

THERE IS A LOVE

*There is an Eye that never sleeps, Beneath the wind of night.
There is an Ear that never shuts, When sinks the beams of light.
There is an Arm that never tires, When human strength gives way.
There is a Love that never fails, When earthly loves decay.*
—George Matheson.

When in the quieter moments of our life, we turn the pages of our memory, we are filled with joy and delight at the realization that what are mere words for George Matheson is an actual experience for us.

When the 'winds of the night' invigorate the baser instincts in us, it is the ever watchful Eye of SATHYA SAI that guards over us. This phenomenon becomes vivid when we behold our Lord standing amidst us in the portico, His compassionate glance scanning through the rows of boys, trying to spot, as it were, the victims of vicissitudes.

Again, in our dark moments of dejection, distress and despair, when all light seems to have faded from our lives, when in our unbearable agony we cry out, "Lord, please, O please help me," it is our munificently merciful master SATHYA SAI, who hears our S.O.S. with concern and compassion.

When all our efforts in life's battle fail and we are torn asunder by the surge of the senses and the debility of our minds, it is our Bewitchingly Beautiful Bhagavan who extends His Arm and lifts us out of our stupor.

It does not end here. When in the torrents of Time all attachments and 'Loves' are washed away with kith and kin, friends and companions, there is a Love, like that which made the Gopis of Repalle divinely mad, which fills our beings with Joy and ecstasy not of this earth. It is the Love that guides us night and day, lighting up our way, keeping darkness and evil at bay. Having experienced it, one does not know what to say; it is a Love that does not decay, it is a Love that has come to stay.

Years may come and years may go, but each atom of our body and soul shall chant, "There Is a Love... There Is a Love..." and our hearts shall echo, "...that of sweet Sathya Sai."

—Mayur Pandya, Research Scholar,
S. S. I. H. L., Vidyagiri.

Lord! Let me be

Lord! Let me be a dreamer
and, let me be a doer.
Let me constantly strive

And, steadily achieve
Let me be a learner
And, let me be a teacher

Let me be a follower
And become a humble leader
Let me hear your voice
And heed gladly your call
Let me know your wish
And, help me to fulfill the plan.

—*Vivek Mehta, XII Class, Vidyagiri*

The Master and the Disciple

I stood at the summit of Mt. Ego
And turned my gaze down-hill.
And viewed the vast expanse of ocean blue,
The very Embodiment of Love and Mercy,
Boundless, placid and majestic.

Gradually the vision changed
Pinkish blue it was; my eyes glued
To the very personification of Immensity
Revealed two twinkling little eyes
Beckoning as though to be one with them:

My hair stood on end,
For, the heart had flown down
To meet in oneness with that Immense
Being. But the mind sent a fear thrill
At the prospect of a fearsome fall
To the abyss of the depthless ocean.

Spread across the endless expanse
Were mountains likened to the one I stood on
And I espied many who stood on them
Perhaps with feelings same as mine,
Now hesitating in fear.

The heart wrestled with the mind
The mind mindful of its limitations;
The heart yearning unto the limitless.
Betwixt these wrestles and tussles,

As if solving the puzzle,
The memory of a dialogue clicked to me;
A dialogue between the Master and the disciple.

"Think yourself to be a bee," said He unto him,
"Sitting on the rim of a vessel
With honey filled to the brim.
What method will you adopt
To taste the tasty honey?"
Answered Narendra saying:
"Cautiously shall I partake of the juicy liquid
Lest I slip unawares into the thick jelly."
"Nay," said the Master,
"Would you not be immersed in sweetness
Sacrificing the raiment of your soul
To attain your True Nature?"

That sent through me
Currents of joy, raptures of ecstasy.
And then I was fast nearing the waters of Love
But no.....
The waters of Love were rising!
For, the mountain had dwindled in height!
Then flashed in me the Word of Sai
"TAKE ONE STEP TOWARDS ME;
I SHALL TAKE A HUNDRED TOWARDS YOU"!

—*K. Ramesh Kumar, III B.Sc., Vidyagiri Campus*

CAMPUS CORNER

The Vision

Tenuous vision in saffron silk,
Apart, aloof from mortal ilk;
Slow, how slow, thou wendest Thy way,
Unearthly, Thou seemest, apart, away.

Dear, inescapably dear, Thou art,
Near, agonisingly near, to my heart;
Whither Thou goest will I follow, Lord;
Whom else have I, my guide, my God?

Whither Thou movest, radiant vision,
Followed art Thou by faces legion,
Turn to Thee, vision unreachable,

Multitudinous eyes insatiable.

Where amongst them do I belong?
Lord of the multitude, Lord of the throng?
Whither amongst the world's mass'd desire,
Cans't Thou espy my tangled lyre?

Thou so distant receding ever,
Pray, calm Thou my love's hot fever.
Fragile Lord, orange petall'd flower,
Sacrosanct in Thy sacred bower,
From grasping hands unsullied, above,
To my prayer, O respond Thou
(One amongst the many, amongst the throng,
Who never shared the calm of the strong;)

Turn thou my way, more felt than seen,
Let me as did Mary Magdalene
Lay my head bewilder'd with fears
Upon thy feet, so blessed, so dear.

—*Sagari, Student of Sri Sathya Sai College for Women, Anantapur*

AMRITA DHARA:

Conduct and Compulsions

In an informal talk to some devotees at the Mandir (Prasanthi Nilayam) Bhagavan clarified doubts regarding the apparent contradiction between different kinds of obligations one has to discharge in life.

Speaking about love and law, and the need to maintain a balance between the two, Swami gave an example. He said that if there is a judge whose own son is brought for trial before him, the judge would be duty-bound to observe all the proper legal procedures, without regard to his intimate relations with his son. Similarly, a wife has her duties towards her husband, while she may also very much love God and be devoted to Him. She should not neglect her duties towards her husband on the ground that worship of God came first. On the contrary, she must seek to reconcile the two by seeing God in her husband and regarding her duties as a form of worship of the Divine.

In this context, Swami spoke of three kinds of obligations that occur in life. These are

Sambandham-Commitments which are voluntarily undertaken.

Nirbandham - Compulsory obligations arising out of one's position.

Kartavyam - The right or appropriate action in any particular situation.

Suppose a person invited some friends to his home for a party; he could always postpone or cancel the invitation if he was not feeling well. That is an example of Sambandham, Swami said. If, however, the same person had to attend an important meeting in his office and it was physically possible for him to go even though he was feeling sick, then he should discharge his duty, regardless of his personal condition. This obligation is a consequence of the Nirbandham, the compulsory duties associated with the position he held. An example of Kartavyam is the case of a man who is in an angry mood, following a disagreement with his wife. If at that time a friend happens to call at his house, he should not display his anger towards the friend, but welcome him cordially. This is the right conduct appropriate to that situation; therefore, that is his Kartavyam. If he behaved in an angry mood, the friend would be perplexed and very much disturbed, as he would not be able to understand the reason for such conduct. Right conduct required that the angry feelings the man had towards his wife should not be revealed to his friend.

Role of the avatars

Bhagavan also spoke about Avatars. He said that the advent of each Avatar is for a specific purpose. In the case of the Narasimha Avatar, for instance, the purpose was to protect Prahlada and vindicate his faith in the omnipresence of God; at the same time, He also came to punish Hiranyakasipu, Prahlada's father, who bitterly hated the Lord Narayana. Similarly, in the case of Rama and Krishna, there were specific functions for which the Avatar had come. Bhagavan said that the Avatar in human form represents duality; He comes cloaked in the human form to help people who are immersed in the Dvaita stage. But the purpose of the Avatar taking that form is to lead humanity to the higher realization of the Unity and omnipresence of God.

One fundamental difference between the Avatar and others is that people, in general, have only some specialized knowledge. Therefore, they function from the limited point of view arising from that narrow segment of knowledge they have acquired. On the other hand, in the case of the Avatar, He always looks at the totality, and His actions are determined by this total view.

Bhagavan said that the forms taken by the Avatar may differ according to the function, but the power is one, just like the one current which operates a fan or a bulb or a stove. Each form is taken for a specific purpose, and so the function is different, but the power is the same unlimited power of the Omni-will. In this present Avatar the avowed purpose is to raise the whole of humanity to a higher level.

Swami also spoke about Sat-Chit-Ananda, in terms of Being and Becoming. He explained that Being is that which eternally exists; Becoming is that which assumes form and manifests itself in the world of objects. It is only through the state of Becoming that we can realize the state of Being. He said that Sat is Being; Chit or awareness is associated with Becoming. Beyond Sat-Chit-Ananda is the attributeless Supreme. This Sat-Chit-Ananda, or Asti-Bhaati-Priyam, are the attributes of Brahman; when He enters Prakriti He assumes Nama and Rupa or name and form. The name and form are liable to change, whereas Asti-Bhaati-Priyam is its unchanging base. Without that permanent basis, Prakriti cannot exist. We should not be deluded by Prakriti, just as we should not be deluded by the figures on the screen; they are bound to go. What is

permanent is the screen. What is unseen is more important than the seen, just as the roots below the earth sustain the various parts of the tree we see above ground. The tree in bloom or laden with fruit is a magnificent sight, filled with wonder and delight for the beholder. But what is it that sustains all this magnificence and beauty? It is the unseen roots that provide the sustenance of life for the tree. Similarly, the Brahman sustains all the glorious forms that make up Nature, for without the Divine all this would not exist. We should not mistake the form for what sustains the form. When we pursue the form we are caught up in something which is endless, but when we know the substance, when we know what is the foundation, then we will not be carried away by the attractions of the form. The latter is always obvious to the external organs, but the attractions of the thing which underlies the form can only be realized through inner experience.

—Prasanthi Nilayam

Divine Grace and Human Effort

All of us need and pray for God's grace; most often a special quota of it. If God means what He says, and He says that He is the Universal Father, most kind and most merciful, we argue, He should not keep back His grace from anyone, particularly when we pray for it. Now that we see God walking the earth in human form, who says that not only He knows our past, present, and future, He has come to show us our way to Him, Grace would be taken for granted as much as salvation. We quote a number of other things He has said to suit our purpose and start claiming it. If it is denied, claiming that we understand all about it, we accuse Him of not justifying His own words, and open an ancient case against Him!

Our concept of grace leads us to a very comfortable position. There is nothing God's grace cannot achieve. Even a fool becomes wisdom itself; a lame person turns into the best of mountaineers, if one receives His grace. The most important part of the whole affair is that nobody can stop God from offering His grace to a fool and a lame. None can ever question Him. But what about deservedness? His grace can even create it in us and flow into us. That's most wonderful. Therefore, 'I am nothing if He wants me to do a certain thing, achieve a certain goal, He must make me do that and achieve that through His Grace.' But, suppose He doesn't want? Then, of course, I can question Him, why not? His want must converge on my want, then He must rush to me with His grace, if necessary, special Grace, and get it done Himself! From Bhukti to Mukti, that is the general rule! How comfortable life is with this faith! If this sounds to be a miracle, why, miracles also come under the rule.

But do I mean it? Do you mean it? A little precious thinking on this would convince one easily of the incongruity of the whole point of view. By definition grace cannot be claimed as a possession. Grace shall not, does not, bring us armchair salvation either. It does not rid us of our responsibility towards ourselves. Grace does not reduce one to a cabbage; it helps one to become an individual. It is, no doubt, a friend to count upon, but it shall not take our position in the house, God wants to see us grow big enough to touch heaven rather than becoming a dead load for Him to carry us there. He did not only create the flesh and bone, He also put a part of Himself within us. What about that part?

Action and interaction

Here we come face to face with a very vital question about the relationship of man and God. When and how does God interact with man? Does He, or does He not? He does, but only when man acts. Man must act to invite God to interact. The truth is man cannot stop acting. He has got that built-in urge for action, which he cannot escape. But if he does not act by choice, he doesn't become the actor, he is acted upon by his instincts. Between becoming the actor and a victim of action, the former is certainly far better, and in keeping with man's true nature. He has got intelligence, discrimination, understanding as the instruments of work. To make use of these instruments is to act consciously and invite, in fact, tempt God to interact. That is very exciting, and with this, life is very much worth living.

If, on the other hand, one does not make use of his natural gifts, and allows his instincts and lower urges to take over, he becomes a plaything, not a player. A plaything can have no higher urges or higher life, and will never touch God. To be a plaything is not to be overwhelmed by the power of circumstances. One who is overwhelmed has put up a fight; used his fists and kicks, and spent his natural resources. But one who never even pretends to punch and kick, and wants someone else from behind the tree to come and shadow him, will always lose the field. One who willingly and intelligently takes the field, knows how and where he must cut and thrust. He is a fighter, an actor. But one who stands there quietly with the sword in hand, not even aware of the use of the blade, is a plaything. His own sword shall be used by the adversary to cut him down. He will never know any grace, for he will never know how to use it. One who knows not that the sword in his hand is God's grace, his intelligence and skill to use it are only promptings of God to use His grace, shall know no other grace.

How to use grace

Now we understand that to receive grace is not as vital as using it when it comes to us. Grace is not a mantelpiece, or a decorative antique, or a comfortable hammock. It is a knife in the hands of a surgeon, a hum in the heart of a poet, a flash of colour in the eyes of a painter, a sudden understanding in the mind of a scientist and a thousand similar revelations to men and women of action. Grace fulfils itself in the actions of men and women, not in their idle dreams. God is ever willing to operate in the human world, provided we are ready to take and pursue His directions. We miss the beauty and thrill of living because we miss His loving Intimations and very rarely hold on to them even if we get a glimpse of them once or twice.

To have a glimpse we may need the Divine Initiative. But to understand more and more of it we must have effort. I shall illustrate the point. Suppose I want to come to Puttaparthi to witness the Birthday festival. I apply for leave. Effort. Leave is refused, I pray, weep, and pray. Effort. Then, suddenly I get a call from the boss. Leave sanctioned. Grace. I am delighted. I frantically run up and down for a ticket. Effort. Someone cancels his journey, and I get his ticket. Grace. Arrive at Bangalore on 22nd afternoon. No bus. Shared a taxi with a stranger, Grace. Puttaparthi the same night. Have to put up in a crowded shed. Effort. Tired, but must get up early to be before time in the auditorium. Effort. Get a seat near the middle row. Grace. Swami comes, smiles, and says 'Bangaru'. GRACE.

Grace and effort

Thus we see how grace and our effort interact for fulfillment of both. If this chain had discontinued somewhere, I would have been deprived of that sweet smile and 'Bangaroo'. If, for instance, I had resigned myself to the refusal of my boss; or I had submitted to a grumbling wife; refused to rush up and down for a ticket, the flow of Grace would not have been continuous. It would never stop; only I would stop acting and using it to invite further grace. Therefore, for the joy of that smile and 'Bangaroo', Grace and effort cooperated with each other; God and man cooperated with each other. To be more correct, man used the love of God in his action.

I have already suggested that man must act, and act intelligently, judiciously, rightly to be saved from being acted upon. This judgement, discrimination and right thinking, again, are the result of the grace-and-action chain pursued earlier. The stronger and keener the interaction and cooperation the stronger and keener our inner instruments. Grace thoughtfully utilised over a period of time brings us success and delight. This delight is not a moment of overwhelming grace, but an overwhelming moment of a long series of grace-effort operations.

Increased awareness

If we look into this wonderful process, we see another secret. Grace comes to us, we use this gift in action. That is, we convert one currency into another, to make our further travel possible. That brings us more grace and more meaningful action. Thus our actions go on getting purified more and more and approaching God's way. Once grace is used, that goes into the capital which brings us more interest—perhaps compound Interest. This interest need not be in terms of God's intervention. It may manifest itself in clarifying our consciousness, strengthening our convictions in right actions, making our bhakti deeper, our action less selfish, and so on. And, of course, purity in life only tempts God to intervene more and more in human affairs and subsidise our weaknesses, shortcomings. Grace should be used to raise our awareness and this awareness affects our actions.

Grace acts thus, true. But do we always recognise when it is given to us? It is not an object that comes in a parcel. It is the revelation of God's love in an Incident. We are so shortsighted. Our capacity to perceive is so much limited. Our memory, understanding, power to analyse and assimilate are so poor that we can rarely perceive our days and nights to be one whole unit. For us, generally, they are fragmented pieces of time. Do we see the undeniable relatedness of these fragments? Do we know what goes through all these beads of time to hold them together? If we could but see, we will see nothing but grace.

How God reveals himself

How does one action result from a previous one? How are all that happen to us in a single day the just and right deductions from our previous actions? Do we suspect even for a moment how much of grace and special Grace might have intervened to give us what we get? Are we so much sure that God has let the deadly process of our Karmachakra go on in its own pace without modifying it in any measure? We never see it, and accuse God of being a stingy miser! Do we ever suspect that our death might have been postponed to smooth out a family problem? Do I ever suspect that a simple sneeze, only a minute earlier when I was turning a sharp bend in a fast moving bicycle might have cost me my life? Do I suspect that if I had married the other person than the one I did, I might have ruined my life? Thus I can never count in how many ways God

sends me His grace to make my life a little easier, safer and a little more tolerable by modifying my own actions and redirecting, rearranging their results. I also cannot count on how many occasions I have failed to hold on to Him, failed to recognise his kind intervention, and failed to learn the little lessons he has been incessantly sending me. He never announces Himself with a bang. In a whisper does He come, and in a smile does He reveal Himself. In one touch He changes the base metal to `Bangaroo', and in one look He transforms the earthquake to a dust-quake! The greater thing is not to deserve grace, but preserve grace. God does not count our deservedness, but our capacity to recognise this supremely beautiful moment, and preserve the experience.

A smiling flower can be grace for a sad and depressed man. A plate of rice kindly offered can be grace for a hungry and angry man. A helping hand in an overcrowded railway booking counter can be grace for a tired and worried man. Grace can come in a flowing river as it actually did to Siddhartha of Hermann Hesse; grace can come to us as the hunter's arrow as it came to Valmiki. It can come as a failure, as a success; as poverty or as prosperity, for varieties of purposes. It need not always save, or delight, or solve a problem, or give rewards. Grace also kills, tortures, multiplies problems or punishes. When we recognise the moment of grace, we must also see its purpose, its function—all for only one objective, to toughen our soul, and to prepare our self for that great journey beyond. Sometimes giving a son is grace, sometimes taking away the only son is also grace. To recognise this God-given moment in our life, we must let go—not hold on to our little selves, small minds and petty aspirations. Grace is God's desire to mould us, His preparedness to shape and reshape us—not to help us in our own chosen way—to heaven or hell! Most of the greatest devotees of the Lord have proved poverty to be a blessing; while there have been many others who have converted prosperity also to a blessing. In fact the whole history of mankind can be re-written more usefully as a saga of revelations of God's grace; it also can equally truthfully be recomposed as a tragedy of man's failure to make use of these great moments.

—*Bejoy K. Misra*

(To be concluded)

Act Right, Then Claim The Fruit

There is a story of some monkeys which planted a mango garden. They planted the saplings, watered them a few days, and plucked them from off the ground to see how deep the roots had gone! They wanted them to grow fast and yield fruits, but they were unaware of the process by which alone they could get the fruits they craved for! Act right: then, claim the fruit. Cultivate with care; and collect the harvest.

—*(From "Chinna Katha")*

"From Zoroaster to Sathya Sai"

Christmas at Prasanthi Nilayam is celebrated with a solemnity and holiness that is rarely to be seen elsewhere.

This time, a very large gathering of men and women devotees from overseas countries went in a procession with lighted candles, singing Christmas carols and hymns to Sai, starting from the Ganesha Mandir and ending there after making the usual Nagarsankirtan round the Mandir. The procession was led by a band of cherubic children dressed in immaculate white, with gleaming faces, which glowed with joy in the light from the candles they carried.

Although the darshan which Bhagavan used to give from the balcony of the Mandir in previous years was not included in the morning's programme, this was amply compensated by Bhagavan's stirring discourse in the evening, followed by an exquisite ballet by overseas children, which presented the theme how messiahs, prophets and avatars have come to rescue mankind from time to time.

The theme was so well conceived and so well presented that the entire audience cheered the children when in the last scene the actor in the role of Shirdi Baba came down from the stage to garland Bhagavan Sathya Sai as the Avatar of our age.

Bhagavan blessed all the children, who had given such a fine account of themselves in their different roles as Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha, Christ, Mohamed, and Shirdi Baba, besides other characters including Vishnu, Siva and Parvati, Bhoodevi and Brahma.

The stage settings and costumes had been well designed. Al Drucker rendered the script impressively to drive home the message of the ballet.

Harnessing Talent for Community Service

"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 sympathy." —**Baba**

Talent flourishes all around Sri Sathya Sai Baba. At every darshan people hand him poems or drawings. Music flows, Inspired by Him. Glittering performances fill many an evening under His patronage. Amateurs find themselves creating or performing as they never imagined possible, while artists of long standing outdo themselves. The young are trained at a tender age to speak in public, before crowds of thousands. The old are honoured and their wisdom cherished.

This renaissance is encouraging, in view of the problems we seem to have with talent: how to recognize it, what to do with it when it is evident; how to deal with an apparent lack of it. Even in nations with advanced technology, very little is known about how to improve the

understanding of the so-called "retarded", or how to develop extraordinary talent in seemingly average people. (One all-too-secret ingredient is love!) Even less is known about the gifted, especially the highly gifted. Only a fraction of the spectrum of human capabilities can be measured by existing "I.Q." tests.

In some countries tradition favours the old to such an extent that many types of giftedness are "out of bounds" to the young, although they may be quite capable. In other lands, the knowledge of the elders is dying with them, unappreciated and unwanted. Sometimes talent seems more of an embarrassment than a source of joy and is seen as a threat. Great souls, however, seem to delight in detecting the talents of others, and in encouraging their development.

Nurtured with love

"Talent Develops by Being Developed!" insists Professor Shinichi Suzuki of Japan, a pioneer in the development of abilities. He seems to have proved his point several thousand times over by teaching hosts of young children to play the violin beautifully. Ordinary children, not geniuses. His book "Nurtured with Love" is a revelation well worth reading by parents, educators, musicians or any person concerned with making the most of the treasures within us, especially at an early age.

