Bal Vikas classes were conducted in all the villages and bhajans were taught to the villagers.

In one village the efforts of Sai Seva Dal workers to wean the villagers from the drink habit led to the complete closure of the toddy shop. The village women told Bhagavan how their family life and income had improved as a result of the elimination of drink. In one village, Bhagavan was greeted by a group of women carrying vessels filled with sweet water from a drinking well dug by the Sai volunteers. Most other wells in the village had brackish water.

Bhagavan distributed clothes to disabled persons in all the villages he visited. Some clothes for children affected by polio came from Bal Vikas children who had attended the World Children's Rally and who were allowed by Bhagavan to retain the money they had brought for the expenses of their stay in Prasanthi Nilayam. The children decided to use this money for presenting dresses to handicapped brothers and sisters.

In Madras City

Leaving Brindavan at 2 p.m. on the 18th, Bhagavan and party reached "Sundaram", Madras, at 7.30 p.m. On the way, Bhagavan was given rousing receptions near Chittoor, Walajah and some other places. At "Sundaram" a vast gathering of devotees had been waiting for Swami's arrival since the afternoon. Bhagavan was received with Poorna-kumbham and Mangala Vadyam by the State President and members of the State Trust and other devotees. Bhagavan gave darshan to all the devotees and blessed them.

The next morning (19th January) there was Nagarsankirtan, in which thousands of devotees participated and had Darshan of Bhagavan at "Sundaram". As it was the anniversary day of the opening of "Sundaram", after the morning Bhajan, Narayana Seva was organised for nearly a thousand persons.

A gathering of over twenty thousand persons from all parts of Madras and from outside assembled at "Abbotsbury" in the evening to listen to Bhagavan's Divine discourse. Maj. Gen. Mahadevan, President of the Tamil Nadu State Samiti, welcoming Bhagavan on behalf of the people of Madras City and members of Sathya Sai Seva Organisation in Tamil Nadu, explained the Avataric mission of Bhagavan and exhorted everyone to participate in the furtherance of this mission by rendering service with love and promoting harmony in the community.

Bhagavan then delivered His discourse (which is published separately).

Visit to a Slum

On the 20th, Bhagavan visited a slum area at Thirumangalam, which has been adopted by the Madras Seva Samiti for community service. Bhagavan blessed the large gathering of devotees assembled there and paid a visit to the medical unit run by the Sai organisation at Annanagar. Bhagavan distributed clothes to poor and needy persons and presented crutches to disabled persons at the medical unit. Before returning to "Sundaram", Bhagavan visited a small Mariamma temple which is being renovated by the Sai Samiti. The evening Bhajan at

"Sundaram" was followed by a devotional music programme by Smt. M.L. Vasanthakumari and party who rendered the songs of Thyagaraja and Purandaradasa.

On the 21st, after morning Bhajans at "Abbotsbury", Bhagavan visited Nandivaram village, one of the villages adopted by the Tamil Nadu Seva Samiti. Bhagavan was deeply impressed with the devotion and discipline of the villagers. He distributed clothes to disabled persons and called upon the villagers to maintain unity and lead a righteous life with faith in God. He urged them to live in harmony without regard to distinctions of caste, creed or language.

In the evening, Bhagavan granted Darshan to a vast gathering of devotees at "Abbotsbury" and witnessed an impressive cultural programme presented by Bal Vikas children on the theme of "Unity of Faith."

On the 22nd, Bhagavan received a group of Bal Vikas Gurus and distributed prizes to Bal Vikas children who had obtained the first three ranks in All-India examinations. Bhagavan also addressed nearly 750 teachers from the Corporation Schools in Madras who had received Education in Human Values. Bhagavan said that the programme of education in human values was designed to fill a vital gap in the present curriculum in schools. While children were taught academic subjects, they did not receive any instruction in ethics or religion. The education in Human Values helped to improve the character of the children. One of the teachers said that the training they had received had completely changed their attitude to education and their work as teachers.

That afternoon Bhagavan visited the "Sathya Sai Nivas" at Perambur, where a large number of devotees had gathered. He paid a visit to the Trade Union College run by the Southern Railway Employees Sangha and inaugurated the industrial training centre, for which Swami had given a gracious donation during His previous visit. A large gathering of railway workers was blessed by Bhagavan.

Leaving Madras by plane on the 23rd Bhagavan alighted at Trichy, where an immense gathering had assembled to have Darshan of Bhagavan and receive His blessings. From Trichy Bhagavan proceeded to Madurai by car, where He gave His benediction to a gathering of many thousands. Swami stayed at the former residence of Dr. Chari which has been donated by him to the Sai organisation to be used as a centre for Sai activities in the Madurai District. After lunch Swami and party left for Kodaikanal. Swami had a comparatively restful period here although many devotees assembled early in the morning, despite the severe cold, to have Darshan of Swami.

Leaving Kodaikanal on the 26th afternoon, Swami left for Mettur, visiting en route Kangayam, Perundurai, and Chennimalai. At each of these places, Swami was received by large gatherings of devotees who had been awaiting Swami's arrival, reciting Bhajans for hours. Swami reached Mettur Dam at 9 p.m. On the 27th morning, Swami left for Salem where a large meeting had been arranged. Here, again, the devotion and discipline of the gathering impressed everyone.

Swami returned from Salem to Brindavan via Krishnagiri, where the local devotees accorded a rousing reception to Him.

Solace in a Sai Retreat

“Open the gates of wisdom.
Tear the veil of ignorance.
Enter the abode of divine bliss
And rest in peace forever”—Sathya Sai.

I am always happy, always blissful... no worries or concerns can enter my state of bliss...for it is constant, unchanging."

These words of Sathya Sai Baba created an atmosphere akin to bliss one Saturday morning in the early hush of dawn, when a group of devotees gathered in the upper Ojai Valley to spend the entire day chanting, praying, meditating, and listening to discourses on Sathya Sai Baba.

Inside a converted barn transformed into a place of worship, the Suprabhatam opened the morning:

“Awake, Oh Lord of the entire world
So that the world may attain fortune...
Awake, Oh Lord of compassion.
We pray for a glorious daybreak
Blessed by Thy wakefulness."

The Sanskrit words, followed by the above English translation, penetrated the emotional world of this writer. Before coming to the retreat, I had wondered how to face my sorrow over a broken relationship.

As the chanting ceased and the bhajan songs began, the words of Sai Baba came to mind:

“Sorrow springs from egoism, the feeling that you do not deserve to be treated so badly, that you are left helpless. When egoism goes, sorrow disappears."

Sai Baba adds that quiet acceptance is the best armour against anxiety, and that the singing of bhajans helps to alleviate it. As joyous melodies filled the hall, it was love that pierced the veil of sorrow, slowly opened the gateway into an expanding, inner universe, where springs of refreshing waters spilled out of the mouth of song.

As Love became real, as Sai Baba's presence was felt, I thought ... Love is the guiding principle of the universe, and it will never let me down...streaming through every living thing, Love is the song we sing; it is within the friends who sometimes bring us pain. Now, they too had become...the Beloved.

The bhajan melodies merged into morning sunrise, as the sun sent its chorus into the hall. The teachings of Sai Baba stress that, by chanting and singing of divine virtues such as humility, compassion, charity, self-control, the devotee is brought nearer to God, and every kind discontent may be dissolved.

As the songs ceased, and silence filled the hall, the words of Sri Chaitanya recited:

"Oh Name, stream down in moonlight on the lotus-heart.
Opening its cup to knowledge of Thyself.
Oh self, drown deep in the waves of His bliss,
Chanting His Name continually,
Tasting His nectar at every step
Bathing in His Name, that bath for weary souls"

Bathing in an intense feeling of love, I rose, followed the devotees to the breakfast area. Love is the key, the door, the passageway to liberation...these thoughts seemed to give me the courage to face life anew. Gazing out on the golden ridges of the Topa Topa Mountains, I remembered Sai Baba's words:

"Life is love, enjoy it;
Life is a challenge, meet it;
Life is a song, sing it;
Life is a dream, realise it;
Life is a game, play it."

—J. E., California

Sutra Vahini

17

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Sarvathra Prasiddhopodesaath

"Everywhere, the well-known Entity is the one that is taught." In all statements contained in the Vedantic texts, the Upanishads, the familiar and easily recognisable expression, Brahman, is the one that is mentioned and elaborated. In the direction, "One should meditate by becoming calm" the object of meditation is therefore the entity indicated by "All this is verily Brahman" and not the individualised Self. Commentators too upheld this interpretation.

"All this is verily Brahman" (Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma) is the axiom with which the Upanishadic exhortation to meditate starts. The Shruti or Vedic revelation is that the Cosmos or Creation is Brahman; for it originates in, is sustained by and merges into Brahman. It is not distinct or separable from Brahman.

When viewed without the twin distortions of like and dislike, love and hate, all forms, all effects, all causes are experienced as Brahman only. But, when the vision is affected by love or hate, each form, each effect and cause, appears different from the rest. Hence the advice to meditate after attaining calm. When feelings are calm and balanced, the many are experienced as the one. An agitated mind can never have a single vision. It runs along contrary lines. So, it experiences the world, nature and the Cosmos as separate from Brahman. Such vision creates division. Calm vision reveals unity. As the vision, so the impression, the view of the world.

The head of the family is one person only. But he is viewed by each member of the family from a different point of view. So he is addressed differently, as 'father' by the son, 'husband' by the wife, 'father-in-law' by the daughter-in-law, 'grandfather' by the grandson, 'elder brother' by the younger; the One is thought of in many forms, because of the variety of relationships assumed.

So, to, seekers and thinkers who are in various levels of awareness and attainment express and experience the One in different forms and ways. Besides, the attitudes of approach and adoration also cause differences in the experience of the One. Some identify and posit the individualised Atma or the Jivi; some adore the active all-knowing Almighty Easwara, God; some concretise the All-pervasive Energy, Shakti, and others have as the goal they seek, the Cosmic Person, the Purusha. But, the Jivi cannot claim omniscience and omnipotence. So long as it is bound by its self-imposed ignorance and egoism, the Jivi cannot know and experience the all-pervasive, all-comprehensive Brahman.

(To be continued)

Tell me that God is there

He is in the Sun that rises in the East
He is in the Wind that blows through the trees
He is in the butterfly that dances on the flowers
He is in the waves that roll on the sea

He is in the snow that falls from the sky
He is in Happiness to cheer the sad ones
He is in Beauty to brighten our lives
He is in Truth to guide us there

He is in Man the crown of creation
He is Love for Sai is Love.

—C. L. Quek, Singapore.

The Form and the Insignia

Although Bhagavan repeatedly reminds devotees that all forms and all names are His and that one form should not be regarded as superior or inferior to another, many devotees are apt to forget this essential teaching. On such occasions, Bhagavan has His own way of making the devotee see the light.

For instance, once some friends of mine suddenly decided to go into a Siva Temple which we were passing by. I was given to understand that it was an auspicious day. But, according to Swami, the day we spend in the contemplation of God is the only Holy day. This point was stressed in the Bhagavatam through Prahlada. Anyway I went with my friends through the milling crowds and stood at the side railings near the sanctum sanctorum. As the idol was somewhat in a lower position, the heads of the devotees on either side of the railings were blocking the view of Lord Siva. Even my height of 5'—8" did not help me to have a glimpse. I resorted to Dhyanam, closing my physical eyes.

When I was trying to mentally picturise the Siva Lingam with the symbol of three sacred horizontal vibhuti marks, I was getting the picture of 'Seshasayi' of Srirangam (the Lord Ranganatha reclining on the serpent Adishesha.) Twice, thrice I repeated the exercise, but the picture did not alter. Then I prayed: "Swami, I wanted to visualise Lord Siva right at this moment, but why are you giving the vision of Sriranganatha? I want the horizontal Vibhuti lines not the vertical Vaishnavite lines at present." That very instant, I heard the familiar voice of Bhagavan, with His intriguing smile, saying "Yes, Yes. I know you are going to pose this question and hence this pose. Otherwise, I would have given darshan as Lord Venkateswara in a vertical manner. See what will happen to the namam of Vishnu if he lies down as Sriranganatha. Will they not become horizontal Namam, which you are seeking for?" and suddenly His voice became stern and serious. "Am I not telling you repeatedly to give up these names and forms and meditate on the formless!" That very moment the namam of Lord Sriranganatha began revolving and became pure white light with increasing brilliance. I lost all sense of time and place and stood there perhaps for sometime till the Archaka brought me back to consciousness by saying: 'Sir, please take Arati', holding the flame in front of me. So with the Light inside me and that outside I opened my eyes!

Let that Eternal Light be installed in us by Bhagavan Baba, who is always within us, around us and beside us.

—Dr. M. S. Ramakrishna Rao, Chithoor

The Highway

He, the Master of our waking
And Director of our dreaming,
Sends us symbols full of power,
Lighting up our darkest hour,
Flooding with a wealth of meaning
Fitful nights and dreary days.
As, forgetful though we rove
Through the corridors of time,
He opens doors of truth sublime.
Our dreams become a precious trove
Of treasures, pointing out our way,
Like this vision of delight,
When God began my heart to steal,
As I was wondering what was real
Long before I heard His Name,
About the time He did proclaim
That He had come to lead us all

Back to our Home, whate'er befall:—
A mighty highway to the stars,
I saw, where trod a blissful throng—
All kinds, conditions, young and old,
From every race on earth, it seemed,
Their faces bathed in radiant gold—
A Light from all eternity
That drew them to felicity,
Enfolding them in mutual love.
Onward and upward thus they streamed
Towards the Source, and as I dreamed,
I knew that this would come about.

And now I know without a doubt
The Tree of Life, the Earth, the Sky
And all of us are One with Sai.

— *Helen Heubi*

‘Zul-Jalali Wal-Ikrami’ The Lord of Majesty and Bounty¹

(On seeing Baba at the Bal Vikas Rally, 29-12-1983, at Prasanthi Nilayam—a Sufi View)

Once more, yet once more,
The Lord of Majesty and Bounty,
O Beautiful, O Adorable,
You have drawn to Yourself ,
Your mighty creation.
Ocean-like prismatic, wave upon wave,
They girdle the silent hills,
Like pearl-strings in Time's open palm.
Bubbling with Your Love they gather,
To gaze at Your Face—
Lovely beyond description;
clasp to hearts the hand
Raised in benediction and the promise:
“Peace—a word from Thy Lord,
Most Merciful.”²

Thus it must have been
At that primordial meeting
When You held in Your Hand
The yet uncreated mankind
And quietly said with a look of love
"Am I not Your Lord?"
And we affirmed in one voice
"Yes! Yes! You are.”³

Age after age, Beloved,
We respond to this bond,
When You hold us together
Closest to Your Heart,
Closed-eyed we repeat
"Yes, Our Lord,
Thee we adore;
Guide us on the Path⁴
That leads only to You."

(Mrs) Zeba Bashiruddin.

¹ *One of the nineteen names of God in Islam*

² *The Quran XXXVI: 58*

³ *The primordial Covenant described in the Quran: "When Thy Lord drew forth from the children of Adam—from their loins—their descendants and made them testify concerning themselves (saying): "Am I not your Lord ?"—They said "Yes! We do testify." [VII-1711]*

⁴ *Opening verses from the Quran*

The Maker of Dreams

When first I heard of Sathya Sai
I seemed to waken with a sigh
From a sleep of centuries,
A sleep of frenzied fancies
And haunting memories,
Bejewelled with a few Great Dreams,
And peopled with heroes
Who vanished at daybreak.

Dreaming and waking merged in one,
When first I saw His glowing face,
And, bathing in His flowing grace,
I knew my richest dreams come true.
Not all their heroes vanish at daybreak.
One remains constant in all worlds,
The Same in all His guises.

—H.H., Geneva

SANKRANTI SANDESH:

"The Most Precious Period"

"Dedicate yourselves to the cultivation of good qualities and righteous action and develop that pure devotion which will redeem your life," observed Bhagavan Baba, in an exhortation to students on Sankranti day (January 13, 1984) at the Poorna-chandra Auditorium. As the day marked the conclusion of the Sports Festival in the Sathya Sai Institute, Bhagavan called upon the students to look upon life itself as a battle between the forces of good and evil and to regard the years between sixteen and thirty as the best period for utilising all their faculties and powers to cultivate virtues and lead exemplary lives.

Bhagavan said:

In one's life, the years sixteen to thirty are the most precious. This is the period when all one's faculties and energies are at their peak. Hence one should strive to make the best use of this period. Noble qualities like self-confidence, sacrifice, aspiration and courage must be acquired then. If this time of one's life is wasted, there will only be failures in later years. Bad thoughts, bad practices and backbiting should be eschewed altogether. During this crucial period, one should try to understand the purpose of life and concentrate one's efforts on achieving one's

ideals. No spiritual effort is possible when one has dissipated one's physical and mental abilities. It is a pity that young people misuse these precious years of their lives by falling into bad ways. Swami expects them to develop all their human endowments and lead exemplary lives which will be an object lesson to others.

What we witness today in the world, however, is a great deal of play-acting. All appear as devotees and all proclaim their spirit of sacrifice. Everyone declares himself or herself as a sadhaka (spiritual aspirant). Every believer claims that he is seeing God. One must enquire whether it is the so-called devotee who is seeking God or whether it is God who is searching for a true devotee. Is the sadhaka serving God or is God serving the sadhaka—that is the question. The service that the sadhaka is doing is trivial. Offering to God what God has provided is like offering to the Ganga water from the Ganga. The truth is it is God who is rendering service to the devotee. All the capacities given by God should be used in the service of the Divine. There is no need to go in quest of God. God is all the time searching for the genuine and steadfast devotee. The sadhaka is approaching God for the fulfillment of his desires. He is after petty and transient benefits. He does not seek to understand the nature of true love or the divinity that underlies everything. Today's sadhaka proves himself to be a self-deluded being with no moral commitment.

The real criterion of moral conduct is harmony between one's profession and one's practice. Morality consists in acting up to the rules of right conduct prescribed by society at a particular time and place for an individual or group. If there is no connection between what one professes in words and his actions, morality cannot exist.

Three Great Values:

Of all human values, three are most important. The foremost is love of God. Where there is love there is sacrifice. There arises purity of heart. There should be a fusion of love, sacrifice and purity. They are not mere human qualities. They constitute vital organs of a human being. They are as essential for a human being as the head, hands and legs for the body. Without these attributes, no one is a complete human being.

Just as the sun can be seen only by his own light, the love of the Divine can be acquired only by Divine Grace and not by trivial spiritual practices. These practices (sadhanas) are invariably motivated selfish objectives. There is an element of selfishness in every service which man undertakes. All undertakings are tainted by egoism or the acquisitive urge. Only when the sadhaka's heart is filled with the Divine, will he be able to entertain pure and sacred love.

Students must bear in mind that their life is determined by their actions, whether they are good or bad. The other determining factor is Time. Time is all-powerful. It is not subject to any one. All are subject to It. It rolls on without beginning or end. Rama's exile, Ravana's death, emperor Bali's descent to the nether world, Sibi's supreme sacrifice, the ordeals of the Pandavas—are all examples of the power of Time over the destinies of men. It is only when one's actions are harmonised with the dictates of Time can one enjoy the type of bliss described as Triputi. For this, the proper control of the mind, which is the cause of both happiness and

sorrow, is necessary. This control cannot be achieved by merely reading the scriptures or practising certain rituals. Mere scholarship or the acquisition of knowledge about the external world will not lead to internal peace. If one is engaged all the time in the acquisition of Information, when is he to undertake the task of Transformation?

The Game of Life

The games you play may be compared to the Mahabharata war. On one side were ranged the forces of evil—the Kauravas—and on the other the powers of good—the Pandavas. They played the game of Life with empire as the football. Till the end of the battle, Lord Krishna was the sole chief for the righteous Pandavas. The wicked Kauravas lost their commanders one after the other in the battle. The Pandavas, who had completely surrendered to Krishna, achieved ultimate victory. The contest could be described as one between the evil qualities of Desire, Hatred, Envy, Pride, etc. on the one side and good qualities like Truth, Dharma, Tranquility, Non-violence and Love on the other. The body is the battlefield. The captain of one team is the embodiment of good qualities. The captain of the other is the embodiment of mundane desires. There can only be defeat for those who adhere to ever-changing, worldly desires. Only those who attach themselves to the unchanging, eternal Divine can hope for enduring success in life. Gandhari, the wife of Dhritarashtra and mother of the Kauravas, and Shakuni, were children of the same mother. Gandhari was like a vessel of nectar. Shakuni was a very clever man, but full of poison. Acting on the advice of Shakuni, the Kauravas lost their kingdom and everything else. No one should feel proud about his cleverness or intelligence or about his ability to win laurels in studies. Good character and right thinking are more valuable than scholastic achievements or intellectual abilities. Utilise your intelligence and thoughts for achieving that bliss which comes from leading a life of righteousness and goodness. Enter on a life dedicated to ideals.

Today is called Sankranti—the day when the sun starts on his northward journey by entering the Makara sign of the Zodiac. "Samyag Kraanthi iti San-kraanthi" (Change for the good is Sankranti.) We must transform ourselves completely. Sankranti reveals not only the beauty of Nature but the resplendent beauty of the Divine. The Divine will not consider your status or position, your pomp and show. It is beyond the reach of knowledge and intelligence. It can be secured only by pure love (Prema). The Lord is bound only by the intensity of the Bhakta's devotion. Devotion is the cord that binds God. Bhajans and prayers should not emanate only from the lips. They should flow from the heart. The Ganges of true devotion arises from the devotee's heart. Everything that is associated with divinity has its origin in the heart. Hence the heart should be emptied of all evil and kept pure and unsullied by right action. It may not be possible to escape the consequences of one's good and bad actions. But even a mountain of sin can be wiped out by winning the Grace of the Divine. Hence one should strive to earn the love of God, which is all-embracing and all-powerful. From this Sankranti day, dedicate yourselves to the cultivation of good qualities and righteous action and develop that pure devotion which will redeem your life. This is my message and my benediction for you.

—Prasanthi Nilayam, 13-1-1984

"The Ten Commandment"

The following are the Ten Commandments inscribed below the figures of the Dasavatars at Dharmakshetra, Bombay.

Matsya: Recover the treasure of wisdom from the deluge of doubt.

Kurma: Live unattached as master of here and hereafter.

Varaha: Carry the burden of duty on two tusks: Devotion and Discipline.

Narasimha: Do not allow your ego to hide the glory of God.

Vamana: Offer yourself at His feet and gain the feet of the Lord.

Parasurama: Learn the lesson of surrender or suffer.

Rama: What one meets in life Destiny; how one meets life is self-effort.

Krishna: Strive to become an instrument in my hands.

Buddha: Perfect yourself so that you may aid others to perfect themselves.

Kalki: Build the mansion of Life on Truth, Morality, Peace and Love.

—V. V. Rayudu, Bombay

Three disciplines are essential, to become aware of Divinity in all and in the Avatar: No activity should be taken up with individual aggrandizement in view; intellect and emotion must be directed to the revelation of the resident in the heart, Atma; every act should be done sincerely, with love, and no yearning for acquiring personal profit, fame or benefit. Above all, listen to the voice of God within. As soon as one contemplates a wrong act, the voice warns, protests, and advises giving up. It pictures the shame that has to be suffered, the punishment that has to be faced, the disgrace that it entails. It would appear as if there are two personalities inside you, the one that prompts and the one that prevents. The warning signal, the timely advice, is given by Jangam in the Angam. It reminds you of the absurdity and the danger inherent in the identification of the self with the body, it encourages you to discriminate between right and wrong; it is God, enthroned in every heart as the highest wisdom, the Prajnana, the Eternal Witness, whom you can contact easily in the depths of Dhyana.

—Baba

Wondrous Love

In the desert of my life,
You sprang up like an oasis, saying:
"Why fear when I am here?"
When my eyes were filled with tears,
My prayers cried for Thy help
you appeared before me like a Rainbow.
When I was left alone in the bitterness of my life
you entered my heart as a spring of nectar saying:
"I am the ocean of Love."
When none knew me rightly
I knew not what to be;
You said to me:
"When you are misunderstood by everyone God will understand you".
When I was dismayed not knowing
What my path ought to be
I heard your voice:
"Take one step and I shall take a hundred steps towards you".
When my senses mastered me
And time passed by meaninglessly
You revealed to me that
"I am you".
When I could do nothing that could please you
Thou showered thy love and grace and said
"Feel pure so that you can act pure."
When I was held in fetters of bondage
You showered your grace and led me
 slowly towards the path of Divinity
When I was deluded by darkness
Thou kindled the Light of Hope revealin the truth
"The Light is in me and I am the Light."
What can I give Thee, O Lord!
nothing is mine, All is Thine
With eternal prayer I beseech Thee
May I be always worthy of Thy love and grace.

— *M. Subbalakshmi, Final B.A., S.S I H.L. Anantapur Campus*

"Parents Should Not Pamper Children"

"If innocent children go astray and take to bad ways, it is their parents who are primarily to blame," observed Bhagavan, in a discourse at the Kunwarba Auditorium in Brindavan on February 5. The meeting, which was attended by a large number of parents of students of the Sathya Sai College Hostel, was held as part of the two-day Hostel Day celebrations.

The entire hostel area was attractively decorated for the occasion, with multicoloured illuminations showing the hostel building in a blaze of lights. A notable feature of the celebrations was the attendance of a large number of parents, who had come from different parts of the country on special invitation. Arrangements had been made for their stay. All of them were very pleased with the opportunity provided for them to witness the celebrations and acquaint themselves with life in the hostel.

Bhagavan, in the course of His address, dwelt on the basic aims of true education and urged that the accent should be on the development of character and right values and not solely on the acquisition of knowledge and skills for earning a living or for getting on comfortably in life. Educated persons should try to see how they can promote the progress of the country by the use of their knowledge and talents.

Bhagavan said: Parents today tend to lavish too much affection on their children. But such affection alone is not enough. There should be control also over the children. There should be both "love" and "law". Only when both love and restraint are present will the love prove beneficial. For all the evil habits of children, who are naturally innocent and uninformed, the parents are primarily responsible. They do not make any efforts to teach proper ways of behaviour to the children. They pamper the children by giving them money freely. They want their boys to become high officers, to earn large incomes, acquire wealth and lead a life of comfort and ease. But they do not consider for a moment how they should make the children realise the need to develop good qualities. It is up to parents to teach the children to cultivate right attitudes and moral qualities. To encourage them merely to get on in life is not proper. Parents should feel happy only when they see their sons leading blameless lives, acquiring a good name and behaving properly. To rejoice merely at the birth of a son is foolish.

A Lesson from Mahabharata

Dhritarashtra had a hundred sons-the Kauravas. He knew very well that they were a wicked lot, pursuing bad ways. He knew also that his brother's sons, the Pandavas, were wedded to Dharma (Righteousness) and that the Kauravas were inflicting many indignities and injuries on the Pandavas. Although Vyasa told Dhritarashtra several times that, out of his misplaced affection for his sons, he should not allow the latter to persecute the Pandavas, the doting father did not heed Vyasa's advice. Consequently, he got involved in many sinful actions. Vyasa warned Dhritarashtra : "Dhritarashtra! I do not say that for you to love your sons is wrong. But you must know what kind of son you should love. Not knowing this, you are behaving like a

country. "By his blind infatuation for his sons, what is it that Dhritarashtra achieved? In the final outcome, he had no one even to perform his funeral obsequies. The righteous Pandavas had to render this service to him.

It is not wrong to love children. But you (parents) should learn how to love them. Whenever the children go astray, wittingly or unwittingly, parents should hasten to correct their faults and bring them to the right path. The obligations of parents do not end with providing food, schooling and knowledge of worldly matters. The children should also be provided with right values. They should not be made to think that the acquisition of wealth is the be-all and end-all of life. Wealth does not accompany one when he leaves the world. Wealth is necessary only for meeting one's essential needs. Too much wealth is an embarrassment like an over-size shoe. Too little of it is likely to be painful, like a tight fitting shoe. So, it is desirable to have only that amount of wealth that is adequate for one's basic needs. It is deplorable that today, in the mad pursuit of money, people are forgetting all human qualities.

Ideals for Students

Young people today are totally oblivious to the importance of dedicating their lives to great ideals. It is up to the parents to endeavour to make their children lead purposeful lives. Teachers, on their part, should set an example and inculcate in their wards right values. Only a lighted lamp can serve to light other lamps. If teachers lack idealism how can they inspire their students to lead ideal lives?

People talk about the spiritual life, but rarely practise it. They often act contrary to it. The reason is the lack of virtues. Without good qualities, all other attributes are useless. It is like pouring water in a pot full of holes. When the heart is oozing with bad thoughts and evil desires, how can you fill it with pure aspirations?

Governor Banerjee spoke about success and mentioned that "success begets success." But how is success to be achieved and what is the success you should aim at? The Gita says: "Saddhaavaan labhathe jnanam". ("The persevering seeker secures wisdom.") This means that without perseverance and earnestness no success can be achieved. You must take interest in the path shown by elders. You must devote attention to the knowledge taught by the ancients. You must pay heed to what the elders say. If you have no earnestness (shraddha) you cannot achieve anything, whatever other qualifications you may have.

Prema and Seva

Despite eons of evolution and considerable progress in scientific knowledge, man is not able to make significant progress towards the Divine because of absence of strenuous striving in the spiritual sphere. Without spiritual practice, reading religious books and listening to spiritual discourses have no value. Study of the Upanishads and Shastras and reciting God's names may be good acts in themselves. But, if there is no love, which is the basis of all spiritual sadhana, they are of no use. They are like buttermilk. But the love of God is like well-boiled milk. Everything is contained in it—all proteins and vitamins. Love reinforces one's physical, mental and spiritual

Dhyana and Japa without love are lifeless rituals. Love which expresses itself in service to all living things is the best expression of the love of God. There is no true devotion without such love. It is love which is unchanging and which does not mind any sacrifice in serving others. When we have students filled with such love and imbued with the spirit of service, the nation will achieve unalloyed prosperity, peace and progress. Learn, first of all, to honour your parents. Be respectful to elders and heed their advice. Carry out the behests of your teachers. Place your trust in God.

Faith in God

Without faith in God, all other possessions are of no avail. Take, for instance, the case of Duryodhana. He was the lord of an empire. Both Duryodhana and Arjuna went to Krishna before the Kurukshetra battle. Duryodhana wanted only Krishna's army on his side. Arjuna was content to have Krishna alone on his side. This was enough to secure for him victory in the war. All the armies Duryodhana had were of no avail. Duryodhana relied on the clever strategies of Shakuni. He had no faith in the divine intelligence of Krishna. The lesson that students should learn from this episode is that they must rely, not on their intellectual cleverness but on the guidance of their higher intelligence, which transcends ordinary reason and thinking. They should seek the support of That which sustains everything in creation.

Students should cultivate the quality of forbearance (sahana). Whatever you do, do it without any selfish motive. You spend a great deal of time to acquire some material object or other. How much time do you devote to thoughts of God? You shed tears profusely for getting sensuous pleasures. Do you shed a single tear for experiencing God? How, then, can you realise God?

Spirituality and Science

Today, manifestation of Bhakti (devotion) has become a mass-produced manufactured product. But are the devotees practising what they profess? Without practice, can the fruits of devotion be realised? Spirituality is not separate from other aspects of life. You must understand that spirituality permeates everything. Science is spirituality. Mathematics is spirituality. Spirituality can be found in everything if you look for it. What, for instance, is the connection between Mathematics and spirituality? Spiritual mathematics is different from academic mathematics. According to academic mathematics 3 minus 1 is equal to two. But in spiritual mathematics 3 minus 1 is one! How is that, it may be asked. There is a mirror. When you look at it, you see an image. There are thus three things: The seer, the mirror and the image. When you take away the mirror, the image also goes and only one thing remains. Nature is the mirror. The Divine is the seer. The Jivi (individual) is the image. When the mirror of Nature is removed, the Jivi goes and only the Divine remains. It is the relationship with Nature (the phenomenal world) that produces the appearance of duality and individual separateness. What one should seek to realise is the oneness with Divinity. The means of realisation has been indicated in the 12th Canto of the Bhagavad Gita where the qualities of the true Bhakta are described. The primary quality is absence of hatred towards any living thing—"Adveshtas-sarva-bhootaanaam". Cultivate universal love. Avoid causing harm to others. Do not speak ill of any one. Give up pride and egoism. Cultivate purity of thought, speech and action.

What is the origin of pride? Is it knowledge? What is this knowledge? It is really nothing more than ignorance. What is the cause of ignorance? It is the feeling of duality. Wherefrom has duality originated? From attachment and hatred (Raga and Dwesha). What is the origin of these two? They are the products of circumstances. How have the circumstances come about? Through Karmas (past deeds). What is the cause of Karmas? It is Birth. It will thus be clear that birth is the cause of all sorrow. It is only by seeking freedom from birth that one can free oneself from sorrow. The opportunity that has been provided by being born as a human being should be used for realising this supreme goal.

It is the duty of parents to set children on the right path from their early years. They should not hesitate to correct them and even punish them when the children take to wrong ways. The best way they can show their love for their children is to do everything necessary to make them follow the right path. If any boy proves intractable or incorrigible, they should not hesitate to disown him. It is better to have one good son rather than a brood of bad children.

When the boys come home for holidays, the parents must keep a watch over their activities, movements and companions. Some parents tend to pamper them at home on the ground that the boys might have lacked some things in the hostel. They are encouraged to see films or the TV. They are given unwholesome food. All this is undesirable. The children are ruined by these indulgences. The parents should exercise restraints on themselves in the interests of the children. Because parents are present in large numbers, I have spoken in this strain. You must bear in mind that the years of youth are the most precious years in one's life and they should not be wasted or misspent. To let children watch the TV from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. is to make them forget all that they have learnt at school or college. In addition, they learn many evil things. If TV is used for teaching good things, it can serve a worthy purpose. But that is not the case. The younger generation is being ruined by undesirable films and TV programmes. Their minds are being poisoned. It is not a sign of parental love to let children be ruined in this manner. Even parents should avoid going to cinemas. All the crimes and violence we witness today are largely the result of the evil influence of films on young minds.

While science and technology may appear to confer many benefits, they also have many harmful effects. We must have the wisdom and discrimination to make the proper use of scientific knowledge. Students must learn how to use their learning to lead worthy and noble lives. If they cannot mould themselves properly in these crucial years, they cannot hope to lead better lives in later years. Parents and teachers have a duty to see that the children are brought up on right lines through love, precept, and, if necessary, corrective measures. Some parents say that their boys do not listen to their words. This is a sign of weakness. Why should children refuse to obey their parents? If, from the beginning, the children are taught to respect parents and elders, this kind of attitude will not develop. A disobedient child should have no place in the home. It is only when parents show firmness in dealing with their children that they will develop along right lines. It is because parents and teachers fail to enforce discipline that students behave in the most irresponsible way and indulge in disorder and violence. Education must be regarded as a sacred process and a preparation for unselfish service to society. There are innumerable persons in the

persons to serve them and help to relieve their suffering to the maximum extent possible. This is the best form of service to the Divine. There is pollution in the air, in the water we use and impurity in so many things. You must use the knowledge you acquire to purify what is impure. It is for this purpose that the science courses in the Sathya Sal Institute are being given a spiritual orientation. Service to society must become the primary purpose of education. Students of Sai institutions should devote their knowledge not only to earn a living, but to use their talents and energies in whatever walk of life they may be engaged, to render service to society in all ways open to them.

Always Remember...

Tormented by her ego,
still with her though ten years ago
Sai had granted her the boon that He would have it go,
again she journeyed round the world to Him.

Trembling, she cast herself at His beloved feet
which have the power of peace.

“Lord!” she said in agony, “Destroy the ego!
Take it away! Take it!
Take that which is the only thing
which stands between myself and You!”

Bracing the body for the
trample of His Feet upon it
she shut her eyes.

Quickly she heard a stomping sound—
but felt no pain!
wondering, she opened her eyes
to see Him trampling upon her *shadow*.

"My child! Get up!" He said,
and He even stooped and offered her His hand.

"What is this craziness?
Get up and realise who you really are?
As for the shadow,
which must remain until your body dies,
stop being fascinated with My maya!

Always do My Commandments! Do!
And as you walk, face the Light!

When you must go
in the direction where your shadow casts its shade
concentrate upon the Light around the shadow
and not the shadow itself?

*I am always with you
Always remember who you really are!"*

—Saidas, Hawaii.

JOURNEY TO GOD:

Baba and the Music of Thyagaraja

It was music that first brought me to Baba, in 1970.

I did not personally know anyone who had ever heard of Baba, but I read about his life and teachings in a pamphlet by Kasturi, and in a 1968 Newsweek article found the name of his village in India, Puttaparthi. With the aid of the largest atlas in the New York Public Library, my wife and I found the longitude and latitude of that special location.

With songs in our hearts, seeking a transcendental music, we travelled overland by train from Europe, and called on Baba in Turkey and Iran when violence and danger threatened our pilgrimage. After a bus accident in which several passengers died, we decided not to travel by land through Afghanistan, but to fly to Bombay, then take trains till we reached Sri Sathya Sai.

Arriving at Puttaparthi, having walked a few miles along the dry Chitravati river bed, wearing heavy Vermont clothes and weighed down by backpacks, we found that Baba had recently celebrated his 45th birthday there but now had gone to Whitefield.

We awoke the next day to the sound of angelic singing—Nagarsankirtan—and stayed long enough to learn some Bhajans. I remember thinking this was the most peaceful place I had ever been. Later we learned Prasanthi Nilayam means "Sanctum of Continuous Serenity."

When we arrived at Whitefield, Baba was preparing to leave. We were frustrated, but decided to give him another chance! He went to Goa, where he took on an appendicitis and amazed a squadron of doctors by curing himself; and we waited, reading his life story, singing, and being asked by perfect strangers what we would tell Baba when he asked us: "What do you want?"

Christmas and New Year day came and went in Whitefield. Still no Baba. Except in an occasional mysterious dream.

Return of the Master

Then one night we took a walk to Brindavan and a few silent devotees stood huddled outside Baba's house. A car was in the driveway. When we learned he had returned, my wife began to cry. I offered a silent prayer asking for purification.

The next day was Thursday, a bhajan day, and when Baba came among us singing people, I began to cry, all my hopes and fears, guilts and innocences in a turmoil. Baba walked up to me and waved his hand, making Vibhuti, giving it to me, saying "Don't cry; eat this." I didn't want to stop crying, first because it was ecstatic weeping, second because it had brought Baba to me!

This was in January 1971.

Over the next few months my wife and I, along with a dozen or two other Westerners, were treated to Baba's presence at a Bhajan session every day after Darshan. He kept the rhythm and taught us songs. We were allowed to meditate in his garden, from which you could hear him and see him inside his house. We were given dinners, and keepsakes, sugar candy and advice about Sadhana. Though we were young and foolish, Baba took a personal interest in our needs, gave us Vibhuti when we were sick, organized a Yoga class for us, shepherded some of us through childbirth, tragedies, and maturation. We were just coming out of the sixties, in need of a shining example of down to earth wisdom and divine dedication. Baba's life showed the way.

New Life

With the treasures of service, meditation and music which he gave to us we returned to Vermont. Baba had given us handfuls of Vibhuti at our last interview, and said we would be writing letters to him and he would be answering them, so we knew we would not return to India immediately. We did not know it would be seven years before we returned. I remember enroute to Bombay feeling that we were the luckiest people in the world; a new life had opened, we had much to put into practice, much to accomplish for Baba. We even had one of his robes to give us confidence, and to share with sick friends in need of comfort. We were riding on a crest of new energy and enthusiasm, and nothing seemed impossible.

We went back to work in Vermont, where we built our home in the mountains. One winter night we heard a flute song coming from the wood stove. It went on a long time, meandering melodically, enchanting us. Surely, we thought, it was a sign of Sai Krishna's presence.

Time passed. In the autumn of 1977 Baba came in a dream, and said; "Why don't you come North and have dinner with me?" That Christmas we unexpectedly travelled to India and, along with several hundred Westerners, enjoyed Christmas dinner with Swami.

Lila, a book of Krishna stories in verse which I had worked on in spare moments. Now I was in PhD programme at Harvard University.

Three years later we returned to stay for eighteen months, while I gathered material for my dissertation on the great South Indian mystic composer and poet, Thyagaraja. Baba has often spoken of this saint who composed hundreds of Bhakti-charged songs; but few people know that this saint, who lived 1767-1847, also spoke of Baba.

Announcements of the Avatar's Advent

There have been many announcements of Baba's divinity. I want to share with you another announcement of Sai's divinity, one made by Thyagaraja, the saint from Tanjore, who sang songs in Telugu. Thyagaraja had visions of Rama after repeating his name constantly for twenty years and he was inspired to compose many Telugu songs, which his disciples taught to others, and which are still being sung today. He sang for God, and refused to sing for royal rewards. In this century one of his greatest devotees was Bangalore Nagaratnammal, born into the caste of dancers and singers. Taught by the best of music Gurus, Bangalore Nagaratnammal became a great dancer and singer who entertained the Mysore court. Always devoted to Thyagaraja, she went to live in the village where he had spent his life. In 1951 Bangalore Nagaratnammal had a dream in which Thyagaraja appeared and told her that the Lord was on earth and she should go to see him at the palace in Venkatagiri, a town in Andhra Pradesh near the famous Tirupati hilltop temple. She immediately wrote a letter to the Raja of Venkatagiri. In effect this is what the letter said : "Dear Maharaja, My personal Lord Sri Thyagaraja gave me the great fortune of a vision in a dream and commanded me to go to Venkatagiri, in order to be blessed by vision of Bhagavan (the Lord) who has come to earth, and who is soon reaching Venkatagiri, in his travels. My Lord told me that Bhagavan has assumed the name of Sri Sathya Sai. I shall come to Venkatagiri as soon as I hear from you." The Raja of Venkatagiri wrote back, saying that Bhagavan would be present at the celebration of Krishna's birthday and that she should come to Venkatagiri for that occasion.

And so it happened, on the strength of a dream, that this devoted woman met the Lord whom her guide, Thyagaraja, had spent his life praising. Sathya Sai was twenty-five at the time, and he had known the royal family of Venkatagiri for some time already. Baba asked Bangalore Nagaratnammal to sing Thyagaraja songs, and for two hours she was immersed in this form of worship and communion. Baba then materialized for her an image of Rama, and after receiving it Bangalore Nagaratnammal was in an ecstatic unconsciousness or mystical bliss consciousness for twenty-four hours. Baba granted her two boons: a peaceful death, and the remembrance of the name of Rama until the very last moment of her life, in 1952.

Music and Bliss

Baba's life is a story of music and bliss. Wherever you find Baba, you will find song. And to encourage sadhakas to sing, Baba himself leads singing. When he was younger he used to sing not only his own compositions, but also the songs of Thyagaraja. I remember when I first heard Baba's remarkable voice in 1971 at a Kannada New Year celebration. It was clear as a bell,

upon wave of musical poetry cascading our hearts.

When I met Kasturi, Baba's translator and biographer, and told him that I was studying Thyagaraja and his songs for my Harvard thesis, he smiled, recalling the days in the 1950s when Baba would tell him and the few other people at Prasanthi Nilayam: "I will be singing this afternoon at five, and I want you to come and listen." And at five he would sing Thyagaraja songs in the old bhajan hall for the handful of devotees.

Thyagaraja's Guru

One very erudite listener was surprised that Baba, who had spent his life in an out-of-the-way rural village, knew even rare Thyagaraja songs. Baba told them: "Who do you think taught these songs to Thyagaraja?" He had been the inspirer.

In those times Baba delighted in giving enjoyment to listeners with Thyagaraja songs. When visiting the Ganges, at the request of a Telugu Yogi living there, Baba sang a Thyagaraja song which no one had heard him sing before, "Sri Raghuvara Sugunaalaya," "Divine Rama, Abode of Virtues". Visiting devotees in Madras once, Baba sang one full hour of Thyagaraja's Utsava Sampradaya (festival ceremony) songs at Osborne House, which was then the Venkatagiri royal family's town residence. Members of that family have tapes of Baba singing. Among the songs which people recall Sri Sai Baba singing are "Saantamuleka," "Nidhichaalasukhamaa," "Ramanannu brova," "Entabhaagyamu," "Mokshamu galada," " Munduvenuka, " "Sitamma," "Nagumomu," "Teratiyaga raada," and "O Rama ni namam".

One full moon night after Dasara one year, Baba materialized an image of Rama with a bow from the river sands, and singing Thyagaraja's "Rama Kodandarama" he gave it to a thrilled devotee.

I was fortunate enough to hear Baba sing a Thyagaraja song once. It happened like this. While in Madras in March, 1981, I dreamt Baba said: "I'll see you at six." Within a week I was in Puttaparthi unexpectedly. It was six o'clock when he called us into the inner interview room. Then Baba asked me to sing a Thyagaraja song. I had to tell him that I was studying the poetry, rather than the music. Then I asked him to sing a Thyagaraja song, and he sang part of "Sri Ramadaasa dasoham"—"I am the servant of the servants of Rama." We left the interview room intoxicated with divine love.

Music and Spirituality

Sai Baba has spoken of Thyagaraja on many occasions, illustrating points in the spiritual life with verses from the saint's lyrics. This in itself is a great compliment to the saint. According to Baba, Thyagaraja is unique because "his songs are marked by the rare excellences of sincerity of devotion, poetical beauty, and musical melody. The Raga suited to the emotional tempo of the idea elucidated in the song; the marking of time quite appropriate to the movement of the meaning; the words which automatically dictate the Tala and guide the musician along the notes; the entire structure of the song helping the arousal of the yogic urge In the singer-such spontaneous

any language or country."

This perfect unity of interrelated parts in a work is the mark of greatness in art and spirituality both. The fusion of melody and prosody was Thyagaraja's special gift. He integrated Telugu lyrics and Tamil music in the intense necessity of his burning devotion to utter itself and reach his beloved, Rama. To win the vision of his Lord Rama he repeated the *Rama taraka mantra* 96 crores of times.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba has remarked that Thyagaraja, absorbed in devotional music, sang unselfconsciously, "out of the fullness of his realization, and so the songs have that strange communicative force imparting Ananda to singer as well as listener." In the modern world people more than ever have a tremendous need for this Ananda. Sri Sai Baba notes that "it is when the inner springs of Ananda are ignored that man gets depressed. India has recognized the salutary effect of music on the mind, its potency to restore calm and equanimity, to still the waves of agitation and worry. Music is the instrument by which passions are sublimated, emotions are tamed, impulses directed to higher purposes. We have forgotten the great role assigned to music in our culture."

There is an unbroken continuity from time immemorial in the art and science of sacred music in India, and it is one interwoven strand in the fabric of philosophy, Yoga and the arts. As Bhagavan Baba points out, "Song has been the Refrain of the Vedas, the Skill of Saraswati, the Goddess of the Scriptures, the Flute of Krishna, the Pranava of the Conch of Vishnu, the Drumbeat of the Damaru of Shiva."

A Global Process

Thyagaraja, who sang in the universal tongue of yearning, interlaces many communities with the thread of musical spirituality, and his inspirational songs unify the culture of South India praising the various names of God. On a much larger scale, Sri Sathya Sai Baba is inspiring an international community of spiritual seekers. We can glimpse this in the Christmas celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam, where many nations and languages are represented in joyous song. The Rome symposium on Unity is another example of this global process.

In a number of religious traditions the chanting of the evocative names of the Supreme Being is an important way of attuning oneself and taking shelter from harm. Sai Baba reminds us that "the power of not only the Names of God, but also those of His devoted adherents—ever pure and ever in contact with the Absolute"—is said to protect one even from thunderbolts, as in the case of the practice of reciting Arjuna's names. "That is the reason why Aradhana, or worship of the Presence, is offered even to great devotees like Thyagaraja and Kabir. They have no identity of their own, they have become one with the Limitless, through the worship of the limited." This divine non-duality is the goal of Bhakti, as Thyagaraja sang in such songs as "Rama Sita Rama."

Today we need to understand in depth the neglected authentic spiritual traditions of the soul's return to the source of harmony and peace by way of sacred sound. This is an aspect of the

song: singing with him is becoming part of a high, ecstatic and harmonious energyfield that brings peace.

When Baba came to Madras in January 1982 he said: "Devotion is getting God where you are, not having to go somewhere else to get God." Kanakadas, a South Indian saint, centuries ago said, "When you get peace of mind, even if your house is dilapidated-that is Prasanthi Nilayam."

Baba has taught us how to cultivate peace. We have much to be grateful for: he has opened up the possibility of making our lives into a spiritual music.

*Who, after hearing the Lord's celestial song
Would prefer a tiring confusion of mere noise?*

*Once we've had a chance to sing at his feet
And take part in the dance, what else would be sweet?*

May we all hold on for dear life to the Lord's feet, as we are danced through our lives; may we ever be attentive and attuned to the divine vibration!

—*William Jackson (from a talk given on 9-11-83 at a Retreat at Cold Spring, New York)*

THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS: II

Clothes and Conduct

Life becomes worth living only when we have disciplined habits in our dress, manners and behaviour and concentration of our mind on the spiritual journey. Unless we make some effort to follow His teachings and make some sacrifice of worldly sensual pleasures, we cannot expect His grace. Jesus Christ, in one of His parables to His disciples, said that the land of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully in a season. Sufficient room was not there in his barns to store the fruits of his land. Hence he decided to demolish his old barns and build new ones of bigger capacity. Now he was proud to say to his soul. "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry." But God said unto him! "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" Jesus gave the moral of the story thus: "So this rich man was hoarding material wealth for his sensual pleasures and he was not spiritually rich towards God. Therefore, I say unto you take no thought for your life what ye shall eat; neither for the body what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat and the body more than raiment."

Generally our make-up and type of dress depend upon the occasion of our visits such as marriage parties, social get-togethers, cinema or religious functions. Social status and the latest fashion are the deciding factors for dress from our point of view. Jeans, tight wears, fancy

and bhajans, are out of place. One's dress and appearance should be graceful and not sensuous. Whatever may be the occasion, our dress should invariably be dignified and pleasing and not vulgarly showy. Especially women should bear in mind the principles of modesty and purity at all times. Bhagavan guides us as to how one should be dressed. He says:

"Let dress heighten humility. With the discipline of Japam and Dhyanam, let the intellect fully blossom forth. There should be clean and comfortable clothes for the body, not clothes that attract attention. I like dress that will not discourage people from approaching you for a kind word, a bit of service, a helping hand. Similarly you must have clean consoling exercises for the mind like Japam and Dhyanam. Do not use the eye to vulgarise your brain, the feet to stand in queues for deleterious films."—Baba (Ideals of Sri Sathya Sai Education).

Guru Nanak says that wearing of that dress is evil which gives pain to the body and evil thoughts to the mind. It looks odd to see some persons dressed in fancy clothes with unbecoming human figures and slogans at the back when we are in a holy place. Elderly gentlemen wearing 'T' shirts of fast shades and bizarre designs, are looked down upon by youngsters who appear to be more disciplined than they. The face may be the index of the mind, but nowadays one's way of dress also shows the inner state of cleanliness of one's mind and one's maturity.

The Garment Of Love

Once Charles Penn, the veteran American devotee, asked Bhagavan how one should be 'dressed' or prepared for Brahmamarga. Bhagavan said:

"Before starting on Brahmamarga and commencing your Sadhana, disrobe-undress--but not in the usual manner. The clothes you cast off may vary in number. Some may be more heavily garmented some may have already discarded most of their unwanted apparel. In whatever order you choose, cast off the clothes of Jealousy, Hate, Anger, Pride, Greed, Desire. But you shall not be cold for there is one garment you have on and that is the raiment of love. This one piece has many thicknesses to keep you warm and protected on the coldest nights. It will let you survive the greatest storms; for what is this love? It is the love of joy, the love of giving, the love of survival, the love of living; this one raiment is all you need when you come to ME in the quietude and stillness of your Dhyana although you do not have to wait until then to come, for I am always near."

Habits And Behaviour

We gain knowledge during every trip of our yatra to Prasanthi Nilayam. Having learned to dress ourselves in simple clothes, clean and tidy, let us think of our habits, behaviour and company. First of all we must give up evil company to remove all the blemishes of bad habits, bad tendencies, feelings and thoughts from us. It is true that we have got to live in society. We cannot escape it and live in isolation. By keeping good company—Satsang—our auspicious ideas of practising good sadhana are strengthened. It is of course difficult to get rid of evil habits we have inherited from our association with bad characters for so many years. We have a desire to discard the bad habits because of the good company we have now. As we keep on trying, with

will power to control our bad habits.

About the bad practices which have become fashionable, Bhagavan says: In the name of fashion many unsanitary and morbid practices are adopted: smoking, drinking, sitting long hours in the midst of packed crowds in cinema theatres and subjecting oneself to all kinds of shocks and tensions—all lead to chronic damage both to body and mind. Cancer, tuberculosis, heart diseases—all these have increased as a result of such deleterious habits. Man has to be vigilant about his habits, his desires, his emotions, the impressions he gathers through his eyes and ears, the books he reads, the films he sees etc."

"Indian traditions and Indian modes of living are now being cast away; crude manners of dress, speech and personal appearance are replacing them. Children should be taught to look upon these with disgust, they should know them for what they are—aberrations and vulgarities. Now obscene posters are placed along the roads by cinema theatres in order to attract fans; they contaminate character very subtly and silently. Children must make the elders ashamed when they permit such demeaning and deleterious posters in public view. They have to waken elders into a sense of shame at lowering of human values. Unless we plant these ideals in the children India will go down to the depth of degradation.

"The parents themselves are not competent to guide the children; they have reprehensible habits and ways of life. They smoke, play cards, gamble, drink and fight in the home; they utter falsehood, talk scandal, indulge in boasts and slander, in the full knowledge of the children. How can they lead their children on right lines?"

Accumulating money, luxuries and comforts will not make us happy. It may be difficult to do away with bad habits all at once. Bhagavan has given the guide lines 'to control', 'give up', 'limit' and regulate'. No progress can be achieved without observing bounds and limits.

—S. Narayanan

AVATAR VANI:

Devotion Sans Discipline is Valueless

The indifference of students today to ethical ideals and their obligations to society was deplored by Bhagavan Baba, in a discourse at the Sathya Sai Institute's Auditorium at Prasanthi Nilayam on February 9. Bhagavan drew pointed attention to the need for discipline among devotees and students and said without discipline devotion had no meaning. Besides the students and staff, a large number of foreign visitors were present

Welcoming Bhagavan, Prof. Gokak, Vice-chancellor, said that it was an auspicious day—Ratha Sapthami—which celebrates the Sun's journey in his chariot. Bhagavan's chariot in

Bhagavan, in the course of His ninety-minute address, said

The world attracts man in innumerable ways. Either in speculation or in exploration, man cannot go beyond the universe. Whatever knowledge he acquires, however much he develops his powers of understanding, his knowledge is confined to things of this world and does not go beyond it. He can know about the objects in creation, but cannot understand the Supreme Principle that is at the base of all creation.

Physics is concerned with the physical properties of material objects. Chemistry teaches the composition and qualities of created things. Botany deals with plants and trees found in nature. Zoology is concerned with the study of living beings. All that man learns about these things relates to the natural sciences. It is not knowledge relating to the Supreme. Man, who is immersed in the temporary pleasure derived from his knowledge about the five basic elements (the panchabhutas) that constitute the physical universe, does not know what is his own future, what is in store for him the next moment. He behaves like a mouse which is attracted to the onion in a mouse-trap. Caught up in the knowledge and skills he has acquired and satisfied with the benefits from them, man does not try to find out the truth about his future and his real destiny.

Duty to Society

The teacher should serve as the signpost for the community. The student determines the future of the nation. Together, they help to promote the greatness and welfare of the nation. Both teachers and students should realise that their welfare is bound up with the well-being of society as a whole. Individuals are prepared to engage themselves in various activities for the sake of their own personal comfort and for the acquisition of wealth and position and for ensuring the good of their kith and kin. But few of them are prepared to make any efforts or sacrifice for the general good of society. It is not realised that all the pleasures and comforts enjoyed by one are really derived from society and are not solely got from one's own means. Man does not show any gratitude to the society which has enabled him to enjoy his wealth, position and power. A man lacking gratitude is worse than an animal. He forfeits the grace of God.

To secure the grace of God one must adhere to right conduct and observe purity in thought, word and deed. Kindness and compassion are the hall-mark of a true human being. Young men of to-day are ready to listen to a thousand lies, but do not have the patience to pay heed to a single truth. One honest man who speaks with love is better than a hundred flatterers.

Young people do not realise the value of health and strength they enjoy during their years of youth. They should learn to lead purposeful, unselfish lives even while they have the benefits of youth and health, instead of dissipating all their energies and talents in the pursuit of sensuous objects and evil desires. An evil minded person in a village is more harmful to the community than even a polluted pond.

any trouble to develop their character and personality. Good conduct and character are the most essential requisites for a man. They are the basis for the spiritual life. If the spiritual aspect is neglected, man becomes an artificial, mechanical being with no genuine human quality in him. Young people today do not understand what is meant by spirituality. It is the knowledge of Divinity, which is the core of man's true nature. Spirituality reveals the basic principle that is immanent in everything and sustains the entire Cosmos.

Young people today lack a broad-minded universal outlook which will enable them to lead exemplary lives. They are too much self-centered and, like frogs in a well, are preoccupied only with their narrow selfish interests. It is essential that they should broaden their vision and develop large-heartedness.

Vijnana without Viveka

The uneducated persons in the world may not appear to be great patriots, but they do not do any harm to their country. The world is being destroyed by the highly educated who claim to be patriots. For example, there are great scientists in the United States of America and in the Soviet Union. Out of narrow considerations of national interest, they are busy producing monstrous bombs which will destroy millions. They do not realise that their country is only a part of this world. They are in perpetual dread of the destructive power of the weapons they have created. What is the reason for all this? It is the fact that while science (Vijnana) has progressed, there has been no growth of wisdom (Viveka) at all. It is only when wisdom and science march together that the true character of science will be realised.

Who is entitled to wield authority? Is it the person who has high educational qualifications and feels puffed up by his knowledge? No. Or is it the person who claims that he has all material resources and can use them as he likes? No. No one who is filled with pride and conceit is fit to wield power. It is only the person who is imbued with humility and appears to be not very knowledgeable that is fittest to wield authority. Hanuman is an example of such a person. Although he was endowed with enormous prowess, he appeared as a simple person. This humility enabled him to leap over the ocean. Socrates, who was hailed as the wisest man among the Greeks, always professed that he knew nothing. The knowledge that is paraded is like a seed ostentatiously planted on a rock for all to see. It will not sprout and yield fruit. It is only the seed that is planted in the soil that will grow into a tree and bear fruit. The scholar who is humble and respectful towards everyone is the truly great man. One who lacks these qualities, however knowledgeable he may be, is only an incarnation of egoistic pride. The truly educated person should not have the slightest trace of ego. You may achieve great distinction in sports or in your examinations or in any particular field of study. But if you develop pride or arrogance as a result, it will bring about your downfall.

The Five Dharmas

You must realise that the grace of the Divine cannot be got by sweet talk or singing songs. When your hearts are pure, the Divine will dwell in them. The Divine is not pleased by showy

study s of scriptures will be of no avail for realising the Divine.

Five types of Dharma (duties) have been laid down for man. One is "Kula Dharma" (duties relating to his occupational group). The second is "Desa Dharma" (duty to the nation). The third is "Mata Dharma"(duties pertaining to his religion). The fourth is "Gana Dharma" (duties relating to society). The fifth is "Aapad Dharma" (the duty when he faces danger). All these five types of duties are related to one's life in the phenomenal world and are not concerned with the Supreme Reality. All these duties have penalties for their violation. Without these penalties organised life is impossible. Such punishments should not be regarded as unwarranted impositions. On the contrary, they should be considered as essential corrective measures conducive to one's good. Only the person who has been subject to such restraints can achieve anything great in life. Discipline Is like the reins which regulate the movements of a horse. It is like the goad that controls the elephant. Without discipline-and the punishment that may be inflicted if it is violated-man will not be able to correct his mistakes.

Railwaymen's Pledge

[Bhagavan then gave a vivid account of His recent tour of Tamilnadu during which He had opportunities to witness the boundless devotion of thousands of devotees and to acquaint Himself with the wide range of service activities of the Sathya Sai units in the urban and rural areas. Referring to a meeting with leaders of the Southern Railway Labour Union at Perambur, Bhagavan said that He addressed them for an hour, emphasising the importance of unity among the workers and devotion to their work. At the end of Swami's address all the union leaders gave a pledge that they would not go on strike. Swami told them that He was not taken in by verbal promises, which were seldom kept. The union leaders assured Him that they would honour their pledge whatever might happen.]

Swami commended the excellent work being done in the villages "adopted" by the Sathya Sai Organisations in, Tamilnadu. Last year the work had been completed in 300 villages. This year 300 more villages will be taken up. It is proposed to complete the development programme in 1000 villages in all by Nov. 85. The work that was being done was not confined to Bhajans and Bal Vikas Classes. Various amenities like roads, schools, hospitals, wells, etc. were being provided, wherever necessary. More than that, the lives of the villagers were being transformed by their being weaned from such evil practices as drink and factional quarrels.]

Devotees' Duty

Seeing the change that the Sai devotees in Tamilnadu are effecting in the lives of people around them, while transforming their own lives by their sadhana, devotees elsewhere should ask themselves whether they are doing all they can to elevate their own lives and contribute to the improvement of others. Many have been coming to Bhagavan for many years. They must examine in what way they have improved their character and conduct. How far have they shed their undesirable qualities? What good habits have they cultivated? How far are they living up to the teachings of Bhagavan? How far do they adhere to the disciplines of the Ashram? These

have been strictly carrying out the instructions given to them.

Swami expected that at least the students would observe strict discipline and set an example to others. It was unfortunate that this was not always the case. The students were a small number and it should be easy to develop unity amongst them and real fellow-feeling. How can they hope to serve the country well if they have not learnt to cooperate with each other while at College?

Students! Education should serve to teach you two things: What is life and how you should live. Life is not mere existence. It must be lived for a purpose, an ideal. A life without ideals is utterly worthless. Only character and humility can lend meaning to life. Students should strive to develop these qualities. Earning of money cannot be the sole purpose of education. If money was all that mattered, it could be got by other means than education-by begging or stealing. Education should help one to acquire good qualities. The Sai educational institutions have been established not to enable students to earn a living but to make them acquire good traits and lead ideal lives. I wish that henceforth you should concentrate, not only on your studies but also on the development of your character so that you may serve as an example to others and promote Sai ideals everywhere by your actions.

—*Prasanthi Nilayam, 9-2-84*

SADHAKA'S DIARY

Four by Six

Bhagavan Baba received a complaint that spiritual life is complicated and difficult. He responded by saying that on the contrary it is worldly life which is complicated and difficult, whereas spiritual life is easy although it may take a little practice at first, like any new endeavour.

People who have had long experience living in proximity with Swami offer a warning and this warning merits our careful attention. They say, be very sure you know what Swami means when He makes a statement. He stated that worldly life is hard whereas spiritual life is easy. We know what worldly life is because we have been more or less engaged in worldly life since childhood. But are we as sure that we in fact know what Swami means by "spiritual life"?

If our spiritual life is turning out to be difficult, then perhaps we are not living the spiritual life which Bhagavan Baba talks about, for He assures us that spiritual life is easy. If we are experiencing substantial difficulty, then in the light of the warning previously mentioned we would be wise to challenge our present understanding of what Bhagavan Baba means by "spiritual life".

life to spiritual life, then what He says will surely have a deep meaning. A deep and subtle statement by the Supreme Lord of the Cosmos and the unknown-beyond is not likely to yield its depth and subtlety to casual or habitual reading by a person new to spiritual life. In fact, Bhagavan Baba often warns that reading and hearing by themselves are not enough, that what is said by Him needs a further and fuller attention. Indeed, He has said that the one factor most responsible for our ignorance of the truth of our Reality is our lack of intensity.

This matter of an ability or a strength to grasp the deep and subtle meaning of Bhagavan Baba's statements about spiritual life may, at the moment, seem to be puzzling and intimidating. But, surprisingly, a simple mechanical modification of the way we study what Swami says is enough to bring about a very deep comprehension of what He says.

A simple change in your study method will, almost automatically and without any significant effort on your part, allow you to penetrate Into Swami's wonderful statements about spiritual life.

From now on, make this simple change in the way you study Bhagavan Baba's discourses and writings. Whenever you come upon something which Swami has said which strikes you with an exceptionally strong impact, do not just make a mark at that point, but stop reading and copy the few words, or the sentence, on a 4 by 6 sheet of paper, not in a notebook. Convenient to use are the 4-inch by 6-inch pads of paper obtainable in any U.S. stationery store. In other countries, look for something about that same size. Only write one statement per 4 by 6 sheet, no matter how few the words. Keep the papers in loose form, not in pad form.

The initial tendency will be to copy far too much, to transfer almost the entire book to your notes. The key is, copy only that which hits you very hard, only that which thrills you through and through, only that which you feel is absolutely vital to you for your own unique realization of Truth, of God. As you continue with the study method, you will discard some of the 4 by 6 notes, will add some new ones, and will re-arrange the sequence of the notes if several of Swami's sayings amplify a particular topic.

As soon as you have accumulated three or four of Bhagavan Baba's sayings which you feel are absolutely essential for your spiritual life, then in calm deliberation read two or three each morning before starting your day, taking your time, letting the words sink in. The sayings of Swami will remain in the background of your mind throughout the day. Since Swami's sayings are Divine Truth in the form of words, they are alive, vibrant and saturated with omnipresent Divine energy. These sayings of Bhagavan Baba, as a background to your mind, will exert their beneficial influence, and your daily life will respond to that Divine influence. Softly, automatically, as you go over and over your notes again and again, without any effort on your part the Divine sayings which you have taken into your mind will unfold their deepest meaning to your intelligence and your intuition and, quite naturally, without effort you will know what Bhagavan Baba means by the term, "spiritual life". Doubts will fall away as you come to know directly that of which Bhagavan Baba is speaking.

In His Service

One little mouth,
to chant His name.

Two little eyes,
to watch the eternal Rime.

One little nose,
to smell His abounding fragrance.

Two little legs,
to tread towards His Presence.

One little head,
to think about Him.

Two little ears,
to hear about Him.

One little heart,
to be kind and loving.

Two little hands,
to serve the suffering.

—**R. Vijay Raghav, Vidyagiri.**

Life has to be spent in accumulating and safeguarding virtue, not riches. Listen and ruminate over the stories of the great moral heroes of the past, so that their ideals may be imprinted in your hearts. Virtue is becoming rare, nowadays, in the individual and in the family, society and community, in all fields of life, economic, political and even 'spiritual'. So also, there is a decline in discipline, which is the soil on which virtue grows. Unless each one is respected, whatever his status, his economic condition, his spiritual development, there can be no peace and happiness in life. This respect can be aroused, only by the conviction that the Atma that is in

Leela Kaivalya Vahini
(Stream of Cosmic Sport Divine)

Sai speaks to sadhakas

1

Spiritual exercises like worship (puja), adoration (bhajan), meditation (dhyana) are activities prompted by devotion (bhakti) to higher powers. Controversy about their efficacy should not be indulged in by those who are unaware of the depths and heights to which they can lead. These can be gained, and judged only through actual practice. The proof lies in one's personal experience only.

The longing for the supersensory spiritual life (Paramaarthika Jivan) is aroused in the seeker, either by a quest for fundamental principles or by the felt need for lasting joy. Mere longing will not grant success. Spiritual exercise (sadhana) has to be undertaken. It is important also to examine oneself and assess in detail one's aspirations and attitudes before embarking on the process. For, contemporary religions which profess to guide seekers in this task do not infuse confidence in the youth. They feel that some of these have been shaped by the conditions of the era in which they emerged. Many have become outdated. Some are specifically linked with regions or states. Some have been imposed and moulded by foreign peoples. And some strike them as indecent and injurious. Young aspirants for higher life feel they will be ridiculed if they practise them. So, they indulge in incessant talk and turning over the pages of thousands of books! They stay away even from the first step of Sadhana as prescribed in any of the many religions. Such are the critics and controversialists who relish the confusion they create.

Far more valuable than the scholarship gathered from a million books is the grain of wisdom gained through a session of meditation. That flash (jnana), however slight, precious acquisition. It is the product of personal Sadhana and indisputable authentic experience. As one cultivates and develops this grain of wisdom, controversy and criticism will cease. All arguments will be with one's lower self only until the Truth stands revealed. Self-confidence is essential for a person to enter on this path of spiritual practice.

A word to those who are overwhelmed by the burden of worldly responsibilities and anxieties and to those who find themselves unable to pray to the Highest, either because they have condemned themselves undeserving or because they have no faith in the Highest: Enormous is the number of those who live their days in joy. You too were joyful and are so now.

every one must desire and adopt every means to attain, not only joy, but what is far more valuable, peace of mind and an ideal exemplary life.

Born as human beings, one should not disown the unique nature of humans. One should not forget even for a moment the genuine characteristics of humans. One should never degrade oneself to the level of beast; or a level which is far worse and despicable, that of demonic beings (Asuras). Man must firmly resolve that he would not allow himself to fall into these depths. The spiritual path alone can arouse and sustain that resolution, that alone can awaken and strengthen such yearning.

It is necessary to emphasise that, in order to successfully confront the problems that arise in one's daily living, one has also to possess intelligence and skill, in addition to the qualities of justice, virtue and spiritual excellence. Both these attainments are essential for progress, as essential as two wings for a bird or two wheels for a cart. The importance of the higher path that leads to the Highest can be realised only by experiencing and understanding the world.

The world is enchanting, because it is a tantalising appearance, though it is fundamentally untrue. It is a phenomenon that is fading out. When this Truth is realised, one becomes aware of the Cosmic Sport of God and the Eternal Universal Being.

This state of Consciousness cannot be won through the piling of wealth or of worldly power or the acquisition of knowledge and skill. It can be won through the purification of one's consciousness in all its facets and the earnestness with which the search is pursued.

During that search, there naturally arise various obstacles like doubts and dogmas, purposeless arguments and flimsy fancies.

From the coming Yugadi (New Year) Festival Day, this series under the name, Leela Kaivalya Vahini, will dissolve all such obstacles and fill you with Ananda. It will lead you to the path of spiritual progress. Meanwhile, await the message.

(To be continued)

A Sai Sevak's Prayer

Bhagavan! I shall ever try
To keep my body pure,
Knowing that you said:
"Sevadal is my Body".
I shall ever try to keep untruth

Knowing that thy name is 'SATHYA'
Which illumines my reason.
I shall ever try to drive all evil
Away from my heart,
Knowing that thou art Love
Come as shower in my heart.
And it shall be my endeavour
To reveal Thee in my seva,
Knowing that it is Thy power
Which gives me strength to serve.

—*P. Rama Moorthy, Bangalore.*

SAI FAMILY NEWS

Narayana Seva in New Jersey

Is there any scope for Narayana Seva (feeding of the poor) in a country like the United States? Sai devotees in New Jersey, who were conducting bhajans, study classes and visiting Bhagavan from time to time, took the initiative to take up this programme in 1983. They got Bhagavan's blessings for it by obtaining a picture signed by Him at an interview in February 1983. The devotees had planned to provide 1000 meals in the year, keeping Bhagavan's photo during Narayana Seva. Actually they were able to provide 1750 meals before the end of the year.