Recognized, developed and allowed to flourish, our talents enrich our lives. This is why those who love humankind are so enthusiastic; about combining love and discipline so that our gifts can flower. Within us is the ocean of nectar divine, the pure spring of creativity. Tapping our own talents can be a form of active meditation. Once we experience this, we may long, to share it with our own contemporaries and even succeeding generations.

One of the ways to share talent is the Talent Bank. This is an organized list of the various skills and types of knowledge possessed by a certain number of people. Animating the endeavour is a basic belief that everybody has something to contribute, whatever one's age, sex or walk of life.

Creating a Talent Bank can be rewarding in many ways. You help people assess their own gifts and to develop them further or branch out in new directions. Nor need your search be confined to the more obvious interpretation of "talent" as being mainly related to the arts. Recognition can be given to handiwork skills, leadership ability, mediumship, healing, gardening, accounting, or any other field.

Needs and assets

You may go out and seek people who might be interested in participating in such a project, interviewing them personally. Or, any group may make a survey of what they have to offer, as is now being done in several local Sai service organizations. You can then correlate your assets with a survey of community needs. Business concerns may offer a reservoir of their employees' skills on a volunteer basis, thus enhancing community relations to the benefit of all concerned.

A simple card index can be set up and made accessible to the public under the care of a responsible, enthusiastic person. The constant upkeep of the Talent Bank index is vital to its effectiveness. It should be kept alive, expanding. In addition, some screening of inquiries is

necessary to preserve order and privacy. This is as important as ensuring publicity so that people know the index exists and is active.

Once you have a Talent Bank set up, the possibilities for using it are limited only by the imagination of its creators and caretakers, the quality and quantity of its content and the scope of its outreach.

A Talent Bank Pool has within it the seeds of a school, since members may be called upon to instruct others in their arts or crafts. Such activities can take place in addition to official school programs, within them or in cooperation with them. They can also be for adults.

Another Important dimension of a Talent Bank can be a sector for projects to make better use of the human resources at hand. This again can be done with Index cards, each one outlining a project (either already under way or still in the planning stage) and giving the name of a coordinator, in the hope of attracting like-minded people with suitable knowledge and skills. Such projects can be for leisure time or even for generating new sources of employment.

One Talent Bank that I know of was funded by the Canadian Government as a make-work project and to provide a new service in a city of some 24,000 inhabitants. When it came to planning how to go about collecting our information, we discovered how controversial talent can be. Some of our survey team objected that the word "talent" conveyed an elitist image, especially when combined with "bank".

"The people pool"

After much discussion, we agreed to change the name of our project to "The People Pool". Following an intuition that people tend to become skilled at what interests them, we did not ask, "What are you good at?" but rather, "What are you interested in?" With this approach we learned more than we expected. Our inquiries led us to observe a flow of talent-interest through people's lives, a dynamic, changing energy transforming itself to suit circumstances and helping to modify them as well.

We were surprised to find how warmly we were welcomed by many older people. For many of them this was the first time in years that anyone had shown such an interest. We came to specialize a little in "Senior Citizens", for ours was a town where many came to retire. A long, snowy winter kept them even more isolated than is usual in North America. Come springtime that year, our People Pool was ready to be handed over to the Reference Librarian at the Public Library, so that living beings could be consulted as well as books.

Wisdom bank

More recently at Carleton University in Ottawa, a young social scientist created a Wisdom Bank. Warren Thorngate invited any Canadian resident over 65 years of age to send him a reply to the question: "What lessons have you learned about life that you would like to convey to future generations?" This valuable collection is now housed in the Public Archives of Canada.

Although a Talent or Wisdom Bank or Pool is hardly a panacea for all our ills, it can certainly help to promote a better knowledge of ourselves and each other and a wider sharing of these

Insights. I strongly suspect that neglect and abuse of gifts may be at the root of much more distress than we now realize. Talent seems to have energy that will express itself one way or another—if not to the common good then...

I truly believe that the sooner we focus serious efforts on talent and its implications, the better for all of us. It is simply a matter of inquiring into the gifts God gave us so that we may become the best instruments possible in the coming of His Kingdom back onto this Earth.

—*Helen Heubi, Geneva*

All Are Sevaks

In the world all are Sevaks (servants). People speak of master and servant, the rich and the poor, the guru and the shishya. This kind of discrimination encourages one form of pride. In front of an officer, a subordinate shows deference and humbleness. Looking at it from a superficial point of view, we decide who is an officer and who is a subordinate, but if we view it from the Atmic standpoint, we will realise that both are servants. Both master and servant are interdependent and therefore we should foster a sense of interdependence. For the master the servant is a servant. For the servant the master is a servant as he is dependent on the former. Hence both are servants. Sai Sevaks should therefore discard these differences and promote the concept of service among all persons and thereby widen their outlook.

—(From Baba's discourse on 18.11.84 at the Sai Seva Dal Conference)

Messengers of Sathya Sai

At the fourth annual function of the Kingdom of Mother Sai—the association of old students of Sathya Sai College for Women, Anantapur, —Bhagavan announced that the name of the two old students' organisations—Kingdom of Sathya Sai and Kingdom of Mother Sai—might be changed to "Messengers of Sathya Sai" so that all old students will bear the same name.

Bhagavan, while commending the service activities undertaken by the old students, called upon them to live up to the new name of "Messengers of Sathya Sai" by upholding the ideals of Sathya Sai wherever they may be working or living. Bhagavan said: There are ex-students who have been with Swami for many years and listened to His discourses and teachings. Many have taken to heart these teachings. They should try to live up to at least a few of these ideals and principles in their after-life and induce others to follow them. If they did any thing contrary to Swami's high ideals or spoke against Swami's sacred teachings, they would be guilty of heinous wrongs. They should be true messengers of Sathya Sai.

Sai Family News

U. K. SEVA DAL CONVENTION

London: The first National Seva Dal Convention was held on October 28, 1984, at the Communal Building, University of Bradford.

Among the highlights of the convention were a Medical Camp for Deafness Survey of Children, an exhibition which was opened by Mr. Max Madden, M. P. for Bradford, a film show depicting ashram life in India, and presentation of a Bal Vikas play by Bradford children on Hanuman's devotion to Rama.

At the afternoon session a number of speakers dwelt on different aspects of Bhagavan Baba's Mission for Mankind. Mr. Lucas Ralli, President of the U. K. Sai Council, read one of the messages, received in meditation from Bhagavan. Among others who addressed the convention were Mr. Victor Kanu, Mr. Max Madden, Councillor Nun. Deputy Mayor of Bradford, and several students from Bradford, Swansea and other Universities. Sai students from London staged a play, portraying two brothers, one of whom had gone astray because of bad company.

The convention, while revealing the extent of Sai service activities in the U. K., Indicated the scope for enlarging these activities.

—*L. R.*

ZAMBIA GOES AHEAD

Zambia (Africa): The Sai movement has been growing steadily in Zambia since 1981, when the first Sai Centre was started at Ndola on March 29, 1981 (Guru Poornima Day). Besides regular weekly bhajans, the Ndola centre has been conducting Bal Vikas classes every Saturday, and organising Narayana Seva at an Old People's Home for the past three years. A blood pressure detection camp was first conducted in 1981 and has been run at regular intervals since then. The Mahila Vibhag is sending teams of ladies to visit patients at the Ndola Central Hospital every Wednesday since June 1983.

Three other centres have been started since 1981—the Bitwe Sai Centre in 1982, the Chilalabombwe Centre In 1983 and the Lusaka Centre in 1984. All these centres are conducting Bhajans, Bal Vikas classes and Narayana Seva.

—*S. Thaker, Ndola.*

NEPAL CENTRES' CONFERENCE

Kathmadu (Nepal): A two-day conference of Office-bearers and members of the Sathya Sai Centres in Nepal, attended by 180 delegates and observers, was held at Kathmandu on October 13 and 14, 1984. The Conference was turned Into a Sadhana Shibir (camp) by the inclusion of Namasankirtan and bhajans in the daily programme. The inaugural session, held at the Royal Academy Hall, was attended by Ministers, dignitaries and leading professionals from different walks of life. Dr. Sushil Banerjee, President of the Sathya Sai Centre of Biratnagar, welcomed the gathering. Sri Bhopal Sigh Karki, Chairman of the Raj Sabha Standing Committee, inaugurating the Conference, said that under the leadership of King Birendra people of all faiths

and sects lived in harmony in Nepal. He hailed Bhagavan Baba's advent as the harbinger of a new era of peace, unity and happiness for mankind. Sri Indulal Shah spoke on the Sai programme of education in human values, which was being taken up in many countries outside India, including the U. K., U. S. A., and Malaysia.

An interesting cultural programme was presented by Bal Vikas students from Kathmandu, Dharan and Biratnagar.

The conference set up a Coordinating Committee for Nepal, a 60th Birthday Celebrations Committee and a Sathya Sai Trust for Nepal.

MEETING IN PHOENIX

Tucson (Arizona, U. S. A): On November 4th, the Sathya Sai Centres of Phoenix and Tucson (Arizona) hosted a public meeting in Phoenix to present the message and mission of Bhagavan. An exhibition of posters and information material was held. Dr. Jack Hislop, Dr. Samuel Sandweiss and Dr. Gerald Jampolsky addressed the meeting. Dr. Michael Goldstein presided.

—*J. R., Tucson.*

EYE CAMP IN H.P.

Mandi (Himachal Pradesh): A seven day eye camp was conducted by- the Sai Seva Samithi, Mandi, in collaboration with the Himachal Pradesh Medical College during October-November 1984, in Badhal village, Mandi district. 32 major operations and 20 minor operations were done. Over 700 patients were treated at the Camp. In addition, 303 students from the primary school were also examined for eye ailments. The villagers extended their full cooperation to the Sai sevaks to make the Camp a success.

—*L. R. V., Mandi*

CYCLONE RELIEF IN NELLORE AREA

Inspired by the call given by Bhagavan in his Janmadina discourse on November 23, Seva Dal members from the Nellore, Guntur and West Godavari districts organised comprehensive relief and rehabilitation activities in the cyclone-ravaged villages on the Nellore coast near Sriharikota. These villages, which could be reached only by boats, had no medical facilities. The Seva Dal members set up a relief and medical camp on December 1. Many old and infirm persons were carried to the medical centre from their villages and treated. In all 1600 patients were given medical aid. Starting with Nagarsankirtan and bhajans in the morning, the Seva Dal members were able to secure the cooperation of the stricken villagers in the rebuilding of their huts and resumption of natural life by the way they worked amongst them. Cooking utensils and clothes were distributed to needy persons.

A village temple, to which the panic stricken villagers had rushed for shelter, where many had died owing to stampede and suffocation, had been abandoned out of fear. The Seva Dal had it cleaned up and revived for use as a shrine by holding bhajans and religious talks there. The relief camp was wound up on December 13th after Narayana Seva at which 600 people were fed.

MEDICAL CAMP IN PUNJAB

Abohar (Punjab): A medical checkup camp and a Sadhana camp for men only were conducted in October in the adopted village, Dangerkhera (Ferozpur district). Nearly 500 persons were

examined at the camp. In September 16 devotees donated 46 units of blood at a Blood Donation Camp.

Many people consider all acts of worship, puja, etc. as "His" and all acts of earning and spending, as "Mine". But, this is a mistake. All acts are "His". There is so much distinction as Manavakarma and Madhavakarma; all Karma leads you towards Madhava or away from Him. For example, you say that you fall ill, that you are in good health etc. That is because you feel that the body is "you", whereas you are really only the Atma, with the five sheaths which you have superimposed on it. This is the result of the system of education now prevalent which teaches that the Ananda one derives from the senses is all the Ananda that one can get, that one needs get. It does not disclose to the individual the eternal source of Ananda that he has within himself.

—Baba

"Secure Gods Love"

"Strive to understand well the nature of God's love. To secure that love is the sacred goal of human life," declared Bhagavan Baba, in a deeply moving address to the vast gathering of devotees from many countries in the Poornachandra Auditorium on Christmas day.

Bhagavan spoke for over ninety minutes, emphasising the need to cultivate love towards one's fellow-beings as the primary means to God-realisation.

Embodiments of the Divine Atma!

Forgetting his true nature man spends his life in the pursuit and enjoyment of meretricious and evanescent sensuous pleasures and mundane desires. Does man secure peace, however much he may succeed in indulging in worldly pleasures? No. Ultimately he ends his life in discontent and despair. Ignoring the pure, eternal, infinite Divine Truth in him, man fosters animal and demoniac traits.

What is the reason for this betrayal of his true nature, which renders his life meaningless? It is because he neglects the code governing a life based on restraints and righteousness. The old saying is: "Dharma (Righteousness) is at the root of everything. It is the highest virtue." Morality is the corollary to Dharma. Morality does not merely mean the observance of certain rules in the workaday world. Morality means adherence to the straight and sacred path of right conduct. Morality is the blossoming of good conduct. It is the royal road to the acme of human achievement. The honour of the community rests upon morality. Without morals, a community decays. Morality alone makes or mars the community.

Only in an Individual who is morally strong does the human personality find its best expression. The term personality can be applied only to one who manifests the hidden

unmanifested divinity within him by his conduct. Mere human form does not make one a human personality. It is the behaviour that counts. Only those who lead well-regulated lives can be regarded as real human beings manifesting their true divine nature. Such great historical personages as Manu, Nala, Raghu, Bali and Harishchandra were examples of the highest expressions of human excellence. Jesus was also one such personality who manifested the perfection man is capable of. The prophet Mohamed was another historic figure who led a rigorous life of righteousness and spiritual endeavour.

Love and dharma

Love is another name for Dharma. True Love is priceless. It has no trace of selfishness in it. It does not change. It is pure and unsullied. It always grows and never diminishes. It is spontaneous. The love of God is of such a nature: it is spontaneous, free from selfishness, unwavering, and always full. Ordinary human love is motivated by selfish considerations. It is liable to change owing to changes in time and circumstance. For persons immersed in such love, it is difficult to comprehend or realise the greatness of Divine Love. The English philosopher Bacon has pointed out how the love of God is all-encompassing and unchanging and how it can grow into universal love.

Love wears the mantle of Truth. And one wedded to Truth is ever young and vigorous. The Upanishads have declared that the votary of truth will not know old age. The Bible also declares that the body gets fortified by adherence to truth. Truth should not be confined to speech. It must express itself in action. Only the one who is truthful in word and deed can be esteemed as a genuine human being, according to Prophet Mohamed. Buddhism also lays down that everyone, Irrespective of sex or country, must live up to truth

Sai's incomparable love

You may believe in it or not. I must tell you that total adherence to truth, absolute selflessness, universality and spontaneous outpouring of love are to be seen only in Sai and nowhere else. Sai has not an iota of self-interest. Sai is motiveless. Sai deals with sadhakas according to their deserts. Sai will continue to love even those who revile him. Sai will not forget anyone, even if he forgets Sai. But occasionally, Sai will appear to ignore those who may have forgotten Sai, acted against His injunctions, set at naught Sai ideals or traduced Sai. From this, some persons may imagine that Swami is angry with some persons or dissatisfied with some others. It is not without reason that Sai avoids meeting or talking to some persons. I do not wish to waste my words on persons, who do not respect Sai's directives or follow Sai's ideals. I do not wish to speak to those who have no regard for my words. That does not mean I have no love towards them.

Love will not submit to the forces of envy or hatred however powerful they may be. Love will prevail over them. Once when Buddha was travelling, he was confronted by a demoness with a sword in hand. "Oh Buddha! Your Love must submit today to my envy. Your life will end today." Buddha answered her, with a smile: "I will not submit to envy or hatred. I am not affected by praise or blame or ridicule. I love even you who bear such ill-will towards me." When the demoness heard these words, she turned into a dove and vanished.

Those who hate others are ultimately consumed by their own hatred. Those filled with envy ultimately meet their end in it. Richard, a character in one of Shakespeare's plays, was filled with envy and could not bear to see any one superior or better looking than himself. In the end, he was a victim of his own envy and died miserably. Similar examples can be found in the Indian epics. Bhasmasura, who got a boon from Siva that any one on whom he placed his palm should be reduced to ashes, was himself reduced to ashes when he placed his palm over his head.

Faith and confidence

In the pursuit of the good and godly life, one may encounter many difficulties and disturbances. Many doubts and questions crop up. It is only when these difficulties are faced squarely and the troubles are borne with patience and fortitude that we can understand the true nature of Reality. You should not allow yourselves to be overwhelmed in any way by difficulties and sorrows, doubts and disappointments. You must have faith. Have confidence in yourself and strive to understand well the nature of God's love. To secure that love is the sacred goal of human life. The transforming power of Love is boundless. St. Paul, who was originally an inveterate critic of Jesus, was transformed by Christ's love into the greatest apostle of Jesus.

The animosity which some persons show towards good and godly people can be traced to one or other of three factors. In the first category are those who have no faith in God or goodness and hence oppose anything that is good or godly. In the second category are those who turn against God because their desires or ambitions have not been fulfilled. The third category is those who are envious by nature and cannot tolerate anything good. Other than these three types, there is a fourth composed of persons who think of God or seek God's favour when they are in trouble or difficulties and who forget God immediately after their troubles are over or their desires have been fulfilled.

Are they human?

It is unfortunate that man, who is inherently divine in his origin and in whom the Atma resides as the indwelling Witness, is caught up today in unrighteous and evil actions and is bringing discredit to the human species. In the Dark Ages, when men indulged in wicked and cruel actions and behaved like demons or wild beasts, there might be some excuse. But in the present age, when such great advances have been made in science and technology and when people call themselves civilised, if inhuman practices are predominant and wickedness and ingratitude are the rule, one is compelled to ask whether these persons are human beings or demons!

The irony of the present situation is that, on the one side, governments are piling up monstrous lethal weapons, indulging in demoniacal actions and promoting conflicts among nations, while at international gatherings they proclaim their desire for peace. Is there any meaning in this? Why should those who crave for peace encourage conflicts? If they genuinely desire peace, they should pursue policies which will be conducive to the promotion of peace.

The foremost need today is for everyone to realise that God is One. This is what Jesus and Mohamed proclaimed. The word "Allah" really means the One Supreme which contains everything in the universe. This is the primary message of the Vedas: "Om ityekaaksharam Brahma"—the single letter Om is Brahman.

The three wise men

The essential truth of all religions is that God is one. Jesus proclaimed the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. One can have only one father not two. When Jesus was born three wise men followed a star to reach his place of birth. Seeing the new-born babe they bowed to the divine child in their hearts. Before leaving, each of them spoke about the child as follows to the parents. One sage told Mary: "He loveth God." The second sage said: "God loveth him." The third man said: "He is God." What is the inner significance of these three pronouncements about Jesus? The first statement that "He loveth God" contains the implication that Jesus is a messenger of God. A messenger can love his master, but the master may not so easily love his messenger. The second statement declared that "God loves him (Jesus)." Why? Because he is the Son of God. The third statement "He is God" bears out what Jesus said: "I and my Father are One." It means that as the Son of God he is entitled to acquire his Father's place. The unity of Father and Son was proclaimed by the third sage.

All are messengers

The inner meaning of all this is that every human being in the world is a messenger of God. What does this signify? What is the message that the human being is expected to convey? That he is a "messenger of God," not of the devil. A messenger of God must propagate the divine teachings of God to the world. You have no right to call yourselves messengers of God if your actions are bad, your thoughts are evil and you preach wrong ideas. Such persons can only be called agents of the Devil.

From today, as "messengers of God", you have to demonstrate to the world the purity, the Truth and the Love that the Divine symbolises. When you lead a life of purity and morality, you are entitled to regard yourselves as "Sons of God." God is the embodiment of Love and you should not do any thing which is contrary to the love that God represents. You should develop those good qualities which can make you worthy "sons of God."

In the Bible it is recorded that Jesus washed the feet of His disciples. When they asked him why He was doing so, Jesus answered: "I am washing your feet as your servant, so that you may learn to serve the world." Every man is, to begin with, a messenger of God. When he fulfils his duties as a messenger, he realises that he is a Son of God and then achieves oneness with the Divine.

God's love is boundless and universal, unlike human love, which is narrow and selfish. Swami's love is "beyond reason". It is unlimited and unchanging. I am promoting love all around through my love. Those of you who have been nourished by this love should not deprive yourselves of its beneficence. I do not seek anything. I impose no hardships on anyone. In such a situation, if you understand the real nature of Swami's love and utilise that love to transform yourselves into embodiments of love, you will be setting an example to the world.

—Bhagavan's discourse on 25.12.1984 at Poornachandra Auditorium

"The Chosen Mother"

To be the mother of the Avatar is a privilege that is conferred on the blessed woman once in many millennia. Easwaramma—the Mother whom Bhagavan Baba chose—must have earned it richly by many meritorious lives. How difficult is that role, especially when one learns to recognise the divinity of the Presence after many ordeals and incredible experiences, is brought out vividly by Prof. Kasturi in his book "Easwaramma—The Chosen Mother", which is a revealing companion volume to the four volumes of Bhagavan's biography—"Sathyam Sivam Sundaram"—already published.

Though many of the events and experiences related in this volume have figured in the earlier books, the focus here is on how the Mother reacted to these events and how they served to mould her life and shape her destiny. The entire book is a moving account of the agony and ecstasy of being the Mother of the Avatar and the final fulfillment through mergence in Swami. For years, Prof. Kasturi writes, "the impossible, the incredible, the unpredictable—these were her daily bread. She could, however, digest them and survive the pace because her memory preserved for her a private treasure house, a Smriti, of myths and legends of the past, of the lives of saints and sages and tales of war and peace. She discovered parallels and coincidences, approximations and similarities and her faith grew as she constantly thought over the disturbing but happy happenings all around her. She learnt to grow serene during storm and calm and impressed everyone with her Dhrti, her steadfastness in her overpowering attachment to Swami and to all those who adored Him... Fortitude brought equanimity and equanimity shed love even on those who did not know how and when to return it... Easwaramma, like millions of her sisters, was pestered by folly, fear and fumbings whenever worldly desires accumulated and clamoured and clashed in conflict. Swami led her into the realm of happiness, goodness and wisdom. He raised her, whom He had chosen as His Mother, to the status of His foremost pupil as she progressed from perplexity to pre-eminent faith in the Divinity that deludes as Diversity and also helps us to cast off that delusion for this is but a game it enjoys playing."