The Narayana Seva was arranged with the cooperation of the pastor of the Methodist Church in Trenton, where a soup kitchen is run to provide free meals to the needy. The devotees chose the dates for the Narayana Seva and arranged to do the coking of vegetarian meals themselves, while accepting the help of other volunteer organisations for serving, cleaning, etc. Dr. Ghanshyam C. Patel, President of the Sri Sathya Sai Study Group of Princeton (New Jersey), writing about the programme, says: "Some of us were very nervous the first time, but we had seven families who showed up to help in cooking. By Bhagavan's grace everything went well and we got more joy out of cooking with Sai Bhajans on tapes. Each time the number of participants increased for our Narayana Seva." Between May and November 1983, five Sevas were conducted, the persons provided with meals ranging from 330 to 400. All funds for the Seva were raised by voluntary contributions from devotees collected "in a box kept behind a clock unseen by new persons. Only the donor and Swamiji know the amount."

—**G.C.P.**

Lenasia South (Transvaal, South Africa): During 1983, the Sathya Sai centres in Transvaal jointly celebrated the Gurupoornima Day and held a symposium in September at which discourses were given by several speakers on various aspects of the Sai mission and teachings. Mr. Kenny Malinje spoke on the role of the Sai devotee. Mr. H. A. Khoosal explained

Centre, Lenasia South, were well attended.

Biratnagar (Nepal): Baidyanathpur village, which has been "adopted" by the Biratnagar Sai Centre, wore a festive appearance on January 7, when the first half-yearly celebration since its adoption was held. Besides office-bearers of the Sai Samiti, prominent Government officials, businessmen and social service workers were present. The Bal Vikas children presented the Nepali version of Bhagavan's play "Cheppinatlu chesthaaraa?" "Will you act up to your words?" There was a rally of the village children, followed by a recitation of hymns.

The service activities in the village included an immunisation programme for children, free distribution of medicines and clothes, and donation of blood. Forty children are attending school, while previously the attendance was negligible.

—S. C. B.

Kanpur: A two-day symposium on Human Values was held on December 10 and 11, 1983 at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, under the auspices of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organizations, U.P. The symposium, which was attended by a number of distinguished academics, educationists and scholars from various universities and other walks of life, was inaugurated by Mr. Justice V. Balakrishna Eradi of the Supreme Court. Mr. Eradi explained how Baba's educational programme envisages a society living and thriving in love, cooperation and selfless service to one another, aiming at a transformation of character through a change in consciousness. The symposium had four panels, on the Value of Values, on the elucidation of Human Values, on the Methodology for inculcation of Values, and on Human Values and Social integration. Prof. S. Sampath, Director, ITT, Kanpur, paying tribute to Bhagavan Baba, hoped that a new world order would be ushered in under His Divine Guidance.

The Symposium left a strong impact on the common people as well as the intellectual elite who attended it.

—P.D.

Solapur: The Sai Seva Organisation, Solapur, organised a free dental camp on 8th January. 555 persons got dental services of all kinds. The Indian Dental Association, Solapur, and the Dean of the Dr. Vaishampayan Memorial Medical College and Civil Hospital, Solapur, co-operated with the organisers by providing free use of their equipment and medicines and the services of its members.

Chittoor (Andhra Pradesh): At an eye camp conducted by the local Samithi, 300 patients were examined on January 29 and cataract operations were performed on 40 patients on January 30th. Free spectacles will be supplied to them.

The Samiti organised a devotional reception to Bhagavan on January 18th when Swami was on His way to Madras from Brindavan. A very large gathering of men and women devotees

President, K. C. Varadachari, and other members of the Samiti on the outskirts of the town. Although a big shamiana had been put up, the crowds were so large that Bhagavan gave them Darshan from the road and blessed everyone. The entire gathering prayed to Bhagavan to visit the town and give the devotees His message and blessings in the near future.

Bangalore Seva Dal: The annual report for 1983 states that 150 members renewed their seva pledge and 15 members were admitted. Among the regular activities of the group were holding of bhajans and distribution of prasadam at the Red Cross Home, the Mental Hospital and the leprosarium.. In addition, film shows were arranged. Bal Vikas classes were conducted in Immadihalli village, near Brindavan. Boys from the village, who are studying in the Sai college, were inducted into service activities in the village. A training programme for volunteers (90) was conducted. The Seva Dal is planning to take up a youth development programme and intensify its rural service work.

Jhansi (Uttar Pradesh): Under the joint auspices of the Sathya Sai Organisation, U. P., and the Bundelkhand University an all-India seminar on "Human Values and National Uplift" was held at the M. L. B. Medical College Auditorium, Jhansi, on February 11 and 12. Mr. Justice V. B. Eradi, who was the chief guest spoke on the need for imparting a moral and spiritual orientation to the education of children. This was the aim of the Sai programme of education in human values. Leading intellectuals and persons from different professions participated in the seminar. Dr. Harbans Lal Sharma, Vicechancellor of Bundelkhand University and organising chairman of the seminar, emphasised the need for inculcating in youth the human values of Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love and Non-Violence.

Berhampur (Orissa): The Pratishtha (installation) ceremony of the newly constructed Sathya Sai Bhajan Mandir on Dayamahanty Road, Berhampur, was performed on February 20 in the presence of a large gathering of Sai devotees. The two-day programme included Nagarsankirtan, Puja and Homa, Bhajans, Narayana Seva, speeches by Prof. K. Anil Kumar and Sri Brahmananda Panda, State President, and cultural programme by Bal Vikas children.

Study Circles in Kerala

Kerala: The Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Kerala, in its report for 1983 on the work of study circles, states that a major event of the year was a state sadhana camp, held at Kalady in April. Eight district level camps and 17 unit level camps were held, in which in all 2000 members participated. Twelve seminars on topics like "Cure for the Contemporary Crisis" and "Value-oriented Education" were conducted in different parts of the State. The participants totalled 1600. Mahila Vibhag study circles were started. The number of study circle units increased from 54 to 100. Competitions in essay writing and quiz programmes were conducted for students in two districts. Plans for 1984 include a mini-course in spirituality for 1000 college students.

—E.M.

Science Exhibition

The celebrations commenced on the morning of February 4, when Bhagavan inaugurated an exhibition organised by the students of the Hostel, titled 'Creative Creation'. Also present on the occasion were Sri Govind Narain, former Governor of Karnataka, and Sri M. K. Rasgotra, Secretary, External Affairs Ministry. The exhibition, which was multidimensional and multi-disciplinary in its approach, provided a forum for the expression of the creative thinking of the students. Covering a wide gamut of subjects including spirituality, Indian culture, the social sciences, physics, chemistry, the natural sciences and sports, the exhibition had an exclusive photography section. There were on display over 100 models depicting our ancient wisdom and the panorama of modern knowledge. A highlight of the exhibition was a realistic depiction of the two different approaches that lead to Paradise or Hell. The serenity and peace that prevail in Paradise were in sharp contrast to the turmoil and darkness that are met with in hell. The exhibition, which was kept open for two days, was visited by hundreds of parents and other devotees.

As part of the celebrations, a meeting was organised on the evening of February 5 attended mainly by parents, students and staff of the Hostel. The function began with the recitation of the Sarva Dharma prayer. The orchestra, of the Hostel then rendered a welcome song. C. Sreenivas, Warden of the Hostel, welcomed all those who had come to participate in the Annual Day Celebrations of the Hostel. On behalf of the students and staff of the Hostel he expressed his deep sense of gratitude to Bhagavan for His abounding love in gracing the occasion. The sitar maestro, Pandit Ravi Shankar, gave a short but enthralling recital at the end of which Bhagavan presented rings to Pandit Ravi Shankar and the tabla player. The chief guest at the function, Sri A. N. Banerjee, Governor of Karnataka, in his address, dwelt on the universal message of Bhagavan and appealed to all to sincerely follow and spread the teachings of Bhagavan.

Later in the evening a gymnastic display was organised in the presence of Bhagavan, in the colourfully and tastefully decorated grounds of Brindavan. The display, which lasted more than an hour, included a mass drill, fire drill, dumbbell exercises, floor exercises and gymnastics on the vaulting horse. An impressive march-past by the participants brought the programme and celebrations to a close. Military bands provided the background music for the programme.

—(*Brindavan 5-2-1984*)

The Divine Call

Eternal, since ages
echoing in the universe

sounding, resounding, reflecting
vibrating, vitalizing, vivifying
Eternal, since ages
echoing from the heights of the mountain peak
from the depths of the ocean
shining in the sun, the moon
twinkling in the stars
sounding in all the beauty of nature
whispering in the silence of each heart
pulsating in our blood stream
resounding in each our breath
Eternal, since ages
enticing, encouraging, enchanting
drawing, driving, inviting
guiding, leading, inspiring
Lovefully guarding
compassionately saving
patiently forgiving
righteously conducting
divinely blessing
forever
Calling us back home
back to our origin
to God the Almighty, Sai Baba.

—*Sisko Orefjaerd*

The First Slip

A mother used to carry her son on her shoulder, when she went to the market. A woman with a basket of fruits passed by her; the child lifted a banana from that basket and started eating it. The mother noticed it, and when she was told that he had cleverly lifted it from the basket of a passing fruit-seller, she complimented the son on his smartness. This made the child indulge in petty thieving and picking pockets, as he grew into a boy-and in actual house-breaking and dacoity. Once during a dacoity, he committed even murder, and when he was caught and jailed, he expressed a wish to see his mother before being hanged. The wailing, weeping, desperate mother was brought before him. She was sobbing at her 'son's fate. The son asked her to come closer to him; suddenly, he tried to strangle her, and the guards separated them. The son said, "She deserves the punishment; for, it was she who brought me to this doom. Had she reprimanded me when I stole a banana when I was a child of two years, instead of complimenting me, I would not have fallen into this evil way".

The Nectar Smile

Silence pervades all around
Broken occasionally
By chirping of sparrows.
A hundred bees hum in silence
Waiting with impatience
To drink the nectar
From the flower Divine.
Suddenly there is a buzz,
A flutter, and the flower
Blossomed full stands,
pouring nectar with a smile,
And the bees, with joy thousand fold,
Open their hearts and drink.

—*Sunil Narang, IX Standard, Vidyagiri.*

AMRITADHAARAA:

The Victory to be Sought

Pundits, who read big tomes or write them and are engaged in expounding the scriptural texts, are intent not on Paramatma but on paisa. But, those who practise the Sadhana of Prema and Seva through Prema will be granted the Grace of God. Everything will be provided for them. As Krishna has assured in the Gita, "I shall ever be with him, conferring boons and protecting him from grief, when he is engaged in unceasing contemplation of God."

This day is the sacred day Sankranti. `Kranti' means a transformation, a big change. `Sam' means full and free. So, the Day too exhorts you to glorify the occasion by new aspirations. Nature is entering a bright and cheerful phase, bringing joy and prosperity to the land. Granaries are being filled; cattle are sleek and happy; the sun is kind, the moon is comforting; the earth wears a carpet of lushly green, dotted with yellow and red floral designs. Beauty beckons from every side to the contemplation of the surpassing delight that the Divine Beauty can confer. This is a day that calls for the installation of God in your hearts, so that you may achieve victory in the game of life, whatever its form and name may be.

paraphernalia, or your oratory and rhetoric. Pure Love alone is what He seeks and rewards. Devotion is what He appreciates. When a devotee has to be away, he becomes sad, but when a devotee keeps away, God is hurt much more. God serves the devotee much more than the devotee serves God. The Ganga flood of devotion has as its springhead, the heart full of Love. The heart speaks the authentic language of love, when it is clear, full and free from pollution.

It is said that no one can avoid or escape the effects of his deed, thoughts and words, whether beneficent or maleficent, moral or immoral, right or wrong. But, have faith in this Truth: even an insurmountable mountainous heap of such 'effects' can be burnt into ash when a small spark of Divine Grace is gained or garnered. Strive therefore to win the Divine Love; surrender your personality to the impersonal, purify your thoughts, emotions, attitudes and feelings and offer them to God. That will make you heroes, brave and strong.

(Excerpts from Bhagavan's discourse on Sankranti Day when prizes were awarded to winners of Inter-Campus Sports competitions, Prasanthi Nilayam, 13-1-84)

What Bal Vikas Means To Them

Bhagavan listened with great interest to a speech by a young Bal Vikas student, Mukesh Singly from Gujarat, who described the benefits he had derived from the Bal Vikas course, at the valedictory meeting in the Poornachandra hall on December 30.

While expressing gratefulness, on behalf of all Bal Vikas students of the world, to Bhagavan for having given them the Bal Vikas course, Mukesh referred to the mini-cyclone which had disrupted the arrangements for the stay of the Bal Vikas students attending the World Rally and said: "We were happy even then, for Bhagavan has taught us that life is a challenge and we have to face it. Are not rain and cyclone also your Leela to test us, children of Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas?" he asked.

Another Reminder

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has categorically declared on many occasions that He has no successor or delegate or disciple, spokesman or representative or intermediary, medium or vehicle or agent. He deals directly with us, wherever we are, *as Himself*. "Sanathana Sarathi" has been warning readers against fakes, who claim to have these roles assigned to them by Bhagavan, and against those who parade their devotion in order to earn adoration from the gullible public. In spite of this, instances of clever individuals who pretend to receive communications directly from Bhagavan and who deceive the public into the belief that they are specially blessed by Bhagavan are reported from Kerala, Kodagu, Lucknow and other parts of India, as well as from New Zealand, England, Sri Lanka, etc. These persons assume names indicating closeness to Sri Sathya Sai Baba and manipulate photographs to bolster their claims of special relationship with Him. They mislead people, announcing that Bhagavan has authorised them to heal the sick on His behalf or build institutions in His name. It has therefore become necessary to warn readers and through them the people of all lands of the tactics of these unfortunate impostors.

—(Ed.)

Leela Kaivalya Vahini

(Stream of cosmic sport divine)

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Sadhaka: All those who are loyal to Bharatiya culture accept the Vedas as authoritative sources for every aspect of life. They assert that the Vedas are the roots of their faith. What exactly does Veda mean? For what reason has the Veda acquired such importance?

Sai: My dear fellow! Born in India that is Bharat, parading yourself as a Bharatiya, you are not aware of what Veda means! Well. Veda is the name for a mass of divine knowledge. Veda teaches the Truth that cannot be revised or reversed by the passage of time through the three stages—past, present and future. The Veda ensures welfare and happiness for the three worlds. It confers peace and security on human society. The Veda is the collation of Words that are Truth, which were visualised by sages who had attained the capacity to receive them into their enlightened awareness. In reality, the Word is the very Breath of God, the Supreme Person. The unique importance of the Veda rests on this fact.

Sadhaka: But, in the field of worldly life, on the daily, material stage, what light can one expect from the Veda?

Sai: Every being that lives in the world strives to possess what it desires and avoid what it dislikes. Know that the Veda instructs how to succeed in both these endeavours. That is to say, it

lays down what has to be done and what should not be done. When these prescriptions and prohibitions are followed, one can earn the good and avoid the evil. Veda is concerned with both the material and the spiritual, both this world and the beyond. If truth must be told all Life Is Veda-filled. One cannot but observe its injunctions. `Veda' is derived from `vid' which means `to know'. So, Veda means and includes all knowledge, Jnana. Man is distinguished from other animals by the Jnana that he is endowed with. Devoid of Jnana, he is but a beast, a pashu.

Sadhaka: They say, the Vedas are numberless, without end (Ananta). Are they all full repositories of Jnana?

Sai: "Anantho vai Vedah." The Vedas are infinite. But, note that, in the beginning, there was just one Veda. Later, it was dealt with as Three and subsequently as Four.

Sadhaka: Why was the one divided into many? What special need was met thereby?

Sai: Since the Veda was vast and limitless, it was difficult for ordinary men to study it. Moreover, it would take endless time to complete the study. So, those who wished to learn were overwhelmed by fear. So, very few showed earnestness to study the Veda. For these reasons, something had to be done to make the study within reach of all who sought to learn. The rks or hymns of praise in the Veda were therefore separated from the rest and grouped under the title, Rk-Samhita; the Yajus or formulae for sacrifices were taken apart and placed under the title Yajus-samhita; The Sama verses (capable of musical rendering) were grouped under the title Sama-samhita and the Atharva mantras (formulae and spells) were collected under the title Atharva-samhita.

Sadhaka: Who was the person who grouped them in these collections?

Sai: It was Vyasa, who was a partial manifestation of Narayana (God, Vishnu) Himself. He was the son of Sage Parashara. He had mastered the scriptures and spiritual treatises. He was a great sage himself. He was a skilful coordinator. In order to promote the welfare of mankind, he compiled the Veda in four parts and facilitated righteous living by all. He divided the Vedas into four and prepared five Samhitas.

Sadhaka: The four Vedas are the four Samhitas, as you explained now. What purpose does the fifth serve? How did the extra one arise?

Sai: The Yajus-samhita (Yajurveda) has separated itself into two, the Krishna-Yajurveda-samhita and the Shukla-Yajurveda-samhita. So, the total became five. The process did not stop there. Each of these samhitas developed three separate complementary components. These scriptural texts emerged in order to enlighten people in different states of awareness and different levels of consciousness. The purpose was to enable every one to benefit by the guidance and cross the sea of suffering. Therefore, there is no trace of conflict in any of these texts.

Sadhaka: What are those three elaborations, those three subsidiary texts called?

Sai: Brahmanas, Aranyakas and Upanishads.

Sadhaka: What are Brahmanas?

Sai: They are explanatory texts dealing with mantras or ritual formulae. They describe clearly the sacrificial rites and the ceremonies that have to be observed while performing them. There are many texts like Aitareya Brahmana, Taittiriya Brahmana, Sathapatha Brahmana and Gopatha Brahmana.

Sadhaka: And, what are Aranyakas?

Sai: They are in verse and prose. They are mainly intended for the guidance of those, who after passing through the stages of Brahmacharya (spiritual studies) and Garhastya (family life), assume Vanaprastha (life as recluse in forests). Aranya means 'forest'. That is to say, these are texts to be perused and meditated upon silently in lonely hermitages. They deal with the duties and responsibilities of the final stage of active life (Karma Kanda), the stage preliminary to the totally spiritual stage (Brahma Kanda).

(To be continued)

SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY: II

The Destiny of Science

Throughout his history, man has sought to understand both the nature of humanity itself and that of the things surrounding it. His deeply inquisitive and gregarious nature, which anthropologists consider as characteristic only of the "homosapien," led him to the pursuit of knowledge, a knowledge over and above the practical sort he required in order to survive and to adapt to his environment.

The means available to him for the systematic study of himself and his surroundings involved mainly observation, classification of facts and experimentation aiming at the establishment of verifiable general "laws." The ulterior motive for man's desire for knowledge was the desire to understand the process of reality—for it is in fact a process—which would in turn allow him to assess and evaluate the nature of humanity and its place in the processes around it. `What is man? What is his origin and which his destination?

The accomplishment of this difficult task, which man took it upon himself to carry out, entailed the use of concepts such as explanation, verification, experimentation, control, evidence, prediction, deduction and induction, definitional systems (axioms, theorems, postulates) and artificial languages.

All of these concepts and their implementations, in effect, constitute nothing less than the actual definition of science itself.

The etymology of the word science brings us to the Latin "sciens," which means having knowledge and is derived from the verb "scire" to know. To Know. To know all there is to be known. To know the Truth...

It should be pointed out at the outset that in this present humble discussion, the word "science" will be used to signify only science for the sake of science and will not refer to the applied sciences, where progress today may be a verifiable fact but where it is not at all certain whether this fact is beneficial or detrimental for humanity.

It therefore appears that science was originally a means in man's efforts to acquire knowledge of himself and of the Universe. But it was not the only means and perhaps it was not even the prescribed means, for, since science involved observation, experimentation, etc. it was outward directed. In other words, science was based on the assumption that man himself lacked the knowledge he was seeking, that he in fact was not a party to it and that, therefore, he could take the position of an uninvolved, non-participating observer.

"The finger philosophy"

All these assumptions would be fine and would present no problem whatsoever, were one to consider things from the point of view of what can be referred to as the "finger philosophy."

The finger philosophy makes what is felt by the fingers, or what is sensed by any of our sensory organs, a criterion of ultimate reality. This conception of the world may, in the words of Paul Brunton, be essential from a practical point of view because it has a limited truth of its own but rising to the philosophical point of view, we discover that it does not resist scrutiny." It does not exhaust all the possibilities of the Universe. Therefore, as he puts it, "reason reverses the judgement of the senses and philosophy silences the voice of opinion."

Today however, the standpoint of the finger philosophy is highly unacceptable and it is through recent developments in science itself that it has become so. In his Essay on Nature, Emerson stated that "culture inverts the vulgar views of Nature ...Children, it is true, believe in the external world. The belief that it only appears to exist is an afterthought." It appears then that a certain degree of maturity is necessary for conceptualization beyond that of the finger philosophy.

And indeed, it did require the maturity, the coming of age of science, in order that it reach the stage where it became apparent that no longer were facts or events absolute.

It was Einstein's theory of relativity which established that the time and space of an event (concepts which the layman of today still considers absolute) depend on the point of view of the observer. Special dependence is easy to understand. Anyone who has dealt with the arts has no difficulty in understanding the concept of "perspective", or the physical location of the observer in relation to the observed. Temporal dependence, on the other hand, is a little more difficult to

accept, as it involves rejection of man's favourite fixed, absolute, time itself. Temporal dependence in effect means that the sequence of events alters as the velocity of the observer changes.

Another significant aspect of the evolution of science, an aspect which is of extreme import as it involves a change in our concepts of what constitutes reality, is that of the energy - matter relationship.

Matter and energy

Matter to the layman of today and to the scientist of yesteryear, entailed a certain degree of solidity, which varied, as a function of the form in which matter appeared; in other words on whether or not matter was solid, liquid, or gas, the difference among the three resting only on the degree of "cohesion."

Whatever else the idea of matter may have included, it did not include the idea of a good deal of empty space! And yet today, it is an accepted fact that there is much more space, empty space in the atom than solid substance. This is even more to the point where subatomic particles are concerned. The atom and the various particles contained in it are essentially "space" or energy fields and as a result of the spontaneous transformation of matter into energy and then back into matter, it now becomes difficult, if at all possible, to distinguish between the two. So scientists today believe that matter has no specific existence of its own but rather, that like energy, it is a stage in an endless inter-actional play, an inter-relational pattern of energy, which gives the impression of "solidity," of material substance. We cannot help at this point but be reminded of the words of Heraclitus "no man can twice enter the same river," stating clearly that all existence is in a state of constant change, in a state of flux.

This awareness of matter as essentially "space" leads us to the concept of the "vacuum," the void, which to our times even connotes nothingness and emptiness. But vacuum, for the science of our days, is no longer equated to emptiness but rather it is thought of as containing the potentiality for all creation, all matter of physical substance.

The "becoming" universe

The Universe, thus, is no longer seen by science and specifically by quantum mechanics, as having a structure of inert and stable substance but rather as a series of dynamic events. It is a "becoming," a process, not a thing and certainly not a material one.

If man's Universe is not a material, stable and inert structure, how can man be expected to arrive at an understanding of it through science? For science isolates events, facts, existence and treats each as separate and distinct from all else, placing thus an emphasis on the differences among things. Of necessity, in the scientific method, the scientist assumes the role of the non-participating observer who in no way influences the facts he is studying!

But the fact remains that if all of the Universe is composed of interrelations of energy patterns, man cannot be an exception to this, at least not in his physical, biological sense. And he cannot

but both affect and be affected by whatever he is studying, measuring etc. by the mere fact of his existence alone.

Energy bundles and energy fields do not recognize the physical boundaries that man has set for himself. It is true that for practical purposes, man, at some early stage in his evolution, set his epidermis as the maximum outer limit of himself, of his being. Yet man's physical substance is also subject to the same laws applicable to matter and to the Universe in general. And like all else, man's every particle, man's every cell is imbued with "spirit," the difference between man and other beings being that he has been endowed with the consciousness of his spirit, a consciousness which underlies all his efforts.

And it is consciousness of his spiritual nature, or rather, the form of study which involves the faculties of his spirit, that afforded man the other means available to him in his endeavour to understand himself and his Universe. Spirituality, thus, along with science allowed man the possibility of penetrating the mysteries of existence, non-existence and even beyond both.

The word spirituality is derived from the latin word "spiritus," which means breath. Breath, life-giving force, animating principle. Spirit...the gift of God to man, or even, part of the very breath of God...

The spiritual method

In contrast to the scientific method, the spiritual path is inward-directed. The effort to obtain knowledge and understanding through spirituality involves a reaching into one's self. The assumption here is that man is not separate and distinct from the Universe and that within him is contained all knowledge, or at least the means to all knowledge. He needs to do nothing other than to communicate with his inner reality!

Thus, the concept of the impartial observer is useless here because it is exactly through the lack of impartiality, the involvement of direct experience and the intuition factors which allow the human mind to be rid of the constraints imposed upon it by reason, logic and method as we humans believe them to be. Thus freed, the human mind can afford man the most coherent and complete overview of the Universe and himself.

It would be very much in order here to compare the Universe to a jigsaw puzzle, whose final shape and form one is not aware of. Science, in this case, is the method of putting the puzzle together, whereby each piece is examined separately and as one piece is added on to the other, a new total picture is formed; still incomplete yet new of form. With each new addition of a piece and as the part of the puzzle which has been completed grows larger and larger, so grow the number of sides and shapes in its perimeter, a fact which requires additional effort and study before placing the next piece. Spirituality, on the other hand, gives a general overview of the whole puzzle, while science offers nothing but a disjointed view of the world at best, a view which is both incomplete and temporary. Spirituality allows of a True overview.

It is widely accepted among many scientists today that the direction science is taking appears to be leading it to the examination of aspects, which up to now were considered to belong to the realm of the spirit. Slowly but surely, science is converging towards the spiritual path, considering metaphysical and non-material factors as parts of its domain.

It is not difficult to see that pure science, the science endeavouring to achieve true knowledge, will, if allowed to proceed without violent interruptions, eventually come to meet with spirituality.

The ageless wisdom

And this is hardly odd, or unexpected, for already scientists of great renown accept the fact that many of the concepts that modern science is now dealing with, were long before known to the ancient sages of the world. What science discovers with the help of its cunning instruments, ancient spiritual men discovered with the help of concentrated thought alone.

Just to mention a few of these age-old concepts which are coinciding with the most recent discoveries of science: To begin with, the concept of the Brahman, the Absolute, the One and only, the basis of all existence, is not at all different from that of the newest theory of the creation of the Universe which prevails in science today. The source of the world, the basis of all existence was the great void, the empty space which contained the potentiality of all that can ever possibly exist, in the same way that the seed contains a miniscule whole plant, or that a DNA molecule carries the whole set of characteristics which identify an Individual.

The concept of Maya, or the illusory nature of all existence is now supported by science, as it now ordains that our sensory organs are no longer valid criteria of what constitutes reality.

The concept of an existence not linearly dependent on time, in other words, existence with no beginning and no end but rather existence as a temporary stage in the untiring and inexhaustible process of transformation is also common to spirituality of the past and science of today.

And finally the issue of the likeness, the Unity of all things is also contained in modern science. It is no longer true that our world is an interplay of opposites, for, in fact there are no opposites such as negative vs. positive, cold vs. hot etc. The difference indicated by the convention of these concepts is but a question of difference in degree, a quantitative, not a qualitative difference at all. It is therefore just a relative matter as well and not at all an absolute.

In a speech Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba delivered in Bombay, in May 1983, He said that what is actually required for man to perceive the whole of the Universe which is based on God and God alone, is the synthesis of science and spirituality. Surely this indicates that the ultimate aim of science cannot, should not be different from that of spirituality. It appears in fact to be the case that spirituality is the destiny of science...

The ultimate, final purpose of both science and spirituality is nothing other than the self-realization of man and his development to the point where he has so approached the One

who created him, that he is so very close to Him, that he is no other but Him, part of Him. And in the words of Eddington, whom Sathya Sai Baba mentions in the same speech, "the whole Universe is a part of God."

For all is One, there is only One and the ultimate in man's evolution is the realization of this UNITY which is nothing other than DIVINITY.

—A. Tabourlos, Athens.
(From paper presented at Rome Conference in October, 1983.)

AVATAR VANI:

The Message of Shivaratri

*The 'Chataka' bird yearns for moonbeams cool;
The bee does yearn for honeyed floral charm;
The sick man yearns for curative medicine sweet
The devotees yearn for the Lord in Parthi dwells.*

*That, when known, all is known,
Which unknown, none is known,
That is Brahman, beyond reach of words,
This is the Truth, the Path, the word of Sai.*

Embodiments of the Divine Atma,

Having achieved the rare fortune of a human body, one should ever strive to manifest the excellence which is its credential and to gain, as a result of that manifestation, Divinity Itself. When that is gained, nothing else need be gained. When the vision of That is won, there is nothing more to be visualised. When that is loved, nothing else would appear as worthy of love. All else would be trash and dust. When that is known, all is as good as known.

The 'Chataka' bird is all alert to drink the first few nectarine rain-drops that fall from the cloud. It does not allow either the fearsome typhoon, or the reverberations of thunder or the blinding flashes of lightning or even disastrous bolts from the clouds, to distract its concentration. The Sadhaka, too, should in the same manner fill his heart with the yearning for God and await His nectarine grace of Love, not being distracted or disturbed by the joy and grief, profit and loss, honour and dishonour, that pummel him from all sides, or by the ridicule, the opposition or even hatred directed on him by his parents, kinsmen, and companions.

But, most Sadhakas today are only acting the part and pretending to be spiritually progressing. Their prayers and petitions to the Lord rise, not from the heart, but only from the lips. If the Lord

takes them at their word and presents Himself before them offering them the Liberation they demand, they start stuttering and shivering. "Lord! I asked for Liberation, only as a repetitive formula. I do not desire Liberation, if it involves deserting my wife and children and my hard-earned wealth. Confer this gift on me, after my death. That would be more welcome."

There was a woodcutter once who collected and bundled a heavy load of fuel one day, since he needed extra money that day. On the jungle track, he waited long for some one who could help to lift the load on his head. Pining over his tragic poverty he cursed his fate. He prayed pathetically to Yama, the God of Death. "Why have you forgotten me. Take me into your custody. End, this miserable life." And Yama appeared in answer to the call "Come, I shall take you to my Kingdom," Yama said. The woodcutter replied, "Not so soon, my dear friend. But, you can do me another service. Please lift this bundle of fuel and place it on my head."

These Sadhakas bargain with God. They try to use the Lord to solve their problems and promise to adore Him when He brings them prosperity. They believe they can tempt Him with gifts of money, coconuts or cranial hair, as if they possess them by their own unaided skill! No. Offer Him steadfast faith, pure unselfish Love. Man has not tried to understand the magnificence of Love, its precious possibilities. It is far more valuable than tons and tons of erudition and miles—long titles before one's name. Place these on one pan of the balance called 'Life' and place one single drop of Love Divine in the other. The drop will outweigh the junk.

The satwic quality

The Sadhaka must adhere to Satwa ideal, a serene balanced equanimity. His inborn nature and social nurture might help him in this, but he must consciously and steadily cultivate this perseverance to attain purity of thought, word and deed. It is wrong to attribute the ups and downs in one's life to the will of God; they are due to the cultivation or neglect of this quality of perseverance.

Expansive Love, purity of intention and an eagerness to sacrifice—these three are the criteria for the Satwic quality. They are the chief limbs of the spiritual body which require attention. Mental health and spiritual well-being depend on these limbs. The assertion, "I take refuge in Buddha" must be based on an illumined intellect. "I take refuge in Sangha" must therefore urge the Sadhaka to utilise the intellect as an instrument for the service of society or sangha. When the third statement, "I take refuge in Dharma" is made, it directs the Sadhaka to utilise it for strengthening and promoting righteousness, morality and virtue. The path of Love is the path of Dharma. Love results in enthusiastic service. Who deserves Love most? Nothing on earth deserves pure Love more than God, and if one is aware of God in man, embodiments of Divinity.

Everyone has passed through numberless lives in the past, lives spent in utter selfishness. So, egoistic impulses enslave him very drastically even now, preventing unselfish Love from sprouting and spreading. God seeks in man Love and Law. Love has to be regulated by Law. Without Law, Love-cannot expand. It will be narrow and crooked. They are the negative and the positive.

Love implies understanding and consequently, sympathy and compassion. These confer Ananda. But man is lacking in Love and so in Ananda also. When men form conflicting groups and plot to destroy each other, how can joy and peace reside in them? Ancient myths speak of wars of extermination between Gods and demons and between men and Rakshasas. But history today has to record wars between Rakshasas who call themselves men.

Love is directed towards selfish ends. Sacrifice and charity are indulged in for the sake of self-aggrandizement. A person donates ten rupees and insists on the fact being published in a ten-inch long headline. People take part in social service in order to advertise themselves. How can the sweet contents be consumed when the bottle is tightly closed by the two corks—pomp and personal publicity. These have to be removed by the screw of selflessness. Then the innate virtues of Love and sacrifice can emerge and elevate your lives.

Fast and vigil

The nature of man is a mixture of progressive and regressive characteristics. He must take note of this and foster the former, to the exclusion of the latter. The will to renounce, to share, to give up, is a precious virtue. Curiosity, the longing to know, is another quality which must be used to know the Reality which appears as Many and Momentary. This knowledge can be attained only when the consciousness is purified, by the grace of God. Holy days like Shivaratri are marked out in order to impress upon man's mind his duty to impose a 'fast' on the senses and a 'vigil' on his intelligence to keep away polluting impulses and inclinations. This is the Day when Siva consumed the deadly poison that threatened to destroy the world and saved mankind from perdition. The aspirant for Divine grace has to remember this day with gratitude. He must not exult when his happiness is promoted, nor disheartened when misery becomes his lot. "Thy will, not mine" shall be his constant assertion to himself. This is seldom the case. Few seekers seek to unravel the intention of God, to tread the path that leads to Him, to follow the ideals He lays down. They follow their own instincts and judgements and get distress and despair as reward. They are not aware of the sacrilege they commit. They proclaim that God is the inner motivator and that He is present everywhere but they behave as if He is absent in the places they do not like Him to be. They fritter away precious time in dry discussions and controversies about God. Each one can explore the Truth of God only as far as his capacity—moral, intellectual and mental—can delve into the mystery. One can collect from the ocean only as much water as his vessel holds. God is immeasurably vast; He is beyond the reach of the most daring imagination. A pupil of a particular standard in school has to study the texts prescribed for pupils of that level of intelligence. Annamacharya, the mystic poet, realised the limitation imposed by one's own failings, He sang.

"To what extent our minds do reach
To that extent your vision we get."

God appears to each one in the Form and the magnitude of glory which he can contain. The feeling of separation from God, the Source and Sustenance, is a laudable quality. Nursing it and fostering it can help to consecrate one's heart. Do not allow the mind to dwell on the faults and

vices of others; it will be contaminated thereby. Fix it on the fairness and virtues of others; it will be sanctified thereby.

Unwavering faith

I know that during moments of emotional frenzy, you set aside your real nature and you indulge in abusing others or wish that they come to harm or exult over their distress. Such evil thoughts get implanted in your own minds and grow wild, yielding for your consumption, distress and dishonour in return. Why worry about others? Speak to them if you like them. If you do not like them, leave them alone. Why seek faults in them and talk ill of them? To do so is to invite spiritual downfall. Such people lose all the gains they hope to secure by japa, puja, dhyana, or darshan. They will remain bitter despite all these sadhanas, like the bitter gourd which a pilgrim carried with him, intending to make it sweet by dipping it in holy waters.

The mind of man has to undergo transformation. It must promote not bondage but liberation. It must turn god-ward, and Inward, not world-ward and outward. Then only can attempts at economic, political and social transformation succeed in uplifting man's destiny. The mind plays many tricks to please you and give you a great opinion about yourselves. It revels in hypocrisy, riding on two horses at the same time. You may prostrate before Swami and declare that you have surrendered. But, once you are away, you may behave otherwise and allow faith to fade away. Even the thought that you have not benefitted from the puja or japam you do, should not pollute your faith. To practise Sadhana is your duty, your innermost urge, your genuine activity. Leave the rest to the will of God. This must be your resolve on holy Shivaratri.

—*Prasanthi Nilayam, 29-2-84*

SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY: I

The Quest for Universal Consciousness

Why is there an almost total absence of spiritual insights and thought in the theories and practices of science? In my field of psychiatry, I have been particularly struck by the absence of any serious consideration of God, the soul or devotion. Coupled to this, the world today seems to be, as Sai Baba has said, "in the grip of a supreme moral and spiritual crisis. People everywhere are feeling frustrated and helpless and anxiously wondering what is in store for humanity. While science has overcome the barriers of time, distance and nationality, it has done little to promote better understanding between man and man and nation and nation."

Could it be that this lack of appreciation for the spiritual dimension on the part of science and the crisis in morals and values in the world today are related? Could it be that a science without a strong spiritual foundation loses its sense of moral responsibility for the welfare of mankind in general and, more than we have heretofore realized or been willing to admit, even promotes chaos and violence? Because of this precarious and dangerous world situation, science doesn't

have the luxury of avoiding serious consideration of our role in the development of the present global crisis. We must wonder if we are not seeing something correctly.

Sai Baba tells us what many of us have already observed—that much of scientific work is motivated by selfish desires devoid of a deep sense of reverence for life and service to mankind. So many billions of dollars are spent by scientists set upon the task of collecting information without a deep sense of moral responsibility for alleviating the suffering in the world. Sai Baba tells us that knowledge without proper action is useless—and action without knowledge is foolish. Take nuclear arms experimentation, for example. Here knowledge without proper action is certainly useless, and action without knowledge based on deep spiritual insight is absolutely foolish if not downright dangerous. There is ample evidence that scientific exploration in this area, devoid of a sensible spiritual attitude and approach, has in fact brought the world to the brink of annihilation. No matter what certain articulate scientists say to the contrary, the poisoning of our atmosphere, air, ocean, land and food supply by toxic chemical and radiation pollutants seem a glaring testimony to this fact. Because of the dangerous world condition, the possibility of a major moral crisis in science today and our possible role in promoting world-wide instability, the scientific community must take a new hard look at the central spiritual questions—does God exist, does man have a soul?

Unity of creation

Fired by a vision of God's loving omnipresent consciousness and inspired by a deep devotion to Him, science would become aware of the fundamental Unity of creation. More than the sense of being linked by our contact during the course of daily activity or even by a deep empathy, the oneness and unity taught by the great spiritual teachers is of another dimension. "Tat Twam Asi"—"That Thou Art"—is the bold Hindu declaration—I and the other are actually one—there is no separation of one from another—what appears so is only delusion. Even the furthest star and the closest speck of sand—that we actually are. And one day through our spiritual work we will grow to realize that our individual consciousness can and does merge back into Universal consciousness, and that we are actually one—and as Sai Baba so boldly declares, "We are all divine—all one with Universal consciousness."

Surely if science understood and appreciated the depth of this spiritual insight and seriously devoted itself to God, it would treat all with a deep humble reverence. Our soil and atmosphere would be considered sacred and human beings would be perceived as embodiments of divinity. Such a science would demand its finding be applied in a new moral and just way to the needs of the suffering and poor. A science inspired by this kind of spiritual insight couldn't help but be a profoundly moving instrument for the establishment of peace and happiness on earth. And in turn this practice of love, reverence and devotion is the very approach which promotes consciousness expansion, which will move science to awareness of even the deepest mysteries of reality.

Why has science ignored the wealth of material from spiritual systems? One may speculate that the spiritual dimension which saints and God-men say lies outside the realm of the senses and the mind as well, is so subtle as to defy scientific exploration. Or perhaps, this lack of appreciation in the social sciences represents a criticism and scepticism toward a system which in many cases

has given rise to overly punitive practices damaging to psychological health. Then, again, some of us may intuitively grasp that this dimension is important, but don't know how to integrate it into what we know. But even more than this, I found that this avoidance, this marked resistance that I have personally observed in psychotherapists from all theoretical persuasions, represents something even more fundamental—a basic and inherent problem that the mind has in dealing with the spirit—a hidden conflict which cries for illumination.

"Mortal" fear

At the crux of the problem is man's mind, a mind which Sai Baba says is responsible for man's bondage as well as his liberation. This mind may selfishly and persistently resist serious inquiry into the spiritual reality of unity and oneness because the mind's basic nature is duality. That is, the mind sees separateness and distinction and not unity, and to seriously consider a reality beyond duality threatens its own existence. I have given some thought to this issue and have identified in my own clinical experience a real and central fear which the mind has as it opens to spirituality. I have labelled the fear "mortal" fear as it is unique to mortals, as this fear keeps us mortal and hides us from our own immortality, and as it can strike a mortal blow to all of us if we don't find a way to transcend it. It is the fear of challenging pain and suffering and confronting our assumed mortality more directly and openly. For transcending duality means being unaffected by the pleasures and pains, the drives and impulses which tell us one thing is different and better than another. And to be fully free of duality one must not be attached to the experience of a distinct and separate ego. Here is perhaps the most serious challenge of all—the fear arising from man's ego when it considers the possibility of its own nonexistence. For saints and God-men have described in spiritual literature, that in order for one to fully realize oneness with all, the ego, our sense of separate self, must dissolve. This has been described by spiritual aspirants as an experienced death before a rebirth. Jesus has said that one must die to be reborn.

For science to seriously consider the spiritual dimension, it must be willing to face this mortal fear. The scientific approach which puts so much emphasis on the reality of the outer world which it investigates through the senses—weighing, measuring, contrasting, Isolating, separating and comparing, —must lessen its strong attachment and belief in duality and begin to entertain the possibility of an underlying unity which cannot be perceived through the mind or the senses. It must soften to the possibility that there may be something more than the relative and temporary outer world—there may be an absolute world upon which all of this is based—a world that can be perceived only through the heart and through the process of devotion. What a challenging Idea to a science which is so centered in mind and duality! By challenging duality, spirituality challenges science at its very centre. It takes a true scientist—a most open and courageous investigator—to meet such a challenge and bridge the gap which now separates spirituality from science.

Baba and the scientist

In December of 1978 I was present during a small interview in which Sai Baba discussed the relationship of science and spirituality. Among those present was a friend, Professor Preben Plum, professor and chairman of the Department of Pediatrics at the University Hospital in Copenhagen, Denmark, and his friend Hagen Hasselback, a Danish professional filmmaker of

some forty years. Sai Baba addressed Professor Plum, "What is science? What is a scientist?" Then followed this lovely discourse and exchange:

Sai Baba continued, "Science is away of looking at the outer world through the mind. The mind's nature is duality—it dissects, compares, contrasts, separates, categorizes—tries to define and bind reality in terms of words and concepts.

"All of this cosmos, the entire material universe, as vast an expanse as it seems, is just a flake of froth on the ocean of reality. And the mind which views it through its senses and tries to grasp and comprehend it—this mind is even bigger than the cosmos, it can eventually encompass and understand it. But even this vast mind is like a little wavelet on the ocean of reality. You are the ocean. You're not the flake of froth and you're not the wavelet—you are beyond separation—you are everything—you are the ocean.

"The mind sees separateness, duality, but there is another way of experiencing reality—as Unity. It is through the heart, by the process of love. Love reaches out to merge with the other—two become one. Love sees unity. For the limited little wavelet self to know that it is the ocean it must merge back into the ocean—through love. The scientist says, 'What is this'—this which lies in the outer world and is seen through the senses. The spiritual aspirant says 'What is that'—that which lies beyond the outer world, the senses and beyond the mind as well. 'That' is the ocean from which all 'this' arises."

"Who are you?" Baba continued—and for emphasis, he pointed to us and repeated, "Who are you—who are you? You are three people. First, there is the one that you think you are—that is the body, —next, the one that others think you are, —that is the mind, your personality. And then there's the one that you really are—that is the infinite, the eternal—the ocean. You are that—that which lies beyond the cosmos and the mind—you are eternal."

Baba continued, "Why is it that everybody says I?" And then pointing to some of us in the room for emphasis he continued, "She says I—he says I—you say I—we all look different but there is this common sense of I-ness. What is the meaning behind this? We have to look beyond this constantly changing world of different names and forms in order to see the underlying, unchanging and immutable reality—the reality that always was and always will be—the underlying unity which gives rise to all this diversity. How can the scientist with his mind try to grasp the reality of the spiritual aspirant? As long as he sees separateness he cannot grasp unity. The mind sees separateness—love sees unity. The only way that the wavelet can know the ocean is to merge back into it—to become one with it. Love is the way—merge with love."

Baba paused a moment and then became more animated. "My name is Sathya, truth. I represent that which is beyond mind. I have come to show you who you are—the reality that lies beyond mind. How can a scientist comprehend me? I am at all places at all times—everything that ever was or will be. I can transmute the earth into sky and the sky into earth," Baba paused a moment with a playful twinkle in his eye—"But I don't do it often because it causes inconvenience to some people."

We all laughed and Baba was immensely joyful with our happiness. He continued, "How can the scientist understand my reality? See, how can you understand this?" And with that Baba became even more excited and began to move his hand in a large circle in the air. In a startling, electrifying instant Sai Baba was holding a beautiful silver ring. It had come as if in a flash of light—in an instant beyond time and space—and at such a moving point in the spiritual discourse that we were left stunned and gasping. I almost fell over. The mind simply becomes humbled and lost in the face of this magnificent mystery. It is as if one is sitting in front of the creative force that gave birth to all matter.

Baba beamed with happiness. He showed the beautiful ring to everyone and then, looking at the professor, said, "How can you understand this?" He took the professor's hand in his own and Plum turned into a little child. It is something to see, this instant unmaking of a person, this turning even the strongest and most reluctant into an innocent giggling child. Baba slipped the ring on Plum's right ring finger and it was a perfect fit. Right then and there, Plum became an innocent giggling child. Could I have witnessed in this intimate personal experience the hint of a more general major wedding between science and spirituality which is to occur in the near future?

Consciousness—a creative force

What might be needed for an ailing sceptical scientific community is evidence that God exists—a conviction based upon experience. In the behavioural sciences there is a growing body of evidence mounting from such diverse sources as meditation, biofeedback, dream psychology, out of body and post-death experiences, age and past life regression during hypnosis, altered states of consciousness and experimental ESP phenomena in the field of parapsychology suggesting that consciousness is more than what science formerly thought. The acceptance of clairvoyance and telepathy, of the possibility of knowing about past lives and future events suggest that man's consciousness may extend beyond time and space and that there may actually be a Universal Eternal consciousness that is beyond time and space of which we are all a part and into which we can all merge. This idea is not new to western psychology. Carl Jung introduced the concept of the collective unconscious and the idea that we may ultimately be part of a higher dimension of reality beyond time and space. Yet I feel that this idea must be expanded and made even clearer—as resistance to it is so strong and as it has extremely important implications for science in general. Yes, consciousness may be far more than a function or product of the individual mind centered in the physical brain as has been the basic assumption of mainstream Western psychology. It may be nothing less than the creative force of the Universe, giving rise to the physical cosmos and the mind as well. I believe that we are drawing closer to scientific confirmation of the intuitive insights of the great spiritual systems which see mind as well as the material cosmos itself as creations of a Universal Consciousness (the Divine). If so, then morality may be the major force directing the unfolding of man's individual consciousness as it evolves through mind to finally transcend it and eventually awaken to its own divinity. The scientific community today is in a unique position to make critical observations regarding the nature of consciousness and the possibility of Universal consciousness. It is my strong belief that today, perhaps more than ever before in all of recorded history, we have the chance of observing

striking evidence of Universal consciousness in a living man who can be approached and measured. I am referring to Sathya Sai Baba whom I have personally known for the past eleven and a half years.

I personally have seen hundreds of miracles in India, as well as materializing ash and a sweet nectar called amrita on pictures of Sai Baba in the U.S., 12,000 miles from his physical presence. Although these and thousands of "other reported miracles have not been observed under controlled laboratory conditions, the sheer numbers and the calibre of people who are documenting these phenomena, make this compelling evidence to support the contention of a Universal consciousness which has no boundaries. This extraordinary opportunity to study the deepest mysteries of consciousness must not be treated lightly. The scientific community must rivet its attention to an event of this magnitude with its potential for such far-reaching implications for all of us. For if science is convinced of a universal consciousness, or God, then what follows must be a serious integration of spiritual insight and scientific approach. Science would take on a new morality centered in God. Most significant would be a new appreciation for the Unity of all creation—a new respect and reverence toward all creation—a deeper appreciation of Christ's teaching, "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you." Science would attain a whole new sense of responsibility for its actions, and the way its knowledge is applied for the welfare of all mankind.

When science is filled with this sense of duty toward mankind and reverence and love toward God we will then reach our greatest successes. For it just may be that such a devotional science would win the love of God, and He in His infinite grace, may allow us to be instruments of his greatness and shower the grandest kind of success and plenty upon our fields. When God is again recognized as supreme authority, then we'll realize a truly Golden Age. When science starts the day with love, fills the day with love, spends the day with love and ends the day with love, as Sai Baba teaches, "this is the way to God" —then the world will experience a deeper realization of unity, oneness and love and we will surely establish enduring peace and happiness for all.

—Dr. Sam Sandweiss.
***(From a paper presented to the Sai Conference
in Rome, October 30, 31, 1983)***

Reform the body, reconstruct the mind; regulate the way of living, then, the country will become automatically strong and prosperous, Do not wail that it is a mud pot if it contains nectar; it is far better than having a gold pot with poison in it. The land may be rich, but, if life is mean, it is deplorable. It does not matter if the standard of life is poor, provided the way of life is pure, full of prema, humility, fear-of-sin, and reverence for elders.

—Baba

To the Prodigals

Swami Vivekananda has said: "There is nothing that is absolutely evil. The devil has a place as well as God, else he would not be here. Just as I told you it is through hell that we pass to heaven. Our mistakes have place here. Go on: Do not look back if you have done something that is not right. How do you believe you could be what you are today had you not made these mistakes before? Bless your mistakes, then. They have been angels, unawares. Blessed be torture. Blessed be happiness. Do not care what be your lot. Hold on to the ideal. March on."

We should not imagine that we are condemned souls. We may feel guilty about our lapses and develop a complex of fear to go nearer to Bhagavan Baba. Unless we seek the help of a doctor we cannot be cured of our diseases. After diagnosing our diseases a doctor will prescribe certain drugs and restrictions on our movements or diet. We have to comply with the doctor's advice. We may have to make some sacrifices and forgo certain luxuries if we wish to restore our health to normal.

Here is a word of encouragement from Bhagavan: "To insist that a person has to be good and pure and that he has to observe certain codes of conduct before he could be considered a candidate for sadhana tantamounts to saying that a person must be free from disease and in perfect health in order to deserve the medical attention. This is absurd on the face of it. Purity, goodness etc., are the consequences of the journey towards God and the sadhana prescribed for that journey. The drug will induce health and cheer; health and cheer should not be prerequisites for taking the drug in."

Spiritual remedies

Bhagavan, the supreme doctor for our sickly souls, has prescribed good drugs and conditions for our Improvement. They are certain norms and ethical principles of discipline as to how a Sai devotee should live and behave in society. He says: "Study well the disciplinary rules laid down for all who wish to be in the Prasanthi Nilayam. The rules are for your own good. Wherever you are you make the place a Prasanthi Nilayam. Become sharers in my history. Do not get far from Me. You have acquired nearness through the accumulated good fortune of many births. If you cut this contact and get away a time will come when you will weep outside the gate clamouring for entry. Be free from silly delusions and doubts, be free from tawdry desires and I shall take you unto Me"—(SS Speaks-II)

"I was telling the permanent residents of Prasanthi Nilayam five points of discipline which they have to keep in mind. I shall tell you about them, so that your homes too may be turned into Prasanthi Nilayam and through subtle influences exercised by them, the villages and towns, may be converted into abodes of peace. This will be a good step in establishing Prasanthi in the Nation and finally the world as a whole. The five points are:

- 1) **Silence:** The practice of silence is the very first step in sadhana. It makes the other steps easy and worthwhile. In the silence you will hear His footsteps.

- 2) Cleanliness: Cleanliness is next to Godliness: Outward and inner cleanliness are needed to welcome God into your hearts.
- 3) Service: Service to others in distress gives you mental peace and saves you from the agony experienced, for the other is no less than you yourself. You are equally affected by the grief or joy of another, for the same Atma is in all. The taste of sea water everywhere is the same, whether you sample it from this wave or some other. All waves are of the sea, from the sea, and merge in the sea.
- 4) Love flowing from you (without calculating the response and the reward, the reaction or the result) towards all beings. For this, too, the realisation of the basic non-difference is essential.
- 5) Hatelessness: 'Adweshtas-sarva-bhoothaanaam'. No being is to be looked down upon as inferior or secondary or unimportant. In the scheme of the Almighty each has its destined role. Do not slight any being; if you do, it is as sacrilegious as slighting God Himself." (Baba)

(To be concluded)

—S. Narayanan

True Devotion

Devotion is mainly silent (mental), at times vocal, and sometimes physical, by body action, but in all cases by decision. It is a product mostly of spiritual desire. Yet, sometimes unfortunately, and unpleasantly, negative by hollow pretence or deceit.

Let us get on to something by way of definition. *Under a wholesome devotion* we find: 1. *The fact, quality, or state of being devoted*; 2. *Piety*: Devoutness; 3. *Religious worship*; 4. *Prayers*; 5. *Loyalty; faithfulness; deep affection*, 6. *The act of devoting*. Under *devout*: *Pious, reverent, fervent, loving, sincere, dedicated and so on*

Devotion by method or structure may be formal or informal—Divine surrender, Divine Captivity. It involves Faith, Discrimination, Detachment and non-detachment. There are dual and non-dual elements. Generally speaking, a concerned concentration is required where a studied effort is made. When true *Love* is exacted, it must of necessity become automatic, one-pointed and effortless. The mechanics range from the simple to the complex. Devotion in its pristine, jewelled character unlocks the treasures of Heaven. Ego and Vanity involve pitiless, perverse mercenary aims and bargaining with the object of devotion. Spiritual devotion must be pure and unsullied. It must not indicate any intolerance.

Devotion may be single or individual as in one's self, collective or in groups as in a family, city, nation or far-flung outer celestial worlds themselves.

Heart-bound devotion seeks no reward, no returns. Yet, a super-value return currency lies in the sanctity and purity of a simple consecrated heart. Let it be your abiding sanctuary in life. Tumble and unlock the mind and yield its substance, to Love. It is your key!

Quotations from "The Teachings of Sri Sathya Sat Baba of India" by N. Kasturi:

"Strengthen your faith in God in whatever form you worship. Firmly believe that everything is made holy by his name. In this way, practise your *devotion*.

Peace is true *devotion* towards God, towards Truth and towards the creative law of life (the DHARMA).

The guru is that through which your mind gets attached to God. If you consider Supreme Consciousness as the guru and practise spiritual discipline with unwavering love, the Lord himself will appear before you and give you instruction, just as a guru. Or, he may so bless you as a result of your intense *devotion* that you may meet a guru who is capable of initiating you into the highest truth.

Devotion and activity should go together. Different opinions must be like pictures seen with two eyes which, when brought together, reveal a complete and proper picture.

Devotion directed to the Lord is called Divine Love and is the easiest of all paths for realization of the goal."

Quotations from The Bible (King James Version, Acts 17-23):

"For as I passed by, and beheld your *devotions*, I found an altar with the inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." This wonderful statement was made by Saint Paul as he spoke in the midst of Mars' hill in the city of Athens, Greece. He began his famous speech with the much quoted first line "*Ye men of Athens,*" then presently noted their devotion alter to their '*Unknown God*' who was, he declared: "*The True God* and was the very same one that he came there to extol and praise in *devotion* and worship."

Let us, then, listen to John Greeleaf Whittier, in his pointed poem "His Living, Presence":

Immortal Love, forever full,
Forever flowing free,
Forever shared, forever whole,
A never ebbing sea!

O, Lord and Master of us all
Whate'er our name or sign,
We own Thy sway, we hear Thy call

We test our lives by thine.
Amen.

—*James W. Johnson, Cleveland, Ohio*

What a "Legacy"!

Gondia (Maharashtra): It is said, "God fulfils Himself in many ways." Members of the Sathya Sai Seva Samiti, Gondia (Bhandara district) realised the truth of this in an extraordinary manner recently.

With a view to inspiring members of the public to engage themselves in devotional activity, the Samiti invited as many persons as possible to devote a few minutes every day for 18 days to writing the name of the deity of their choice as many times as they could. Between December 25th and January 12, it was hoped to collect in this way a crore of names. When all the lists were collected on the target date, it was found that the total came to only 12 lakhs. Although this was not a small figure by itself, the organisers were a little disappointed and prayed to Baba for reaching the target by 15th January when they wished to celebrate Makara Sankranti and perform Sathyanarayana Puja in the presence of all the writers of the divine names.

Two hours before the puja was to begin, a remarkable thing happened, which seemed to be the Lord's response to the devotees' prayers. An old lady came in to the hall where the puja was being arranged and whispered to the President of the Samiti: "My husband had taken a vow to write one crore names of God as Namajapa and offer them at Rameswaram. He had completed his task, but could not fulfill his desire, as he passed away before he could go to Rameswaram. For the last 15 years the family has been trying to fulfill the departed soul's wish, but in vain. This is his legacy. I want to hand it over to you to be offered to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba." So saying, she handed over the huge bundle and left.

The lady is a resident of Gondia and is known to Sai devotees. The manner in which she chose to offer her husband's Namajapa writings just at the time when the Sai devotees were feeling rather disappointed showed that Bhagavan in His own mysterious way prompted the lady to make the offering and fulfill the undertaking of the Sai devotees. Thereafter the puja was completed and the Namajapa writings were offered to Bhagavan in prayerful ecstasy.

—*Y. L. K., Gondia*

"With You in My Heart"

Through the barren lands
 On the snowy mountains
 In the ever-green forests .
 I roamed in vain-In search of You.
 In the depths of the ocean
 Up in the sky
 In the heavenly bodies-in vain
 I searched for You.
 Exhausted to the point of collapse
 I returned to my tiny dwelling
 With eyes closed I thought of You.
 "Where hast Thou hidden Thyself?"
 Answered an inner voice
 "Here, in the temple of thy heart!"
 Joyfully I dived into the inner self
 and Lo! Illuminating that path inward
 Dwelt the Lord—in all His splendour!

While I looked in the outer world
 With two gross eyes for darshan of the Lord
 Secretly and mysteriously
 Sai entered the heart of His 'bhakta'.
 You are the nearest—the dearest
 Friend, Guide and Philosopher
 Yet, with all Your assurance
 A fear lingers—
 For my heart is not always pure;

When discrimination fails
 When the mind lets me down
 When I yield to temptation
 Lord! Do not leave the temple of my heart!
 For without You—
 A meaningless journey life would be!
 To the end of the world I would walk
 With You in my heart.
 An ideal actor I would be
 With You in my heart.
 Cruelties of life—its temptations
 I would meet, with You In my heart

Fight to the end and
Finish the game
With You in my heart.
But Lord! at the end of this cosmic drama
When my duty is done to the world
At the hour of dissolution
Come out of my heart.
And in Your ever-loving and gentle manner
Take me into Thy Beloved Arms!

—*Enoka Wijesuriya,*
Maharani's College, Jaipur.

Dharma will compel integration of thought, word and deed. It will cleanse the mind and rid it of greed and hate. Every faith is but an endeavour to cleanse the Impulses and emotions, as part of the process of discovering the truth of the world, seen and unseen. No one who has trodden that path, and engaged himself in that process has escaped calumny and cruelty. Mohamed, who sought to establish the primacy of the One Formless Absolute, had a large share of persecution, defamation and privation. Jesus attempted to rebuild mankind on the basis of love and was crucified by little men who feared that their tiny towers of hate and greed will be toppled by his teaching. Harishchandra, who had resolved never to waver from truth, was subjected to ordeal after ordeal, each more terrifying than the previous one. Those who seek to know God must steel themselves to bear Insult, Injury and torture with a smile.

—**Baba**

Ode to Prasanthi Nilayam

O Marvellous Silence,
Sitting serene on sands of our yearning
In eloquent majesty!
You touch thrice the Blue Infinite
To bring us benedictions thrice holy,
To touch our ill-shod souls thrice.

Hanging on a triple-chord,
You stand on massive pillars
Triple-faced, mute proofs
Of Truth, Sweetness, and Beauty
Whose abode you are.

Guards your invincibility;
And a lotus stem of six rings
Sings the perennial human epic
Of crossing six doors
To arrive at the Lotus Pool.

O Everlasting Beacon!
How you nestle there as a Mother dove
Calling all your dovelings.
Under the warmth of your wings;
And for all, tired of distances,
Bitter breath of dark phantoms,
Your cool mosaics of love and assurance,
Your hymns of fragrant purity,
The only comfort.

Yet, like those chirping sparrows,
Flitting from corner to corner,
Our thoughts from ignorance to ignorance
Move claiming your gifts
Other than what You Are.
Holy, Intractable Quiet,
Let my soul grow into you.

—*B. K. Misra, Prasanthi Nilayam*

Come, Come, Come, my beloved Sai!
Ganga-Jamuna water is flowing
More fierce the flame is growing
Helpless anguished mind is moaning
Calm the burning fire, O Sai!
You are with me from birth to birth
All is tasteless on this earth
Alone you are of taste and worth
Shower love on us, O Sai.

—**Mohammad Amin, Common Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam**

Each one eats to assuage his own hunger; so too each one must discover the best way to appease his own spiritual hunger. Do not be led away by the scorn of others or by the recommendation of others. Contact your own reality in the silence that you create by quietening the senses and controlling the minds. There is a voice that you can hear in that silence; The true witness of your having listened to that voice is your behaviour. A tree is held and fed by the roots that go into the silent earth; so also, if the roots go deep into the silence of your inner consciousness, your spiritual blossoming is assured.

—**Baba**

Bhagavan in Nilgiris

Bhagavan's five-day visit to the Nilgiris (Tamilnadu) in April was memorable in many ways. It was three years since He last visited Ooty in 1981 to open the new three-storeyed building of the Sathya Sai Vidya Vihar, situated on the slope of a hill overlooking the heart of the town. Devotees in the Nilgiris area had been eagerly looking forward to Bhagavan's visit for ceremonially installing a Ganesha Idol in a shrine erected in Vidya Vihar.

Leaving Brindavan (Whitefield) early in the morning on April 11, accompanied by a select group of devotees, Bhagavan reached Vidya Vihar by 2.30 p.m. The news of His visit had spread to the town and the surrounding villages in the morning and by the time of Swami's arrival a large crowd had assembled in the school compound to greet Him and have His darshan.

During all the days of Bhagavan's stay in Ooty, every morning and evening, hundreds of devotees assembled in the Vidya Vihar campus to have darshan of Bhagavan. One afternoon,

into the school and join in the bhajans led by the children of Vidya Vihar.

Bhagavan Inaugurated the Ganesha temple on Tamil New Year Day, April 13. He distributed saris and dhotis to the staff and proceeded towards the temple to the accompaniment of Nadaswaram music and Vedic chants. The children of the school were singing bhajans at the shrine. The large-sized Idol of Ganesha, which had been kept immersed in water for a few days in the traditional manner before installation, was reverently taken out and carried to the pedestal where it was to be installed. Before the ceremonial installation, Bhagavan materialised a gold Yantra to be kept in a hollow below the idol in the place whereon it was to be installed. While Brahmin priests recited the mantras appropriate to the occasion, the Idol was installed and milk, kum-kum, flowers and coconuts were offered to Ganesha.

Taking advantage of Bhagavan's visit the District Sathya Sai Organisation and General Mahadevan, President of the Tamil Nadu State Seva Samiti, had organised visits of Bhagavan to some of the "adopted" villages in the district on April 14th. Bhagavan started at 8.30 a.m. followed by three cars with a few devotees from abroad. In the very first village, Bhagavan was greeted with folded hands by thousands of villagers singing their traditional folk-songs in a manner which resembled the chanting of the Pranava Mantra ("Om"). The village was on the crest of a hill and Bhagavan was taken in a specially decorated jeep to the top where the villagers entertained Him with folk dances and songs. Bhagavan visited two temples which had been renovated. The entire gathering was lost in bliss during Bhagavan's brief stay.

At other villages visited by Bhagavan, large crowds had been waiting since the morning. Cultural programmes by Bal Vikas Children had been arranged. Bhagavan gave darshan to all the villagers and enjoyed the performances of the children. The orderly behaviour of the crowds everywhere was impressive.

At the end of the visit, Bhagavan distributed dhotis and saris to the poor.

Commenting on His visit, Bhagavan said: "I would have liked to tell them something, but the programme was so tight. I am very happy."

Bhagavan was particularly pleased with the bhajans organised by wayside groups on the route traversed by Him. Swami stopped at several places to bless the devotees lining the roads.

—S. C.

Character and Personality

Bangalore (Karnataka): The Mahila Seva Dal, Bangalore, in cooperation with the local women's colleges, organised a series of lectures on "Personality Development and Leadership qualities" for girl students during the first three months of this year. The lectures were attended by almost all the students of the respective colleges. Among the lecturers were Dr. P. Selvie Das,

Vibhag, Mr. G. V. Rao, Inspector-General of Police (retired), Principals of colleges and others. A common theme of all the lectures was the importance of character, the cultivation of human values, and spiritual discipline in the development of an integrated personality. The colleges cooperating in the programme are: Maharani's Arts College, NKM RV College, BMS College for Women, Jyothi Nivas College, Vidyavardhaka Degree College, Maharani Laxmi Ammani College and Maharani's Science College. By and large, the students took lively interest in the lectures. The response to the programme has been so good that other women's colleges are inviting the Mahila Vibhag to organise similar lectures for their students.

THE CHANCELLOR SPEAKS:

Examinations—Then and Now

"Samskara (the refinement of character) and Vyaktitwa (cultivation of personality) should be the twin ideals of a true system of education. Any system of education that does not contribute to the fostering of these ideals is an exercise in futility," observed Bhagavan Baba, Chancellor of the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, inaugurating on March 19 a Workshop on Examination Reform jointly sponsored by the Association of Indian Universities, New Delhi, and the Sathya Sai Institute.

The five-day workshop was held at the Institute's Campus in Prasanthi Nilayam and was presided over by Prof. V. K. Gokak, Vice chancellor of the Institute. It was attended by Professors and Lecturers from the three college campuses of the Institute.

Prof. Gokak invited the attention of the participants to the chaos and confusion prevailing in the University examination system today. The participants in the workshop should examine the causes for the present deplorable situation and see how improvements could be made in teaching methods, learning processes and evaluation techniques so as to make higher education meaningful and purposeful.

Bhagavan Baba, in a scintillating discourse, highlighted several aspects of higher education. In the course of his address Bhagavan said:

For every man the development of his personality is a primary duty. The Sanskrit word for personality is Pourusham. This is not found in everybody. It is revealed only in outstanding persons, who have made a mark in history. The Ramayana, which is the textbook on Dharma for the Hindus, describes Rama's personality as the product of character, morality and adherence to truth. Emperor Ashoka was another great personality in history.

A true individual is one who manifests the divinity that is within him. The word "person" is used in Latin to describe the character in a play. It was later used in the English language to

describes the divine origin of the individual. Hence, the primary purpose of education must be to make the individual develop his personality by the pursuit of spiritual and moral disciplines. Education is thus a process through which man is led to his highest status. It is the failure to infuse education with ethical content that is responsible for the futility of education to-day.

In ancient times examinations were held not as an imposition on students but for the development and protection of the personality of the students. Examinations today have become a kind of punishment for the students. Unlike present day examinations, which are primarily memory tests, examinations in ancient days were morality tests. The growth of educational institutions today is more an index of a growing disease rather than a means of training people to solve their problems. Everywhere there is trouble, violence and confusion, most of which is caused by educated persons. Hijacking, kidnapping, looting and other anti-social acts are indulged in mostly by educated persons. Because of the absence of character and morality in education, the educated persons are behaving in an unbecoming manner. Improper education results in great harm to the whole nation.

There is a wish-fulfilling tree in the shrine of the heart; that tree is surrounded by weeds. Unless the weeds are removed, the wish-fulfilling tree cannot be seen. That wish-fulfilling tree is a proper system of moral education. If the weeds that have grown round the tree are not removed, the educational system will not grow properly and yield good fruits.

Right teaching

In preparing question papers for examinations, teachers should observe certain rules. The questions should relate to what has been taught to the students. Very often questions do not bear any relation to what the students have been taught or to the prescribed syllabi. This results in misbehaviour by the students. The examiner should also know the answers for the questions he prepares. The other day an Issue relating to a Medical Examination question paper went upto the Supreme Court. Teachers often fail to complete the syllabus within the prescribed period. Teaching has become a process of transmission from head to head. Teachers teach with the head, and students listen to them with the head. Students go to the examination-hall with a head load of information, empty it out on the answer books and return home empty-headed. This kind of students may earn degrees, but what good will these youths bring to the people around? True teaching goes straight to the heart and imprints itself permanently on the hearts of the students.

By preparing students merely for answering certain questions in examinations they are induced to concentrate only on portions of a subject and not the subject as a whole. There is need for an interdisciplinary approach so that the connection between one subject and another is properly understood.

Teachers should regard their profession as one in which they not only teach but also continuously learn more and more about the subject that they have to deal with. It should be like the battery in a car which gets charged when the car is running.

University teachers, especially those serving in the Sathya Sai Institute, have to bear in mind certain important obligations. The foremost among them is the eschewing of involvement in politics. A great national leader like Bala Gangadhar Tilak, who played a key-role in the national struggle was a teacher in a High School at Poona. When he was asked, what ministerial position he would like to have when India became free, he replied that he would continue to remain a teacher and not seek any ministerial job. The proper training of young men who might become future ministers was, in his view, a more important job than being a minister himself. This showed Tilak's spirit of sacrifice and devotion to the national interest.

Professor Natarajan, Project Officer (Examinations) of the Association of Indian Universities, who spoke after the Chancellor, expressed his deep appreciation of Bhagavan's Discourse and said: "After having visited as many as fifty seven Universities of the country, I now come to a University where the Chancellor's words are not only words of inspiration, words of wisdom, or words of blessing, but they are also words of high technical knowledge. I feel blessed by His inspiring discourse, and believe it will serve a great purpose for all-round development in the sphere of higher education if His discourse can be made available to every teacher."

Leela Kaivalya Vahini

3

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Sadhaka: Swami! I have heard the term 'Brahma Kanda' being used for some texts. What does it relate to?

Sai: Those texts are concerned with sacrificial rites as well as rules of right conduct. They deal with the special features of ceremonial rituals and. special elaborations of moral codes.

Sadhaka: And, Swami, what are Upanishads?

Sai: They can be mastered only by deep study (Vidya) accompanied by intelligent discrimination (Viveka). They deserve to be so mastered. Four goals are laid down for, humans in the scriptures: Dharma (Righteousness), Artha (Prosperity), Kama (Moral Desire), and Moksha (Liberation). Vidya or Learning can be classified under two heads The Apra (Lower) and the Para (Higher). While the Four Vedas, the earlier portion of ancient scripture, deal with the Apra (the first three goals), the later portion of the same, the Upanishads, deal with the Para (the last among the goals).

Sadhaka: But, how did the word Vedanta arise?

Vedanta has to be understood and assimilated. Knowledge can never reach consummation until Vedanta is mastered.

Sadhaka: Swami! The Vedas are often referred to as Shruti; why?

Sai: The Vedas have nine names by which they are denoted. Shruti is only one of the nine.

Sadhaka: What are those nine?

Sai: Shruti, Anusrava, Trayee, Aamnaaya, Naamaamnaaya, Chhandas, Swaadhyaaya, Aagama, Nigamaagama.

Sadhaka: Each of these names must be indicating some distinct feature. I desire to know how those names arose and what those features are. Please instruct me.