It is an intensely human story which is suffused with spiritual illumination at every turn.

- N.

** "Easwaramma—The Chosen Mother" by N. Kasturi, Editor, "Sanathana Sarathi" Published by Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust, Prasanthi Nilayam.*

The Real Birthday

*When we delight as He keeps us close and near
He sows anxiety in the heart, of separation sad;
When we despair and feel His sport is our wail
He grants us in plenty laughter to split our sides.
When we ride on the crest of the wave of His praise
He pricks our pride by well-timed jeers.
When we roam quite free at the boon, "Don't fear".
He heaps trouble on trouble and passes silently by.
We cannot turn away, nor forward proceed.
Thus He who is in Parthi holds the world in thrill;
Who at this time can solve for us His Mystery?*

In the cavity of the heart of man, in that sublime space (Akasa), God resides associated with the Self-principle, as sunshine exists associated with shadow. Light and shade are twin birds. Shade is caused by Light; shade includes Light, for it declares the adjacency of Light; it needs the presence of Light. They are fundamentally inseparable. So too are the Individual Self (Jivi) and the Universal Self (Brahman) related to each other as One Inseparable Entity. The Jivi as the shadow exists in and through Brahman and partakes of the same Divine Splendour. Every individual has to become aware of this identity.

For, the shadows are many and varied, though the Light is One. When the One is reflected in the many, in the multitude of Jivis, it appears as the Self In each, which watches unaffected as the Witness. The Self (Atma) is Eternal. The Self is Truth. However, since it is enclosed in flesh, bone and skin, man deludes himself into believing that the outer covering and not the inner core is the source of bliss. The foremost duty of man to himself is, therefore, to penetrate through these sheaths and imbibe the higher bliss which his Atmic core alone can confer. Everyone must, in his own best interests, strive to attain that unifying principle that is his inner treasure. Of all spiritual exercises (Sadhana) this is the most pertinent—the process of achieving this closeness. For, Sadhana means the endeavour and the effort to gain the desired object.

Activities that are devoid of Truth do not deserve to be known as Sadhana. The Atma is the Universal Eternal Truth and therefore, it cannot be gained by search in the particularised and the temporary world. The Divine shines in your heart and can be won only therein.

The body is a chariot. The charioteer is the principle of Intelligence (Buddhi). The senses are the horses. The reins that regulate and restrain the horses are 'the manas' (mind). When the mind wavers and wanders, not having stability of purpose, the horses run helter-skelter, endangering even the charioteer, Buddhi.

Speech, wisdom and atma

Speech is an important function of the senses and it serves the whims of the mind. So, one has to control the mind and not pollute it with greed for sense pleasures. Nor should the mind be tossed about on the waves of 'Yes' and 'No', of acceptance and rejection, of resolutions and

hesitations. The mind has to act as the associate of Buddhi. Speech sub-serving the mind and mind sub-serving the intellect—this is the way to bring about Prasanthi, the Supreme Peace. And, note this further point: slowly and steadily, instruct the intellect to turn towards the Atma. Speech with the mind, mind with intellect and intellect illumined by the Atma—this ensures for you the genuine goal of man.

The Atma is Eternal; it manifests Truth, which is Eternal, and beyond the limits of Space, Time and Causality. Truth is not affected by the passage of Time from the past through the present into the future. Wisdom (Jnana) too is not modified or clarified by the passage of Time. In fact, Wisdom is Truth; Truth is Wisdom. So, you should direct your best effort to experience the unity of Speech, Wisdom and Atma.

The urge to love

You have no need to run about in search of God, for, you are yourself God. God resides in your heart. "All this is enveloped by God" "All this is God", "All beings are God". He is the All-pervasive motive force. Have firm faith in this fact. Like fire in the matchstick, divinity is latent in man. The fire in the stick becomes manifest when it is struck against the side of the box. So too, when the Jivi contacts Deva (God), the flame of Jnana sheds the Light of Wisdom. How can the man taste the experience of Wisdom? In what form does it emanate? The wise person does not hate any one: he does not belittle or blame or hurt any one. What is it that prompts you to love another? The urge to love and be loved is inherent in every one. So, when you deny love or when you hate, you are hurting not only the person but the Universal Principle, the Divine Nature Itself.

Know that whatever you feel or do is an offering to God, flows towards God. So, be cautious. Do not offer bad thoughts, words and deeds which He does not accept. Offer instead the holy and the pure. That is your duty. That will ensure Self-satisfaction. Self-satisfaction paves the way to Self-sacrifice and Self-sacrifice brings about Self-realisation. The entire process rests upon faith; satisfaction, sacrifice and realisation—all these depend on faith. Faith decides the yearning; the yearning decides the fruit; the act decides the stage that is reachable. For, the sincerity of the act promotes the purity of the path; the purity of the path determines the validity of the wisdom and true wisdom is Divinity itself. The act, the conduct, the way of life—these have to be disciplined and elevated. How can a mind encumbered with desires ever rest content? How can it welcome sacrifice? Nevertheless, man has to involve himself only in acts that encourage detachment and renunciation.

A devotee once asked Brahma, the Creator: "For whose sake did you raise Meru, the Mountain of Gold? The renunciant would have nothing to do with it; the person who desires gold can never be satisfied with one single Meru! Even a thousand such will only incite him to long for more!" That is the nature of desire; it grows on and on in a never-ending rate. Curbing desire is the only means to achieve mental peace.

The four pillars

What exactly is "Peace"? It is the stage in which the senses are mastered and held in balance. "Samatwam Yogam Uchyathe"—Equanimity is, it is said, Yoga. Life should rest on the four pillars of Sathya, Dharma, Shanthi and Prema, which hold it firm against the turbulent waves of

joy and grief. Of these four, Prema is the crucial support. For, it is the very breath, the sole purpose of life. Love God and acquire the strength to meet the upsets of life. Love liquidates the blows of fate. Love blends and binds the parents with the child. Love sanctifies and glorifies the body.

In truth, the subjective world and the objective world are not two; they are only aspects of the One. The joy one derives from the senses-to whom does it belong, from whom did it originate? The body? Or the Atma? The senses are but tools.

They are operated, put to use by the mind. The mind is named Indra, since it manipulates the Indriyas (senses). The mind has to act according to the orders decided by the Buddhi and not according to its own whims. The Buddhi is illumined when it turns to the Atma within.

Embodiments of Love! Do not pay attention to the day when the body was born and fulfill selfish ends by celebrating the event pompously. *The day when you manifest pure feelings in your hearts, plant firm faith in the Divine Principle in your thoughts and cultivate unselfish enthusiasm to serve others, that day deserves to be celebrated as the Real Birthday. Seva can give you the experience of the Omnipresence of God, God as Vishnu.*

In many states, people are suffering from the havoc wrought by floods and cyclones while in other States, thousands are struck by famine caused by prolonged drought. For example, in the Nellore District, many are caught in great misery and loss. Take up appropriate Seva activities there. Devotees from neighbouring districts must also join in this task. Why? Wherever the need, whenever the call, the urge for Seva must direct you to offer your Seva without stint.

—(*Bhagavan's Discourse at Poornachandra Auditorium, 23-11-1984*)

SEVA DAL CONFERENCE:

Training for Service

Over one thousand Seva Dal trainees drawn from eighteen States were given intensive coaching in specialised activities for three days during the Seva Dal Conference. The training programme was conducted in seven sessions by 167 trainers. The main object of the programme was to impart knowledge in different skills so that the trainees on returning to their States would, in turn, train people in adopted villages. The specialised activities selected included spinning and weaving, coir products, making caps and trays from areca palm leaf, electric wiring and plumbing, health and hygiene, plastic decoratives, soap powder making, smokeless chulas, eye camp, veterinary services and purifying drinking water.

The activities have a direct bearing on the socio-economic well-being of the rural community. Every unit of the Sai organisation in the country has evolved a need-based programme in the State concerned so as to fulfill the aspirations of the rural community for a healthy living.

The training programme was conducted in the campus of the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. Effective audio-visual aids and practical demonstrations were employed to impart skills in the specialised activities.

Every State brought information and material prepared with care for the benefit of the trainees. At the end of the training programme the impact on the trainees was evaluated as particularly rewarding. In some cases the training sessions were prolonged for a while at the request of the trainees. Requests were received that such camps should be held more frequently.

Teaching the mutes

How to make the mute speak? And how to extend this benefit to as many of those as possible in the most expeditious way? This challenging task has been taken up by the Seva Dal.

At the international Conference, ninety five members of the Sai organisation drawn from eighteen States were put through a crash course to teach the mute, who are invariably deaf also. These, in turn, are to train more batches of teachers on a continuous basis.

Christopher Babu, 22-year old son of a police constable, who was learning tailoring at Puttaparthi, had not spoken a word since birth. After he was fitted out with an appropriate hearing aid in the presence of the trainees and as an expert started putting him through his paces, he enthusiastically responded, trying to reproduce the sounds he started hearing. Within a short time he was able to understand what he was expected to, step by step. His father, Mr. Joseph, standing outside the classroom, was a picture of happiness as he saw his son responding to sounds through his hearing aid, which he had not done since birth.

"Their homes will be happier still when the handicapped children begin to call "amma" and "baba", said a member associated with the training team. Dr. T. V. G. Tilak, an ENT specialist of Hyderabad, who is associated with the social welfare activities of Sri Sathya Sai Samiti, was in charge of the training programme. He said dumbness is not due to any fault in the speech organs-mouth, tongue and voice box. The fault lay in the dumb child not being able to hear from birth.

All dumb children are not totally deaf. Many of them have "an island of hearing", at some frequency. Testing their hearing capacity with an audio-meter it is possible to determine this frequency to fit a child with a hearing aid and make him hear sounds. The more difficult part of training starts in making them speak. It takes at least 3 years for the child to learn most of the words he needs to say. About 70% of the children, it is said, can be trained to talk and even go to school like normal children. Much of the neglect of these mute children is attributed to lack of knowledge about deaf children. It is in this context that the Sathya Sai Seva Organisation has undertaken training its Seva Dal members to work in this field, thereby eliminating the one hurdle in helping dumb children, namely, lack of trained teachers. Many of the States have by now introduced degree courses for training teachers for this purpose. The All India Institute of Speech and Hearing in Bangalore has facilities for training teachers even at post-graduate level. A lecturer from this Institute has been engaged by Dr. Tilak to train men and women in teaching mute children.

Be Human: Become Human

Man is an amalgam of body, mind and spirit. The senses of perception and action, which form the components of the body, are busy contacting the objective world. The mind-consciousness of the various levels, the faculty of reason and the ego—examines, experiences and judges. It decides after discrimination, which word or deed will be beneficial, favourable, fruitful and felicitous. It attempts to separate the good from the bad, the punya from the paapa, the true from the false, the permanent from the momentary. The spirit or the Self or the Atma is unaffected, stable and foundational. Its quality is 'isness' (Sat) but it is ever aware, ever conscious (chit). And when the consciousness is pure and unchanging, that state is undiluted felicity, delight or bliss (Ananda).

What is the purpose of life, for man? What has to be his highest achievement? Tennyson has extolled "Self-reverence, self- knowledge, self-control" ("these three alone lead man to sovereign power") as the ultimate goal.

The feeling 'I' has to be retained until it is submerged in the 'We' and finally in 'He' from whom it was projected at His Will. This is an arduous process, which requires a long journey through compassion, renunciation, rectitude, fortitude and patience. These are the five vital airs which purposeful living needs. All these are subsumed under the word, 'dams', in the scriptures. The person endowed with 'dama' is named a 'danta', indicating an adept in Vedanta! These five are the counterparts of Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Love and Non-violence.

Truth implies more than the correct reporting of what was seen. It involves the co-ordination of thought, word and deed and the recognition of the Eternal Witness of all three. The Witness is the Self, a sport of the Omniself. X may wear a brown shirt today, he might have worn a black one yesterday. "X in a brown shirt" is a true statement today; "X in a black shirt" was a true statement yesterday. This level of truth is known as 'truth for all practical purposes' (Vyavaharika Sathyam). The coats do change; the body of X does change; from day to day. But the Witness, the Self, is free from change.

Dharma is the code of morals that upholds and uplifts man and society. It is the superstructure on Truth. It serves the needs of the time, the society and the goal and is therefore subject to modification. The Dharma of the 'student' is different from that of the 'master of the family' and from the Dharma of the renunciant and the monk. But, through all the stages of life, the Truth, the Unchanging Witness persists. Accept Buddhi (intellect) as the charioteer; then, the practice of Dharma will lead to success.

The fundamental human values all emanate from Dharma, based on Truth. If human behaviour has no such basis, it leads to disaster. Man has dehumanised himself systematically by neglect of the basic Unity. From slings to arrows, from cannon balls to bombs, from fusion to fission, man has progressed in the art of killing and entered the Darkest Age of history. The greed for wealth and power has overwhelmed the creed of compassion. The law of self-aggrandizement reigns; the law of self-abnegation has receded. When the son is acclaimed as a good fellow, the father congratulates himself; when he is ostracised as a bad fellow, the father condemns others for leading him astray!

A person who is unable to cope with the demands of worldly competition is labelled as a fool, an Ajnani, one without jnana. But, he can well be an Ajnani, in another and higher sense `A' here means Akshara (Not letters of the alphabet, but) the imperishable, that which is not kshara. Jnani is a person who has mastered the Knowledge of the indestructible Cosmic Core and so, he is established in the highest Peace. Ajnani is one who is not aware of this Imperishable Principle. The Sath alone exists; the Chit is its effulgence; Ananda is the consequence.

The enumeration of human values as five—Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Love and Non-violence—is not correct. They are all facets of the foundational humanness. They grow together; they are interdependent, they are not separable. Dharma is Love in Action; Love thrives on inner Peace, on the absence of inner Conflicts. How can one have Peace when he revels in violence of speech and action?

You are entering upon the sacred task of guiding and training teachers who will inculcate human values in the hearts of children. Do not treat `Human Values' as a separate curricular assignment. Then, it will become dry and uninspiring. It must transform the way of life and should not stop with imparting information. It must be imparted more through example and practice rather than by books and formal teaching.

Emphasise the importance of physical cleanliness, simple Sathwic food and group activities involving mutual help. Service is Divine. Be examples of humility so that the children may learn its value and validity. Humility promotes charity and purity. Also, exert yourselves to implant in the children self-reliance by encouraging them to believe in themselves. Let them not develop a desire for imitating the vanity of others. Appreciate good thoughts, sweet speech and selfless deeds, and denounce bad thoughts, words and deeds as soon as they emerge.

Any beneficial venture will have to overcome the obstacles of indifference, ridicule and opposition. But, you must consider this project as a spiritual sadhana, as an exercise in self-realisation, as a Tapas. Already, 25,000 persons now engaged in teaching the children in Primary Schools have been trained in methods of cultivating human values. This is indeed a great achievement in the field of service. Do not give room for slackness. Continue the seva with full vigour. A few thousands more of teachers are coming here in June for fulfilling their desire to become ideal teachers of fundamental values.

The world today is flooded by conflicting propaganda. Let the message of this educational revolution, insisting on the resurgence of the divine in man, spread to every street and home. You have my blessings in ample measure. You can receive my guidance and help always in the fulfillment of this task.

—(*Bhagavan's Discourse in the Mandir to Vikas Gurus, Prasanthi Nilayam. 31-12-1984*)

Christmas in the Presence

This past Christmas was a very different one from previous Christmases spent at Prasanthi Nilayam. This Christmas ushered in the celebration of the Unity of all religions, under the Fatherhood of the One God. Through His Grace and Blessings, we became aware this Christmas of the golden thread that ties together all the great religious streams in the One Divine Principle. In daily meetings of overseas devotees during the Christmas week, and in the preparation for a Christmas Day Programme, the theme evolved of Divinity manifesting Itself in many forms and proclaiming the message of the Oneness of God, through great prophets and messengers in various places and times.

We were given a blessed chance of expressing the joy of this message, by staging a play acted out by the children and accompanied by a chorus of 100 voices and musicians, performed on Christmas Day in the Divine Presence of our beloved Lord. It was a wonderfully uplifting experience to present a drama that had come together almost miraculously in only five days, and stage it just minutes after Bhagavan's Christmas Discourse in which He proclaimed the message of the One God. After hearing Bhagavan's Discourse there could no longer be any question as to the origin of this play; He was not only the author behind the scenes, but also the unseen director and stage manager, as well. From the beginning it was an impossible project made possible by His Will. Many of the children playing major parts knew no English; the final version of the script was not ready until the day of the performance; the chorus and musicians were still composing the musical accompaniment and rehearsing up until the last morning; beautiful costumes appeared as if by magic only during the final days; the elaborate stage props were still being feverishly prepared by a small army of carpenters and artists on Christmas Eve, working behind stage even as the Kingdom of Mother Sai members were setting up their decorations in front of the stage. Lakshmi and Vishnu seated on a golden, multi-headed Serpent in the Ocean of Milk, Brahma emerging out of an unfolding Lotus, and Shiva and Parvati dancing in front of a magnificent Cosmic backdrop, all came together for the first time with lighting, sound-effects and makeup, only during the actual performance itself. So it was that a collection of disconnected parts somehow turned themselves into a dream-performance, when through Divine Grace everything fit together smoothly, as if this play had been carefully rehearsed for weeks before.

The principal theme of the play was that whenever the faithful were beleaguered by evil, the Lord would send great souls, such as Jesus, Mohammed, Buddha, Zoroaster, Moses and Nanak to strengthen man's faith and reestablish man's inherent goodness. But when the times got so bad that Dharma itself was in danger of being submerged, then the Lord Himself would come to guide man back onto the God-ward path. That is when the worst time becomes the best time, for that's when the compassionate Lord graces the Earth with His enchanting presence in human form. Such was the final scene of the play when Shirdi Baba proclaimed the new Sai Age and pointed to the coming of Sathya Sai. At that moment every child on stage turned towards Bhagavan in prayerful salutation and every eye in the Hall was fixed on our living, loving Lord. Beaming with a radiant smile, Swami arose from His chair in the audience, came on to the stage and sat on Shirdi Baba's rock, as all the prophets and deities gathered around Him and the

Chorus sang the inspiring song announcing the new era, 'Sai Sai Sai, Sai on Earth. Sai Sai Sai, for all the Universe'.

It was a magical moment in the great Hall. The audience, united as one, gave the Avatar of the Age their heartfelt thanks and acclaim. Love, joy and gratitude filled the vast auditorium. Many a devotee's eyes were moist when Bhagavan finally left the Poornachandra stage, completely surrounded by the happy costumed kids. Baba was clearly pleased, and when the Lord is pleased everyone else is pleased, as well. And so Christmas turned out to be a happy and holy occasion for all those present.

The Sarva Dharma Play

Here is the text of the play: Two little angels come out on stage and announce *The Sarva-Dharma Play, offered as a prayer of Thanksgiving at the Divine Lotus Feet of our Beloved Lord.*

Before the curtains go up, the Chorus sings three long OM's and "Sayeesa Sharanam", followed by 'Love in my heart', as the curtains open to reveal a beautiful cosmic scene of Vishnu and Lakshmi seated on Sesha in the Ocean of Milk. A tabla starts a slow beat which gets progressively faster, and just off centre-stage we see Shiva and Shakti doing their Cosmic Dance.

A spotlight now reveals a number of angels sitting on a cloud at one side of the stage. Another spotlight on the other side of the stage reveals some children fighting, while others are sleeping. All are unaware of the magnificent heavenly scene taking place behind them.

Young Angel: Look! Look at man on Earth! He is lost. He has forgotten the Lord.

Older Angel: He doesn't know why he is alive. He has forgotten his soul.

Young Angel: And he has forgotten his love and his joy. He is asleep!

Baby Angel: Can't we angels go and wake him up?

Older Angel: No, little one. Only if God tells us to. The Lord always sends a prophet or a messenger who is just right for the time and place.

Young Angel: Ah, but when the times are really bad, then the Lord goes Himself. That's when the worst time becomes the best time!

Older Angel: O, What a wonderful time that is, when our beautiful Lord takes on a human form.

How blessed is man when he can see the Lord come to Earth.

Baby Angel: When was the first time the Lord came?

Older Angel: I'll tell you the story from the very beginning.

(Chorus sings three OM's)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God; the Word was God.

(Brahma unfolds himself from the lotus, stretches himself, and looks at all sides with his four heads)

Brahma: Here I am on this beautiful lotus, but Who am I? Where have I come from? What am I to do?

(A white Swan glides onto stage and comes to Brahma's lotus)

Swan: O Brahma, Why do you look about? You will not find the answers to your questions outside. Each breath says, "So Ham, I am He, I am He." O Brahma, I am Hamsa, the Swan, come to teach you. Instead of looking afar, just seek within. You will know who you are and how to begin.

Brahma: So Ham, So Ham, So HAM.... (Namaskars to Vishnu)

Now I remember O Lord, my Source in Thee. I remember my Soul and my reason to be. Just as I have done many times before, I shall create all the worlds once more.

Swan: O Brahma, men have these very same doubts, instead of looking within they look only without.

Brahma: I will give them the Veda, the Wisdom Divine.

(A number of Rishis come and prostrate before Brahma and receive the Veda.)

Swan: Yes, teach them just as I have taught you. Tell them to listen to the OM resounding in their own hearts, and in the heart of the whole Universe. (Exit Swan)

(Chorus softly chants OM, as Rishis go to centre-stage to perform a Yagna)

Older Angel: Men prayed for the welfare of the entire world.

Chorus: Loka Samastha Sukhino Bhavanthu

Scene 2:

(A troubled time. Lights flashing. Moaning sounds and chorus sighing)

Older Angel: There was a time when the faithful met with such violence that even the Soul of the Earth cried out in prayer.

Mother Earth: O Lord! Must I bear this outrage? Please come and relieve my burden. Please! Please come!

Young Angel: Don't cry Mother. The Lord has always protected us. Don't you remember when He sent Zoroaster in Persia?

(Zoroaster comes on-stage and stands by fire)

Zoroaster: I shall go, dear Lord. This is my love offering to You. (turns to followers) Dear Brothers. Holiness is good. It is the best of all that is good. Into this fire we must offer all bitterness and emerge great, grand and Godly. Then the Lord's Light will shine upon us.

(Chorus sings 'Hallelujah')

Older Angel: And remember, Mother, when He sent Moses to the people of Israel, and gave them the Ten Commandments for all of humanity?

(Moses comes on-stage holding the tablets over his head)

"GOD is ONE"

Moses: How very blessed we are I God has given us His sacred Law. Inscribe it in your hearts in letters of gold, and be a holy people because the Lord our God is holy. Hear O Israel, God is One.

Chorus sings the `Shema'.

Older Angel: And He sent Buddha, the Compassionate One, to spread the Dharma throughout the East. After Buddha's enlightenment, he returned to the palace, and there his little son came to him.

Buddha's Son: O father, mother has sent me to you to ask for my inheritance.

Buddha: My dear child. Remember the wheel of Karma, of Cause and Consequence. Follow the path of Dharma. That is the solution to end all suffering. This, my son, is your inheritance.

Chorus sings `AUM Mani Padmay Hum'.

Older Angel: And then for the West, the Lord sent Jesus. He showed mankind the path of Sacrifice that leads to immortality.

(Jesus comes on stage with disciples and bends down to wash their feet)

Disciple: Master, why do You wash out feet?

Jesus: If I, your Master, serve you, how much more should you love and serve each other? I give you this commandment: `Love one another as I have loved you.'

Chorus sings `Gloria'.

Older Angel: And remember Mother when He sent Mohammed for the people of the desert? He was called `The Praiseworthy'. Even as a child angels came to him to fill his heart with light. Once, in prayer, he heard the voice of the Angel Gabriel commanding him

Gabriel: Recite in the Name of the Lord, the Most Bountiful. Receive the Koran and be like the star that does not waver from the crescent moon, but is always fixed in steady faith. Arise and teach!

Chorus: Allaho Akbar Allaho Akbar.

(followers start a Sufi circle dance)

La Illaha Illallahu. Mohammeda Rasullaila.

Scene 3:

(Shirdi Baba comes and sits on a rock in the centre of the stage, taking the characteristic pose. Throughout the play the heavenly scene of Lakshmi and Vishnu on Sesha in the Ocean of Milk,

Brahma in the Lotus, and Shiva Shakti, remain on stage in the background, watching the play unfold.)

Shirdi Baba: Allah Malik ...Allah Malik ...God is the sole owner.

"THE LORD HAS COME"

Mother Earth: O Glory to the Lord He has come! The Lord Himself has come! He promised He would and He has! Here He is

Small Boy: (speaking to Shirdi Baba) You are Vishnu! I know You are Vishnu!

Shirdi Baba: Look child, you can see I have only two arms. How can I be Vishnu?

Small Boy: You're God! You are Vishnu, I know it!

(Enter a number of men and they all fall at Shirdi Baba's Feet)

Man: O Deva! You saved him! Our child fell from the building; he would have been killed had you not saved him!

Shirdi Baba: Yes, I caught him in my four arms.

Small Boy: See! I told You, You were Vishnu!

Shirdi Baba: Yes. I am the Controller. I am the Wire-puller of the show of the Universe. I am the Mother. I am the Origin of all beings. I am the Creator, the Preserver, the Destroyer.

Young Angel: (Coming down from her cloud and running to Shirdi Baba) O loving Lord of Grace. Won't You save humanity now, as You saved that falling boy?

Sai's Three Promises

Shirdi Baba: Yes, little one. I will catch all my children in My four arms of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema. I will come as Sathya Sai and give you these promises three:

Whatever I do is for the good of all living.

I never receive, I know only giving.

And I will always protect you who are Mine, You who surrender, and say, 'Lord I am Thine.'

Mother Earth: O, the Lord of All has come! He has come! The Age of Sai has now begun!

(All the prophets, deities and angels come on stage, a few at a time, and form a semi-circle around Shirdi Baba, with their hands folded in prayer. Chorus sings 'Sai Sai Sai, Sai on Earth, Sai Sai Sai for all the Universe.'))

Let us be Grateful

If God's love for man is another way of describing His grace, what prevents us from responding to His love? The greatest impediment to responding to His love and making use of His grace, it appears to me, is our ingratitude. How soon do we forget the helping hand of God! He hears our prayer, responds with grace and saves us from a very difficult situation. We thank Him. That's the end of our using His grace! We do not remember His kindness, His love, His concern for us and want Him to prove it again and again. But when God wants us to prove our loyalty to Him and faith, we grumble and complain! God does not mind that. But we are the losers. Even though He allows us to share His power, when we most need it, because of our lack of proper communication with Him, of faith and love, we fail to grasp the moment and make best use of it. Even if we use a particular moment of revelation, we fail to sustain it. Thus while we grumble, grunt, whimper, curse, He only turns His sad face away regretting: "Dear one, when will you learn gratitude?" Thus, the magnificence of life turns into a living misery because we are too blind to see, too weak to hold on, and too ungrateful to love-and all this is not because God has denied us anything; we have denied ourselves that which has come to our doorstep.

It may seem that I write as if I know everything about grace! God forgive my impertinence if I think so! I do not know how God's grace works in my life. But should I not know *when* He works? I may not know how His grace functions in our lives; but I must be able to recognise when it functions and when I see God's Hand shaping my life, my thoughts and deeds, re-arranging and re-ordering things around me favourably, saving me from critical situations and awarding me more than my efforts call I should then be filled with humility and reverence, not complacency and self-esteem. I should not feel that God gives me special attention because I deserve it and I am better than all the others to whom apparently He denies these favours! That is the most dangerous thought. It cuts the life-line between me and God. I thoroughly miss the meaning of that God-Touch, and by fostering ego, build a wall that blocks out further grace!

Recognising grace

That means, I am pleading here for a very important thing; recognising and then preserving Grace. Grace need not necessarily be a downpour. It may consist in the simplest incidents of our life. A letter received in time; a bus in time to the place of my work; a little headache that holds me from attending a party; a passage in a book and so on and on are God's self-announcements. Silently does He come to us to give us a silent, unmixed and very personal joy because He personally cares for us.

A very valid question may be asked at this moment. How do I know my getting a certain letter and meeting a certain friend on a certain day is grace, not chance? Likewise all the daily incidents that fill my interminable days and nights might be pure chances, mere coincidences. Why should God be credited with showing His special care for me, while all this may be just natural? I cannot refute you; just as you cannot prove yourself. But let us not leave it there for the individuals to take it as they like. Could we judge this, look at this, from a different angle, and see whether that is acceptable to us?

Granting that these incidents are revelations of God's grace, what happens to me? I am profoundly grateful to God; I realise He is always with me, and takes care of me in all ways; my worries are reduced; my understanding becomes deeper; I am more cool and collected in my activities-in which state my intelligence, discrimination, efficiency are more effective and manifest; above all my days become an endless song, and nights an endless dream. On the other hand, if I explain them away as chances, coincidences, or accidents, I see no nobility and meaning in the business of living. I vegetate like a tree and life becomes a confused lyre. I learn no humility, no reverence, am full of doubts and divisions, whimper, shout, avenge, and die, I establish no contact with Gobi, the fountain source of all beneficence; become a bitter man with the Iron in my soul. My days are filled with dark shadows, and nights with nightmares. Which is better?

Proof of grace

The first section of people make the natural supernatural; the second section treat the supernatural as natural. If a blooming rose early in the morning doesn't give us a touch of the supernatural, of the miracle, of the grace of God, I wonder whether we can see any other revelation of God's grace in the right spirit. If the smile of a baby, the love of a friend, the concern of a mother, the devotion of a brother and the faith of your boss are only 'natural' and nothing else, I do not know how God can convince me of His love. The most natural is the most wonderfully supernatural, for God's will is reflected in it. With this awareness, a simple act like eating your lunch can become exciting and an occasion to remember God, thank God and love God. That is supernatural. Grace need not transcend the natural laws always. It can operate, and most often does operate within the natural laws. That does not take out of it its essential qualities. Moreover how much of the so-called 'natural' do we claim to understand? Are we able to have a very rational and related explanation of all that happens to us? Then why fret about 'natural' 'chance' and 'coincidence'? If we perceive how they come to us and make life a challenge, we may see the supernatural in the natural; we can see God's glorious hand even in a flower and a letter. Then we shall not sing with Shelley "Our sincerest laughter with some pain is fraught"; and "I fill upon the thorns of life, I bleed"! We will probably join the Upanishadic Rishi and sing, "I will live for a hundred autumns, I will hear (noble songs) for a hundred autumns" etc.

Man is a spark of the Immortal light in a speck of dust. There is always close correspondence between the mortal and the Immortal. When the mortal perceives it. It is dyed immediately with the colour of the immortal. If it does not perceive that, the Immortality as well never exists. Divine Grace and human effort are only two sides of the same coin, the front and the rear wheels of a car. They are not independent of, separate from, each other.

—Bejoy K. Misra, Prasanthi Nilayam

Meditation during Morning Prayer

For once, the scene of a depression happened to be Prasanthi Nilayam and not the Bay of Bengal. With Swami not talking to the boys, the boys themselves appeared to be quite introspective back at the Hostel. This introspective and meditative mood reflected itself at the students' Study Circle that had its second session in this semester at Prasanthi Niketan, Sri Sathya Sai Hostel, on the evening of the 23rd of December, 1984.

After the Universal Prayer, one of the senior participants started speaking on a topic of his choice. It was really a treat to see the boys simply drinking in the words that came from his lips.

The unique feature of the Students' Study Circle is that practical aspects of the spiritual development of students and students' interpretations of the words of Swami are discussed and an effort is made to put them into practice.

The topic this time was on how to meditate during Omkaram. Referring to the sanctity and efficacy of the sound Pranava, he said that it came before every mantra which we chant. If properly chanted it could cure innumerable diseases. An aspirant chanting the Omkaram with sincerity in the correct manner in a room full of mosquitoes will not be bitten by the insects as they will be repelled by the holy vibrations that will emanate from his being, he said.

The entire Omkaram session of 21 Omkars can be divided into five parts. The first part is devoted to the purification of the five Karmindriyas, the second part to the purification of the Jnanindriyas, the third to the purification of the vital airs or Pranas, the fourth, to the purification of the five sheaths or Kosas and finally, in last part, consisting of one lone Omkar, the aspirant could feel oneness with Atma.

One should come into the prayer hall a few minutes prior to the beginning of the prayer session and have a meditative attitude. One can picture to himself a powerful light source or even the beautiful form of Swami. With each passing Omkar, along with chanting it, the aspirant should feel the light travelling and filling his tongue and mouth and purifying them. He should pray to the Lord to help him purify this, region. Similarly in the succeeding Omkars, he should feel the light purifying his hands, legs, excretory and generative organs. In this process five Omkars would have been over. He should then proceed to the Jnanindriyas and pray for the purification of the eyes, the nose, the ears, the organs of taste and speech and skin. Likewise he should feel the light purifying the Prana, Apana, Samana, Vyana and Udana vital airs. During the sixteenth Omkar, the aspirant should pray for the purification of the food sheath, in the seventeenth, the vital air sheath, in the 18th the mind sheath, in the nineteenth the intellect sheath and in the twentieth, the sheath closest to the Atma (the Vijnanamaya Kosa). During the twenty first Omkar, the light enters the innermost recesses of the Self and the aspirant loses all feeling of the ego. He feels the presence of Swami within.

The speaker went on to say that during Suprabhatam also one can sincerely pray to awaken the Lord within. The Sanskrit prayer has a deeper meaning than its literal one, he said.

The interesting question and answer session that followed is given below:

Question: How can one prevent oneself from feeling sleepy during Suprabhatam?

Answer: Before coming for Suprabhatam, one should have a thorough wash or a cold water bath. While washing, we should not only wash the face and hands, but also the feet. Later on, the joy of participating in the prayer session and the thought of the ultimate reward to be obtained from the same would keep one awake.

Q: It is a common experience with students that, after an inspiring session of discussion or thought on Swami's ideals or experience with Him, when one retires to one's room, one is accosted by one's roommates discussing all sorts of topics of lighter interest. The student in question, in order not to get away from his pensive, elevated mood, prefers to keep away from his roommates, as he finds them not 'in tune' with his thoughts. As such he resorts to a defence mechanism like putting a long and serious face which in turn spoils the atmosphere of the room. Does it seem to be a right approach?

The various comments on the question were:

It is really a practical problem for those who have been exposed to the spiritual atmosphere for the first time. The situation can be viewed from various angles. It can be that Swami is testing the constancy of the student in question. It can also be a chance given to him to prove his sense of tolerance. The very essence of spirituality is LOVE. If we cannot appreciate and respond lovingly to the thoughts and feelings of our own fellowmen, the very purpose of a spiritual sadhana is lost. Hence one should present a smiling face under all circumstances and respond pleasingly to all. That is actual practice of love.

When the session was adjourned, and the boys started dispersing, all of them looked thoughtful and richer in knowledge and experience. But one could not help noticing the smile that played on the lips and the feeling of love that permeated them.

—Reported by C. Sandipan

Predicament of Modern Science

Whenever we think of modern science two aspects of it come to our mind—the first is the breath-taking technological advancement and the second is its apparent contradiction with spirituality. The latter is the result of the mechanistic view of the Universe held by science during the last three centuries. This view of the Universe, developed by Descartes-Newton, held that the Universe was made up of independently existing objects, inanimate or animate, located in space with no connection whatsoever. This gave rise to dualism between matter and spirit, body and mind, which remained the dominant characteristic of Western thought and also affected the Eastern way of thinking. But the exploration of the subatomic world of electrons, protons and neutrons by scientists, from the beginning of this century, brought them face to face with strange and unexpected aspects of reality hitherto unknown to them. In the beginning they were faced

with a crisis, not merely intellectual but also emotional and existential. But in this process they were rewarded with great insight into matter and reality. By this they have been brought very near to the spiritual and holistic view of the Universe which greatly undermined the mechanistic view.

The worldview of science is fashioned by the theories of physics. This is gradually adopted by other sciences and their details are oriented accordingly. The two theories which have revolutionised the opinion of scientists regarding matter and reality are the quantum theory and the relativity theory.

The Quantum Theory: According to the quantum theory, matter at the subatomic level does not exist with certainty as discrete particles in definite places, as held earlier. They are supposed to exist as waves, that too as 'probability waves' which indicate the probability of finding them at particular locations in space and at particular times. They are not even 'real' three dimensional waves like sound waves or water waves. The solid objects which we experience around, according to modern science, dissolve themselves into wave-like patterns in the subatomic level. Subatomic particles are, therefore, nothing but interconnections between other things and so on. It reveals that the Universe, in reality, does not consist of isolated building blocks but is knit into a web of complicated interconnections. According to Prof. Whitehead, an eminent mathematician and philosopher of the present century, the Universe forms an organic whole with interconnected processes. Therefore, according to modern science, the perceptual world which appears to consist of disconnected objects, very strangely reveals a basic oneness of the Universe. How similar is this view to that of the Upanishads and the Eastern mystics! The Upanishads proclaim "the One becomes many; unity ramifies itself into diversity." Bhagavan Baba states this as "Prakriti or Nature is the vesture of Purusha, the Primary Principle."

Modern science has further revealed that material objects are never passive and inert as they appear to be. In the subatomic level they are in a state of 'restlessness'. According to modern science, matter is not at all passive and inert but consists of particles which are in a state of perpetual dancing and vibrating movements which are in rhythmic patterns. Their movement patterns are determined by atomic and molecular structures of which they are a part. The age-old Indian view in this regard, is stated by Bhagavan Baba as: "It is the law of Karma (Action) that rules the motion of the stars, the planets, the galaxies and other heavenly bodies. In short Karma is observable as progress, as evolution and as hereditary effect."

The Theory of Relativity: The theory of relativity proposed by the greatest scientist of modern times, Einstein, has changed our outlook of the Universe yet in another way. It has brought great revolution in our concept of space and time. According to it, space and time are intimately and inseparably connected and form a 'four dimensional continuum' called space-time'. As we do not have a direct sensory experience of this space-time continuum, we find it difficult to deal with it at the level of sense experience and language. All events and processes that constitute nature, according to modern science, are within the space-time continuum. The Indian view points out that the nature of Prapancha or the perceived world, is impermanent whereas the underlying reality, Brahman is eternal. In the words of Bhagavan Baba: "The external world or prapancha whose processes are like the picture (on the screen) has no permanence; it changes. This

external, which is real-unreal, has the internal (the screen) as its basis, its substratum. The substratum is Brahman.”

The most spectacular aspect of the theory of relativity is the concept of `death' of material particles and their transformation into energy and vice versa. Einstein showed that mass and energy are inter-convertible. Hence the process of destruction and creation of matter is continuously taking place in the Universe. In our own body while the shapes of bones and tissues remain as they are, their constituent cells and materials are being destroyed and in their place new ones are being created. "The whole Universe is thus engaged in a rhythmic dance of creation and destruction" says Dr. Fritjof Capra, an eminent physicist. The most beautiful expression of this is found in the Indian concept of Tandava Nritya (Cosmic Dance) of Shiva. This is the basis of all existence and natural phenomena in the Universe. This concept as conceived by the Vedas is expressed by Swami as: "It is the Importance of Karma that necessitated the Triple aspect of Divinity, Brahma (who causes creation) Vishnu (who supports and sustains) and Maheshwara (who dissolves and destroys). This is how Shrutis summarise the Process.”

The essence of all the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita is given to us by Bhagavan Baba in the simplest way. Regarding Nature, creation and Brahman, Baba says; "What exactly is the cause of Creation? What is the nature of the original substance which Creation affected? These are the questions not only for Bharatiyas but also for all men of inquiry. There can be no effect without cause; there can be no structure without base. Well. It can be asserted that all visible Cosmos has Brahman as the root cause. But what is Brahman? Brahman is eternal, pure, ever vigilant, omniscient, invisible, formless; Brahman is the origin of the Cosmos or Jagat. Brahman is shaping, evolving and fostering this Jagat."

With the basic oneness of the Universe being revealed by the investigations of modern science, scientists are at the threshold of understanding the Upanishadic view of the Universe and Creation, "Go into the truth and you see the One behind the manifest. Brahman alone is the One," exhorts Swami. Will the scientists take this most important step? Or will they simply grope in the investigation and analysis of the external world or Prapancha which is ever changing and impermanent?

Bhagavan says: "Prakriti has been communicating a lesson to us that there can be no pot without mud, there can be no ornament without gold, there can be no cloth without yarn and there can be no world without Brahman." in the words of Bhagavad Gita: "God exists everywhere and manifests Himself as smaller than the smallest (Anoraniyan) and bigger than the biggest (Mahatomahiyan)." What is it that prevents the scientists from getting at this Truth? Why are they refusing to accept this obvious in spite of the far reaching conclusions of modern science? It is due to the methodology of Science which asserts that sense perception alone is the source of all knowledge. Extrasensory perception (ESP) is no doubt conceded in psychoanalysts, in the analysis of telepathy, clairvoyance etc. But in the general scientific analysis and investigation, scientists dogmatically adhere to sense perception and verification thereof. This has enabled them to achieve tremendous results in understanding the secrets of Nature and harnessing them. But it has also prevented them from getting into the heart of Reality—the all-pervading Brahman, the substratum of all natural processes. At least their inquiry into the

basic premise of science should lead them to the Reality. The basic premise or the fundamental postulate of science is that there is order in Nature. It is on this premise the entire edifice of scientific investigation is built. If the scientists examine this basic premise and inquire, "What is it that has preserved the order in the Universe and enabled them to discover the Laws of Nature? What is it that has enabled the identity of things through time and continuation of natural processes?" —they would realise that the cause of these is the Potter or 'the substratum' or 'Brahman'. The scientists are not undertaking this inquiry.

What science has achieved so far is wonderfully summarised by Bhagavan Baba: "While science has overcome the barriers of time, distance and nationality, it has done little to promote better understanding between man and man, nation and nation." Will the scientists revise their present methodology or examine the basic premise of science and reach at the Reality or will they continue to grope in the dark in spite of the far-reaching conclusions of modern science! This is the predicament in which modern science is placed! It needs love in the heart and wisdom on the part of scientists to revise their position and realise that Brahman is the basis and unity behind all natural phenomena. When they do so science will be, spiritualised. Bhagavan Baba says: "You must understand that spirituality permeates everything. Science is spirituality." When science is spiritualised, Baba says, it will work only for the good of humanity. There will be universal peace and harmony. Humanity will be saved from the present prospect of annihilation it is facing today, due to the selfishness of the scientists. Will the scientists heed the clarion call given to them by the Avatar of the Age: "It is erroneous to separate Prakriti from Brahman and regard them as distinct, and worship Nature alone." "He (scientist) must learn to use Nature... for the better understanding of the intelligence that guides the Universe." "When you see everywhere, on every inch of ground, in every being, small or big, the foot-print of God, Nature is seen in a new vestment of glory, a manifestation that demands worship, rather than exploitation and enslavement."

—Prof. S. Varadarajan (University of Delhi)

Reflection

Let me see Thee in things I dislike.
May I know Your Face in people I spite.
Faults in another are easy to find
But when *SELF* is involved I guess I'm blind.

My neighbour shouts, he speaks too loud.
Another pal cheats and is very proud.
Down the road I find still another friend
Who must have his own way never, willing to bend.
On and on my list does grow
With another's faults, never what I will sow.
It is always easy to blame another
Whether Friend, Wife, Husband or Brother.

So, when I look upon animal or tree
The duality must go and I should see Thee.
The Atma of One lives in each.
There are not many the Gita does teach
Treat all alike we are truly one
Brothers of the Effulgent Sun.
The bodies seem different, but look inside.
We are all the same; in Him we reside.
The Truth is Strong and made me see
Faults in another are a reflection of me!