Sai: Of course, those names have inner meanings. Shruti means 'that which has been heard'. The guru chants the Vedic hymn, the pupil listens with one pointed attention, and reproduces it with the same voice modulations. This process is repeated until the pupil masters each hymn. Hence, the name Shruti is relevant. The name Anusrava also means the same, 'that which has been heard serially'. Now, the word Trayee. It means 'the Three'. In the beginning there were three collations only in Vedic scriptures—the Rg Veda, the Yajur, and the Sama Veda. These three alone were considered important. So this word was used and it has stayed.

The word 'Aamnaaya' is derived from the root 'mnaa' which means 'learn'. Since the Vedas had to be learnt continuously and in a steadfast manner, they were collectively known as "Aamnaaya" and also as "Naamaamnaaya."

'Chhandas' means a poetic metre, which can be set to music, as in Sama Veda. So, the Vedas themselves were indicated by that name.

The name Swadhyaya was applied to the Vedas, since they were handed down from father to son and from a generation to generation, by the process of teaching and learning (Swaadhyaya).

Aagama means 'that which has come, originated'. 'Nigamaagama' is an elaboration of the same word. The Vedas have originated from the Breath of God; each syllable is sacred. Each word is a mantra. The Vedas are all mantras.

Sadhaka: Mantra? What does 'Mantra' mean?

Sai: Mantra is the exposition of the goal that is set ; that is to say, it is that which prompts and promotes manana or probing through the mind. 'Man' syllable indicates the process of probing and the syllable 'tra' means "the capacity to take across, to liberate, to save." In short, mantra is that which saves when the mind dwells upon it. While rites and ritual sacrifices are performed,

to repeat to achieve this end are mantras. But, today, those who perform these rites either recite them mechanically or allow them to roll on the tongue. They pay no attention to the meaning of the mantra. When mantras are uttered as rigmarole they yield no fruit! The person can reap full reward only when he recites them with the knowledge of the meaning and significance. Each Veda has many "shakhas" and the total direction and purpose of each 'shakha' has also to be known by the Vedic scholar.

Sadhaka: What are 'shakhas'?

Sai: Shakha means 'limb', a text arising out of the main Veda. A tree has branches, each branch has twigs and bunches of leaves. When all these are conceived together, the tree emerges. Each Veda has a large number of main branches and subsidiary branches. Not all have come to light. Only a few have been identified and studied. The number of shakhas lost from memory and practice will add up to thousands and even lakhs. Even their names have disappeared; no one can recall them. This is the reason why the scriptures declare, "The Vedas are endless" (Anantho vai Vedah). As a result, each of the great saints and sages took up for study and practice only a few shakhas from one Veda or other.

(To be continued)

YUGADI SANDESH:

"Manifest Your Divinity"

The New Year Raktakshi—meaning "bloodshot-eye"—has a fearful name, but there is no need to be alarmed at the prospects for the year. It is likely to be a year of considerable peace, observed Bhagavan Baba, in the course of a discourse on Yugadi Day (April 2) at Prasanthi Nilayam.

Bhagavan referred at the outset to the state of things in the world and deplored the conduct of so-called educated persons who indulged in every kind of misdeed and behaved worse than animals in cruelty, deception and violence. Instead of progressing from the human to the divine, man was falling below the level of animals.

Educated persons, Bhagavan said, did not seem to have any regard for moral values. They have no gratitude for those who helped them in times of need. They have no consideration for their kith and kin and do not hesitate to inflict harm on them. Students who have gone through many years of higher education are reported to have behaved in an unworthy manner. Educated young men and women do not behave like cultured human beings after a few months of married life. Many lead miserable lives. What is the value of an education which does not enable a man to do his duty by his wife and children?

They have to return to the path of morality and right conduct. Many educated persons have neither fear of sin nor love of God. Those who appear to be pious and god-loving have no genuine good qualities and by their external postures seem to be attempting to impose even on the Divine. It is this kind of hypocritical behaviour which is vitiating the atmosphere everywhere and promoting disorder and confusion. Everyone should, therefore, embark upon getting rid of bad traits and implanting divine qualities. Man should realise the divine within. For this the path of love is the means.

Of the four yugas—the Krita, Treta, Dwapara and Kali Yugas—we are today in the Kaliyuga. The Krita-yuga is said to have begun in the Vaisakha month; the Treta-yuga in the month of Kartika and the Dwapara-yuga in the month of Mrigashirsha. The ancients celebrated the days of the beginning of each yuga in an appropriate manner, with due ceremony. By efflux of time, with the decline in human qualities, the significance of these observances was forgotten and the Yugadi day came to be observed only as the beginning of a new year in the almanac. Thus the beginning of the Kaliyuga, which was originally in the month of Magha, came to be observed in Chaitra masa, when the sun enters the Mesha asterism and marks the beginning of a new year. The Yugadi is not celebrated as in olden times. We have now only New Year days based upon the position of the sun or the moon.

The name of the New Year is "Raktakshi." The name is obviously dreadful. "Raktakshi" means "bloodshot eye." It is only when one is filled with hatred and greed and wickedness that one's eyes turn red. But it is wrong to judge anything by the name only. The name may be attractive and sweet but the person may be quite different. A man with the name Dharmaraja (the king of righteousness) may be evil from head to foot. A person named Sundararaja (a prince of beauty) may be loathsome.

"Raktakshi" bears a dreadful name, but the year is likely to prove a very peaceful one. The ruler for this year is Chandra (the moon deity). His minister is Shukra. Moon and Shukra are well disposed towards each other. More than that, Surya (the sun), who is the presiding deity for food crops, is favourably placed. Surya is capable of destroying everything and creating everything. This year, because of the Sun's position, there will be no lack of rains and there will be sufficient food grains.

Looking, however, at the world scene as a whole, there is fear about the likelihood of a disastrous war, because of conflicts between countries in different parts of the world. It is likely that peace maybe affected in some areas, but there is no ground for apprehending any grave crisis. No major calamity appears likely this year. All godly persons should strive to promote the welfare of the world by their prayers and actions.

There was a famous sculptor in Italy known as Michelangelo. A friend of his found him one day chiselling a big piece of rock. The friend told him: "Why are you working so hard with this rock? Why don't you go home and take some rest?" Michelangelo replied: "I am trying to release the Divine that is in the rock. I wish to bring out of this lifeless stone the living divinity that is

God, cannot human beings vibrant with life manifest the living Divinity that resides in them?

What is the reason for this incapacity to realise the Divinity within? It is because we do not realise the soiled cover in which it is wrapped up. If our clothes get dirty, we change them because we are ashamed to appear in dirty garments. If our house is dirty, we try to clean it so that visitors may not get a bad impression. But when our minds and our hearts are polluted, we do not feel ashamed. Is it not strange that we should be so much concerned about the cleanness of our clothes or our homes, but are not concerned about the purity of our hearts and minds which affect our entire life? To purify our hearts and minds, the first thing we have to do is to lead a righteous life. Our actions must be based on morality. Indulging in abuse of others or inflicting pain on them is not a sign of human nature. The evil that we do to others ultimately recoils on us. Auspicious days like Yugadi should be used for making resolutions to change our ways of life and to purify our behaviour by giving up all bad qualities.

PILGRIM'S PROGRESS: IV

Role of Women in Sai Family

Usually mothers who are Sai devotees would prefer to spend the summer/winter vacations of their school-going children at Prasanthi Nilayam. They are the spirit and inspiration behind the trips to Puttaparthi of their family members every year. As a reward they get lot of relief physically, mentally and spiritually. Thus the Mahila devotees play an active role in leading all the members of their family towards the Sai path.

Bhagavan Baba has accorded a very important role for women as architects of the future generation and as a corrective force on men who have tendencies to stray away from Dharma, because He regards women as more pious than men. They respect Dharma. According to the Vedas woman constitutes a half of man and she occupies a high and honourable place as a co-partner in all Dharmic activities. Women should bear this in mind; they have the responsibility for teaching and guiding the children in the family. The mother must be kind and reasonable but not indulgent. She must believe in just discipline and enforce it religiously. Children are taught responsibility and courtesy through religious discipline. The mother should set a good example in spiritual discipline for her children to see and emulate.

Mahatma Gandhi always advised women to be good housewives in Indian society. Nowadays, the "Kulastri" dharma is on the decline. Gandhiji said: "I do not envisage the wife, as a rule, following an avocation independently of her husband. The care of the children and upkeep of the household are quite enough to fully engage all her energy. In a well ordered society the additional burden of maintaining the family ought not to fall on her. The man should look to the maintenance of the family, the woman to household management the two thus supplementing

dignified status. She is the queen, not the slave, of the household over which she presides."

Unfortunately we find our social pattern of life is disturbed. Modern education and western culture have upset the Indian traditions and the sacred role of women in the family. Bhagavan observes: "Women are taking to modern education in larger and larger numbers now-a-days. They are serving in offices, schools and factories. They are also rising to positions of authority in other fields. But most of them are prompted by urges of personal aggrandizement rather than ideals of service. They desire more and more material comforts. But if women run after jobs, who is to run the family? If father and mother move into offices to earn money what becomes of the children? More money may be earned. The women who take up jobs are finding that they have no happiness worth the name. The educated woman must utilise her knowledge and skill to bring up her children as healthy, virtuous and disciplined patriots so that they may be of great use for the country and the community. Earning money is not the end-all of education."

Again, Baba says: "Without modesty woman is devoid of beauty and culture. Humility, purity of thoughts and manners, meekness, surrender to high ideals, sensitivity of feelings, sweetness of temper modesty is the peculiar blend of all these qualities. Hence, it is the most valuable of jewels for women."

Light of the House

"Woman is the light of the home, the Goddess spreading Divine bliss. This is to say that she has to maintain and foster her parents, her parents-in-law and her husband, she has to spread affection and tenderness towards kith and kin and by subtle impact, correct and direct the conduct of every member of the family. The mother opens the eyes of the child to the glories of God and God's creation. Even God Almighty comes as Avatar in human form to remind man of his Atmic reality and thus save him from fear, hatred and greed. So, if the mother in the home does the same task in so far as it is within her ambit, how glad must the Avatar be." —Baba.

"That house where husband and wife are bound together by holy love, where every day both are engaged in the reading of books that feed the soul, where the name of the Lord is sung and his glory remembered; that house is really the house of the Lord—Vaikuntha," says Bhagavan Baba.

Let all our women remember the high role that Bhagavan has assigned to women in our country when He says: "If the women of a country are happy, healthy and holy the men of that country will be hardy, honest and happy."

(Concluded)

—S. Narayanan

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

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

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

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

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

"Make life more human"

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

The absence of physical labour has not granted happiness but has created isolation and mental anguish. All this for one reason only-that science has tried to cross out God and human values.

spirituality, even though some like Einstein and Sartre never accepted the word "God." Einstein, however, clearly spoke about the "Cosmic religious experience" and wrote, "Knowing that there exists something which Is Impenetrable, knowing that manifestations of the deepest intellect and of radiant beauty are accessible to our mind only in the most primitive forms-this awareness and this sentiment are to me true devotion. In this sense and only in this sense am I one of the most deeply religious men."

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

As regards Sartre's atheism, a famous theologian of Milan's Universita Cattolica, Mr. Moleni, in his lecture "God In Today's World," has this to say: "How curious it Is that the radical Interpretation of man given to us by Sartre should conclude with Mircea Eliade's statement. Eliade, famed historian of religions and man of letters, said that man is, in the final analysis, a product of the quest of the Supreme Being of the Supreme Reality, if it can be considered as such."

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

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

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

man without faith in God is worse than an invalid because he is without the vital essence of life. All this goes to prove that it is not pure science which drives a wedge between man and spirituality but the use that is made of its applications.

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

—Madame M. F. Bouchereau
(From paper presented at Sathya Sai Conference in Rome, October, 1983)

A Vision Realised

Most of us in the Sri Sathya Sai Baba Organisation are often faced with the searching question when we are talking to others about our Father-Mother-God Bhagavan Sathya Sai Baba: "How do you know that He is God?"

Most of us simply say: "So He says and who am I to doubt or to disbelieve Him?" When the questioner is not satisfied, some of us fall on our personal experiences of His Omnipotence, Omnipresence and Omniscience. On further pressure on the subject some of us will quote Bhagavan when He said: "When someone asks you in great earnestness where the Lord is to be found, do not dodge the question. Give them the answer that rises up to your tongue from your heart. Direct them to come to Puttaparthi and share your joy. Tell them He is here in Prasanthi Nilayam."

I have been faced with that question many many times and I try to satisfy the questioner according to his intelligence and his religious background. Very rarely I narrate the following vision I had of Prasanthi Nilayam in 1950, 27 years before I heard of Swami.

In the summer of 1950, a friend and I moved from our digs to a cheaper accommodation in the Salvation Army Hostel in Boscombe, Bournemouth, England. It was there that in the night of one of those summer months I had a dream which I realised in retrospect to be a vision. Two Beings clad in white and with what appeared to be wings came for me. I found myself in between them in space moving at a tremendous speed. I was not at all frightened. We eventually found ourselves in a beautiful garden. They stood on either side of me and pointed to a house at a distance surrounded by trees and flowers. I saw only parts of the house because of the vegetation in my view. Then they said, 'That is the House where God lives'.

As we stood there I wished God would come out of the house so that I could have a glimpse of Him. But it was not to be. They told me of a few things that were to happen in my immediate life

woke up to find myself lying supine and straight in bed with my arms by my sides. I realised that the dream was unusual, so I immediately took a pen and wrote down all I could remember. I have since narrated this vision to my friends and seekers on the Path.

Then In 1977, I heard of Bhagavan Baba through a Filipino lady in Accra. In 1978, I visited Prasanthi Nilayam to realise that where I stood with those Beings in 1950 is where the Poornachandra Auditorium stands at present.

On the morning of November 23, 1978, when we were all seated in front of the Mandir (where God lives) awaiting the emergence of Baba, I found myself seated in between two friends from Ghana and all three of us were dressed in white. Baba came and stood a few yards from where we were seated and gave us a very sweet smile. I had the presence of mind to smile back and He stood long enough to enable me to take a few pictures of Him. One of the pictures came out with a blue halo around His Head.

My brother, my sister, my friend, if you still have any doubts about the Godhead of Bhagavan go to Prasanthi Nilayam and pray with a pure heart for that experience.

—Dr: H. K. Takyi, (Surgeon), Accra, Ghana

GURUDEVA VANI:

Teachers and Students

Man does not become fully human merely by making himself a prosperous moral person. Spiritual progress has also to be achieved. Body, mind and spirit these three together make up the man. The animal is concerned primarily with the body. Man has risen since he has been equipped with a mind. Cultivation of the spirit will elevate him to Divinity. The three are intertwined and interdependent. Each promotes the other. Without the mind, the body cannot decide on any step. Mind and body have to sub-serve the spirit and become aware of the Divine Atma.

Health is very important for a fully disciplined life. Health means wholeness, fullness. The senses and the mind have to be controlled and regulated, so that man can win the battle of life. Self-control is sense control, mind- control. This is, otherwise called 'culture' (samskruti). Culture must be evident in every aspect of life—while studying, eating, sleeping, playing games etc. Culture expresses itself as discipline.

You must ensure that living is a purposeful process. Without such a faith, life is rendered wild and wasteful. With it, you can attain Divinity. The faith will induce a regulated and disciplined life. A farmer was once charged before a court in Greece for adulterating the milk he was selling. The judge found that the milk was indeed not pure and was about to deliver the sentence when

the farmer milked his cows on some days at 4 a.m. some days at 6 a.m. and on some other days, when he could not sleep long, even at 3 a.m. The quality of the milk was affected by this irregularity and waywardness in milking. The farmer was admonished and advised to adhere to a regular time.

Duty and discipline

Duty is best discharged through discipline. Discipline for teachers cannot be limited to punctuality and adherence to the timetable. Duty for them involves intensive preparation, choosing the most effective means of communication and discovering how best to instruct and inspire the pupils under their care. The pupils and the teachers must both have high ideals and aspirations. You know Darwin, the great scientist. Though born in a poor family, Darwin even as a boy had a heart full of ambition. He came under the care of a teacher named Henslow who discovered his talents and fostered his aspirations. He filled his pupil with courage and enthusiasm until he became an image of his master.

Valmiki, by meditating on the glory of Rama, was able to mould himself into the Immortal poet who composed the Ramayana. He became an embodiment of that glory, and therefore, he could create that great epic. When we decide on writing a letter, we gather in our minds the facts to be communicated, the manner in which it has to be written, and then, we start writing it. When we decide on building a house, we build it first in our minds—the drawing room here, the dining hall there, the kitchen at this end etc., and then, draw the plan on paper. What we do is to project an ideal into action, into a concrete programme. The external action or achievement is only a reflection of the Inner Being, which frames the ideas and concepts. So, the transformation and refinement have to be done in the inner region of the mind. Constant reflection on the glory of God helps to transmute the body, mind and spirit. The face mirrors the moods of the mind. When the mind is gloomy, the face records it; when the mind is full of Ananda, the face spreads Ananda all around.

Aurangzeb was Emperor Shah Jehan's son. He was tired of waiting to ascend the throne; so he imprisoned the father and crowned himself. His evil-minded comrades desired to put an end to Shah Jehan's life, so that Aurangzeb could be safe on the throne. They planned to execute him. When Shah Jehan came to know of their plot, he felt glad that he could escape the humiliation and misery of exile and imprisonment. Aurangzeb gave up the idea of execution, when he found that the father was welcoming that fate. He did not relish the idea of satisfying the old man. He decided to keep him in prison until his death, with a single feeble-minded servant and the Holy Quran as his only companions. Shah Jehan was elated at the opportunity to read the Holy Quran to the companion. But, he had to give up the attempt when there was no response from him. He said to himself: "What have I to do with companions now? Peace is the first companion. The joy of Love is the second, the third is Affection, the fourth is Adoration and the fifth is Sweetness. All these together are inspiring me to become aware of my soul." With this resolution, he spent himself in the Holy Quran, and became one with its message. This is the highest duty, to have a high ideal, to reach it and become it.

When ridiculing, reprimanding or punishing pupils, teachers must try to picture themselves in their position and discover how they would have reacted to the same, when they were pupils. Self-inquiry of this kind will be very useful. The word Upa-ni-shad teaches a great lesson. `Upa' means near; `ni' means down and `shad' means sit; the pupil sits down, at the feet of the Guru and also near him. `Tat' (That) is the Guru; `twam' (You) is the pupil. The "twam" poses the question and the "Tat" gifts the answer. The bond is love from "Tat," humility from the "Twam." And `asi' (is) connotes the Ananda at the knowledge, the illumination that is shared.

The educational process adopted at Prasanthi Nilayam might appear to be novel but it is really superior and highly beneficial. It has not been devised for awarding degrees only; it is aimed at equipping the student for an integrated life. The student must be aware of all aspects of the adventure of life. One must be aware of the do's and don'ts, the ups and downs of all fields of activity moral, material, scientific, philosophical, political and economic Or else, one will be haunted by doubts when faced with difficult situations and problems.

Therefore, teachers as well as students must develop faith in the validity and worth of this process. A Telugu proverb exhorts man thus: "Believe and Live." Faith is the very foundation for any forward step. If the step has to await the dawn of faith through experience, one cannot progress at all.

Journey of the spirit

The journey of the spirit is from the individual to the universal, from `I' to `We'. It is said by some, "I and You are one" but the reality, is "I and You are We" and "We and We are one." Students have to be aware of the mergence of the self in the all-pervading Self-not merely physical existence. In deep sleep, the 'I' alone persists but even the 'I' is not perceived! A person whose eyes are closed declares that he does not see anything. "It is all dark." So, he sees darkness! Something in him sees both light and darkness. That is the Witness.

When baby Krishna clamoured for milk, Yashoda said that it was too early an hour and she would feed him only at nightfall. Krishna closed his eyes and said night had fallen. The mother said that the darkness of night is different. It cannot happen when one person closes his eyes. But Krishna argued that light contains darkness and darkness has light in it. When one is present, the second is not evident, that is all: The sun illumines the world but hides the stars. The child contains the old man; the old man has childhood persisting in him I Grief has joy latent In it; joy has the potency to land the person in grief. When one is evident, the other is hidden, that is all.

Teachers must endeavour to help each pupil to unfold his native talents and innate skills and recognise his latent potentialities. When you plant a sapling, you provide it water and manure; you ensure that it receives plentiful sunlight and air. But, the wonder is—the plant does not become air, soil, manure or water. It grows as the very plant which was the Truth of the seed: Recollect your own childhood and boyhood, the struggle for preserving and promoting your individuality and deal with your students who have the same problems and the same purpose. There is a Telugu proverb, "It is always an old mud pot, if the mother-in-law breaks it." When

that spot. When the daughter-in-law stumbles and breaks it, the fault still, is the daughter-in-law's. "Have you no eyes?" she asks. The mother-in-law holds that she is never in the wrong. Such an attitude has to be given up. Self-examination helps the correction of one's attitudes. Emperor Bhoja had a unique way of testing and judging the worth of Gurus. He never pitted one Guru against another. He arranged contests and competitions between the pupils of different Gurus and from the result of these tests, he honoured the Gurus.

Spread the message

In our educational Institutions and in this Institute, students must shape themselves as 'images' of their teachers. They must spread the message of our ideals throughout the world. Teachers must live that message and students must imbibe it and become it. The Atma is the Truth of Truths. When one achieves its awareness, all knowledge is added unto him. Imagine a coconut tree with a head load of nuts. It casts a long shadow on the ground and the shadow fruits are equally plentiful. When one climbs the tree and plucks the fruit, he can also be seen moving along the shadow tree and plucking the shadow fruit. So too, when one seeks to know the Atma and succeeds, he can at the same time progress along the "World" (which is an illusory shadow) and gain the shadow-fruit (which is trivial and temporary).

This is a noble task—a hard but heavenly Sadhana. Teachers have to undertake it with patience and humility, always standing forth as examples and ideals. They can then confer on the world the Invaluable boon of Atmic Awareness, through the students whom they instruct.

(From Bhagavan's valedictory, address to the Workshop on examination reform at the Institute of Higher Learning; March 23, 1984)

SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY:

The Seeker and the Sought

At a certain stage in man's cultural evolution (c. 3rd or 4th century B. C.) there developed a radical split in what was till then a free-flowing single current. This cultural bifurcation appeared in the area between the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Sub-Continent.

One of these two currents, that flowing westward, directed its efforts to discover the natural laws of the external world. And so it was that Aristotelian enquiry was born. There followed in its wake the vast bulk of modern western science, with its tendency to empirical analysis (that is, from the particular to the general), to arriving at general laws through a study of the many manifestations of the physical world. Perforce it was a study based on objective observation, to the rigorous exclusion of all that which could not be testified to by the senses, which saw scientific instruments as but auxiliaries or extensions of the senses (as Bertrand Russell put it).

world multiplied beyond all bounds, posing new corrosive problems which ate into the foundations of the old monolith of Science, causing it to weaken and crumble.

This attitude to research is present even today. The triad—(a) the object observed, (b) the process of observation, (c) and the observer—still subsists. Any fusion of the three is rejected "a priori." This happens as well in psychological research; the researcher posits himself as "observer," looking from the outside in at the field of his research. Here, too, we see the same problem recurring, enquiry sooner or later oversteps the bounds.

However it may be, the laws of scientific observation demand that every new discovery presents at least two characteristics: (a) that it is communicable and (b) that it can be repeated. As regards the first requisite, it should be noted that all communication, messages, external stimuli are relayed through the sensory perceptions before being assimilated for mental elaboration. The senses transmit data which are screened, thereby eliminating unconsciously that which is regarded as useless for life in the external world; this brings to mind Aldous Huxley's experiments with hallucinogenic drugs. After screening, the data are expanded upon and coordinated by the faculties of the mind which then transcribe them into language which makes them communicable to other thinking beings. Those who therefore receive the message can relate its contents to a reality which is relative to their world of the senses and of the mind. It naturally follows that all scientific thought and activity develop in the mental sphere.

It is also true and widely recognised that the mental sphere is not the only sphere that exists. Plato with his strongly ethical philosophy with its theory of eternal ideas, Kant with his rationalist theory of a priori knowledge and the "categorical imperative", Benedetto Croce with his definition of art as a "lyrical intuition", all pointed to a function which transcended reason—that of Intuition. Intuition, it seems, transmits to the mental sphere messages which are not relayed by the senses. It appears that subatomic physics has come up against unknown factors which its laws have not contemplated, so much so that the human mind has to force itself to find new mathematics and even newer hypotheses contradictory to those which hitherto were held to be true.

The bifurcation referred to earlier led to another separation, that between external research and internal quest, which if looked at in the light of Universal Unity is not really a separation, being two aspects of the same phenomenon.

However, a whole new breed of seekers dedicated themselves to this inner quest which revealed itself as richer and more promising. This change in direction occurred either because there seemed little choice in the matter or because they realized the inanity of the effort to get to the Cause through a study of an unending multiplicity of effects. But interiorising is limited to the doer or the seeker, who, motivated by a deep-down desire to explore the world in which the senses and the mind play no part, has to transform himself, at the same time, from seeker, to instrument of observation, to becoming the very object of this observation. It is very interesting and revealing that from time immemorial, there have been men who have dedicated themselves

from the Vedas and the Upanishads to the "Emerald Tablets" of Hermes Trismegistos, from the prophetic Hebrew texts to the Gospel of St. John, to the poetry of Juan de la Cruz and so on in endless profusion.

Nevertheless, to the Positivist these documents do not prove anything. His accusations are that they are not clear enough, that they have to be read in a certain key, that they are lyrical passages or Apologetics etc.

These accusations strike the reader, who lives on a strictly mental plane, as true. He, however, should realize that these works communicate messages which do not relate mental experience. Further more, they are expressed in a language which sounds contrived, because it is forced to utilize mental concepts and structures In order to express ideas which transcend the mental process. Still, he cannot fail to see that *they all, in the main part, communicate the same experience in spite of outward differences of idiom, style and concept*. It cannot be denied that there is a factor of truthfulness and credibility which unites all these messages even though they come from different epochs, from diverse origins in time and space.

There is, however, another determining characteristic which gives to this spiritual quest and its results the seal of a "scientific" approval, *The spiritual quest is repeatable* just as much as a scientific experiment Is for it to be indisputably accepted in the halls of Academie.

Many spiritual seekers have discovered the Ultimate Truth and have left behind, for the benefit of posterity, not one but many methods whereby a spiritual experience can be repeated. Methods which have been tried out by others and proved valid, methods which have led to a realization of the Ultimate Reality, the Absolute Reality, before which all else fades to nothingness.

The spiritual quest has as much right to be considered scientific as positive scientific research has.

Moreover, while positivist scientific research does not influence the personality of the researcher (except in those exceptional cases when a man of science can see only through his instrument) the spiritual quest betters the seeker. The seeker, who has to transform himself from being an observer, to becoming the instrument of observation, to identifying with the very object of his quest. That is, he is aware that he has to, so to speak, make "transparent" the field of his research. He has to free himself from such thoughts, passions and desires as cloud his inner vision. This process reveals to him not only the "how to" but the "how to be" which then becomes a way of life, a DHARMA, a universal law of behaviour. A process which cleanses him and hones his being, making him a better man.

At the end of the quest he finds within himself the primary force, the Universal Motor, the Spirit with which he merges. He knows this Spirit to be one with his higher self, with his consciousness. It is ultimate and eternal, that which survives after the destruction of the body, the senses, sentiments, mind and intellect.

When he discovers in himself the Whole, the Infinite, the All, he reaches Godhead - SATCHITANANDA-the supreme state: SAT which means EXISTENCE, CHIT which means KNOWLEDGE and ANANDA which means BLISS. The eternal, universal absolute "IT IS," "IT KNOWS," "IT IS BLISS" always. When the seeker has reached God-consciousness he has reached the PARAMATMA, the supreme self, the Universal soul. All of us are part of it even though we may not have direct experience of being so.

May Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the divine incarnation, the Poorna-avatar, help us to unite with the Divine.

—**M. J. Bianco, Italy**

I want that you should all build new houses for happy living, and install the Lord therein. I do not mean houses of brick and mortar, but houses of good thoughts, good words, good deeds and good company, where you could live calm and collected. Invite Me for the Grihapravesham of such houses and I shall most readily agree. In fact, then, the house is Mine already and I do not need even an invitation to come and enter it.

—**Baba**

Three and Nine

The name given by Bhagavan to the new building at Brindavan—"Trayee Brindavan"—has multiple significance, which may not be apparent to all.

"Trayee" is the composite term for the three Vedas—Rig, Yajur and Sama—which are the foundation and the source of the Ancient Wisdom (Sanathana Dharma). "Trayee" represents also the three attributes of the Absolute—Sat-Chit-Ananda (Being, Awareness, Bliss). It refers also to the three qualities of the Supreme—Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram (Truth, Auspiciousness and Beauty). Bhagavan said that the name "Sathyam-Sivam-Sundaram" was considered originally, but was not adopted as it was too long. "Trayee" represented all the three (which are the names of Bhagavan's abodes at Dharmakshetra, Hyderabad and Madras).

To the devotees "Trayee" can also signify the Hindu or Christian Trinity. "Trayee" refers also to "Tri kala"—the past, the present and the future. Above all, it is a perennial reminder to spiritual seekers of the need for "Tri karana Shuddhi"—purity to thought, word and deed—for self-realisation.

lotus-like awnings (1+8=9) and the inside wall of the balcony in the central circular hall has nine lotuses, with the deities of the navagrahas (the nine planets) in between them.

—N.

"Trayee Brindavan": New Abode for Bhagavan

For thousands of Sai devotees from far and near, April 26th was a memorable day when Bhagavan Baba ceremonially inaugurated at Brindavan the new lotus shaped mansion, which has been constructed on the spot where the old bungalow stood.

While for some devotees the demolition of the old building, with its own special associations, was a little saddening, everyone hailed the new edifice, with its unique aesthetic appeal, as a worthy abode for Bhagavan.

The lotus motif is dominant in every aspect of the new building. With eighteen lotus-shaped awnings overlooking the windows in the first storey, the circular hall inside having a balcony with nine full-blown lotuses, a grand domed ceiling with a giant pink lotus shedding its lustre, and a lotus pond encircling the whole building—one is reminded of Bhagavan's favourite flower wherever one turns. The aesthetic appeal of the building has been enhanced by the excellent artistic wood-work that is ubiquitous—from the massive door at the entrance, with two panels based on scenes from the Ramayana and the Siva-Shakti theme, to the antique rosewood door leading to the circular hall, the large delicately carved Ganesa, Nataraja and Krishna figures installed in the central hall and the exquisite carvings in various parts of the building. The antiques were contributed by Mr. Natesan, of Bangalore, and the woodwork, including a specially made sandalwood carving of the Krishna Arjuna scene at Kurukshetra, was done by Mr. Sukumaran and his band of skilled workers from Nagercoil.

Prior to the inauguration ceremony, Bhagavan distributed clothes to all those who had been associated with the building programme including the architect, Mr. Athale of Bombay, and Brigadier Bose and Mr. Vimalanathan, who supervised the construction. Clothes were also given to the students, doctors and other devotees.

On the 26th, from early in the morning huge crowds of devotees and special invitees had begun to assemble in the Sai Ram Mandap and in the shamiana near the new building.

At 9 a.m. Bhagavan came in a procession (in a new Rolls Royce car which had been brought the previous night), led by bhajan singers, a military band, and students reciting Vedic hymns and singing bhajans. Richly caparisoned cows from the Gokulam were also in the procession.

A large gathering had assembled around the building when Bhagavan arrived at about 10 a.m. The priests, who had been performing Navagraha-Vaasthu-Mrityunjaya homas before

and unveiled a tablet with the inscription "Trayee Brindavan" (the name of the new building).

As Bhagavan entered the building, there was joy in everyone's face and when a group of pressmen asked Bhagavan what was His message for the occasion, Swami said: "Mee anandame na Anandamu" ("Your joy alone is my joy"). Bhagavan told the pressmen that the building was the result of the labour of love and devotion of numerous devotees, each of whom had contributed to the measure of his or her capacity. Bhagavan recalled in this context how monkeys, squirrels and others had helped Rama to build the bridge to Lanka.

Thousands of poor persons were fed on the occasion and saris and dhotis were given to a large number of old and handicapped persons.

In the evening, there was a delightful programme of devotional music by Srimati M. S. Subbulakshmi, Prof. Jog (the reputed violinist), Srimati S. Janaki, and Srimati P. Leela, well-known playback singers.

Bhagavan blessed the artistes and the vast gathering of devotees.

Waiting for Bhagavan

The outcome of my journey to Sri Sathya Sai Baba (in the winter of 1983) turned out to be a surprise. I thought here is a great spiritual teacher who will teach me how to meditate. I felt certain to win the ultimate of interviews.

I was in for a shock-nothing of the kind occurred! I won no interviews, and I learned that meditation, according to Sai Baba, is not simply a matter of retreating into a blissful silence! The experience of Sai Baba's vision was so much bigger than this. I found out that it was not based on the need to attract followers. It is a vision that encompasses the unity of all peoples, the essential oneness of all religions, and the spiritualization of education by awakening in the hearts of youth the true purpose of scholastic learning to become radiant, happy, selfless, moral, and heroic human beings.

Meditation is certainly an aid to these goals, but in Baba's view, it is not simply a matter of quieting the mind so that the seeker drops off into a pseudo-peace. Three quarters of meditation, says Baba, is self-enquiry. What does he mean? I soon found out. Day after day I sat waiting for Baba to give his darshan, his blessing. It was in this silent waiting that I took a look into my thoughts: would he see me, would he look at me, would he make me something, would I get my interview?

desires, leaving my heart free to give nothing. And so, for one month, that is exactly what I got: nothing. Baba would not look, touch, materialize, or talk.

Gradually, the sun began to shine in my heart. Baba began to appear as a being of splendour every time he passed by me. I gave up my resentment over his seeming rejection, and began to love him for bringing me here, for giving me this painful lesson of seeing my selfishness and pride. I longed to give him only thanksgiving, and my love for him became devoid of desires. It was then that he showered upon me the Kingdom of Heaven the grace of a radiant silence between us, and the bliss of His smile...worth all of Eternity.

Thus, I found out: meditation means purifying the heart.

In Baba's ashram, meditation is only one phase of the whole. There comes the time for song, and the time for serving; to help others is love in action, and it is Baba's counsel that we share love among all people, regardless of race, religion, caste, or creed.

Christmas at Prasanthi Nilayam: I couldn't help being excited. A Hebrew hymn, one that I had offered to the Christmas programme committee, was accepted as a solo to be sung before Bhagavan. The song, usually shared among Jews in their holy sanctuary as the most sacred prayer in the Jewish tradition, was now to be sung in Sai Baba's ashram among Germans, Italians, Mexicans, South Americans, Swedes, Swiss, Malaysians, Englishmen.

Unity among people became a living experience: as the choir rehearsal began, I looked over at the German interpreter, and suddenly he wasn't German, wasn't part of an atrocious past-he was an open, friendly human being, who was both generous and joyful ...and I loved him as if he were part of my own family. In a secret corner of my heart, a prejudicial wall had broken loose and fallen to the ground.

Then came a blow that was not as sweet. Bhagavan cancelled the Christmas programme. My Jewish song seemed destined to die that Christmas. Instead, a huge project got underway. The grounds below the Vidyagiri hill were to be cleared and levelled to make ready for crowds of up to 100,000 expected to attend a world children's rally in December.

Joining the ladies, I handed a basket filled with sand, rocks, and gravel down a long line of women who were singing joyously. I looked at the lady next to me. She might have been an illiterate washerwoman. But as our eyes met in a bond of knowing, of intimate connection, it seemed to be a moment of musical ecstasy. God had become our common heritage, the root of our Being, the source of our joy, our strength, and our song. What greater music could there be than this? I completely forgot my preoccupation with singing the Jewish solo. I didn't care, for I had something more precious-the gift of meeting my sisters, my mothers, my holy grandmothers, in one exuberant praise, which cast aside all barriers and made work a worship of love.

an unforgettable Christmas for me and thousands of others who were blessed by Bhagavan.

Above all, the month's stay was a great spiritual experience. I learnt that to rely on seeing Sai Baba in his physical form as he pours out his Love in blissful, abundant joy, giving saris, calendars, Padanamaskar, will not take us to the final goal. It is easy to receive Sai Baba's bliss today, only to forget it tomorrow in our human world with its tragedies and victories, its losses and its gains, its acceptance: and its rejections. To place yourself in the fire of Prasanthi Nilayam, to mingle with thousands in the most difficult circumstances, to take up the task of endurance, determination, and the desire for oneness with God, for the realisation of that Divinity which is within you, is to take one step closer to becoming a living flame of love, peace and brotherhood.

—*Joan Englander, California*

STUDENT'S CORNER:

Youth and Human Values

In an essay contest organised by the Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, New Delhi, for students of Colleges and University Departments, Kum. Kusum Bhatti, Jesus & Mary College, Kum. Chhaya Mehta, Miranda House, and Sri Shabih Ahmed, Sardar Patel Chest Institute, got the first, second and third prizes respectively.

Excerpts from the prize winning essays are reproduced below:

Kumari Kusum Bhatti wrote: "The modern-day education has reduced my generation to the status of nomads in the whirlpool of bread and butter. Now if at this juncture my generation discards the basic human values of life, who is to blame for it-the age, or the youth, or education itself?

"If we wish to achieve the dream of integral development of mankind, if we wish to arrest our decadence and resume ascent, if we are concerned about the near demolition of a meaningful life like a house of cards and if we wish to make a proper human being out of human life, we have no choice but to revamp our educational structure. If this is done, man will automatically retrace his steps and march towards now heights of bliss and happiness. The aim of Education must not be to garner bits and pieces for a livelihood but training of all the lofty facets of our existence.

"Education is the prime need of our society. It is too imperative that it be imparted a life-orientation and not a livelihood orientation. Education for life leads man to its divine status and education for living to the status of a demon. The choice is clear and the time is ripe. I pray that this happens."

Kumari Chhaya Mehta wrote:

"Much is our preaching but not the word of truth,
Much is our building but not the Man of Character,
So why build cities glorious if man unbuilt goes."

It is said that God makes man in his own image but man seems to be moving much below his true nature. If the statement of man being an image of God is true, man should have divine attributes and he should strive for perfection. It is said, 'Trifles lead to perfection but perfection itself is no trifle'. So to attain perfection man has to do more than just add on to the number of monuments or increase his contraptions. It is said, 'In his effort to make limited useful things the world is making unlimited useless men.' So if man has to rise above the level of an animal he has to mould his life according to certain values and ideals.

There is one important question that needs to be answered. 'Why was man born or is born?' It is said, 'Man is born so as to know how not to be born again.' The essence of this quest is the imbibing of the five values of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa.

Being the crown of creation and creator of all marvels, it is man's prime duty to create his own real self first and install that creation in the lap of the Divine. Then what follows is a 'Built Man presiding over a built creation.'

True happiness

Sri Shabih Ahmed wrote: What is happiness? No two persons' measure of happiness would be identical. Everyone's yardstick of being happy is different. For one person eating a meal in a nice restaurant would be the most gratifying experience. For another seeing a favourite matinee idol, and for another driving a Benz. Going In a slightly deeper plane, away from the mundane exercises, when we ask ourselves, when in a more sedate mood, "Is this real happiness? Is it the ultimate kind of satisfaction which we so earnestly desire? Is it going to keep us happy for any longer period of time?" The answer is an emphatic 'No'. The happiness listed above is ephemeral and on a purely materialistic plane and nothing more than sense gratification. Then what is real happiness? The important difference is that true happiness comes from within and not from without. True happiness is what we exude and not what we extract. Durable happiness is a state of mind and is in its actual sense nothing more or less but contentment.

The Sai Baba Center of Santa Barbara, In California, U.S.A., has been concerned about Narayana Seva for some time. Three years ago, during the Dasara festival, which is observed for the full ten days in our Center, it was decided that, since Bhagavan feeds and clothes the poor during the celebration of Dasara at Prasanthi Nilayam, we would inaugurate a programme to do likewise. So each evening, devotees brought food and clothing, and on the last day, Victory Day, we asked Bhagavan to bless it all as Prasad.

To carry this over into the Bal Vikas and EHV Programme, in each of the classes during this period, the meaning behind the Dasara festival was explained and discussed and on the last day, all the children, solicited food and clothing from friends in the neighbourhood, explaining the purpose for which it would be used. The day following Victory Day, the children came to the Center for their own puja, and then accompanied the adults and assisted in the delivery of all the supplies to the selected organization.

The Salvation Army was the first recipient. The following year, a local Rescue Mission was chosen to receive all that was gathered. In 1983, this Center became involved in helping a local community project called "The Wings of Love." This is a remarkably inspired group that responds to many varieties of crisis in the local area of Santa Barbara; families who suddenly find themselves, through accident or illness, out of home and income; deserted families, destitute children, drug and alcohol addicts. The Wings of Love provides food and shelter and facilities for bathing and washing clothes to those in need. Adults and children decided to assist this organisation in gathering food and supplies for the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. In January, the Sai Baba Center voted to make assistance to The Wings of Love, a monthly seva project. Devotees are welcome to bring food and clothing to the Center, and others share happily in the shopping and delivery of all that is gathered during the month. Our Center members have been invited to give discourses on Baba's teachings and philosophy.

Santa Barbara has an ongoing project that could expand to include any number of other Centers who might be so inclined. Since January of 1981, when Bhagavan blessed this project, friends and benefactors from many sources have contributed books, good reading, "how to" books on all subjects, magazine subscriptions, etc. If anyone who may be interested in supporting this project sends the books to the Santa Barbara Center, we will see that they are packaged properly and shipped to Baba's Institute of Higher Learning at Prasanthi Nilayam.

—Muriel J Engle, President, Sathya Sai Baba Center of Santa Barbara, California

Nadi (Fiji)

Nearly forty Sai devotees gathered at Nadi Sai Centre to travel thirty kilometers to Natabua Old People's Home to distribute food to destitutes. After bhajans for an hour, Bal Vikas boys and

Sai devotees. After lunch, the old people were given apples and some money. —*Ashwin Gandhi.*

Education in human values in U.S.

The E H V Programme is gathering momentum in the United States. Bea Flaig, a committee member from New York, has been teaching E H V on her own initiative to her public school classes for many months. She has been awarded a cash prize of \$ 400 for the best innovative programme in New York public schools and has been asked to make a formal presentation of the E H V programme to New York public school system on June 6.

California devotees are conducting seminars for Montessori School teachers (private school) on a regular basis.

Denise Dake has made a presentation of the E H V programme to 175 Public school teachers in Oregon. It was very well received and she has been asked to develop a programme for the public school system. Dr. Muniz of Mexico and his family attended the meeting as guests. They are assisting a supervisor in Mexico City public schools to teach E H V to classes involving 300 children each week. This supervisor has opportunity to expand the programme to 16,000 children next semester. The plan is to send the material developed by the American teachers to Dr. Muniz who will translate and adapt the programme to Mexican culture. — *M. G.*

Karnataka Conference

Bangalore (Karnataka): A two-day conference of the State Sathya Sai Organisation was held at Bangalore on April 28 and 29. All aspects of Sai service activities were considered and the following decisions were taken: Gents' Seva Dal: The number of Active Seva dal Workers to be increased by 50% in 1984 and by another 100% in 1985. To upgrade the quality of the Seva dal Workers, it is proposed to conduct training camps in 10 districts during 1984. Aptitude tests will be conducted using proper technical guidance for all Seva dal Workers and volunteers to offer them the work for which they are best suited.

Mahila Seva Dal: It was decided to concentrate on the following activities during 1984-85: (i) Moral and Spiritual lessons for village women and children; (ii) Vocational guidance and training; (iii) Health and Hygiene and home remedies for small ailments; (iv) Free coaching for school going children and helping them with regard to uniforms and tuition fees; (v) Collections of old and new books for the School children. (vi) Nutrition programme; (vii) Small libraries for village women and children. (viii) Collection of old and new clothes and distribution of the same. (ix) Personality development and leadership guidance among village high school and College boys (x) Handicrafts classes (xi) Looking after children of working mothers in slum area. (xii) Arranging film shows on education, Health, at pilgrim centres etc.

Village Adoption and Development: As against 400 villages to be adopted in the State on the basis of the All-India guidelines, so far only 86 villages have been adopted. It is proposed to adopt at least another 74 villages in 1984 and make up the balance next year. Sai Workers should

water supply, latrines, etc. Vocational guidance and training programmes for the youths in at least two model villages in each district will be conducted.

Health and Hygiene: In future, medical check-up activities will be concentrated on E. N. T., Eye, and Dental cases.

Bala Vikas: The Bal Vikas Wing will make available more personnel to be trained as trainers for human values for wider implementation of the Education in Human Values programme. The number of Bal Vikas centres will be increased by at least 50%. Oratorical competitions to be held for College students in all cities and towns.

Mahila Vibhag: All Mahila family members should be persuaded to enroll as members of the Mahila Vibhag. Bhajan Centers will be started in Ladies Hostels, State Homes for women, prisons, rural centres and schools. Bhajan training centres to be improved to ensure a steady availability of trained bhajan singers.

Study circles for Mahilas should be started at least in the main towns and cities. Sadhana camps for Mahila should be conducted at least once in six months. Mahilas' service activities in the village areas should be carefully co-ordinated with the Samithi activities after planning and prior survey.

Medical Camps

Prasanthi Nilayam: A free eye camp, organised by the Kingdom of Mother Sai, was inaugurated by Bhagavan Baba on Easwaramma Day, May 6, In the Easwaramma High School. A team of doctors headed by Dr. Siva Reddy, including doctors belonging to the Mobile Ophthalmic Unit, Kurnool, examined 1200 patients and performed operations in 225 cases. Members of the Kingdom of Mother Sai attended to all the needs of the patients and assisted the medical personnel as required. Volunteers from Prasanthi Nilayam also rendered service at the camp.

Malkangiri (Orissa): A mobile camp for free treatment to patients suffering from ear, nose or throat ailments was conducted by the Sathya Sai Seva Samithi, Malkangiri, at the Dandakaranya Project Hospital, Koraput, with the help of doctors from the General Hospital, Koraput. Over 350 patients were treated. Seva Dal members took care of all the patients.

M. P. Conference

Bhopal (M.P.): A two-day conference of over 300 Seva Dal workers from all over Madhya Pradesh was held on March 24 and 25 at Indore. Mr. Ranjit Vithaldas, coordinator for the states of Madhya Pradesh, Delhi and Rajasthan, inaugurated the conference. Mr. Indulal Shah explained the implications of reorganisation of the different wings of the Sai organisation and how the scheme for adoption of villages should be worked. The Conference decisions have given

and vigour.

Mr. Arjun Singh, Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, laid the foundation stone for a new building for Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vihar (Primary and middle school) on March 25, on a site on the outskirts of Indore. The State Government and interested well-wishers have offered donations exceeding Rs 16 lakhs for the construction. —*S. P.S.*

Sai Seva in Canada

A number of Sai centres in Canada are involved in Seva. This is an account of some of the activities currently going on or being planned for the near future.

The Sai Centre of Windsor plans to serve people in old age homes, visit patients in hospitals, and give rides to elderly people requiring transportation.

Members of the Sai Centre of Toronto Central (Yonge & Eglinton) and Sai Centre of Toronto (York University) are helping some patients with multiple sclerosis who are living at home and are in need of friends. Some members of these centres are also involved in giving support to people with terminal illnesses and the bereaved. One family from the Sai Centre of Toronto (York University) is delivering "meals on wheels" to the elderly.

In the Sai Centre of Barrie, Ontario, members are involved in visiting senior citizens, helping the rehabilitation of psychiatric patients after their discharge from hospital, working with people who have terminal illnesses and being counsellors for a "listening ear" telephone service for troubled people.

A seva group from the Sai Centre of Mississauga, near Toronto, is serving as hospital volunteers. This centre collected clothes to be given to the needy.

The Sai Centre of Peel, Ontario, is registering with the local Volunteer Bureau to work wherever there is a need.

The seva group of the Sai Centre of Kingston, Ontario, after discussion with their local Volunteer Bureau, got involved with Extendicare and will be helping the sick according to the needs of this institution. One of their members has served with the Income Tax Clinic of the Volunteer Bureau assisting senior citizens and handicapped persons in filing their tax returns. Another one is regularly doing typing for the volunteer organization.

In Montreal, the Sai Centre has registered with the local Volunteer Bureau and will work where the need is greatest, either visiting the sick in hospitals or supporting them at home.

Some members of the Sai Centre of Winnipeg are giving support to needy and lonely hospital patients. The seva group of the Sai Centre of British Columbia (Vancouver) plans to visit old people's homes on a regular basis.

Another very useful and relatively simple seva activity is to give supplies to the emergency food centres in each city. These food centres feed hungry families. At times they run short of food. The Sai Baba Centres currently giving supplies in this way are the Sai Centre of Toronto Central (Yonge and Eglinton), which has been doing it for over a year, and the Montreal Sai Centre which recently began. The Sai Centre of B.C. (Vancouver) plans to begin similar donations in the near future.

—*Peter Hacker, Canada.*

The arena of life is raised on four pillars: dharma, artha, kama and moksha. They sustain and support. When the arena loses two and struggles to stand on the remaining two, viz. artha and kama, naturally, anxiety, pretence, grief and greed afflict mankind. Each pillar must co-operate and complement the parts that the other three play. Dharma must sublimate artha, that is to say, through moral means alone should the means of living be obtained. Artha must be won through dharma and used in dharma. Kama must be primarily for moksha; that is to say, desire must be directed to liberation from bondage, not to the forging of new chains or the addition of further links in the chain of birth and death. The first of the four, dharma must interpenetrate and strengthen the next two, so that truth may be attended. Devoid of the first and the last, mankind is reduced to the level of beasts and birds.

—**Baba**

"Be Cooperators"

Bhagavan often reprimands devotees from many lands, "You are Operators, not Cooperators." For me, this observation has meant that we must become more aware than ever, that our thoughts, words and actions are founded and grounded in the Higher Consciousness.

The word "Operator" signifies that we are performing our actions in the field of mental activity, or Ego. To be an Operator and be in the Higher Consciousness is an impossibility.

Ego does not stand up and reveal itself as Ego. It appears in all the trappings of that which may seem to be holy and as truth, to the indiscriminating.

An Inner voice recently said to me:

"Search within, do not search without. What appears to be practices of great devotion are many times tarnished by Ego. You please Me with one moment of devotion than with hours of bhajans fueled by the fires of Ego. The flame of Divine Love burns in each of you, but you must choose between lighting your actions with the spark of My Love or with the spark of your Ego. Outwardly they may appear the same, but inwardly they are different: It is for each of you to know the difference within your own heart.

from clearly reflecting His Divine Glory. If we are truly aware of the significance and the unfoldment of the Advent of Sathya Sai Baba into our lives, can we refuse to be other than Cooperators?

—Mary M. Wilson, Albuquerque, U.S.A.

SATHYA SAI VANI

"Combine Morals with Business"

"If you businessmen live upto right principles, all the corruption in the country can be ended in a moment," observed Bhagavan Baba, in a powerful exhortation to a vast gathering of businessmen in Bombay on May 14 at the Brabourne Stadium. The meeting, which had been organised by the Indian Merchants' Chamber, was attended by several thousand businessmen drawn from every section of trade and industry and included the elite of the business community.

Bhagavan was forthright in his 90-minute discourse, and sought to bring home to the businessmen their moral responsibilities to society and the nation. He squarely placed the responsibility for the prevailing corruption in the country on the businessmen. He dilated on the obligations of the wealthy towards the weaker and less fortunate members of society and commended to them the supreme virtue of "Tyaga," dedication of their possessions and abilities for the welfare of the community. "Install morality in your hearts and, with faith in the Divine, engage yourself in business. If this is done, the nation will benefit from your efforts and you will be serving society and yourself;" urged Bhagavan.

The world attracts man in multifarious ways, but it will not allow man's thoughts or intelligence to go beyond its own limits. Content with the satisfactions derived from the physical world, man does not consider what is in store for him in the future. He devotes all his energies, physical and mental, and all his resources to achieving material comforts, power, position and honour, but makes no attempt to show his gratitude to the society from which he derives all these comforts, wealth and position.

For right living, righteousness and character are essential. The divine is the life-breath of man. The fulfillment of life consists in dedicating all one's energies to these objectives. Man, however, does not have faith in the divine. Whether one believes in God or not, one can see from moment to moment evidence of the presence of Divinity wherever one turns. Without Divinity humanness will not blossom. A man's life shines amidst enormous vicissitudes only when he displays qualities like equanimity and compassion. Because man covers his mind in a cloak of ignorance, blinkers his eyes with egoism, and closes his heart with the doors of pride, he forgets the Lord who created him and protects him. Such a man is unable to listen to any teaching. He worships at the shrine of the sense organs. As his desires go on mounting, he is unable to listen to what is wholesome for him. He has no relish for the company of the good. He has no awareness of the transience of life. He does not realise that his life and all that he enjoys may

pleasure and pain, success and failure. Obsessed with the acquisition of wealth and power, he does not realise the Divinity that is his essential nature. Immersed in ignorance, he wastes his life in the pursuit of impermanent things.

It is on the basis of this fact that Sri Sankaracharya declared in a famous verse in the Bhaja Govindam: "Oh man! Do not be proud of your wealth, progeny or youth. All these will be taken away in a moment by Time. Destroy this world of illusions and enter the seat of the Eternal. The thirst (trishna) for wealth is folly!" Trishna has two meanings thirst and desire. It is natural for man to have desires and thirst. But there is a difference between desire and thirst. It is natural for men not to be content with what they have, but to desire for more and more goods and more and more comforts. But In seeking fulfillment of such desires, one should take care not to cause any harm or suffering to others. Trishna is different from desire. It has no limit. It is insatiable.

Adhere To Dharma

Dharma or the code of righteousness lays down for men a regulatory path. Like the effulgence of the rays of the Sun, Dharma illumines the paths which men should follow for the welfare and progress of society, among the laws of Dharma, Rectitude (Nyayam) is most important. Rectitude means that one should earn his living by just means and be an example to others by just living. Justness consists in making no difference between oneself and others. Whatever may happen to oneself or one's relations, whatever difficulties one may have to face, one should not swerve from the path of rectitude. Justness is like the mariner's compass. In whatever way you put it, the needle will point only towards the North. Similarly, justness reveals the Divinity in man and makes him enjoy the bliss of the Divine. Hence, the ideal human life should be one in which rectitude forms the basis for every action.

Today, whatever prosperity one enjoys, whatever comforts one secures, all of them are derived from society. Some rules of Dharma have been laid down for ensuring that the wealth that is earned from society is devoted to the benefit of society. In the process of acquiring wealth one may be guilty of some lapses. It is to make amends for such lapses that one must practise charity.

Life consists of a constant interchange of pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, heat and cold. Happiness is an interval between two pains. The sour rind that covers an orange protects the sweet juice inside. We must look upon pain, anxiety and sorrow as the protecting covers for the peace and bliss that is experienced later. It is a mistake to seek an unending series of pleasures and comforts in life. Real happiness cannot be found that way. Without experiencing difficulties and troubles one cannot know the value of peace and pleasure. Man thinks that the more he has of worldly goods the happier he would be. But, as desires grow, disappointments and troubles also increase. There should be a limit to our desires, attachments and ambitions. The world is suffering from numerous troubles because people set no limits on their desires. Nature has prescribed limits for everything for the temperature of the body, the capacity of the eye to tolerate light or for the ear to listen to sound. When these limits are crossed, harm is caused to the organs concerned.

Life itself is like a limited company. All actions in it should be governed by the limits applicable to each of them. When desires are controlled, genuine happiness is experienced. Even in practising charity, limits should be observed. One's gifts should not exceed one's financial capacity. Nor should they be below one's capacity. In the former case, one will face financial troubles. In the latter, one will be withholding from those in need what is due to them. Charity is not limited to money alone. One must share one's physical, mental and spiritual resources with those in need in society. It is through such sharing and sacrifice that the awareness of the Spirit is achieved (Atmajnana). Charity should not be indiscriminate. Help should be rendered according to the needs of the case. The hungry must be fed, the naked must be clothed.

Although one may know how much good can be derived through sacrifice (Tyaga), one does not make any sacrifice. One may aspire for wealth, but one should only seek what one is entitled or competent to get. A bank cashier handles lakhs of rupees every day. But he is entitled only to his salary. He should not desire for more money than what he can earn legitimately. Excessive wealth carries with it many dangers. Human values are forgotten by the affluent. As long as there is wealth the evils resulting from it are not realised. It is only when it is lost that one begins to realise one's follies. It is better to be forewarned and learn to lead a righteous and upright life from the beginning. Wealth may come and go. Morality is what one should cultivate. What is morality? It is right conduct in accordance with time and place.

What is the root-cause of all the disorder, chaos, crime, falsehood and violence that prevail in the country today? It is the behaviour of people contrary to the dignity of human nature that is responsible for the present situation. All the education that one receives has no relation to human values. Whether it be in the sphere of political behaviour or social conduct, economic activity or spiritual pursuits, all one's actions are based upon the tendencies of the mind. No change in any form of activity is possible unless the mind is changed. That is why the Vedas proclaimed that the mind is the cause of the bondage and the liberation of men. One who wants to change others must first change himself. The heart is like a lock and the mind is like a key. If you turn the key to the right, you open the heart to God; if you turn it to the left, you turn it towards attachment to worldly things.

Corruption: who is to blame?

There is no use blaming the government for all the evils prevailing today. The people are responsible for the Injustice, the wickedness, the falsehood and the corruption prevalent in the country. The people cannot disown their responsibility for the actions of a government which has been placed in power by their votes. Whether a government is good or bad depends on the people themselves. There is widespread talk in the country about corruption. Many come and ask me "Swami! When will corruption end in this country?" Who is responsible for this corruption? Is it the government? No. It is the businessmen who are directly responsible for this corruption. For their own selfish reasons and private gain businessmen have been financing those in power and making them more and more powerful. If you businessmen live up to your right principles, all this corruption can be ended in a moment. It is true that there is no one who does not desire wealth. An old Telugu proverb says that even a dying person will get up if he sees somebody

for businessmen to set a limit to their business and their profits and utilise their abilities for the-promotion of public good. It may be difficult to combine business with morality. Therefore, the first requisite is to install morality in the heart and, with faith in the Divine, engage oneself in business. If this is done the nation will benefit from the businessman's efforts and he will be serving society.

Today everyone talks only about what he wants. He says: "I want this, I want that." If he loses anything he bemoans his loss. The whole of life is spent in acquisition and losing and there is no peace of mind. Businessmen have to understand the basis of human relations and cultivate harmony and understanding. Unless such a broad-minded approach is developed, businessmen will not experience the bliss of the divine.

How long can the pleasure derived from education, wealth, health or position last? Like the lamp that sheds its light on all alike, you must cultivate love towards all.

Love lives by giving and forgiving. Self lives by getting and forgetting. Everybody seeks Liberation. Everyone wants immortality. But how is immortality to be got? Removal of immorality is the only way to immortality. If we are filled with hatred, envy, pride and other evil qualities, how can we hope to achieve immortality? You must cultivate good thoughts and do good actions. You must engage yourself in service to society. By this process you purify yourself. You cannot reach the Divine unless you are pure. The unchanging, eternal, ever pure, blissful Supreme is the goal. By your steady pursuit of Sadhana, you must strive to reach that goal. While remaining in the world of business, you must keep this high goal in view and carry on your business, whatever it may be.

Do not regard all your various possessions, houses, vehicles, wealth, etc., as permanent. There have been great emperors in the past who ruled over vast empires. When they passed away, what did they take with them? Posterity does not care even to remember their names. What you cannot take with you does not really belong to you. You are filled with fear, like the ticketless traveller who gets into the train. In the journey of life, if you want to travel without fear you must have the ticket of a good conscience. If you adhere to right conduct, you will have no need to fear any one.

The great conqueror, Alexander, when he was approaching his end, called all his warriors and told them that when he died, his body should be taken to the grave with his two hands held upwards. On seeing the funeral procession with hands of the emperor held up, the people asked why the emperor was being carried in that manner. They were told that the great emperor, who had amassed immense wealth, wanted to show that when he was leaving the world he was going empty handed, taking nothing with him. The lesson of this episode is that we should seek not unlimited worldly possessions but contentment and peace of mind through good deeds. All that we accumulate is really not our property. It belongs to the people.

If conditions in Bharat are to be improved, it is only businessmen who can do this. Businessmen can even reform the government. Businessmen can promote the world's progress. They can also ruin the world economy. By their own right conduct, businessmen should try to set right the administration.

Bharat is the land of our birth. It is a sacred land devoted to sacrifice (Tyaga-bhumi), to right action (Karma-bhumi) and the practice of yoga (Yoga-bhumi). We are trying to convert such a sacred country to a land of luxury and pleasure (Bhoga-bhumi). All the sources of Pleasure (Bhoga) are in fact the causes of disease (Roga).

This is the biggest mistake we are committing. Our willingness to sacrifice constitutes real yoga. Of the four Purusharthas—the objectives of life, (Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha)—the Ignorant man confines himself to Artha (Wealth) and Kama (sensual desires). The wise man (Jnani) seeks only Dharma and Moksha (Liberation). However, every person should seek all the four Purusharthas. This should be done by associating Artha (the acquisition of wealth) with Dharma and Kama (the satisfaction of desire) with Moksha (Liberation). You must earn wealth by adhering to Dharma (Right conduct). Utilise the wealth for right ends. Our ancients laid down four avenues for the utilisation of wealth or earnings. One fourth should be used for personal use and for supporting the family. Another fourth should be used for charitable and religious purposes. A third quarter should be spent on other living things (like animals, birds, etc.). The remaining fourth should be offered for supporting the State. It is only when one's wealth is utilised in this manner will it be really beneficial and meaningful.

Misdirected charity

Today many persons give money for charitable purposes. But the reason for their action is to reduce the burden of taxes in one way or another. You all know how large temples are being built at Benares, Prayag, Delhi, and other places. There are Birla Mandirs at many pilgrim centres. They are quite Impressive and attractive. They are built in marble and are additions to the nation's architectural achievements. Crores are spent on them. It is, no doubt, good to build temples. But the real temple is one's own body. Without purifying one's self, what use is there in building temples? Temples built at the cost of crores of rupees are not properly maintained. Swarms of beggars ruin the surroundings of the temples. How much better would it be if the crores of rupees spent on erecting temples are used for improving the condition of the poor, the destitute and the helpless? Institutions for helping the indigent unfortunates are more useful than edifices for worshipping some deities. To give a helping hand to the helpless is real service. Love towards one's fellow beings is the best spiritual discipline. Misuse of money is a great evil. Wealth must be used only for good purposes. Money is capable of leading man to any place-good or bad. Hence he should take care to see that wealth does not lead him to bad ways.

Having been born in the sacred land of Bharat, we should not do anything which will bring a bad name to this great country. By limiting their desires and reducing the amenities required for comfortable living, the wealthy should devote themselves to the service of the poor and the forlorn. Seek to derive happiness from service to your fellowmen. Happiness is union with God.

be "Seva" (service) all the time. They should take up every form of activity and give it a spiritual meaning. It is only those who are imbued with the spirit of selfless service that are fit to become leaders of the nation.

Service to society is everyone's primary duty. Businessmen should develop a moral approach, use right means for earning wealth and utilise it for the benefit of society.

I may have caused some uneasiness to all of you. But without minding it, you should all take to heart what I have said and try to practise what I have said. Thereby you will be achieving real happiness. I bless you all.

—*Brabourne Stadium, Bombay, 14-5-84*

Dare To Be Fully Human

When the mind is free, illumined by the clear light of unconditioned consciousness
When the heart plays host to the radiance of divine love, experiences the wholeness of being
When life flows deep and consciously in the currents of boundless energy and creative
intelligence
When the soul bursts through yet another barrier, revealing rays of refinement, tenderness and
exciting beauty
A new being, the supramental human distilled from the foul gases of the past,
Arises to fulfill the high promise of life.
We are not alone! I see a Mystic Presence on earth, I hear a Mystic Voice calling
"Follow me, stride out of this ignominious existence in the half light,
Cowering, cringing, snarling, biting in fear, hatred and anger,
No better than jungle predators and prey, masked in human forms.
Come, be bold! Dare to be fully human!
Upholders of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa!
Amruthasya puthraaha! Divyaatma swarupas! Co-Rulers of the Cosmos!"

—*Dr. S. Cooppan, Wellesley, U.S.A.*

The Voice of Hope

I looked at some of the people around me ...
...and my heart became so very sad!
For so many of the people I know ...

I wondered how these people could take pride in themselves,
On saying exactly what's on their mind
Without even a second thought,
If their comments are cruel and unkind?

My heart was so wounded that day,
As I walked the road of sorrow...
...a road so dark with care...
But as I laid my head upon HIS breast,

I realized this was all a test.
And then ...soft as the voice of an angel,
Breathing a lesson unheard...
HOPE ...with a gentle persuasion,
Whispered those comforting words...

"I am with you," I heard HIM say,
"Fear not my child, for I am here,
Have no doubt, and never fear..."
Whispering HOPE, oh! How sweet thy voice!
Making my heart in its sorrow rejoice
The gentle voice of my Lord S-A-I!

—S. Lithopoulos, Ottawa, Canada

Leela Kaivalya Vahini

4

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Sadhaka: What is the Rg Veda? How was that name applied to it?

Sai: Rg Veda is the collection of mantras or hymns in praise of Gods. The term Rg Veda can apply to the Gods who are praised.

Sadhaka: Which God is most adored and glorified in this Veda?

Sai: There are many Gods whose praise is contained in it. The Rg Veda deals with thirty three of them as important.

Sai: They have forms akin to the human.

Sadhaka: Please instruct me on their swaroopa, their form, at least, about one or two among them.

Sai: Surya, the sun God, has `rays' as His arms. The flames of Agni, the Fire God, are His tongues. This is how they are pictured. Agni, the Fire God, is born when hard-wood (Arani) is churned. Agni has parents. But, as soon as He is born, He eats up His father and mother, that is to say, the pieces of wood whose friction produces the spark. Agni is described as having ten maids. They are the ten fingers that hold the arani and operate it. Since He is born every time the arani is ritually operated, Agni is named the Bahujanma, the Multi-born. The column of smoke (dhooma) Indicates His presence, it is His Flag (Ketu) so to say. Therefore, He has another name, Dhooma Ketu, by which He is invited.

Agni is named Yajna-Sarathi, (the Charioteer for the sacrifice), for He brings in this chariot to the place of sacrifice the Gods to whom offerings are made in the ceremonial flames. He conveys the offerings to the Gods to whom they are dedicated. In every Yajna (sacrificial rite), Agni is the most important participant. So He is praised as officiating in all the four roles: Rtwic (priest), Hota (reciter of prayers), Purohita (performer of rites) and Brahma (supervisor of ritual). Agni is the closest friend of man, for without fire he can scarce hold on to life. The principle of Fire is at the basis of human activity-both inside the body and outside. So, Agni is addressed as Grhapati (the master of the home) and Atithi (the welcome guest). Agni has no preferences and no prejudices. Agni treats all living beings, all races and castes equally with no distinction. Therefore, He is addressed as Samamitra (Same Friend).

Sadhaka: What is the main lesson that the Rg Veda teaches?

Sai: The Rg Veda teaches Unity. It exhorts all men to pursue the same holy desires. All hearts must be charged with the same good urge; all thoughts must be directed by good motives towards good ends. All men must tread the one Path of Truth for all are but manifestations of the One.

People believe today that the lesson of the unity of mankind is quite new and that the idea of progressing towards it is very praiseworthy. But, the concept of human of unity is not at all new. In Rg Vedic times, the concept has been proclaimed much more clearly and emphatically than now. It is the preeminent ideal of the Rg Veda.

All are parts of God, His Power, His Energy. The Atma that is the Reality in everyone is, in truth, the One manifesting as the Many. The Veda demands that difference and distinction should not be imposed. This universal inclusive outlook is absent among men today. They have multiplied differences and conflicts and their lives have become narrow and restricted. The Rg

Unity.

Sadhaka: What is the Yajur Veda? Why is it known by that name?

Sai: The name is derived from the root 'Yaj'. It has a large number of derivatives, each with a particular meaning. But the meanings most current are 'Worship of God' (Devapuja) and charity, granting gifts. The Yajur Veda describes the modes and methods of performing Yajna and Yaga to propitiate the Gods. Adhwara also means 'a sacrifice'; so, Yajur Veda is sometimes referred to as Adhwara Veda.

Sadhaka: What lesson does the Yajur Veda convey?

Sai: The Yajur Veda has two recensions, one centering round the tradition of Aditya or the Sun and the other, around the tradition of Brahma. The latter is distinguished as Krishna (Dark) Yajur Veda and the former as Shukla (White) Yajur Veda. The Shukla Yajur Veda is widely current in North India while the Krishna Yajur Veda prevails in South India. The Krishna recension is closer to the hymns of the Rg Veda collections. The mantras or formulae contained in this are used in the worship of Gods and while placing offerings to the Gods in the sacrificial fire.

The Krishna Yajur Veda comprised eighty six Shakhas (branches) each with its special explanatory texts. But they have mostly disappeared from the memory for want of people to study and practise. Only four have survived. Eighty two have been drowned in the whirlpool of time.

The Shukla Yajurveda had seventeen noteworthy branches but they too had to succumb to the ravages of time. Only two of them are available now. When we consider how momentous and meaningful (mahath) these two are, one has to conclude that the unique value of this Veda is well-nigh indescribable. Estimating the glory and grandeur of the Vedas is a task which no one can fulfill. The Vedas are unreachable, by means of either language or imagination-"Yatho Vaacho nivarthante, apraapya manasaa saha" (That from which words recoil, inaccessible even to the mind). Know that this is the truth and exult that you could know it thus. Those who have become aware of this are really blessed; diving into the depth, they have gained the precious gem; they have won the goal of Life, the Purusharthas.

—(*To be continued*)

Meditation

`Meditation' is generally understood as the process of fixing one's mind on an image that gradually absorbs the mind and lends it its own qualities. When you fix your Inner attention on any form of god, the goodness, the purity and the sublimity of the form gradually become yours.

light, gradually becoming a part of it. If you meditate on breath, you become conscious of a constant presence in you. In all this we start with a thought, and pass on to a stage beyond that. We use a thought to kill another until the instrument also is killed.

Swami speaks of another and more effective method which he explains by the help of two parables. While the mother watches at the doorstep, the child goes on playing, sometimes indulging in mischief. He pays little attention to the mother's calls, shouts and threats. The more exasperated the mother is, the more playful the child is. But, if the mother turns her back on the child and walks in, without ever chiding the child, or shouting at him, the child stops his play and comes back to the mother. Then the mother has a very obedient child. In another parable Swami describes a traveller who wants to see his own image. He goes to a wayside well and bends over the edge. He sees his own form in water. He hasn't seen it earlier, for he had not desired it. But now he loves his own image. He thinks of the nose in the image, the smile and the frown in the image, and as he continues his journey he loves them and hates them. The image did not exist prior to his desire to see it, and now he has nightmares of that which never existed.

What is the meaning of these parables? As long as we are after our thoughts and want them to take the road we like to show them, they are sure to play mischief. All our powers of persuasion, entreaty and prayer will end in failure. We get angry with ourselves and start punishing the body. But we forget that as long as we acknowledge the shadows, and look for them, we continue to sanction their rightful presence. Then we want to tell them: "Hey, you can't exist." That is not going to work.

So the mother must turn her back on the child. The traveller must walk away from the well, and never peep in. In Swami's language, which sounds like a mantra, "Don't run with your thoughts. Keep quiet, watch them." *WATCH THEM*, that's the mantra. "You are not the mind, not the Buddhi, not the indriyas. You are their witness. Let the thoughts come and go, what's that to me!" Swami drives this home by two illustrations. A boat ploughing through the water and a plane cutting across the air leave no stain in water or air. To own the thoughts is to perpetuate them. To be conscious, even intellectually, of the overwhelmingly quiet state of our being, is to start putting them to naught.