—Joy Ziegler, Arizona, U.S.A.

The best way to gain happiness is to choose God as the leader and guide. Then, He will guide and guard, from the heart itself. Emperor Sivaji once sent some person from the Court to Samarth Ramdas, his preceptor with a large quantity of provisions—grains, clothes, sweets and vessels. Ramdas asked them, "For whom have you brought these and why?" they replied, "For you. You have so one who can provide for you, and so, Sivaji Maharaj has sent all this." Ramdas laughed and said, "I have Providence Itself to provide for me; God alone has no one to provide for Him. Ask Sivaji to send these things to God!"

—Baba

BHAGAVAN IN MADRAS:

Seva is the Highest Sadhana

The accent henceforth in the Sai Movement will be on Seva-Seva not in the sense of service to the less fortunate members of society as a social welfare concept, but loving service rendered spontaneously and unselfishly to any one in need, in the spirit of worship of the Divine and as an offering to the Divine. This was made clear by Bhagavan Baba in a heart-warming speech in Tamil to a gathering of over four hundred active Sai Seva Dal Workers (men and women) at Abbotsbury on January 25th.

The meeting was the last item in a weeklong programme in which Bhagavan gave darshan to thousands of yearning devotees in Madras City (and many from other places) and addressed different groups of Sai Sevaks on four days, giving them inspiring advice on how to carry out the various items in the comprehensive Sai service programme for spiritualising the life of the individual and the community and bringing about the unity of mankind transcending the barriers of caste, creed, language and nationality.

Arriving in Madras on the night of the 18th, after visiting Anantapur and Madanapalle, Bhagavan started His programme in Madras on the 19th with a glorious darshan to thousands of devotees from the balcony of "Sundaram" at the end of the morning's Nagarsankirtan. Later in

the morning Bhagavan distributed prizes to Bal Vikas children, who had distinguished themselves in various contests.

Bhagavan blessed the food packets that were distributed to those who had gathered for the Narayana Seva in connection with the anniversary of "Sundaram" on January 19th.

There was an Impressive rally by over two hundred Bal Vikas children (boys and girls) in the evening at "Abbotsbury". The dance drill performed by the children, to the accompaniment of songs expounding the Sai message, was appreciated by Bhagavan and the very large gathering that had assembled in the extensive grounds of "Abbotsbury". The rally was followed by a short cultural programme.

On Sunday morning over four hundred Bal Vikas teachers from all districts of Tamil Nadu had assembled in "Abbotsbury" for a message from Bhagavan on the programme of education to human values. (As usual, a large gathering of devotees was present outside the assembly hall to have darshan of Bhagavan and receive His benediction).

EHV on the march

Mr. V. Srinivasan, Vice-President of the World Council, said the Sai programme of education in human values is affecting a silent revolution in the student community. The programme has made its impact not only in India but in many countries abroad such as Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Italy, U.K., and Denmark. The scheme aimed at inculcating moral values in children from the primary school stage by precept as well as by example.

Prof. M. L. Leela, Coordinator of the E. H. V. Scheme for Tamil Nadu, said that so far 2500 teachers had been trained in Tamil Nadu and it was planned to give training to more teachers not only from government and municipal schools, but also from private institutions.

Bhagavan Baba, in an inspiring address, which was heard with rapt attention, said that teachers had the greatest responsibility in moulding the character of students, apart from imparting academic instruction.

Bhagavan stated that human beings had forgotten their true nature and were behaving like demonic creatures. Though they called themselves as human beings, they did not know the essence of human qualities. Today's educational system emphasised textbook knowledge, but Ignored morality and character. Seventy percent of the world's population consists of 'youth', who are the potential leaders of tomorrow. Unless they are properly trained to take up their roles in the future, the society, the nation and the world will not progress in peace.

Love—common denominator

In order to train the younger generation in the proper way the Sai Organisation has prescribed the five guiding principles of their movement—Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love and Non-violence. "We should understand first the real import and significance of these five principles. Sathya or Truth is not just relating events exactly as seen, heard or experienced. It is the eternal Truth which is beyond time and space, which does not ever change. If Love forms part of your nature, Sathya will be there. When your thoughts emanate from a mind purified by

love, they will result in Right Action, which is 'Dharma'. When Love becomes part of your experience, thought and action you get Peace (Santhi). When we comprehend Love clearly, 'Ahimsa' or non-violence will result automatically. So Love is the unseen undercurrent binding all the four values. It can be summarised thus: Love plus thoughts is Truth; Love plus feelings is Santhi; Love plus action is Dharma and Love plus understanding is Ahimsa. Love is the common denominator for all the values. It is the form of God, for God is Love. One who gives Love is a man and one who fails to nourish this Love is a beast. Love or absence of Love makes one an animal, man or God.

"Nurture love"

The nurturing of Love is possible only in a tender heart. Because of attachment to worldly objects, that tenderness is lost. When the mind is directed towards the sensual world, life becomes artificial. "When you go to your office you greet people artificially. The namaskaram is done with Ahamkara. Respect is given artificially for the position and does not emanate from the heart. That which emanates from the heart is Truth or Sathya. When you see a person doing service to others with Love you have to respect him. It is not the formal action that counts only the good heart behind the action is entitled to respect and regard. So we should develop a tender heart filled with love rather than act mechanically. If there is no love in the heart there is no use in doing anything whatsoever."

Practice and precept

The teacher is like a water storage tank. If there is good and clean water in the tank, you will get good water in the taps. Students are like the taps and will prove to be good only when the teachers are good. Teachers should have lofty Ideals so that these can be reflected in their students, who are the future citizens and leaders. Teachers should first practise themselves what they want to teach to the students. They should have a feeling of Tyaga or sacrifice for the sake of the well-being of the nation so that the students will have a similar ideal. Before they try to correct the students, they should first correct themselves. Human values are not commodities to be sold in the market. They should be reflected in one's behaviour and one's way of life. They should be taught not as academic subjects but as the basis on which right living should be built up. The teacher should do Sadhana to ensure control of senses and achieve harmony in thought, word and deed. "When you achieve this harmony, you will become an ideal teacher," concluded Bhagavan.

"Seek god in the temple of your heart"

Monday (January 21) was a memorable day for the thousands of residents of the Thirumangalam colony on the outskirts of Annanagar, when Bhagavan consecrated the idol of Thiruveedhi Amman (the Mother Goddess) in the renovated temple in the colony and exhorted the people to develop devotion to the Lord by leading pure and righteous lives.

Long before the scheduled time of arrival of Bhagavan, large crowds had started gathering in the festooned precincts of the temple. Bhagavan was received with Vedic chants and led to the sanctum sanctorum of the temple, where Bhagavan performed the pratishtha (installation) of the idol with His divine hands. Simultaneously, priests performed the Kumbhabhishekam of the temple gopuram with due ceremony.

Emerging from the temple, Bhagavan gave darshan to the devotees and went up to the specially erected dais, where a spokesman for the residents welcomed Bhagavan and related the various services rendered to the colony by Sai Sevak. Maj. Gen. Mahadevan, in requesting Bhagavan to give His message to the residents of Thirumangalam-which had been "adopted" by the Sai Samiti for Improvement In its service programme-appealed to the villagers to give up drink and other evil habits, lead a good and godly life and earn the grace of Bhagavan.

Bhagavan's address (which was translated into English and Tamil) dwelt on the role of temples in awakening the spiritual impulse in man and directing him towards the realisation of his inherent divinity. The real temple for man, Bhagavan said, is his heart, but forgetting this fact, man goes after temples outside. Temples are erected to remind men about God, but the Divine dwells in the heart and should be sought there. Men go through any amount of difficulties, hardships, trials and tribulations in life, but few try to understand their essential divinity, which should be the primary aim of life. Men devote considerable care and attention to the preservation of the body, which is perishable. But they do not cultivate good thoughts and do good deeds through which they can attain enduring bliss. Temples serve to provide the company of the good and the godly and should be used for cultivating such company and acquiring mental peace. It is not enough merely to go to temples as a mechanical ritual. You must cultivate good thoughts in tune with the sacred atmosphere of the temple. Even in uttering the names of the Lord, the words should come from the depths of the heart and not merely from the lips. Acquiring the name of the Lord is like getting a precious pearl from the deep ocean. Having got it, you should not let it go out of your hands. Faith in the Lord must be strengthened by repetition of the name. Faith is the foundation of all activity. Spiritual sadhana is needed to develop faith in God, even as curdling and churning are necessary to obtain butter from milk. The fire in a matchstick will be seen only when it is struck. Likewise God can be realised only through spiritual effort.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with a call to the residents to live in harmony, cultivate a fraternal spirit and cooperate with each other for their material and spiritual betterment.

Bhagavan distributed clothes to old and handicapped persons in the colony.

The residents expressed their unanimous desire to rename the colony as Sathya Sai Nagar in commemoration of Bhagavan's visit and the varied services rendered by the Sai Sevak.

Call to village workers

During the next four days, Bhagavan's scheduled programme, apart from giving darshan at bhajans at "Sundaram" or "Abbotsbury", was confined to addressing meetings of Active Sai workers and committee members of the adopted villages and slums, inaugurating a workshop for Mahilas to impart training in making plastic decorative flowers and garlands, manufacture of soap powder, making of art works in plaster of paris, etc., and addressing Seva Dal workers attending a workshop on health and hygiene.

The meeting of the Active Workers and representatives from the 300 adopted villages in Tamil Nadu, held in the prayer hall at "Sundaram" on January 22, provided an excellent opportunity for the villagers to receive the blessings of Bhagavan for their developmental activities and to derive inspiration from Bhagavan's exposition of the significance of Seva as Sadhana. Bhagavan moved

among the four hundred odd village committee members and spoke to some of them about their problems. (Picture on page 29)

Maj. Gen. Mahadevan described the work being done in the adopted villages and said that the Sai Organisation was confident of carrying out the projected service programme in all the 300 villages well before November 1985.

Serve daridra-Narayana

Bhagavan, in His discourse, said God had two forms—Lakshmi-Narayana and Daridra-Narayana. Most people preferred to worship Lakshmi-Narayana for ensuring their personal prosperity and welfare, but few chose to worship Daridra-Narayana (the Lord in the form of the poor and the forlorn). Members of the Sai Organisation should think only of service to Daridra-Narayana. If the hungry are fed, they are easily satisfied. Service to Daridra-Narayana can never go to waste. It is the highest form of Sadhana. Man is a product of society and service to society is real service to God. Such service should be rendered without regard to caste, creed, race or nationality. The essence of all religions is one and the same, like the current that serves many different purposes but is the same energy.

In serving society, they should bear in mind the four ideals of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema. Service is like a bulb, which cannot shed light unless there is a wire to convey the current. Sathyam is the current. Dharma is the wire through which the current flows. When the wire of Dharma is connected to the bulb of Santhi, then you have the light of Love.

One may encounter many difficulties in rendering service. But one should not be overwhelmed by them. The Pandavas have become immortal because of the sufferings they underwent for the sake of Dharma. Jesus sacrificed his life for the sake of those whom he came to serve. Prophet Mohammed had to face similar troubles in his mission. Do not aspire for comfort. Greater than all other forms of worship is seva (service to one's fellowmen) done in an unselfish and dedicated spirit. There is an element of selfishness in forms of worship like Japa, Dhyana, etc. But when service is done spontaneously, it is its own reward. It must be done as an offering to God.

Training for service

The 1984 Sai Seva Dal Conference laid special emphasis on training of active Seva Dal workers in different types of service activities that would be useful to the villagers. Arrangements had been made at Prasanthi Nilayam to give training in 18 specialised activities to selected Seva Dal workers from the various States. Bhagavan's visit to Madras was availed of by the State Sai Organisation to give training to a large number of active workers from all the districts and provide them with an opportunity to derive direct guidance and inspiration from Bhagavan.

The training programme was spread over three days from January 24 to 26 and was organised in the form of "workshops" for specific groups of activities. Those who had received training at the November Conference acted as trainers for the trainees from the districts. These, in their turn, will train the people in the adopted villages in their respective areas.

Among the activities in which training was given during the three days are: Tailoring and embroidering, village sanitation and vocational guidance, rehabilitation of the deaf and dumb, health and hygiene, preparation of nutritious food for rural areas and Sai protein food, coir products, decorative pieces from plaster of paris, etc., preparation of juices and squashes and omum water, soap powder, agarbatti and phenyl manufacture.

Fifteen active workers had been selected from each district for training in the different activities in all 75 mahilas and 150 men went through the training programme.

On the 25th, Bhagavan inaugurated the workshop on Health and Hygiene for Seva Dal workers at "Abbotsbury". The function became doubly memorable because of Bhagavan's response to Maj. Gen. Mahadevan's earnest appeal that Swami should give His message to the Seva Dal workers in Tamil.

Dr. Punnaivanam, State Seva Dal Convener, explaining the background to the State-level training programme, said that the programme of service activities adopted at the World Seva Dal Conference aimed at bringing about a total transformation in the villages and not merely material improvement. The active workers in Tamil Nadu were fortunate to have Bhagavan bless their training programme.

Bhagavan released a booklet describing the working of Study Circles in Tamil Nadu. The report showed that since January 1982, when the first study circle was formed, the movement had gathered momentum and in November 1984, there were in all 143 circles with 4273 members.

True seva

Bhagavan then addressed the gathering in Tamil, to the immense delight of every one present. Speaking in simple and sweet Tamil, Bhagavan said Seva is a small word but is filled with immense spiritual significance. Citing Hanuman as the supreme exemplar of the ideal of service, Bhagavan said that when the Rakshasas asked Hanuman, during his search for Sita in Lanka, who he was, he replied simply: "Dasoham Kosalendrasya." He was content to describe himself as the humble servant of Rama. Seva must be viewed as the highest form of Sadhana. Serving the poor in the villages is the best form of Sadhana in the various forms of worship of the Divine, culminating in Atmanivedanam (complete surrender to the Divine), Seva comes before Atmanivedanam. God's grace will come when Seva is done without expectation of reward or recognition. Sometimes Ahamkaram (ego) and Abhimanam (attachment) rear their heads during Seva. These should be eschewed altogether.

Bhagavan said that in speech what mattered was the inner feeling. The purpose of speech should be to promote heart-to-heart understanding. He wanted them to develop the love of God in their hearts. He had spoken like a child to them. He wished to touch their hearts. The heart is like a musical chair in which there is room for only one. "Give in your heart place only for God," concluded Bhagavan.

Bhagavan then distributed prasadam to all the Seva Dal workers.

After the meeting, Bhagavan gave darshan to the large waiting crowds outside the hall and left for Perambur to visit the technical training centre run by the Southern Railway Workers' Union. (Swami had given a large donation for the starting of the centre).

Swami left for Bombay on the 26th, after giving darshan to the large gathering of devotees, inside and outside "Sundaram," who had been waiting there since early in the morning.

Hundreds of Seva Dal Volunteers, including quite a few in their teens, rendered splendid service during Bhagavan's stay by regulating the crowds and maintaining perfect peace during bhajans and at the meetings addressed by Bhagavan.

The Sagittarian

Behold! I look ahead and see in
Revelation's Mystery
A Holy Man on steed of white,
With bow and crown he goes to fight.
The arrow of His bow is Truth,
The crown upon His head, the proof
That He is King to rule this age
And all in Revelation's page.
"Hold back the winds!" the angel said,
"Till seal of God be on the head
Of all who praise the Living God,
Who rules with Love instead of Rod."

Who can afford to jest with truth?
Who tarries seeking further proof?
Have faith, have trust, heart full of love
And trust in guidance from above.
Sai Baba, Avatar of Light,
Is He Who rides the horse of white.
And His the Seal of which was told
Protecting all who fit the mould.
Oh Revelation's cryptic lines,
Unfolding in this very time,
With cloaks of darkness, cloaks of light,
And winged monsters all in flight.

A fairytale `tis surely not,
Symbolic in its very plot
And as the Lotus blooms unfold,
So will this storytale be told

And understood at every stage
The cryptic code of every page.
The power, glory, Kingdom Come,
The Avatar with God is One,
And One with Man who holds the light
Of God to help Him win the fight
To rid this Earth of evil deeds,
The sorting of the grain from weeds.

The mighty hand of God is spread
To sort the living from the dead;
But not the dead in mortal flesh,
But those whose souls with evil mesh.

And gently as an Angel's wings
The Hand will lift the soul that sings
Of praise to God and Glory Be,
Of peace unto Eternity.
And gently still will hold the cup,
Immortal Life of which to sup.
The key is there to fit the lock,
Take heed of the Celestial Clock.

As fast the hour cometh near
Oh ye with ears please listen clear
And count your blessings, one by one;
Be staunch and say "Thy Will Be Done."
Hold out your hand to those in need
And shun materialistic greed.
The pot of gold at Rainbow's

End is there for all who will attend
The call to fill this world with love
On Earth as In the Heaven Above.

—(Mrs) Joan Miller, New South Wales, Australia.

Help Me, O Lord!

Look to our Dearest Lord, as you start each day;
Look to the Lord, to point the right way;
Pray for His Joy and peace of our mind;
Pray for His help to serve all mankind;
Open your heart and let His blessings flow in;
Open your mind and let Him cleanse you within.

Let His strength console you in times of sadness;
Let Him hear your thanks when your heart is full of gladness;
Look to the LORD when the day turns into night;
Look to the LORD in the darkness of your light;

PLEASE HELP ME,

To spread His message of Love to the world to unite,
To spread His message of Truth, the one clear light,
To believe in His Peace, no violence or greed,
To believe in Humility, make service my creed.

—T. J. Carpenter, Coventry

"Tyaga" and "Bhoga"

"Man should not behave like animals which pursue a mirage in the hope of quenching their thirst. Man's primary duty is to realise his divinity. The delusion that he is the body is the cause of his bondage. Self-realisation (Atma-jnana) destroys that delusion," observed Bhagavan Baba, in His public discourse at "Abbotsbury" on the evening of January 20th.

It was the only public gathering addressed by Bhagavan during His stay in Madras.

Bhagavan said: As a seed finds fulfillment by growing from a sapling into a tree blossoming with flowers and fruits, man should find fulfillment by achieving fullness and ripeness as a human being. God is the seed for creation. The cosmos is the tree. Humanity represents the fruits in that tree. In each of these human fruits there is a seed. That seed is the Atma. That Atma is the Primal Cause. It is Divine. In each individual the divine seed of Atma is shining with effulgence. This profound truth is not being realised by every person.

Man is an amalgam of body, mind and Atma. Without the existence of all three, man cannot accomplish anything. Both the body and mind are associated with the Atma, without which neither of them can function.

To comprehend the unity of body, mind and Atma is to realise a fundamental truth. The body is gross. The Atma is subtle. It is the mind that links the two. If the Atma is ignored, man is reduced to the level of the animal. When the body and Atma are ignored and the mind alone is active, the humanness comes to the fore. When the body and mind are kept out and the Atma alone is experienced, Divinity is attained.

How is this to be achieved? An essential requisite is "Tyaga", the spirit of sacrifice. How is sacrifice to be reconciled with man's incessant activity and his desire for comforts and conveniences (bhoga)? The gulf between Tyaga (sacrifice) on the one side and Bhoga (enjoyment of material comforts) on the other, seems to be unbridgeable. The Vedanta has resolved the conflict between the two by pointing out that material objects can be enjoyed with a sense of detachment and a spirit of renunciation. If the ego is eliminated in the performance of actions and attachment is renounced in the use of material objects, there will be no difference between renunciation (Tyaga) and enjoyment (bhoga). Pleasures which are experienced with a sense of detachment cease to be "bhogas" and become a form of Yoga. After enjoying all the pleasures and comforts we seek, what is it that remains? The body decomposes into the five elements. What is basic is the Atma principle that sustains the body and all the senses. When the Atma leaves the body, neither the sense organs nor the mind can function. The Atma is eternal and omnipresent. It is self-existent. The spiritual quest is to understand and realise the nature of the Atma. This is Brahma-jnana, knowledge of the Brahman. Every individual should regard the enquiry into the nature of the Atma as the primary purpose of life. Purify of thought, word and deed is essential for this enquiry.

THE CHANCELLOR SPEAKS:

Uphold Sai Ideals

*There exist Masters of Vedanta who can teach Rishis of yore,
There exist Masters of art and sculpture who can animate lifeless stones, and make them dance,
There exist valiant heroes who can play with the heads of foes.
There exist all these in numbers large in the land of Bharat today:
But of what avail are all these, O Students! if there is no one amongst them who ever hears the
plaintive cries of the people around!*

Embodiments of the Divine Atma!

We can hear in Shikshavalli (in the Taittiriya Upanishad) the voice of the well-wishing teachers who imparted their last instructions to students who had studied under them in the gurukulas and were on the threshold of grihast-shrama dharma.

Vidya, according to Shikshavalli, is not mere mastery of letters. Vidya should blend harmoniously with life and lend meaning and purpose to it. It is said 'Saa vidya yaa Vimuktaye' (Learning is that which liberates).

There are four Samhitas in Shikshavalli-Loka Samhita, Aloka Samhita, Vijnana Samhita and Prajnana Samhita. The Loka Samhita describes the earth, the three lokas (the three worlds) and the stellar galaxies. It is Vayu (wind) that binds the earth and the stellar galaxies, giving rise to the creation of 'akasa' (space). The principle of mutual attraction governs the galaxies and the earth. There are seven kinds of winds that circulate between the earth and the three worlds. The Shikshavalli teaches that a harmonious bond between the three worlds and the earth is ensured by the presence of these seven winds. It is due to this intimate bond that the ocean swells and sways at the sight of the moon and the clouds.

The second Samhita, Aloka Samhita, is also known as Jyoti Samhita. This describes the presence of Fire and the Sun and the connecting bond between the two. Cosmic radiation establishes a link between Fire on the earth and the rays from the Sun, causing the creation of water in the process. The Samhita testifies that one who understands the nature of water can cognise the nature of the universe as well. The second teaching of this Samhita is that there is a link between the Sun and the heart of man. The statements 'Chandrama manasojaatah, Chakshos-Suryo Ajayata' in the Veda bring out the connection between the moon and the mind and the sun and eye-sight. DO'S AND DONT'S

The third samhita, the Vijnana Samhita, expounds the conjunction (sandhi) between the teacher and the student, and the Vidya that arises there from. It stresses the Importance of spiritual education, in addition to secular education through the education of the heart. This Samhita imparts also some essential teachings for one's conduct in life. The sacred injunctions contained in the samhita shine as beacon-lights to mankind afflicted with limitless desires and meaningless yearnings. These injunctions are, Speak Sathya (truth); Observe Dharma (righteousness); Foster knowledge with diligence; Abstain from vicious deeds; Perform worthy acts; Respect most meticulously the regulations laid down by society for leading a disciplined life in the community; Practise charity as a householder according to your capacity; Show reverence and obedience to elders; Exercise extreme vigilance with regard to your duties and relationship with your kith and kin and fellow-human beings.

After imparting these instructions, the Samhita lays down that these teachings constitute the eternal commandments for the conduct of man. The Samhita teaches that based on these commandments, the students should lead a life of exemplary excellence.

Unfortunately we do not find such thoughts and feelings in the hearts of the students of today. The educational system today makes an educated person selfish. It makes him a slave to the senses and as a consequence he forgets his own divine nature. Educated men are not prepared to take up service to the suffering people.

Rights and duties

It is not only the educated who are to be blamed for this situation. The government, which has failed to encourage and enthuse the people, is also to be blamed for this. Students are not being

taught to be self-reliant and self-supporting. Despite the possession of high degrees, the educated man is frantically after salaried jobs rather than seeking independent careers. The educated man fights for his rights, without regard to the duties to be discharged. The man who neglects his duties will lose his rights as well. Rights and duties are inseparably inter-related. Love is the connecting link between the two. The faithful ones in the spiritual realm crave for joy, peace and comfort without striving to realise how they can be obtained. We do not want God nor do we cultivate devotion. But we want God to shower Santhi and Ananda on us. If we want peace, we should conduct our life on lines conducive to peace. How can a person, pursuing evil and unrighteous ways, ever obtain peace, truth and joy? Can we have the belch of a gourd by eating a mango? As are the deeds, so are the rewards. As the motives, so are the gifts of God. Hence our motives should be sublime and deeds should be righteous.

Students should try to develop the powers latent in them. The educated men of today believe in what they read in novels and newspapers, what they see in films, and even in the whimsical words of a passerby. But they have no faith in God. This is a great misfortune. Men who believe in the words of an astrologer or a purohit, will not trust the words of the Veda Mata, who has taught the four great truths; "Tattwamasi, Prajnanam Brahma, Aham Brahmasmi, Ayam Atma Brahma" which declares: "O son, you are Brahman (Absolute Truth) itself." The educated man wastes his life by developing faith in petty mundane things and by refusing to develop faith in the wisdom to be gained by divine power and spiritual knowledge.

Moulding ideal citizens

It is in order to impart true, ideal education, and mould the students as ideal citizens for the service of the country that the Sathya Sai educational institutions have been set up. Many people have the notion that the students of our educational institutions are capable of only performing pujas and bhajans and such other spiritual activities. This is entirely wrong. Our students are ready to take up activities in the field of ethics, administration, politics, business and various other professions. Our students are achieving excellence not only in dance, drama, music and literature, but also in the arts and in physical culture. The gymnastic feats done by them bear ample testimony to this.

As our students are unassuming and humble, devoid of all show and pomp, you underestimate their excellence and underrate their abilities. Our students reject and resent all pomp and show. The students who love pomp and show are not students at all. Our students know the truth that egoism is the cause of disaster. Our educational institutions are making all effort to produce thousands of ideal students to help people lead ideal lives.

Dear students! When you go out into the world, you should maintain in your daily life the sacred feelings and habits that you have acquired here. Regard this as true education. Cherish the teachings and precepts that you have received in this convocation as your very life-breath and conduct yourselves as ideal men and enlighten the entire world by your precept and practice.

***—Bhagavan's address in Poornachandra Auditorium
at the Convocation of S. S. I. H. L. on 22. 11. 84***

Bhopal Tragedy: Sai Sevak in Action

On the night of December 2-3, 1984, a sudden warning woke up the residents of Bhopal with the call; "Bhopal Khali Karo" (Vacate Bhopal). People got panicky and started moving out of their homes with whatever things they could carry.

In the early hours of the morning (December 3) residents in multi-storeyed buildings experienced a burning sensation in the eyes and a sense of suffocation in the throat. They became restless and rushed for medical aid.

Workers employed on night shift duties in various installations, while going home, noticed human bodies lying hither and thither on the roadside. They were alarmed at this ghastly sight. Hardly had they recovered from this shock, when they heard another announcement stating that there was a gas leakage from the Union Carbide works in Bhopal.

The people and the Sai devotees in different localities immediately started shifting the unconscious, semi-conscious and dead to the nearest hospitals and clinics to provide them medical aid. They arranged for supply of ice, medicines, especially eye drops, glucose and bread etc., to the patients under medical advice.

About 250 Samiti members, Mahila Vibhag workers, 275 students of the Sri Sathya Sai Middle School, 600 girl students from the Sri Sathya Sai Arts and Science College for Women, and about 90 students of the medical college, several Pre-Seva-Dal workers and students of various other educational institutions rendered round the clock service and helped the doctors in treating the patients along with others.

Later, during the programme for neutralisation of the lethal gas 'Mic', commonly known as "Operation Faith", which was started on 16th December and completed on 22nd December, the members of the Sai Organisation helped in the evacuation of the people in the affected localities to rescue camps. One such camp was located in the Sri Sathya Sai Arts and Science College for Women, Piplani, Bhopal. The staff and students of the college looked after the evacuees during their stay.

With a view to infusing faith and courage and restoring confidence in the people of the affected areas, the Samiti members started Nagarsankirtan, Bhajans, Narayanaseva, medical aid and reciting of 'Ramacharitamans' in these areas, after the evacuees had returned to their respective houses. Having gained their confidence, the Samiti members could start a door-to-door survey to ascertain their needs and meet some of their immediate requirements such as clothes and utensils.

The Madhya Pradesh Government desired to place orphaned children in the guardianship of willing voluntary organisations so that they might be properly looked after. The Sri Sathya Sai Trust with the help of 'the Seva Samiti and Mahila Vibhag, has undertaken the responsibility for running an orphanage with the aid of the Government and philanthropic citizens.

During the crisis, Sai devotees remembered Bhagavan's assurance, "Why fear when I am here?" The devotees residing in the affected areas did not feel disturbed by the calamity and continued staying in their houses, feeling fully protected under the boundless love and grace of Bhagavan.

—*S.P. S., Bhopal*

SHIVARATRI DIVYA SANDESH:

Cultivate Love, Faith and Humility

"Shivaratri is a day when one tries to establish friendship between the mind and God. Shivaratri makes one aware of the little that the same Divinity is all-pervasive, that it is to be found everywhere," observed Bhagavan in a soul-stirring discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium on February 17.

A very large gathering of Indian and overseas devotees was present for the occasion. In the morning, a specially prepared recital of songs in praise of Siva-Sai was got up by the students' orchestra of the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. While the children of the Sathya Sai Secondary School gave a delightful rendering of the Linga-ashtakam and the Bhakti Yoga slokas from the Gita. Prasadam was distributed to all devotees with the benediction of Bhagavan.

In the afternoon the meeting began with a short address by Prof. V. K. Gokak on the significance of Shivaratri and its observance in Prasanthi Nilayam. "Bhagavan appears as Siva on Shivaratri," he said. "We all feel one with each other under the Fatherhood of God." The moon loses its last digit on Shivaratri day. Mahasivaratri is the symbol of the final removal of the Ego. He recalled Bhagavan's statement, "I have brought new medicines for you." "Shivaratri is one of the antidotes Swami has found for us to enable us to get rid of the Ego and bring the soul to the forefront."

In the course of His ninety-minute discourse, Bhagavan said:

In our daily experiences, there are a number of instances which reveal the existence of Divinity in every person. Consider a cinema; on the screen we see a number of pictures. Sometimes we see rivers in flood, engulfing all the surrounding land. Even though the scene is filled with floodwaters, the screen does not get wet by even a drop of water. At another time, on the same screen we see volcanoes erupting with tongues of flame, but the screen is not burned. The screen which provides the basis for all these pictures is not affected by any of them. Likewise in the life of man, good or bad, joy or sorrow, birth and death, will be coming and going, but they do not affect the Atma. In the cinema of life, the screen is the Atma. It is Siva, it is Sankara, its Divinity. When one understands this principle, one will be able to understand, enjoy and find fulfillment in life.

Sankara (Easwara) refers to the One who is endowed with all types of wealth (Aishwarya). The types of wealth that we enjoy in the worldly sense are not what we mean by Aishwarya. Everything in the phenomenal world, every person, every bit of matter that you see, has this principle of Aishwarya in it. This Aishwarya is nothing other than Easwara. In other words the entire phenomenal world is made up of Easwara. This has also been described as Sathaamaatra Chaitanya or Pure Consciousness. This principle of Chaitanya cannot be directly seen; it exists unseen. It is eternal. It is permanent. It is all-pervasive. This is the Aishwarya that permeates and fills this world. This is the very embodiment of Easwara itself. For this principle of Easwara there are two aspects. One is Saguna or Sakara and the other is Nirguna or Nirakara, the attributeful or formful and the attributeless and formless. Associated with the mind and thoughts, and responding to the joys and sorrows, the pain and sufferings of human beings, various forms of Divinity have been visualized. These are the Saguna and Sakara aspects of Easwara.

The Trinity and Omkara

In this context we have the Trinity, Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshwara. These are associated with the three Gunas or attributes, Rajas, Satwa and Tamas. Rajas is associated with Brahma, Satwa with Vishnu and Tamas with Siva. The Rajasic attribute, associated with Brahma, is represented by the sound 'A'. The sound 'U' is the manifested form of Vishnu. And 'M' is the form of the Siva principle.

These three forms, comprising the Trinity, are not permanent. They are not permanent because they have taken form. Anything which has a form cannot be permanent. In the worship of the Divine with attributes the Trinity exist in each Individual as auspicious witnesses. But there is one syllable consisting of 'A', 'U' and 'M', which is the One underlying all the three forms; that is the Omkara. It is an expression of the Nirguna Aakara, the attributeless Divine Principle. Whatever number of births we may take and however long we may go on worshipping these three forms, we will never be able to free ourselves from the cycle of birth and death. If one wants to get rid of birth forever, one has to worship the Nirguna Nirakara, the Formless and attributeless principle, which is represented by the Omkara. Only when we get rid of action, will we be free from the delusion that the world is real. When we are rid of delusion, then we will also be free from the illusion of Maya. And only then will we be free from sorrow and will finally be able to reach the Paratatwa, the transcendent Principle. This may also be described as Paramatma, the transcendent principle within us. As long as we have the mind and the tendencies, we can only be described as Jivatma.

Jivatma and Paramatma are not two different entities. The characteristic of Jivatma is to waste the entire life in worldly things and associate the mind with this phenomenal world. This is the externalised vision, which is full of illusion and delusion. If you turn your mind inwards, it will be free from delusion. When it is associated with delusion, it is Jiva Tatwa. When it is free from delusion and illusion, then it is one with the principle of Paramatma.

If there is a boil on the body, we put some ointment on it and cover it with a bandage until the whole thing heals. If you do not apply the ointment and tie the bandage around this boil, it is likely to become septic and cause great harm later on. Now and then we will have to clean it with pure water, apply the ointment again and put on a new bandage. In the same way, in our life, there is this particular boil which has come up in our body in the form of 'I', 'I', 'I'. If you want

to really cure this boil of 'I', you will have to wash it every day with the waters of love, apply the ointment of faith on it and tie the bandage of humility around it. The bandage of humility, the ointment of faith, and the waters of love will be able to cure this disease that has erupted with this boil of 'I'.

With the help of the mind a man can rise from the level of the human to the highest level of divinity. But he can also descend to the animal nature or demonic level. Once you turn the mind towards worldly objects it tends to become animal and demoniac in nature. If the mind is turned upwards towards God and freed from the thought process, it tends to merge with the Nirguna Nirakara and thus become liberated.

The most important reason for bondage is giving too much freedom to the mind. For example, when an animal is tethered to a post, it will not be able to go to another place and spoil it. It will not be able to show anger or violence or do harm to any person. But if it is untied and let loose, then it can roam over various fields, destroy the crops and cause loss and harm to others. It gets beaten for the mischief done by it. Similarly, the mind must be bound by certain regulations and limits. As long as man lives within certain limits and disciplines, certain rules and regulations, he will be able to maintain a good name and lead a happy and useful life. Once he crosses these limits he will go astray.

Addressing the students in particular, Bhagavan said: You want to study well. You want to pass and get a first-class. After that you want to get a good position and you want to get married and live a happy family life. And then you want to have children and you want them to be intelligent and do well in life. For these kinds of desires there is no limit. They will keep on multiplying. The reason for this multiplication of wants is that you think you are simply a man. But that is not sufficient to keep you free from suffering. In addition to considering yourself a man, you have to put a number of questions to yourself: "To what caste do I belong? Am I an educated person or not? Where am I staying? Am I conducting myself in keeping with this sacred privilege of staying in this most sacred Prasanthi Nilayam, in the immediate presence of Swami?" Only when you put all these questions to yourselves, will you be able to conduct yourselves as true human beings. If one merely thinks he is a man and is entitled to pursue all kinds of desires and enjoyments, he is likely to behave like an animal or even like a demon. "My caste is the caste of humanity. I live in the sacred land of Bharat. I am born of a good family. I am an educated person, not an ignorant one. And I am here in this sacred Prasanthi Nilayam in the presence of Swami." When you have such answers and use them as guideposts for conducting yourselves, you will not go astray.

Today is described as Shivaratri. 'Ratri' means night. What is the significance of night? Night is another word for darkness. 'Siva' means auspiciousness. So, Shivaratri speaks of an auspiciousness which is inherent in darkness. It refers to the wisdom which exists in the midst of ignorance. Ignorance and wisdom are not two different things; they are basically the same. They are associated with Dvaita; they are the opposite polarities of the same underlying principle. The state that transcends both wisdom and ignorance is Paratatwa. It is a stage which is not associated with any comings or goings, where birth and death do not occur. So long as there is birth for the body, death has to follow. What is it that has taken birth? Is it the Atma? No. It is only the body which has taken birth. You are Atma. You are the permanent entity. We consider

this body as inert, but truly speaking, this body is not inert. Even in the physical matter making up this body there is the Divine Consciousness.

The form of the body is constantly changing. That is why the phenomenal world is described as Jagat. In the word Jagat, 'Ja' means taking birth, 'Gat' means dying. "Jagat" means that which has birth and death, a process which repeats itself over and over again. In this world there is nothing which is free from this birth and death, be it a body, any object or thing. All are continually undergoing changes.

This Shivaratri is a day when one tries to establish friendship between mind and God. Shivaratri makes one aware of the fact that the same Divinity is all-pervasive and is to be found everywhere. It is said that Siva lives in Kailash. But where is Kailash? Kailash is our own joy, our own bliss. It means that Easwara lives in the Kailash of delight. If we can develop that sense of delight and joy in our mind, that itself is Kailash. How can one get this joy? It comes when we develop purity and steadiness and sacredness. Then the heart becomes filled with peace and bliss. Then your heart itself will be Kailash and Siva will be there in the sanctum sanctorum of your heart, within the temple which is your body.

At first look, everyone appears to be a devotee, but individuals respond differently to different circumstances. If you keep a ball of iron and a dry leaf side by side, when there is no wind both of them will be firm and steady. But when a breeze blows the dry leaf will be carried away for miles together. The Iron ball will remain firm and steady. If one has true love and firm faith in God, one will be like an Iron ball, steady and undisturbed. If one is like a leaf, running away on account of difficulties and problems, it is a travesty to call such a person a devotee. We should develop pure and steady love and faith.

There are no permanent mothers in the world, the only permanent mother is the Divine Mother. Swami often reminds you of your spiritual family where Truth is your father, Love is your mother, Wisdom is your son, Peace is your daughter, Devotion is your brother, and Yogis are your friends. In the spiritual path these are your true relatives, who will always accompany you. When you have this kind of relationship, when you treasure this kind of friendship, you will be able to break the bonds of the world and become free. Light has value only when there is darkness; otherwise it has no value by itself. Therefore, in times of trouble and sorrow, whenever problems arise, evoke the principle of Divinity, which will shed illumination and light in moments of darkness.

There is no use in just thinking of Shivaratri once a year. Every minute, every day, every night, you should think of Divinity and sanctify your time, for the Time principle truly speaking is Siva. You yourself are Siva. Try to understand and recognize this principle of Siva Tatwa which is your own Reality.

—*Prasanthi Nilayam, 17-2-85*

Experiencing the Omnipresence

A spiritual life, a search for understanding and learning to know God within ourselves, is not dependent on the springs of inspiration from the outer circumstances. The divine spring of Inspiration is within us, but we must make efforts for finding it. When consciousness of our divinity has taken living form in our daily life, we are not dependent on place and time. Then we live deeply rooted in this God Consciousness.

All the various activities done within the area of a Sai-centre are meant to be means of assistance and spring of inspiration for achieving communion with God. When we have reached a deepened awareness of God's omnipresence, it is of no importance for our spiritual development where we, through the law of Karma, have been born and have to act.

Sai Baba has chosen to be born and live in India during this divine incarnation, but He has no geographical limitations. He appears wherever He wills. Sai Baba says: "Why cry over the fact that you cannot come here to see me? Pray and call for me, and I shall come to you instead." Of course, it is a divine grace to have received the possibility to have Sai Baba's personal darshan, but it does not mean that those who, on account of different circumstances, do not have this possibility cannot experience God's grace. Our prayers, our love and longing reach Him, and, if it is His will, we can experience His divinity and get His darshan in the stillness of our own heart.

God's omnipresence is intellectually understood by most of us, but only a very few have succeeded in manifesting it in their inner, so that it has become a living reality in daily life. We have lost the capacity to perceive unity with the divine Presence in and around us, which ought to be the principal point in our life. With all our power we must strive to experience and become conscious of God's love and power, which pervade the total cosmic creation.

Often we feel satisfied and stop at merely experiencing the outer attributes for communion with God, in the form of participating in various ritual gatherings. These ought instead to inspire us to go further, in stillness and meditation on God to reach a clear consciousness of the divine unity. As long as dualism is a reality in our life, this is an obstacle for us for understanding the principle of total divine unity.

In the material world we are living in today, we are more strongly bound to this than to God. This prevents us from experiencing the divine unity with all in the cosmic creation, God Himself. Therefore we should daily practise Dharma (righteousness) and try to find Truth within us. We must remember that it is more important what we do for others, than for ourselves. Forget yourself and love others. As we think and live, so we are. Good thoughts create good men. And, always remember that only God knows the sincerity and depth of our devotion. Let us never judge each other.

Karma from previous lives can help a seeker to come in contact with his spiritual guru. This is the result of earlier yearning and aspiration to learn to know God. We are dependent on the guru, but he is not dependent on us. When a wish to live a purer spiritual life has taken firm form in us,

then we are mature for meeting our guru, and he will guide and help his disciple to an inner life and light.

What a grace we have been given, by having been born in this time, when the Guru of all spiritual gurus, Sai Baba, divine Avatar, has chosen to incarnate among us and has called us into the sphere of His divine radiation. God is love. May we be worthy of His grace and live in unselfish love, to God's glory!

—*Curth Orefjaerd, Sweden*

EHV ON THE MARCH:

Fiji Minister Commends EHV Scheme

"The most essential of all human values for us is unity, and it is an indispensable value in a multi-cultural society like ours. It is a value which can be taught through education and sustained through religion," observed Dr. Ahmed All, Minister for Education, Fiji, at a seminar on "Human Values in a Multi-cultural Society and the role of Religion and Education," held on December 1, 1984, at the Fiji Institute of Technology, Samabula,

It is a long way from Prasanthi Nilayam in Andhra Pradesh to Fiji in South Pacific but it is a testimony to the vitality and essentiality of Bhagavan's EHV programme that the Sai Samiti in Fiji, with the co-operation of others, should organise a seminar and exhibition on EHV with Bhagavan's blessings.

A planning committee was formed which worked indefatigably to make the seminar and exhibition a success. The exhibits were brought from Kuala Lumpur. The seminar was attended by nearly 200 participants from various islands of the Fiji group.

Mr. C.M. Pala, Chairman of the Sathya Sai Seva Samiti, who headed the Planning Committee, welcomed Dr. Ahmed All and the participants.

In a thoughtful address, which struck the right note regarding the role of education in human values in a multi-cultural country like Fiji, Dr. Ahmed All said: "We are deeply indebted to the Sathya Sai Education in Human Values Trust for what they have put before us here today.

"All societies in history have developed some values which they have elevated beyond human sanction. The authority of these values has come from a Being which has been variously defined and variously named, but may, for our purposes, be called God. It is significant that at the back of the invitation card for this seminar and exhibition we read, 'Unity is Divinity'. The values which give order are those which unite human beings, whether these be values for the production of food or for the enjoyment of leisure or for the distribution of surplus acquired or accrued through a multiplicity of means. These must all result in human beings being able to move forward in harmony.

Need for unity

"This unity as the basis of progress and happiness in human society is of even greater significance and necessity in a multi-cultural environment. Multicultural societies bring together human beings with deep group attachments which have as their foundation different languages, different modes of worship, different priorities, different historical experience, sometimes one conflicting with the other. The hallmark then of multi-cultural societies is at one level the differences which are evident. These give rise to diversity. On the surface, from these differences one is likely to suggest that people in multicultural societies have different value systems, and on prima facie evidence, this may be sustained, but when we delve below the surface and look at the sustaining forces of those different values, we find that their goal in the end is the same, and in many cases if we search far enough into history we will find that they have a common origin.