To achieve this, one must first accept the proposition, then building up conviction, attempt to assert and live it every moment. This involves constantly disengaging ourselves from the shadow figures that continually dash against our twilight awareness. When a thought strikes hard, smile at it; don't say anything by way of owning it or rejecting it. Try to see it as different from you. The depth of your being remains unruffled. Then that thought will go, giving place to a subtler one "I have driven that thought away!" It becomes harder to fight it. But don't fight it either. Simply try to watch this one also, constantly disengaging yourself from these passing strokes, trying all the time to take the position of a witness.

Sometimes, we like to talk to our thoughts. That's what Swami refers to as 'internal dialogue'. Someone sends us a thought from the background. We see it come, either take interest in it or get

the game in right earnest and sends us thoughts after thoughts in quick succession, and the process goes beyond our grip. If we but try to watch it, we can see there are two persons parleying with each other in this. One is the ego, the other, which we can hardly distinguish from the ego, stands apart and gets involved. If we try to refuse to carry on the dialogue and try to be only a witness, the dialogue slowly dies down. In fact this internal activity in a person is more intensive than the external as the external is only a projection of the internal.

It is interesting to see how a section of contemporary psychoanalysts are, in their own way, arriving at similar results. Dr. Hubert Benoit postulates a concept which he calls 'Inner Gesture'. It is synonymous with 'Witness'. He says, 'each one of us lives in a state of SATORI...which is independent of birth and death'; and this satori, he insists, is the source from which all our thoughts or imaginative emotive concepts rise and finally merge in. To be free from this disturbing process and see our real state is that for which man must live. Then he talks of living in this state. He advises not to suppress the activity called Thinking, but to evoke and awaken that Inner Gesture and see the very birth of the concepts. For this, one must have, first, active attention, or constant alertness towards the whole process. To quote him, "If I take up, in the face of my inner monologue, the attitude of an active auditor who authorises this monologue to say whatever it wishes and however it wishes ...I observe that my monologue stops." And this results in "seeing with having no objects to see." That is not different from the "Watch them" and "you are the witness."

This is the end of meditation. To a question how long one must meditate, Sri Ramana Maharshi is reported to have said, "Meditate, till you know that you are not meditating."

—*B. K. Misra, Prasanthi Nilayam*

BHAGAVAN IN BOMBAY:

Advice to Businessmen and Rural Sevak

Bhagavan Baba's mid-May visit to Bombay was made memorable by his wholesome and forthright advice to the cream of the city's business community to give morality a place in their hearts. Industrialists wanting to hear Baba has by now become a common feature. It was, however, for the first time that the Indian Merchants Chamber specially invited Him to address them. The meeting on the lawns of Brabourne Stadium was organised with meticulous care. Bhagavan's 90-minute talk on "Role of business in promoting moral values" fell on very receptive ears

Bhagavan's engagements during his four-day stay (May 11 to 14) covered an unusually wide variety of events. The main thrust of the programme during the current International Seva Dal Year being service activity, the rural uplift schemes well under way in Maharashtra have created a deep impression on the rural population.

Considerable preparatory work had gone into setting the stage for the 16th anniversary of Dharmakshetra this year on May 12. Mr. Justice Y. V. Chandrachud, Chief Justice of India, who presided over the main event was all admiration for the enormous amount of work that was being done by the Sai devotees under the inspiration and guidance of Bhagavan. "It is only to be seen to be believed," he said. What greater recognition was needed for it than the fact 703 schools in London had adopted the system of "Education in Human Values" evolved under His guidance, he added.

Lending colour to the celebrations was an impressive exhibition on "Science to Villages" at Santhi Deep, in Dharmakshetra, showing how the Sai organisation is striving to improve the quality of rural life by carrying the benefits of scientific developments to the villages. The exhibition was formally declared open by Bhagavan.

A symposium held alongside was equally illuminating. Nearly 400 village "sevak", drawn from Maharashtra, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh, attended the symposium and their representatives participated in it.

The exhibits showed improvement of sanitation, provision of medical aid, clean water supply and approach roads as some of the crying needs of the villages. Models of smokeless 'choola' and solar cooker, inexpensive to make and easy to operate, were also on view.

"Live upto our traditions"

In His message to the anniversary gathering, Baba said that even rural India was not free from the scourge of politics, creating divisive forces. He said those who wish to serve the people should do so in a spirit of dedication and keep away from factional politics.

Baba said if the people of this country failed to recognise the need to live up to "our traditions and culture," it will be impossible to sustain higher values in life.

Baba gave away "Village Utility Kits" to Gram Sevaks representing 100 villages.

He also released a "Directory of Blood donors" compiled by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samiti, Bombay. It was presented to him by Mr. Pramod Dalal, Chairman of the Samiti.

Dr. M. G. Goldstein, Vice-Chairman of Sri Sathya Sai organisation, United States, told the gathering that Bhagavan Baba's message was touching the hearts of people of all nations. "We, in America, recognise our duty to future generations through our Bal Vikas and Education in Human Values."

Yet another important event during the four-day Divine visit was a symposium on "The Spirit of Social Service," to which representatives of about 18 social welfare organisations and Professors from the Indian Institute of Technology had been invited.

symposium was to gather some fresh ideas on social service. The Sai organisation would welcome cooperation from all in a spirit of service. He announced that a coordinating committee would be set up to consider the various suggestions made by the participants.

Dr. V. K. Gokak, Vice chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, speaking on "Teaching as social service" said that mere transmitting of information would not amount to teaching. Teaching is a tool. Those taught should be able to embark on the adventure of using the knowledge they acquired for the benefit of society.

Cooperation in seva

Baba told the participants that many organisations were engaged in welfare work. Instead of working independently, if they coordinated their efforts, they would be able to do a lot more good to the people than at present. He advised them to work in a spirit of cooperation and not competition. Further, those engaged in social work should be free from selfish motives.

A compilation of lessons in history for primary teachers under the "Education in Human Values" programme was presented by Baba to Mrs. Kusum Kamath, Head of the Department of Education of the Bombay Municipal Corporation, and one of the participants in the symposium.

In the midst of a crowded programme Baba found sometime for the 400 rural workers from Maharashtra, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. Meeting them in the newly constructed Anand Kutir with a rural touch, He heard some of them narrate how they carried on their work in villages.

Three hundred men, women and children from slums adopted by the Sai organisation in the city were overjoyed to get a chance to meet Baba all for themselves. He heard with deep interest Mrs. Indu Sudha, mother of four (3 sons and a daughter) wife of a carpenter, residing in a slum off Dharmakshetra, describe her experiences since joining the Sai Service activities. She told Baba that till recently her children had been fond of films. Since joining the Bal Vikas classes run by the Samiti however they had developed a liking for bhajan and the urge to see films was not there now as before. Baba gave them all gifts and prizes to children who had participated in competitions held for them.

Baba spent some time at a Blood Donation Camp organised by the Sathya Sai Blood Bank In cooperation with St. George's Hospital Blood Bank at Santhi Deep. The four-hour camp yielded 293 bottles of blood Offers of blood by 66 more had to be rejected for medical reasons.

Sai workers' pledge

All the active workers of the Sai Organisation in Bombay were received by Baba at Ananda Kutir, where they pledged themselves to work for the fulfillment of the target set for them in the various spheres of activities.

Industrial Study Circle programme. Their leaders reported to Baba the progress made in these activities.

Yet another pleasant function at Dharmakshetra, an annual event, was the presentation of trophies to winners in essay competitions in different languages held for students of Bombay colleges. Over sixty students from 30 colleges had participated in the preliminary round and 45 in the final round. Heads of the situations received the trophies from Baba.

Baba declared open the new premises of the Central School for the deaf at Agripada in the city, and an operation theatre in the ophthalmic wing of the clinic run by the Sathya Sai Seva Samiti, Bombay, at Dharmakshetra.

Baba's address to the members of the Indian Merchants' Chamber was his last public engagement in Bombay on May 14.

Mr. Pravinchandra Gandhi, a prominent member of the Chamber, announced to the gathering that Baba would speak on "the Role of business in promoting moral values".

Mr. Pranlal Bhogilal, President of the chamber, welcomed Baba on behalf of the business community.

Baba told the members of the Chamber that wealth alone would not bring peace. Blinded by ego, man was not inclined even to think of God. Such a person would not listen to any preaching. It was natural for man not to be satisfied with what he had. But In the pursuit of his own desires, he should not harm others. He would do well to remember that there was a thing called Dharma.

Business and morality

While it was perfectly natural for one to think of earning as much as he could, he should also bear in mind the good of the society in which he lived and give back to society a part of his earnings.

People often complained to Him of corruption in public life. He would not blame the government for it. He placed the blame squarely on the shoulders of the "business community." The bribe-giver was more to blame than the bribe-receiver.

His advice to the business community was "give morality a place in your heart". Removal of Immorality was the surest way to Immortality, He added.

—**V.N.B.R.**

AUSTRALIAN SAI ANNUAL: Edited by Dr. Sara V. Pavan, 8, Mirrabrooke Avenue, Homebush, New South Wales, Australia.

The Sai family is growing remarkably in all parts of the globe. Australia is one of the countries in which many Sai Centres have come up in recent years. Sai Devotees in Australia are influencing the lives of people in their respective communities by their varied activities. In this finely produced Annual, Dr. Pavan has presented a varied collection of articles and poems on Bhagavan's message and mission and the unique experiences of devotees. Among the contributors are Mr. Howard Murphet, Dr. Moshe Kroy, T. Sri Ramanathan, Peter Morgan and others. Profusely illustrated, the Annual is a fitting new year offering to Bhagavan.

SATHYA SAI SANDESH

"Spread the Message of Love"

A stirring call to Sai workers to go to the villages, spread the message of love and promote unity among the villagers for achieving their all-round development, was given by Bhagavan Baba in His message to a mammoth gathering of devotees at Dharmakshetra on the occasion of its sixteenth anniversary celebrations.

Bhagavan said that the individual, the society and the nation constituted an inextricably linked organism. The peace and welfare of the nation depend on the peace and progress of society, which in their turn are dependent on the peace and good conduct of individuals. Unless individuals develop mutual regard and tolerance and cultivate equal mindedness towards each other, there can be no peace and harmony in the community. Material progress alone cannot bring about peace and happiness among people. America is an example of a country with a high degree of material progress, in which the people have little love for each other and have neither happiness nor peace of mind.

The astonishing progress of science and technology has not brought with it corresponding powers of discrimination and wisdom. Man must realise that the sense organs, through which he explores the external and discovers the powers latent in Nature and the physical universe, function because of the Divinity which is immanent in them. Without the power of the Divine, the eyes cannot see or the ears hear or the mind think.

Our ancients were not ignorant of science. But in pursuing scientific enquiries, they did not rest content with knowing all about creation. They were keen to understand the Creator who was responsible for the creation. They sought to know the nature of the unchanging Reality, that was behind the continually changing phenomenal Universe. This spiritual quest leads to the realisation of the Divinity that is present in all living things and permeates all things in the universe.

Members of the Sai Organisation must carry on their work in the firm faith that all are the children of one God. They must carry on their service activities in a spirit of unselfish dedication

purify their hearts and minds, regarding their body as the temple of the Divine.

Today we see disorder, violence and hatred in various parts of the country. Conditions appear to be deteriorating from day to day. In this situation, the duty of the Sai devotees is clear. They must cultivate the principle of love (Prema-tatwa) and make it the basis of all their actions. They must wean the villagers away from bad habits and advise them not to fall victims to the divisive forces that are rampant amongst them. There is no place for party politics in the field of rural betterment.

Sai workers should identify themselves with the interests of the villagers and serve them with love and sympathy. This is the sadhana in which they should engage themselves.

—*Dharmakshetra, 12.5.84.*

Onward to Europe:

"Tasks Before Sai Workers"

"In our decision to become good Sai-workers, to do our very best, always following the inner Truth, we must be like the diamond, where our one-pointed determination to work for Him should be as hard, unchangeable and strong as the diamond, and our Love, compassion and soft speech should be beautiful as the lustre of the precious stone," observed Dr. Thorbjorn Meyer, Chairman of the Coordinating Committee, Europe Group One, addressing a Sai Satsang at Guldenberg, the Netherlands, on April 20.

We all believe in LOVE as the great unifying force in the whole of cosmos and each in his own way is trying to serve this force, this principle, which we consider the guiding light for humanity. For most of us a long search was brought to Its final stages when we met and heard Sri Sathya Sai Baba and He has for us become the symbol and the very essence of the unifying Love, which must be the guiding principle for anyone who chooses to live according to the ethics of humanness. Many of us are in His Organisation as SAI-workers, active members, who take up responsibility for a life in accordance with the Human Values, devotees who are walking together, following the great Master along the spiritual path.

But is an organisation really necessary? This question is raised now and again, although it really has been answered already in His Charter for the Organisation as well as in many of His Divine discourses. Still when the question continuously is raised it must be because of some confusion and some misconception of what true spirituality is.

"Why do I need an Organisation to realise myself as Divine?" they ask. "How can I need an Organisation in connection with my wish of acquiring a higher spiritual consciousness? Isn't this, when we look at the facts, just a question between God and myself?" they may continue.

When we go deeper into the question, it looks as if some spiritual seekers earnestly believe that they themselves in reality are limited entities without realising that such a limitation of our own reality in fact also reduces and restricts God. Naturally it is not possible to realize oneself as Divine, to experience the fundamental Unity and Oneness as a state of consciousness existing 'in splendid Isolation' apart from everything else. Such a profound change in the minds of men is a spiritual Awakening to the Unity, the One-ness of all. It cannot be brought about by anyone, who restricts his awareness to two limited and self-contained entities.

Imagine one embodied Divine spark as a tiny, little facet on a gigantic diamond believing that it may realize the sparkling totality of the precious stone without being aware that the whole is made up by the sum of all the tiny and accurately cut facets. In realising the whole no one facet can be excluded as they are all contained in the whole. They are all interrelated by virtue of their very existence.

In the same way we cannot worship the Creator without worshipping His Creation, His manifestations. We cannot realize our own Divinity without realizing the Divinity of all. It would be like admiring the beautifully cut diamond and at the same time look down upon its many facets as ugly and without value.

The inner desire to achieve Love and expand Love has taken outer shape in the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation. It is meant for persons who have spiritual aspiration and faith in Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and are wedded to His Charter. Such devotees have understood the universal message: "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength—and love your neighbour as yourself*" as indeed the greatest commandment, which means that we should find God in ourselves, learn to see Him as Immanent in the whole Creation and serve the Creator through His manifestations.

So the task of the Organisation is to develop and foster Love and to help the devotees through a spiritual Awakening to realize the Unity behind all this apparent multiplicity and to worship the One through service to His manifestations. Each and every activity of the Organisation is only a means to further such a spiritual process and final Awakening.

For each devotee his spiritual process is motivated by a strong and persistent inner urge, furthered by the faith in the living Avatar. Gradually the devotee realizes that no one but he himself can take responsibility for all of his thoughts, words and deeds, and that it is not possible to follow the Truth without acquiring a total Unity between thought, word and deed.

The task at hand for the seeker may seem so enormous and difficult that it is frightening. Can we realise our Truth through a strict self-discipline and are we able to take the full responsibility for our thoughts, words and deeds and to acquire Unity within? Because as within so without. Having come so far we must admit that there is no other way.

to add to our own efforts the Satsang, the Sadhana (the spiritual discipline) of whole-hearted co-operation with other devotees. To canalise and direct our bhakti, our Love for the Creator to His Creation and to multiply our Love.

Through the activities of the Organisation, Bhagavan Baba is helping us to purify the mind and clarify the intellect. He Himself is guiding us towards realization of the Truth.

Through our SAI-co-operation and mutual SAI-work we learn renunciation and non-attachment, —we begin to succeed in our self-discipline, we surrender and say: "Not my will but Your will be done" and we feel the strength of our faith in Him, —which is the same as faith in ourselves, a new and strong self-confidence. We are beginning to feel Him In our heart. And *then* we can take up responsibility in its true sense.

In this difficult process He directs us to implant three ideas in our hearts, they are: (1) Do not forget God. (2) Do not be afraid. You are the imperishable Atman that knows no fear (3) Do not put faith in the outside world you see around you; it is changing every second.

He also wants us to banish two ideas from our heads, they are: (1) Forget the harm that anyone has done to you. (2) Forget the good that you have done to others.

By following Him and by taking up our responsibilities, both Individually and together in close co-operation within the Organisation, we are getting a glimpse of this Unity, which is so difficult to behold.

He tells us that the unifying principle is Love and that God Is Love. God Is Unity. He wants our work, our loving heart and selfless service. He is interested in quality, not in quantity. He points out that God can only be won by the cultivation and exercise of Love. The commandment is short and clear: "LOVE ALL—SERVE ALL." His prescription is: "Learn first to love all the members of the centre and from there spread your Love to all of humanity—and even to the lower creatures."

Listen to one of His beautiful declarations. He says: "There is only one royal road for the spiritual journey—LOVE. Love for all beings, as manifestations of the same Divinity that is the very core of oneself. This faith alone can ensure the constant presence of God with you, and endow you with all the joy and courage you need to fulfill the pilgrimage to God."

He says that the qualities that entitle a person to membership of the SAI-organisation are detachment, simple living and steady spiritual discipline (Sadhana), and with such devotees the objectives of this Organisation, He says, are: *inner Individual reform and re-building* eventually securing us a new human society based on straight and sincere individuals. Sometimes He puts it in another way when He says: "Man must be unmade and remade."

such as: *co-operation, renunciation, the taking up of responsibilities, love, devotion, faith and Unity in thought, word and deed.* An unshaken faith In the Name and Form must be the best guidance for our leaders as indeed for every SAI worker. But never should we allow ourselves to feel spiritual pride.

"The Organisation," says Baba, "must constantly enthuse members to engage themselves in the spiritual discipline of service."

To further our mutual endeavours, the Co-ordinating Committee is in the near future establishing three non-profit foundations for Europe Group One with satellite foundations in each of the countries belonging to the group.

The first is: The Sri Sathya Sai Baba Foundation, which will mainly deal with Seva, the practical implementation of undertakings according to the love-thy neighbor-philosophy.

The second is: The Sri Sathya Sai Baba Publication Foundation, which will publish SAI-literature.

And the third, which might not be founded until 1985 is: The Sri Sathya Sai Institute for Education in Human Values, which will carry on activities furthering the implementation of Human Values In the public education system.

AMRITA DHARA:

Who is the Greatest?

During his visit to Ooty in April, Bhagavan gave a series of edifying fireside chats to the small group of devotees who had accompanied Him on the visit. The talks combined profound insights into spiritual truths with entertaining parables narrated in Bhagavan's own delectable manner.

On one evening, Bhagavan related a story about the Sage Narada's encounter with Lord Narayana to bring out the eminence of the true devotee in the eyes of the Lord.

Bhagavan said: On one occasion Narada went to the Lord. In the course of their conversation, Narayana asked Narada: "You are moving around three worlds, what news have you brought for Me from your wanderings? Have you seen anything great in my creation?" "What is greater than Yourself in the world," said Narada. "I am asking you about my creation and not about myself," said Narayana. Narada said: "I do not understand the question." "There are five basic elements, the Pancha-bhutas. Which is the greatest among them?" Narayana asked. Narada said: "The earth is the biggest." Narayana said: "In the earth three-fourths are occupied by water." Narada agreed that water is greater than the earth. But Narayana observed: "All the oceans were drunk by the

Agastya was greater. But Narayana observed that "Agastya is remaining as a star in the sky. In the vast firmament, Agastya is merely twinkling as a small star; is not the firmament greater than the star?" Narada said that the firmament is greater than Agastya. Then Narayana said, "In my Avatar as Vamana I covered the entire earth and sky with one foot of mine. So is the firmament greater or my foot?" Then Narada said: `Your Foot'.

"If my foot itself is so great, am I not greater than my foot," Narayana asked. Narada agreed. Then Narayana said, "Although I am great, I am confined in the hearts of my devotees. So the devotees are greater than myself. And therefore, wherever my devotees sing my name I am there."

Hence, everyone must cultivate a broad mind, a large-hearted outlook. Broad mindedness is expansion, narrow-mindedness is contraction. Devotees should also cultivate broadmindedness. It is to broaden the heart that name of the Lord should be chanted. Instead of singing by oneself, when devotees sing in groups, a sense of unity develops. By all people singing in unison and all hands clapping together, all hearts become one. This unity is proclaimed by the Vedas by describing the different organs of the Lord as the source of the power in the different sense organs of a human being.

Devotional Singing

On another evening, Bhagavan expatiated on how devotional songs should be sung. Narada, Bhagavan said, once asked Sriman Narayana what was His permanent address. Narayana replied: "Wherever my Bhakta sings my name, I am present there." Then Narada asked: "There are innumerable places in which the devotees sing your name, how can you be present in all those places at the same time?" (Bhagavan explained that it was not any kind of singing that appealed to the Lord) In singing there are some who indulge in gymnastics and do not reveal genuine devotional feeling. When songs are sung in that manner, how can the Lord be present there? (Bhagavan illustrated it by reciting merely the musical notation Sa, Re, Ga). Where the singers merely emphasise the Raga and the Tala, He will not be present. It is only when the song is melodious combining Raga, Tala and Bhava the tune, the rhythm and the feeling only there will He be present. The singing must be full of feeling. The Lord is moved only by the feeling that is expressed, not by musical talent as such. It does not matter if the raga is not perfect and the tala is not perfect. Those appeal only at the worldly level. The Lord loves only the sincerity of feeling.

There was a great musician in Akbar's Court known as Tansen. He used to sing night and day and the music was mellifluous. It was perfect music but there was no deep feeling in his singing. One day Akbar and Tansen were going round the city. Akbar found an old man singing to himself songs in praise of God. Akbar stopped his chariot and went on listening to the song of the devotee and even without his knowing it, tears started flowing from his eyes. His heart was deeply moved. He went some distance and told Tansen: "You have been singing for a long time before me and I have always found your music very sweet to the ears but it has never moved my heart, but the music of this devotee has melted my heart. I wish to know the difference between

please you, but this devotee is singing to please God that is the difference."

So something which is sung to please a man cannot move the heart. Only that which is addressed to God can have that effect. What pleases the Lord alone can change the mind of man. Both the devotee and the great musician Tansen were singing well, but only the song filled with devotional feeling could appeal to God.

You Know Best

What shall I ask for with my fallible judgment?
What avails the deer chasing after a false scent?

The object that I seek with a consuming passion
may be a bauble merely —a moment's rage and fashion.

Make me like one who prays unsullied with desire
like the petal of a lotus untouched by mire.

Help me follow him who in embarrassment prayed
and you knowing the reason why the outpouring ash stayed.

The ego gets inflated at the least semblance
of partiality or favour cleverly read in your glance.

Let your Grace enter me unnoticed, with no visible token
and silent adoration an intimate secret, unspoken.

My prayer won't be tied with a material thing
you know best what to bestow, my part your glory to sing.

In the face of a rebuff with an unclouded brow
Since you know all, unrepining, I simply bow.

How much I can endure you very well know
How long I do tarry here and when it is time to go.
You also know when to temper the wind you recklessly blow.

—**P. P. S.**

"Make Adoption Meaningful To Villagers"

The implications of the village "adoption" programme, undertaken by the Sathya Sai Organisations, were elucidated in detail by Bhagavan Baba, in an illuminating discourse at "Sivam," Hyderabad, while inaugurating the Andhra Pradesh Sathya Sai Seva Dal Conference on May 20.

Bhagavan, who arrived from Brindavan on the 19th, did not mince words in commenting on the kind of service being done in the "adopted" villages. Swami said what mattered was not the number of villages listed in the programme, but the nature and quality of the work actually done for the benefit of the villagers. Calling for a spirit of love and dedication in rendering service, Bhagavan urged the Seva Dal members in Andhra Pradesh to assess their performance conscientiously and concentrate on their work in such a way that by November, 1984, the picture presented by the "adopted" villages will be pleasing and satisfying to the villagers and the Sevaks.

Bhagavan said:

However carefully a man may live, he is prone to commit five types of offences (doshas) unwittingly. The first of these relates to the use of words. The second relates to actions like sweeping and cleaning. The third relates to walking. The fourth relates to the use of fire for different purposes. The fifth concerns the use of water. The words one uses may cause pain to others, or harm them in one way or another. Moreover, in the act of speaking many germs may get killed. Their death affects us even if we are not aware of it. When we sweep or clean the house countless ants or other insects may be destroyed. Likewise, when we are walking many tiny creatures may get crushed under the feet without our knowing it. When fire is lit for one purpose or another, some living objects may get burnt. When water is used for washing or other purposes, several microbes and other organisms may be killed. These five types of offences, though they may be committed unconsciously, have their effects on a man's life and may cause suffering and sorrow. How is one to avert the consequences of such offences? The Vedanta has laid down five kinds of Yajnas (sacrificial acts) to expiate for such offences. These are: Deva Yajna, Pitru Yajna Daiva Yajna, Bhoota Yajna and Atithi Yajna. These five kinds of Yajnas help to mitigate the consequences of the five types of offences (doshas).

The Five Yajnas

Deva Yajna (propitiating the Divine) comprises various forms of worship to atone for offences committed by speech. They are Shravanam (listening to things divine), Kirtanam (singing the praise of God), and contemplation on God (Vishnusmaranam), Mananam (reciting the divine names), Vandanam (prostration), Dasyam (service) and Atmanivedanam (self-surrender). The bhajans you do and the Nagarsankirtan done by devotees can be regarded as a form of Devayajna.

and upbringing received from them. To please the parents by one's actions, to look after them in their old age and to protect them in every way possible—all these constitute Pitruyajna. Such acts serve to atone for some types of misdeeds. When the Upanishads laid down that the mother and the father should be revered as God, they revealed the spiritual value of respect for parents.

Daivayajna comprises such acts as study of the Vedas, reading sacred books like the Gita, the Upanishads and the epics. This has an expiatory effect for some kinds of unconscious offences.

Bhootayajna includes various kinds of actions done for the protection and welfare of animals, insects and other living objects. In ancient days various duties were prescribed for people to regulate their lives on right lines. For instance, on festive occasions, the place in front of every house was strewn artistically with rice flour, which was a kind of offering to birds, ants and other insects. By this means the lesser beings in creation were propitiated. Unfortunately, this ennobling custom has either gone out of vogue or is surviving as a meaningless ritual by the use of a white powder instead of rice flour. In the old days people used to take rice flour or sugar and scatter it over anthills or other places for consumption by insects. What was once a sacred obligation to other living things in creation is now treated as a superstition. It is not realised that by this type of Bhootayajna considerable merit was earned and many evil consequences of one's actions were averted.

The fifth Yajna is Atithiyajna—the service rendered to guests. To satisfy a person who comes to your house by offering him food according to your means, or at least offering him buttermilk or water, is a sacred duty. It is an Important form of sadhana for the spiritual aspirant.

Spirit of Love

In rendering service (seva), members of the Sai Seva Dal should not think that their services should be confined to the poor and the destitute. There is no need to make any artificial distinction between the rich and the poor in the sphere of service. What matters is the service done to a person that needs it. There may be servants who attend to the needs of the well-to-do. But when you are out to render service, your concern should only be with what kind of service is required, when and where, and not the status or position of the person concerned. The first requisite is a genuine spirit of love and fellow feeling. If there is no feeling of kindness and compassion, whatever service that is done becomes an artificial exercise, done for getting publicity or recognition. Sai sevaks do not need name or position. Ostentation in rendering service is totally out of place. It will only inflate the ego. You should render service to the limit of your capacity, neither more nor less.

Faith in God

The first quality every member of the Sathya Sai Seva Organisation should have is firm faith in God. This faith must be based on the awareness that God is omnipresent. The Divine pervades everything in the Universe. This may not be understood by everyone. Some may not agree that the Divine is Omnipresent. But whether they accept this fact or not, the truth is evidence of the presence of God can be found wherever one turns. Is it possible for this boundless creation to be

is latent in the branches of a tree and in the tree itself. If the branches rub against each other, they may generate a fire which could burn down the tree, branches and all. Which is the power that filled the branches with the latent fire and ensured at the same time that they did not destroy themselves by releasing that fire? Is man responsible for this? Take, again, the example of the process by which the food that we take is converted into blood. Is this the invention of any man? It is the immanent, all-pervasive power of the Divine that reveals itself in numerous ways. We see flowers of all kinds. Men are able to make plastic flowers of the same kind. But can any one fill the plastic flowers with the native fragrance that is got from natural flowers? This is possible only by the Divine. There is sweet water inside a tender coconut. Who poured the water inside the coconut? Was it the work of any man? No. Only the Divine can do such a thing.

Examples such as these should serve to confirm your faith in the Divine. No one can probe the mystery of the power of the Divine or grasp its infinite magnitude. If members of the Sathya Sai Organisation have no faith in the Divine, there is no purpose in their remaining in the organisation. Such persons need not join the organisation or continue in it. It is with faith that one should take up social service. Society is our primary concern. The Divine is manifest in society.

Not Numbers but Quality

Venugopal (President of the Andhra Pradesh Sai Samiti) stated that the State Samiti had "adopted" two hundred villages. He gave a list of the names of these villages. But is the mere selection of villages for "adoption" enough? Will one's hunger be appeased if only the leaf is spread out before him for serving food? The hunger will be appeased only if food is served and it is consumed.

You go to an "adopted" village, conduct Nagarsankirtan and undertake renovation of a dilapidated temple. Can these activities fulfill the purposes of "adopting" the village? They all merely symbolise preparations for serving food. They only whet the appetite of the villagers. What you must do is to find out what are the essential needs of the villagers. Do they suffer from poor water supply? You may feel that you need money for digging a well. But if all Seva Dal members work whole-heartedly, two wells can be dug in a single day. You must render service out of spontaneous urge from within, with a heart filled with love.

Seva as Yajna

How is service, in fact, done at present? There are doubtless persons who undertake service with love. But for whose sake are they doing it? It is for their own sake, not for the sake of others. It may not be done to achieve name or to gain something. It is done for the pleasure derived from it. To engage in service activities with pleasure and to regard a day devoted to service as a good holiday is not enough. The pleasure derived from service must be a spiritual experience. Service must be regarded as a yajna, a sacrificial act to atone for one or other type of lapses one may have committed. To utilise one's wealth, one's talents and resources for the service of the people and help to all living things must be regarded as an offering to, and a form of worship, of the Divine. Only then can service (Seva) become true service. Putting in one's

Each Seva Dal member should ask himself whether he is rendering real service to the maximum extent of his capacity.

Today you have all come to this conference as delegates wearing the Seva Dal delegates' badges. You must ask yourselves whether you are really qualified to wear this badge. Each one must ask himself: "Have I done genuine service? Or have I joined one group only in the expectation of getting the chance to approach Swami?" Examine yourself with a pure mind.

Purity of Motives

You all know how large is Andhra Pradesh in area. If the number of delegates is so small, you yourself can decide whether this is not a matter for shame. The greatest loss the country has suffered in recent years is the loss of a sense of decency and self-respect. For instance, if the clothes we wear become soiled we feel ashamed to be seen in them by our friends. We try to dress well before we go out, because we want to be respected. Likewise, we try to keep our dwellings clean because we do not want to feel ashamed when visitors see the dirty state of the house. While we feel so concerned about the state of our house or clothes, the heart in which the Divine resides is utterly polluted. It is filled with unclean thoughts and impure fancies. How many go about the world with such impurities in their minds without a sense of shame. If they make an honest examination of the impure state of their minds and the kind of double life they are leading, they will be able to get rid of their bad thoughts in a moment. What they are doing is to conceal their thoughts, but are externally well-dressed and move about as impeccable persons. Of what use is such conduct? We attach importance to the external appearance of the body and value the respect shown to it. But one who cares only for the body and ignores the state of his mind is only a two-legged animal.

It is not enough to appear to do right actions. Your motives and impulses must also be pure and unselfish. It is only when your motives are pure that the Divine will extend His grace. Whatever service you render, it must be unsullied. The motive is all important. The form of the action does not matter. Without pure impulses, actions get tainted at the source. If you are a good man, your actions will necessarily be good.

Promote Unity

There is a Telugu proverb which says: "If the whole village unites, the entire farm can be harvested." With unity any work can be accomplished. You must strive to promote unity. You must fraternise with the villagers and demonstrate your awareness of the Divine that is present in everybody. You should not get entangled in local politics. Political differences have entered the villages and ruined community life in the rural areas. You should tell the villagers: "Every individual can have his own political views. But these should not affect the welfare of the village as a whole. In matters concerning the progress and well being of the village, all the villagers should act as one regardless of party differences. You may support any party of your choice. But this should not affect your attitude to matters concerning the development of the village. All of you should act unitedly." Sai Sevaks should promote such a cooperative attitude.

facilities for the villagers such as dustbins, drains, latrines, etc. In all such work, the involvement of the villagers should be ensured so that they learn to develop self-reliance. You must try to wean the addicts from the drink evil, which has ruined many homes. Provision of roads, wells, lights and the like should be undertaken wherever they are required. The service you do must meet the needs of the villagers and give satisfaction to them.

Malady among Leaders

"Adoption" of a village can become meaningful only when you give love to them and earn the love of the villagers. Nothing should be done in a spirit of condescension. I know there are many good workers in the Seva Dal. Not in Andhra Pradesh alone, but in all the states. There is however, a malady that is noticed in the organisation. If the leaders behave well, the workers can render excellent service. The primary requisite is to see that the right persons are chosen as leaders. They must be dynamic persons. They must be filled with the spirit of service to society and dedication. They must feel that they owe everything to society and that their life can be worthwhile only when they have discharged their obligations to society. They must consider social service as their primary aim in life. It is only when they devote all their physical, mental and other resources to the service of the community that they will be doing real sadhana. Sadhana (spiritual exercise) does not mean performing Japa in a lonely place. There is no greater sadhana than service to one's fellowmen done in an unselfish spirit. Ignoring the sufferings of others, if you occupy yourself in meditation or other devotional activity, it has no spiritual value at all. It is only one form of selfishness. Through genuine selfless service, not only can peace of mind be achieved, but progress can be made in self-realisation and the ultimate goal of life can be attained.

As members of the Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, you have to be an example to others. In whatever service you do, it is the quality that counts, not the quantity. No act of service should be considered trivial or debasing. Nor should there be unhealthy rivalry in rendering service. If one State has "adopted" two hundred villages, another should not think it should adopt an equal number or more to produce a better impression. Mere numerical claims have no meaning. It is better to render proper service in two villages than nominal service in two hundred. It is not the presentation of lists of "adopted" villages that matters. What is the real work that has been done in the two hundred "adopted" villages? Let those who have worked in these villages speak up. For whose satisfaction are you claiming to serve the villagers? You must be your own judges of the work you are doing. Consult your conscience and see whether you are rendering proper service. I do not want anything to be done for Swami's sake. My only object is promotion of the welfare of mankind. When you render service in the villages, you are redeeming your lives.

The sages of yore acquired various kinds of powers by their penance. They were able by these powers to fulfil whatever they promised. They used their powers with restraint. There is nothing wrong in acquiring even titanic strength. But it should be used in a humane way. It should not be wielded to oppress others. Shakespeare, the famous English dramatist, observed: "It is glorious to have a giant's strength; but it is tyrannous to use it like a giant." Everyone must heed this warning.

Work With Faith

There are all kinds of organisations in the world today, including spiritual organisations and service organisations. What are these organisations doing? How useful are they to the people? There is no proper answer. What use is there in having such organisations? If the Sai organisations also function in this manner, what purpose is served by starting them? You must all be filled with the zeal to render service at any time, at any place, when the need is there. You must try to attract young people to the service organisation. With more young people in the Seva Dal, you can carry out many welfare activities in the years to come. The present is a product of the past, but it is also the seed for the future. If you make good use of the present, you can ensure a better future. If you misuse the present, the future will be worse. Hence, all those who are in the Sai Seva Organisation should engage themselves in worthwhile activities and achieve fulfillment in the service they render.

Every village today is exposed to many diseases. We need not blame any one for this situation. We must be concerned only about the resources in men and materials at our disposal and use them with devotion for carrying out our welfare services. We have to do this work with faith. People display devotion and earnestness in the presence of Swami, but act in a contrary fashion when they are away from Swami. This is not a sign of true Bhakti. Bhakti means wholehearted love for Bhagavan. Such love can tame even wild animals. It is only when your hearts are filled with such love that you can claim to be Bhaktas. You must show that love to anyone whom you see or talk to and in everyone of your actions.

Every act must be regarded as an offering to the Divine. It may not be easy to develop such an attitude. But if the effort is made sincerely, it can be achieved. It does not call for abandonment of hearth and home or giving up your wealth and position. What I ask from you is to devote at least half an hour in a day of twenty four hours to service. Is this beyond your capacity? If you can serve the government or someone else for eight hours a day for the money you earn from them, experiencing in the process many trials and difficulties, can't you devote some time to win the grace of God, the benefit from which is immeasurable? What you earn through the grace of God will confer on you enduring benefits greater than the wealth you earn by other means. The grace of God is like insurance. It will help you in your time of need without any limit. Material wealth confers Bhoga (enjoyment) which leads to Roga (illness). But selfless service is Yoga which secures Divine grace.

Call to Andhra Sevaks

Devote yourselves from today with all your heart and soul to service activities so that by November 1984 I may hear the good news that the Sai members in Andhra Pradesh have been rendering signal social service and conferring joy on the people. Only then will this Seva Dal be a source of joy for Me. So far Seva Dal conferences have been held in fourteen states. Of these I have attended only the Andhra Pradesh conference (Applause). What is the inner reason behind this? Your applause is of no use. You must note that the first letter of the English alphabet is 'A' and 'a' is the first letter of the Telugu alphabet. Andhra Pradesh people also are achieving the first position, but one is not certain in what sphere. In other states the Sai organisations are

Andhra Pradesh organisation is weak and pitiable that I have chosen to attend this conference, like a mother who devotes more attention to a weak and sickly child than to others. You are inclined to take things easy and be casual in your work. You must henceforward concentrate on service activities with all your strength and make Andhra Pradesh an ideal for other states. Only then will I visit this area to see the good work that is done. I do not want you to go about collecting funds. I value good qualities and not money. Improve yourselves and devote yourselves to good deeds. That is all I want from you. Some changes will have to be made in the organisation. These may be discussed at your meeting. Hoping that you will intensify your service activities, I bless you all.

—**"Sivam," Hyderabad, 20-5-84**

Recipe for Peace

The World today is suffering from selfish politics, nihilistic religion and heartless competition; this is indeed a disgraceful state of affairs. Man has completely forgotten his fundamental divine nature. At such a crisis, the thing that is most urgent is Santhi, Prema. To get Santhi, Prema is the only means. The fuel Prema yields the divine flame of Santhi. Prema brings about unity of all mankind and this unity combined with spiritual knowledge will bring about world peace.

—**Baba**

Bhagavan's Message of Unity

Bhagavan Baba lays great emphasis on the Unity of Mankind. He constantly reconfirms the message of all religions which is the Brotherhood of Man and the Fatherhood of God. For thousands of years religions have tried to help men reestablish their link with each other and with God, through the principles of love, peace, right action and non-violence. Even the word *universe* itself is based on the concept of unity. In Latin "uni" means one and "verse" means turning into. Thus the universe is something which is turning into one. Why, then, have men failed so miserably in establishing this unity among themselves here on the earth?

It is obvious that we are forced into separate alienated existence by our desires, attachments, fears, prejudices, likes, dislikes and insecurity. But the basic cause of all these fears and insecurity is IGNORANCE of who and what we really are. We are Ignorant of our true spiritual nature and our relationship with each other. We are ignorant of our already existing SPIRITUAL UNITY. Baba is simply trying to get us to realise and reestablish that Spiritual unity here on the emotional, physical and mental planes. We must understand and experience that unity here on the earth in these physical bodies.

Baba and other sources give us various models and examples which help to conceive and understand this underlying spiritual unity which links us all together. One example commonly used is that of the sea and waves which form and dissipate upon its surface. Each wave is like an individual human being who appears out of the sea in a separate and unique form and then at the end of its life merges once again with the sea. The wave-form is only a temporary expression of the one sea. All waves experience their unity in the one sea from which they come forth and return. In the same way, man comes forth from the one Universal Spirit (Paramatman) and eventually returns once again to that unity. It is only during the height of his active life here on earth that he loses awareness of that unity and acts in a selfish and egotistical way for personal gain.

Fire, too, like water offers us some models of unity. Take, for example, the Sun which is the physical source of all life in this solar system. The sun obviously represents the one God who is expressing himself through the power of the sun so as to make life possible in the physical form. The sun reflects on millions of different bodies of water all over the earth. It reflects on rivers, streams, lakes, oceans, seas, swimming pools, cisterns and even puddles and glasses of water. Thus there are millions of different reflections of the sun, none of which is the same. Each unique reflection of the sun will depend on the quality of the water, its colour, its transparency, its motion or stillness and its surroundings. It will also depend on the position and state of mind of the observer of the reflection. The sun is God. Each unique reflection is a living being, who appears differently depending on his tendencies, qualities, the Samskaras, karmas and gunas which he manifests, and also on the "eyes of the beholder." Obviously all these various differences in the reflections are illusory because in reality there is only One Sun which has a specific image when seen directly. The same may be imagined about man. All the physical and personality differences which we perceive among human beings are temporary illusions; for each is simply a reflection or a projection of the One God. Thinking in this way we can gradually overlook our differences with people around us and begin to experience our unity with them as unique manifestations of the same Divine being.

Many candles but one flame

Baba also mentions the image of the flame from which many other flames can be lit. Although we may light one million candles from the same source, a candle, that original candle will not be in any way diminished. The candle does not lose anything of itself as it ignites another candle. The original self-igniting candle is God. We spirits are all candles which have been ignited by that divine light. God is in no way diminished as He projects his Divine Life into our forms. Nor can we say that those million candles are different. The form of each candle, the colour, the appearance may appear different. Even the flame may burn differently depending on the size and make up of the wick and the air currents around it. But the flame is the same divine flame which is in all other candles, for they were all lit from the SAME FLAME. There are many different candles, but there is only one flame. There are many different bodies and minds, but only ONE SPIRIT.

between the spokes is greatest. As we move toward the centre the distance between the spokes diminishes. Each spoke is a human being. On the surface of the human being, that is in his physical body and ego identification there are great differences between one human being and another. But as we move inward away from the external, physical and mental factors toward the spiritual centre of the human being, the distance between himself and others around him gradually lessens. The more one acts and reacts from his spiritual centre, the more he feels and expresses his unity with his fellow beings through love, compassion, and service. When he reaches the centre of the wheel, all spokes (that is all beings) become one and no differentiation can be experienced. This, I imagine is how Sai Baba experiences each one of us; as a spoke radiating out from his own being. In this way we can in some small way understand how he can communicate with all of us at the same moment.

God and man

One final model of the unity of the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God is that of the cells of the human body. The functioning of the human body is dependent on the harmonious united effort of all the cells of the body. If these cells are ill within themselves, or do not perform their function, or do not have enough resources, or do not cooperate with the other cells (as in the case of cancer cells) then the body will obviously be ill. God is the projector of the body of all beings. Each being is a cell in the body of God. Just as the mind consciously and unconsciously attends to the functioning and needs of the cells in the human body, God attends to the needs and functioning of the body of humanity. But just as the cell has the ability to revolt and not cooperate with the other cells, the human being has the same free will. Thus the body of humanity is afflicted with a most serious and perhaps lethal case of cancer as each cell is functioning only for itself without any thought or consideration for the other cells. Humanity is suffering from lack of cooperation and harmony between the cells and organs of its beings. Each country is like an organ, and there is little or no harmonious functioning between them. Thus we have a complete blockage in the flow of natural resources, food, money, water, love and trust. The result is poverty, starvation, unhappiness, revolution, violence, crime, illness, lack of morality, the arms race and in general a sick and unhappy world.

Sai Baba brings us the message of the Unity of Love, of Peace, of Wisdom and Right Action. He encourages us to see our fellowman as a cell in the body of humanity. He asks us to overcome the obstacles to unity which are ignorance, fear, selfishness, desire, attachment and aversion. He gives us very simple and clear guidelines as to how we can break through to Unity Consciousness.

—Robert Najemy, Athens

SAI, the living God, looks after and guides everyone in the world. His approach is global, Irrespective of caste, creed, colour, religion or geographical boundaries. This may appear unconvincing in the case of those who have yet to have the fortune of his 'Darshan', for want of which their minds are closed and unreceptive. Their minds are like television sets fitted in the homes without antennae. In a contrary situation, when one gets to know `SAP, one starts receiving instructions which are not imperceptible initially, but become clear, explicit and bright with advancement in devotion (Sadhana). The more the progress In devotion, the more explicitly clear are the instructions televised on the minds of Sadhakas (devotees).

When a two-way link is established, SAI the Lord does not allow anyone to reproach Him. His communication, with inherent and inbuilt automatic control, is unique, unparalleled and unprecedented in the annals of the Universe. It has defied the scientific advances in the communication system and has baffled even the scientists. When one bows before Him (His picture, I mean) and/or invokes Him, He Is there in one or other form or transmits instructions within the twinkling of an eye.

One day, (recently) I was in a depressed state of mind, plunged in gloom and dejection. Wrong ideas arose in my mind that prayers do not lessen suffering. The germination of these bad thoughts resulted in a cobweb of negation and there was a resolve to stop the prayers immediately.

While the resolve had yet to become a resolution of the mind, the interwoven thoughts started receding and a process of disintegration set in. Right at that moment an idea flashed in my mind: resume prayers if Swami gives a message. Lo! The message came within minutes. At that very moment, a not very familiar person was at my doorstep and pressed the call bell. While I was lying in the bed absorbed in thoughts of resentment with Swami, my wife attended to the visitor for a short while. Since the visitor was a stranger to her, she climbed upstairs and apprised me about the unfamiliar caller. She insisted that I should change my clothes before meeting the visitor. Ignoring her advice, being completely in a shattered mood, I rushed to the visitor to dispose him of summarily. The visitor was fairly unknown to me, except that I had a hazy idea about him. He was employed in the Civil Secretariat and had occasionally saluted me in the lift while I was based in the Secretariat. I recollected that he was a lift operator. Nicely dressed as he was, it looked difficult to dispose him of so quickly. I enquired about his well-being and the service I could do for him. He narrated a pathetic story about his family's trials and tribulations, compared to which my own problem looked petty and frivolous. My resolve to stop my prayers crashed and I got absorbed in my thoughts. When I looked up, the visitor sought some help from me. Since the solution to my own problem was not in sight, I dared not suggest a solution for his problems, not to speak of helping him. My wife incidentally was watching my reaction from behind the curtain as she had heard the woe-some tale of the stranger. After a great deal of struggle in my mind, I uttered: `Pray to HIM'. The man left immediately nodding his head in partial agreement.

prayers and the prayers are continuing without hindrance. SA's ways are mysterious. How beautiful and worth practising are Swami's words: "Those who seek to know God must steel themselves to bear insult, injury, torture with a smile" (Cover page message in 'Sanathana Sarathi', April, 1984.) I bow to Him and pray that He must give us courage not to lament over our sufferings but remain patient and have unflinching faith in Him.

—*I. C. Gauba, Chandigarh*

Hail Ushas!

Amid the lifeless silence of the void, in the solitude and immensities, a voice came quivering like a loved refrain heard in the echoing spaces of the soul-ripple dissolved into another ripple; wave melted into another wave and the stream ran down the rocks dancing gaily.

An opulent ecstasy seized my being, a divinising stream possessed the veins and the cells awoke to spirit's felicity. Every fibre became a burning thread of incessant rapture. A bliss, a light, a celestial tongue licked the being and a pure sun gaze flame stared on. The feet lost their hold upon earth and the eyelids could no more repel the sunlit gaze. They dropped down in silent ecstasy.

Earth lost its texture to the flesh. A shape was seen in the corridors of the mind, a form flaming red—a murmuring of celestial fire in the heart's chamber.

A stillness came upon Nature. A mute silence pervaded the being. And a refrain echoed through ripples and waves, across the transcendence: Awake! Ushas is here! Awake to the felicity! Arise to the story! Arise! Arise

—*M. Balakrishna Reddy, First Semester, Biosciences, SSSIHG, Prasanthi Nilayam*

Leela Kaivalaya Vahini

5

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Sadhaka: Swami! You said the Veda is known by nine other names. Has it got more?

as Prashna, also as Prathama-ja. The names reveal the various facets of the Veda, the context and character of the teachings.

Sadhaka: Prasna? What does it mean?

Sai: The Almighty (Parameshwara) is Prashnagarbha (He who contains all clarity and wisdom). Prashna connotes purity, clarity, sanctity. So the word indicates that the Almighty has the intelligence, devoid of taint of any kind. The Veda is the concretisation in words of that Wisdom. Rishis (sages) who possess purified consciousness and clarified intellect win the grace of the all pervasive Brahman (Cosmic Self). Brahman prompts them and blesses them to visualise the hymns and sacred formulae (mantras). While adoring the Almighty, who became aware of the Truth, they too recognised and described Brahman as Prashnagarbha.

Rishis who visualised the mantras were not bound by the consequence-coils of Karma (works); they merge in Brahman and emerge from Brahman when the cycle of manifestation starts again. So, they are hailed as Ajah (unborn). The Veda acclaims them thus. Their very nature is immaculate purity. Therefore, they too are called Prashna. They yearned so agonisingly for grace that in the state of super-consciousness (Samadhi), Brahman manifested out of self-will, and awarded them the vision of Brahma Yajna.

Sadhaka: What is Brahma Yajna?

Sai: Brahma Yajna is Swadhyaya, that is to say, intense study and observance of the Veda. The Rishis who are 'unborn' and therefore authorised by Brahman to transmit the Truth, formulated, according to the vision they earned, the Yajnas or sacrificial rites designed to promote peace and prosperity in the world. The Vedas acknowledge as Rishis only those who treasure in their hearts the awareness of mantras, of the supreme truth, and of the meaning and significance of Brahman (the Cosmic Self) and Dharma (the Laws of Social Harmony and Individual Rights and Duties). The ritual sacrifices authorised and accepted by such Rishis are called Yajnas.

The yearning for Truth is Tapas or Asceticism. Since Brahman is won through Tapas, *It* is referred to as Tapoja (attained by Tapas) and the response from Brahman to the Tapas is described as the Word of God (Deva-vaak), the Voice of God (Deva-vani).

Tapoja literally means 'born of Tapas'; but this does not imply that the Cosmic Self (Brahman) was nonexistent until Tapas brought It forth! Brahman is ever-existent; it has no Beginning; Time does not affect it. 'Born of Tapas' means that 'It revealed Itself to the person who underwent the Tapas'. It ever IS; It has willed to be so. It projected Itself as the Vaak, the Word. The Word is the mantra of the Veda. So, the Almighty is described in the Veda as the Designer of Mantra (Mantra-krit), the Creator of Rishis (Rishi-krit), besides the names that occur at some place or other, like Self-emergent (Swayam-bhu), Tapoja (born of Tapas) etc.

signifies food (anna), water (jala), immortalising nectar (amrita) and the wisdom of the Veda. Since the Almighty Brahman has all these in Him, in the womb (garbha), so to say, He is named Prashnagarbha. Brahman is thus declaring His own Reality as the Form of Veda (Veda-rupa).

Sadhaka: Swami! Prathamaja is another name you mentioned. What does that word mean?

Sai: The Three (Trayee), that is to say, the Veda, is extolled as Prathamaja in the Veda; "Upasthaya Prathamajam"; —this statement reveals the belief that Vidya (higher learning) could be attained by the upastha (revered study) of Prathamaja or the Primal-born. Unless one studies with humility the sacred Veda-vaak (Word of the Veda), one cannot master knowledge of Brahman (Brahma Vidya)—that is the lesson the statement conveys. This requires, not the verbal recitation of the Veda, but the constant `service', the conscious worship, of the Veda with full awareness of what the word means and commands. This has been made plain in that statement.

Sadhaka: In which Veda, Swami, does the name, Prathamaja occur?

Sai: In the Rg Veda. Understand that Prathamaja and another similar expression, Poorvaja indicate the impossibility of discovering when the Veda was first revealed. It is beginningless. It is for this reason that Sage Valmiki has praised this Word (Vaak) as the First imperceptible mysterious Word (Agra Vaak). The first concretisation of the Cosmic Will was the Cosmos or the Cosmic Womb (the Hiranyagarbha); that too is Prathamaja. Knowledge of the Impersonal and its projection as Personal (Brahma Vidya) is also Prathamaja, the Primal Awareness, according to the V e d a. Both Brahman and Hiranyagarbha are sometimes referred to as Prathamaja.

Sadhaka: Of these two, which is really Prathama, that is to say, the First?

Sai: Brahman is the very first. It always is and has *been*. From it, Hiranyagarbha was born. And, the Veda too emanated from It. The appellation Prathamaja is very apt, for the Vedas. Since the Rishis heard and pronounced the Veda, it is also named Aarsha, that is, related to the Rishis.

Veda is the source of Dharma, moral life, righteous behaviour. Those who observe the norms relating to duties and taboos as laid down in the Veda and as interpreted by the Mimamsa rules deserve the name Dharma-adherents. Those who interpret them as their own desires direct are A-dharma-adherents. This is the Artha.

Sadhaka: Artha? What does that mean?

Sai: Meaning, declaration of distinction! The Vedas are the expression of the highly spiritualised vision of sages or Rishis. The Vedic mantras are the precious treasure garnered by Rishis for liberating man. Thus sayeth the Rg Veda.

—(*To be continued*)

The Lord's Glory

There are scholars who proclaim that the world is a hollow zero, that it has no latent or potent strength, being but a dream and a delusion. This is a sign of the blindness of ignorance. God is very much in the world, in and through every thing in it, with no exception. In the Gita the Lord announces, "I am man among living beings, the cow among animals, the lion among beasts, the cobra among snakes, the eagle among birds, Prahlada among Rakshasas etc." No item is discarded as not worthy of God. There is no body that He does not activate; no Form that He does not reside in. He is fragrance, brilliance, sweetness and taste, intelligence, valour, austerity, fame, contentment—all desirable and even undesirable things and qualities. One can acquire unalloyed bliss only by knowing this universal all-inclusive glory of the Lord.

The Universe is the Field where God sports. Be aware of this fact, every moment of consciousness, and there is nothing more you need for a happy existence. For, you will then contact God in every thing through every thought, at every place and at every moment.

—Baba

Abode of Peace

Prasanthi Nilayam, Abode of Peace,
For darshan people come
But the only ones who get it
Are the lucky Blessed some
His love has no bounds
Peace fills the air
What name or God you call
Him He does not really care

To err is only human
But to forgive is divine
He is ready to forgive mistakes
Your mistakes and mine
We are lost in Maya
He has come to show the way
Be good, see good, do good
Each and every day.

Sai Family News

Easwaramma Day in Sydney

Sydney: Sunday, 6th May, was truly a day to remember for the Bat Vikas children of the Homebush and Greenacre centres, teachers, parents and well wishers. Over eighty devotees, half of them children, gathered at a public school to celebrate this special day.

The importance of the Human Values programme was brought home to parents and children. The infant group gave an impressive performance when they sang, "Be Careful Little Eyes ...Sai is Watching You." Some children from the intermediate group made short speeches on how their Involvement with Sai and the Bal Vikas movement had benefited them. There was a short play, "Act as you speak," a play written by Baba, which made those present realise the need to harmonise thoughts, words and deeds. The senior children participated in a debate on "Can Spirituality be mixed with Social Life." Finally, the children led a number of group devotional songs, about half of them in English.

Unity of Faiths

Gauhati (Assam): A seminar on unity of faiths was held at Gauhati on May 1 1984 at the Kamrup Academy H. S. School under the auspices of the Study Circle of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, North East Region of India. In his inaugural address, Mr. Justice N. Ibotombi Singh said that hatred and animosity arose out of differences of caste, creed and religion and Insistence on ritualistic observance of religious beliefs. He observed that we must learn to see God in man and to achieve unity through service to man. Prof. Amin Khan explained the basic concepts of Islam and stated that brotherhood of man is a cardinal principle of Islam. Sri Benoy Anthony said Christianity preached the gospel of love and compassion. Mr. Dhirendranath Das, explaining the chief doctrines of Buddhism, pointed out that there is no higher good, according to Buddha, than love of one's fellow-beings. Sardar Dhyani Singh explained the significance of the Guru in Sikh religion. Sri Surendra Nath Sarma asserted that the term Hinduism was a misnomer, because the religion that is usually described as Hinduism was, in its true essence, religion in its widest sense incorporating in it an implied acceptance of all religions. Lt. Col. K.K. Aurora spoke on Sri Sathya Sai Baba's concept of religion and His view that the basic beliefs of diverse systems of faith are identical. He pointed out how Baba's message of unity of faiths was relevant in the present world context and how It was inspiring people of different religions all over the world to come together on a spiritual basis. Mr. Taraprasad Hazarika said Bhagavan Baba's message of unity was the only means of saving a world ravaged by wars and torn by dissensions. Mr. Suresh Chandra Rajkhowa, former Vice-Chancellor of Gauhati

creating an atmosphere of unity and fellow-feeling in society through efforts to promote mutual understanding of different viewpoints and beliefs.

—B.P.

Unless you have Love, you cannot claim kinship with the votaries of God; mere ritualistic exactitude or pompous adoration, or loud acclamation will not entitle you to enter the portals of Go-loka! They are as tin and trash before the treasure-chest of Love. Love is the bridge which helps passage from birth to deathlessness, from death to birthlessness. When you rise from the Jiva-sense to the Deva-sense, human-ness to God-ness, then, there is no more birth or death. Liberation happens when you Love every being so intensely that you are aware of only ONE. Soak your heart in Love, soak your acts in righteousness, soak your emotions in compassion; then you attain God soonest.

—Baba

THE SAI PATH:

Spiritual Progress and Sai Ideals

Birth brings man into the world. He has no knowledge of his nature before birth. The world offers him ever multiplying attractions. He experiences an unending cycle of ups and downs and passes through happy as well as unhappy events. He aspires for more and more of happiness and knowledge and subconsciously feels he is permanent, inspite of witnessing many deaths. Scriptures and Avatars unanimously proclaim man is basically divine. The desire to achieve a higher state of permanence, knowledge and bliss, is inherent in man. The progress achieved by a person, in this direction, by way of recognising himself to be Sat-Chit-Ananda Swaroopa may be considered to be the spiritual evolution or progress.

Fundamentally, the ideal of Sai or the message of Sai is one and only one. That is, Man is basically Divine. Bhagavan often says, "His life is His Message." Thus he places before every sadhaka the task of realising Divinity within and helps them to proceed towards that end by various methods and means.

Bhagavan gave four ideals to guide man step by step towards this ultimate objective. These allow every one to make a beginning. These are Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema. One must confess that It is difficult to state precisely what they mean, for what one can achieve or experience by putting them in practice can never be told in words. Stretching our imagination these ideals may be considered as a three-step programme of Sadhana, as described below

1. Sathya

(i) To be able to speak exactly the same thing, without introducing any distortions, as it is seen or heard or understood.

(ii) To achieve internal harmony which enables man to think, speak and do the same thing (Manasyekam, Vachasyekam and Karmanyekam aspect)
(iii) To be able to establish oneself in the concept of "I am Brahman" (Tat twam asi aspect) so that He reaches the final ideal of Truth which is God itself.

2. Dharma

- (i) To follow the code of conduct in order to achieve inner harmony and harmony in the external world.
- (ii) Having realised the place and role of man in creation, to achieve perfection as human being and lead a life which will automatically protect and foster dharma resulting in "loka-kalyana" (Dharmo Rakshad Rakshitah)
- (iii) Just as every living (except human) and nonliving being behaves according to its real nature, man, when he realises his real nature, adopts a path which is indeed divine. This perhaps is the real ideal of Dharma (Dharayati itithi Dharma).

3. Santhi

- (1) A state of harmony with the external environment and society.
- (i1) A state of complete harmony with internal environment.
- (iii) Complete non-dual experience.

4. Prema

- (i) A strong feeling for the well being of kith and kin, others and external objects which one feels are his.
- (ii) The feeling towards God, when one realises God as his or he as God's.
- (iii) The feeling one radiates, when He recognises that the Jagat, God and he are the same.

It is clear that these ideals bring about social and individual welfare as the first step. Simultaneously spiritual evolution of the people Involved takes place, guiding them towards the ultimate objective of realising the divinity within.

In spite of his best intentions, to-day's man is not in a position to make even a beginning in following these ideals. How to generate in him the required ability to make a beginning? The answer lies in the programme of selfless social service which purifies the mind and generates the required motivation and strength to progress on the spiritual path. Bhagavan's Seva organisations, with wings such as Samiti, Seva dal, Bal Vikas, etc., have been specially designed for this purpose. This organisation is like a mysterious box. When an ordinary man passes through this box willingly, adhering uncompromisingly to the sadhanas prescribed, he emerges as a different person. He will find Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema are his way of life and the omnipresent Lord in his heart. The Importance of adhering to the prescribed sadhanas uncompromisingly must be recognised well, as otherwise one may find the programme has no or negative effect on him. Finally, with the grace of Bhagavan, man will be fortunate to stop emerging, but will merge once for all in the ocean of bliss-the omnipresent God.

Students and Sadhana

The need for combining spiritual discipline with the pursuit of academic studies was emphasised by Bhagavan in a memorable discourse to students of the Sathya Sai Institute Hostel at Prasanthi Nilayam recently. Bhagavan dealt with many aspects of spiritual endeavour, including the awakening of the Kundalini Shakti and the practice of meditation on right lines. He advised the students to devote some time every day to meditation, which was as essential for purifying the heart as food was for sustaining the body.

Bhagavan said: The power of the Spirit is indescribable. It is limitless. It can raise man from animality to Divinity. All knowledge which one acquires is of no use if it is not put into practice. It is like a lamp in the hand of a blind man.

The sage Narada, who was a master of the sixty four sciences and arts, unable to achieve peace of mind, went to the sage Sanatkumara to learn about the means of securing tranquility. Sanatkumara asked him whether he had tried to find out the truth about himself. Narada confessed that that was the one thing he had not learnt. Sanatkumara then told him that this ignorance was the cause of his lack of mental peace.

Today, from the time one wakes up, one is keen to know all about what is happening in U.S., Russia, Punjab and Delhi. The person who is so concerned about the news from everywhere, is not aware of the 'nuisance' arising from within himself. It is only the person who has transformed himself that can reform others.

The ancient Yoga Shastras of Bharat have indicated different methods of self-realisation. The awakening of the sleeping Kundalini shakti is one of them. The Kundalini shakti is aroused by the process of breath control and is gradually led up to the top where it merges with the Sahasrara—the thousand-petalled lotus seated in the brain.

The vital force that is in man is also known as consciousness. To merge this consciousness in the Universal Consciousness has been described as Liberation in Vedanta. Today various types of meditation are being promoted in India and outside. Many persons wrongly equate meditation (dhyanam) with concentration (ekagratha). There is no relationship between the two. Concentration is a routine everyday phenomenon in life in any form of human activity reading, walking, or eating. Where is the need to waste one's time on achieving something which comes naturally? What we should find out is how this concentration comes about. Here is a book in one's hand. We see this book with our eyes. The moment we see it, we are able to read the letters. As soon as the letters are read, the intellect tries to understand the meaning and ruminate on it in the memory. The hand holding the book is a limb of the body. The eyes that see it are a

organs. It is the coordinated action of all the organs that enables us to examine any subject. Concentration thus takes place at the lower level of the sense organs. Meditation is a process that takes place beyond the senses. Between the concentration at the sensory level and meditation that is above the senses there is a borderline where contemplation (chintana) takes place. Contemplation is the second half of chit (intelligence), whose other function is discrimination between right and wrong.

The rose and the thorns

An illustration will make this clear. There is a rose plant, with branches, leaves, flowers and thorns. Locating the place where there is a flower calls for concentration. At this stage, we are concerned only with locating the flower. But the flower has to be plucked without touching the thorns. Love is the flower. Lust is the thorn. There is no rose without a thorn. How to get at the flower of Love without touching the thorn of lust is the problem. This is where contemplation is needed. Having plucked the flower, how shall we use it? By offering it to the Divine. Meditation means offering the flower of Love to the Divine.

In the rose plant of our body, there is the rose of pure and sacred Love emitting the fragrance of good qualities. Below the rose, however, there are thorns in the form of sensual desires. The purpose of meditation is to separate the rose of selfless Love from the senses and offer it to the Lord.

Meditation (dhyana) has been accorded a pre-eminent place in Bharat from ancient times. Nowadays people sit for meditation, considering it as a kind of pill which is taken when one has a headache or some other pain. Meditation is not such a simple affair. In the hoary past, sages like Sanatkumara, Narada and Thumburu engaged themselves in meditation as a means of awakening the Kundalini shakti and leading it up to the Sahasrara. Now, meditation should be practised as a means of cultivating pure, selfless love, renouncing all attachments to worldly things.

Do's and Don'ts

Even in sitting for meditation, certain rules have to be observed. The first requisite is to sit in the Padmasana (lotus) pose. While seated in this asana, care must be taken to keep the spine straight and steady, without bending this way or that. Some persons bend their necks during meditation. This is very harmful, as the arresting of the rising Kundalini shakti at the throat, where some subtle nadis (arteries) operate, may endanger the entire physical system. Many have suffered mental derangement on account of misdirection of the Kundalini shakti. During meditation one should not bend backwards. That is also harmful. The cloth one wears during meditation should be tied loosely so that there is no pressure on the waist. The eyes have to be concentrated on the tip of the nose. If the eyes are open, they are likely to turn in different directions and one's attention is likely to get distracted. The eyes should be half-open. If they are fully closed, one may be overcome by sleep.

sacred thoughts. This calls for control over all the sense organs. The ears should be trained to listen only to matters relating to the Divine and to eschew evil gossip. The eyes should be told to see God. The mind should be restrained from restlessness by making it concentrate on the breathing process and relating inhalation and exhalation to the repetition of the mantra, "So-Ham," "So-Ham" ("I am He"). By this process, the life-breath is controlled. This reveals the great power of Yoga. There is no need to undertake a separate exercise for awakening the Kundalini shakti. The process of breath control itself will achieve this purpose.

Three Stages

Some persons use a lamp (Jyoti) as a basis for meditation. The lamp reveals the oneness that is the basis of the Unity of the Divine as well as the multiplicity that reflects the manifestations of the Divine. In this method, the experience of bliss does not come quickly. There are three stages in this type of meditation: imagining the Form (Roopa), experiencing the Form (Bhava) and seeing it as a Reality (Sakshatkara). For instance, if one wishes to meditate upon Baba, he first tries to imagine with the closed eyes the figure of Baba as seen by him earlier. This figure vanishes within a few moments. In experiencing the figure, the process is longer and the impression also lasts longer. In this process, one starts envisaging the figure from head to foot and from the feet upwards. Gradually, by this process the picture of Baba gets firmly implanted and becomes an inner reality. While the imagining process gives only a momentary glimpse, the experiencing method leads to the complete identification of the seeker with the Divine Form. Awareness of the Divine results in oneness with the Divine (Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavati).

Conserve Energy

When we are experiencing the Divine Form, what is happening to our mind? The mind experiences every part of the Lord from head to foot and ultimately becomes one with the Form. It is the process of identification of the mind with the Divine form that constitutes true meditation. Meditation is not merging the Form In the mind. It is merging the mind In the Form so that the mind as such does not exist.

While sitting for meditation in a group, one should not be in contact with anyone else. This is highly important. Meditation is like the process of electrifying a wire. If a live wire comes in contact with something, it will produce a shock. During meditation, spiritual energy is generated. How is this energy lost? It is lost through fingernails and the hairs on one's body. This was the reason why the ancient yogis allowed their nails and hairs to grow freely. Spiritual energy has to be conserved by all possible means. The Rishis practised silence to conserve the energy lost through speech.

Do not develop too close relationship with one another. Such close relationship results in intimate friendship which produces mutual obligations and expectations. From these arise the sense of ego. When expectations are not fulfilled, resentment emerges. When they are realised, the ego gets inflated. Either way, the consequences of entertaining desires are undesirable. When resentment grows, the discriminating power is weakened. One loses control over his tongue and

excessive association with one another.

Young persons tend to let their minds wander hither and thither. They should concentrate on their studies and should not give their minds a free rein. They should reduce their worldly concerns and devote some time to meditation every morning and evening. This will help to purify their minds and set them on the road to Divinity. Like the river losing itself in the ocean, the mind must merge in the Divine. Then there will be no mind at all. That blissful state can be realised only through the path of Love. Love is God. Live in Love. Realisation of the power of Love is the true aim of meditation. That Love is utterly selfless and is dedicated to the Divine.

Many paths, but one goal

In the practice of meditation, it should be realised that all cannot follow the same pattern or method. It varies according to the evolution and circumstances of each individual and his or her capacity and earnestness. Some worship the Supreme as the Universal Mother. Some look upon the Almighty as Father. Some regard God as the Supreme Friend. Some devotees approach the Divine as the Beloved or the Master. Jayadeva, Gauranga and Ramakrishna Paramahansa belonged to the last mentioned category. They did not practise meditation. They felt the presence of God everywhere. Where could they go for meditation? Such was their experience. To the true sadhaka evidence of the omnipresence of God can be found everywhere. By merely closing one's eyes, one does not engage in meditation. One must feel one's unity with God in one's inner being.

Prayer is for the mind what food is for the body. Just as wholesome food gives health and strength to the body, prayer purifies the mind and strengthens the spirit. If bhajans are done in an ostentatious manner, the ego gets bloated. Young people must proceed from Tamas (the darkness of ignorance) to `Tapas' (spiritual penance). They must be steadfast in pursuing whatever they take up. There is no meaning in doing meditation for two days and giving it up on the third day. Meditation must become an integral part of one's life. Along with it, all the knowledge and skills required for one's profession or vocation should be acquired.

Being in Swami's college and residing in Swami's hostel you are all regarded as exemplary students and respected as such. But you will not win that respect unless, when you go out into the outside world, you maintain the same discipline and strength of character wherever you may be and preserve the sacred atmosphere and sublimity associated with Sathya Sai Institutions.

—Prasanthi Nilayam, 11-3-1984

The Quest for Quality

In March 1981, I was privileged to be in Brindavan, the residence of Bhagavan, along with many others. As we waited eagerly for the flash of the Red Robe, He appeared before us with the beaming smile; His eyes cast forks of Lightning (*Vidyullekha*) around. I waited in grateful

happen!

Baba turned towards me and said, "So, you have been transferred to Bangalore!" This was several months after my transfer had materialised and an equal length of time after I had reported to Him before taking charge at Bangalore of my assignment! Why is Baba feigning ignorance? I used to wonder why the 'Omnipresent' and the 'Omniscient' One asks such questions. Now, I have discovered an answer which I believe is convincing.

Imagine Baba telling before everybody about us, what is in our mind at the moment, and what our deeds and misdeeds were until then. How many of us can muster courage to go to Him next? If He reveals all the time His Divinity by manifesting His "Omnipresence and Omniscience" few of us will dare go to Him; the facade of devotion which we maintain in His Presence, is so fragile that it will be shattered at the slightest touch. We will desert Him and give no scope for improving and transforming us. But, that is the task for which He has incarnated. So, in His mercy He gives us the impression that He is human, and envelops us with His maya, to keep us with Him until the slow process of transformation is consummated. We will have to be persuaded to give up our undesirable habits, '*kramakramena*', gradually.

Returning to the question He asked me, I replied, "Yes! Swami!" and I utilised the chance of nearness to volunteer some additional information. "Swami! I have only 71 days more before I retire from Government Service." I hoped He would bless me with "Yes, Bangaroo!" and an assurance, "Time will pass; and you will join Swami's Service." Instead, He turned round and looked at me with those penetrating eyes. Out came the *Sadguru's mantra*, "Whether it is 71 days, 71 hours, 71 minutes or 71 seconds, quality is important," and in His characteristic style, He turned round and conveyed the message to all. "Quality of work is most important, isn't it?" He asked them, confronting them too with the Divine Dictum.

This is Baba; He uses every occasion to convey to all present lessons on how to apply spirituality in daily living, by such seminal *mantras*. He aims the mantra also at others who might benefit by the lesson. One will miss the Import of His statement if one thinks that it was meant only for the individual who happened to be the target of the teaching.

With the *mantra* Baba shook me from my stupor. He has repeatedly said that all the work we do for whomsoever it be, whatever it be and under whatever auspices, is work for him. There is nothing like Sai Service, different from Government Service. All that you do is for Sai only; though apparently it is for yourself, really it is for Sai. I knew all this, but I must admit, that I had forgotten the lesson when I expressed relief at only a short period of 71 days remaining for me to retire from Service. The ever vigilant *Sadguru* gave me the lesson again at the right moment.

"Quality foremost." What a grand formula for *Ananda*! I should not now attach importance to what happens after 71 days. I should not forget that it is His work which I am engaged in. I should carry out the work assigned by Him with emphasis on the highest quality I am capable of. It is His worship that is being done through the assignment. "The past is beyond recovery. Those

thoughts, words and deeds." "The most important thing in life is not doing what you like, but liking what you have to do," He has told us. These are the guidelines for instilling spirituality in daily living.

Can we practise this in the office, in the factory, in the kitchen or wherever our avocation lands us? No doubt we can; we should only bear in mind some other *mantras* He has given us. We can sanctify our thoughts, words and deeds if they are not motivated by the six enemies which the sages have identified, *Kama* (passion), *Krodha* (anger), *Moha* (attachment), *Lobha* (greed), *Mada* (pride) and *Matsarya* (envy). Difficult? Yes, but not impossible. Read any modern book on psychology, you will learn from them too that diseases are due to these six; for they are psychosomatic in origin.

While filling every moment with "quality," we are fully involved in the work and naturally we will be enjoying the quality of the work we do. That joy, the self-satisfaction which induces self-respect, itself is the "fulfillment." In fact, the sweetness of the process is to be coveted more than the final result. The game is more important than victory or defeat. That is the real meaning of the Lord's advice in the Gita, "Work alone is thy concern; not the fruit thereof."

Knowing that we are all dangerously forgetful, let us pray, "Baba! Give us the wisdom to remember your *mantra* when it is most needed and inspire us to fill every moment with work of the highest 'quality' using fully the abilities you have endowed us with."

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

Horse Behind The Cart

We seem to put the horse behind the cart.
It is not how much, but what's in the heart.
We talk of Service to all mankind
The action somehow gets left behind.
Those whose life is in despair
We oft forget `tis well to share.
With faltering step we wonder why,
Pleasure goes and we cry and sigh.
Living between two, pleasure and pain,
Soon both these emotions begin to wane.
We're left with self upon which to gaze
And the Karma we've laid in the earthly maze.
We pray to God for wealth and fame
They are no use in this worldly game.
So, once again the horse is left behind the cart.
We are born again and there we start.
So take the horse, bridle him tight,
Control the ego with much insight,
Attach to this surrender and love
And the cart will come behind and the horse ahead!

—Joy Zeigler, Arizona, USA

The Awakening

In vain I sought Him in the temples;
Churches with their lamps and treasures glittering
Were empty of Him.

Music was whispering, and the honeyed choirs
Hymned His holy Name;
He spoke not to me there.
Was then the true God this one, that one?
Whose was the power to pardon or condemn?
With sacrifice and rituals did I worship;
He answered me not so.

Then in the silence of my own heart
Beyond the grasp of fear, He told me:
 'I am Brahman, the Everything, the Everywhere,
 Not to be confined to this one, that one.
 Not to be imprisoned in a flower decked shrine,
 Never to be contained in rigid doctrine.'

Then the spires faded and the jewelled domes sank;
The candles guttered and the priestly forms

Fled down abandoned catacombs of truth.
The stately ships of dogma with their dusty freight
Slow submerged, and reason, like Phoebus,
Flooded the cavern of my mind.
Then did the swinging sun become His altar lamp,
The skies of dawn and dusk wove from their magic spools
His vestments, and in a robin's song I heard Him.
He blessed me with the fingers of the wind;
The mighty tides extolled Him,
And the hills and valleys knelt in adoration.
At last I knew Him for the Universal Sun
Shining through all the creeds,
Pervading all the forms:
Brahman the Infinite, the Limitless and yet,
Nearer than my own heart, for He and I were One

—*Winifred Dearden,*
(*Sathya Sai Baba Magazine, London*)

Leela Kaivalaya Vahini

6

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

The Brahman concept of the Vedas is also denoted by the word that has 'sa' as the end syllable. Vedah, for this reason, also means wealth (Dhana), wisdom (Jnana) and the highest potency (Param Aishwarya). The wealth here indicated is distinct from worldly gains and possessions. It is the means by which the supreme goal can be attained. In other words, the wealth acquired through the Grace of Mother Veda (Veda Mata) is the most potent Wisdom itself. For this reason, the Vedic Rishis prayed thus: "God! You are the very embodiment of the Veda (Veda Swarupa). Fill me, not with the burden of cattle and children, but with the Wisdom that Is the source of Param Aishwarya. I shall be fully content with that wealth (Dhana). And, since such wealth is capable of being utilised for your service, you too will be glad when I have it."

Sadhaka: Swami! We do not find today feelings that produce such prayers anywhere among men. People repeat these Vedic prayers, as gramophone records do, without any knowledge of their meanings, out of sheer habit. Is it not so? Do they get the Wisdom that is the most precious treasure of God?

Swami: My dear fellow! You yourself said now that they recite the Veda as gramophone records do, didn't you? So, they gain as much wisdom and Aishwarya as those records get. How can they acquire the treasure of full potence? Planting a branch that has been severed, can one claim that it is a tree growing there? Those who recite the Vedas with the awareness of their meaning, experiencing at the same time the feelings embedded in the hymns, they alone can earn the Grace of Brahman, the Brahma Vidya, the Highest Wisdom, the Supreme Treasure (Sakal-aishwarya).

Sadhaka: Swami! Generally speaking, there will be no one who does not crave wealth. But, what form of wealth is to be craved for? Which form will be approved by the Veda? What has the Veda said about this? Instruct me.

Swami: 'Vedam Paramaishwaryam' (Veda is the highest treasure) `Vedayathithi Veda' (That which gives instruction is known as Veda) `Sah Vedasthwam' (Get Instructed by that Veda). Wealth (Dhana) is desired and sought out (Artha) as a means for prosperity and progress (Subha). So it is named Artha, that which is the object of struggle and strain, of Sadhana. The Almighty (Parameshwara) is sought to be known and gained through Sadhana. So, He too is known as Artha. The Veda announces that the intuitive wisdom (jnana) constitutes the riches (Dhana) the means by which the Almighty is attained; this alone deserves the name `Vedas' or Vedic truth. Shruti (Vedic scripture) asserts that such wealth alone can confer the joy of satisfaction (tripti) to both the worshipper (aradhaka) and worshipped (aradhya)

The Rg Veda extols this form of wealth and refers to it as Sruthyaak, for it is the type described and recommended in the Shruti. The Veda approves as Vedic only that wealth that is earned through adherence to the moral codes laid down clearly for human guidance.

Sadhaka: Sruthyaak? What does that mean, Swami?

Swami: A prosperous person (Sreemantha) is one who is happily endowed with sons and grandsons and who is successful in worldly ambitions beyond even surprising heights. Moral excellence is a more valuable possession. This wealth is the concrete result of Vedic Injunctions. It is called Dharma. The Ramayana extols Rama as Dharma Personified (Vigrahavaan Dharma). Dharma sustains all beings ("Sarva bhoothanam dharanaath, Dharmah") Dharma is the support (dharana) for all beings. Hence it is named Dharma. The Almighty is that support and sustenance; the most effective mode of worship is the offering of Dharma. So, the Almighty Itself is identified with the word, Dharma. That name is therefore meaningful. The entire Cosmos projected by the Almighty is established on Dharma. (Dharmo Viswasya Jagathah Pratishtha). The Dharma imbued with profound sanctity is being interpreted by persons in accordance with their whims and fancies, their selfish interests. Hence it has been severely distorted. The words, Veda and Deva take on new meanings and implications. The process can be clearly recognised in Vedic literature. "Swayam Sarvam Vetthi-iti Vedah" (Itself It Knows All). This statement reveals that Veda is the Omniscient Brahma Itself. Sruthi is Its embodiment.

Sadhaka: Swami! In the mantras which the Vedas contain, we have the word Svaha occurring frequently. What does Svaha mean?

Swami: Good! That word is generally taken to indicate only an expression used while offering oblations in ceremonially-lit fire; people imagine that it is not a Vedic word. They argue it is a technical expression applicable to rituals only. There is a deity named Svaha Devi, invoked by that word. It also connotes 'the offering of Havis (sacramental food) to the Gods.' So, the word has two meanings. When Havis or other offerings are made to Divinity under Its various forms and in its various names, this word, Svaha is used. When, however, one invokes one's forefathers and invites them to accept ritual offerings, the expression used is svadha, not svaha. Since the word is full of potency, it is revered as the manifestation of Vaak Devi, the Deity presiding over speech.

(To be continued)

A. P. SEVA DAL CONFERENCE:

"Make Andhra Pradesh an example to others"

Inspired by Bhagavan's forceful inaugural address, the Andhra Pradesh Seva Dal Conference, which met at "Sivam", Hyderabad on May 20, called upon Sai Seva Dal members to redouble their service activities and make Andhra Pradesh an example to other states in the field of Sai Service in the implementation of the programme drawn up by the World Council for the transformation of the rural areas.

Welcoming Bhagavan, Mr. Indulal Shah and others, Mr. C. S. Venugopal Rao, President of the State Samiti, described the progress of Sai service activities in the State.

Mr. Indulal Shah, President of the World Council of Sathya Sai Organisations, who addressed the Conference after Bhagavan had inaugurated it by lighting a lamp, dwelt at length on the role of social service in Bhagavan's Divine Mission to transform the world.

The Conference was attended by 307 delegates from 21 districts, of whom over one half came from the six districts of West Godavari (40), East Godavari (39), Guntur (34), Krishna (23), Srikakulam (21) and Chittoor (15).

Mr. Indulal Shah said Bhagavan had initiated the Seva Dal as a vital part of His Divine mission. Service activities should be carried on as a spiritual sadhana, in a spirit of selfless dedication, without any ostentation or fanfare. This year has been named the Seva Dal year. All Samiti members and Seva Dal members should take up service work with redoubled energy and enthusiasm and, by their faith and devotion, not only elevate themselves spiritually, but improve the moral tone of the community and thereby promote the spiritual mission of Bhagavan.

Accent on self-reliance

In working in the villages, they should bear in mind the well-being of the villages as a whole. All aspects of rural life should be covered-social and cultural activities, agriculture and animal husbandry, co-operative effort, education, roads, health and hygiene, water supply etc. A preliminary survey of the primary needs of the villagers should be made before embarking on

service activities and a programme of action should be drawn up. Sai Sevaks should identify themselves with the villagers and serve as liaison between the Government and the villagers in the implementation of development schemes. On the spiritual side, Sai Sevaks should organise bhajans and religious discourses, carry out renovation of temples, hold exhibitions and run study classes. Self-reliance must be promoted and the villagers should be encouraged to depend as far as possible on their own co-operative efforts.

Mr. Shah explained in detail the various service activities that could be taken, up under the Sai programme and pointed out that trained sevaks were necessary for carrying out the different items in the programme. For Instance, there should be a trained sevak to teach bhajans, another to run the Bal Vikas classes, a third to conduct the study circle, a fourth to teach handicrafts, a fifth to act as liaison between the villagers and the administrative authorities. In addition, expert personnel like doctors will be needed to render medical service.

Mr. Shah referred to the forthcoming World Seva Dal Conference to be held at Prasanthi Nilayam from November 16 to 24 and said that the Conference will provide an opportunity for the Sai Seva Organisations from all countries of the world to present different aspects of their service activities.

Mr. V. Srinivasan, member of the World Council, explained the guidelines drawn up for implementing the revised programme of service activities. There are three main areas of service envisaged in the programme: spiritual activity, Bal Vikas and Seva Dal. The Seva Dal has to take up three basic Items of work. In the educational field, work among students and special classes for artisans. In the sphere of health and hygiene, organise blood donation camps, eye camps and the like. In the area of rural development (in the "adopted" villages) a wide range of service activities will have to be undertaken.

Mr. Srinivasan said that 18 categories of service activities had been identified and members should be assigned to different activities according to their aptitudes and qualifications. Members of the Sai Organisations will be divided into three groups: active workers, who will devote at least 4 hours a week to social service, volunteers, who will work for less than four hours, and ordinary members, who must feel that they have also an obligation to participate in service activities to the extent they can. Members can become volunteers, from whom the cadre of active workers will be drawn.

The Conference recorded the members' resolve to work wholeheartedly for making Andhra Pradesh an ideal state in the field of Sai service and prayed for Bhagavan's Grace to enable them to achieve this aim.

Resolutions

The Conference resolved to carry out with redoubled vigour and enthusiasm the programme drawn up for developing the adopted villages so that all the basic needs of the villagers are ensured through the dedicated efforts of all wings of the Sai Organisation.

While keeping away from any contacts with the Government, political, caste or religious organisations, it was resolved to secure for the villagers the amenities to be provided by official

agencies by appropriate representations and see that the villagers derived the full benefits of these measures by promoting self-reliance and voluntary co-operation amongst them. It was resolved to take up adult education and occupational training as part of the service activities.

Every district should mobilise the services of Sai members for the effective implementation of the revised service programme, utilising the talents of Seva Dal members, volunteers and devotees according to their aptitudes and preferences.

The office-bearers at the State and district levels were enjoined to extend the Sai educational programme to the rural areas by drawing up plans for reorganising the Bal Vikas, Study Circle and Education in Human Values programmes in consultation with the members engaged in this work.

The Presidents of the State and District Samitis were directed to prepare maps and charts illustrating the various Sai activities in the districts.

In connection with the forthcoming World Conference, it was urged that Andhra Pradesh should organise a polio camp as a special service activity.

It was decided to take up centralised service activities in the Sathya Sai taluk and in the Prasanthi Nilayam through the Andhra Pradesh Seva Dal Organisation. Among the activities envisaged in this programme are "greening" of the hills surrounding Prasanthi Nilayam by the planting of trees, erecting bus stands at suitable points in the villages, encouraging the villagers to grow lime, coconut and other trees, running veterinary camps for cattle, presenting first aid kits to the villagers, and running medical check-up camps for school children.

In His valedictory address to the Conference, Bhagavan said that selfless service to humanity was the highest form of spiritual sadhana and Andhra Pradesh, where the Avatar took birth, should take the lead in promoting the ideals of Bhagavan-Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema -and carry out with vigour the programme of social service and spiritual development. All are equal in the eyes of Bhagavan and any criticism of anyone is intended only for his own benefit. With Swami's blessings, Andhra Pradesh was bound to achieve eminence in the spiritual and moral sphere, concluded Bhagavan.

The Conference ended with Mangalarati to Bhagavan.

Our `Mother' at Kodaikanal

I asked Swami at Darshan, "May I travel south, with You?" The answer rang in my ears for days. "Yes, Sir!" So, on the morning of May 29, we boarded an Indian Airlines 737 with our Lord from Bangalore to Madurai. We followed Swami in a taxi from the airport to Kodaikanal.

Swami put five of us in the taxi—a Catholic from Central America, a Protestant from England, a Muslim from North Yemen and two Malaysian Buddhists from London. Swami graciously delayed the taxi with an accident for another vehicle. We helped the injured who were taken to the hospital and we had to proceed to a police station too. Meanwhile, at Kodaikanal, hotel after hotel was being filled with tourists and others. When we reached the place, we drove round and round looking for rooms without success. A 'Mother' was standing at the front gate of a spacious building, with a boy beside her, evidently hoping to glimpse Swami when his car would pass by. We asked her, "Has Swami passed by?" She looked at us and offered to take us in! Baba's Grace! She insisted and we agreed to enter the Hindu home. Baba presented a Mother, a Matru Devi, to us.

We were all moved by our own good fortune. We celebrated it with bhajans in which Mother and her son joined. We sang with tear-filled devotion.

The next morning we walked to where Swami was staying for morning darshan. The mountain resort was vibrant with His Presence. His love covered us all. Mother asked Swami if He would come to her home again this year. She heard no answer, but the son was sure Swami had said, "Yes, I will come this evening."

We ran home and started cleaning the house and garden. After evening darshan we returned home quickly and started bhajans. But it was just like the bhajans back home. Swami is there; only we can't see Him.

Next day, Mother decided to cook something for Swami and we were invited to participate. While we sliced beans, tomatoes, potatoes, etc. and stirred the broth, she would recite a line from the Gita in Telugu and explain it in English. Every dish was thus spiced and seasoned with the Bhagavad Gita and the love Mother poured generously over the five of us. We took our offering to the Lord. Would He accept? As His aura filled the garden, He went straight to our hostess. A tiffin carrier was blessed and given to us for our own lunch. The Lord's Grace was overwhelming. That midday meal was one to remember.

That afternoon, Mother asked if Swami was coming to visit her home and Swami said, "maybe". We ran home to do bhajans. The next day we all pitched in to weed the garden and sweep the paths. We sang bhajans waiting for His arrival, but "maybe" was not to be that day.

Next morning Mother was up early cooking for Swami. This time she spiced and seasoned the offering with Ramayana. She led us through the forest paths with Rama, Sita and Lakshmana, giving us such insight as only a Hindu filled with love could give. The food was taken quickly up the hill to Swami's residence, but alas, darshan was over and Swami was going out in the car.

That afternoon at Darshan, Swami called Mother and her son in for an interview. Swami also told one of us to hurry home. We ran home, cut more flowers from the garden, which now looked rather barren, and started bhajans, certain that this time the Lord was coming in His Physical Form. After bhajans ended we read the following para from Swami's teachings, in order to stabilize our shaken egos!

"You must have freedom not only from fear, but freedom from hope and expectation. Trust in my wisdom. I do not make mistakes. Love my uncertainty, for it is not a mistake. It is my intent and will. Remember nothing happens without my will. Be still. Do not want to understand. Do not ask to understand. Relinquish the imperative that demands understanding."

Mother and son returned after the interview. Swami did promise that He would visit her home the next morning after darshan.

That was the last day, before leaving Kodaikanal, and our preparation for Swami's visit was feverish. We cleaned even the street outside and I cut open two coconuts. The first was a perfect cut and we put the water in a glass beside Swami's chair, the same chair He had used the year before. The other slipped as I was opening it and some water spilled. The rest we put in a glass on the table next to some fruits which Swami was to bless.

Finally, the moment arrived. We had not overcome expectation, nor had we relinquished trying to understand, but even so the Lord opened the gates of His abundant grace. Gliding over the silk spread path, He sat in His chair and drank a few sips of coconut water. We gathered round His Feet and He started to tell our Mother that she would always be happy. For the son, Swami materialised a beautiful silver bracelet with the OM on it. Swami filled each of us with love and while leaving blessed the fruits on the table, and knocked over the second glass of coconut water, but quickly righted the glass, in what appeared to the casual observer to have been an accident. But I took it to mean: "Be more careful with your offerings to the Lord." Before we knew it, Swami was in the car, and Mother came out running with a basket of pears, an offering of love for the Lord. Swami accepted it and off He drove. We returned to the house for farewell bhajans and a tearful goodbye. It must be people like Mother and her son that bring Swami to Kodaikanal.

—John Behner, San Salvador

SAVING AND SEVA:

Reclaiming the Prodigals

Part of the World Council's plans for improving the quality of Sai Baba's devoteeship throughout the world for the 60th birthday celebrations in November 1985 is to encourage his followers to place a ceiling on their personal desires. I can think of nothing that would please Swami more, as a gift on that auspicious day, than the knowledge that every devotee was making a special effort, in however small a way as a start, to engage in a permanently extended period of Lent by lovingly sacrificing some personal desire. I emphasize the word 'lovingly' for any spiritual effort which is too duty-ridden and not sufficiently motivated by love smacks of spiritual compulsion, and this can lead to frustration, which in turn can lead to a state of disease.

By placing a ceiling on desires one obviously saves money. It is referred to as 'spiritualised money' in the Sai movement, because it has been spiritually 'earned', as it were. My wife and I live frugally in a very small cottage, and in this way manage to save about half our income which in part we use to serve Swami. It was not always so, as we came from affluent families and lived

in an affluent style when we were young. But I can honestly say that it is a great joy to have 'shed our luggage', as Swami puts it; we do indeed travel lighter. And it is an equal joy to use spiritualised money in the service of the Lord. Some devotees might care to follow this example and perhaps donate part of their savings to the recently formed U.K. Trust to further the all-important Sai education of youth, although there is absolutely no compulsion, nor even request, to do so. It is entirely voluntary.

Most of my secular life has been in business and dairy-farming, but I retired early to take up full-time voluntary welfare work, at first with the Samaritans and then with my own group, 'The Befrienders'. My wife and I were blessed with a country residence which had a staff cottage, so we turned this into a small hostel for our 'patients' who lived with us. In this way we were able to give them more intimate befriending than merely visiting them in their home-though many of them did not have homes. Our local Social Services quite often used us to house the homeless, including young women with children.

During ten years we must have helped a hundred people. I can only remember one failure. Some, it is true, we only helped marginally, but one must expect this. Our motto was, 'Work for a miracle, be satisfied with limited gains, accept hurt and disappointment as inevitable.' But there were others whose lives were completely transformed.

We had a young woman who had had five doses of electrotherapy in our local mental hospital. She is now a qualified District Nurse. Another young woman had been a heroin addict for fourteen years. She is now a Statutory Welfare Worker. We had a poor fellow who had been an alcoholic for more than two decades. He has not touched even a glass of beer for many years now. And then there was Bill, a burglar who had been in prison three times and was married to a prostitute who was also a drug-taker and drug pusher.

From Burglary to Baba

Well, Bill and I went along the road together for five long years, and they were long years. During that time I must have been with him for two or three thousand hours, either in his presence or on the telephone. (Once he phoned from the north of Scotland on reverse charges, and the conversation lasted five hours!) But at the end of five years he had divorced his prostitute wife, married a good woman, had two children, and was earning an honest living. As a matter of fact, in 1983, he visited Brindavan and Puttaparthi. (When I heard this I thought of writing an article, with his permission, entitled 'From Burglar to Brindavan'!)

Now we were not clever. We did not have much expertise. We simply used the tools of common sense and unrelenting loving-kindness. We never gave up, but 'kept on keeping on'. We believed that no dedicated effort is ever wasted, and in using the power of love we were using the strongest power in the universe. It often worked when professional methods had failed.

But what I really want to stress is the effect that this ten years of dedicated service had on my character. Apart from the present era of serving Swami it was the most rewarding and growth-promoting period of my life. Its effect was threefold. Service became a way of life, an attitude of mind which spilled over into my *whole* life. I did not don a Seva uniform and then discard it when the day's work was over. Service became my reason for living, the sole purpose

of my existence. If I did not serve I 'died' inwardly. I had learned what Swami means when he says, 'Serve because you have no peace unless you serve; it is an inner urge to experience a kinship with all mankind, with all life'.

I found, too, that my heart chakra had expanded to take in all humanity. I can truly say that I feel compassion for all mankind. Even those I dislike I find that I can love. This sounds a paradox but one can dislike with one's human self and still love with one's soul, through the common inheritance of the Atma.

Sometimes the burden of living on this planet overcomes me and I go into a quiet place and weep. At such moments I feel I am identifying with Jesus when it is reported that 'He looked on the city and wept'. I suppose I am really crying for Baba, for the gargantuan task he has set himself, to 'set the crooked straight' in this vale of tears.

The Long Road

At other times I sit in a cafe and watch my fellow human beings—perhaps two elderly ladies, sitting apart, lonely, but too reserved to meet and talk; a married couple with three rowdy children, a couple in love. I find my eyes moistening. I want to help, to share, to be at one with them, but they are like oases. I weep for their separateness and loneliness, their problems, the joy and suffering which will be their lot; for their unawareness, for the pathos of the human state, and for the long, long road to divinity.

I eat very little-and am mindful of Swami's exasperation when he said that his devotees seem 'to eat on every conceivable occasion'. (Indeed, one sometimes gets the impression that Festivals mostly consist of prolonged bhajan-singing and eating!) We don't go for holidays. When people ask me what I do for relaxation I say, 'I enjoy feeding the goldfish in my garden pool, and watching the Virginia creeper growing up the wall of my cottage.' Apart from sometimes having a nap in the afternoon or watching some programme on television, that is really all I do for relaxation.

Burglars have removed my family silver, and after a few days of experiencing a sense of violation of our home, I felt a marvellous sense of relief. There was now nothing of any real value left in the house and I felt truly liberated!

I commend service as perhaps the best way of sublimating personal desire. Unlike yoga and meditation, etc. it has the added advantage of helping others as well as oneself.

—Ron Laing, London

Sai Family News

Kerala Conference:

The Fourth Conference of the office bearers of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation and State Trust in Kerala State was held on the 12th and 13th May, 1984, in the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, T.D. Road, Ernakulam. The State President, Mr. Justice P C. Balakrishna Menon presided over

the meeting. A Pragnana Pradarshan was arranged for the occasion. Mr. V. Srinivasan inaugurating the Conference explained the work carried out in the adopted villages in the suburbs of Bombay and how much Bhagavan was pleased when the 400 workers from the adopted villages came to Dharmakshetra for Bhagavan's darshan and blessings. Tracing the growth of the Organisation, he said that although the Sai organisation had expanded in numbers, quantitative increase was not at all important. One single true devotee was better than thousands of false devotees. He stressed the importance of discipline in the Organisation.

Mr. M. Krishna Menon, Chairman of the 60th Birthday celebrations committee, Kerala, gave a short review of the progress in the activities connected with the 60th Birthday celebrations in the State.

Andhra Pradesh:

The West Godavari Sai Seva Samiti adopted Gandbinagar, a very backward village in Narsapur Taluk, with a predominant Harijan population, for development as a model village. As the village had no fresh water tank, the Seva Dal members dug a tank in a piece of land donated by a member of the Samiti. Two wells were dug and an approach road has been constructed. The local temple has been renovated. —**K.B.R.**

The Chittoor District Samiti organised in the Rama Vilas Sabha, Chittoor, a summer course for students from May 15 to June 3. The 45 boys and girls who attended the course were given lessons in the Gita, painting, first aid, English grammar and yoga asanas. The Samiti conducted an eye camp at Chodepalli during May 19 to 25, at which 63 operations were done for cataract.

Free medical service for the villagers and veterinary treatment for the cattle were provided on June 17 at Gangasagaram, which has been adopted by the District Samiti. The Seva activities in the village were inaugurated by Mr. V. K. Narasimhan, who urged the members to work with dedication for the all-round development of the village. The Samiti has started planting coconut saplings in every house in the village.

Tamil Nadu:

A five-day Bal Vikas training camp at the State level for Bal Vikas gurus was conducted from June 19 to 23, at 'Abbotsbury', Madras. Most of the 200 participants, hailing from all the districts, were undergoing training for the first time.

Maharashtra:

An Akhand Gayatri Japa for five hours continuously was organised by the Mahila Vibhag at Pune on June 3. Prayers for peace and unity were offered.

"Holi" was jointly celebrated by children of the Bal Vikas from Pune and the orphan children of "Bal Gram", run by the Servants of India Society. Following the festival, a Bal Vikas group has been formed in the village.

Man has to recognise the indebtedness to society and his duty towards it; this is the best way to solve the troubles of the day. Attention is paid only to arguments and counter-arguments,

propositions and oppositions, plans and programmes; the aim of the ego centred is more to win a verbal victory than achieve a valid target. No attempt is made to foster the social virtues of honesty, tolerance and cordiality.

Society is the expression of Divinity in manifold phases, with its love, its ardour, its eagerness to comfort and console. A chance conglomeration of humans does not become a Society. It has to be welded into a unit by the consciousness of kinship in God, by the sharing of each other's joys and sorrows, and the cultivation of Samarasa, sympathy. The individual has to manifest through word and deed, the Ananda Inherent in him and in society.

—Baba

Study Circle Conference

The first State Study Circle Conference of Andhra Pradesh was held on 19th May at "SIVAM". Justice M. Jagannadha Rao, A. P. High Court Judge, inaugurating the conference, said that in the Study Circle there should be humility in discussion and humility in action. Practising in life what was learnt in the Study Circle was the ideal sadhana.

Prof S.V. Pappu, member of the World Council in charge of Study Circles, congratulated Andhra Pradesh for conducting the first ever State Level Study Circles Conference in India and appealed to the delegates to convert every house into a Sathya Sai Study Circle.

The Conference resolved to declare the year 1985 as Study Circle year in the State, to conduct 200 Study Circles by the end of September 1985 and place the Jnana Yajna Sadhana at the lotus feet of Bhagavan on the occasion of His 60th Birthday Celebrations.

Bhagavan was present at the end of the Conference and blessed the delegates.

AVATAR SANDESH:

The Triple Promise

"Like Rama and Krishna in earlier yugas, I have come to carry out three Pratijnas (promises). Once Swami has accepted a devotee as 'You are mine', He will not abandon him, whatever happens. Swami has come to give, not to receive. When I undertake anything for the good of the world. I will not give it up, come what may." This historic declaration was made by Bhagavan in the course of a thrilling address on Guru Poornima day in the Poornachandra Auditorium. The unprecedented gathering of devotees from all parts of the world cheered rapturously when Bhagavan made this announcement of His avataric mission.

He alone is the Guru who imparts that Higher Knowledge by knowing which all that needs to be known can be known and without which all else is useless.

The sacred Bharatiya culture has survived the ravages of time and the vicissitudes of history. Sanathana Dharma is the core of this culture. Like a diamond that shines in a hundred facets, the Bharatiya culture has scattered its brilliance in all directions and spread the fragrance of its wisdom like a thousand petalled lotus. It is based on ethics and character. Spirituality is its life-breath. Truth and Love were the ideals cherished by the great seers of Bharat, who made Bharat shine like a beacon-light for mankind. They regarded God as the great moving spirit inspiring them. But, today, forgetting God and immersing themselves in worldly pleasures and possessions, people are dehumanising themselves.

Today all over the world you hear about plans to build a new society. The universal provision of daily necessities and various amenities and the equal distribution of wealth are among the declared aims of this movement. This may be desirable. But is it practicable? It may be possible to distribute equally property and possessions, amenities and comforts. But is it possible to limit equally the desires of all persons? If desires are not limited equally, there is bound to be frustration. The socialist doctrine is an important concept. But it is no less essential to recognise the reality of God as the primal source of all things in the world. According to the Indian seers, the source of the food one consumes, the power that sustains all living things and the basis of all objects in creation is God. It is because this basic truth has been forgotten that the world today is bedevilled by famines, conflicts, wars and commotion.

We must enquire deeply whether the daily necessities, the comforts and pleasures enjoyed by man are created by man or by God. Can man create the land on which his food is grown? Can he produce water? Can he control the air? Can he create the wood in which fire is latent? All these can be created only by God and are beyond the power of man.

The saint Purandaradasa went from street to street proclaiming that everything is Divine. He sang: "Who planted and watered the tree that grows upon a hill? Who painted the feathers of the peacock? Who provided the green-feathered parrot with a rosy beak?" These are possible only for the Divine.

Unity in divinity

Moreover, today we must also seek to discover the unity that underlies the diversity among mankind. The most noteworthy characteristic of Sanathana Dharma is its concern for the well-being of humanity as a whole. This concern stems from the consciousness that all are children of one mother. There may be differences among people in mental and physical prowess. There may be differences in the doctrines they profess and in the knowledge and skills they have. Even in qualities there may be variations. But in respect of one thing there is no distinction. This relates to the process of creation which is common to all. It is this which must make us accept the equality of all beings. It is on the basis of this idea that the new society should be established.

When I began my discourse, I addressed you all as "Embodiments of the Divine Atma." In the Bhagavata and in the Gita the Lord has declared: "All beings in creation are manifestations of one fragment of Myself." ("Mamaivamso jeevabhootas-sanatanaha") The Divine is manifest in every being. Only when this truth is understood can you know the meaning of the term "Divyaatmaswaroopaloka" (Embodiments of the Divine Atma.) But relying on differences in

physical and intellectual abilities men develop hatred towards each other. When such hatred grows in society, corrective measures have to be taken. This may be illustrated by incidents in the Mahabharata. Overthrowing arrogant and oppressive rulers, Krishna installed on the throne Yudhishtira, who was wedded to Dharma and Sathya (Righteousness and Truth). Although he had won the kingdom, Krishna did not rule over it himself. Some qualifications are required for ruling a kingdom. Krishna installed as rulers only those who had those qualifications. This is the truth underling the concept of "Dharmasamsthapana" (establishment of the reign of Dharma). Whoever wishes to reform society or the government should examine his own competence and fitness for the task.

The ideal guru and shishya

We are today celebrating Guru Poornima. What is the real Guru Poornima? Is it simply the full moon day in the month of Ashada? This is the common view. But the great ones have given other meanings to it. One meaning is that it was on this day Vyasa began writing the Brahma Sutra. It was also on this day that the Buddha attained enlightenment and taught his disciples "All is sorrow; All is transient; All is void." For these reasons, the day is known as Guru Poornima, Vyasa Poornima or Buddha Poornima.

In this context, it may be asked: Who is fit to be a Guru and who is fit to be a shishya? If we examine the Gita, we will know whether we are the ideal shishyas or not. In the Bhagavad Gita, the Shishya is Narottama (the highest among men), the Guru is Purushottama (the Supreme Person); the Shishya is a Mahatma (high souled), the Guru is Paramatma (the Over-soul), the Shishya is an ideal person (Aadarsh-murti), the Guru is an Avatar-murti (incarnation of the Divine), the Shishya is a Patradharudu (an actor), the Guru is Sutradharudu (the director of the play); the Shishya is a Dhanurdhara (wielder of the bow), the Guru is Yogeswara (the Lord of Yoga). It is this type of Guru-Shishya relationship which illustrates the ideal combination.

The god-ward path

The true Guru is one, who has no ego or selfishness, and who can raise the shishya to his own level. Donning the saffron robe, mouthing a few mantras and expounding some texts are the signs of many gurus these days. The signs of a true guru are large heartedness, absolute selflessness, purity in living, freedom from acquisitiveness, absence of envy, and equal-mindedness in his conduct towards everyone. Freedom from envy is an essential quality in a guru or shishya, because envy is the root cause of many evils.

The Guru's role is to lead the shishya on the God-ward path. He must teach the shishya the true purpose for which each of his sense organs is to be used—his eyes, his tongue, and his limbs. All the senses are to be used for discovering and experiencing the Divine. This was what Thyagaraja and Pothana commended in their songs.

Every action in daily life should be turned into an act of devotion to God. In Kashi (Banaras) the municipal authorities appointed some persons to light the streetlights. A sadhaka was one such employee. He had to fill the lamp with oil and fix a chimney to protect the flame. He used to go to every lamp singing the glory of Rama and cleaning the chimney and lighting the lamp while singing. The municipal authorities noticed that the lamps in the streets in which the sadhaka was lighting the lamps were shining brighter than those elsewhere. They found that a

great devotee was lighting the lamps with devotion to God and this accounted for their exceptional brilliance. The moral of this story is that when you do any act in a spirit of dedication, as an offering to God, you can experience joy and find fulfillment.

The avatars' resolves

Hence everyone should set before himself certain resolutions. Without these he can make no progress. Even Avatars (divine incarnations) make their advent with certain resolves. They also set certain limits to their roles. Krishna incarnated with three resolves: (1) "Dharmasams-thapanarthaya sambhavami yuge yuge" ("I incarnate from age to age to establish Dharma ") (2) "Yogakshemam Vahamyaham" ("I shall promote the well-being of my devotees"); (3) "Mokha-yishyami maa suchah" ("I shall liberate those who take refuge in Me.") Rama also had three resolves: One word, one arrow, one wife. Rama declared that whoever sought asylum from him, would be totally protected.

Similarly all divine personalities make their advent for some definite purposes. They will not deviate from them in any circumstance. Swami's Prematatwa is of the same character. Swami's Prema has no trace of self-interest in it. It is absolutely pure. Swami knows only how to give, not how to receive. Swami's hand is held above for conferring something, not stretched for seeking anything. Moreover, once Swami has declared, "You are mine," whatever wrong ways they may pursue, Swami will not abandon them (Applause). It may be asked why anyone who has been accepted by Swami as "You are mine," should be subject to hardships and troubles. These troubles are the consequences of their own karma (actions). They have to see that their conduct is right. If, supposing, the Lord blesses a man with a hundred years of life, he should not get puffed up with pride and start jumping from a tree in the confidence that he will live for a century. He may live for a hundred years, but may have his leg broken in the fall. So, in accepting the blessing of God, one should also try to lead a righteous life.

"Will not change my course"

When I have given a word to anyone, even if they turn against me I will not bear any ill-will towards them. Even if they revile me, I shall continue to love them. I will stand up to my pledge right up to the end. Some day they will return to the right path.

Owing to the compulsion of circumstances some changes may take place. They are not permanent. I will not change my course because of such happenings. This is my second resolve.

This is my third resolve: When I undertake anything because I feel it is for the welfare of all and that it is good for society as a whole, I will not give it up, come what may. Even if the whole world is against me, I will not turn back, I will only go forward (Cheers).

These are my three resolves: The foot that is put forward will not retreat. I will not go back on the word I have given I only give and do not receive.

These are my three resolves and I am determined to fulfill them and to set an example. Only then others will follow these ideals. What the country requires today are persons with ideals (adarsha), not cravings (ashas). Desires may change from time to time. But the ideals remain long after one is dead. Hence every one should try to live up to some ideals. You should lead

exemplary lives. You should become noble souls and secure real bliss, which can come only from the Divine.

On this Gurupoornima day, try to transform your heart making it pure and sacred. Purity (pavitramu) is the true characteristic of a human being. This purity should be manifested in everything one does: in his thoughts, in what he sees or says and in all that he does. It is only when you display such purity that you can become embodiments of the Divine Atma. Then the distinction between the Divine and the mundane disappears. Everything becomes divinised. The difference between the object and the subject will also go. Everything then becomes the whole (poornam). The realisation of that wholeness is the real Guru Poornima—not the offer of pada-pooja to some guru and obtaining a mantra from him. Resolve today to turn your thoughts to God, to strive for the purification of your heart and to seek Self-realisation.

—*Poornachandra Auditorium, 13-7-84*

The Mandir

When I think back over the two months that I recently spent at Prasanthi Nilayam, my thoughts turn first and foremost to the Mandir. For me, it seems to embody everything I felt about this 'Abode of Supreme Peace'. On the evening of my arrival, I came upon it dressed in its holiday best for Swami's birthday, with hundreds of little lights, and it seemed to be floating like some ethereal wedding cake between Heaven and Earth, bathed in the afterglow of a crimson sunset. When I saw it next morning, long before dawn, it seemed more mysterious still. Eventually came the day in which I found myself *inside* it for morning Omkar (the chanting of the 21 OM's), instead of *outside* it, and I felt privileged beyond belief.

The Mandir is so beautiful. Everything about it is beautiful: its shape; the exquisite detail of the finely carved figures that adorn it; the welcoming cool of its verandah from which Swami emerges each day for darshan, and where, one day, I too was allowed to sit waiting for the long-hoped-for interview. Inside, it is as beautiful as the outside. From the focal point of the life-size portraits of the two Babas, in their carved, gleaming silver frames that turn to gold in the flickering lights of Omkar, to the great chariot at the opposite end, majestic and white, reminding us of Lord Krishna's eternal Gita to an attentive Arjuna.

But it is not just the *beauty* of the Mandir that has made me love it. There is much, much more to it than that! All that I feel about the Mandir was epitomised for me one afternoon when I was sitting on its cool floor, during the World Conference of Bal Vikas teachers. They called us 'gurus', but I didn't feel much like a 'guru'. I just knew that merely to be there was a privilege beyond belief. Mr. Jagadesan was the first to speak that afternoon, and the opening words of his talk found an immediate echo in my heart. He said: "It is awe-inspiring to realize that we are at the moment seated in the Sanctum Sanctorum of the Universe!" Yes! That was it: I had the immense good fortune of having been invited into the Holy of Holies—the innermost sanctuary of the entire Universe. The very Lord of this Universe (in His present, bodily incarnation) lives in two small rooms at the side of this Mandir; the whole place is saturated with His presence, His

physical presence as well as His omnipresence in the hearts of all. This is the heart of the world, and the peaceful 'eye', not of a hurricane, but of His Cosmic Dance. For Bhagavan is the great Nataraja, the Lord of the Dance, as well as the Universal Mother-Father. He is Rama; He is Krishna; He is the One who was before the world was, and whom we adore as Christ. Once more, He has come unto His own, and may we hope and pray that it may never be said this time that "His own received Him not"!

Certainly, this had not been the case with those ten thousand who, a few days before, had been privileged to sing their time worn carols to that very Lord, and carry lighted candles during the dawn procession on Christmas morn. At that pre-dawn scene, the silver doors on the front of the Mandir opened, and Bhagavan stepped out onto the balcony to bless the sea of upturned faces. The hearts of all were full, that morning, with an inner joy such as most of us had never known, for we were conscious of singing those carols, not to an idea, not as a re-enacted ritual, nor as a sentimental memory, but as an act of total devotion to the incarnate God, smilingly present. It was as if the clock had been turned back some two thousand years, and humanity had been given the chance to make amends to Him who was the cornerstone that it had rejected. I could feel tears of gratitude welling up within me, and I didn't see a dry eye anywhere around. It is a scene that will remain with me all my life.

My last memories of the Mandir are equally dear: As a gentle gesture to soften the pain of leaving, I was 'allowed' to be in the front row of the Mandir at Omkar for the last five mornings of my stay at Prasanthi Nilayam. I say 'allowed' for Bhagavan says there is no such thing as chance, so I know that it was by His Grace that I was allowed to drink deeply of its beauty and its atmosphere, so that I might be able to picture it whenever I shut my eyes—however far I may be in spirit, the Mandir envelops me still.

—*Madeleine Guillemin, (Auckland, N.Z.)*

STUDENTS' CORNER:

The World of Vidyagiri

"Vidyagiri", at Prasanthi Nilayam, is fast becoming a unique educational centre, with spiritually inspired educational institutions embracing education from the nursery stage to the highest level of university studies. Kumari Shalini Ayre, a student of Class X in the Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School at Puttaparthi, was chosen to speak about her experiences at Vidyagiri at a Seva Dal-cum-Training Camp held at Jodhpur (Rajasthan) on May 27, 1984. The camp was inaugurated by Air Marshal C. V. Gole, A.O.C -in-C South-Western Command.

In the course of her speech, Kumari Shalini said I shall endeavour to acquaint this august audience with the world within Vidyagiri. I invite you to travel with me to South India. We alight at the Dharmavaram station which heralds the advent of the Avatar for Dharma-samsthapana. We now travel on through lush green fields and sun-bathed roads till we reach a tiny hamlet, Puttaparthi—the abode of Bhagavan Baba. At first sight this village is just like any other Indian village, but as we enter the gates of Vidyagiri, we behold a new world. A world of

Vidya, where, value education and Seva are the degrees given to students. The Gopuram and abode of Baba constitute the home of eternal peace—Prasanthi Nilayam. As was recently mentioned by Sri V. K. Gokak, our Vice chancellor, once upon a time all roads led to Rome. Today all roads lead to Puttaparthi.

The Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning has Bhagavan Baba himself as the Chancellor. Under His benevolent and strict care, we the students of Vidyagiri, are being nurtured in the most ancient and best culture of all-the Indian culture.

I have the good fortune to be living in this new world just now. The education imparted here is for a better life and not just a living. Every student emerging from the portals of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning comes out equipped not only with academic qualifications, but also with a knowledge of the real self and with an ultimate aim in life—SEVA.

Baba says: "The educational system of a country is the bank on which the nation draws a cheque, whenever it requires strong, skilled and reliable workers."

We in Vidyagiri are being educated towards this end. Our school is a part of the campus at Vidyagiri which has many beautiful buildings and an Institute of Higher Learning.

Swami visits us often and we go for his darshan on Thursdays and Sundays to Prasanthi Nilayam.

Great Moments

We cherish the moments spent with Swami for He makes them so enjoyable for us. He gives us so much love and never fails to leave a meaningful message for us, which we are eager to implement.

All activity in the school is geared towards learning. It is not mere learning, but learning for the pleasure of it and for the good it results in.

It may sound unreal to you that there aren't any modern day leisure pursuits like the movies and T. V. at Vidyagiri. This is because we, as students with value oriented minds, are convinced of the need to spend every available moment in active and constructive learning. This does not mean that we are in any way "behind the times". We are as aware of world happenings as anyone outside Vidyagiri.

As for our leisure time, we spend it in organized games, bhajans, reading, and in cultural activities. We are treated to Sunday sessions when we listen to glorious stories from our very dear Sri Kasturi Sir.

Swami occasionally treats us to cultural programmes and concerts by renowned artistes from all over the world.

Spiritual Transformation

Our day is a very busy and interesting one. With the break of dawn, we awake to the silent world of prayer. This communication with the divine prepares us for the day ahead. Our prayers

are universal and open our eyes to the goodness preached in every religion and also helps us to respect all faiths.

We get to school, where our gurus instruct us in academics and help us to enjoy learning. They constantly remind us of the role we shall play as adults and how we can change the evil in society to good, by leading exemplary lives.

Slowly but steadily, a transformation occurs and we become more aware of our spiritual strength and less inclined towards material gains.

We are becoming conscious of our rich culture, and heritage, through chanting of Vedas, slokas, mantras and feel proud of being Indians.

The Human Values lessons make us more respectful and dutiful. Swami reminds us constantly that He wishes students to become sacrificing spirits for the welfare of the nation and the world at large.

When we peep outside Vidyagiri all we can see is destruction and sorrow caused by man. This makes us realize how different, how beautiful and how peaceful our new world is.

Swami's Army

To fight the sorrow in the world, Swami is gathering an army. Swami's army uniformed in white representing peace and purity; carrying swords of Truth (Sathya) marching on the path of Righteousness (Dharma), use the most effective and lasting ammunition of all—Love (Prema).

With this Prema, the army trained at Vidyagiri removes evil and kills all hate. This prema is demonstrated through Seva. This Manava Seva has no bounds of caste, creed or colour and is the crown for which every student aspires.

We students imbibe this Seva bhavna at Vidyagiri through sharing, helping, caring and working together. We are thus able to experience the brotherhood of man.

Swami has given us three watchwords, Duty, Discipline and Devotion. He has armed us with Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and with His grace, we the citizens of the new emerging world of Vidyagiri, shall devote ourselves to Manava Seva.

Though still on the first rung of this ladder of service, I feel that someday I shall be able to work for the cause of humanity.

I offer my gratitude to Swami for enrolling me in His army, and I hope more and more children and youth will awaken to the call of Seva. Jai Sai Ram.

To The Guru

The light of wisdom within me shines brighter today because of you.
The knowledge of the first light has been fanned by you.
I have within me all the Truth that is, and is to be.
I am unaware of all that is.
With You, O Great One, I shall realize the Truth;
With gratitude, I honour Your Name, which is many;

With humility, I bow to Your Form, which is changing;
With trust, I merge my mind with Yours to become the One Mind;
With You as my Guide, Teacher, Guru, I know
I will come to know my true self, the One Self of all.
Your name is Sathya, You are Truth.
The Truth that I am.

—*Diane McCabe, Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, USA.*

Lead Me On

My mind is tossed `twixt good and bad.
O! Sai Divine! do turn my eye
From evil thoughts and evil deeds
That have their roots in thoughts of ill,
And lead me on, whatever impedes
The Progress of the nobler WILL.

—*B. Ravichandran, XI standard, Vidyagiri.*

World Seva Dal Meet in November

A ten-day programme to celebrate the International Seva Dal Year during November, 1984, was submitted to Bhagavan after meetings of members of the Central Trust, Zonal Convenors and Coordinators of the World Council, State Presidents, State Trust members, State Trust Convenors, Bal Vikas Trust members, State Seva Dal convenors and Principals and Wardens, held at Prasanthi Nilayam on July 12, 13 and 14.

The programme includes three-day service activities in selected villages in the Sathya Sai Taluk (November 15-17), an exhibition of rural service activities all over the world (Sathya Sai Seva Darshan), the International Seva Dal Conference (November 19 to 21), convocation of the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning (November 22), and Bhagavan's birthday celebrations (November 23).

The programme was considered at a meeting presided over by Mr. Indulal Shah, Chairman of the World Council.

Only active Seva Dal workers are eligible to be chosen as delegates. Each State has been directed to bring for demonstration and training in one specialised service activity five trainers, who will train Seva Dal workers from other states in this activity. Each State will nominate in all 85 workers for training in 17 specialised activities other than its own.

The Sri Sathya Sai Seva Darshan will be in the form of a model village set up in the Hill View Stadium, with two huts each to be put up by each of the states.

One hut will display the service activities and the other will be a demonstration-cum-training centre. Each State will provide its own distinctive arch-cum-gate for the huts.

Each State will bring 100 special fruit saplings for planting in the orchard near the Gokulam at Prasanthi Nilayam.

Each State will take up for service activities in the Sathya Sai taluk one main village and five smaller villages. There will be a preliminary survey of the conditions in these villages and their essential needs.

New designs of scarves for Mahila and Seva Dal workers were approved. Subcommittees were formed to be in charge of various arrangements in connection with the Conference.

It is expected that the participants at the Conference will range from 11,000 to 15,000.

Several States have decided to bring out special pictorial publications in their respective regional languages for presentation to Bhagavan in November, 1985.

It is expected that the target of 6000 adopted villages, suggested by Bhagavan, will be reached before the 60th birthday celebrations.

It was agreed that in implementing the "Ceilings on Desires" programme, the emphasis should be on the spiritual aspect.

The Sathya Sai colleges will bring out a series of pocket books carrying the message of Bhagavan, to be distributed to students.

"A Continuous Presence"

I had only read of Sathya Sai Baba, when a few years ago a few of my friends who were devotees of Sai Baba encouraged me to visit Prasanthi Nilayam at Puttaparthi. I went along with a lawyer friend of mine, a distinguished lawyer in Colombo, and with a lady, who was a relation of my wife, and my elder son, who had come for a holiday to Sri Lanka from France. My son is of a rather disbelieving nature.

On that occasion, I took a letter of introduction to His secretary and proceeded through Trivandrum by air and then by car to Bangalore from whence we set out to Puttaparthi.

I carried with me the letter of introduction, which strangely enough, on the first day of my stay at Trivandrum, I took out while unpacking the luggage. My friend asked me why I did this. "The letter would have great value when we go to Puttaparthi." I laughed and put the letter back. The next day strangely enough the letter was missing. We searched the suitcase, but we could not find that letter. On the third day, I opened the suitcase to find the letter on top of the suitcase. I was happy I had rediscovered it, and I kept it back in the suitcase and we went out to town. When I came back again, very strangely the letter was missing. The next day, the letter was found in the bag. We set out and stopped at a bungalow belonging to the Indian Government. During lunch, I showed my friends the letter. Before we got to Puttaparthi, we stopped at another place. Again, the letter was strangely missing. It was discovered at the Circuit Bungalow and sent to me by the Indian police.

At Puttaparthi, when we arrived, it was early in the afternoon when everyone was resting. The party with which I came had wanted to get back to Bangalore soon, and had wanted me to use my influence with the officials at Prasanthi Nilayam. I thought it highly improper and disrespectful to a person of high religious stature.

An hour later a person came from inside and asked, "Are there any people here from Sri Lanka?" When we admitted to it, we were told that Baba had wanted us to be lodged in an apartment and given some food. Then we were conducted to a large hall and asked to stand in the verandah of that hall.

Suddenly a door opened and Baba summoned us and we went into the room. He laughed and asked, "Have you found the letter to me?" This appeared most unusual, because only we were aware of it. My son, in a moment of disbelief had said, "I don't believe in Him nor do I believe He has any powers and I will not personally take any notice of Him unless He speaks with me." My son was seated when Sathya Sai Baba called him to His side and said, "Now will you believe in me because I spoke to you. You had said you would not care the slightest for me, but listen, I know what you said and I shall bless you, and you will be happy in the future."

The day prior to going to Puttaparthi from Bangalore, a telex had reached us informing one of the ladies in the party that her cousin sister had passed away. We had made enquiries at Bangalore and we were told there was no chance of her returning to our country in time for the funeral and much against her own wishes she joined us in this trip to Puttaparthi. When addressing her, Sathya Sai Baba said, "Yesterday, your sister died. You wanted to go back but

could not; you have come here and joined in prayer at this place. Extend the benefit to the person who has passed away from this world."

That evening, we were summoned by Sathya Sai Baba who exhorted us to wait the night. Unfortunately, we had a programme we could not avoid. On the journey back a strange occurrence took place. We missed the road. We suddenly came across what we thought was a pool of water. We halted. The driver reversed the car and we were waiting not knowing what to do. Just then a lorry arrived nearby apparently going to a farm. The lorry driver said, "Go back to where you have just turned." We told him there was a pool of water. He replied, "I don't think so. Why don't you try again?" The driver drove back for five minutes. There was no pool of water, and we went right through. These different incidents convinced me that Baba is a continuous Presence, which we with our limited understanding of physical phenomena are not able to explain and which we sometimes reject in our ignorance.

This evening the Bhajan was set in a pattern that brought the mind and body into a strange sense of equipoise. It is particularly appropriate that it took place on Full Moon Day which is sacred to us, Indians and Chinese.

—From the address given by Justice Nissanka Wijeyeratne of the Ministry of Justice, Colombo, Sri Lanka, to the Sathya Sai Baba Centre of Hong Kong on Full Moon Day

Bhakti is not a uniform to be worn on Thursday evenings, when you gather for Bhajan, and to be laid aside when the Bhajan is over. It must mean the promotion of an attitude of humility, of revering parents, teachers, elders, and others; it is a mental outlook, an attitude that is ever-present. It is the sustenance of the heart, just as food is sustenance for the body. Like the needle of the compass always pointing to the North, never deviating from that direction, returning to it, readily, gladly, quickly, whenever it is shaken off that line, so too the Bhakta must face the Lord ever, must be happy only when he is set towards Him.

— Baba

MALAYSIAN SYMPOSIUM:

"Age of the Spirit is Dawning"

"What the world needs today to save itself is Unity based on the most spiritual of all virtues—LOVE! Conflicts arise when this Unity is ignored. Competition, domination and exploitation will disappear when Unity is discovered and experienced," declared Bhagavan Baba, in a message to a Symposium and Exhibition on World Religions and Human Values for the Far East held at Kuala Lumpur during July 29 to 31.

The Conference was sponsored by Sri Sathya Sai Central Council of Malaysia and was attended by participants from Sai Centres in countries as far apart as Fiji and Sri Lanka. The Symposium had two themes: (1) The religions of the world—Unity in diversity—Human Values for daily living. (2) Education In Human Values.

The objectives of the Symposium were: (a) to enable participants to have better understanding of the principal teachings of their own religions, so that these can be used as guidelines for daily living beneficial to their families, society and nation; (b) to give participants a greater awareness of the common teachings in all religions and thus create greater multi-religious understanding and harmony; (c) to expose participants to a programme of teachers' training in Education in Human Values.

The Symposium was inaugurated by Datuk Pattinggi Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud, Chief Minister of Sarawak. There were speeches on different religions prevalent in the Far East by their respective exponents (Islam, Hinduism, Taoism, Confucianism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Christianity). The second and third day's programme was devoted to the teachers' Training Programme on Education in Human Values. It included practical demonstrations in techniques of story telling and other methods used in Education in Human Values.

"East and West One in Spirit"

Bhagavan's Message was read by Prof. V. K. Gokak, Vice Chancellor of the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Prasanthi Nilayam. In the course of His Message, Bhagavan said:

"We had a symposium last year in the western world and devotees from many European countries came together and experienced the thrill of Unity and Purity during the days of the symposium. The Far Eastern horizon lifts now and devotees from several countries are assembling in Kuala Lumpur on the morning of 29th July 1984. This will be for them a day to remember like the day of the symposium in Rome. The Eastern and Western worlds are one in Spirit. They will undoubtedly evolve as one world family in the not too distant future.

"Man is the crown of creation. The Kingdom of God is within him. Divinity is his nature. The awareness of the Atma, the Divine Self, as the very core of one's existence is the source of Light, Love and Wisdom. But man is dominated by delusive desires. He struggles to conquer Nature but does not conquer his own desires. He mistakes the momentary for the momentous, the fleeting for the fundamental. He has used the unique gift of intelligence to scan the depths of space but he has neglected the depths of his inner being where he can listen to the voice of God. He has polluted the land he lives on, the air he breathes in and water which is the source of life. He has brought the very globe to the very brink of total disaster. The weeds of greed, hatred and envy grow in his diseased mind and heart. They are not bared to the sunlight of Love which eliminates them.

"The world today is in the grip of a fearful moral and spiritual crisis. People everywhere are feeling frustrated and helpless and anxiously wondering what is in store for humanity. While science has overcome the barriers of time, distance and nationality, it has done little to promote better understanding between man and man and nation and nation. Never has there been so much distrust, hatred and violence as is witnessed today, in almost every country.

"New dawn is breaking"

"But a new dawn is breaking and a new age, the Age of Spirit, is fast coming on us. Driven to utter disillusion and disenchantment, a sizeable portion of elite humanity is steadily turning towards the light of Spirit. Man has now realised that animality and sensuality lead him to a

world of increasing misery. If man is to achieve peace and bliss, which are his inward glory, and a wide sense of harmony, which extends from the Individual to the universe, what is essential for him is to conquer his passions and open himself to the transforming splendours of Spirit. That is why there is a hunger for Spirit today in almost every country of the world.

"This conference is not concerned with any one religion, nation, race, caste or individual. It is intended to reveal the essential Truth that underlies all religions and to strive for the peace and welfare of all people, for the establishment of Truth and Righteousness.

"Christ's message of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man finds its parallels in the pronouncements of the prophets of many other religions. These messages will spiritualise the human race if only the messages are practised earnestly.

"Love and Law are the basic human values. Love as Thought is Truth. Love as Action is Right Conduct. Love as Understanding is Peace. Love as Feeling is Non-violence. All men must share in this precious heritage of Selfless, Universal Love and develop it by practice in daily life.

"This is Sal's message to you all. Be the harbingers of the new age! Be free from selfishness, greed, hatred and violence, be a light unto yourselves and thereby be alight unto others! May you become worthy instruments for the revival of the Religion of Love and the Resurgence of Human Values. Know that I am ever with you, within you and around you. In fact, I am in you as much as you are in me."

Addressing the Symposium, Prof. V. K. Gokak, Vice Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, urged the need for cultivating tolerance and developing positive secularism—belief in the beauty and worth of all the religions in the world. "A world civilisation which is based on the fusion of the gifts of both the East and the West is the next phase that has to be shaped in the life of each country."

AVATAR VANI:

Ceiling on Desires

"You should believe that Service is a path to God realization. Service activities are to be undertaken not for the sake of Sathya Sai Organization nor for the sake of society. They are purely and essentially for your own sake—to transform your own lives and redeem yourselves," declared Bhagavan Baba, in an address in the Prasanthi Nilayam Mandir on July 14, to a gathering of office-bearers of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations from all over India. Bhagavan explained the specific objects of the "Ceiling on Desires" programme and removed certain misconceptions relating to it. He explained that the object of the programme was not to raise money but to prevent waste of money, time, food or other resources and to use all the savings for the welfare of the people. Bhagavan's address covered various aspects of Seva activities and emphasized the role of Seva as a vital element in spiritual sadhana.

In the course of His ninety-minute address, Bhagavan said:

We have undertaken tasks of varying magnitudes and description. Before we embark on the execution of these programmes, we have to ask ourselves three questions: One: For whose sake are we undertaking these programmes? Two: For what purpose? Three: How are we going to execute these programmes? These may be three different questions, but the answer is one. If we examine deeply, the answer to the first question is: "All for our own sake." The answer to the second is: "For our own happiness and joy." The answer to the third question is that "the results of our work will depend on what we do. If we do something good, the result will be good, if we do something bad the result will be likewise."

In this world it is not possible to make use of anything without transforming it in one way or the other to make it useful. You cannot have rice for eating without converting paddy to rice-grains and then cooking it. Similarly, you cannot have cloth without transforming cotton into yarn and then weaving it into cloth. Similarly, a human being needs transformation in respect of three things: The first is bodily transformation; the second pertains to the mind; the third relates to the Atma. The Atma is changeless. It is only the body and the mind that require transformation. How does transformation take place? For instance, if we ask the question whether silver can become God or stone become God, the answer is `YES'. When a sculptor converts a piece of rock into a beautiful idol to be worshipped in a shrine, what was inert and worthless becomes sacred. This is transformation. Similarly, an idol made out of silver becomes an object of worship. In the same manner, everything which is petty and worldly can be transformed in course of time into something sacred and divine. Such a transformation is necessary for man.

Take, for Instance, the body. It is an entity which houses much that is bad and that is undesirable. Externally we take great care of the body through bathing and cleaning. We are aware of the external impurity and we try to get rid of it. But, are we aware of the internal impurities? How do we purify them? For this internal purification, we have to acquire sacred thoughts and do sacred deeds.

We have the concepts of Jiva and Deva. Man is composed of the three Gunas—Satwa, Rajas, Tamas. As long as you are part of these Gunas, you are Jiva. Once you transcend these three qualities you become Deva or God. The three Gunas are like the husk that covers the rice in the paddy. When you remove the husk it becomes the rice-grain. Whatever we do, whatever actions we undertake, if they were to be permeated with thoughts centred on God, they would become sacred. To-day in our Seva activities, we do not have this lofty sense of dedication. We should get rid of the thought that Seva activities are being done for others. You should understand that they are being undertaken for your own sake and for your own betterment.

In Vedantic parlance this identification of yourself with others is called "Maitri". In Seva activities you have to develop "Maitri". Another attitude you have to develop is Karuna or compassion. The third is called "Mudita" and the fourth is called "Upeksha". In all these four ways we should try to change ourselves and others.

What is "Maitri"? It is commonly equated with friendship. In the worldly sense this friendship is a mutual relationship. True friendship lies in regarding other people's comforts or joys or

sorrows as your own. For instance we have an example in Ramayana in the relationship between Rama and Sugriva. Their friendship was based on the fact that each could experience the suffering of the other as his own (Samana avasthalu). The bond of friendship is drawn when there is a recognition of sharing of experiences common to both.

What is "Karuna" or compassion? Seeing a person in distress and expressing verbally sympathy is not compassion. Compassion must express itself in action to relieve the suffering. Nor should you adopt an attitude of aloofness or indifference on the plea that each one is suffering for his own folly. Though suffering may be due to one's mistakes—mistakes to which everyone is prone—we should seek to remedy such suffering just as we try to get rid of our own suffering. Some people try to show off their sympathy by setting up charitable institutions like hospitals etc. True compassion should emanate from the heart. It should not find expression in outward manifestations which only reveal one's vanity. In the Sathya Sai Organisations there is no place for such demonstrations of vanity. Everything that is done to help the poor or the suffering should be based on the feelings coming from the heart and appealing to the hearts of those who are helped.

Next comes "Mudita". This means acquiring peace of mind through cultivating equanimity in the experience of honour and dishonour, praise or calumny, loss or gain, joy or sorrow. These pairs of opposites should be regarded as things which come and go, like passing clouds. Every Sevak should develop such an equanimity of mind.

The fourth requisite is "Upeksha". "Apeksha" binds man. "Upeksha" frees man. "Apeksha" means involvement with the worldly concerns. "Upeksha" means getting rid of this involvement. Take the example of a pumpkin. A green pumpkin, when it is placed in water, it sinks. The pumpkin has plenty of water within it and when placed in water it sinks. The same pumpkin, when it is dried and has no water inside it, floats on water. What is the reason? In the first place the pumpkin has friendship for water and it makes water part of its own self. Similarly, when you are worldly yourself and you move in the world you are bound to it. When you free yourself from worldly attachments you go towards divinity and you are freed from bondage to the world. It is the process of "freeing yourself" that is called "Upeksha".

In the Ramayana, when Rama decided to go to the forest, Sita wanted to accompany him and she gave away all her possessions. By giving up attachments to the possessions she could get Rama. But, when in the forest she developed a desire for the golden deer, she was separated from Rama. In the first place when she removed "Kama"—the desire for possessions—she became one with Rama. The meaning of this episode is, so long as you are tied to Kama or desire, you cannot hope to get Rama or God.

This does not mean that you have to renounce the world. Living in this world as you are, you must strike a balance between worldly life and spiritual life. Man's life is like gold in its native state, associated with dirt, which is impure. It is impure in the initial stages. When you begin to purify your thoughts, speech and actions through seeking good contacts and cultivating noble ideas, you will be transforming yourself. This is the process of "Upeksha".

More than Tapas or Dhyana, service to others is the means by which one transforms oneself. In rendering service, you should be moved by genuine concern for those you serve. You should try to ascertain the cause of their suffering and try to remove it. Only then can you do Seva properly. Momentary sympathy or charity or competing with others in exhibiting one's generosity is not true Seva. In rendering service if you try to do something which is beyond your capacity It is a sign of your ego. If you give less than what you can, then you are a thief (denying to others what is due to them). You must be discriminating in your service. You must regard service as a Sadhana.

You should believe that service is a path to God realisation. These activities are to be undertaken not for the sake of Sathya Sai or even for the sake of society. They are purely and essentially for your own sake. It is to transform your own lives that you undertake Seva. Through the medium of Seva you can reap the fruits of Japa and Dhyana. By making your fellow-beings happy you are making God himself happy. The Seva that you do should not be done out of a sense of compulsion or to please others. It should be wholehearted and spontaneous. In organising Seva activities do not attempt to compare one State with another. Because some States have taken up some work in some villages, you should not feel that you should do the same thing. Do whatever you feel is your duty and what is necessary for the areas in which you are working. Do it with all your heart without comparing yourself with others.

Rationale of "ceiling on desires"

There is the programme connected with Ceiling on Desires. You must realise that this programme has not been launched to raise funds. The object of the programme is to prevent waste of money, time, food or other resources and to use all these for the welfare of the people. The money that is saved need not be kept for the Sathya Sai Organisations. It may be used in the best way you choose for the benefit of others. Do not waste time. Time wasted is life wasted. Time is God. Sanctify all the time at your disposal by undertaking Seva activities in a pure and unselfish spirit. To-day we waste time on unnecessary and unwanted things in indulging in unnecessary talk and doing meaningless actions. In all these actions we are sacrificing the body to time. Instead we should try to make time our servant. It means spending our time in good thoughts and good deeds. Every second of your daily existence you must ask these questions—"How am I utilising time? Is it for a good or bad purpose?" Likewise, with regard to food you must ask: "Am I just eating what I need or more? Am I wasting food?" So also with regard to money: "Am I using this money for my own selfish needs or for boosting my name and fame, or to satisfy my ego and vanity?" Once you start seeking answers to these questions, there is no greater sadhana.

These are the aims of the Ceiling on Desires programme. It was never the purpose of this programme to collect money for the Sathya Sai Organisations. The object was to encourage you to share your money with others, to give you an opportunity to utilise your surplus resources for some good and noble purpose which will sanctify your life.

Saving as yajna

Three types of strength are given to a person ...physical strength, mental strength and the power of money. It has been said that all these should be offered as sacrifice (Yajna). This sacrifice is not offered to God. God, who has given you the body and the mind, does not need

them for himself. God is also the source of all wealth. What does He want with your wealth? Use it for sacred purposes. The Seva programme is intended only to provide you with opportunities to make your lives sacred and worthwhile. It is to develop the spirit of sacrifice. Was it beyond the power of Rama to discover Sita in Lanka Himself? What need was there for Him to send Hanuman? Rama wanted Hanuman to go on the search, so that He could show to the world the devotion and steadfastness and faith of Hanuman. It is a case of Grace on the part of Rama. In the same manner, if Sai so much as wants to do so many things Himself, He could do anything. This endeavour is not for the sake of Sai. It is done through these Seva Organisations so that members of the organisation get the chance to do service and redeem themselves. Try to understand the basic truth that these avenues of service have been provided so that you will get good name for yourselves and not for the sake of Sai. If people have any wrong notions about the service programme, endeavour to remove their doubts and explain the real purposes. For instance, some people say for the sake of the 60th Birthday Celebrations they have embarked on this project of "Ceiling on Desires." This is a wrong notion. Tell these people it is not so. Sathya Sai does not need anything and He does not ask anything from you. Our idea is that we should undertake some development programme, so that the villages can get benefited. The idea is to save money that is now being wasted in one way or the other, so that it may be made available for doing something good. Above all, the basic purpose of all service activities is to effect a transformation from the state of man to the state of divinity. Fill your hearts with that which is godly. Then there will be meaning to your Seva.

—*The Mandir, 14-7-84*

Darshan

The door opens and,
Two persons clad in white,
Come out and stand,
Oh: Our faces look up bright.

The latch bends in Obedience,
And a glow of Orange is seen,
The Lord stands at the threshold,
Looking at you and me.

Every-one is thrilled,
And filled with courage and Vigour,
He comes sweet and soft,
And the gleams of his love glitter.

Peace and Love-Love and peace.
What more do you want?
He whispers ever so sweetly,
As he pours them in our Heart.

Hands folded in prayer,
Eyes blight with joy,
Let's translate the Darshan,
Into a world better for all.

—*Rohit V. Pappu, X Standard, Vidyagiri*

STUDENT'S CORNER:

OM

To reach to thy bliss,
'OM' you ought not to miss.
To clean thy soul,
To achieve the goal,
The one word 'OM'.

To give thyself
All the power and pelf
To learn God's ways
To hear what he says
he one word 'OM'.

Within the heart to go,
Peace and love to know,
And to fear not
To be happy with what you've got,
The one word 'OM'.

For the ego to burst,
To quench love's thirst
For sins to be washed out
For the seed of joy to sprout,
The one word 'OM'.

To live midst the Lord
To make the path of tolerance broad
Supreme knowledge to attain,
To be away from pain
The one word 'OM'.

God, show me the path of all things right
Give me strength against wrong to fight

Oh Lord make me wise
Anyone I may not despise
Lord keep me within you
You are the rose and I'm the dew.

—*Prashanti P. Palekar, Bombay.*

Goals of Love

There is a modern version of what Apostle Paul said, in a portion of the scriptural book of Corinthians, about Love, which may be rendered as follows

"If I SPEAK with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have *Love*, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have *Love*, I am nothing.

And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have *Love*, it profits me nothing.

Love is patient, *Love* is kind, and is not jealous; *Love* does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never fails..."

Unlike the biblical Apostle Paul, who declared of himself "as one born out of due time," I am happy to proclaim myself as—"one born in due time"—to bear witness to the advent and presence in today's world of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba of ancient India. In one memorable interview, deep in the Mandir at Prasanthi Nilayam, He turned in my direction and quite clearly said in my hearing his much quoted words:

Start the day with *Love*
Spend the day with *Love*
Fill the day with *Love*
End the day with *Love* ...
that is the way to God.

Let us examine the meaning of the words "Goal" and "Love".