"Conflicts not inevitable"

"The conflicts which arise are usually the result not of diabolical conspiracies deliberately hatched, but the outcome of misunderstanding unwittingly created, beginning in ignorance and intolerance. If we look at many of the conflicts in the world today, those in Lebanon, the communal tensions which appear and disappear in India, the traumas in South Africa, the turmoil in parts of Sri Lanka—these are all human creations resulting from one group failing to grasp the aspirations, the desires, the fears and the sensitivities of others. These conflicts are not inevitable. Nothing involving human action is inevitable, but once an act occurs it becomes irrevocable, and that is the story of many a conflict in the world today. In multi-cultural societies tolerance is not enough. It merely means putting up with others. Something more positive is essential, and this is an understanding and appreciation of one another as human beings not merely as individuals but as human beings subscribing to a certain group identity which each wants preserved and perpetuated in order to keep closest to himself or herself what gives him or her a sense of security and well being.

Role of the family

"We in this country take the view that every culture domiciled here has the right to its development without obstruction and we want it to be a living monument well after many of us have gone. This is Government policy too. Thus to preserve our values we must make a deliberate effort to ensure they are learnt and passed on from generation to generation. The work towards this goal begins at home. If we undermine the family as a unit then we are striking at the very foundation of human society, and threatening all essential human values. Education in human values has to be given right from the first days of our birth by our parents, by members of our family, by those who belong to our group. It cannot wait till one goes to a so-called formal school. But to say this is not to deny the role of education in the more formal sense. Formal education trains a man to become a worthy, contributing, and satisfied citizen in his society and state. The school too must play its part in unifying people.

Unity through religion

"Those who have organised this seminar say 'Unity Is Divinity'. If we accept the premise here that Unity is Divinity, and there is no reason why we should not accept it, then disunity is anti-divinity. Thus those who deliberately set out to work against efforts to bring about unity are indeed in one sense pursuing what we might call, an 'atheistic' path. Religions which exist in our country have as their essence the worship of a divine being, the unifier who brings all of us

together. All religions in one sense are syncretic in that they coalesce the different values in a society towards oneness with the one perfect being whom we may call God, or Allah, or Bhagavan, or a number of other respected names. If this is the role of religion then we must teach religion to our children. Religion can also divide as it does today in Lebanon, for instance. But it is not religion which divides, it is really human beings who create division. Thus if human beings were to practise their religion as the various faiths advise, then they would all come together in the one divine being whom we acknowledge as the Father of all of us."

Mr. Patrick O'Sullivan, a former Catholic priest and now a professor in the University of South Pacific, Suva, presented a detailed paper on the challenges facing education and religion in the contemporary world. He said that all the five Human Values—Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Love and Non-violence—are interrelated and the observance of one presupposes the observance of the other four. "In the area of character building which in reality is the development and consolidation of human values," he said, "Religion and sport play very important roles and if sport gets the values all warped up, who will unravel the mess if the voice of Religion is not heard?" Summing up his conclusions, he said: "Religion, in addition to its responsibility to teach and foster Human Values to members of our multi-cultural society, should seriously consider taking up the challenge to confront social conditions and such aspects of the media, business or other bodies which either individually or collectively militate against the practice of broadly accepted Human Values. In order to do this effectively Religion would need to speak with one voice. Sri Sathya Sai may be in a position to get the various denominations and sects together in order to try to identify the basic evils of our society today and vigorously voice reform.

"With respect to education and its very important role, I wish to advocate the introduction into the curriculum of all secondary schools a course on Human Values which would enable members of our multi-cultural society to live together with a deeper sense of appreciation and acceptance."

The subject of human values was considered from a businessman's point of view in a paper presented by Mr. Edmund March, a prominent businessman and social worker of Fiji.

There was a lively discussion on the Minister's speech and the two papers. The consensus at the seminar was summed up by Dr. Madhu Kamath. Mrs. S. Subramaniam, member of the Planning Committee and a veteran educationist, thanked the speakers and participants and expressed the hope that the seminar would be followed up by appropriate action to introduce EHV in Fiji schools.

—C. M. P., Suva, Fiji

Hope

The turmoil of my soul calmed down
and a great cleansing took place—
that what distorted my sight
and showed me a world full of pain and despair

has been taken out of my thoughts.
Wherever I look now
I see God's beauty and joy
and hope comes into my heart
that not all is lost
but was only covered
by the dust of man's ignorance.

Peace will come back to this earth
once man awakens to his soul
and turns his attention to God—
for there—in God—is eternal wisdom
and a perfect plan for each life.

Let's stand up in the light
children of God;
the dark night of the soul is over.
We are the messengers of God,
as we have been cleansed
in the fire of God's grace
from that which darkened the sun
for many centuries
since ever man lost faith in God's love
and tried to play life's game on his own.

How could he ever expect to succeed
as he can never see the whole—
all he could gain was fear and pain—
How could he dare
to he separate from his source?

This world now is covered with fear
the result of man's doubts,
and the scream for love
awakened those
who had not forgotten yet
the source of all life.

The light is growing stronger
and with it comes
a stream of new hope.

—Ingrid Oiler

Manava Abhyudaya Kshetra Inaugurated

Bhagavan's five-day visit to Bombay in January marked one more big step towards promoting the Sathya Sai system of "Education in Human Values" with the opening of the Manava Abhyudaya Kshetra. Forming part of the Dharmakshetra complex in the northern suburb of Andheri, the new building will house the Institute of Education in Human Values and also accommodate the Sathya Sai Technical School.

Children of the adjacent Sathya Sai Vidya Mandir gave Bhagavan a fond welcome in colourful uniforms. Baba was much impressed by the devotional feeling they expressed in a dance number.

Dr. P. L. Malhotra, Director of the National Council for Educational Research and Training, presided over the opening function. Dr. (Mrs.) Madhuri Shah, Chairman of the University Grants Commission, addressed the gathering.

Dr. Malhotra felt happy that the Institute would provide training to teachers in a new system, which held out great hope for the good of this country. He recalled his visit to Puttaparthi in December 1983, when he addressed the world convention on Education in Human Values. What impressed him in that "isolated corner of India" was the physical, mental and intellectual surroundings and the impress they made on his own emotions. In his brief visit to this sacred centre one desire grew in him and that was not to have any desire. "This experience I shall never forget," he said. He told the Bombay gathering that he had spoken to a number of children of the Sathya Sai School at Vidyagiri and was amazed at their discipline. "Are they our children?" he asked himself, he said. He had no doubt whatsoever that the system in which they were being educated had great potential. It will be ideally suited to India. Nowhere else in the world can one find the kind of composite culture as in India, with people of different religions.

"Long march ahead"

One important factor he wished every one interested in the growth of education to bear in mind was that a large number of people in this country did not have the benefit of education and, therefore, did not have the opportunity to know what human values are. Dr. Malhotra said we have a "long march" to undertake. That "long march" will be to change the minds and hearts of the people.

Dr. Madhuri Shah said she was associated with the institutions which evolved the scheme of "Education in Human Values" right from the beginning. This aimed at bringing about a qualitative change in those brought under this system. She would even go to the extent of saying that if we did not inculcate human values in the people it will be difficult for them to lead a happy life. The fact remained that human values had eroded. How did this happen? If a firm foundation for these values right from the pre-school age is laid there is every hope that respect for these values could be restored. But that effort had to be made with courage and conviction. There was need to change the heart of the teachers as well, she added.

Mrs. Rayees Ali Mohmed Sayeed, Principal of Anjuman-I-Islam High School, said she was happy with the adoption of the E.H. V. programme in her school. This made children truthful and self-reliant.

Teachers should change

Bhagavan Baba told the gathering that a system of education which did not teach human values did no good at all, and whatever the extent of one's study, the benefit derived from it would be next to nothing. He said "Manavatwa", which meant human values, was an integral part of life. He said that the present-day education system only made man lead a "mechanical life". The system should be such as to make him self-reliant, capable of leading a life with due regard for Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema.

Baba emphasised that the teacher himself needed to be trained to have a proper outlook. He compared the teacher to a water tank and the pupil to a tap. Unless the water in the tank is pure, one cannot expect what comes out of the tap to be pure.

Mrs. Sarla Shah, Joint Convener of Sri Sathya Sai Education in Human Values Trust, said she was happy that Dr. Malhotra, a member of the three-man expert committee on education set up by the Prime Minister, and Dr. Madhuri Shah, Chairman of the UGC, were participating in the day's function.

Mrs. Shah said as far back as 1940, Bhagavan Baba had declared that His Dharmasthapanam rested on four strong pillars-Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema. These were also the focal points of the Education in Human Values programme. In fact, these four eternal values epitomised the 84 values that the NCERT had been propounding and which are now being incorporated in the educational scheme.

She stated that Bhagavan gave his national programme of education, in conformity with the requirements of Article 27 of our Constitution, three years ago. He has added one more value to this programme, namely, "nonviolence". His definition of non-violence also covered the practice of rigorous economy in the use of energy, speech, food, time and money. When He interpreted non-violence this way, He also gave a new dimension to it, by stressing the need to curb desires. The root cause of violence everywhere and at all times is the proliferation of desires. The only remedy to curb violence and discord is to minimise desires, she said.

Bridging science and spirituality

The elite of Bombay and several thousand devotees of Bhagavan Baba filled the Jalan, Mandap in Dharmakshetra to overflowing at His first public function in the city, on Republic Day, where he released books on "Science and Spirituality" and "Study Circle for Industrial Workers".

Mr. Ramakrishna Bajaj, President of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and Dr. V. S. Venkatavaradan, Director of Nehru Planetarium, who addressed the gathering were agreed that Baba's philosophy of love alone could save this strife-ridden world from destruction.

Mr. Bajaj said that an urgent task awaiting fulfillment was bridging the gap between science and spirituality, so as to foster harmony between man's outer environment and his inner world. He said science was racing far ahead of man's ethical behaviour. He was happy that Sri Sathya Sai Baba is leading the movement to harness the benefits of science for the good of mankind.

He said science. In its literal sense, means knowledge, and technology is its application to any given problem or situation. Modern science, as it has developed is a creation of the past 300 years. In the past four decades science has scored most spectacular triumph. It is now advancing at a breath-taking pace enabling man to gain increasing control over nature. There are, however, stirring doubts and second thoughts as to where all this is leading. There is a growing realisation that in the pursuit of science, something else has gone wrong. While the gains have been tremendous, the cost too, has been astounding.

In our blind pursuit of progress we have reached a dead-end and are tending to lose sight of higher values in life, he said. Science and Spirituality are not distinct from or alien to each other but are In fact complementary. While science helps to gain greater control over the outer world, spirituality is concerned with the development of the world within and with promoting meaningful relations between men.

Dr. Venkatavaradan, a member of the study group, which brought out the book on "Science and Spirituality", said the two are in reality not in disharmony. He complimented the Sathya Sai Trust on giving a lead to establish the close relationship between the two. He was sure that the philosophy of love preached by Baba would help save mankind.

"Develop the science of love"

Bhagavan Baba told the gathering that merely acquiring knowledge without a corresponding improvement in the character of man would be as futile an effort at trying to grow a good crop on infertile land. With all the success achieved by man in the material sphere he still remained dissatisfied with himself and felt more insecure than ever. This was because he had lost faith in the basic code of conduct. In his egoistic attitude towards life, he has not only lost self-confidence but has also reduced himself to the level of a beast.

Baba said that while science has developed, man has not. Man's effort should be to develop the science of love. The scientist has even learnt to control the elements, but science has not evolved a system to enable man to control himself. He compared science and spirituality to the two wings of a bird, without both of which it cannot fly.

Dr. B. Mavin Kurve, coordinator of the study group, said that Bhagavan Baba in releasing the book had at the same time released a cosmic force which would go round the world and help unify the two hemispheres, science and spirituality, into one global human wisdom.

In an intensive research that the committee carried out, they found a vast amount of agreement between science and spirituality. The two had joined hands at all levels from the sub-atomic to the macro level, beyond Relativity. The two have a common goal, in universal man, who dedicates himself to the service of mankind.

The other members of the study group are Dr. A. K. Ganguly, former Director of the Chemicals group, B.A.R.C., Prof. Mahapatra of the Indian Institute of Technology, Powai, Sri S. Ramakrishnan, Executive Director of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, and Dr. C. Ramaswamy, former Director-General of Observatories.

Mr. K.R. Rao, who compiled the guidelines for conducting "Study Circles for Industrial Workers," said these have been found to go a long way in promoting industrial peace and improving productivity.

Mr. S. P. Mehta, a member of the Trust, earlier welcomed the gathering.

Children entertain Baba

Bhagavan Baba's Bombay visit was made memorable by His appearance at Vallabhbbhai Patel stadium on two consecutive days, after a gap of about 11 years. Bal Vikas children of Bombay and Madras entertained Baba to "Dance Divine" on January 27 and top musicians poured their heart out in devotional songs the next day at a concert appropriately called "Prasanthi Naad".

"Dance Divine" was on the lines of the presentation by the Bal Vikas children at the Hill View Stadium in Puttaparthi in 1983, and though a smaller number participated in the Bombay programme, it was more colourful. What is more, such a theme had never been presented in Bombay before. All the Bal Vikas children in the city and their parents were specially invited to it.

It was a dance ballet, based on script provided by the Nehru Planetarium research bureau. It was produced, directed and enacted entirely by the students of Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas. With a thoughtful mixture of commentary, music, slides, and dances, it brought to life the entire cosmos with its galaxies and stars, as seen through a modern telescope. How the universe originated and for what purpose was shown in the final scene. It depicted the Big Bang with which all matter in the universe came into existence, including stars, galaxies, dust and gas. A cosmos without man to appreciate its beauty and grandeur would serve no purpose. The Creator, therefore, chose a cosy place for himself on a planet called the earth among the nine planets going round the medium size star called the sun. Bal Vikas students from Madras, playing the role of the nine planets, performed dances depicting the nature of each planet, as portrayed in the Navagraha Stotra (Prayer to the nine planetary deities). Big models of the planets (Saturn, Mars, etc.) were carried by the children followed by the dancer to complete the symbolism.

The last scene depicts the Creator, in response to the prayers of saints and sages, manifesting in human form and performing his celestial dance, the Siva-Tandava. The Siva-Tandava dance was performed by Deepak Majumdar, a well known dancer himself and a product of Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas.

Presentation of prizes

Bhagavan gave away awards to winners in the annual essay competition for students of Bombay colleges at a function held at Dharmakshetra on January 27.

The rotating shield for all-round proficiency went to Swami Vivekananda Junior College, Chembur, the winning student being Miss Suchisree Deb (Standard XI). The principal of the college, Miss Mohini Tani, received it.

The trophy for the best essay in English went to Agnel Technical College, the winner being its student, Sajid A. Shaikh, Mr. P. R. Prabhu, principal of the college, received the prize.

Trophies for the best essays in Hindi and Marathi were won by Miss Manisha Tripathi and Miss Neelima S. Marathe respectively, both of Parle Junior College. Prof. S. N. Nadkarni and Prof. V. J. Mundle of the College, received the prizes. Both the students are in Standard XI.

Sudarshan Kamath of Podar College was awarded a special prize for his essay in English.

The topic for the essay, given on the spot, was: "What role do you, the youth of today, envisage for the restoration of righteousness, discipline, harmony and peace in our motherland and for regaining our ancient glory." One hundred and eighty one students from 45 colleges participated in the preliminary contest and 74 in the final round.

Bhagavan Baba told the principals that the conduct of the teachers should be exemplary and they should have the same concern for their students as they would have for their own children.

"Combine knowledge and practice"

Bhagavan Baba advised all those participating in Study Circles run by the Sai organisation in Bombay that the knowledge they gained through discussion should be put to use in their practical life. Otherwise, participation in these study circles for devotees, Intellectuals and industrial workers, would serve no purpose. Members of all categories of study circles in all the 15 units of Sathya Sai Seva Samiti assembled in Santhi Deep at Dharmakshetra on January 30 to hear Bhagavan's discourse.

Baba told the gathering that they should first put themselves the question why they were participating in this activity. Study circles promoted self-education. The knowledge gathered through discussion and exchange of views in this forum should be retained and used in day-to-day life, thereby setting an example to others. Further, whatever knowledge one gained should be used for the good of the community. What was even more Important was that each Individual should practise it himself in such a way that it helped to develop self-confidence.

Mr. K. R. Rao who is in charge of the study circle programme in the city, said that there are seven study circle centres for industrial workers in different factories. In all 1155 centres are functioning in the city.

Boundless enthusiasm at Akola

The whole of Akola wore a holiday look and almost the entire population took a day off to have Bhagavan's darshan when he paid a flying visit to the Vidarbha town on January 29.

The Vice-Chancellor of Panjabrao Deshmukh Krishi Vidyapath, Dr. Thakare, received Bhagavan and conducted him to the convocation grounds of the agricultural university where the staff of the college and farmers from nine districts of the region had assembled.

Dr. Thakare acquainted Baba with the work being done at the university.

Baba gave away to farmers representing 90 adopted villages "Village kits" comprising water filters, books for school libraries, first-aid boxes and musical Instruments for use in their bhajans.

Bhagavan later met the elite of the town—doctors, lawyers, and members of Lions organisations—and urged them to participate in the movement for the service of mankind, particularly the welfare schemes undertaken in rural areas.

Bhagavan spent some time with Bal Vikas children, their gurus, teachers trained in Education in Human Values and EHV tutor-trainees before he drove to Vasant Desai stadium where nearly two lakh men and women had assembled to hear Him.

In a brief speech to the gathering Baba asked the people of Akola to join in promoting welfare work that was fast gaining momentum, with love in their hearts for the less privileged. He said the system of Education in Human Values, which has come to be widely appreciated, could alone equip the younger generation with the values necessary to restore orderliness and peace in life.

STUDENTS' CORNER:

Mystery of the Missing Yogi

..... A few days remained for the Navaratri festival to begin at Prasanthi Nilayam. I was at Madras, having no hopes of witnessing the grand celebrations at Parthi.

One night Bhagavan appeared in my dream. The next night too He appeared in my dream and repeated His order, "Leave for Parthi immediately." I dreamt that I pleaded with Him, "Oh Baba! How to come to You when I am caught in the coils of never-ending troubles." Bhagavan replied, "Nonsense! Come immediately." I was worried how I could leave for Parthi when my mother and sister were critically ill, and I not much better than they. The day passed while I was in a dilemma.

On the third night again my Lord appeared in my dream but not as Sai Baba, but as Sai Shiva, for He looked at poor me with angry eyes and lashed and thrashed me verbally for not obeying His divine command, and once again He summoned me to Parthi, without regard to my tearful pleadings.

I woke up in the morning dazed. I was unable to make up my mind. But the thought of Bhagavan again coming in my dream made me tremble. I dared not keep my head on the pillow,

fearing I would fall asleep and He might again appear in my dream and give me another sound verbal thrashing. Somehow I decided to leave for Parthi that very night.

That day Madras seemed to have incurred the wrath of Indra for it rained incessantly. With the help of our sympathetic neighbour, my ailing mother, sister and myself boarded the night bus for Anantapur. We were to reach Anantapur at dawn. We spent the night miserably but waiting for the glorious day to dawn. As the bus sped by, tearing through the dark night I pined to see the golden rays of the sun. My childish emotions overpowered me, for I accused the sun of being lazy and a late riser. It was not too long when my angry accusation turned into prayers too. I prayed to the sun to rise fast at least for my sake. But the sun took his own sweet time, and the day dawned.

The bus was nearing Anantapur when it came to a halt with a sudden jolt. There was a bridge which it had to cross. It was heavily flooded. All around was a scene of destruction. The bus took an hour to cross the flooded bridge, with great difficulty. After we had crossed the bridge, to our great delight we found a bus going to Puttaparthi trying to cross the bridge. Our bus conductor advised us three to quickly get down and board the bus leaving for Parthi, without our going to the Anantapur bus-stand. We hurriedly brought our luggage down and boarded the Puttaparthi bus. The latter's conductor was very hostile. He rudely said, "There is no place, so get off the bus." When I tried to request him, he took our luggage and threw it out of the bus, and forced us to get down. To our great dismay we found that the Anantapur bus was nowhere in sight and the deserted look all around made me shiver in fright. To my great surprise, as soon as we got down from the bus bound for Parthi, the bus could not move as its engine refused to start. Half of its chassis was in the water and half on dry land. It could neither proceed forward nor go back. It refused to move an inch.

My mother and sister seated themselves on the luggage and were on the verge of collapse. I stood beside the raging river and viewed the angry waters, while mother sat lost in prayer or despair, I do not know. Broken logs of timber rolled and came dashing against the bridge. The corpse of a goat was caught in the swift current of the swirling waters. The dark sky above seemed to be determined on a downpour to drench us, The grim situation cast a gloomy spell on me. I cursed myself for being responsible for the watery grave I had chosen, as I felt our end not far.

Something said within me that the Lord is my host and why should I give myself away to despair and frustration. No sooner had this thought occurred in my mind than I felt the pressure of a hand on my back. I whirled round and saw, "a white long robed yogi with a white beard and matted hair" smiling at me. He had a tender voice and spoke softly. His eyes twinkled and his face shone with splendour. I stood bewitched while he spoke, "Son! You seem to be troubled. Tell me, it may be that I could help you." Hearing him speak such kind words, I was very much delighted. I told him of the soup that we were in. He gave me a reassuring smile and said, "Is that all! O. K. How many persons are you?" I replied, "There are three of us." Then I saw him dig his hand into the side pocket of his robe and take out three pink tickets. The smiling yogi said, "I don't need them, you can take them." Now with tickets in our hands we boarded the bus that still stood there. As I was boarding the bus, I again felt a pat on my back. I looked behind and saw. It

was the smiling yogi. He then uttered these mysterious words, "You go to Puttaparthi and 'I shall meet you there." And he hurriedly walked away.