Goal is an object or end that one strives to attain; aim—destination.

Love: (General)—a strong affection or liking for a person, place or thing. Fondness. Sometimes it is permanent and long lasting, at other times of a transitory or passing nature.

Love: (Religious)—Mankind's devout attachment to *God* ...*God's* benevolent interest in mankind and *God's* concern for the long lasting, unchanging bond of eternal unity.

In this context, mention might well be made of the scriptural directive: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you ."..*Love* thy neighbour as thyself" Also the statement of Sri Sathya Sai Baba that the purpose of human life is to attain Brilliance, Immortality and Bliss.

Love of itself has many, many *goals*—in fact everything in *creation* can be connected to it because of it, all-embracing nature. One goal is the *Goal of Love itself*, which is all sufficient and eternal, all there is...

Briefly some Goals of *Love* might be described as follows:

1. Unity with God (Self-Realisation).
2. Character (Ethics. Morality, Nobility, Balance, Ideals).
3. Truth (Freedom-Detachment).
4. Charity (Duty-Service Caring-Sharing-Sympathy).
5. Faith (Hope-Religion).
6. Salvation (Saving-Remembering GRACE).
7. Surrender (Devotion-Obedience).
8. Peace (Silence-Calmness-Temple Shrines).
9. Happiness (Pleasure-Joy-Health-Holidays-Festivals-Retreats).
10. Security (Wealth-Prosperity-Survival Organisation-Connections).
11. Creativity (Arts & Sciences).
12. Understanding (Education-Knowledge-Wisdom).
13. Purity (Cleanliness).
14. Patience (Forbearance-Attention).
15. Compassion (Consideration-Respect Consolation).
16. Family (Companionship).
17. Friendship (Goodwill-Fellowship).
18. Fairness (Sweetness-Kindness).
19. Honour.

Let me conclude with recalling Love's Old Sweet Song:

Once in the dear dead days beyond recall,
When on the world the mist began to fall,
One of the dreams that rose in happy throng
Low to our ears *Love* sung an old sweet song,
And in the dusk where fell the firelight gleam,
Softly it wove itself into our dream.
Just a song of twilight, when the lights are low,
And the flickering shadows softly come and go,
Tho' the heart be weary, sad the day and long,
Still to us at twilight comes *Love's* old song,
...Comes *Love's* old sweet song. Rejoice, LOVE is GODS.

—James W. Johnson, Cleveland, U.S.A.

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 Bhakti is the seed of Prema and Jnana is the seed of Santhi.

—Baba

Leela Kaivalaya Vahini

7

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Swami: The rites prescribed as unavoidable for daily life and those that are laid down as optional for the observance of certain holy days, all these have to begin with `svaaha' pronounced along with the ritual sips of sanctified water (Aachamana). Generally speaking, there are no ritual offerings in the sacred fire without the accompaniment of the mantras, svaaha or svadhaa.

Sadhaka: What is the benefit that accrues when these two mantras, svaaha and svadhaa, are additionally pronounced at the end of Vedic mantras?

Swami: When offerings are given, while svaaha or svadhaa is uttered, the Gods (Devatas) or manes (Pitrs) to whom they are directed, will be pleased. Moreover, when those who are well versed in Vedic practices perform the worship of fire in order to offer oblations, and do not utter the prescribed svaaha, the offerings cannot reach the Gods. Svaaha and svadhaa are words which invoke the respective deities. They are mantras which awake and alert the Divine. The Rg Veda declares, "Svaahaa sthoamasya varmanaa". Svaaha has two meanings: (1) the offering made with the utterance of that mantra, and (2) the Vedic statement which conveys praise or glorification. Whether one of the meanings is preferred or both are accepted, the Gods are pleased and they confer progress on the person who pronounces the mantras—svaaha or svadhaa.

Sadhaka: Confer progress on the adorer! What does that mean?

Swami: As a consequence of the praise conveyed through words bearing the impress of the Vedas, the person is blessed with various progressive qualities and opportunities to achieve excellence.

Sadhaka: I would like to know some examples where the mantra `svaaha' is used in the Vedas to convey its traditional meaning.

Swami: Kesavaaya svaaha; Praanaaya svaaha; Indraaya svaaha. These are some examples. Here, the meaning of the mantra is: Svaahutham Asthu, Suhurtham Asthu. May it be svaahutham. May it be suhurtham.

Sadhaka: What do those two words mean? Svaahutham and suhurtham.

Swami: They mean, "May the offering made be well burnt," that is to say, well digested.

Sadhaka: Swami I That raises a doubt in me. Whatever thing is dropped into fire gets burnt totally, even when no mantra is uttered by us. This is the general experience. So, what is the special process that takes place when svaaha is uttered?

Swami: 'Svaahutha' does not indicate the mere burning out or the total consumption of the offering placed in the fire. From the worldly point of view, only this much is observed. But, the Vedas (Sruti) concede that Fire has a divine form and function besides the commonly known material form and function. The Divine Forms (Gods) are beyond the reach of the senses. So, the Vedas recommend that the Gods be worshipped through rites and rituals. And, Agni or the Deity Fire, has in it the source and sustenance of the Gods. ("Agniravat deva yonih") Agni is the Divine Principle. He who offers oblations to the Gods through Agni becomes blessed with Divine qualities. Only those who are able to understand this fact can achieve that Principle.

The person who enjoys (Bhoktha) and the object that provides joy (Bhogya)—these two compose the Jagat (World). When these two become one, they mix and are then known as Aththa, that is to say, Bhoktha. This is the vyavahara, the natural conclusion. It does not stand to reason that the One be known as Bhogya. Well. Who is the Bhoktha? It is Agni, the Fire which accepts the oblation.

The very first Divine Entity is Aditya (the Sun). Its spiritual counterpart is the vital warmth in living beings, the Praanaagni. Agni has in it Aajya (ghee) and soma (the juice of the soma plant). The oblations placed in fire are named Aahithayah. The word means 'deposited; placed'. The Gods prefer to be beyond the range of sight. Therefore, the oblations are also referred to as Aahuthis.

Sadhaka: When Agni is within the range of sight, what is its name?

Swami: Then, it is named Agri. Agri means the first. It was created earliest. Hence the name. When it is beyond the range of sight (Paroksha), it is named Agni.

Sadhaka: What is the meaning of Aahuthi?

Swami: Oblations offered in the fire, lit and fed as prescribed. Besides, the word denotes that God is invited (aahvaana) to accept the oblations. This is the special meaning the word conveys. Vashatkaara (the explanatory formula) only complements the effect of svaaha mantra. The Gods receive only offerings for which they have been invited (Aahuthis).

Svaaha is a name applied to Saraswati, the Deity of the Word (Vaagdevi), the Deity of the Vedic Word. Since the Word expresses the Atma, the name is svaaha too. The Devi Bhagavatham declares that the Supreme Deity is both Gayatri and Svaaha. The Lalitha Sahasranama (the 1008

names of Lalitha, the Supreme Deity) declares svaaha and svadhaa as Her Names. Svaaha also means 'the close', 'the going under', 'the end'.

(To be continued)

Moses, Darwin and the Sai Revolution

On 10 August 1984, Dr. V. K Gokak Vice Chancellor of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, completed 75 years of blessed life. To commemorate Dr. Gokak's birthday, Bhagavan, as Chancellor of the Institute declared an Institute holiday and brought together the students and teachers from the three campuses to felicitate Dr. Gokak In a grand celebration, held in the Institute Auditorium at the Prasanthi Nilayam Campus. Bhagavan spoke most affectionately of Professor Gokak as an ideal example for students and teachers everywhere in the world, and appreciated his achievements in the field of literature and education. Then Bhagavan warmly blessed him with a long and happy life, filled with peace, health, prosperity and Ananda. Commenting on his deep devotion and faith, Bhagavan pronounced that Dr. Gokak would reach the Poorna Swaroopa, and that his life would thus become fulfilled. It was a touching moment for all of us, to witness such a sweet outpouring of Baba's Love.

Earlier in his address, Bhagavan mentioned Moses, the towering figure of the Old Testament of the Bible, as one who was always fully immersed in God-consciousness; and he also mentioned Darwin, the great scientist, as one who had devoted his life from his earliest years to a one-pointed pursuit, which eventually led to the great accomplishments he was able to achieve in his later years. Since Bhagavan had singled out Moses and Darwin as two great lights from the West, and brought them into the same talk in which he later praised Dr. Gokak so generously, we must think about these three ...Moses, Darwin and Gokak, and try to find the thread of connection that has linked them together in the divine mind.

Moses represents the very roots of Western religion. Darwin represents the central thrust of Western science that has changed the thinking of the 20th Century and that is providing the link to Eastern Philosophy. Gokak represents the amalgam of West and East, particularly in the area of education, that will lead the new generation into the spiritual Golden Age that, as Bhagavan has told us, is to come. What we are talking of here are really a series of revolutions, that have, and still are, transforming men's minds and hearts. Previously, for almost 2000 years the ancient Greek philosophical tradition held sway in the West. It held that man was the measure of all things and the very zenith of creation. This fitted in with the Judeo-Christian view, and so with the rise of the Medieval Church in Europe, it was man glorified in the form of the Saviour, the risen Christ, on whom the Universe centered. The possibility that the Earth, on which the great drama of the Creation and the historic saga leading to Christ had taken place, might not be the centre of the world, was totally unthinkable. After all, weren't the Sun and the Moon, and all the stars and planets, seen to rotate daily about the Earth on their passage through the heavens? But then came the first of five revolutions that rocked man's view of himself in relation to the Universe; even now the full implications of these are still revealing themselves.

Copernicus-Newton-Darwin

1. The first major revolution was the *Copernican Revolution*. Copernicus was a Polish physician, mathematician and clergyman who was one of the small band of innovative souls who ushered in the Renaissance in Europe. What was the Copernican Revolution? It was this—that we are just insignificant little specks on this great globe which is the Earth; but that this Earth is just one of the minor planets orbiting the Sun; and that the Sun is just one of a huge number of stars circling within this Galaxy; and that this Galaxy is just one of an incredibly vast number of island worlds making up this infinite Universe. So, in the physical dimension, we are just a negligibly small and vanishingly insignificant part of this unlimited Universe. This kind of physical view can be associated with the Cosmic *Annamaya Kosa*, the gross, physical aspect of the Universe.

2. The second major revolution was the *Newtonian Revolution*. Here we are speaking not just of Newton and his work, but of the revolution in ideas that was the *Zeitgeist*, the new spirit of that day, which actualized a revolutionary change of thinking from that time onwards. And what was that change? It was this—that what happens *out there* in the macrocosm also happens *here* in the microcosm, in exactly the same way. The same gravitational law that holds together this Solar System and all the Galaxies, and is slowing down the whole Cosmic Expansion, is also active here on Earth dropping the apple into our laps from a tree overhead, or accounting for the weight of those apples in a balance scale, when we go to buy them in the market. Nature's laws are universal. They tie together the largest and the smallest into a unified web of connections and relationships. We may be infinitesimally small compared with our vastly greater brothers in the Universe, but we all use the same natural laws and follow the same processes. Associated with all matter, whether big or small, is the subtler property of *energy*, shifting from its potential into its kinetic form and then back into its potential, and thus providing the basis for the continuous flux of change that is characteristic of all forms of matter. Old forms degenerate and disappear, and new forms emerge to take their place in an ongoing river of change. This revolutionary insight into the workings of Nature can be associated with the Cosmic *Pranamaya Kosa*, the subtler, energetic aspect of the Universe. This is a step upwards in man's consciousness from the previous stage of awareness, where he was just an unrelated, physically insignificant speck lost in the vast ocean of time and space.

3. The next major revolution, which characterizes all of these revolutionary steps in Science, and which takes us another 150 years further along in the progressive development of Western thought, is the *Darwinian Revolution*. Its principal theme is this—that there is a hierarchy of order in the Universe. Within the great river of change, which moves every form towards dissolution and chaos, there is a finer stream that moves on a much longer time-scale, slowly wending its way upriver. It has the effect of changing the templates, or the blueprints, we might say, out of which like forms have been created throughout the Universe. It changes the simple, the limited, the potential into the great variegated spectrum of possibilities in which forms have expressed themselves in the world, including the vast range of complexity that takes us from simple Hydrogen to Uranium, from cosmic dust clouds to moons and planets and giant stars and whole Galaxies, from rocks to seas and trees and mountains, and from simple bacteria all the way to the miraculous manifestation of the infinitely complex and unlimited human being. This process has the effect of tying the whole Universe together into what might be considered as one vast, growing, changing, developing organism. This understanding of the dynamic makeup of the

Universe, leading upwards step-by-step, in an orderly progression from primeval matter to Man who is the crowning achievement of the evolutionary process, provides a much subtler and higher level of awareness than that given by the universal laws of Physics; for it provides not only a set of common rules and a *modus operandi*, but it also provides a characteristic niche, a purposeful role for every individual entity in the Cosmos, from the least to the greatest. Underneath the surface everything is alike; everything is made up of the same stuff and follows the same laws. But in manifestation everything has its own individual uniqueness, its own role to play and its own destiny to fulfil. The inescapable philosophical conclusion and implication of this, is that in everything in the Universe, there is not only matter and energy, but also consciousness and purpose. Everything is alive, as it were, and the demarcation between physics, chemistry, biology, astronomy and even psychology gets increasingly fuzzy. This realization is a true revolution in thought that has not yet fully matured in the established scientific thinking, but it is slowly filtering into the awareness of the new generation. We can associate this level of understanding with the Cosmic *Manomaya Kosa*, the still more subtle mind aspect of the Universe.

The Einsteinian Revolution

4. There is still another scientific revolution that has made its appearance in this Century, and that is every bit as radical as the previous revolutions in changing man's outlook and inlook. We can call it the *Einsteinian Revolution*. Although it is still very much limited to theoretical Physics, it has, nevertheless, a wide-ranging philosophical implication in how man views himself in relation to Nature. We can speak of it this way—that all this which we perceive with our senses and analyze and codify into relationships and laws, has to do with a relative world ...a kind of phantom play of names and forms, all of which are flowing along in a stream of space time. Our world-bound view, looking outwards towards this relative world, must also necessarily be limited and relative. Everything is caught up in the great flow. In this relative world there are no absolutes. Time and change governs everything. There cannot even be agreement about isolated events seen by different observers. There are no objects that can be considered independent of the observing subjects. And there is an irreducible uncertainty which precludes the possibility of our ever knowing all the fundamental properties of the various phenomena that we experience and investigate. This uncertainty is built into the very fabric of the Universe; nothing can be considered as absolutely certain. The whole cannot be ultimately reduced to a set of basic building blocks. On a cosmic time scale, matter can lose form and become pure energy, and then can remanifest itself into new form. Nothing is substantial ...all is a dance. But yet, in our intuitive vision, an underlying Consciousness reveals itself here and there in surprising ways, and promises to be the unchanging Absolute, the Unity that we have been seeking, which pervades the whole of this manifested uncertainty. We can associate this level of awareness with the Cosmic *Vijnanamaya Kosa*, an even more subtle and higher mental aspect of the Universe. Here the Spirit is beginning to reveal itself, as Consciousness, to the clarified intelligence of modern man. This is the last of the scientific revolutions associated with the West, as seen here through the mystical framework of the East. All four of these phases can be linked most prominently with the name of Darwin, whose insights have had the effect of bringing Western thinking into a converging path of agreement with the ancient revelations of the Vedic Seers of India. Now, through Vedanta, Western Science can complete itself, and also fulfil itself.

5. This brings us to the next step, which is still only in its seed form; that is the *Sathya Sai Spiritual Revolution*, which involves a massive re-education of mankind along spiritual lines of understanding. This revolution in education is associated with Bhagavan Baba and the Sri Sathya Sai System of Higher Education, as well as the System of Education in Human Values, for both of which, Dr. Gokak has been the principal exponent. What is this new philosophy of higher education? Its basic premise is that pure Spirit, pure Consciousness, eternal Peace and Delight, in other words, the One Reality known in Sanskrit as Sat-Chit-Ananda or Brahma, is the unchanging truth of this Universe, and underlies all the changing forms and phenomena that we experience through our mind and sense.

(To be concluded)

— *Al Drucker*

If man makes but the slightest effort towards surrender, the Lord Himself will confer the courage to pursue it to the end. He will walk with him and help him as a friend; He will lead him as a Guide; He will guard him from evil and temptation. He will be his staff and support

— **Baba**

Sai Family News

Bal Vikas in Europe

The serene and picturesque township of Bogense, on the Island of Fyn in Denmark was the venue for a four day Bal Vikas Teachers Training Symposium-cum Workshop from June 9th to 12th, 1984. Over 100 adults and 25 children from various countries of Europe Group I (Denmark, Holland, Sweden, Belgium and Finland) participated in the camp.

As a result of the training imparted in the camp over 50 people volunteered to take up the responsibility of becoming Bal Vikas teachers in their respective countries. The enthusiasm and commitment of participants was most encouraging and it was evident that in years to come Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas and Education in Human Values programmes would get firmly planted in these countries and would thus become vital instruments of much needed transformation.

The participants experienced the inspiring presence of Bhagavan throughout the Symposium. An interesting incident further confirmed this presence. Bhagavan had sent some Vibhuti Prasadam for the Seminar and the participants felt that the quantity sent by Bhagavan would be far too inadequate. The organisers advised devotees on the first day to take very small quantities of Vibhuti so that all get it. It was only after distribution that it was found that instead of diminishing the Vibhuti had increased in volume. Thereafter copious quantities were distributed for each of the remaining days and at the end also the quantity left was more than what had originally been brought.

The talks, interaction sessions and demonstrations covered a wide range of subjects relating to the curriculum of Bal Vikas and Education in Human Values programmes. While the Symposium decided to retain the framework of the syllabus as laid out in India, it was decided to supplement it with locally available teaching aids and other instructional material available in those countries.

The objectives of Symposium-cum Workshop were (a) to train new Bal Vikas teachers and to acquaint old Bal Vikas teachers with new teaching techniques, (b) to formulate a strategy to expand the coverage of the Bal Vikas programme, (c) to get ready for the launching of EHV programme in 1985. All these objectives were fully accomplished. The theme of the Symposium was 'Peace through Cooperation' and it emerged beautifully out of the talks and discussions.

All participants were firmly convinced that the educational programmes of the Sai organisation are the only solution to the crisis confronting contemporary education.

The new Bal Vikas teachers vowed to dedicate themselves to this programme and derive peace and bliss through its systematic implementation. The Symposium laid out the targets and time schedules so that most effective results could be achieved by the sixtieth birthday of Bhagavan.

—S. K. C.

ROME: Italian Children's Camp

The first children's camp in the Education in Human Values Programme was held at Talamello from 7th July to 22nd July 1984. This gathering of children coming from all over Italy was a unique experience. The camp, organised by *Amil Core Modlot* and the Sai Centre of Rome, gave to the 48 children attending the Camp and to the 15 teachers and Sai Sevaks an opportunity to live, to learn and to practise the teachings of Bhagavan Baba in a beautiful surrounding.

A large house in the medieval village of Talamello on the top of a hill was rented for the occasion. The children, ranging in age from 6 to 13, were brought by their parents on July 7. The local priest and the nuns got interested in the Group, when they attended the local church every morning. The children had an unexpected opportunity to go to the rescue of an elderly man who had almost driven his car over a cliff.

Entertainment programmes had been arranged for the children, which included a puppet show and music and guitar by three Franciscan friars. The Bal Vikas children and local children played many games together and the adults of the village got interested in the Sai programme. One day a report came that a serious epidemic had broken out in a nearby village and that it had claimed three lives in 24 hours. While precautionary steps were taken, the Camp continued with full faith in Bhagavan Baba.

On the final day, the students and Gurus were thrilled when they were visited by the local policemen followed by 15 kids and their parents all bearing gifts of pastries and soft drinks. The camp concluded with the staging of a play on the "Unity of Religions" by the participating children. The experiment of the Bal Vikas Camp, where Bhagavan's photos were displayed in a small village with a strong Catholic tradition, was an inspiring success.

Training of gurus: (A.P.)

A State-level training camp for Bal Vikas Gurus was conducted on the 7th and 8th July at Kovvur with the cooperation of the local Seva Samithi. 70 Gurus from Srikakulam, Vizianagram, Vizagpatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna, Guntur, Nellore and Chittoor districts attended the Camp. Most of the trainees were new to the Bal Vikas Movement but were enthusiastic young educated women, who took a keen interest in the training. Smt. K. Maniamma and Smt. N. Rani addressed the participants on the role of the Bal Vikas Course in the moral training of the young and called for dedicated effort on the part of the Gurus. Experienced Bal Vikas Gurus gave lectures and demonstrations.

Dharamshala (H. P.)

A free veterinary camp was organised by the local Sai Seva Samithi at its adopted village of Darnoo (Kangra District) in June. 83 animals were examined. The camp was the first of its kind organised in Kangra District.

Ranchi (Bihar): Bal Vikas Training Camp:

A four day Regional Bal Vikas Training and Refresher Camp for the three states of U. P., Bihar and M. P. was held here in June. 50 Gurus participated. Mr. Raj Jain, Chairman, Heavy Engineering Corporation, Ranchi, inaugurated the camp at the campus of the National Institute of Foundry and Forge Training.

Giridih (Bihar): As in previous years 700 Sai Sevalal volunteers rendered a variety of services to lakhs of pilgrims, who carry the Holy Ganges water from Sultanganj to Deogarh during July to August (Sraavan month) for offering at Baidyanath Dham, which is one of the twelve Jyotirlinga Shrines. Services provided included provision of hot water, drinking water, tea, massage, first-aid services, maintenance of sanitation and other help required by the pilgrims.

Gauhati (Assam): A four-day training course in Modern English Grammar and usage, spoken English, methods of Education in Human Values and Bal Vikas was organised by the Sathya Sai Sishu Niketan from 15th to 18th July at the Sai Seva Sadhana Nilayam at Jorpukehuri.

Kozhikode (Kerala): At a Free Eye Camp conducted in Shoranur in Palghat 1323 persons were examined, of whom 63 were operated for cataract.

A Study Circle Sadhana Camp was organised in Idukki District.

Bal Vikas Gurus' Refresher Courses were conducted during July in four Districts Quilon, Trichur, Calicut and Cannanore.

On 22nd July, which was observed as "Handicapped Day" Seva dal members conducted a detailed survey of handicapped persons at camps held in various districts. Besides supplying clothes and stationery to handicapped children, special appliances were distributed to handicapped persons.

Eluru (West Godavari District): A ear-nose-throat medical camp was conducted in the village Vijayana near Eluru mainly for school going students. 380 students were examined and appropriate treatment was given to those needing medical attention.

Tadepalligudem (A.P.): A dental camp was conducted on 29th July at Tadepalligudem. 350 patients were examined and 75 extractions were done.

The most chronic disease of man is Ajnana, ignorance of the undying Atma within him. One must know the reason why he caught this aphasia and try to get cured. The general cause of this illness is infatuation for the objective world and subservience to the senses. There is even a deeper cause: the undue prominence given to the body, imagining it to be the touchstone of value. The body is like a temporary shelter where you reside for a short while on your journey. The 'gamyam' is 'kaivalyam', —the goal is liberation. Liberation gives the highest bliss.

—Baba

Birds, beasts and trees have not deviated from their Nature; they are still holding it valid. Man alone has disfigured it, in his crude attempt to improve upon it. So, the Avatar has to come as man among men, and moves as friend, well-wisher, kinsman, guide, teacher, healer and participant among men. He has come to restore Dharma, and so when man follows Dharma, He is pleased and content. Act so that your career as a man is not degraded, desecrated. With hands on chest, assert, 'I am man; I am human; I am saturated with shining humanity, humanness? God does not draw you near or keep you far; you near Him or keep away from Him. God has no likes or dislikes. You live according to the highest demands of your nature and you are near Him.

—Baba

The Divine Name

What Baba says about removing illusion from mind and heart may cause surprise, because it sounds so simple and yet is said to be totally effective. When Sri Sathya Sai, at 14 years of age, told family members that his life in the family was ended and that he would now fully engage himself in the work for which he had come, in his first discourse he declared, "O ye seekers! Worship the feet of the Guru with all your mind; you can thus cross the ocean of grief and joy, and birth and death." The meaning is that if we adopt the practice of repeating with love that name of God which is most dear to us, and simultaneously visualize with love the particular form bearing that divine name, this practice alone is sufficient to clear our mind and heart of impurities, and thereby we will fully realize the truth of ourself.

This practice of the divine name gives joy at the start, joy continues with the practice and the culmination is Liberation, God-Realization. The practice is simple, needs no explanation and Baba tells us that its effect is sure. However, our minds are accustomed to explanations and some

explanation is given. The significance of the divine name, which is a spiritual practice, is that we thereby keep ourselves in the divine presence of the Lord, and in His immediate presence nothing which is evil can survive. Tendencies which spring up from delusion and desire have their growth and sustenance in ignorance and cannot survive and grow in the pure light of Divinity. Bad tendencies are likened to a ferocious all-consuming fire which dies down without struggle when fuel is no longer fed to it.

In order for the practice of the repetition of the divine name to have its effect, It must be started and then continued. To illustrate the need to start and to continue, Baba tells the following story. At dusk, a traveller came to a large forest which he needed to cross through without delay. With him he had only a small lantern whose light did not extend beyond a 3-foot radius. Yet the forest was dense, dark and threatening with unknown dangers. Intimidated, the traveller sat down at the base of a tree and began to weep. Soon, a party of travellers came from the depth of the forest and, seeing the man weeping, stopped and asked about his trouble. After hearing him, they said, "But Sir, a lantern which throws light even two feet ahead is sufficient to pass through this dark forest. But you must rise, carry your light, and walk forward." The forest is the dark, unknown course of our life, and the lantern is the little, small name of God. But y to sing that little name and walking forward with it, we will safely pass through the forest of life.

Baba tells us that name and form are not separate, that when God is given form, the form is accompanied by His name. And, conversely, where His name is said, the name is accompanied by His form. Name and form together are manifest God in the full light, glory and power of Divinity. Thus, when His name is repeated with love, God, who is love, responds. He is called and He comes to us, happy and loving, and willing to walk with us and be our divine companion. In addition to the repetition of His name, by also visualizing the accompanying form, which we love, we give added scope for an outpouring of devotion to our supreme Lord.

God is pure light. He has been held to be so throughout the ages. We, living our day in that pure divine light, will not be able to bold on to our bad tendencies even if we wanted to do so. Bad tendencies are as flowers which grow in the darkness, and they cannot survive in the pure light of the Lord; they will wither and disappear. Our good tendencies give us no trouble, for in the presence of the Lord they will not develop into a big ego.

Along with our tendencies, the ego, which is constructed of our tendencies, will also finally humble itself at the feet of the Lord. The heart, then totally purified, is fit to realize its truth, its inherent unity with God. Extraordinary it will seem to our complicated minds that such a simple practice will purify our life and make heart and mind fit for enlightenment, make us fit for release from the entangling web of the opposites, of likes and dislikes and make us fit to be fully the eternal undifferentiated Divinity. Baba declares this to be the power inherent in the spiritual practice of the divine name.

Repetition of the divine name with visualization of the divine form was known in the early days of the Christian era. Baba has said that Jesus advised his devotees to adopt the practice. Some years after the death of Jesus, Christian mystics were told by their preceptors, "Collect your mind, constrain it to enter the heart with the breath and keep it there, but do not leave it idle, instead give it to the prayer, 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me.'" Thereafter,

the mystic, whether in the monastery or wandering throughout the land, would constantly visualize the form of Jesus and repeat the name, suffusing it with his love for Jesus.

For some of us, the practice may seem a bit dry at first. But that is inevitable if the heart itself is a bit dry. Pay no attention to this. Continue the practice and very soon love will accompany the sacred name.

There may be a doubt, "How can I be repeating the name and visualizing the form when I am engaged in some task? It would be inattention to my work, and that would not be good." To explain this point, Baba tells the following story. A certain king had a heavy burden of state and was unable to find a competent minister. He turned to God in prayer. God appeared and asked, "What do you want?" The King explained that he was in dire need of a good servant, for his kingdom was getting out of hand. God then granted the King's wish, but warned him, "The servant will be efficient, but if you fail to keep him busy, he will turn upon you and destroy you." The King gave no weight to this, for the tasks facing the servant were formidable and almost without count. However, the servant had boundless energy and intelligence, and one day the King realized with a shock that the work was almost completed. He then remembered God's warning, and in panic again turned to God in prayer. God appeared and said, "Well, what is it you want now?" The King explained, and God in His mercy advised him, "I will save you. Do this: Instruct the servant to build a wall twenty feet high. Then, when he has no task to accomplish, have him climb up and down that wall until you have another task for him."

The servant is the mind. The wall is the name of God. When the mind is idle, put it to work repeating the sacred name of God, for if left idle the mind will surely destroy us. When we must do work we address Baba and say, "Lord, I dedicate this work to you." Then, we go ahead giving full attention to the work. Baba assures us that work in his name is tantamount to repeating the name. When the work is done, then return the mind at once to the repetition of the sacred name.

A question may arise ...which name and form of God to use? Since God is held to be one and indivisible in truth, although diverse in name and form in the minds of people, He is fully manifest in any name and form which we attribute to Him. Thus, Baba's suggestion is, "Take the name and form of God which is most, dear to you." If presently, the devotee does not cherish any of the historical name and forms of God, the name and form of Baba may be chosen. In such case, the name as used may be "Om Sai Ram" or "Om Sri Sai Ram". In the case of any name chosen, Baba suggests that the form to accompany that name be deliberately created, that the name of Jesus, for instance, is best accompanied by the mind making its own form of Jesus, rather than picturing a form taken from a painting of Jesus or a statue. Baba tells us that when the mind creates God's form, then the mind becomes that form and God will fill that form of Himself with His Divinity.

Baba informs us that this age, which is named Kali Yuga, is considered to be low and gross, but that in fact it is the best of all ages for the devotee of God. We have Baba's statement that in this Kali Yuga any person who gathers his or her energy and will into a one-pointed attention to the divine name and form will thereby penetrate the veiling of the Divine and will gain release, the realization of his or her ultimate truth

—J. S. HISLOP

The brotherhood of man can be translated into life only on the basis of the Atmic Vision. All men thirst for peace, happiness and bliss. They are the precious heritage which is their right, for, they are God's Treasure. They can be earned only by recognising the bond that knits man to man. All men are of one lineage; they are of Divine Lineage.

—Baba

JANMASHTAMI SANDESH:

The Journey to God: Four Stages

It is not easy for the mind of man immersed in worldly concerns to turn to God. Meditation, repetition of the names of the Lord, bhajans, reading of scriptures and other such activities are designed to purify the mind so that it can concentrate on God. As a field has to be properly ploughed and prepared for sowing so as to reap a good harvest, the field of our heart has to be rendered pure and sacred through good and holy actions and sadhana if it is to yield the fruit of Divine Wisdom.

There are four stages in the spiritual journey to God. In the first stage, one half of the time of the mind may be devoted to the pursuit of the three Purusharthas—Dharma, Artha and Kama—for earning one's livelihood and carrying on one's worldly duties to family and kith and kin. One quarter should be used for the study of Shastras and scriptures and the remaining fourth for contemplation on God. Gradually you proceed to the second stage (the intermediate stage) when only one-fourth of the time is devoted to worldly affairs, half the time is used for study of scriptures and the remaining fourth for meditation on God. At the next higher stage, half the mind's time should be devoted to scriptural studies and the other half to meditation. In the fourth stage—that of the Mumukshu, the seeker of Liberation—the entire time of the mind should be devoted to God realisation. This is the stage described in the Gita as "Satatham Yoginah" (always immersed in union with God). If you pursue your spiritual sadhana, while regulating your daily life in the manner, discharging your daily duties, you are bound to become the recipient of God's grace.

In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna has declared that He and the Gita are one. When you reverentially study the Gita at home, you must regard the Gita as Krishna Himself installed in your shrine. Where Krishna and Gita reside, it is not a mere home but a temple. It has been declared that for those who have installed the Gita, the Ganga, the Gayatri and Govinda in their hearts, Moksha (Liberation) is certain.

If the body is regarded as a home, there are in it a master (the husband) and a wife. The master is a pure, unsullied, unwavering person. The wife is fickle and full of impurities. It is difficult for the two to get on harmoniously. Either of them must give way to the other. It is obviously not desirable for the pure and untainted husband to give in to the ways of the vacillating and impure wife. If the wife comes under the sway of the husband and follows his dictates, the home will be

filled with peace and joy. In the body, the master of the house is the Atma, which is ever pure and steady. The mind which is ever wavering and unsteady, is the wife. It is when the mind is transformed and brought under the control of the Atma that the body experiences Ananda (bliss). The means by which the mind is transformed is Bhakti. The mind must be progressively turned towards God until it merges in God.

Bhagavan related at length the story of Uddhava's visit to Brindavan with a message from Krishna and his discovery that the Gopis were so completely immersed in the contemplation of Krishna that they have no use for any other message or teaching.

Bhagavan related other episodes from the Mahabharata to illustrate the Avatara mission of Krishna to punish the wicked, to protect the righteous and establish Dharma.

—*The Mandir, Prasanthi Nilayam, 19-8-84*

You may have cows of different breeds and brands, colours and continents, but the milk they give is everywhere the same in composition I You may get gold from different places and engage different goldsmiths to make for you different types of ornaments but the basic substance does not undergo any diminution in value. It remains gold for all time. Living beings belong to widely different species but the Spark of Life, the Jiva in each is the same. God is the goal of every prayer, in whatever language or dialect it is spoken. You may see people kneeling or prostrating, with folded palms or arms extended, in church or mosque or temple but they are all asking for help, succour, strength, wisdom, security or happiness from the inexhaustible reservoir of happiness, wisdom and power, God. But, people in their pettiness, do not recognise this basic truth, they pride themselves on their holiness and disparage the others, as having gone astray I They do not have mental peace themselves, nor do they allow others to live in peace. Such is the stupidity of the fanatics.

—Baba

The Lord's Response

In November 1970, I had just finished reading *The Autobiography of a Yogi* by Paramahansa Yogananda in which he refers frequently to the long-lived Himalayan master Babaji. This Babaji seemed the highest being I could conceive of, a Godly being who was Incarnate, shrouded in mystery, but effecting contact with some chosen few. I resolved to ask this Babaji to aid me, i.e., to hear my prayers, guide me, and perhaps to be my living teacher. In that spirit I prayed intently, with a faith prompted by the need to know. As I lay in bed on the night of November 10, 1970, silently petitioning Babaji, I was suddenly arrested by a palpable thump against the middle of my forehead. I felt as though a finger had tapped me, and this was so sharp as to be plainly real. Immediately there opened in my inner vision an ovoid-shaped picture. This picture was vivid and full of light, portraying a figure with brilliant emanations of white around the head and body (shown at half-figure); but the light was so bright that the figure itself appeared dark and I could not make out any distinguishing features, except that it seemed Hindu, and one arm was at the

side of the body while the right arm was held across the body. In my eagerness to see better, I opened my physical eyes and the picture began to fade. I was left with feelings of great peace, calm and benediction and was confident that an unseen but living being was guiding my life. At once I went to my desk to write down the experience and to sketch the figure as it had appeared in my inner vision. The first piece of paper to hand was some orange coloured stationery, and the significance of this small detail was unknown to me, until years later.

It was in fact seven years, one month and twenty-five days later that I was leaving the private interview room in Brindavan wearing the ring Swami had placed on my hand. I was in an uplifted state, basking in the marvellous love Swami had shown as He spoke to me privately and had told me that I had poor meditation, poor health and a restless, worrying mind; but He had brushed these things aside with a wave of His hand and said sweetly, "Don't worry, I will help you." Pointing to my ring, He said, "Anytime you are in difficulty, or worrying, call on Me. Sai Baba will be there."

Only when I was seated in the taxi for the return to Bangalore did I have an opportunity to really see the figure on the ring, for now my eyes were free of tears. I held up my hand, and in that moment the taxi rounded a corner, putting the sun behind me. The bright sun illumined the little silver etchings which surrounded the figure of Shirdi Sai Baba, and I recognized at once the figure from my inner vision: bands of white light emanating from the figure, with the right arm across His body, sitting in the characteristic Shirdi pose. It had been the beloved Shirdi Sai who responded to my urgent prayers in 1970. Shirdi Sai had come to make the connection and to guide me to His present Incarnation.

Though many doubters have hinted that our Sai Baba may be one with Siddhi powers to produce objects, It is my personal experience that only God knew what was in the vision that had appeared to me in 1970; only God knew what my soul had asked, and only God responded—first as Shirdi Sai Baba answering my prayer long before I had ever heard of Him, and again as Sathya Sai Baba who gave me the ring to let me know He is always with me, both in my inner and outer life. Shirdi Sai came in reply to my prayer in 1970, and to January, 1978, Sathya Sai Baba gave me His ring in answer to my question whether I had found my true master. "No more tears," He said, "Your Sai Baba is here." May His glory reach into the hearts and minds of all who approach Him, or read and hear of Him, so that our sorrows are ended and our lives, surrendered to His grace, progress towards the oneness of His joy and bliss.

—*Freda Quenneville, Canada*

(On seeing Baba giving Gurupoornima Discourse: 13-7-1984)

Lord of emerald realms,
Grant us this day the vision
of heart's infinite spaces
Where your green brilliance sweeps all,
Ocean-like, wave upon wave.

Heart's Delight, lead me
From lanes of love's many-splendoured lights
Blue, yellow, fire-red—
To where You stand, Beautiful,
Dusk-robed, Hand outstretched

To welcome the home-coming wave—
Light upon Light—

And whisper, yet once more
The ancient vow
In love's tender note
"If you remember me, I remember you;
A sigh for sigh, a thought for thought,
Forget you may
I never give up
for you are ALL MINE."

—*Mrs. Zeba Bashiruddin.*

Al Rasheedu: One of the ninety nine attributes of God in Islam.

In Iranian Sufism of twelfth century lights had many meanings. Green light stands for Divine Unity, in a mystic's life of the heart and Indicates the highest stage. It is also the colour of the last chakra in Sufi Yoga.

"Heart's Delight" —a name of God in Rabia Basri's mystical poems.

In Iranian Sufism photism lights correspond to the progress of the mystic towards merging with God. Thus *white* light is sign of belief (Islam), *yellow*, truthfulness of faith, *blue*, benevolence, *azure blue*, firm assurance, *red*, mystical Gnosis.

human soul that finally merge and *are ONE* also indicated in the often quoted Quranic line: "We have come from HIM and unto HIM is the final returning." Light upon Light refers to the state of merging in God.

We Are One

I saw myself as you walked by.
The Essence of Beauty called my name;
For my name is The Beauty that I see in you;
For we are One in Love.

What seems our love,
the me in you,
and the you in me,
knows me not, for I am not
until I see My Self in You.
The God we seek is in ourselves.

For God Is Love, and Love knows
Its own reflection in all
as Truth and Beauty.

—Dorothy Paul

S.S.I.H.L. CAMPUS NEWS:

American Response to Baba's message

Addressing the students and staff of the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning on August 23, Mr. William Harvey, American journalist and Sai devotee, said: "The whole world is slowly but surely coming to know Swami and of the marvellous work He is doing and directing. How desperate are the cries of devotees in other parts of the world for Baba to visit just for a few days. Yet, He lovingly resists and continues on His plan, His own time-table."

Mr. Harvey said: "Living in the United States, it is easy to see what happens when man allows himself to forget God, to forget his true self, to forget his mission in life. As a nation the U. S. has made tremendous progress in science and technology—Space travel, mass transit systems, automobiles, television, personal computers. However, social progress has not kept pace with technology. The result is that in spite of our improved 'standard of living' we now have more poverty, mental illness, drug and alcohol addiction, social diseases, suicides, child abuse and crime. The Misery Index continues to rise!

"Much of the work Baba is prompting me to do is related to seeking ways of remedying these problems. And whereas I feel kinship and brotherhood with all my countrymen, I take a special interest in problems facing Black and other minority communities that have not enjoyed full participation in the rights and benefits of the society. Minority communities are over-represented in the negative social statistics, like crime, addiction and poverty indicators. Fortunately, Bhagavan is giving my work much guidance and assistance. For example, the St. Louis Public School system is racked with problems of violence, drugs, truancy and the like. Over the past year the leadership requested that I help develop a Community Task Force to make recommendations on ways of bringing improvement to this situation. To my surprise suggestions about implementing a Human Values programme taken directly from Baba's teachings were enthusiastically accepted; and I am being given wide latitude in implementing these precepts with teachers and students. The Workshops we have developed are being conducted in other communities across the country, and multicultural teams of trainers have been formed.

"There are many other examples of our putting Baba's teachings into action. Not only do we find American devotees actually reaching out to do service in the community with increased confidence and skill, there is, in addition, a tremendous amount of favourable response and receptivity bursting forth from unexpected sources in the community at large. Swami is obviously prompting persons of good will, regardless of race or religious persuasion, to boldly step out and join forces with others in activities for the betterment of all."

GITOPADESH: I

Asuya and Dwesha: The Deadly Vices

"Sarvathra Sarvaani Bhoothani Dehi". The Dehi is the indweller in all human beings. The body is transient. The Dehi is eternal and real. The Dehi is known as such not because it is in a body. The entire Cosmos is the body of the Divine and therefore the term Dehi applies to this Cosmic Consciousness. To realise the nature of this all-pervading Atma, which is the unchanging reality, it is not enough to seek authority from the Shastras alone. The Atma is not realised through Shastras. The realisation of the Self has to be obtained on the basis of the authority of the Shastras, but through one's own earnest Sadhana. The Vedas, Upanishads, Shastras and Puranas-all serve as sign-posts. They indicate the direction one should take. They show the goal that should be sought, but the journey has to be made by ourselves.

The teachings of the Gita begin in the second canto with the words of the Lord "Asochyaan Anvasochasthvam" (You grieve about things for which you should not grieve). Starting with this statement, the Gita gradually reveals the means by which sorrow can be eliminated. The Lord tells Arjuna: "You are having grief about things over which one should not grieve."

first three qualities—Asti, Bhaati and Priyam—are also called 'Sat, Chit and Anandam'. These three attributes are eternal and therefore Divine. For them, there is neither birth nor death. But form and name are artificial creations. Because they are artificial products, they are liable to change. They are like relations in a family. They come and go and are not permanent members of the home. Likewise, joy and sorrow are also family relations, who come and go. To imagine that these passing relationships are eternal realities, and to develop permanent attachments to them, is wrong. These relationships are liable to change and to disappear. To feel grief over loss of such relations is not proper.

How is one to recognise the transience and falseness of these relationships? Bhagavan has indicated in the Bhakti Yoga of the Gita that the man who has cultivated the 26 good qualities mentioned therein is the devotee who is dear to Him. It is not necessary to cultivate all these 26 qualities. As one stick in a match box is enough for lighting a lamp, even one of the qualities mentioned by the Lord is enough to develop one's spiritual awareness. If some of the important good qualities mentioned in the Gita are made the basis for our spiritual endeavour, a great transformation will take place in our lives.

Two pests

The cultivation of good qualities implies getting rid of all bad qualities. Among the latter, two are particularly undesirable. They are asuya (Jealousy) and Dwesha (Hatred). These two bad qualities are like two conspirators, one aids and abets the other in every action. Asuya is like the pest which attacks the root of a tree. Dwesha is like the pest which attacks the branches, leaves and flowers. When the two combine, the tree, which may look beautiful and flourishing, is utterly destroyed.

Similarly, Asuya (Jealousy) attacks a person from inside and is not visible. Dwesha (Hatred) exhibits itself in open forms. There is hardly anyone who is free from the vice of jealousy. Jealousy may arise even over very trivial matters, and out of jealousy hatred arises. To get rid of hatred one must constantly practise love. Where there is love, there will be no room for jealousy and hatred and where there is no jealousy and hatred, there is real joy (Ananda). This joy reveals itself in Beauty. It has been well said, "A thing of beauty is a joy forever." If you see beauty in any thing, you will derive joy from it. But what is the beauty that one should seek which will be the source of permanent joy? Only God is the embodiment of Beauty that is the source of everlasting joy.

Arjuna's conceit

The devotee's primary duty is to seek the nectar of bliss to be got from the contemplation of the beauty of God. The means of experiencing such joy is to cultivate good qualities and get rid of bad traits. Although Arjuna was listening to Krishna's message, he did not fully digest the implications of the message. For instance, during the great Kurukshetra war, one day there was a fierce battle between Bhishma on the one side and Arjuna on the other. Bhishma had fallen in the battle. Despite his devotion to Krishna, Arjuna was feeling that he had been responsible for the victory over Bhishma. As the sun went down, both Krishna and Arjuna returned in the chariot to

conceit, he was regarding himself as the master of the chariot and Krishna as only the charioteer and according to the customary practice, the charioteer should first get down and only then the master could get down. Although Arjuna repeatedly asked Krishna to get down first, Krishna told Arjuna that he should get down first. Ultimately, to avoid an unpleasant tiff with Krishna, because he would need Krishna's help for the next day's battle, Arjuna got down from the chariot. Krishna asked him to get into the house immediately and after Arjuna had gone in, Krishna jumped out of the chariot. Immediately the entire chariot went up in flames. Seeing this, Yudhishtira and Arjuna asked Krishna the reason for such an extraordinary event. Krishna replied; "None can understand the nature of Divinity or the sports of the Divine. The Divine has no self-interest. God has pledged Himself to protect His devotees and uphold them. In today's battle all the deadly arrows which Bhishma had aimed at you were all kept pressed under my feet and because of this, these arrows did not cause any harm to you. If I had got out of the chariot first, these deadly arrows would have reduced you to ashes. Being unaware of this truth, you wanted me to get down first from the chariot." On hearing these words from Krishna, Arjuna gave up his conceit.

Many forms of jealousy

Jealousy expresses itself even in the form of finding faults in the Divine. It manifests itself in many forms. If one has earned a better name than another, jealousy develops towards him. Some people are even jealous of those who are more handsome than themselves. Students even envy others who secure more marks in the examination. The jealous person cannot bear to see anyone who is better placed, more handsome or prosperous than himself. This is a sign of human weakness. Once jealousy takes root in a man's mind, it, in due course, destroys all his other achievements. It promotes demoniac qualities. It dehumanises the man. It reduces him to the condition of an animal. Because of its egregious evil tendency, jealousy should be rooted out from the very beginning. You must learn to enjoy another's prosperity and happiness. This is a great virtue. It is one of the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita. In the ninth canto of the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna tells Arjuna, "Oh Arjuna, be free from the evil of jealousy. Become an Anasuyaka (one who has no jealousy)."

A person free from jealousy can convert Divinity itself into little babes. This is illustrated by the story of Anasuya. When Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara came to her to test her chastity and purity, the three Divinities were turned into infants by the power of Anasuya's purity. By freeing oneself from jealousy, one can even conquer the qualities of Satwa, Rajas and Thamas. Jealousy not only does harm to others but is also self-destructive. For the man filled with jealousy, there is no sleep and he cannot even eat heartily. It is like a consumptive disease which weakens a person from inside. It is a wasting disease which is widespread in this Kali age. It is because of jealousy that man is a prey to peacelessness (Ashanti).

What Buddha Taught

Once Buddha set out to seek alms. He was approaching a village where there were a number of devotees of Buddha. At that time, some wicked persons confronted him on the way and abused Buddha in various ways. Buddha sat on a rock nearby without proceeding with his journey. He

Without giving the reasons, they continued abusing him in worse terms. Buddha sat down saying, "If abusing me gives you pleasure, enjoy yourselves." Exhausted by their abuse, they were preparing to leave. At that time, Buddha told them, "I stayed here all the time because if I had gone to the village, my devotees there would not have spared you, if you had indulged in all this abuse before them. It is to save you from this calamity that I had put up with all your abuse, given you a free rein and stayed here."

"If we want to please others, we have to do many things and even spend a lot of money. I am happy that today without incurring any expense or taking any trouble I could give so much pleasure to all of you! What a fine day for me!" exclaimed Buddha. "You have derived joy from abusing me. So, I am the cause of your joy. I have given you satisfaction thereby. To bring comfort and happiness to people, many build choultries, dig wells, or do other charitable acts. But without undertaking any of these acts, I have been able to give great satisfaction to these evil-minded men. This is a great achievement, indeed," observed Buddha.

Buddha also brought home to them another lesson. He asked one of them: "Child! A beggar comes to your house asking for alms: 'Blessed mother, give me food!' You bring some food. If the beggar says, 'This is not the alms I asked for, and I will not accept it,' what will you do?" The man replied: "I will keep back the offering." Buddha said: "In the same manner, you attempted to offer me the alms (bhiksha) of your abuse. I did not accept it. To whom does it belong? It remains with you. So, you have only abused yourself, not me," said Buddha.

If a registered letter is addressed to some one, who declines to receive it, the postal department will deliver it back to the sender. Similarly, if you criticise someone or hate somebody, if the other person remains unaffected and unperturbed, your criticism and hatred come back to you. Jealousy and hatred do more harm to those who entertain these feelings than to those towards whom these are expressed.

The sage and his ego

Jealousy is a canker that is self-destroying. Once a sage was cultivating a beautiful garden growing a variety of flowers and fruits. Even in him egoism reared its head and in its wake jealousy also took root. When these two were present, hatred also joined the evil brood. Seeing this, the Lord, who felt that a sage wearing the saffron robe and claiming to have renounced all attachments, should not entertain such evil qualities, entered the sage's garden in the guise of an old Brahmin to reform the sage. He went to a tree and praising its beautiful flowers and fruits, he asked the sage who was responsible for raising such a fine garden. The sage replied: "Oh, Venerable Brahmin! This garden has been created by me by indefatigable efforts, night and day, caring for every plant like a child. Every tree was planted by me and reared by me. All the pruning and laying out of the garden are my handiwork." And so on, he was boasting that everything is "my work," "my achievement". "All these flowers and fruits I am growing for the sake of others," he said.

flower plants. Seeing this from a distance, the sage hurled a big stick at the cow. The moment the stick bit the cow, the animal died. The sage inwardly feared that he might be guilty of the sin of cow slaughter (go-hatya). Meanwhile, the old Brahmin returned and, seeing the dead cow, exclaimed, "What a pity! Who could have killed the poor cow?" The sage replied: "It is all God's will. Otherwise, will the cow lose its life, even if someone wanted to kill it?" Immediately the Brahmin said: "You reared the garden and you made the flowers bloom. But when the cow dies, God is responsible for its death, is it? You claim credit for all the good things, but when anything untoward happens you attribute it to God. Your conceit is totally unbecoming." The Brahmin then revealed His true form and said: "I am not a Brahmin. I assumed this form only to remove from you the ego that has taken root to you."

Have love: eschew jealousy

Everyone should strive to rid himself of egoism, jealousy and hatred. This elimination cannot be achieved by mere study of books. Constant effort is required. By cultivating love and dedicating all actions to God, these evil traits have to be got rid of. As long as jealousy remains, to the slightest extent, it will destroy every good quality in us. That is why the Gita teaches that the total elimination of jealousy is a primary requisite for the sadhaka.

It is only when one's daily life is governed by the cultivation of virtues and the promotion of an environment conducive to spiritual effort will it be possible to grasp the meaning of Self-realisation. The Over-Soul is subtle and all-pervading. Its effulgence is everywhere. It is not embodied in any particular object. It shines everywhere. There is light in this hall. What is the source of this light? It is the lamp that is burning somewhere. The flame of the lamp has a form. But the light emanating from it has no form. The Atma hits effulgence but has no form or name. It can assume any name or form. Forms and names are sustained by the Atma. There is an electric bulb which gives light. An electric fan produces breeze. Different machines are operated by electricity. All these appliances are varied in their forms and functions. But the power that makes them function is one and the same. Likewise, the Atma Principle demonstrates its oneness in all the myriad entities in which it assumes various forms and names. Just as there are bulbs with varying wattage and serving different purposes, there are differences among living beings. But the current running through all the different bulbs is the same. The variations in the amount of light that comes from them are due to differences in the capacity of the bulbs. Likewise one who is filled with love shines radiantly. One lacking in love resembles a dim light. To get more light the bulb has to be changed, not the current. God is the embodiment of Love. If you wish to experience God, you have to fill yourselves with love. Through Love alone can you experience the embodiment of Love that is God. The man filled with jealousy and hatred is like a blind man who cannot see the sun however brightly he may shine. He cannot see God however near God may be. Blinded by ignorance, the man filled with jealousy and hatred cannot hope to see God, like a blind man groping for something which is near him. The man filled with good qualities like truth, Love, absence of jealousy, ego and hatred, can see God without searching for Him. He becomes a Jnani (a man of spiritual wisdom). It has been well said: "Death is sweeter than the blindness of ignorance."

room for evil traits like jealousy. They must feel happy when other students do well in studies or sports. To feel jealous towards a student who has come first is a threefold offence. The first offence, is one's neglect of studies; the second offence is to entertain jealousy towards the better student; the third is to lament over one's own failure. Students should not have such narrow ideas. They should learn a lesson from Duryodhana's fate. Because of his hatred and jealousy towards the Pandavas, he brought about the complete ruin of himself and his family

—*Bhagavan's Discourse at the Mandir, Prasanthi Nilayam, 6-9-84*

FROM MOSES TO SAI: II

Discovering the Power of the Spirit

By emphasising in the educational process the noble spiritual qualities that exist in man and that pervade the whole Universe, all the various phenomena that make up the world and the creative expressions that make up our cultural heritage, are seen in a totally new light (in the Sai educational programme.) When our intuitive faculties are awakened and our hearts are purified, we begin to experience directly the Spirit pervading all fields of knowledge, knowing it to be the underlying reality that is the very basis of all knowledge. Once we are embarked on that road, we no longer separate our experiences into spiritual and secular compartments; from that point on all becomes spiritual, because the Spirit is there in every experience. It is the only reality, and our educational task is to discover its presence behind the scenes, shining forth as beauty, truth, power, value, love and delight. When we spiritualize our perceptions, these are the qualities that we find behind every phenomenon, behind every name and form, and behind every organization of human knowledge, because these are the qualities that best describe the Spirit when it comes into manifestation. Therefore, in higher education, all academic subjects are seen to be different perspectives of this one reality, the Spirit. Once this is understood, then the various subjects can be taught and learned not only from the intellectual view, but also from the intuitive experimental view, to bring out these various qualities originating with the Spirit.

Being and becoming

In effect then, in our educational process, we are seeking out the Beingness, the ultimate Source, which has given rise to the Becoming of our phenomenal world. This kind of education will take root, as Bhagavan has declared, only in an integrated personality, where the springs of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa have been developed and are flowing freely so that they can nourish this awareness of the Spirit present everywhere. We can associate this level of spiritual awareness with the Cosmic *Anandamaya Kosa*, which brings us back to the Unity underlying all diversity; the discovery of this can give us an experience of immense joy.

Even so, this joy described here is not yet the ultimate, ineffable joy which is the bliss of the Supreme Reality, for there is still a fundamental ignorance associated with it... the Self has not yet been unveiled. There is still a subject—object duality; there is still the individual

individual self must now be turned inwards towards the true Self, and lose itself in that Self. That is the final stage of the spiritual journey.

Here we have identified three major steps that lead to man's spiritual awakening. First, we encourage the blossoming forth of the springs of Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Love, and Non Violence that lie hidden in every man, and by developing these, we cultivate all the noble qualities that make up a true human being.

Next, in a system of education that teaches all the traditional as well as modern subjects but does so in the light of the indwelling Spirit, the intuitive faculties as well as the intellectual faculties are made use of to discover this Spirit which is present everywhere, and that illuminates everything we call the phenomenal world. Then we are ready for the final spiritual ascent that follows these preliminary stages of educational preparation. Here, in the culmination of our journey, we experience the Spirit directly as our own reality, the eternal Self. To reach this level, we must step-by-step eliminate all the overlying sheaths that have veiled our truth, until we finally discover that the Beloved, the Indwelling Lord, is our own Self. Then we realize that the six elements of Reality that we previously found and experienced in all the things of the world, namely, truth and beauty, value and power, love and delight, are nothing more than the projected qualities of our inner Self. And that inner Self is the One Self of all. Once that is fully known, then we are established in God-consciousness; from that moment on, all distinctions vanish and we realize ourselves to be that Self, one with the Supreme Reality.

Moses' faith in God

This brings us to Moses. For Moses, who was always established in God, the passive witness had fully merged with the Supreme, and so both the phenomenal world and the individual self had faded into the background, like a shadow play. How do we know this from reading the Bible? And since we are now discussing the Bible, we might ask, what distinguishes the Bible from other scriptures? The primary importance of bringing in the Bible, particularly the Old Testament, into our awareness, is that there we find a number of powerful historical episodes that provide some of the strongest archetypal metaphors and images to be found anywhere in the world's literature, chronicling the relationship between God and Man. This has enormous significance in understanding the universal human condition and its transcendence to divine consciousness. Let us take an example in the history of Moses, namely, the episode at the Red Sea. Here the Israelites had left Egypt enmasse quite suddenly, with over a million members fleeing for their lives, leaving the Egyptian captivity behind them. After some days of wandering eastward they must have at last felt safe, finally free of their tormentors. But then they came to the Red Sea and found their way blocked by the sea. Just then they looked back, and there across the full range of the western horizon, teeming with men, chariots and weaponry, they saw the whole Egyptian Army arrayed in battle formation, and preparing to charge down on them, bent on their destruction. A few moments more and it would be total annihilation. In a flash their whole situation had changed ...instead of freedom, the certainty of death now loomed in front of them. They were trapped, we might say, 'between the devil and the deep sea.' They were frightened out of their wits, cringing in terror, feeling betrayed by their leader Moses, and feeling

in the forthcoming slaughter. Their worldview suddenly became very narrow. "If only we had remained as slaves in Egypt," they lamented, "at least we would have remained alive."

But for Moses the view was completely different. With the Pharaoh's Army about to pour down on them, he was completely unperturbed and unshaken. The threat of death and extinction never even came into his mind. His mind was always on God and his heart was always filled with love. He was a mystic ...he saw everything from a transcendental view. He was completely surrendered to God, and so to him whatever happens can only happen at God's Will. All this was only a dream creation of God, and since the dream belonged to God He could certainly change it. "His love is unlimited and if we turn towards Him, He will turn towards us; if we love Him with all our hearts and souls He will never let us down." This is what Moses believed, because this is what he later taught the people in the desert. So, instead of the choice being 'between the devil and the deep blue sea,' for Moses there was only one real choice, and that was neither of these. That choice was to leave everything to God. He told the people, "Don't be frightened. Have faith. The Lord will certainly take care of us. The Army you see coming down on us we will never have to see again."

"Love prevailed"

And so the dream took a new turn. Love prevailed. The immeasurable love that God has for His devotee shaped the subsequent events. And soon a cowering horde of ex-slaves, fear-ridden, lacking faith, trapped like sheep awaiting the slaughter, up against the sea, became, in a very short time, transformed into free men, filled with joy and confidence, safely established on the other side of the sea, with the threat to their lives and their whole recent, ignoble past, now just a dim memory. So they gave voice to a song of thanksgiving and confidently resumed their trek towards the Eternal, ready to face the many adventures that lay ahead. From the higher view, we see here God's plan unfolding itself. But from the lower view of the individual soul, we find that everything is a great dynamic, a sea of infinite possibilities and change. As we look deeply into our experience we find that the world just reflects our own view of it; in other words, it changes itself to accommodate our view. There is nothing objective to be found anywhere that can be seen to be independent of the subjective. If we leave everything to Him, if we fill ourselves with love, make love our inner view, then love comes back to us in our outer view. Nature or the world changes itself to do our bidding, as it were. But really, Nature just completes itself with its source. The Spirit is the only truth, and it is sweet and lovely. If we see it only, then we become it; and the world becomes it also. God, Man and the Universe all dissolve together, just as ice cream dissolves on the tongue, leaving a sweet taste of pure love and delight. They came In with the dream and they go out with the dream. Only the pure I remains, the one Bliss Self.

What the story of Moses teaches us is that the opposite of 'I am unhappy' is not 'I am happy', but 'I am God', 'I am the Infinite Supreme, the One Reality ...fear or grief can never touch me.' That is the song of the God-realized man, who has become totally lost in God-consciousness, who is one with the Infinite, and yet functions on the human plane as the perfect instrument, as the messenger or prophet of God. Later Moses taught the people the mantra called the Shemak which Jesus considered the greatest commandment of the Bible. It proclaims the One God of

measure of Moses' faith and devotion. He is an appropriate image for the West because in his life there is no claim to any heavenly descent or divine origin. He was a very human, human being and so he is an ideal model for all of us; with God's Grace, he reached the ultimate goal within his very lifetime.

Once Bhagavan was asked, "Moses led the people out of slavery to the Promised Land. It is said that another Moses will come. Swamiji, are you that Messiah who has come to deliver us?" And Baba answered, "No. No. It's not like that...Not one Messiah. You are all Messiahs. You are all children of God. Truly, you are all God itself. Here and now you have the strength to save yourselves, and to help others also. Live in God. Live in Love. Be God. Be Love ...and freedom will be there waiting for you."

We see that Bhagavan, acting through all the great teachers and sages of the Age, is leading us right back to our own Self, the one Reality who is he and who is also we. And there within our Self we can find the immeasurable delight that we have been seeking in all those countless forms we have occupied and discarded in the long night of our ignorance... never having known our own truth, or the truth of this marvellous Universe ...that it always was, and forever is, nothing else but our blissful Self.

(Concluded)

—Al Drucker

A country needs an ideal as a human body requires re-couplement. 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 part 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

GITOPADESH: II:

Gita - The Kalpataru

Humans have, perforce, to engage themselves in some action or other. They have to be active, either physically or mentally or both. Apart from securing a contented and happy life, man craves for wealth, for fame, for power and possessions and popular esteem. But, the central teaching of the Gita is disinterested activity, that is to say, activity suffused with enthusiasm and

are entitled to do the work but not to the fruits thereof," says Krishna to Arjuna. The process is really more pleasant and satisfying than the end product. When a person engages himself in arranging for the celebration of a wedding, he forgets his fatigue, the expense of time and money while dispatching invitations, deciding the menu, decorating the house, receiving guests and kinsmen, and supervising the ceremony. When the wedding is over, the joy declines and the fatigue comes into consciousness. The aftermath tastes insipid.

When work is undertaken with an egoistic attitude, impelled by selfish motives and inspired by hopes of self-advancement, it feeds greed and pride, envy and hatred. Then, it fastens the bond and fosters the feeling of attachment to more and more profitable works. It promotes ingratitude to those who lent their hands and brains and to God Himself who endowed the person with the urge and the skill. "I did it," one says when the work succeeds; or "Others spoiled it" one says when it fails. Resentment, depression and despair follow when the work results in failure. The more deeply one is attached to the fruits, the more intense and painful is one's grief when one is disappointed. The only means, therefore, to escape from both pride and pain is to leave the result to the will of God, while one is happy in the thought that one has done his duty with all the dedication and care that one is capable of. No one can do better than his best. The body is gifted with all its inherent excellences and defects so that it can be used, every moment of life, for purposes that can sanctify time through service, sacrifice and love.

Karma as yoga

The word Karma translated as work or action also connotes the rites prescribed by the Vedas in the section named so. They are aimed at securing for the persons performing them a variety of material gains. Some of them promise as reward even a sojourn in heaven. But, they are all result-oriented. Though they cleanse the mind and foster renunciation, they yield the best results only when they have the attainment of world peace and world prosperity as the goal. Karma then becomes Karma-yoga, Karma yoked with unselfish ideals. All acts undertaken by persons after surrendering their wills and wants to the Lord (*Sarva dharmaan parithyajya, Maam ekam Saranam Vraja*—giving up all ideas of do's and don'ts, surrender to Me alone) become so holy and so pure that they do not bind one, either by the iron chain of misery or the golden chain of exultation.

The Gita does not encourage inertia, indifference or slothfulness. It recommends Karma as a Yoga, as an activity in tune with the Divine Will, directed to the promotion of one's spiritual consummation. Karma has to be an act of fulfillment, of adoration and of one's duty to oneself and others. The Gita marks out the steps and the path towards the realisation of this goal. It accepts all attitudes as valuable and sublimates each one into a sadhana. It elevates the Karma Kanda into a means for the uplift of the self and the advancement of mankind. It is Kalpavriksha, a Wish-fulfilling Tree, which bestows boons to aspirants of all levels of commitment. It is an ocean of spiritual wisdom from which each one can bring away as much as the vessel he carries with him can hold. The rational seeker, the actional sadhaka and the devotional aspirant all get equal attention and care from the Lord. In fact, the Gita infuses into every act of daily life the sublimity of Vedanta, the immanence and transcendence of the Divine Principle. The Vedanta is

life.

The Gita is the authentic Messenger of God; it conveys His Message in clear, convincing fullness. It is the Mother's comforting counsel for mankind. Grasping it, man can swim safe across the storm-ridden sea of life. It is the surest guide for the sadhaka. It is a mine of mantras; it is an ever-active fountain of Vedantic truths. It is the royal road to victory for seekers of Freedom. It renders that road a path of flowers.

—From Bhagavan's Discourse at the Mandir on 10-9-84

ONAM SANDESH:

God Knocks Asks and Gives

The name that is applied to the Festival celebrated with great joy by Keralites this day, Onam, is derived from the Sanskrit Shravanam and Sronam, indicating the ascendant star of the day. The month too is Shravanam. That word reminds people of the very first step in spiritual Sadhana, the first of the famous nine, namely, listening to the Glory of God and imbibing joy there from.

Keralites believe that the Lord, who incarnated as Vamana, and Emperor Bali, who was immortalised by the Grace of that Avatar, bless that region of Bharat this day by their Presence together. In every home, They are worshipped with flowers and incense, ritual offerings, song, dance and folk sports. Tradition declares that the Emperor prayed for the chance to re-visit the area he ruled over and loved and he insisted that the Lord who led him into Self-realisation must lead him. This faith is being rewarded every year. Many do achieve the vision of both Vamana and Bali, there as well as elsewhere.

Bali was an Asura by birth but he emulated his father, Virochana, who had risen to great spiritual heights through deeds of self-sacrifice and his grandfather, Prahlada, one of the foremost devotees of the Lord. He ruled over his vast empire with vigilant care and affection. His subjects were healthy, happy and filled with gratitude. People were so prosperous and holy that there was not even a single person in want in the entire realm.

He was engaged in an elaborate ceremony, a Yajna, under the guidance of his Guru, Shukracharya, where he was giving away to pundits and priests land, homes, cattle and gold when the Lord appeared at the place as a young dwarfish mendicant Brahmin, named Vamana. Bali tempted Him with gifts of dominion, riches and power, but Vamana asked only for a patch of space, as much as could be measured by three steps of His feet.

The Emperor's preceptor realised that the mendicant was the Lord Himself and that the three steps will encompass Bali's empire and beyond. He warned his disciple of the disaster that would ensue. He tried personally to prevent the gift, by entering the spout of the vessel used by the

spout to clear the obstruction, Shukracharya lost the eye which was pricked by the bunch. Teaching and practising what he preaches are the two eyes of the Guru. Shukracharya taught but did not himself honour his teaching. So, the loss of the eye was highly symbolic.

The three lokas

The "Three feet" of space that the Lord wished to accept and sanctify after magnifying Himself into Trivikrama or Three-fold conqueror, are often identified as the Earth, Space and Outer-space, the Bhuloka, the Bhuvarloka and the Suvarloka. But, the Lord, who has projected the Cosmos by His own will, does not crave for a fraction of His own creation. Nor are the three lokas situated one over the other. They are regions of consciousness, existing contemporaneously in Bali and everyone else. When you pay attention to the Lokas, the individual personality does not impinge on your attention; when the individual personality is cognised, the Lokas recede from view. When you look upon this chair as chair, you are not aware of the word; when you observe the word, the chair passes out of view. Take the instance of the idol of Shirdi Sai Baba in silver. When you adore it as Sai Baba, you are not aware of the silver; when you know it as so much silver, you exclude Sai Baba. So, too, when man concentrates on the Bhuloka in him, the other two are beyond cognition. The Bhuloka in man is the Dehaloka (the physical home which he carries about and in which he resides). The Bhuvarloka in him is the Pranaloka (the vital equipment or sheath that activates the Bhuloka and the principle of consciousness encased therein) and the Suvarloka is the inner treasure chest, the Ananda or Delight which prompts by its very presence the spiritual bud to blossom. Vamana sought Bali's willing acquiescence in the Divine Process of purifying and sanctifying these three levels of his being-the Body, the Awareness and the Cosmic Essence. Vamana spoke of this blessing, symbolically, as three 'foot-measures' of land!

And, Ball, unaware of the inner meaning, agreed to give Vamana what obviously He wanted. He was indeed in great ecstasy at the unique chance to offer to the Lord what He claimed out of what He had himself given!

Vamana assumed His Cosmic Form and measured the three steps, covering the Cosmos, Including Bali. Bali surrendered totally to the Divine Will; he was amply rewarded. He lived up to the heritage handed down to him by his father Virochana and grandfather Prahlada. The Bhagavatha Purana declares that he was consigned to Suthala, the most sacred of the nether regions. In other words, Bali was blessed with an inner vision of the Lord in his heart. The Lord assured him that He would grant him His constant presence in the Suthala region. The Message of Onam is that the Lord is won by means of total surrender of the ego. When the heart is pure, the Lord resides therein and guides man to Himself.

—Divine Discourse at Prasanthi Nilayam, 7. 9. 1984

Sadhaka: Which Veda is named Atharva? Is it also known by many other names?

Swami: Yes. That Veda has various popular names—Brahma Veda, Angiro Veda, Atharvangiro Veda, Bhrgvangiro Veda, Kshatra Veda, Bhaishajya Veda.

Kalidasa has praised sage Vasishtha as "Atharva Nidhi" (the Treasure Chest of Atharva knowledge). As a result of his earning such high renown, Vasishtha was installed as Rajaguru (Royal Preceptor) and could claim mastery over all the four Vedas (Rg, Yajur, Sama and Atharva) and the authority to supervise ritual sacrifices and perform scriptural rites and ceremonies.

Sadhaka: Swami! Have the mantras contained in the Atharva Veda any special names?

Swami: They are celebrated as Siddha Mantras, that is to say, Mantras that guarantee the promised effects. The presiding deity of the Gayatri Mantra, known as Gayatri Devi, is adored as having the Rg, Yajur, Sama Veda as feet, the Mimamsa Shastra (Science of Interpretation and Inquiry) as the passive, steady aspect and the Atharva Veda as Activity.

Sadhaka: This is rather complicated to me. Is there no other way of explaining the importance of this Veda by some worldly metaphor which is more easily comprehensible?

Swami: Well. Listen. The Atharva Veda is a huge tree, of which the Rg, Yajur and Sama Vedas are the trunk and branches and the Smritis and Puranas, the leaves. One Sun (Aditya) is worshipped in the Yajur Veda as Yajuh, in the Sama Veda as Sama, in the Rg Veda as Oordhva and in the Atharva Veda as Yaathu.

Sadhaka: What does the Atharva mean?

Swami: It means a steady, unmoved person, one who is of stable nature. Atharva is also widely identified in the Veda as Prana-atma, (the super consciousness that activates the vital airs) and Prajapati (the ruler of all beings born). As the former, it is also denoted as Prana-pati. This Prajanati is credited with the achievement of first churning sparks of the fire and making fire manifest. Of the Vedas, each of the three is at some time or other recognised as the first but, so far as the last is concerned, the Atharva is always uttered as such.

Sadhaka: How many forms are ascribed to God (Parameshwara, the Supreme God) in this Veda?

Swami: "Yaatho Rudrassivathanoraghora Papa naasinee," it is said. That is to say. God is described as having two distinguishable forms—the serene and the terrible.

Sadhaka: I crave for illustration by examples.

Swami: The Narasimha form of God that emerged from the Pillar was mild and serene, beautiful and beneficent for Prahlada, the staunch devotee, and at the same time, the form was terrible for Hiranyakasipu, the father, who hated God to the utmost. Well, even Nature, the concretisation of the will power of God, has these two aspects, the mild and the fearful. Water is an essential Ingredient for sustaining life in beings. It is vital and health-giving as well as fatal and death-dealing.

Sadhaka: Pardon me for asking again for some examples.

Swami: All living beings exist because of food. According to the scriptures (Sastras), food is of three kinds-Satwic (promoting peace and harmony), Rajasic (promoting passions and emotions, activities and adventures) and Tamasic (promoting sloth and dullness). One has to choose one's food with discrimination and control and limit its intake. Then, food will be health-giving medicine. If, on the other hand, food is consumed indiscriminately and beyond limit, it produces illness and causes grief and pain. It assumes a fearful role.

This fact is made clear in the Vedas by the probe into the word 'Anna'. The word Anna has as its root, Ad, which means 'eating'. That which is eaten (Adyate) is Anna (food). That which eats (Atithi) is also Anna. It is eaten by living beings and at the same time, it eats the person who eats; food is both beneficent and maleficent.

The Rishis (sages) Atharva and Angiras who visualised the mantras of this Veda have recognised this twin nature of both God and Creation. They appear mild and terrible, in accordance with the credentials of the experiencer. But, in total effect and in a deeper sense, these mantras are intended to reveal the Atma and promote the peace and prosperity of humanity.

(To be continued)

FAR EASTERN SAI CONFERENCE:

New Perspective for Sai Centres

More than 500 representatives of 127 Sai Centres In the Far East attended a mini-conference of organisers of Sai Centres held at Kuala Lumpur on July 30 and 31. Sri Indulal Shah and Sri V. Srinivasan, Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively of the World Council, guided the deliberations. The Conference discussed the objectives of the Sai Organisation, the programme of celebration of the 60th Birthday of Bhagavan Baba and the significance of various organisational activities.

Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore and Sri Lanka. The plenary session of the Conference was attended by 1350 delegates. Sri J. Jegadesan, President of the Sathya Sai Central Council of Malaysia, welcomed the delegates.

The Conference noted that it was no longer adequate for the Sai Workers to concentrate only on their own spiritual development but they should actively involve themselves in social service activities. Sai Organisations in each country should fully identify themselves with the national aspirations and plans of their respective areas.

It was decided to form a Federation of Sai Organisations for Far Eastern Countries. The initial role of this Federation would be to co-ordinate activities and to share resources in (a) areas of Bal Vikas and Education in Human Values, (b) Preparation of material for public media and (c) for Training programmes.

A new awareness of Bhagavan's divine mission was generated at the Conference and all the participants felt that it was indeed a life-time privilege to be associated with this phase of the Divine Manifestation.

Religious tolerance

Earlier, on July 29th, the Chief Minister of Sarawak, Hon. Pattinggi Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud, inaugurating the Symposium-cum-Exhibition on Unity of Religions and Education in Human Values, said that the practice of blindly aping the west could instill unhealthy traits in youth in the eastern countries and lead to a breakdown of the traditional family units. There was an urgent need for leaders in these societies to search for common denominators in their religions to provide guidelines for daily living. There must be tolerant interaction and harmonious dealings between people of all faiths based on the teachings of the respective world religions. Malaysians, he said, were blessed with religious freedom which was enshrined in the Federal Constitution, although Islam was the official religion. Highlighting the most salient aspect of Islam, he said that Islam always stressed that there should be no compulsion in matters of religion. Inherent in the perception of the true Muslim is positive tolerance with a view to harmonious living with followers of different faiths. He hoped that the message of Human Values will play a more important role in all Far Eastern nations.

A set of books and cassettes on EHV was released on the occasion.

The Chief Minister inaugurated an Exhibition on World Religions and Human Values by releasing five white pigeons, symbolic of the five human values. The exhibition was a masterly display of exhibits from all religions of the world. On the second day, the assembly was divided into two separate sessions: One for EHV trainers and the other a conference of Sai Workers. The EHV Workshop commenced with a talk on its objective and inner significance by Smt. Sarla Shah. It was followed by a series of interesting talks, demonstrations and interactions on basic values and aspects related to the technique and methodology of value teaching. Eminent educationists chaired various sessions of this workshop.

The most significant outcome of the Workshop was the keen interest evinced by the Malaysian Ministry of Education in the EHV programme and its desire to implement it in the country's school system.

Sai Family News

Nairobi (Kenya): The Sathya Sai Centre at Nairobi has started running Bal Vikas classes from May. To begin with there were nine children and the strength has grown to twenty. The children are taught bhajans and prayers from the different scriptures, stories from the epics and Puranas.

Dharan (Nepal): The local Sathya Sai Centre observed the Handicapped Day on July 22 by arranging a programme of bhajans and dances by the students of the Jnana Chakshu Vidyalaya (school for the blind) and the inmates of the Nava Jyoti School (for handicapped children), followed by Narayana Seva.

New Delhi: A Sathya Sai Alumni Guidance Bureau has been set up in Delhi, with its office at D55A, Haus Khas, New Delhi-110016. The Bureau has nine members including Mr. A. N. Haksar, Mr. Kulwant Rai and Dr. S. N. Saraf (Convener).

Singapore: Easwaramma Day was celebrated at a joint function by all the eleven Sai Centres in the island. A full-day programme of bhajans, dances, plays, etc. was presented by 150 Bal Vikas children from the different centres. Mr. Samuel Doraisingham, from the Ministry of Education, Singapore, spoke on the importance of Education in Human Values for developing the character of children.

Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh): A state-level training programme for Bal Vikas Gurus on the basis of the new syllabus introduced by the All-India Bal Vikas Board, was held at Santhivan, Bhopal from August 16 to 20. One hundred and sixty one Bal Vikas Gurus from all over the State attended the course. Students and teachers from the Sathya Sai College for Women, Bhopal, also participated in the programme. Mr. Durgadas Suryavanshi, Minister of State, Manpower and Planning, Madhya Pradesh, addressed the Gurus, praising the quality of the training programme and the work of the Bal Vikas Gurus.

When God is recognised as dwelling within, every one will perform his duty as an act of worship. Children have to revere their parents that is their duty. Parents have to bring up their children as bright and willing citizens capable of earning their own food and helping others in distress; if they shirk this duty, they have failed in their worship. They should not also spoil them by allowing them too much of freedom and catering to their fancies. I know many parents who dote on their children, and admire them when they learn the bad habits of gambling or drinking! They do not curb them, when they swagger about in the bazaars, teasing and bullying those who pass

to others. As a consequence, their children land themselves in trouble, and then, the parents repent and curse themselves for their unpardonable foolishness.

—Baba

Sai Movement in Guatemala

Nine years ago in 1975 I came to India desperately looking for a Guru or any spiritual guidance. I had travelled all over the world to satisfy this deep yearning—but nothing had happened. Then finally one day in New Delhi, in a bookstore, I discovered "Man of Miracles" by Murphet. After reading this fascinating account of Baba's many miracles, I said: "If these are true... this is what I have been searching for."

Then after a series of "coincidences" including unusually smooth travelling, I found my way to Puttaparthi. I stayed for sometime and even though food and customs were quite different from what I knew, adapted myself quite well. At the end of two months' stay at Puttaparthi, Baba granted me my first interview. Baba materialized rings and Vibhuti. His love and miracles left a deep impression in my heart. This trip to India (Puttaparthi) was to be the beginning of many many trips. Then, I returned to my country, Guatemala.

In Guatemala I could not work because Baba's memory remained on my mind... night and day. While in Guatemala I met a lady who had a severe case of anorexia—she would not allow herself to eat anything because of a morbid fear of getting fat. When I first saw her, her body was thin—it looked like skin and bones. Her family had taken her to specialists all over the world and nothing had cured her. I gave this woman Vibhuti and forgot about it. From that time on I began to enjoy a succession of trips back and forth to see Baba.

After one year I returned to see this sick woman in Guatemala. To my surprise she was in perfect health with her normal weight. This was after the doctors had given up hope. She said, "your powders cured me."

No one knew about Sathya Sai Baba in Guatemala before this time. I did know of two or three people who had gone to India to see him but they did not know me. I did not want to speak to anyone about Baba because they would not have believed it.

After three years I began bringing groups to see Baba. I organized the first group to come in 1978. There were from eight to ten people. Many Guatemalans became interested and the number of people coming in the groups increased to 30. Some wanted spiritual guidance, others were simply curious. During these trips for 5 or 6 years, sometimes Baba would see me for an interview and sometimes he would not. I was always happy. Through these trips and his grace, he started to open my eyes little by little. I began to realise he was a god-man.

first movie, "Aura of Divinity", dubbed in Spanish. The movie aroused a great deal of interest in Baba.

Little by little, books about Baba were brought from Mexico. Through the many miracles created by the Vibhuti, scores of Guatemalans became aware that Baba was a great saint. Other movies of Baba have also been shown since that first one. Now there are three Baba Centres-two doing a lot of social service and conducting Bal Vikas programmes.

It is so beautiful to see, even though there are only three centres, where four or five hundred people get together on Thursdays, that there is such a great awareness among a large part of the population.

There are many many people who have faith in Sathya Sai Baba. The movement is growing very much year by year and it has spread to the neighbouring country of El Salvador. Centres in El Salvador are carrying on seva dal and Bal Vikas activities. There are now so many people who want to come to see Baba. We are trying to prepare them first as they should know how to be ready to receive his grace, and as Baba has said, "I want quality, not quantity."

From a small seed that Baba has sown, a big tree has grown. By Baba's grace this seed has become a tree that is growing and growing and yielding many many fruits.

—*Nassin Mishaan (Guatemala)*

Significance of Ganesha Worship

Vinayaka means one who removes all obstacles in the way of fulfilling any action. Vinayaka also demonstrated the truth that his Divine parents (Parameshwara and Parvati) were the two to whom he owed his birth and existence and whom he should seek as his redeemers. This is the reason he is described as Vinayaka and Vighneshwara (The Lord of Obstacles). He is also called Ganapati-the Lord of all the Ganas (the host of spirits). There is an inner meaning for this name. Ganapati is known for his supreme intelligence. It is because of this intelligence, he is able to keep under his control the vast array of spirits (ganas). Only the person who has an acute power of discrimination (sukshma buddhi) can realise this nature of Divinity. Saint Thyagaraja enquired whether one needed refined intelligence to recognise the Lord. How could a monkey (Hanuman) cross the ocean? How could Lakshmi attain the Lord? How could Yashoda bind Krishna? How could Bharata enjoy the glory of Rama without satiety? All this was due to the power of supreme devotion to the Lord. There was nothing greater than devotion to Rama, declared Thyagaraja.

Ganapati, who was endowed with supreme intelligence which enabled him to understand the all encompassing nature of the Divine, subjected himself to a test by which he could impart to the

round the world and said that whoever completed the trip first would get a fruit. Immediately, Subrahmanya mounted his peacock and set out on the race with zest. Ganapati, who was cast in a big mould and had as his vehicle a mouse, was apparently no match for his younger brother. How could he hope to go round the world? Seeing Ganesha complacently sitting there, without joining the race, the Divine parents asked him why he had not yet started on his trip. They urged him to get busy. But Ganapati continued to enjoy what he was eating and seemed to be in no hurry to make a start. A little while later, seeing that Subrahmanya was approaching the place, Ganapati circumambulated his parents and sitting before them claimed that he had gone round the world. Parvati asked him: "Without going round the world, how can you claim you have done so merely by going round us?" Ganesha replied: "Oh, Mother, the whole earth is permeated by both of you. If I go round you, is it not equal to going round the whole world? What is the purport of statements such as: Isavasyam Idam Sarvam (All this is Inhabited by the Lord), Vasudevas-sarvam idam (Vaasudeva is everything)? You are omnipresent and to go round you is equivalent to circling the universe," he said. Parameshwara presented a fruit to Vinayaka and said: "Because you have a keen intellect, you shall be the master of all the spirits." It is for this reason that Vighneshwara Is worshipped by one and all before performing any auspicious function, whether it is entering a new house or performing a marriage ceremony or any other religious function.

It must also be noted that the Lord's family is an ideal one, maintaining harmony and peace in spite of the antagonistic elements present amongst them. The vehicles of Siva (the bull), Parvati (the lion), Ganesha (the mouse) and Subrahmanya (the peacock) are in their natural state inimical to each other. But living in the presence of the Lord they shed their enmity and live at peace. Harmony in the Divine family shows that where there is Divinity there is peace and amity. Hatred and jealousy arise when the Omnipresence of the Divine is forgotten or ignored.

Holy days like Vinayaka Chaturthi should be celebrated only to remind ourselves of such sacred truths and to sanctify our minds and lives accordingly. They should not be treated as holidays for feasting and merry making. Ganapati should be worshipped so that all the Ganas become friendly and helpful to us. Thyagaraja sang that if he has the Lord's grace (daiva-anugraham) all the grahas (planets) will be in his grasp. We must purify our hearts so that the Lord may shower His grace on us. All education, all mastery of the scriptures and all kinds of worship will be of no avail if the heart is not filled with qualities like love, compassion and forbearance.

—Discourse at the Mandir, Prasanthi Nilayam, 30-8-84

The Lord and the Devotee

For thousands of devotees at Prasanthi Nilayam—many of whom came from distant countries—August was a month of continuous bliss and spiritual enlightenment. Starting from August 2,

Bhakti Yoga, to begin with.

Bhagavan's discourse each evening was preceded by a brief explanation of the Gita verses in the canto by Dr. Balaraju, Head of the Department of Telugu in the Sathya Sai Institute.

Every day Bhagavan had an aphorism from the Gita as the text for His discourse, which provided new insights into the admonitions, the instructions and the assurances of the Lord to Arjuna after he had declared his unwillingness to take up arms against his gurus and relatives in the Kurukshetra battlefield.

We give below excerpts from Bhagavan's discourses with reference to the theme of each discourse

"Aham Thvaa Sarvapapebhyo mokshayisyaami Maa suchah"
("Don't grieve, I shall liberate you from all sins").

When a devotee completely surrenders to God and takes refuge In Him, giving up attachment to every other thing, the Lord protects him completely and absolves him of all sins. Surrender makes man greater than God because a true devotee can imprison God in his heart.

"Bhaktimaan me priyo narah"
("The man filled with devotion is dear to me").

While wealth, material possessions, honour, fame and power are transient, the love of the Lord is a precious acquisition. A devotee must cultivate santhi-tatwa and be full of sweet contentment (Santripiti) and firm resolve (Sthiramathi). He should be equanimous in joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, loss and gain, heat and cold.

Abhyasa, Jnana, Dhyana, and Renunciation of the fruits of one's actions Abhyasa refers to the efforts made by the sadhaka in daily life. Dhyana refers to the state in which one experiences oneness with Divinity. It is continuous contemplation of the Divine and transcends Time, Causation and Karma. Jnana is a higher stage marked by discrimination. Santhi is reached after going through all the stages from Abhyasa to Tyaga.

"Jnaathum Drashtumcha Tathvena Praveshtum Paranthapa"
("O Arjuna, it is not enough to know about God or see Him; you must merge in Him").

"Jnaathum" is to know about God by hearing from the guru or the shastras. "Drashtum" is seeing God by developing intense aspiration. Just seeing is not enough; we have to merge in Him. Merger is "Tathvena Pravishatum," that is the final consummation. The first stage is Dvaita (dualism); the second stage is Visishtadvaita; the third stage is Advaita.

earth in the form of raindrops of Love and forms itself into a stream of joy. The stream rushes to the ocean knowing that the ocean is its source. This is Visishtā-advaita. Finally the stream merges in the ocean losing its separate identity. That is the state of Advaita.

(To be continued)

The One Step

The way Sai Baba so mercifully has shown me is that God is truth and life, God is the way, God is within us. By learning to know the truth we reach our sacred origin, God. This is the inheritance He in His divine love and grace has given us. God invites us to His feast, He shows us the way, but we must ourselves take the steps. In His love to us Sai Baba says, "If you take one step towards me, I shall take ten steps towards you."

Without ego and selfish motives we must learn to go on working, and offer our efforts to God. We must learn to humbly lay at His divine lotus feet the fruits of our endeavours, for even these belong to Him.

I prayed and pray, "Dear Sai Baba, do not allow laziness to overpower my senses, as I understand that the time left for me in this life is limited. Let me rest and sleep only as long as You think I need for getting the strength to devote the rest of my time to You, under Your divine guidance. May You gracefully have mercy on me and bless my endeavours to perform my Tapas, deepen my Sadhana, live in Prema towards all and everything, and practise Dharma in every act of mine, as You teach us. Here I am, Lord, I exert all my strength for reaching You and lay down my offerings at Your divine lotus feet. Sai Ram."

Practising of yoga is a well elaborated and tested method which the holy Rishis in India, in their yearning for and belief in God, have used during thousands of years for the development of human consciousness, and which made it possible for them to reach beyond the limits of the intellect. One who has reached this height of divine super-consciousness comes in direct contact with God in His various aspects and is conscious of the unity of the principle of the divine creation. Yoga meditation is a way to gain insight into the real truth behind the ideas and the forms that the intellect has created.

God has given us various facilities for gaining a deeper spiritual development and a divine consciousness, so that we shall mature and reach the ultimate goal of our human struggle-full enlightenment, self-realization and liberation.

Mantra yoga

Sai Baba urges us, in connection with our daily Sadhana, to practise at least twice or three times a day the holy Gayatri mantra, visualizing its significance. Mantra yoga develops our spiritual

I. Gayatri mantra develops in us the ability to perceive God's true nature.

I have experienced the great value of Sai Baba's call to practise Gayatri mantra several times a day, at least in the morning and in the evening. Thereby we reach a very important point. Through this spiritual exercise our senses learn to receive the divine light and to comprehend a glimpse of the cleansing and enlightening inherent power, which enables us to perceive the reality of the divine unity.

When our development has reached the stage where the light has become a reality within us, we can experience the Identification with God. The Gayatri mantra has given us the power to liberate our soul from the bonds that bind us to the illusory world we have created and which separates us from God.

To give a clear picture of the entire meaning of practising mantra yoga does not lie within the scope of this short presentation. He who through deeper studies wishes to go further into this theme must remember that the real value lies in the practical, steady practising of the yoga method in question.

We cannot win anything without our own efforts. I remember Sai Baba's words, "We have to dive deep for finding the most precious pearls." Do not let anything stand in your way for your coming into possession of these dear treasures. Start diving into your inner—the earlier, the better.

The greatest and most precious of all treasures we find within ourselves, deep down, hidden in the farthest chamber of our heart. There God is waiting for us to reach Him.

Also now He comes to meet us and show us the way, by urging us in our daily Sadhana, to meditate on the mantra SO HAM and its meaning "we are One". During several years I have followed Sai Baba's wise divine exhortation.

Through control of our breathing we gain inner balance and stillness, which is of great importance. It helps us to calm our thoughts and, through concentration on our true inner I, shuts out the surrounding world as well as our physical I. Thereby we create favourable conditions for reaching the stage where the inner contemplation begins.

These daily exercises strengthen our intuition and help us to become God-conscious. We experience how we come closer and closer to an intuitive deepened understanding of God's omnipresence in all living beings. He lives and acts not only in us, but wherever we cast our eyes we gain a clearer understanding that God permeates the entire cosmic creation. God has no limitations, He is the Creator in His own manifestation.

When we have reached behind the illusory world of dualism, we realize the eternal truth SO HAM—we are all One in God. The eternal divine circle is closed—OM.

The Still Small Voice

Sitting in the small Interview room of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on Dec. 26, 1981, I heard Him say gently, quietly, and reassuringly to the group of thirty-four Americans, "I am prepared to give you whatever you want." The words fell softly on my ears. My heart sang with joy. I felt very much at home sitting at Swami's feet, though it was the first time I had ever done so.

His wonderful beautiful voice! Where have I heard it before? The memory returned so easily that it was as if it had been eagerly awaiting the question. It was in the early spring of 1979. For several months my husband (Ray Thomas) and I had been following a regular programme of meditation and we faithfully devoted a half hour each morning and each evening to this practice together.

On this particular morning I had spent an especially blissful time in deep meditation. My mantra had ceased. No thoughts came. All sound—even the faint hum which seems to be always in the ears—faded away. I was vibrantly aware of Boundless Being in which the senses play no part. "I" was no longer and yet All was self and identity was not in question. It just was. Then I heard His voice. It was so small, so faint, that it could never have been heard at all had there been any other sound. He spoke to me in Biblical language, knowing how much I loved the words of scripture. In His infinite compassion He began, "Ask what you will and I will give it thee." (Words He spoke to Solomon.) My heart answered with that which was my most earnest desire, "That Ray may be fulfilled."

Gradually all senses returned and in what seemed to be about twenty minutes, the ears reported the ringing of the telephone. It was a business call. From a completely unexpected source, Ray was given his first opportunity to serve in a line of work for which he had recently prepared. "Before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear," Baba tells us.

Over the past thirty months He has led us gently on, bringing us closer and closer to Him and ever so closer to the ultimate fulfillment of our lives.

In the Interview room He looked down at me from His chair and asked, "Where is your husband?" I replied, "He is back in that corner, Swami," and pointed to him. He asked, "What is his name?" I replied, "Ray." Then He asked me what I wanted. My heartfelt desire came forth spontaneously, "To be your instrument, Swami."

When the Interview had come to an end and members of the group nearest the door were leaving, our beloved Baba stepped down from His chair and made His way toward the door. At the door,

Ray's right shoulder and with His right hand palm down against the left side of Ray's chest, made several rubbing motions, sweeping about five times from shoulder to waist, saying, "Happy, happy, happy!"

—*Jo Thomas*

BHAGAVAN IN BUKKAPATNAM:

"Unity in Villages the Primary Need"

The need for unity among the rural population for the promotion of the welfare and progress of the villages was stressed by Bhagavan Baba, while declaring open the new imposing two storeyed building of the Zilla Parishad High School at Bukkapatnam, a small town three kilometres from Puttaparthi, on August 16.

The whole of Bukkapatnam was en fete and several thousands of people from the town and the surrounding villages had gathered to greet Bhagavan, who had constructed the magnificent building for the school in which His first adventure in education began fifty years earlier as a nine year old village lad. Bhagavan was received with Vedic chants on arrival at the outskirts of the town and led to the specially erected shamiana in front of the new building.

After cutting the ribbon and going round the new building, Bhagavan returned to the dais, where He was presented with welcome addresses. Two Muslim residents of Bukkapatnam hailed Bhagavan as the Avatar of the Age, reciting poems in Telugu and Urdu. Mr. I. Narasimha Rao, I.A.S., Collector of Anantapur, presiding over the meeting, spoke on the significant revolution in education initiated by Bhagavan. Mr. D. Reddappa Reddi, Zilla Parishad President, expressed the gratitude of the people of Bukkapatnam for the fine building provided by Bhagavan for the High School. Others who spoke on the occasion pleaded for the raising of the High School to a college and requested Bhagavan to make this possible.

In His discourse to the vast gathering, which included thousands of children, Bhagavan said, "My connection, with this school began fifty years ago, when I was nine years old. I find that Bukkapatnam remains today what it was half a century ago. There has been no change. (cheers) This kind of place, what kind of 'Pattanam' (town) is it? All the deficiencies and difficulties present then still continue. Persons who can remedy this situation are not to be seen. They talk a great deal, but no one takes any action. Who is really working for the improvement of this place? Not one. What is the reason? There is absence of unity among the people of Bukkapatnam. This is the greatest defect. Anything can be achieved by unity. Look at this garland. It is the stringing of many flowers that has made it a beautiful garland. Similarly when all the villagers come together, the grace of the Divine will be available to them in abundance. When the five fingers act as one, any work can be accomplished.

"There are over seventy crores of people in Bharat. All of them are pursuing only their selfish interests. If even fifty crores of people acted unitedly, there is nothing they cannot achieve. But that is not happening. Each one is immersed in his selfish concerns and is lost in his narrow world.

"Let this High School continue as a high school. If you really wish to have a college here, make the necessary efforts. Let a college be started independently. What Bukkapatnam needs is unity and harmony among the people. The first requisite for the high school is sufficient area for playgrounds for the hundreds of children. Let some affluent persons provide land for the playground. Those who desire something should consider whether they are making any effort to get that desire fulfilled. I am only interested in the welfare and happiness of the people. I have absolutely no personal desire or interest of my own. Everything I do or plan is only for the benefit of others. Without understanding this, some persons attribute utterly baseless motives. I am unaffected by such talk. If the people of Bukkapatnam undertake any task unitedly I shall be prepared to help them to any extent. I offer this assurance not to the people of Bukkapatnam alone, but to the people in every village in this area. The villages are driven today by factions and feuds promoted by politics. People may participate in politics. But in matters relating to the welfare of their villages, they should be completely united. Why should politics be allowed to ruin the development of the villages?"

—Bukkapatnam, 16-8-84

"Charioteer of the Heart"

Sri Krishna has explained in the Gita that sorrow is the fruit of Rajoguna. He has also shown that only the person who recognises this truth and removes Rajoguna and Tamoguna from his heart, can be happy. As man has all the three gunas in his heart, he is bound.

The entire world is a manifestation of the three gunas. Of these three, Rajo and Tamo gunas are the source of trouble. For all sorrows, grief, trouble and problems, these two gunas are responsible. There are six attributes for Tamoguna—sleep, drowsiness, fear, anger, laziness and inertia.

A farmer who wants to raise a crop in the field has to remove, at the outset, the weeds from his field, if different types of weeds grow, the crop will be affected adversely. Removing the weeds is an essential pre-condition for getting a good crop. In the same way, a sadhaka who wants to realise 'Atmananda' (the joy of Atma), has to remove from his heart the various manifestations of Rajo and Tamo gunas in the form of malice, desire, greed, anger, hatred and jealousy. These six types of enemies of man are the children of Rajo and Tamo gunas. We won't be able to experience the joy of Atma as long as these weeds are there. Therefore Krishna asked Arjuna to remove the Rajo and Tamo gunas from his heart.

If we invite some great man, such as a saint or a learned person to our house, some preparations will have to be made at home, to make it presentable. We have to clean the house and the surroundings before the guest comes to our house. A house which is not clean lacks sacredness and great people would not go to such places. In the same way, if we invited a minister or governor to our village, we would clean the road and decorate the path and keep everything fit and proper for receiving the eminent visitor. If we take so much care and precaution when we invite a person who has only a temporary position, how much more clean should we keep our heart when we invite the very Creator and protector of the world Himself to enter! It is only when we purify our heart that God will be able to enter it.

Krishna said: "Arjuna, you are taking Me as the charioteer of your chariot. Take Me as the charioteer of your life. The seat on which I am seated in this chariot is very clean and well-decorated. Think how clean and how grand your heart should be to make it a seat for Me if I become the charioteer of your heart. As long as Rajo and Tamo gunas are there, the heart is not pure. These two gunas will go on polluting and dirtying the heart. Therefore, to begin with, remove the Tamo and Rajo gunas. Make every effort to remove the dirt from your heart."

Devotion, wisdom, detachment

To take another example: These days when one goes on a picnic, one takes a mirror, a comb and a handkerchief. Why do they take these things? On the way, the wind may blow their hair out of place, and they may need a mirror and comb to tidy it. When they get hot and tired, there may be some sweat on the face, so they take a handkerchief to wipe it off. These three things help one to maintain one's looks. In the same way, if you want to correct the disturbed beauty of the mind, you have to take certain things. Whether our hair is dishevelled or not, is shown by the mirror. To find out whether our mind is disturbed or not, devotion acts as the mirror. This mirror

also must be clean. If the mirror is clean, it will be easy to see whether there is impurity in the mind or not. When we recognise that the mind is disturbed, we have to correct it; for this purpose, we need the comb of wisdom. The cloth with which we wipe the dirt from our heart is 'Vairagya' or detachment. This removes all the dirt. In the journey of life, wherever we go, we need to have devotion, wisdom and detachment.

We must try to understand the different characteristics of Rajoguna. A person who is full of Rajoguna will always be in a hurry. In everything, he exhibits undue haste. He has a lot of anger in him and develops unlimited desires. He cannot keep still even for a moment. These are the features of Rajoguna. If you go to the zoo and watch the animals—be it a tiger, a fox or any other animal—you will find that they do not keep still for a moment. They are continually moving. The reason is that they have Rajoguna. If Rajoguna enters the heart of man, it makes him move all the time it doesn't merely make the person restless but makes him deluded as well. Not merely does he become deluded, but he goes on desiring objects, desiring everything in the world, and thereby becoming more and more deluded and restless. So, restlessness, desire and delusion are the three important features of Rajoguna.

Transcend the gunas

The three gunas are represented in the Ramayana by the three brothers in Ravana's family. The embodiment of Tamoguna is Kumbhakarna, of Rajoguna is Ravana, and of satwaguna is Vibhishana. These three gunas are brothers, but if you allow the first two into your heart, they will cause a lot of harm. When you enter the Kingdom of Liberation, you will have to remove Satwaguna also. Vedanta teaches that we must transcend these three gunas. If a thorn were to prick your foot, to remove it you do not need a knife; another thorn would be enough to help you remove it. Once you have removed the thorn, you could throw away both the thorns. In the same way, with the help of Rajoguna, you have to remove Tamoguna and with the help of Satwaguna, you must remove Rajoguna.

Before you can enter the mansion of Brahmananda (the bliss of oneness with Brahman) you have to cast off all these three gunas. As long as you have gunas, you won't be able to experience bliss. That is why Krishna commanded Arjuna to transcend all three gunas.

The most important cause for the three gunas is the mind. It is impossible to rise above our human nature and realise our divine nature until the mind is transformed. We have to offer our mind to the Lord. Once we surrender our mind to God completely, He will take care of us in every way.

Janaka and Ashtavakra

Once upon a time, King Janaka sent round a message inviting scholars, sages and yogis to teach him the knowledge of Atma. He announced: "In the time it takes me to climb on to my horse, one should be able to give me full Brahmajnana (knowledge of the Absolute)." The sages and scholars were worried, as they felt "This is going to be a severe test for our scholarship and learning." No one dared come and offer to satisfy the King's demand. Meanwhile, a sage by name Ashtavakra entered the kingdom. While he was nearing the capital he saw the scholars and Rishis assembled there. They were looking worried and despondent. He asked them, "What is the cause of all your worries?" They explained their situation and he said, "Why should you be

scared about such a small thing? I can solve this problem.” So saying, he entered the court of King Janaka. He said to the King, "King! I am ready to teach you the knowledge of Atma, but it cannot be taught in this palace which is full of Rajo and Tamo gunas. First I must take you to a Satwa area.”

They took a few horses and soldiers and left the palace. On reaching a lonely spot, Ashtavakra told the King, "I am now going to teach you the knowledge of Atma. I am the preceptor and you are the disciple. Are you ready to accept this relationship? If you agree to this, then you have to make the offering the Shishya has to give to the Guru. Only after you have made your offering will I start my teaching.” King Janaka told Ashtavakra, "I want to attain Brahman and I am therefore prepared to give you anything you want.” Then the Guru told the King: "I don't want anything except your mind.” King Janaka answered: "I offer it to you; from now on, it is yours.”

Then the Guru brought a horse, made it stand, and asked the King to sit down on the ground in the middle of the road of his kingdom. He left the king there and retired into the forest to sit quietly under a tree.

The soldiers waited for a long time for the return of the king but neither the king nor Ashtavakra came. They wanted to know what had happened to them, and one by one, they went to find out. They found their king sitting in the middle of the road with a horse standing nearby. The king had closed his eyes and was absolutely still. Ashtavakra was nowhere to be found. They were rather afraid that this Ashtavakra had cast some magic spell over the king, making him lose his consciousness. They went to the Prime Minister and brought him to the king. The Prime Minister called the king, "Maharaja, Maharaja, Maharaja,” but the king did not open his eyes or respond in any way. The Prime Minister and all other courtiers were alarmed as they could not rouse the king or give him any food or drink. They were wondering what to do. Left with no alternative, the Prime Minister sent the chariot to bring the queen, thinking that if she called the king, he would respond to her entreaties. The queen came and pleaded. But the king remained unmoved.

Meanwhile, the soldiers went in search of Ashtavakra into the forest. They found him sitting under a tree in total peace. They took hold of him and brought him to the place where the king was sitting. Ashtavakra said, "The king is saved, he is all right. You may see for yourself.” The ministers, the queen and others told Ashtavakra: "He has not opened his mouth or his eyes.” Ashtavakra went close to the king and called him, saying, "Maharaj". Immediately the king opened his eyes and replied, "Swami". Ashtavakra told the king, "The ministers and the queen have come; the soldiers and many others have come and all have tried to talk to you; why did you not answer them?" The king replied, "Thoughts, words and deeds are associated with the mind. As I have offered my mind entirely to you, first I need your permission before uttering a word. What authority do I have over my mind? I have offered it to you; it is yours. I won't do anything without your permission and command.” Then Ashtavakra said, "You have reached the state of Amanaska,” and he asked him to place his foot upon the stirrup to mount the horse. By the time he had climbed the horse and placed his other leg over the horseback, he got the experience of Atmananda.

Krishna told Arjuna, "Offer your everything to Me; offer all your Dharmas to Me and I will take care of you and give you liberation and deliverance. Be they physical, mental, spiritual or worldly, offer all your actions to Me."

King Janaka was able to get liberation when he offered his entire mind and the three types of activity, thought, word and deed, to Ashtavakra. The essential meaning of this episode is that one should become Amanaska, to realise unity with the Divine. As long as you have a mind, there is duality. Cold and heat, day and night, sorrow and joy, loss and profit—all these pairs of opposites—come about only when you have a mind. If you want to learn to treat all these things equally, you have to offer your mind to God. That is why in Vedanta it has been said that it is the mind that is responsible for liberation or bondage. As long as you have the mind, Tamo and Rajoguna will not leave you alone. As long as you have these two gunas, there will be no stillness of the body. What is the reason for the restlessness of the mind? On account of the desires of the sense organs the mind becomes restless.

Here is a small example for this. When there is some water in a vessel, if the vessel moves, the water also moves. If the vessel is steady, the water also will be steady. In steady water, you are able to see your image, but in moving water, your Image will also be moving. Therefore, if you want to enter into a state of meditation, you must keep your body still. The body is like the vessel, and the mind may be compared to the water inside it. If the body moves, the mind inside will be agitated. Therefore, control your mind and make it steady by keeping your body steady.

For meditation, it is very important to keep the back straight. The Kundalini power travels from the "Mooladhara" (at the base of the spinal column) to the "Sahasrara" in the head. Therefore, you must be steady. Head, neck and body have to be straight; there should be no bend. This is extremely essential for students and sadhakas engaged in meditation. That is why I tell the students often, "Why do you study? To become steady!" If right from boyhood you can keep your body under control, it will be very useful in achieving many things in later life.

Krishna chose Arjuna as an ideal representative of mankind to set an example for humanity. He said to Arjuna, "I am using you as an instrument in order to make an example of you. Therefore, you must first become an ideal person."

—*The Mandir, Prasanthi Nilayam, 12-9-84*

E H V ON THE MARCH:

Delhi Corporation Takes the Lead

The Delhi Municipal Corporation has decided to bring all the primary schools run by it under the programme of Education in Human Values. There are 5, 45,000 children studying in the Corporation's schools, with 15,000 teachers in charge.

The Corporation's decision was the culmination of over four years of pioneering efforts and experimental work done by the Education Department of the Corporation in collaboration with

Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas Education Trust, Delhi, to assess the positive impact of the E H V programme on the attitude and behaviour of primary school teachers and headmasters.

To finalise a concrete plan of action, evolve an implementation strategy, identify ways and methods of imparting human values through curricular and co-curricular activities, to orient the key-level personnel and teacher-educators to the philosophy and techniques of education, a week-long Orientation Course-cum-Workshop was organised jointly by the Corporation and Bal Vikas Education Trust, Delhi, in May last. The number of participants was over 110, including 64 key-level personnel of the Education Department, School Inspectors, Attendance Officers, and heads and assistant teachers of selected institutions.

The intensive course, covering various aspects of Education in Human Values, was inaugurated by Mr. Justice V. Balakrishna Eradi of the Supreme Court of India. The valedictory session of the Workshop was presided over by Sri Mohanpuria, Chairman of the Education Committee of the Corporation. Dr. P. L. Malhotra, Director of NCERT, Delhi, delivered the valedictory address. Eminent scholars and educationists participated in the Workshop. Sri Indulal Shah delivered the key-note address.

The participants were unanimous in their view that Education in Human Values is the only prescription for the multidimensional malaise afflicting the contemporary world. The five basic universal values—Right Conduct, Truth, Peace, Love and Non-violence—were identified as the ideals round which various activities of the school should be organised.

An action plan comprising a minimum programme followed by intensive work was finalised. The Education Department of the Corporation will take all steps to run this programme effectively with the active support and co-operation of the Bal Vikas Education Trust. The minimum programme which will be implemented in all the 1500 primary schools of the Corporation with immediate effect, will consist of the following activities:

(1) School cleanliness; (2) Two minutes of silence everyday; (3) Prayer of all religions; (4) Morning assembly to be addressed by the head of the School; (5) Observance of holy days of different religions and National Days in a befitting manner.

Concurrent with this programme will be intensive activities aimed at orienting all the 15,000 primary teachers of the Corporation in the next five years so that education in human values can percolate down to every child in all the schools of Delhi.

It was decided that besides direct instruction in Human Values, an integrated approach will be adopted to cover the regular curriculum.

—S. N. S.

Engage yourselves in your duties as intelligently and as devotedly as you can; but, carry out your duties as if they are acts of worship offered to God, leaving the fruit of those acts to His Will, Grace, His Compassion. Do not be affected when the results you anticipate are not produced; do not anticipate at all, but, leave it to Him. He gave you the time, the space, the

cause, the material, the idea, the skill, the chance, the fortune, and you did but little of your own. So, why should you feel as if you are the doer? Do your duty as a sincere Sadhana.

—Baba

VEDAPURUSHA VANI:

Divinity of the Avatar

Exhorting Arjuna to see everything in the Atma, Krishna revealed to him His Cosmic Form (Vishwaroopa). All the forms seen in the Cosmos, wherefrom have they come? Krishna revealed that all of them were in Him. He told Arjuna: "I am in the tree that you see. I am in the ocean. I am in the earth. See Me in everything." Krishna revealed that all that is seen in the phenomenal universe is within Him.

In this context, the difference between Divinity (as Universal Consciousness) and the Avatar (the Divine in human form) should be understood. The Para Brahman (the Omni-Self) is not subject to change. The Avatar has name and form and is liable to change by its own will. The Omni-Self has no name or form. The difference between the two can be illustrated by the example of the Sun and the rays coming from the Sun. There is no difference in substance between the Sun and the Sun's rays. They are one. Whatever the situation in which the Avatar appears, there is no limitation on the Avatar's omnipotence (Poornatwam). Name and form do not circumscribe the Total Fullness of the Divinity the Avatar manifests. Name and form are the self-chosen attributes of the infinite, eternal, ever pure, Universal Consciousness.

Asti, Bhaati, Priyam (Existence, effulgence and bliss) are the characteristics of the Divine. They, in fact, are the Divine Itself. They are the basis of everything in the universe. When they are associated with name and form, they acquire a fivefold character. Hence all things in creation are known as Panchaka (objects with five attributes). The world is described as Prapancha because it makes known these five attributes is creation. For the evolution of the cosmos, the five elements (the pancha bhutas)—ether, air, fire, water and earth—are needed. To nourish the five elements, the five sheaths (pancha kosas) have to be developed. The sheaths have to be sustained by the five vital airs (pancha pranas). The five vital airs are contained in the Avatar. They are: Prana, Apana, Vyana, Udana and Samana. These five vital airs arise from the One that is their source. They originate by the Will of the Omni-self (Chaitanya).

There is nothing in the universe without this Divine principle (Chaitanya). From the minutest particle in its most subtle form to the vastest in its amplitude, the Divine pervades the universe.

Water taken from the ocean, in however small a vessel, has the same quality as the ocean. Likewise, the Avatar, regardless of its name and form, has the plenitude of the Divine. In every respect, except that of name and form, it is identical with Divinity. When Krishna urged Arjuna, "Surrender to Me, worship Me, offer all your Dharmas to Me, I shall protect and liberate you," He was speaking with the full consciousness of His Divinity, His omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence. Only the Divine could have spoken with that assurance.

In the Ramayana, although in many situations Rama appears to act like an ordinary human being, Vasishta, who knew his Atmic Reality, observed: "Rama! You are the very embodiment of Dharma. You are not this corporeal entity, made up of flesh and blood. You are the embodiment of all the sacred mantras. You are not of the earth. You are the Eternal Spirit. The common folk may regard you as an ordinary mortal. But the Yogis experience you as the Divine upholder of Dharma." The Rama avatar is the very incarnation of Dharma. 'Raa' means "purushatwam" (the quality of manliness), "mahapurushatwam" (superhuman quality). "Maa" has also got several meanings. "Rama" symbolises the unity of Prakriti (Creation) and Paramatma (the Omni-self). The Cosmos has no duality. Divinity is the union of Prakriti and Paramatma. The Divine manifests in man as an individual entity. We must recognise the Infinite in the individual. The individual multiplied by infinity is God. God must be seen in the infinity of the Cosmos-in the omnipresence of the Divine.

—*From Bhagavan's discourse at Poornachandra Auditorium on 1-10-84*

Jnana Yagna Dasara

Once again, as in the past year, it was an austere and fully spiritually oriented Dasara, with Bhagavan's discourses on the seven days of the Vedapurusha Saptah Jnana Yagna providing unforgettable spiritual enlightenment and inspiration for thousands of devotees. While explaining the place of Yagas and Yagnas in the religious life of the individual and the community, Bhagavan emphasised the fact that these rituals and other sacred observances like pilgrimages, should be done in such a way that they served to purify the heart ("Chittashuddhi") and enabled the aspirant to achieve God-realisation.

The Dasara celebrations began on September 26 with Kalasa-sthapanam in the Mandir at Prasanthi Nilayam. There was Narayana Seva on the 25th when thousands of men and women were fed and clothes were distributed to the old and the handicapped by Bhagavan.

Bhagavan Inaugurated the Veda Purusha Saptah Jnana Yajna in the Poornachandra Auditorium on September 28. Bhagavan came in a ceremonial procession to the Auditorium from the Mandir, with a group of students chanting Vedic Mantras and the Ritwiks participating in the Yajna heading the procession. As usual, the Yajna included Atirudra Homa, Devi Puja and Linga Puja, chanting of the Vedas, besides Suryanamaskar and reading of scriptural and puranic texts. Bhagavan, as Veda Purusha, started the Yajna with the lighting of the sacred fire in the Homa Kunda specially erected on the auditorium platform. Three priests officiated at the Homa.

Bhagavan gave darshan during the morning hours at the Yajna Vedika and moved among the thousands of devotees gathered in the Poornachandra Auditorium for all of whom Bhagavan's presence and the Yajna were intensely satisfying spiritual experience.

On the evening of the 28th, Prof. Kasturi, recalling the launching of the Prasanthi Vidwan Sabha many years ago by Bhagavan, said that from the day Swami announced His avataric mission He had been engaged in promoting Vedic ideals for the regeneration of the whole of

mankind. As early as 1942, Bhagavan, in a letter, had declared that His mission was to confer joy on all persons ("sakala manavuluku anandamosugate") by awakening their consciousness to an awareness of their Atmic Reality.

Bhagavan, in His discourse, pointed out that the path to God-realisation lay through three stages. Starting from the elimination of dush-karmas (evil actions), one should do Sat-karmas (good and sacred acts) and go on to Nishkama-Karma (action without attachment). The progress is from animal to man and divinity (from preoccupation with the body to control of the mind and realisation of Atma). (Details of discourse published elsewhere).

On the following days, Bhagavan's discourses covered a wide range of subjects, including the significance of the Pranava ("OM") and other mantras, the quest for Divinity, the role of the Avatar, the place of Karmas in the sadhana of the spiritual aspirant, the inner meaning of the concept of the Cosmos as made up of the five basic elements (pancha bhutas). Bhagavan provided new insights into the spiritual significance of many daily observances.

Bhagavan's discourses were preceded by speeches on different days by Brahmasri Bairagi Sastri, Brahmasri Sistla Chandramouli Sastri, Prof. V. K. Gokak and others.

The Saptah Yajna concluded on October 4 after Poornahuti and the adoration of Bhagavan as Veda Purusha by the ritwiks. Swami blessed the entire gathering in the Poornachandra Hall by sprinkling the mantra-charged holy water from the Yagna on them.

Bhagavan's valedictory address in the morning was a ringing call to all devotees to dedicate themselves to the life of the Spirit by eschewing evil qualities like greed, jealousy and hatred and to cultivate love as the primary requisite for God-realisation.

The Dasara celebrations concluded with the eagerly expected Jhoola festival at night when Bhagavan, in shining white robe, resting on the silver Jhoola, gave blissful darshan to the thousands of devotees. There was an enjoyable music concert by Srimatis P. Susheela, P. Leela and Sri Rajeswara Rao.

Learning from Experience

Life is always an exacting school; and experiences are more exacting masters. One who does not learn from one's experiences, never learns. But along with experiences the lessons do not come in ready-made packets. You cannot grip them, pocket them and walk away wiser. You cannot pass them over to a friend and 'convert' him. Nor can you feed a computer with 'experiences' and instruct it to process 'Lessons' out of them for your Instant use.

Every experience is essentially personal; and every lesson (if we can use such a static, ethical and non-expanding term) is essentially subjective. No two persons have the same experience in the same situations or draw the same lessons from them. Had it been so man would have stopped growing long since.

How usefully and successfully we learn depends upon how much we open ourselves to learning, how much we allow the process to take a full toll of our capabilities—physical and psychological. Things happen to us, they themselves are not experiences. Incidents also are not experience. When we relate them to a psychological process of 'de-incidenting' incidents, and begin seeing a pattern in this, we start experiencing.

All our experiences are evocative. A particular incident may generate a particular experience which in its turn may either evoke a similar or a totally dissimilar one, but they are not opposed to each other as east and west are not 'Opposite' directions. They only expand the field. We may confront a 'new' pattern which may shake us thoroughly as we may fail to pick up a similar pattern from the stock we already have, and we are on our way to add another lesson. The faster we classify our experiences, cognise the patterns they evoke, the faster we learn.

Life becomes exciting when incidents are converted into experiences and experiences project facets of truth or lessons. Then we clearly see the process of learning, each experience leading to another, may be of a different order, but ever suggesting a flow towards some vast unity. All experiences are thus stages; or one ever growing, ever moving, ever shifting grand stage circumscribed by the Great Truth. The lessons which we learn from our experiences are only fractional truths leading us to the inevitable whole truth. Therefore Bhagavan says life is a journey from truth to Truth; not from falsehood to Truth.

Unless our responses are deliberate, our choice of Incidents and choice of reaction to them carefully made conscious, we don't learn. Even though an Instinctive response is upon us, we can lay our hold on it, sift it, balance the patterns evoked by it by calling forth experience-patterns of a different order and convert the controlled response into an experience.

I shall try to illustrate the point by an example. Suppose a particular incident at home makes you angry. This incident may be an ugly picture on the wall of your son's bedroom which evokes a series of patterns instinctively. You make a great show of your displeasure at it, announce to everyone at home its ugly implications, which the young boy might not be consciously aware of, and shower upon him, who has just started gathering experiences by instinctive responses to incidents, not very welcome blows. In this you obviously acted instinctively. So on the level of learning neither you nor your son made proper use of the incident to 'learn'. After this you keep on evoking patterns of suspicion, and the young adolescent keeps on calling forth patterns of hatred passed by a more pleasant term 'fear'. You are happy that your son is afraid of you. But what great damage you have done to his learning you don't know! Instead, if you had immediately taken hold of your instinctive response of anger and deliberately chosen to evoke opposite patterns of peace and understanding you would have perhaps smiled to yourself, quietly taken away the picture from your son's bedroom and hung there a gentler, a more sober one. When he comes back, sees the replacement and finds no unusual reaction in your behaviour, a new pattern of experience would shake his psyche—a pattern of beauty, sobriety, gentleness leading to sublimity. Along with this he would experience a fresh pattern of respect and love for his 'thoughtful' father. Thus by consciously guiding our instinctive responses to incidents we can convert them into experiences giving us some useful lessons of life. Such a process of learning is

not only exciting, but far more rewarding than poring over a thousand learned pages in a very well-kept library. That is why Swami often says learning is the greatest adventure in life.

Instinctive response is the enemy of conscious learning. Instinctive response easily calls forth those experience-patterns stored up in us over many a life-time. These may be racial, cultural, geographical, environmental and basic animal patterns. These most often hardly boil down to 'lessons'. Thus we go on repeating the same life many times over. Once someone wanted to impress his listeners by saying, "I have twenty years of experience in this." One of the listeners, a thoughtful one, retorted, "May be, one year's experience repeated twenty times!" Because of this background (which Swami once referred to as 'Blackground!') it becomes so hard for us to learn new lessons.

Therefore, in any thoughtful and useful learning programme the human child has to be aided to fight this 'blackground'. This can be handled by people who are themselves more or less free from the instinctive responses and are able to convert almost every incident into a lesson. But more important than this is that they should be able to touch the psyche of the learner tangentially by evoking the right kind of experience patterns to help the learner draw his or her own lessons. The greatest masters of mankind, therefore, are silent people quietly shaking the world of inner patterns of experience in learners.

I will try to make it clear by an illustration. One must watch people in the Darshan line when Swami is around. He simply goes along the quiet rows of eager people. The incident is characteristically simple. But the response He evokes in people is varied! He stands there before them and a flurry of responses shakes their psyche! Evolutions and involutions take place in those few minutes. Sometimes it is more exciting to watch these responses than Swami Himself. Once I did that, and at the end of those eternal ten minutes, I was almost sweating with wave after wave of varied responses of my own: A westerner wanted his japamala to be blessed by Swami! Swami simply extended His palm, patted it, and passed on. You must have seen the young man to understand how by this simple incident the Great Teacher is able to evoke an experience pattern in him that lighted up his whole inner world! He stayed there dazed with joy full ten minutes totally unaware of his racial-cultural-geographical environmental-animal stockpile of 'Collective Unconscious' being thoroughly overtaken by a totally overwhelming experience-pattern of Delight. He did not come to normal condition until a few friends patted him vigorously and shook him rigorously! That day he must have learnt lessons which no textbook can ever give him, the lessons of Delight.

But you also find people getting up from the Darshan line as if nothing has ever happened! They have failed to convert an incident into an experience and a lesson. Why? All that happened to that young man might have happened to any one of them provided they had opened themselves to it as he did. May be, they did not seek experience, but wanted to prove or disprove or test a manufactured 'lesson' that had been banded over to them.

There are no general truths about God. Each one has to explore his or her own relationship with Him and seek His Truth for himself or herself. Truths are no truths unless they become part of our experience. Therefore, we have no right to contradict an individual's opinions born out of his or her experiences. Swami so often warns us not to argue about Him with anyone: May be,

they are guarding their fort by a pattern already projected into the incident. So until one chooses deliberately to learn, he cannot learn.

The whole truth

To keep the process of learning 'On', we must remember that no lesson is a closed chamber. No lesson is final. No lesson is 'true' or 'false'. In fact no experience can ever be false. But I don't advocate, as some moderns do, that one must welcome all kinds of experiences. This is a tangled field of interminable circles. To learn, we have to choose and avoid certain incidents and experiences. We have to consciously direct the input in the right way or we shall never learn more. We must never stop at fragments. We must continue to add truth until every foregoing truth appears insufficient for our growing psyche, till we arrive at the **WHOLE TRUTH** that engulfs all our experience patterns in a vast sea of light and delight. There all opposites shall have been integrated, the trio, incident-experience-lesson shall have been dissolved and learning shall be done.

But till then life gives to each according to his measure. Swami has a metaphor to bring this home to us. He says He pours on us grace unconditionally, but we receive as much of it as our vessels are capable of holding. In other words He explains grace as proportionate to our endeavour. This may sound, to some, rather disappointing. I also thought God should not be so mathematical-minded until a learned friend pointed out that He has not fixed the proportion! We must enlarge our measure every day by using all that comes our way of learning until we can claim, "My Lord, you are my measure, so give **YOURSELF** to me, so that there shall be no 'me' to receive you."

—Bejoy K. Misra

New Horizons for Sai Seva

Prasanthi Nilayam is a beehive of ceaseless activity-with numerous persons working round the clock to complete the arrangements for the World Sathya Sai Seva Dal Conference to be held in November. Over a dozen new sheds are coming up on the grounds to the north of the two multi-storeyed round buildings while work is proceeding on two more Rotundas, which may be ready early next year.

Simultaneously the vast amphitheater at the foot of Vidyagiri is being got ready for a unique exhibition of rural service activities being carried on by the Sat Seva organisations in the different States of India and in foreign countries. A row of huts will be put up, each displaying the Seva activities in a particular state, through charts, photographs and models. The entrance of each but will be designed to bring out the distinctive features of the State concerned.

In all, over ten thousand Seva Dal members from all parts of India and many countries abroad are expected to attend the Conference, which will be inaugurated by Bhagavan on November 19.

The Sathya Sai Seva Darshan (Exhibition of rural service activities) will be opened on November 18th.

While the Exhibition will give the visiting devotees and the general public a graphic picture of the varied service activities of the Sai organisations in the "adopted" villages. The Seva Dal Conference is expected to review critically what has been done so far and to give new dimensions and set new horizons for these activities in the years ahead. To combine the spirit of service with service of the Spirit will be the unique contribution of the Sai movement to the building up of a new society wedded to the principles of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema.

Bhagavan's inspiration and continuous guidance are to be seen in all the activities going on in Prasanthi Nilayam and the carefully planned arrangements for the World Conference and the birthday celebrations. —Ed.

“Purity of Heart: The Path to Divinity”

*"Heaven and hell are not far away places.
They are related to one's actions.
If you sow a neem seed, will you get a wood-apple tree?
Your birth is the result of your Karma."*

"Karmanubandhini Manushya Loke"—Man is bound by Karma (actions). "Brahma mayam Jagat"—The Cosmos is permeated by Brahman. "Karma mayam Jagat"—The Cosmos is permeated by Karma. Srishti (creation) is Brahman. All action is impelled by the Life Force (Jiva Shakti). The vesture worn by this Life Force is the body. The body is the agency for the performance of Karma. It is also the product of Karma (one's past actions), in a sense, the body and Karma are one.

The actions performed by men are described as Karmas. To reap the fruits of their actions, they take birth in bodies. Hence, man is represented as bound by Karma. It is for experiencing the results of one's good and bad deeds that one takes birth.

We are familiar with the pairs of opposites like good and bad, sin and merit, truth and falsehood. The performance of Vaidika Karmas like Yagnas, Yagas, charity and penance is regarded as meritorious (Punya Karmas). While engaged in these acts, if a person is concerned with worldly gains, Ahamkara (egoism) arises. There is the feeling, "I am doing these sacred rites." On the other hand, indulging in evil deeds like fraud, cruelty and deceit, man forgets his higher nature and is oblivious to the consequences of his actions.

Involvement in actions, whether good or bad, results in bondage. The chains that bind may be made of gold or of iron, but they are chains all the same. Good deeds alone cannot be the means of liberation. The Vedas, the Upanishads, the Gita and the Brahma Sutras have declared that rituals and religious practices will not lead to God-realisation. As they are external acts, they are

related only to the body. They are not conducive in any way to the development of the inner vision. Only when one is able to get rid of egoism and attachment can one develop the inner vision. The realisation of Divinity (Sakshatkara) and mergence in the Brahman (Brahma-prapti) cannot be attained by rituals. "Advaita Darshanam Jnanam"...perception of the Unity of the Divine is wisdom. The sense of duality must be eradicated to realise the oneness of the Absolute.

Three-stage path

Atma Jnana (Knowledge of the Omniself) dawns in man when he has "Chithashuddhi," purity of the heart. This purity can be achieved only through Karmas. The body, the mind and the Atma...all three are involved in the human entity. They are inextricably interdependent. When they become disparate, life loses its meaning. When the body is subject to the mind and the mind is controlled by the Atma, life finds fulfillment. When the body alone is predominant, the human descends to the level of the animal. When the mind prevails over the body and the sensory organs, the human level is attained. When the Atma prevails over the mind and the body, Divinity is realised.

Recognising this fact, the Gita has indicated a three-stage path to divinity. Engaging the body in good deeds, using the mind to develop good thoughts and human qualities and to contemplate on God through Upasana (or worshipping the Divine) man reaches the stage when, like a river joining the ocean, he merges in the Brahman. This is the process by which the human becomes one with the Divine.

Whatever scriptures one may study, whatever sadhanas one may practise or pilgrimages one may make, unless one succeeds in getting rid of the impurities in the heart, life will remain worthless and meaningless. Purification of the heart is the essence of all scriptural teachings and the basic goal of life.

"Swadharma"- "Paradharma"

In this context, the Gita refers to "swadharma" and "paradharma" and says that "Swadharma" is conducive to the ennobling of the individual, while "Paradharma" is fraught with fearful consequences. "Swadharma nidhanam sreyah Paradharma bhayaavahah". Adhering to one's dharma is commendable, while practising "Paradharma" is full of dangers. "Swadharma" does not mean the dharma (duty) relating to any caste, community, race or religion. "Swa" means Atma. It is the dharma that is related to Atma that is "Swadharma". Paradharma is dharma related to the body consciousness. All duties associated with the external world are comprised in "Paradharma". These duties will inevitably involve one in the bonds of Samsara (worldly life). Though they may confer temporary pleasures they are bound to result in fear and anxiety.

In performing Yagas, Yajnas and other Vedic rituals there is the danger that they may become instruments of bondage. We must ensure that in performing these good deeds, we do not develop ego or attachment. When anything is done with attachment or desire, it results in actions which lead to rebirth. Yagas and Yajnas are expected to take one to Swarga (heaven). But how long can the stay in heaven last? When the fruits of the good deeds have been enjoyed, one has to be born again on earth. ("Ksheene punye marthya lokam visanthi"—When the accumulated merit is exhausted, one re-enters the mortal world.)

Nishkama karma

One must therefore seek what is permanent and eternal. That can be realised only through nishkama karma (desireless action). Every action done without ego leads to divinity. Ignoring this truth, man indulges in meaningless actions. People recite the Gita, achieve proficiency in expounding it, but do not live up to the message. The Gita is interpreted in many ways, according to one's whims and fancies. The Gita and other scriptural texts are like the Kalpavriksha—the Wish-fulfilling Tree. They lend themselves to varied interpretations and meanings. But, what matters is not the manifold interpretation, but the understanding derived from actual experience. Without putting into practice the teachings of the Gita, we cannot derive the bliss that can be got from it. Reciting the Gita endlessly or listening to it will be of no avail if nothing is done to purify one's heart and get rid of evil qualities like ego, selfishness and pride. It is better to put into practice a single stanza of the Gita than to get by heart all the 700 slokas.

No spiritual study or sadhana can help to purify one's heart unless one makes the effort himself. And when the heart is purified, it becomes a worthy abode for the Divine.

Whatever you do you must regard it as a duty done without any motive of self-interest or selfish gain. It is only when all actions—whether they be yagas or Yajnas or Tapas or any kind of sadhana—are done as offerings to the Divine, will they become sanctified and liberating. Through desire-filled actions we take birth, through desireless actions (anashakti karmas) we can attain freedom from re-birth.

—**Poornachandra Auditorium, 28-9-1984**

President to Deliver Convocation Address

The President of India, Giani Zail Singh, will deliver the Convocation Address at the third Convocation of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning (Deemed University) to be held at the Poornachandra Auditorium on November 22, 1984. Bhagavan Baba, Chancellor of the Institute, will preside. Many distinguished invitees are expected to attend the Convocation.

Sai Movement and the World's Destiny

Hailing Bhagavan Baba as 'the Avatar of Love', Prof. V. K. Gokak, Vice-chancellor of the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, in his address to a vast gathering in the Poornachandra Auditorium on October 3, declared that "the world is in the grip of a global crisis and only an Avataric intervention can save it."

Taking for his theme the growth of "the Sai movement and the world's destiny," Prof. Gokak said:

Since the 50th birthday celebration of Bhagavan, the Sai Movement has achieved a global spread. Sai devotees from European countries attended the seminar in Rome in October 1983 in large numbers. Devotees from the Eastern Hemisphere of the world met at Kuala Lumpur in July 1984 and eleven countries in South East and Far East were represented there Including Australia. The U.S.A., Canada and Australia have experienced the impact in a considerable measure. The Sanathana Sarathi has its subscribers in all parts of the world. The scheme of Human Values for the young has attracted attention all over India and in U.S.A. and U. K. It is, therefore, time to think about the significance of such a wide reception given to Sathya Sai ideals.

Before thinking of the significance of this movement, it is necessary to cast a look back at the European Renaissance, which began more than four centuries ago. During the pre-Renaissance period, Physics was known as "Natural Philosophy". The scientists were as much believers in God as anyone else. Ecological harmony prevailed. Man had a vivid awareness of his unity with the Universe and with God. But the old view of some Greek philosophers "Man is the measure of all things" was revived. Man began to be emphasised more than God. Religious institutions degenerated and religion was shaken by revolts against it in spite of the Reformation. The empirical and experimental pursuit of science began to be received more and more. Des Cartes with his famous dictum "I think; therefore I am" (it would be better to say, "I am; therefore I think") held the field. The divorce of mind from matter was complete with this philosopher and the unified view of the Universe was lost. The universe was fragmented into numberless objects.

With the gradual growth of technology, industries sprang up and mass production was the rule of the day. Newton and Darwin won the day. The labours of a number of eminent physicists led to the splitting of the atom, the electronic era and space travel. The atom bomb led to the very edge of brinkmanship.

In the meanwhile, empires had been raised by countries, which profited by the Renaissance, —Spain, Portugal, England, France and so on. When the empires disintegrated because of Republican Movements, the two Power Blocs came. The empires were transformed into two powerful and one powerless bloc. This last continued to experience exploitation and the first two were exploiters in more subtle and more dangerous ways.

The pressure of the imperial attitude is experienced today even more disastrously by the nonaligned countries. They cannot catch up with the two powerful blocs because they have been exploited to the point of exhaustion. They may have to continue in this fashion in a newly colonial style, though they have all the trappings of independent democracies.

The imperial attitude means placing at the altar for worship the cult of life and of enjoyment and the gospel of practical reason and indifference supplants Love. Religion becomes mechanical. Man replaces God. Colonies may spring up in Space. Man becomes a robot. Even the Fine Arts can become victims and handmaids of this gospel.

The Indian renaissance

But there are other forces perceptible and one can see them today operating actively. Intellectuals in the Western world have found the unmistakable affinity between Vedanta and modern Physics and they are coming back to the old view of a unified Universe. The relativity

and Quantum Theories are making this return inevitable. A surfeit of the good things of life leads to spiritual hunger and the West is pining for the Spirit. Even the common man in the West revolts against mechanical religion and is at home in the midst of the spiritual movements of the East.

Then there is the great phenomenon of the Indian Renaissance. Its first phase was spent in winning back lost treasures, which ancient India possessed, —Reason, Science, Freedom and a Sense of Social Justice. It was the period of British rule that ushered in these changes. The second phase of the Indian Renaissance culminated in the advent of great saints, like Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Ramana Maharshi and others. Two of these had also the aura of avataric figures about them. Their teachings led to the positive and dynamic philosophy, a re-assimilation and presentation of the robust philosophy of the Vedas. They led to the following basic Truths:

- (1) The Unity of Matter and Spirit.
- (2) Emphasis on the importance of earth as much as heaven itself.
- (3) The need for the coexistence of Reason and Intuition for a complete view of life.

The Sai advent

It is at this point that Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba came on the scene. He announced his four simple and fundamental Truths:

- (1) There is only one caste and that is the caste of humanity.
- (2) There is only one religion and that is the religion of love.
- (3) There is only one language and that is the language of the heart.
- (4) There is only one God and He is Omnipresent.

We have also to admit a fifth important Truth. There is only one remedy to the ills of the world and that is the Avatar. The roles of Rama, Krishna and Jesus Christ explain how a world crisis is met. Baba comes in the wake as a compeer of these Masters.

It is no wonder that both the East and the West are rallying round this philosophy. The world is in the grip of a global crisis today and only an Avataric intervention can save the world. Everyone, who has experienced Baba, knows that he is the Avatar of Love. In his view all are not only brothers: They are One. It is not just a movement for *Sarvodaya*, but *Sarvatmodaya*, —the equality of all human beings in Love and the Universal awakening of souls, in a world society in which caste and class and all religions are One and societies are moved by the inspiration of Love. Add to Love Truth, which is intuitively experienced and intellectually formulated, Beauty or the refinement and purity of one's thoughts and emotions, and Goodness, which results in acts, each one of which is prompted by the soul, the ego being extinct. Here you have with you the making of an Integral Personality.

There is one more aspect, which is even more important than the other four, if one has to speak politically and collectively. The world-situation needs the application of this fifth aspect, Power, today. The leaders of society like Ministers, Government Secretaries, business magnates and members of Parliament and Assemblies have probably seen the possibilities of overwhelming Love. But the temptation is too great and they are unable to extricate themselves from the grip of the Devil.

How the Divine works

But the Divine Will is relentless. If man has to be saved from total destruction, and if ministers, business magnates and politicians have to be enabled to change their views, that Will will work through Circumstance. Circumstance, in fact, is itself the Will of God. It cares for no ministers, no business magnates and no politicians.

There is a way in which the Divine work can be expedited even before Circumstance is projected. There is a way of expediting Divine work and quickly ushering in the fruits of Circumstance. A band of devotees, totally surrendered to the Divine, can open themselves up as channels to the Puissance or Power of the Avatar.

Here is an instance as reported by an air officer who was the pivot of the story. During the Indo-Pakistan war, there was an incident regarding the Srinagar airport. The soldiers and the airmen posted at the airport had been taken to the war-front. There were only a handful of men left at the airport. Somehow news of this airport being thinly guarded had reached the Pakistani Air Force and they thought of making a bid to seize the Srinagar airport. This reached the Indian side very late, —only on the evening of the night on which this air-raid was to take place. A nervous officer was in command and he was too bewildered to plan anything. An officer saw something like a map floating before his eyes. He was too busy to know what this map was. This had come to him in sleep the previous night too. This officer was a Sathya Sai devotee. When the news of the crisis came to be known by the officers, they were talking desperately about it. One of them went to the person in command and told him that one officer was a Sathya Sai devotee (no one knew about the map at that time) and that, cool and collected as he was, he might be put in charge of the airport. The nervous officer in command agreed to this and the said officer was put in charge of the airport. There was hardly any time. Suddenly the officer devotee remembered the map incident. He sat down to recollect it and succeeded in drawing it up. The map showed how the few men that were there, should be posted all over the airport at some distance from each other. The night was on and the air-raiders came in their planes. Shots started being fired from all parts of the airport. The air raiders, after trying for several hours, felt that the airport was heavily guarded and that it would be disastrous to try to seize the airport. The air-raid party beat a retreat and the airport was saved.

Here was a channel that was somewhat blocked. Even then it worked and opened itself to the flow of Divine Power. Utter Faith and Love can work wonders.

The Aged and the Infirm

I have worked with an organization called the Ombudsman (which is a Swedish word for advocate) for the past four years and would like to share my experience. The Ombudsman programme is fairly young and is only established in about 15 states in the U.S. But it has proved beneficial to both the residents of nursing homes and their administrators.

The programme was initiated to find, train and place volunteers in private care nursing homes who would act as impartial mediators between the resident patients and the administration. Each volunteer would visit the nursing home at least once a week to LISTEN and talk with the residents. If the resident had any problems the volunteer would talk with the head nurse or administrator and hear their version of the story. In most cases the problem is one of lack of communication.

The residents very often are lonely and have very few, if any, visitors and employees don't have any time to listen to their problems. So the volunteer becomes not only an advocate for the resident but often a cherished friend. Care has to be taken not to become emotionally attached to the residents.

As the programme grew we found a number of activities that service oriented groups could do either as a group or individually. There are two important prerequisites that are necessary to start and maintain any service project. The first is the person who will organize the project. He has to be able to go out and visit different nursing homes and select one whose needs and size can best be served by the abilities of his or her centre. He has to be able to convey to the administrator that the group is only service-oriented and that their service will be beneficial both for the residents and the nursing home. The second, and most important, is a person with a strong commitment to the project who will visit the nursing home every week or fortnight to get acquainted with the personalities and needs of the residents as well as the limitations of the nursing home. This person will become the heart of the project. Baba's teaching, "leave early, drive slowly and arrive safely" is of utmost importance here. The residents will come to depend upon your showing up at the scheduled time. We have seen groups make large plans and not be able to follow through because of declining attendance. So in the beginning get to know the residents and see if the members will be able to work with them. Then slowly increase the scope of your activities. The residents are both full of love and starving for love; so it is important that we do not let them down.

The best way to get started, we have found, is to have an activity night once a month. What we did was to hand over some refreshment, which is first approved by the head nurse, and then we played bingo. The prizes can be some sweets or some personal item that the home does not supply. The prizes are only of secondary importance. The game is the medium by which the volunteers and the residents become acquainted. After five or six sessions common interests will develop and other activities will become a natural extension of this project. This activity usually takes one volunteer for 5 to 10 residents.

Other activities are as follows:

Picnics: The residents are seldom (if ever) able to leave the home; so if you can take small groups at different times out to a park for the afternoon you can well imagine the happiness they will experience from this. This calls for greater supervision, so you will need one to 2 or 5. (All activities away from the home will be governed by local laws and insurance requirements)

Excursions: Outings to museums, zoos, theatres, parks and other public displays afford an excellent opportunity for the residents to get away from the home for a while.

There are also some activities which one or two people can do on their own.

Reading: You can go to the nursing home any time you have some free time and read to the residents. You will draw an immediate crowd. They love to hear people read and it does not matter what you read. You can read Bible stories or magazines or even from the daily newspaper.

Letter Writing: many of the residents are disabled and would like to send letters to their families and friends. This has a twofold effect: (1) it lets the family know how the resident is and (2) as the family or friends come rarely to visit them, the letters may sway their conscience to get out and come and see them. There is also a second part to this; you can write letters to the residents. It is an indescribable joy for them to receive mail.

Friendly visits: if you have some free time and are close by, you can just drop in and visit them, see how they are doing and ask if they need anything done.

Finally there is the celebration of holidays. Our centre always had a Christmas party for the residents. We would get them a gift (usually the same thing for all), serve some special refreshments and sing Christmas carols. It is a memorable occasion for us. In fact many of our members would experience great bliss during the singing of the carols. And for the residents it was a very joyous and uplifting experience. These are a few of the activities we found the nursing homes in need of and I am sure others will find more.

—*From a Sai devotee, St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.A.*

Kenley (Surrey, U. K.): Sai devotees in Britain have taken up voluntary charity activities to help needy people in the country. A blood donation programme was organised in July. Devotees from London, France, Bahrain and Malaysia came forward to offer their "donation of Liquid Love" and 108 pints of blood was collected on a single day. The Sathya SCI Voluntary Organisation of Kenley arranged a Disco programme for mentally handicapped people in Hackney.

Mulki (Karnataka State)

An E. N. T. (ear, nose, throat) and Dental Medical Camp was conducted on September 16, in the "adopted" village of Thokur by the Mulki Seva Samiti, mainly for school-going children. 269 students were examined and appropriate treatment was given. 69 dental extractions were done. An eye camp was conducted in the same village for students and general public on September 26. 343 patients were examined and appropriate treatment was given. Operation cases were referred to a free eye operation camp to be held at Udupi.

Polio Camp

Madras (Tamil Nadu): Four-year-old Yunif discovered the miracle of walking after a surgical operation at the free Surgical Polio Camp, organised by the Madras Sai Samiti for a large number of children at "Sai Krupa," Abbotsbury, in July. He was one of 1203 polio affected patients examined by Dr. Vyaghreswarudu, from Vishakapatnam. Of them 112 children were operated upon on July 28 and 29. The operations were carried out in two massive sessions in an improvised operation theatre. Nine surgeons, nine anesthetists, 40 pediatricians and general duty doctors served in the camp, besides nurses and other personnel. The entire atmosphere of the camp was sanctified by the singing of bhajans by Bat Vikas children and Sai devotees. The affected children were provided with storybooks and shown video shows of mythological films, besides dances by Bat Vikas children, by way of entertainment. Seva Dal members were in charge of all arrangements. The Health Minister of the Tamil Nadu Government, who inaugurated the camp, was all praise for the way it had been organised to bring cheer and hope to hundreds of handicapped children.

The Madras District Sai Seva Samiti observed September 23 as World Blood Donation Day. 308 donors donated blood, which was distributed to 8 major hospitals in the city. —**M.K.B.**

Meerut (U. P.): The third camp for training teachers in Education in Human Values, was conducted by the Institute of Education in Human Values, Meerut, from September 26 to 29 at Vaish Anathalaya. Forty eight teachers from 31 local primary schools attended the course.

THE LORD IS HERE

The sages cried for help,
To restore Dharma back,
They cried for whose sake?
For the sake of Humanity.
 He has come down hearing their cry,
 On this Earth with a sword,
 The sword that is glittering:
 Glittering with what? With Love.
He has brought with him five angels,
Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa,
And if these are pursued by anyone,
He will merge in Him, the Lord of the Universe.
 He, the protector of the Good,
 The one who corrects the Bad,
 Let us all bow to him,
 The Lord, the Lord of the Universe.

—*Sanjay Charterjee VIII Class,*

Vidyagiri, Prasanthi Nilayam.

Sai Lost, Sai Found

The Sai whose sacred feet
I wash with my tears,

whose reassuring words
I mingle with my earthly fears,

vanished one sudden morning
from the altar of my shrine!

Where have You fled? so mourning
my heart began to reel and pine.

Days passed, weeks went, a month, a year
searching, searching, He was nowhere near.

Then like a stroke of lightning
a thunderous ray unsettled,

from the cavity of the heart within
a beam shot upwards to the space between,

and there, lo! behold, on the inner throne
the King of *Advaita* sat in majesty, alone.

—Purushottama, Melbourne.

GITOPADESH:

The Malaise and the Cure

Arjuna had fought many battles, but he had never experienced any sorrow or attachment then. In the Mahabharata war, however, the same Arjuna felt that those ranged against him were his own uncles, grandparents and teachers, and he became despondent. He was the victim of the bondage of 'my-ness' and of his attachment to his kith and kin.

When Krishna set out on His mission of peace, Arjuna was keen on waging war with his cousins, the Kauravas, and he tried to persuade Krishna to see that His peace mission would not succeed. Arjuna pleaded with Krishna with all the strength he could command, "Krishna, this

issue cannot be settled by negotiations. The Kauravas won't agree to any compromise. Why talk words of peace? They will never accept them. Let us not indulge in this mission! Will the arrogant lot agree to our proposals? Why do you waste Your efforts, Krishna!"

What was the reason for Arjuna's attitude at that time and later, on the battlefield? When he did not see his enemies face to face, his attitude was impersonal. But once he beheld his opponents on the battlefield, he saw them as relatives, teachers and friends, his eyes were clouded and he became dizzy. He said, "Krishna, I won't be able to fight. I am laying down my armour."

When Krishna heard these words, He was very angry and rebuked Arjuna: "This weak-mindedness is unbecoming in a renowned warrior like you, esteemed as an unrivalled hero. You seem to be suffering from timidity. The battle is about to be joined. Preparations for the war have been on for the past three months. If you had shown this hesitation in the beginning itself I would never have taken on this task. But, after securing the help of our allies and kinsmen and assembling them and their forces, if you withdraw from the fray, you are false to the dharma of a true Kshatriya. You are appearing as a faint-hearted poltroon. Coming generations will jeer at your cowardice. You are known by the name Arjuna. Remember the meaning of this name."

Arjuna means sacredness and purity. Ignorance of himself was the only reason for the anguish which overcame him. Being fully aware of the nature of this particular disease, Krishna prepared Himself to treat it. Krishna could have straightaway taught "Bhakti Yoga," "Karma Yoga" and "Nishkama Karma Yoga," to Arjuna. He did not do so. In fact, Krishna started speaking only in the second chapter. The first chapter of the Gita is devoted to the narration of the grief and anguish of Arjuna. Krishna allowed him to have his say. Krishna began his teaching from the 11th verse of the second chapter. Until then, Krishna listened with extreme patience to everything Arjuna said. Then He asked Arjuna, "Have you said all you had to say?" Arjuna was silent. Krishna told him, "The malady of weak-mindedness is afflicting you. I know how to cure It. I'll do it. Your Ignorance is responsible for this attachment and Infatuation." Then He instructed Arjuna in "Sankhya Yoga" or the Path of Jnana.

Atma and an-atma

"Sankhya Yoga" enables one to distinguish between the eternal and transient, 'Atma' and 'an-atma'. It implies the awareness of the basic truth, but a person suffering from ignorance, how would he be able to understand 'Atma' and 'an-atma'? Still, when a patient is in great danger, the doctor has to see that he gets out of danger. Afterwards he can undertake the regular treatment. Unless the patient is saved from danger, other remedies will be futile. When a person is drowning, we have to first take him out of the water to the shore and then offer the necessary treatment. We don't start the treatment while the person is struggling frantically. So Krishna gave Arjuna at the outset a strong injection of courage to save him from sorrow and dejection. He explained the principle of 'Atma' and 'an-atma' to him. "Arjuna, with fear you will not be able to accomplish anything. Don't give way to fear: you are the fearless Atma. It is only in that state of Atmic awareness that I can make you achieve victory."

In truth Krishna is 'Atma', Arjuna is caught in the 'an-atma', ignorance. Krishna said, "I would like to explain things related to you and Me. Let us suppose that I were to become you,

and you were to become Me. If I were to become you, I would also become weak-minded, but it is impossible for such weakness to enter Me. On the other hand, if you want to become Me, then you have to follow Me!" Then Arjuna said, "Swami, I will follow your command implicitly." After instilling courage into Arjuna, He directed him to enter the battle.

Krishna said: "Arjuna, you think that these people are your relatives and friends. But, consider this: who is a relative? Who is the body? Who is the Indweller? All bodies are like bubbles on water. You and I and these friends and relatives have been in existence in many previous lives. Body, mind and Intelligence are all temporary agents. They are like the clothes we wear and discard. They are inert. Why develop such a close attachment to these things, subjecting yourself to sorrow and infatuation! Do your duty: all the honour and other things due to you as a prince, will be showered on you. On the battlefield, there can be no room for faint-heartedness. You can't play two roles at the same time when one role is opposed to the other. Now you are on the battlefield and have come to fight. So, FIGHT!"

Dharmakshetra: Kurukshetra

In the very opening verse of the Gita, we find Dhritarashtra asking Sanjaya: "Sanjaya, what are my people doing, and what are the Pandavas doing on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, which is a Dharmakshetra?" It is a place where sacrifices are performed. The children of 'Kuru' used to play on that very field. Therefore it is called 'Kurukshetra'. Sacred and auspicious acts had been done on that very spot. So it is Dharmakshetra, as well.

Our body itself may be called a Dharmakshetra. For, when a child is born, It is pure and without blemish. It is not a victim yet of any of the six 'enemies of man'—anger, greed, lust, egoism, pride and jealousy. It is always happy. It cries only when hungry. Whoever fondles it, king or commoner, saint or thief, the child is happy. The child's body is not affected by any of the three 'gunas' (qualities) and is a 'Dharmakshetra'. As the body grows, it begins collecting qualities such as jealousy, hatred and attachment. When these evil tendencies develop the body becomes a 'Kurukshetra'.

The battle between the Pandavas and the Kauravas did not last more than 18 days, but the war between good and bad qualities in us is waged all through life. 'Rajoguna' and 'Tamoguna' are associated with the ego and the sense of 'mine'. The word 'Pandava' itself stands for purity and 'satwic' nature. "Pandu" means whiteness and purity. The children of Pandu, the five Pandavas were pure. The war between the Pandavas and the Kauravas signifies the inner war in each of us—the war of 'Satwaguna' against the other two gunas, Rajas and Tamas.

Answering Dhritarashtra's question, Sanjaya said, "Why do you ask me what they are doing? Since they have all gathered for war, they are of course fighting." There is, however, an inner meaning to the question. This is to be found in his use of the word 'Dharmakshetra'. Dhritarashtra hoped, "My children are bad and wicked, but since they have entered the Field of 'Dharma' (Dharmakshetra), it is possible their minds may be transformed into good."

"Dhritarashtra" means one who considers things which do not belong to one as one's very own. He is not the body; but he owns it. He is not the senses, but he derives pride in owning them. A person who considers the kingdom which does not belong to him as his own, is a "Dhritarashtra".

Every person of Dhritarashtra's lineage identified himself with the body and the senses that led to the tragedy.

Foresight and hindsight

Among the Pandavas, there were some who were superior to Arjuna in some respects. Dharmaraja, the eldest brother was more serene. Why then was the sacred Gita not taught to him? In terms of physical prowess, Bhima was a much stronger person. Why was it not directed to Bhima? Why was it taught to Arjuna? Dharmaraja was the embodiment of 'Dharma', no doubt. But, he did not have the foresight to visualise the ravages of war. He did not consider what the consequences of his action would be. He became wise only after the event. Bhima had enormous physical strength and valour, but he did not have enough intelligence. But, Arjuna had foresight. He told Krishna, "I would rather be dead than fight against these people, because, if I should win, it would be at the cost of putting them to death and causing much suffering." In contrast to this, Dharmaraja waged the war and when he lost his kith and kin, he sat down in gloom regretting all that had happened!

When one acts without foresight, one has to repent for the consequences of the indiscriminate action. This was the case with King Dasaratha. In the war between the gods and the demons, he fought on the side of the Devas, taking Queen Kaikeyi, the daughter of the king of Kashmir, with him. She was well-versed in the art of warfare. It was Kaikeyi who taught the strategy of war and the art of archery to Rama. While Dasaratha was engaged in the battle, one of the wheels of his chariot was about to come off as the linchpin of the axle had come out. Kaikeyi saved the situation by using her finger as a pin to hold the wheel in position. After the end of the battle, Dasaratha noticed that Kaikeyi's hand was bleeding profusely. Seeing her plight and realising her courage and sense of sacrifice, Dasaratha told her, "Kaikeyi, you can ask from me two boons." He did not specify what type of boon she should ask of him or when. He promised these boons without any thought of the consequences. Kaikeyi asked for these boons later, at a time which was advantageous to her but disastrously mortal for him!

Krishna considered Arjuna as the fittest person for imbibing the Gita. Arjuna foresaw the aftermath of the war and that was why he shied away from the fight. He knew the consequences would be terrible. Only a pure heart can feel sorry for something even before the event takes place.

Guru and disciple

Krishna and Arjuna were inseparable companions for seventy five years, because Arjuna's was a pure heart. Although they had lived together for so long, Krishna had not instructed Arjuna, because during all that period Arjuna was moving with Krishna as his brother-in-law. He was conscious only of the family relationship. The moment Arjuna surrendered and accepted discipleship, Krishna stood forth as his teacher. If we really desire to acquire higher knowledge from some one, it will be possible only when there is the relationship of guru and disciple.

When Arjuna told Krishna, "You are my father; you are my mother; you are my teacher; you are my wealth and my every thing," surrendering himself completely to Krishna. Then only did Krishna reply: "You are my disciple; you do my work; do everything for Me and I shall take care of you."

While dealing with "Sankhya Yoga" Krishna taught Arjuna how to surrender totally to His will. Krishna freed Arjuna from the sense of identifying his body with the Atma, the indwelling Divine Spirit. As long as that overwhelming body-consciousness persists, we will not be able to practise any spiritual discipline of 'Dharma Marga', 'Karma Marga' or 'Bhakti Marga'. In fact, attachments pollute the heart. Without cleansing the heart of these impurities, it is not possible to fill it with holy feelings. "Arjuna," said Krishna, "you are steeped in body consciousness. Cast off that delusion, then only will I be able to fill your heart with wisdom and bliss."

Ignorance is the most important cause of sorrow. "Have you yearned for God, for Dharma? When you cry out for God and for Dharma, the yearning becomes 'yoga' sadhana. You clamour for a number of things, but when there is a decline in 'Dharma', you must cultivate courage. You must develop the capacity to face adverse situations. Today you should have immense courage and unshakable determination. Avoid blind and foolish courage. One should have the capacity to discriminate and behave in accordance with the time, place and circumstance. Here and elsewhere, you should always have courage in your heart and the determination needed to accomplish the task." Thus did Krishna exhort Arjuna.

—Bhagavan's Discourse at the Mandir, Prasanthi Nilayam, 5-9-84

Unique Significance of "Omkar"

Mantra is not a mere collocation of words. It is compounded of words pregnant with enormous significance. It emanates from the inner power of man. Filled with such power, the sacred mantra, when it is pronounced properly, brings out the Divine power in man. The vibrations produced by the utterance of the mantra, uniting with the cosmic nada (sound) in the Universe, become one with the Universal Consciousness. It is these cosmic vibrations which assumed the form of the Veda.

For all the mantras, the primary mantra, which enshrines the attributeless, Omni-Self, is the Omkar. The Omkar embodies in the form of sound the Supreme Brahman. For this sound, the presiding deity is Saraswati. In common parlance Saraswati is regarded as the consort of Brahma. It is the union of Brahma and Saraswati that accounts for all the knowledge in the world. Who is Brahma and who is Saraswati? Saraswati is commonly worshipped as the Goddess of speech and as the deity who has to be propitiated for acquiring knowledge. She is also described as the giver of boons (Varade) and as one capable of assuming any form (Kamaroopini). But Saraswati is not one who conforms to these descriptions. Saraswati is present in all beings as the Goddess of Speech. The body is regarded as Brahma and the tongue is regarded as Saraswati and the vibrations emanating from the heart find expression in sound through the union of the body and the tongue. Although there are many letters and words, the fundamental letter (aksharam), which has primacy of place, is the Omkar. "Om ithyepaksharam Brahma"—"the single letter OM is Brahman Itself" (says the Gita). All other letters and words are linguistic creations. They do not possess the unique sacredness and divine character of 'OM'.

Why the Avatar Comes?

The Divine has to incarnate in human form to establish Dharma in the world by teaching humanity the omnipresence of Divinity. Assuming the human form does not, however, detract in any way from the plenary puissance of the Universal Consciousness (Para Brahman).

The delusion that makes one mistake a rope for a snake does not affect the real character of the rope. Likewise the delusion about the phenomenal world does not negate the truth about the Brahman. In darkness the rope is mistaken for a snake. The moment a light is brought, it is seen that there is only a rope and no snake. The snake was a creation of the imagination. Neither did a snake exist nor was the rope non-existent. In the same way, the eternal Divine Reality is omnipresent. It does not appear or disappear. In the state of ignorance we regard Nature (Prakriti) or creation as Reality. In the light of knowledge, the same is seen as Brahman.

Man's true goal is to realise his Divinity. All his actions will become meaningful only when they are performed for this purpose. It is to reveal to man from time to time his Divine Reality and set him on the spiritual path that Avatars appear in human form. The realisation of the Truth about himself cannot come to one by the mere study of scriptures or by listening to the teachings of a Guru. It can only come as a result of individual effort and the spiritual discipline practised by one.

—From Bhagavan's Discourse at Poornachandra Hall on 29-9-1984

Central Training Programme for 10 State

A four-day Central Training Programme for Teacher-Trainers in Education in Human Values was held at Shantivan, Bhopal, from 13th to 16th October, 193.1. Two hundred and sixty (144 men and 116 women teachers) participants, including Programme Co-ordinators and Senior teachers of the existing Centres, from ten States of Northern, Central and Western India—Bihar, U. P., Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, M. P., Maharashtra and Gujarat—attended the camp.

While inaugurating the camp on 13th October, Sri Arjun Singh Chief Minister, Madhya Pradesh, observed that through the programme of Education in Human Values designed by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the teachers will have to mould the young children just as stones are chiseled and cut to size for the strong foundation of a building without which it can collapse. If an uneducated mason has to take so much of care and responsibility, how much more is the responsibility of the teacher? The Chief Minister assured all support from the Government of Madhya Pradesh to "this useful programme."

Welcoming the Chief Minister, Sri Ranjit Vithaldas, Regional Convener for M. P., Delhi and Rajasthan, and Srimati Sarala Shah, Joint Convener, Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas Education Trust, explained the significance and relevance of the programme.

The speakers who addressed the participants and demonstrations of teaching methods included Sarva Sri Sham Sunder, B. G. Pitre, Vir Vishveshwar, Sanjeev Choudhary, Prof. S. R. Rohidekar, Jose Paul, Ashok Mehta, D.P. Maini, Smt. H. Palamkote, Kum. Indu Hebalkar, Kum. Neeta Khanna, Smt. Sunanda Ghosh, Kum. Kunda Dalvi & Smt. S. N. Raje.

The Valedictory function on 16th October was presided over by Sri S.C. Behar, I.A.S., Vice Chancellor of Guru Ghasidas University, Bilaspur, and Director, State Council of Educational Research and Training, Madhya Pradesh. Sri Durgadas Suryavanshi, Minister for Manpower Planning, Madhya Pradesh, was the Chief Guest.

India is the land, where the dichotomy of 'that' and 'this', of 'creator' and 'creation', of 'energy', and 'matter', was resolved in one grand unity, by both theory and practice, in philosophical schools and in hermitages. The tree of life, with its countless branches proliferating into thought, words, and deeds, attitudes, tendencies, and impulses, is known by the sages of India to have its roots in heaven! So, every rule and ritual was made sacred and holy, suffused with purity, humility and love. This resulted in peace and happiness for the individual, the family, the community, the nation and the world.

—Baba

Comprehensive Campaign in Sathya Sai Taluk

The Sai message of dedicated service to the rural population was carried to the whole of the Sathya Sai Taluk in a three-day programme, drawn up in connection with the International Sathya Sai Seva Dal Conference.

The carefully prepared comprehensive programme was based upon the results of a socio-economic survey conducted by students of the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning and Seva Dal members from Andhra Pradesh under the direction of Dr. Subba Rao. The short-term and long-term needs of the different villages were identified and a fourteen-point programme was drawn up covering such service activities as repair of bore-wells, health education, medical aid, veterinary camps, cleaning and whitewashing of schools and places of worship, training in the maintenance of borewells, electrical wiring etc., teaching of first aid to students, demonstration of smokeless chulas and improved latrines, etc. The day-to-day implementation of the programme was carried out under the direction of Sri Anil Kumar, Sri Rajesh Khanna and Sri Anand Uchil.

Teams of Seva Dal members and medical personnel, including specialists, some of them from overseas, fanned out into the 340 sq. mile Sathya Sai Taluk in Anantapur district and carried out the service programme for three days from November 15 to 17. In all 11,954 men, women and children received medical aid and 2245 head of cattle were treated in the whole taluk, divided into seven zones for the work. The demand for medical aid was so high at some of the medical camps that the medical teams had to be reinforced.

Over 1200 Seva Dal members drawn from the units of the Sai Organisation all over the country and overseas were divided into large teams and thoroughly briefed on the work they were expected to do. The workers with their implements and aid-kits boarded twelve trucks and the teams of doctors went in buses to their respective centres. They were all given a rousing send off by Bhagavan Baba Himself at Prasanthi Nilayam on the morning of November 15. The teams left for the villages singing bhajans and shouting "Jais" to Bhagavan.

A large number of cases treated at the medical camps were for eye ailments. Most of the old people and young children, who came for treatment, were suffering from serious malnutrition. All the patients suffering from serious eye troubles were given tokens and asked to present themselves at an eye camp to be conducted at Prasanthi Nilayam in the near future for further treatment. Free medicines were provided to all the poor patients. The medical teams had a heavy job to do. At Pedapalli, a village with about 3000 people, for instance, half of its population was treated for one ailment or the other during the three days. Cattle owners of this village were overjoyed at the services they got from a team of highly qualified veterinary surgeons. There are nearly 5000 buffaloes and cows in the villages. Quite a few of them were found to be suffering from luxation of patella.

This needed a minor operation called desmotomy, and a number of animals were brought to the camp limping and returned relieved of their trouble. Yet another cattle disease widely

prevalent in the village was oedema of the leg, considered a deadly disease. Over four hundred animals were vaccinated against this disease.

As desired by Bhagavan Baba, clothes were distributed to several hundred needy men, women and children at the service camps. Packets of vegetable seeds and fertilizers were also distributed to the villagers.

The smokeless choola (oven) fabricated by a Seva Dal team from Nagpur (Maharashtra) at Pamudurthi, drew the attention of a number of households. Inexpensive to construct, this type of oven makes full use of the fuel used in the villages and eliminates the smoke which usually fills the villagers' huts and affects their eyes and health.

The construction of a clean latrine using a Cuddapah slab as the base at Bukkapatnam was another item which was very much appreciated by the people of the township. Costing about Rs. 250, it is suited to rural conditions. The only precaution to be observed is that it should not be within 50 feet of drinking water supply.

The results of the three-day programme, which was the most comprehensive exercise of its kind conducted by the Sai Seva Dal, are to be assessed not only in statistical terms but in terms of the new spirit engendered among the villagers and the intimate rapport established between the village folk and the Sai sevaks. Several headmasters of schools and sarpanches showed interest in the starting of bhajan mandalis and Bal Vikas classes. The spirit of religious unity and respect for each other's faith was promoted by the dedicated manner in which the Seva Dal members carried out the cleaning and whitewashing of temples, mosques and churches. In all, 136 temples, 15 mosques and 2 churches were given a face-lift. As many as 34 borewells were repaired.

The enthusiasm aroused in the villages by the programme has to be kept up by follow-up activities so that the villagers feel that the service rendered by the Sai Sevaks is not a fitful exercise but a continuous expression of their concern for the well being of their fellowmen, in the spirit of Bhagavan's message: "Manava Seva is Madhava Seva" (Service to man is service to God.)

The Glory of Seva

The undesirable qualities which a true Sevak should give up are: attachment, possessiveness and bossism. Their absence is the hall-mark of a sevak. The gains accruing from service are beyond measure. First of all, it brings about purity of the heart. It strengthens the mind. It annihilates self-interest. It ennobles one's outlook, it demonstrates that the sense of community and togetherness is the essence of humanness. It is only when one enjoys such a divine experience can one know the potentialities of the human adventure. Only thus can service to man become service to God (From Baba's discourse on 18-11-84.)

"Girdle of Love Round the Globe"

A foretaste of how the world will look when the global Sai Movement for humanitarian service, in the spirit of service to the Divine, gathers momentum and envelopes every part of the world, was given in a tastefully designed exhibition in the Hill View amphitheatre at Prasanthi Nilayam. The exhibition was part of the programme of the International Seva Dal Conference, inaugurated by Bhagavan on November 18.

The dominant impression produced by a visit to the exhibition is that Sai Sevaks are creating a girdle of Love round the globe by their varied seva activities in various countries.

The exhibition, appropriately named "Sathya Sai Darshan" was designed to give a bird's-eye-view of schemes which are being implemented in the different states of India and in over 20 overseas countries to improve the quality of living of the people in rural areas and to raise the moral tone of the community.

The concept of selfless service instilled by Baba into millions of His devotees is intended to make them realise that service to the community is the highest form of worship one could offer.

With His loving guidance from Prasanthi Nilayam, Sai devotees could start, to begin with, small "Bhajan Groups" two decades ago. In due course, Sai devotees came to understand, appreciate and adopt the three phases of "Sadhana"—spiritual exercises—in the Organisation: Individual Sadhana, Family Sadhana and Community Sadhana.

Even as the ever-expanding Sai Family started grasping the welfare content of the Sai Philosophy, Bhagavan Baba initiated them into the next phase of their responsibilities, the well-being—physical, moral and intellectual—of the younger generation. And this saw the birth of the Bal Vikas movement, now viewed as offering "the only hope" for meaningful canalisation of the energies of boys and girls and help them develop into complete men and women, capable of upholding in afterlife all the higher values they had learnt from their sixth year to the age of fifteen. Initiated by Baba sixteen years ago for the benefit of the children of His devotees to begin with, the Bal Vikas programme has broadened into "Education in Human Values" as a regular curriculum in schools in India. The exhibition gives the details of work done in training primary teachers in different States of India.

Most of the Sai Service activities, to begin with, were confined to urban areas. That was where cadres of devoted young men and women had been built. It was only when they were fully prepared to undertake a higher responsibility that Baba unfolded the next phase of His welfare programme, namely, "Rural Reconstruction." In 1982, the Sai Organisation, at the suggestion of Bhagavan, agreed to carry out a comprehensive rural development programme in 6000 "adopted" villages to be completed by November 1985.

The accent in the Sathya Sai Darshan was on the work being done in the villages.

The exhibition itself was cast in rural surroundings. It represented the work being carried on in 4200 out of the target of 6000 villages adopted by the Organisation. The target is expected to be fulfilled by November 1985, marking the 60th Birthday of Bhagavan Baba.

Men and women engaged in the rural welfare programme had been made to understand by Baba that the benefits of scientific progress in India will have to be made available to the people living in villages. This programme could be seen in the Exhibition under "Science to Villages."

Eighteen states in India from Kerala to Sikkim and Punjab to Assam have well organised Sai service groups. Each had asked to be allowed to specialise in one or two aspects of rural life. Andhra Pradesh, for instance, opted for physiotherapy and rehabilitation of the deaf and dumb; Assam: "Traditional Karbi weaving and lemon squash making"; Maharashtra: "Village sanitation and vocational guidance". West Bengal: "Creation of awareness in the farming community" about the adverse effects of pesticides and the need for their judicious use in agriculture. These specialised services were exhibited in the respective State stalls.

Various pavilions showing the educational, spiritual and social service activities being carried out in some 3000 main centres in India and 30 countries abroad, under the guidance of the World Council of Sri Sathya Sai Organisations, formed the central core of the exhibition. A separate pavilion showed the progress in Higher Education under the aegis of the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning.

The activities of the Sai Organisations depicted in the Exhibition are only a small part of a broad spectrum of service programmes carried out under the umbrella of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust. Other activities include publication and dissemination of Sai literature, planning and carrying out educational and medical services.

Cycle ambulance for rural areas

A novel bicycle stretcher combination described as "rural ambulance" was on view at "Sathya Sai Darshan" and attracted considerable attention from visitors. The Haryana State unit presented the bicycle-stretcher its members had fabricated for use in rural areas, which cannot afford an ambulance van. This device is estimated to cost about Rs. 500, excluding the cost of the cycle. The President of the Haryana State Sai Organisation, Dr. Ram Chander, said that in the absence of a normal ambulance facility in a village, the cycle-stretcher combination is the next best that can be made available for the needy in a village, in an emergency, to transport a patient over short distances to the nearest health centre.

The idea of a cycle ambulance emerged from a seminar on taking technology to villages and was given a shape by Mr. R. S. Prasad, Seva Dal Convener of Haryana and lecturer in the Parjat Engineering College at Chandigarh.

JANMOTHSAV SANDESH:

"Pray for the Welfare of all"

"Loka Samastha Sukhino Bhavantu (Let all beings in all the worlds be happy). Include this universal prayer in your prayers every day. This is my birthday message to you," observed Bhagavan Baba, addressing an unprecedented gathering of devotees, Sai Sevakas and distinguished guests, on the occasion of His fifty ninth birthday anniversary, in the packed Poornachandra Auditorium at Prasanthi Nilayam on November 23. Sri Shankar Dayal Sharma, Governor of A. P., who was the Chief Guest, was seated next to Bhagavan on the dais.

Earlier in the morning, Bhagavan went in the special motorised gilded chariot to the Samadhi of His parents, with milling crowds of devotees flanking the entire route eagerly awaiting the darshan and benediction of Bhagavan as He passed. Bhagavan returned to the Mandir and went in procession to the Poornachandra Auditorium, along with Sri Shankar Dayal Sharma, Prof. Gokak and others, with Sai Geetha, looking majestic in its richly embroidered robes, leading the procession, followed by a Nadaswaram troupe and a group of chanters of Vedic hymns.

Bhagavan was greeted with hearty cheers as He took 'his seat on the finely decorated rostrum.

Prof. V.K. Gokak, welcoming Sri S. D. Sharma and others, recalled Sri Sharma's career as a barrister and minister and now as Governor of Andhra Pradesh.

Dr. Sharma was deeply moved at the sight of the vast gathering in the auditorium as he rose to speak. "I should like to congratulate all of us on this occasion," he said. Reciting a doha from Tulsidas's Ramayana, he said, "All the pleasures of heaven are not equal to the pleasure of Satsang." In Prasanthi Nilayam they had Satsang not only in the sense of the company of the good, but proximity to "Sat"—to Bhagavan Himself. What greater pleasure could they hope for than this?

Dharmasamsthapana

Referring to Bhagavan's avowed mission of Dharmasamsthapana, Dr. Sharma said that going round the Prasanthi Nilayam complex he felt that all that was happening there was "Dharmasamsthapana"—the establishment of the reign of Dharma (Righteousness). Dharma is the essential ingredient of all religions. Bhagavan, he said, is kindling love in all our hearts. The world today needs His message of Love. "There is something Divine when you come to Bhagavan. You get Santhi—a different kind of peace from mere tranquility. Can there be a grater miracle than getting this Santhi? Bhagavan is instilling the spirit of Dharma in the hearts of boys and girls studying in the Sai Institutions and they are going to change India and the world."

When you come to Bhagavan, he said, "A cosmic well-being covers you. What we get is something beyond all value."

Bhagavan blessed Sri Sharma when he offered pranams after the end of his speech.

"Seva and tyaga"

Bhagavan began His birthday discourse with a poem in which he pictured the inscrutable ways of the Divine.

Bhagavan spoke at length on the need for sadhana to realise the unity of divinity. Sadhana consisted in controlling the senses and practising the basic virtues like Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema and cultivating Tyaga and Seva. Bhagavan exhorted all devotees to pray daily for the welfare of all beings in the world. This was His message for them for the next twelve months. (Details of Bhagavan's birthday discourse will be published in our January issue).

Bhagavan announced that the Sathya Sai Trust had decided to give ten lakhs of rupees to the State Samitis to meet the travel expenses of Seva Dal members who go to the villages for service activities.

Bhagavan laid the foundation stone for a planetarium with appropriate religious ceremony. The planetarium will come up on a site adjoining the new central Library building.

In the evening, Bhagavan showered His benediction on thousands of devotees by His gracious presence on the jhoola at the Auditorium. Srimatis M. S. Subbalakshmi, Suseela, and Leela and Sri Ramakrishna sang a few devotional songs.

President of India lauds Sai Institute

"A new star on the educational horizon"—that was how Prof. V. K. Gokak, Vice Chancellor of the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning (deemed university), described the Institute, in welcoming Mr. Justice Bhagavati and others who had assembled in the vast Poornachandra Auditorium for the Third Convocation of the Institute on November 22.

President Giani Zall Sing, who was to have delivered the convocation address, could not be present in person because of the recent tragic happenings in Delhi and his address was read by Mr. Justice Bhagavati, Judge of the Supreme Court.

As in previous years, the Convocation was not entirely an academic function, but had all the elements of an International educational festival with thousands of devotees from India and abroad present in the hall to watch afresh batch of young men, women, graduating from the Sai Institute, receiving their respective degrees and taking the pledge to live up to Sai ideals wherever their destiny may take them.

Precisely at 10 a.m., the Convocation procession started from the Prasanthi Mandir, with the Registrar, carrying the Mace, and two students carrying the emblem of the Institute, heading the procession. Behind them came the Chancellor, Bhagavan Baba, Vice Chancellor, Prof. Gokak, members of the Institute Trust, members of the Governing Body, Deans of Faculties and members of the Academic Council, all in their academic robes. A military band was in attendance.

The proceedings began with due solemnity with recitations from the Upanishads after the Chancellor and others had taken their seats on the elegantly decorated dais.

New orientation

Welcoming Mr. Justice Bhagavati and others, Prof. Gokak said: "This Institute is the baby of our Divine Master." As the Convocation is held on a day prior to Bhagavan's birthday, "this little child has enjoyed all the favours, all the attention and all the grace that attend Bhagavan's birthday celebrations." This three-year old baby "has ceased to lisp and twaddle" and "it can now speak loudly and clearly. It has ceased to stumble and totter and it stands erect today."

A new beginning has been made, thanks to the direction given by the University Grants Commission, to give a new orientation to higher education, though the "colonial hangover still lingers in our midst" in the form of learning by rote. The U.G.C. is insisting on new syllabuses, new curricula and new methods of teaching and evaluation. The change is taking place in 40 universities and others will follow. The Sathya Sai Institute has come at this crucial hour and has introduced all the changes from its first year. It has now integrated post-graduate courses in Physics, Chemistry, Bio-sciences, Commerce and English Language and Literature. This year it has introduced Ph.D. courses in all these subjects and 21 students have been registered for Ph.D. In all these subjects and also in History and Indian Culture. From June next more courses in Ph.D. in Philosophy, Sanskrit and Home Science will be coming up.

After explaining the special characteristics of the "integrated and integralised" scheme of education in the Institute, which was designed not only to develop the intellect but also the intuition of the students, Prof. Gokak announced the programme for constructing a central library (costing Rs. 40 lakhs), an instrumentation laboratory, a hostel for post-graduate students, staff quarters, a planetarium and an observatory. He announced also receipt of donations for instituting chairs (Rs. 31 lakhs), a donation from the family of the late Dr. Dhairyam of Rs. 5 lakhs, donations for scholarships (Rs. 3 lakhs), donations totaling Rs. 17 lakhs for research. Donations had also been received for giving medals (Rs. 1,30,000) and a large sum from the sons of the late Sri B. Ramakrishna Rao for instituting medals in his memory. These lakhs and crores, however, did not constitute the real assets of the Institute. The main assets of the Institute are its students, who have been loyal to the ideals of the Institute, and the teachers, who have identified themselves with the aspirations of the Institute, and above all, Bhagavan's inspiration and far-sighted vision.

First Ph. D.

After Bhagavan had declared the Convocation open, the candidates for the various degrees were presented to the Chancellor and received the Chancellor's benediction. The Vice Chancellor then administered the pledge to the new graduates and read out commandments from the Taittiriya Upanishad.

Mrs. Jayalakshmi Gopinath who was the first recipient of the Ph D. of the Institute for her thesis on Aurobindo's "Savitri," spoke on behalf of the new graduates, describing herself as the oldest student of the University.

The following students who had been awarded medals received the medals (and the cash awards) from the Chancellor:

Distinguished all-rounder: Raj Kumar Jain and Kumari Nirmala.

Academic excellence: I Prize

Dev Sen (M Sc. Maths); A Viswanath (M.Sc. Physics); G. Nageswara Rao (M.Sc Chemistry); Prabhal Mal (M.Sc. Bio-sciences); S. Ramesh (B. Sc.); Kumari R. Nalini (B.Sc. Home Science); Ruchir Desai (B.Com.).

President's call to new graduates

Mr. Justice Bhagavati then read the President's Convocation address.

In the course of his address, the President said:

The tragic assassination of our late Prime Minister, Shrimati Indira Gandhi, has plunged the whole nation in deepest sorrow. In this hour of national grief, I pray to God to grant us the strength to meet the new challenges to our country's unity and integrity for which many generations of our forefathers have sacrificed their lives.

India is wedded to the ideals of democracy, secularism and socialism, reflecting our age-old and time-tested values of peace, non-violence, truth and toleration. Sri Sathya Sai Baba is himself engaged ceaselessly in upholding and translating these values into concrete realities through educational Institutions like this. This Institution though born three years ago has already carved a special place for itself by charting out new paths in higher education. What is especially interesting here is the emphasis placed on moral and spiritual instruction along with social work and self-reliance activities. I congratulate all those who are blessed with an opportunity to study in this Institute.

I congratulate the graduates of the year on the success that is theirs in the various examinations. They will now chalk out plans for higher studies or go out into the wide world to serve their country and put into practice the ideals which they have imbibed at this Institute. I wish them a smooth career crowned with success and fulfillment.

A revolutionary era

We are living through a revolutionary era in the world's history. Kingdoms and empires have risen and fallen during this period. It is also a proud record in the world's history that a number of countries like India have freed themselves from the colonial yoke and become masters of their own destiny. But this freedom has to be further strengthened by winning for our people social equality and economic well-being. The younger generation has to gird up its loins in order to work incessantly for these goals.

There will be problems awaiting you in the life of our country as you grow up to manhood. The phenomenal poverty of the teeming millions in India stares us in the face. There are glaring social evils with the elimination of which alone the people can come into their own. Every citizen of India has to put his shoulder to the wheel and work hard for the people's welfare. What is required is a continuous diffusion of knowledge, not only of science but also of spiritualism, so that every Indian feels proud of his heritage and gets nourished by the streams of cultural and spiritual values.

There are untold opportunities to youth in the present day India. The country is passing through a process of social and economic transformation. Modern science and technology are being harnessed to improve the lot of the common man. Planned development of the nation's resources, within a democratic frame, and firmly based on the principles of socialism and secularism, has created wide avenues for the talents and energies of youth to be utilised in a fruitful manner. There are so many paths open which offer opportunities to our youth to seek career fulfillment in ways useful to the nation. Dear students, I have full faith in you that you will keep service before self and deliver the goods expected of you as worthy students of this unique institution.

The blessings of your esteemed Chancellor will stand by you and my own best wishes will go with you wherever you are.

To be young is very heaven. All the enthusiasm of youth can be channelled into constructive undertakings if only the young realise that self-understanding is the first step towards a desire to serve one's fellow-men. The young have to analyse what capacities they have and what their spheres of interest are. They have to scrutinise their shortcomings and endeavour consciously to overcome these. They should also know their limitations and accept only such responsibilities as they can cope with in a spontaneous and natural manner. They have to work in a spirit not of rash enthusiasm but of avowed dedication. If you start working with these ideals, I am certain that your efforts will be crowned with success."

Sai Family News

Sai Message in New York

On May 20, 1984 almost 1400 people gathered at the Beacon Theater on Broadway in New York City for an inspiring presentation: "Sathya Sai Baba—His life is His Message—Faith, Service, Human Values." Dr. Robert Muller, Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations, was the guest speaker. He delivered a moving address in which he stressed the need for spiritual understanding between nations.

Dr Muller has been Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations for many years and he has served under every Secretary General since the inception of that organization. He has devoted his life to the cause of world peace and spiritual understanding between the different peoples of the earth. His philosophy is eloquently presented in the following declaration that he has published: "A Declaration of Oneness for the Human Family"

1. The Oneness of the Human Family, irrespective of colour, sex, creed, nation or any other distinctive characteristic.
2. The harmonious place of the Individual person in the total order of things, as a unique entity of Divine Origin, with a basic relationship to the Universe and Eternity.
3. The importance of spiritual exercises, meditation, prayer, contemplation, and the inner search as links between human life and the universe.

4. The existence of an incipient conscience at the heart of humanity which speaks for what is good and against what is bad for the human family; which advocates and fosters understanding, cooperation and altruism instead of division, struggle and Indifference among nations.

5. The value of Dedicated Service to others, with a compassionate response to human suffering, with special attention to the oppressed and the poor, the handicapped and the elderly, the rejected and the lonely.

6. The duty to give thanks and express gratitude for the abundance of life which has been given to humanity, an abundance not to be selfishly possessed or accumulated, but to be shared and given generously to those who are in need, with a respect for human dignity and a sense of social justice.

7. The need for Ecumenical Agencies and World Religious organizations to foster dialogue and collaborative arrangements, and to bring the resources and Inspirations of the religions to bear upon the solution of world problems.

8 A rejection of violence as being contrary to the sanctity and uniqueness of life and a total acceptance of the precept "THOU SHALL NOT KILL."

9. An affirmation of the law of love and compassion as the Transcending Force which alone can break the nemesis of war and establish a Planet of Peace.

10. The evolutionary task of human life and society to move through the eternal stream of time towards interdependence, communion, and an ever-expanding realization of Divinity.

Other speakers on the programme of the New York public meeting were Dr. John Hislop, Dr. Samuel Sandweiss, and Dr. Michael Goldstein. Following the speakers a film on Bhagavan Baba was shown.

Bhagavan's message

The meeting was concluded by reading to the audience a letter that Bhagavan had sent to the American Sai Family. The letter states in part, "Without the conquest of one's passions and desires and without realising the divinity that is immanent in every living thing, man cannot achieve peace, bliss within or harmony with the outside world. The message of 'Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man' which Jesus Christ proclaimed 2000 years ago should become a living faith for the achievement of real peace and the unity of mankind. The oneness of all creation affirmed by the ancient seers and sages must be expressed in a transcendental love which embraces all people regardless of creed, community, or language. This is Sai's Message to you all. May you all develop this Divine Love and stand out as the harbingers of a new age free from selfishness, greed, hatred and violence. Let each of you be a light unto himself or herself and thereby be a light unto others."

The New York public meeting was the third in a series of public meetings sponsored by the American Sai Family. Earlier public meetings were held in Los Angeles and Santa Barbara and future public meetings are scheduled in Hawaii, San Francisco, and Phoenix.

On September 4, 1984 a public meeting was held in the auditorium of the University of Mexico in Mexico City. Dr. Sandweiss and Dr. Goldstein were guest speakers and a film on Bhagavan Baba was shown with narration in the Spanish language. On the day following the public meeting the World Council of Sri Sathya Sai Organizations, with Bhagavan's Blessings established the Sri Sathya Sai Coordinating Committee of Mexico. Dr. Luis Muniz was appointed chairman.

Regarding Sai Organizations, Bhagavan has said, "The name of SAI behind these organizations is intended solely to promote and spread faith in God and Godliness among mankind. Their only purpose is to turn the minds of men to noble thoughts and lofty ideals along religious and spiritual lines." These public meetings provide an opportunity for Bhagavan's devotees and other people of goodwill to articulate their heartfelt convictions. With Bhagavan's Grace, who can say how many minds have been opened, how many hearts have been touched, how many lives have been changed?

—Michael Goldstein, (member, World Council of Sri Sathya Sai Organizations, Covina, California, U.S.A.)

PENNSYLVANIA (U.S.A.):

A record number of devotees participated in the Ninth Annual Northeastern Retreat (September 14-16) at Camp Colang in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania. Despite unseasonable cold and steady drizzle, nearly 400 adults and children from all the northeastern states gathered for a weekend of workshops, forums, study circle, bhajans and Satsang. The guest speaker, Sai Council president Dr. Jack Hislop, gave two inspiring talks, one on the path of Knowledge and the other on the path of Devotion. He explained in detail Baba's strong emphasis on the repetition of the name of God.

There were forums on Sai service and on the Education for Human Values programme with qualified panels reporting and answering questions. Among the workshops were several directed specifically to parents, one on speaker training for the development of guest speakers, as well as several dealing with various aspects of sadhana.

A special feature of this retreat was a completely separate programme for children of all ages. The children gave a series of skits for the entire group on Saturday evening and were addressed by Dr. Hislop at the conclusion of their programme.

The Sai Centre of Shelton, Connecticut, observed Krishna Janmashtami festival on August 18. An overflow crowd from surrounding states and as far away as Washington. D.C., came to participate in bhajan, children's performances and to hear a talk by Sai Council member Hal Honig. Mr. Honig had recently returned from Prasanthi Nilayam and shared with the group the highlights of his experience there. This celebration commemorated also the extensive manifestation of Vibhuti that took place there two years ago.

—Mimi Goldberg

WINDSOR (Ontario, Canada)

The Sathya Sai Centres of Canada organised a four day national Bal Vikas Retreat (June 29-July 2) at "Camp Samac," Oshawa, Ontario. Besides 185 Bal Vikas students, nearly 300 parents, guests and teachers attended the camp. In addition to regular items like Nagarsankirtan, bhajans and prayer sessions, the programme included study circle meetings, games and sports for the children, presentation of plays based on spiritual or moral themes, lectures on service activities, cultural programmes and camp fires. The weather was excellent and everybody experienced the

presence of Bhagavan and expressed gratitude to Bhagavan for the success of the Camp.
—VPS.

"Seva—the Greatest Sadhana"

"There is no greater Sadhana than Seva," observed Bhagavan, in His valedictory address to the Seva Dal Conference.

He said that for man, haunted by fear and anxiety, the only way to get rid of fear was to cultivate Vairagya—non-attachment to worldly things. To develop Vairagya (detachment) man has to perceive the unity that underlies the diversity in the world. To realise this unity man has to give up the ego—the feeling of "I" and "you." This can arise only when the heart is made pure. Seva is the primary means through which the heart is purified.

The essence of all learning is Vairagya (detachment). The basic foundation of all education is fearlessness. The goal of all education is Fullness (Paripoornatvam). Fullness is realised through detachment. This does not mean renunciation of worldly life but giving up all evil qualities and tendencies. Such renunciation is true Yoga.

It is through service that man should find fulfillment in life. The ancients described the one who was well educated and engaged himself in service as "saakshara." The man who had control over his senses was described as "Dama." Today men who have lost control over their senses are filled with "Mada" (pride and arrogance). Those who have lost their "Dama" turn into "Rakshasas" (demons)—the reverse of 'saakshara'. The foremost task today is to get rid of "Mada" (pride) and other demoniacal qualities, to foster human virtues and strive to attain divinity by leading a pure and sacred life. This is not a single act but a process. The right action you do today, by repetition becomes a Samskara (a ritual). Today's ritual becomes tomorrow's habit. And the habit in due course becomes sadhana. Sadhana leads you to your life's goal. Hence the realisation of the goal depends on your actions.

Life is a sacred and precious gift. All actions should be done on the basis of this fact. One should not be cowed down by the vicissitudes of life. (The life of Rama in the Ramayana and the troubles which the Pandavas experienced as related in the Mahabharata show that difficulties in life have to be faced with fortitude).

Sai sevaks should be prepared to face all difficulties with courage and faith. They should realise that the Divine always gives and does not take anything. Likewise they should manifest the divinity in them by their readiness to give and not to receive anything. In rendering service they should have no thought of getting any service in return. Sevaks should be unwavering in their work. They should be "steady" and not vacillating in their attitudes and actions like a dried leaf. Above all, they should cultivate the spirit of Tyaga (sacrifice). Modern man is acquisitive and has not cultivated the art of giving away. Sai sevaks should cultivate a heart filled with Tyaga and Prema (sacrifice and love). Then seva becomes yoga (union with the Divine).

What is adoption?

The villages are in a deplorable state today. When the Sai organisation "adopts" a village, what does "adoption" really mean? Mere whitewashing and cleaning of schools and Mandirs cannot represent "adoption." It should mean that the Sai organisation meets all the essential needs of the village, just as a parent who has "adopted" a child takes care of its entire well-being. All the needs of the village in respect of education, health, water supply, roads, etc. should be met. And in the process the spiritual and moral needs of the villagers should also be met. Every act of service should be spiritually oriented. They should promote unity and purity in the villages.

Service is not a one-way street. Give seva and receive Prema. Earn the love of the villagers through your service. Sai Seva Dal members should live up to the ideals of Sathya Sai. The word "dal" refers to a petal in the flower. Every member of the Seva Dal is a petal in the flower of Sathya Sai. Sai represents Love, sacrifice and compassion. Fill your hearts with compassion. Develop the sense of togetherness and promote unity. One plus one... results in unity and strength. Minus, minus, minus leads to mindlessness.

Service should not be haphazard or casual. It should be done continuously. There are good sevaks in the Sai organisation. But the leaders are not all of them sufficiently dynamic. Some prefer to push from behind than to lead at the forefront. Defects such as these should be corrected. Politics should be totally eschewed from all Sai activities. "Love all, serve all" should be their motto. They should have no political or other prejudices. There is no need to establish a new religion or a new institution. The world needs only men and women of good qualities.

There was prolonged applause when Bhagavan concluded His discourse and led the vast concourse with his favourite song, "Bhajan bina sukh Santhi nahi..."

Floor gymnastics by Sai students

The final item in the Conference programme was an unforgettable display of gymnastic feats by students of the Sathya Sai Institute, from the primary classes to the postgraduate level, at the vast Hill View Stadium on the evening of Nov. 21.

As the three-hour programme progressed it was evident that the students had been trained well and performed every item of mass drill and athletic feats with the finesse of professional acrobats. What gave a devotional touch to the whole programme was the manner in which at the end of each item the participants bowed to Bhagavan in great reverence. A spectacular item was the torch light tattoo. Sundar Iyer, a university student, gave a striking display of Yoga asanas on a rope dangling from a high scaffolding.

A novel item in the mass drill was display of cricket strokes by students arrayed in the form of a cricket bat with blade and handle.

Bhagavan Baba not only sat through the entire programme, but took part in the last item of the evening, as the helmsman in a boat who helps the devotees cross the stormy seas of worldly life. As Bhagavan alighted from the boat when the lights came on, His appearance was a delightful surprise to the vast gathering which cheered Him lustily.

It was heart-warming to notice the superb state of physical fitness maintained by the college students. Many parents present in the gathering felt that the training in the Sai Institutions contributed to the spiritual, mental and physical development of the students.

To Divinity Through Seva

Bhagavan's call to Sai sevaks

A stirring call to Sathya Sai Seva Dal members to carry on their service activities in a spirit of sacred dedication, without regard to race, religion, class or caste, was made by Bhagavan Baba, while Inaugurating the first International Seva Dal Conference in the Poornachandra Auditorium on November 18th.

The Auditorium was filled with over 8500 Seva Dal delegates from all parts of India and 20 overseas countries, besides special invitees and guests. The dais had been tastefully decorated for the occasion. Bhagavan Baba, accompanied by Sri S. B. Chavan, came to the Auditorium in a procession, headed by a group chanting Vedic hymns. A vast gathering of devotees filled all the open spaces outside the auditorium.

"A unique conference"

Welcoming Mr. S. B. Chavan and other Invitees and the delegates to the Conference, Sri Indulal Shah, Chairman of the World Council, said: We have over 8000 active workers as delegates from one of the three wings of the Sai Organisation, namely, the Seva Dal, from 300 districts of India and from 20 countries abroad. But three times these numbers have not been able to come here, but their hearts are here today.

This Poornachandra Hall has witnessed so many national and international conferences. But this is a unique conference.

Our country faced a national tragedy only a few days ago. Many Sai centres approached us as to what is the duty of the Sai Organisation in such a calamity. We guided them to the best of our ability, according to the areas to which the Sai Centres belonged. But we have a lesson to learn from all this. Bhagavan has taught us that the goal of our Sadhana is peace for the individual. Individuals make a nation and nations make the world and if we, as individuals, do not have peace, there cannot be peace in the world. A peace march in violence torn area and symbolic prayers may not bring forth any permanent results, unless this basic truth which Bhagavan has taught us time and again is understood by everyone. It is the foremost duty of the devotees, more so of the active workers, to understand this and demonstrate this in society by precept and practice.

A prophecy fulfilled

Bhagavan has motivated all of us, through His teachings, and made us instruments in His Divine Hands. It is no more a belief. What He prophesied in 1947 about His Divine Mission is now unfolding itself today. We have to deliberate as to how we can make use of the human

resources of active members of this organisation to make the service programmes more dynamic, more useful and meaningful, in our effort to bring about world peace. The other theme of this Conference is to understand the true inner significance of all activities we are doing.

Every service activity we do should enable both those who are serving and those who are being served to imbibe the human values and, through them, progress towards spiritual consciousness.

Rural development is one of the important subjects of this Conference. We have to speed up our work to cover some 6000 villages in India before 23rd November 1985, and we have to carry "Science to Villages," intensify our work in "Health and Hygiene in the Slums" and introduce study circles among the youth in the villages and also to the industrial workers.

In 42 countries

Coming to the Overseas Centres, the Sai movement has now spread to 42 countries of the world where the Service Organisation has been built up, along with spiritual and educational activities. It was the general feeling in the various Sai Centres in overseas countries, at the time of the 3rd World Conference in 1980, that their Centres had no particular role to play in respect of service activities which the Seva Dal was doing in India. This, they thought, was because with concept of a welfare state, it was the responsibility of their respective governments to look after this work. But then, they realised that by helping and serving others they were only helping and serving themselves and this thought gave a widespread recognition to the Sai ideals of service. This is the starting point of the Service Organisations in overseas countries. These activities have now spread to several centers and have become spring-boards for more and more humanitarian and social services.

Sri V. K. Narasimhan, speaking on the impact of the 3-day service programme undertaken by over 1000 Indian volunteers and overseas sevaks including doctors from overseas, said that a new spirit of communal amity had been generated in the villages. There was also a recognition of how the rural scene could be transformed if the villagers cooperated with Sai sevaks in improving every aspect of rural life-health, education, communal harmony, and economic betterment.

Need for training

Mr. V. Srinivasan, Vice-chairman of the World Council, said that what the Sai volunteers had been able to do during the three days of their service in the Sathya Sai taluk (from Nov 15 to 17) was a remarkable achievement. The volunteers belonged to every caste, creed and State in India. "It was indeed a true international event, not an event of pomp and empty show, but a new chapter in the history of mankind heralding the dawn of the New Age of Sai!" The Sathya Sai Central Trust was preparing a long-term follow-up plan for the activities which have been started. The thrust of the Sai Organisation in the village adoption programme was to bring about a transformation in the villages and not only to effect material improvement. The training programme that was planned along with this Conference had been specifically designed for this purpose. Training is imparted in 18 activities, each activity having 90 trainees. These trainees will become the trainers when they go back to their states to train others in these activities. They will thus act as catalysts in a new programme of rural education.

The activities have been selected to create simple self-sufficiency in the villages and improve the quality of life without creating unnecessary desires and social problems. An important part of the training programme is to take Science to the villages through inexpensive but useful devices.

"6000 villages may appear small in the total rural environment of India. But what is happening in these adopted villages will bring about change in the other villages and thereby change the face of India."

"Divine prime-mover"

Mr. S. B. Chavan, Union Minister for Defence and an old devotee of Bhagavan, addressing the Inaugural session of the conference, said: "There are more than 35,000 trained activists engaged in the Seva Dal, spread in about 4000 Centres all over our country and abroad. More than these numbers, what is significant is the meticulous way in which the areas of work are identified and activities are developed and implemented-with the focus on the spreading of the message of universal brotherhood, common heritage and service with love. It cannot indeed be otherwise, given the divine prime-mover behind this endeavour.

"We very often come across views proposing that spiritual concerns and service to people should be kept separate. I believe that these are not appropriate in the present world context in which the mad rush for materialistic power of the greedy is colouring, if not blinding, the clear vision about the real needs for the survival of the human race. Did not Gandhiji teach us that God would appear to the poor in the form of a loaf of bread or a piece of cloth? Our own ancient sages had proclaimed that love is God and service to mankind is worship. With more than three-fourths of our people residing in villages, with the level of poverty characteristic of an agrarian economy, our service in the name of God should begin with our villages. I am, therefore, happy to note that the Seva Dal Wing of the Sai Organisation has adopted over 4200 villages for their development. Rural uplift, according to me, is a challenge and an opportunity, rather than a problem in our efforts to promote national development. Recent advances in science and technology enable us, so to say, to telescope the past decades of development history and to achieve a quantum jump in the process of rural transformation. The techniques of bio-mass conversion and extension of integrated rural energy planning concepts can alleviate the traditional drudgery of rural life and bring to the villages the comforts of urban living. At the same time, the rural areas have their own vibrations and rhythms of art and culture which need to be preserved, fostered and integrated with life styles and patterns. The role of group rendering of devotional songs should be seen in this light and not practised as a dull routine. We require a band of dedicated workers whose education and training would be such as to inculcate in them a set of spiritual and moral values to be in consonance with the requirements of their noble mission of service to mankind as well as the necessary fusion of tradition with modernity. I have no doubt that the Seva Dal programme of the Sri Sathya Sai Organisations would fully cater to these requirements.

Referring to India's spiritual and cultural heritage based on the principles of Dharma, Mr. Chavan said: "It epitomises the cumulative wisdom and experiences of ages, encompassing every aspect of human endeavour and social life. It has enabled the sustenance of our civilisation and given the Indian people the noblest expression to their creative mind and culture. It has also given to the Indian body politic a consistent and comprehensive interpretation of its past,

consciousness of a new strength and hope for the present and inspiration and vision of a new ideal for the future. In fact it is a great force to bring about cultural, emotional and fraternal unity among the diversity of Indian national life. May our commitment to Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema guide us in our tasks in the service of mankind!"

"Service without distinctions"

Inaugurating the Conference, Bhagavan said "Many are experts in the art of worshipping stone idols and thereby winning the acclaim of the people, but there are few who strive to offer the kind of selfless service that will win the approbation of Lord Siva." (poem)

Through right action one achieves purity of heart which leads to the acquisition of the higher knowledge (Jnana). When right action is coupled with Jnana, there is true service. To feel that one should be the sole enjoyer of the results of one's actions is a sign of selfishness. It is naive to think that one alone is the doer of one's actions. All the things in the world are not intended for the exclusive enjoyment of any single person. They are to be shared by all.

It is only when attachment to the fruits of one's actions is discarded that the action becomes yoga. Members of the Seva Dal should overcome the sense of 'mine' and 'thine'. When they embark on service activities, they should regard it as a privilege to serve others and look upon it as a form of worship of the Divine. They should look upon service to society as the means of finding self-fulfillment in life. They should face whatever problems may arise with faith and courage and carry on their service activities without fanfare in a spirit of humility and dedication.

In the Sai organisation there is no room for distinctions of race, religion, caste, class, or community. All should regard themselves as the children of one God. When they are united by this sense of divine kinship, they will act with Love towards all. They should shed all narrow and limited ideas and engage themselves in service with a heart full of love for all. True seva can come only out of a pure and loving heart.

There are any number of service organisations in the world. The uniqueness of the Sathya Sai Seva Organisation consists in the fact that it regards seva as a form of service to the Divinity that is in each being. The bliss that is derived from such service is incomparable. It is a spiritual experience.

You should not be content with what you have accomplished so far. You should do a great deal more to make this great country an exemplar to the world of the great ideals of its seers and sages. Bharat should be made the land of Tyaga (sacrifice) and not bhoga (indulgence in luxury). Tyaga is yoga. Bhoga is roga (disease). To live up to the ideal of Tyaga is your duty today.

In the world today one does not see anywhere unity or love. Life appears to be a totally mechanical affair. Man does not mean merely the external appearance of a human being. We should have the conviction that he is a soul dwelling in a body. This may be an act of faith. But without such faith life has no meaning. Today we believe in things which should not be believed and have no belief in the things in which we ought to believe. We should have faith in ourselves.

We should understand our true nature and rectify our failings. Discovering our true self, we should live up to its demands."

After Arati to Bhagavan, the conference adjourned for the afternoon session.

At the afternoon session, representatives of overseas centres spoke on the activities that were being carried on in their respective areas to spread the Sai message and the transformation that was taking place among the people.

Human values and seva

Dr. Art Aung Yuensai, an eminent scientist from Thailand, speaking on "The relevance of Human Values in Service Activities," described how one day while he was observing silence, the figure of the machine, which he subsequently designed for assessing the influence of love on plants, appeared before his mind's eye. It was his thesis on the technology of this apparatus for amplifying microwaves, which got him his doctorate in U. K. He had found from personal experience that there was "something" in each of us which could give us all the answers provided we could still the mind. He described various experiments he had done to find out what pure love could do. "Love is a form of energy." He had scientifically found that when we curse others we hurt ourselves. Anger is a form of energy which if left in our body is destructive in nature. It is to neutralise this that one has to cultivate love. "Service is Love in action." The four human values for which the Sai Seva Dal stood helped us to understand the inner significance of its activities.

A miracle in West Bengal

Mr Sanjiv Choudhary, who is in charge of evaluation of the human values programme of the Sai organisation, said Baba's divine grace was very much evident in all the service activities undertaken by them. He gave an instance of a schoolboy in a village in West Bengal who had not met Baba but turned out to be a great devotee of Baba. He had participated in an elocution competition conducted by the local Sai organisation and topped the list. When asked what he would like to receive as a prize, he asked for a photograph of Bhagavan. From the moment he installed it in his home profuse Vibhuti started falling from it. People started visiting his house to see this phenomenon and very soon the whole village accepted Baba. This particular village happened to be a border village and had got deeply involved in smuggling. From the time the people of the village took interest in the phenomenon of Vibhuti falling from Baba's photograph in the village boy's house, smuggling activities steadily declined and the Indian customs were curious to know why the villagers had stopped indulging in smuggling. It didn't take long for them to see that it was not any respect for laws but the awakening of a new spiritual consciousness which had led to the transformation. It was amazing to see how much Baba inspired the Sai Sevakas.

Dr. M. Goldstein, Chairman of the American Service organisation, Mr. Antonio Craxi, Coordinator for Europe, Mr. Kirit Patel, Chairman of the Sathya Sai Volunteer Organisation in UK, and Mr. Hank Kung Sang, coordinator for the activities in the Far Eastern zone, spoke on the impact of the Sai message and the progress of service activities in their respective areas.

In the evening, a cultural programme, consisting of folk dances by villagers from Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh, Assam and Manipur, was presented at the Hill View Stadium in the presence of Bhagavan.

Joint session

On the 20th, a joint session of the Indian and overseas delegates was held in the Poornachandra Auditorium. Bhagavan went round the hall, giving darshan to the delegates and occasionally speaking to some of them.

Reports of the conveners of the various sub-committees were presented. Dr. Goldstein disclosed the plans for overseas countries. Mr. Jagadeesan spoke on the inner significance of Seva Dal activities in overseas countries. Mr. Tajmul Hussain dwelt on the administrative problems relating to Seva activities in overseas centres. He suggested that a comprehensive service manual should be distributed by the World Council to the foreign centres.

The conveners of the Indian subcommittees presented reports on various aspects of the Seva programme.

There were discussions among the delegates in separate groups during the day and the conclusions of the conference were finalised for presentation to Bhagavan at the valedictory session on the 21st.

Sevaks' march past

It was a thrilling sight to witness thousands of Mahila Sevaks, in their bright golden yellow scarves and Seva Dal men, wearing their azure blue scarves, marching in file past Bhagavan from the Mandir to the Poornachandra Auditorium for the valedictory session of the Seva Dal Conference on November 21. It was a bright morning and the sun seemed to shine with benevolence on Bhagavan's spiritual army, preparing themselves for loving service to mankind.

Bhagavan was greeted with thunderous cheers when He came to the dais for the valedictory session. The enthusiasm among the delegates was indescribable.

Sri Indulal Shah struck the right note when he summed up the results of the conference as marking "the beginning of a new era for the Sai movement." He said "an integrated approach" to village development had been evolved, as was evident from the activities carried out in the Sathya Sai taluk. The Sathya Sai Darshan (exhibition) presented a comprehensive view of what Sathya Sai centres all over the world were doing. It showed differences in methodology in carrying out the same programme. A significant development was the influx of the younger generation into the Sai movement. The Conference had brought the overseas centres closer to the Indian centres.

He announced that the fourth World Conference of the Sathya Sai Organisation would be held on November 18, 19 and 20, 1985, at Prasanthi Nilayam.

Sri V. Srinivasan presented the report on the decisions of the Conference.

Conference decisions

The Conference endorsed the definition of active workers as those who put in a minimum of four hours per week of community sadhana. Those who put in a minimum of two hours work per week will be named as volunteers and all others as devotees. The above criteria will apply uniformly to all members of the Organisation, including office-bearers.

The Conference took note of the new phase of the Divine Mission "which now gives a greater thrust to service activities. This means that every Sai centre will not only be a spiritual centre but also a service centre."

In order to enable the Seva Dal to play its role in this phase of the Divine Mission, the Conference urged that the inner significance of every service activity should be explained at regular intervals to the volunteers and active workers. The relevance of human values to service activities and their blossoming within the individual through performance of selfless service should be explained to them.

Training for volunteers and active workers should be given not only at the time of entry but also at regular intervals.

All eligible members of the families of active workers must join one of the three wings of the Organisation. Office-bearers are directed to maintain a close liaison with the youth to give them opportunity to join in the service activities and also to motivate them to do so by their own example.

The Conference took note of the progress made in the village/slum activities programme and the Impact made by this programme not only on the villages but also on the active workers themselves and directed the office-bearers to take steps to complete the target of 6000 villages before Guru Poornima 1985 to enable a consolidated report to be placed before Bhagavan in November, 1985. At the same time, it directed that attention be paid to improve the quality of service activities in the adopted villages/slums.

The Conference directed the Service Activities Wing to maintain close coordination with the Spiritual and Educational Activities Wing and the Mahila Vibhag with regard to the concerted spiritual-cum-service approach to the adopted areas.

The Door-to-Door health education programme should become a part of service activity rather than remain as a spiritual activity.

The Conference noted the effective social contribution made by the Study Circles for Industrial Workers and directed all States to take steps to start at least five such circles in each State before Nov. 1985.

The Conference noted that members of the Mahila Seva Dal are greatly assisting several activities of the Organisation, particularly with regard to the village/ slum adoption programme, wherein they are required to perform spiritual and educational activities in addition to the service activities. Suitable training should be given to them for this purpose.

The Conference felt that there are several activities in the areas of Adult Education, Health and Hygiene and the upliftment of women where Mahila Seva Dal can independently initiate and perform service activities. The Conference called upon the State Mahila Seva Dal Convenors to plan and organise such activities vigorously in 1985 and to motivate Mahilas, including the younger generation, to participate in them.

The Conference felt that the training workshops organised at Prasanthi Nilayam had opened up many possibilities for service activities, both for men and women. It directed all the State Presidents and State Seva Dal Convenors to have a close follow-up of the implementation of such training programmes in their States.

Overseas centres

Dr. Goldstein, presenting the decisions of the delegates from overseas centres, said: While the Sai Organisation is firmly established in several overseas countries, it is still in the process of a gradual transition from a purely spiritual organisation to a spiritual-cum-service organisation. What was most revealing during the deliberations was that, notwithstanding the excellent social security systems that existed in the highly developed countries, there were still many opportunities for service activities in those countries. Members of the organisation in those countries would therefore be able to place greater emphasis on the service activities of the organisation and perform their sadhana by means of service activities.

The Conference recognised that it is vitally important for the members of the service organisation to have a full appreciation of the inner significance of service activities in order that both the service workers and the recipients of the services rendered may derive the maximum spiritual benefit. Towards this end, the Conference has made several recommendations for strengthening the service wing, and to improve communication within the organisation. The Conference also noted that while it was essential to improve and expand the services, it was equally important to ensure that the quality of the services was improved.

It was appreciated that uniform guidelines for the planning of service activities cannot be laid down for all overseas countries in view of the diversity of the social and economic conditions that exist in those countries. However, broad general guidelines have been formulated by the Conference which are to be observed in the preparation of programmes of service activities.

The Conference recognised the necessity to have an organisational structure for the Service Wing of the Organisation, in order to ensure efficiency and consistency in the implementation of service programmes. This is all the more necessary because of the proposed expansion of service activities as the sixtieth birthday of Bhagavan Baba approaches.

"Work for Sai Rajya"

Mr. Justice Balakrishna Eradi, Judge of the Supreme Court and a member of the Sathya Sai Central Trust, speaking as Chief Guest, said those participating in the Sai Mission's work should consider themselves singularly fortunate. The entire Sai programme was planned for the welfare of mankind. He had himself been associated with a number of other organisations claiming to do welfare work, but there was not one which came anywhere near the Sai Organisation. That was

the difference between the Sathya Sai Organisation and the others. He described the rural uplift programme as "beautiful and significant." What they had witnessed was a unique conference under the aegis of Bhagavan. They should work with faith and devotion to spread the message of Bhagavan in every part of the world. The world was in sore need of Bhagavan's message of love and Dharma. It was their privilege to work for the attainment of "the glorious Sai Rajya," the reign of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema.

Dr. John Evans (from Arizona) who was among the team of overseas doctors who ran a medical camp at Bukkapatnam expressed his gratitude to Bhagavan for the opportunity given to the overseas devotees to render service.

"Uphold Institute's Ideals" - Bhagavan's Message

Bhagavan as Chancellor, delivering his benedictory address to the Convocation, dwelt at the outset on how students leaving the ancient Gurukuls at the end of their studies, were told about the cosmic forces which linked the earth to the stars and planets in the universe. It is this teaching which enabled the students to obtain an integral view of all things in creation and know how the individual was related to the great sources of energy like the sun. The Vedas and Upanishads emphasised the importance of spiritual knowledge for every student. They also laid down the basic truths by which one should be guided in one's life so that he could realise the supreme goal of unity with the Divine.

Students should realise that having been born in society, growing in society, and living in society, they have obligations to serve society through their knowledge and skills. Even after 37 years of freedom, the nation has not got rid of a servile mentality. The authorities are partly responsible for this because they have not promoted in the younger generation the right attitudes and the right knowledge about men and things. The so-called educated persons are slaves to exotic ideas and institutions and are not concerned about real freedom and the integrity of the individual. They do not realise that rights and duties are inextricably inter-linked and there can be no rights without duties.

Even in the spiritual field those who claim to be believers and who aspire for peace and bliss, are not aware how to achieve these. They will not cultivate devotion, but they expect God to give them peace and bliss. If you want any thing you have to pay a price for it. If you want peace, you have to give up doing unjust and unrighteous acts. Only righteous deeds can lead to peace.

The modern student is prepared to believe in what is said in the newspapers, what is shown in the films or what he hears from gossip. But he has no faith in himself. Highly learned men will act on what the almanac or a purohit says, but will not accept the great truths proclaimed by the Shruti: "Aham Brahma-Asmi." Instead of seeking to realise their essential divinity, they go after the petty and trivial pleasures of the world and lay waste their lives.

Bhagavan compared modern man to the Rakshasa in the Ramayana, Kabandha, who had no head but only arms and a stomach and he seized men and animals with his sweeping arms to fill his capacious belly. Men should realise that they are not Kabandhas but Daivasambandhas—kinsmen of the Divine.

The primary duty of those claiming to be educated is to uphold ethical and spiritual values, which have been going down in all spheres of our national life, including educational institutions. There should be greater emphasis on training for professional and vocational purposes instead of specialisation in academic subjects. In the Sathya Sai Institute the students are kept busy during their entire waking time so that their time is spent usefully and purposefully. They lead disciplined, well regulated lives. When they go out of the Institute, they should see that they continue to live up to the high ideals and right ways of behaviour they had acquired in the Institute. They should set an example wherever they go, lead worthy lives and transform the world around them by precept and practice. "This is my blessing for all of you," concluded Bhagavan.

The Convocation concluded with the singing of the National Anthem and Bhagavan and others returned in procession to the Mandir.

In the evening there was a fine display of Naga and Bhangra dances by students of the Institute on the stage in the Poornachandra Auditorium. Bhagavan blessed all the students after the performance.

Fourth World Conference

Sri Indulal Shah, Chairman of the World Council of Sri Sathya Sai Organisations, announced on November 21 that, with the blessings of Bhagavan, the Fourth World Conference of Sathya Sai Organisations will be held at Prasanthi Nilayam on November 18, 19 and 20, 1985. Bhagavan's sixtieth birthday will be celebrated on November 23, 1985.