We climbed the bus. The bus conductor gave us a threatening look. Before he could speak out a word, I showed him the tickets that the yogi gave me. The conductor was shocked and he questioned me, "From where did you get them." I told him about the yogi. He got down from the bus to look for the yogi. The yogi could be found nowhere. He seemed to have melted into the thin air of the deserted region. The conductor climbed into the bus. He looked shaken. He timidly got three seats vacated and offered them to us. As soon as we took our seats, the engine that had refused to start for two hours miraculously started all of a sudden, and the bus moved towards its destination.

The happy passengers shouted with joy and the air was rent with shouts of JAI SAI RAM!

—*Giri Naidu, XII Standard, vidyagiri*

Sai Family News

SAI CENTRE IN MEXICO

Mexico City: On September 5, 1984 a conference of Sai devotees in Mexico was held in the capital. They had come the previous day to attend a public meeting which was addressed by Dr. Samuel Sandweiss and Dr. Michael Goldstein. At the Conference, Dr. Sandweiss explained the functions of a Sai centre. Dr. Goldstein described the structure of the global Sai Organisation. Bernice Mead, Malaika Horne and Ann Balasuriya spoke on the programme of education in Human Values. Following this conference, the World Council of Sathya Sai Organisations, with the blessings of Bhagavan, constituted a Sai Co-ordinating Committee for Mexico with Dr. Luis Muniz as Chairman.

One of the first decisions of the Co-ordinating Committee is to bring out a Spanish edition of "Sanathana Sarathi" and promote the publication of Sai literature in Spanish.

TIDE CHANGE IN GURGAON

Gurgaon (Haryana)

The Zonal Convenor of Sri Sathya Sai Organisations, Gurgaon Zone, writes of the deep moral transformation effected by the blessings of Bhagavan in the villages adopted by the Samithis around the Capital. Bhagavan has announced His Presence in homes through divine signs and wonders and urged the sarpanches to follow the disciplines He prescribes. During the first week of November last when the area was a cauldron of looting and rioting, a truckload of foreign liquor was brought into one village by a few local unsocial persons. But, the people stuck to their vow. They broke all the bottles in a field beyond the boundary of their village, and saved themselves from the temptation.

SEVA DAL CONFERENCE

Chokkadi (Dakahina Kanara, Karnataka): A three-day refresher training camp for Seva Dal delegates from tire South Kanara and Coorg districts was held here from January 11 to 13. It was inaugurated by Srimati Ashoka Kumari, Deputy Director of Public Instruction, South Kanara. Nearly 300 delegates and office-bearers of Sathya Sai Seva Organisations in the two districts attended. An exhibition of service activities in the "adopted" villages in the region was inaugurated by Mr. Ananda Uchchil. Addresses on different aspects of the Sai Seva movement were delivered by Dr. Nagappa Alva, Mr. V. K. Narasimhan, Dr. M. V. Keshava Rao, Mr. A. Mohan Rao, State Seva Dal convener, Mr. S K. Shet, and Sri U. Gangadhara Bhat. Mr. Jivaraj Alva, Minister for Youth Service and Culture, said that Sai workers should render dedicated service in the villages in the spirit of Bhagavan's ideals.

Mr. M. S. Pai, District President, and Mr. Kote Pnrameswariah, tire District Seva Dal convener, explained that the camp was organised as a follow up programme to implement the decisions taken at the last International Seva Dal Conference in 1984.

The Earth is the natural habitat of man. Why should he venture out of the range of the elements of which his body is composed and go places whereto he has to take water, air and other essential requisites with him? When he goes to the moon, he does not leave anxiety, fear and falsehood behind. The moon that man has to voyage into is the MIND, not this dead satellite, with no capacity to illumine itself. The Ramayana mentions that Ravana skillfully prepared a wax head similar to that of Rams and arranged that it be presented before Sita as the severed head of her lord, so that she might give up all thought of living with Him again, and surrender to the wiles of her captor Ravana. The moon is like that lifeless imitation head of Rama. The real Rama is vibrant, active, somewhere else. The real Moon for man is in the firmament of his 'heart', where the mind and the intelligence (the real Sun) revolve.

—Baba

Science, Man and Moral

British scientist and Nobel Laureate, Prof. Dennis Garbor, has observed: "I basically distrust the nature of man. He was constructed to be able to fight his way out of the jungle. His basic impulses to survive and to grow have led to tremendous problems in this age of Science—over-population, pollution, boredom born out of a surfeit of leisure and destructive tendencies." He, however, softened the criticism by adding: "The way out of this jungle is not to eliminate science which doubtless has caused all these difficulties but to change man's motivation and to get scientists and educators to work together toward the achievement of a better quality of life instead of adding to the menacing posture of destruction."

Another eminent scientist from Sweden, Prof. Hannes, describes the current dilemma in these words: "Medical Science has successfully fought epidemics but fails to see that the population explosion resulting from this success is more serious. Moreover, in the long run electronics has made communication all the world over much easier but communication between the rich and

the poor in society is worse than ever before. Even with the most sophisticated observational techniques at man's disposal, scientists are unable to observe and understand social conditions prevailing just outside the walls of new laboratories. In this so-called age of science, the number of illiterates has been increasing at an alarming rate. Science appears to be paying little or no heed to what was its primary and still its most important task-which is to fight ignorance, prejudice, superstition and violence, wherever they appear. In many respects, the relationships between Science and Society have to change. This requires new thinking and many bold initiatives.”

For centuries, humanity was guided and shaped by the impulses of religion, with its elements of magic, unquestioning faith and belief in the super-natural. Religion supplied some of the deep and felt inner needs of human existence and human nature. It established a set of values, some harmful and some based on morality. As knowledge spread and reason began to develop, religion came to be looked upon as a collection of superstitious beliefs and practices and seemed to demand a surrender of one's mental faculties in favour of some undefinable emotional experience. To the common man, in the age of Science, philosophy with its urging of the supremacy of the inner life over external things has become something to be resorted to only in moments of despair or anguish.

Somewhere along the way, the moral and ethical approach to life has been lost with its stress on the righteousness of the means and its precedence over the material value of the end. There is a mental imbalance between the rate at which the frontiers of knowledge are expanding and the rate at which the newly acquired knowledge is integrated and consolidated. The process of integration making Science more coherent and hence more easily comprehensible, is a more difficult process than merely expanding the territories of knowledge. Science till now has shown little concern for this. We are still; in its cold and objective march forward, it has left behind and ignored humanism as a factor in the dealings of mankind.

New inventions of science make a strong impact on human physical existence, resulting in innumerable psychological stresses. The products of technology, often being in a flood-tide, change social conditions, often under compulsion and without reference to human values.

In the aftermath of the shocks created by World War II, leaders in education, in all parts of the world, woke up to the grimness of the situation in which they and their institutions were imbedded. The evils of over-specialization were seen to be causing a great deal of damage to the human mind. It was sought to be exorcised through programmes of general education and the teaching of basic intellectual skills to all; mathematics, physical sciences, social sciences and languages. These reforms, good in themselves, have not proved to be adequate and a permeating feeling of confusion prevails in our educational campuses affecting Society in a myriad ways.

Science and human values

A strong willed movement to integrate Science with Humanities should become the order of the day. The two-pronged endeavour should aim at establishing that modern science clarifies and supports the philosophies of Nature and of man embodied in the arts of many classical cultures, and at salvaging the human values inherent in the cultural traditions of the East and the West and finding in them meaning and relevance for our times. The scientist needs as much the

humanising influence of the arts and the classics as the humanist needs the disciplining that comes through adherence to the scientific method. Where science can help is to accept humanism as its foundation and lend its methods of observation and reasoning to regions of human experience which lie in the domain of the moral and the ethical and which have so far eluded an objective approach. However difficult the process may be, it is only in the framework of precise, objective knowledge that we hope to re-establish the old set of values as a factor of consequence in human relations. This process has to start with the individual, with the introduction of harmony between his inner and outer life, leading to harmony between him and group and between groups and groups and between nations and nations. The methods of science can be and should be put to use in demonstrating the following truths: that truth and the implementation of an idea cannot become the monopoly of any individual or group or nation; and that cooperation rules out domination of one group over another and has to be based on equality, mutual respect and concern for the common goals.

Commitment to spiritual values

The question before us is: Will men of science pursue knowledge as they have been doing, heedless of human consequences or will they in the role of good characters, align their quest with the moral and material needs of homo sapiens?

Physical resources are important to our existence; so also knowledge and skills. But all these will be of no avail without a feeling of commitment and a sense of mission. Knowledge should be integrated with a willingness to use it in the service of the community in which one lives. A combination of ignorance with goodness is at best worthless; but a combination of knowledge with a lack of sense of values can become politically dangerous. The achievement of a synthesis of knowledge and skills with a sense of commitment and service to the community is the greatest intellectual challenge before us. Can we, with our background of history and culture, human science and technology use it to strengthen rather than weaken our commitment to spiritual values. We, in this country are the inheritors of some priceless legacies, sense of duty without self-involvement or thought of personal gain; unacquisitive temperament; tolerance; love of harmony; and compassion for all living things. The preservation of this heritage in the process of modernizing our lives and becoming the beneficiaries of new developments in science and technology is both the challenge and the opportunity to advance the welfare of human beings.

Happiness is not the state in which all of one's wishes are satisfied and all of one's hopes are fulfilled. On the other hand, it should be perceived by us to lie in the pursuit of meaningful goals. It should be our endeavour to conceive of such goals and move steadily and courageously toward their attainment.

—Prof. S. Sampath, Director, Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur

With Humility and Love

Who is there to discern His Mystery?
none save He

Who is there to unravel the feat of Creation
the actual appearance of land, water, fire, air and the ether?
Who can measure the distance of 10 billion light years—
and still the measurement has not begun to reach space?
Where is the scientist to explain the inherent voice of conscience,
the already existing knowledge within the heart?
Where is the physicist to explain atomic structure—
propelled by Brahman, the power of materialization, the
Universal vision?
To the mathematician—where is the knowledge that chalks out
Love as Creation and the Creator where all connect as One?
To the philosopher and doctor—what laws explain the dialectics
of pure Miracle!
what philos cannot be traced to Advaita?
To Thee and to Thine, to them who look above for Guidance
and answers—
know 'tis not to know—save surrender;
the ego is limited, humility is limitless—
desire thwarts expansion, to renounce brings growth—
evil wakes death, goodness reaps life.
Whoever knows—whatever is known, greatest minds and thinkers,
the supreme artist, and the everyday man,
the deepest knowledge of any field, the brazenest intellect
Oh Brother, nothing comes close to the Glory of our Maker—
Whatever ye be, or aspire for—
Whatever ye think or discover—
however ye perceive thyself.
Ye were made by Him, from nothing—Remember that and give due credit.
Could ye think if not for Him?
wherefrom comes the power of sight?
What is there to see save His Creation?
Wherefrom comes thy heart, His Seat of Love?
To think of I, and bringing into that accomplishment and failure,
results in the temporary—the fading.
To think of Him, His Power with humility and Love
brings We unto Him—the joy of life, the Sun of Truth,
the peace of Surrender—the Grace of one's soul
—*Michael Hollander, New Jersey, U.S.A.*

SANKRANTI SANDESH:

World Needs Spiritual Transformation

"The four Purusharthas (Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha) are regarded in common parlance as the purposes of human life. They are given a worldly meaning. But their real meaning is spiritual. The foremost purpose of the four Purusharthas is to make man realise that his primary duty is to divinise himself (to transform himself from Man to Madhava)," observed Bhagavan Baba, in His discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium on Makara Sankranti Day (January 14.)

Bhagavan said the word "purusha" did not signify the masculine gender as was commonly assumed. It refers to the Atma, the Supreme Consciousness, which has no gender and which is immanent in all beings. Of the two terms, Purusha and Prakriti, the latter represents the gross element in Nature. It refers also to the body. Purusha is the Consciousness, the Indweller in the body. The two are interdependent. The Shastras have declared that the body is jada (gross) and the Atma is Chaitanya (consciousness) and that the body is feminine. Every being can be considered as made up of both elements and therefore every one irrespective of sex, is entitled to pursue the Purusharthas.

Of the four Purusharthas, (Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha) the first one, Dharma, is regarded in common usage as referring to actions like charity, the duties of one's ashram (or stage in life), going on pilgrimages, and such other good deeds. But these relate only to external actions. The true Dharma of every human being is to make every endeavour to realise the Divine. The process by which this consummation can be reached constitutes Dharma. The observance of the duties relating to different Ashrams (Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa) is incidental to the particular stage in life. These duties do not constitute Dharma proper. Dharma should lead to Self-realisation.

Similarly, 'Artha' does not mean, as commonly understood, the accumulation of property and wealth. These are not our real wealth. They may well become "anartha"—calamitous. They are not lasting. The acquisition of such wealth cannot be considered a "Purushartha". The real wealth a man should acquire is the wisdom that is related to the Divine.

The word "Kama" is generally associated with worldly desires and sensual pleasures. But, when it is considered as a "purushartha"—as one of the purposes of life—it relates to the yearning for God and not to mundane desires. The term "Moksha" is generally understood as referring to the means by which one reaches God or Heaven. But one can be in Heaven only for the period earned by one's meritorious deeds and at the end will have to be reborn again. But "Moksha" in the true sense refers to a state in which nothing is lacking and there is no incoming or going out. It is a state without name or form. It is not a specific place to go to. It is the attainment of unity with the Divine.

For every human being, the first task, among the four Purusharthas, must be to determine what is permanent and what is transient and seek the Eternal Madhava. The second objective is the acquisition of Divine Wisdom as the real wealth. The third is to develop faith in God and yearn for realisation of mergence in God. The fourth is "Moksha", the state of Self-realisation in which there is no change and no movement.

Herald of big change

We celebrate this day as the holy day of Sankranti. Nature wears the garb of supreme peace. The day is pleasantly cool. This is the last day of the Sun's southern journey and the first day of his northward course. It is the last day of Dhanurmasa (the month named after the constellation Dhanus or Centaur). It is the beginning of Makara masa (when the Sun enters the constellation Capricorn). We bid farewell to Dhanurmasa and welcome Makaramasa. The day of Sankranti has a special significance. Sankranti means: "Sam" "coming together"; "Kranti" "a big change." Kranti also means knowledge of the past, present and future that is why 'Kavi' (poet) is described as a Kranta-darsi, one who knows the past, the present and the future. The term cannot apply to one who dabbles in mere words and rhymes. It can only apply to God, who presides over time, space and causation.

The entry of the Sun into the Makara Rasi (Capricorn) heralds the beginning of a great change from this day. It marks the entry into a Divine phase. It signifies the attempt to turn man's mind towards God. It is a day when we pray to the Sun, who is the presiding deity for the eyes, to direct our vision to the pure and the holy, the sacred and the Divine. The Makara month is holier than all other months. All auspicious ceremonies and activities are embarked upon only from this month. For the performance of the Upanayanam (sacred thread-wearing ceremony) people wait for the Uttarayana. In this period Nature is vibrant with joy. The harvest is brought home and the farmers enjoy the fruits of their labours. Young girls decorate the fronts of their houses with flour designs and pumpkin blossoms. They celebrate the season with group dances. Newly-wed bridegrooms are sent to the houses of their brides for celebrating the festive season. Cattle are given a new look and taken round for display of many tricks. Man should recognise the change in season and reform himself to discharge his duties appropriately.

The real meaning of Purusharthas is to make use of the time and circumstances as they arise for making one's life meaningful and sublime. We have to effect a remarkable, spiritual transformation in the world today. Only then the observance of Makara Sankranti has a meaning. External changes with no change in one's outlook and attitude will not signify "Kranti" (radical change). When we bring about a great spiritual transformation, then there will be real peace.

—Bhagavan's discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium on 14. 1. 85

YUGADI SANDESH:

Face the Challenge of "Krodhana"

"The year Krodhana—which means Anger—is likely to be full of manifestations of anger. According to astrological predictions, the New Year is so much filled with hatred and anger that everyone must be extremely vigilant in all one's actions. Through faith in God and the performance of good and love-filled actions even a dreadful year can be turned into a divine year," observed Bhagavan, in the course of an inspiring discourse on Yugadi day (March 22nd) at the Mandir in Prasanthi Nilayam.

In the morning, the orchestra of the Sathya Sai Institute greeted Bhagavan with a special programme of songs for the New Year. The children of the Central School rendered the Bhakti Yoga verses from the Gita.

In the evening, before Bhagavan's discourse on the significance of the New Year, Sri Bairagi Sastri read out from the almanac the astrological readings for the year Krodhana.

Prof. Kasturi said the New Year day was an occasion for devotees to draw up a balance sheet of their record during the past year and submit it to the Lord. All of us, he said, are pilgrims to His Lotus feet.

Bhagavan then delivered His discourse.

Caveat Against Anger

"Good and bad conduct are present among men, but will not be apparent to others. The results of each one's good and bad deeds, however, will be reflected in each one's future life."

Pavitratmaswaroopulara!

Man's waking life every day begins with sunrise and closes when he goes to sleep. This is the pattern for all beings and in the process men attempt to discover the purpose of life. The sun rises in the east and sets in the west and on this basis the other directions, north and south, are determined. Similarly, on the basis of the sun's appearance and absence, day and night are experienced. The different seasons are also based on the apparent movement of the sun. This is the ordinary experience of man in daily life. When the matter is seen from a different viewpoint, on a recognition of the fact that the earth is a globe revolving round itself, neither sunrise nor sunset nor east and west has any reality. The real truth is one thing and what is apparent from experience is another. When you are going in a bus, you are moving with the bus though you seem to be in the same place. Likewise, although the earth is revolving at the rate of several hundred miles per hour, people are not conscious of its movement. They feel that the earth is stationary and they are making all movements. Even scientists, who know the truth, behave on the basis of their daily experience and not on the basis of the deeper reality. They know that neither sunrise nor sunset, nor east and west have any basis in reality. But they regard them as facts of life. Likewise our daily life is based on the apparent facts of day-to-day experience.

Our days and nights, weeks and months, the changing seasons and the yearly rounds are all based on these recurring experiences. The science of astrology is based on these recurring phenomena relating to the movement of the sun, the moon, the planets etc.

The year of anger

In the Hindu almanac there is a cycle of sixty years starting with Prabhava and ending with Akshaya. For each year there is a presiding ruler, a minister and a team of nine officers. Together they have powerful Influence over the course of human affairs during that year. For the New Year Krodhana, which commences today, the rulers Shukra (Venus). His minister is a malefic deity, Saul (Saturn). Among the nine officers, five are malefic and the other four are not so well disposed. Hence, according to the science of astrology, the Indications for the New Year from its very commencement presage trouble and turmoil.

The name of the year is "Krodhana", which means anger. This year is likely to be full of manifestations of anger. Even in trivial matters it will be difficult to restrain people's anger.

Today differences between man and man, village and village, one state and another, and one country and another, are growing. According to astrology, the New Year is filled with so much hatred and anger that its heat will burn even green grass. In view of this we have to be extremely vigilant in all our actions. Fire disasters are likely to be numerous in this year. Except In the month of Shravana, rains are likely to be meager during the rest of the year. The reason for this is that the succeeding year, Akshaya is going to be a prosperous and bountiful year and will be preceded by a period of scarcity and trouble. In the cycle of Nature, bad is likely to be followed by good and vice versa. Hence, we must cultivate the strength and equanimity to face difficulties and troubles. Only the grace of God can give this strength and courage.

Even in our daily life, we will have to conduct ourselves with great care during this year. Every word we utter must be spoken with due deliberation. We have to restrain our pride and anger to the greatest extent. We must eschew anger and hatred towards anyone. Even If there is some provocation for such feelings, it should be kept in check. If one succumbs to such provocations, grave consequences may follow.

The primary obligation this year is to restrain anger in our own Interest. Ill will towards anyone cannot do any good.

How to control anger

When you find anger rising within you, you may withdraw from the place to provide time for cooling your emotions. Or you may drink a glass of cold water and sit quietly in a place. Or, take a brisk walk for a mile to get over your anger. Or, stand before a mirror and look at your face. By anyone of these methods, your anger will gradually come down.

Do not, however, stay near the person who has provoked your anger, because there is no limit to what anger may lead you to. Owing to anger and agitation the blood gets heated up. It takes three months for the blood to cool down. Within that period the nerves become weaker and even the blood cells get destroyed. Weakness is aggravated and the memory power is reduced. Old age sets in prematurely.

All the aberrations that we witness today among men arise from anger. Our entire daily life is filled with anger. When to this is added the contribution of the Krodhana year, the situation becomes intolerable. Therefore, you must meet this by presenting a smiling face all the time. That will demonstrate the presence of divinity. Happiness is union with God. We must link our happiness with the Divine. It is by such efforts that we must confront the challenges of the year Krodhana.

Faith in Sayeesa

Again, when you feel angry, start reciting some song in praise of the Lord. Then there will be no fear of what Krodhana portends. Let the entire family join in prayers at least for a few minutes in the morning and evening (Here Swami sang a song sweet and soothing as a lullaby)

*When the mother and children gather round
To sing the bhajan of Sainatha,
Loving Sai will stand beside them.
Where, then, is room for Anger?*

*And why despair, when Sayeesa is there?
Why despair when Partheesa is beside you?*

The name of the year does not matter. What is really important is how we think and feel. If we do not fill our hearts with pure and sacred thoughts, any year will be unfavourable to us. We should not be preoccupied with the external world. Where there is in reality only One, it appears to us as two. One is Jiva and the other is Deva. The Jiva is absorbed in the external. This is a sign of forgetfulness ("marupu"). To turn the vision inwards is real awareness ("eruka"). It reveals God. The process by which the divinity in man is realised is known as "Tarakam".

This divinity can be realised only by Tyaga (sacrifice or renunciation of worldly things). Tyaga is a supreme virtue in man. One who has no spirit of sacrifice will be sick in body and mind. What Tyaga does to a man is to eradicate his selfishness. As long as self-interest is dominant, one cannot understand Reality. The self-centred man cannot attain the Supreme. Hence, we must cultivate a broad mind and seek to serve our fellow beings who need help. Even in the pursuit of Liberation (mukti), there is no place for concern with one's self. To be concerned about "My salvation", (Naa Mukti) will lead only to "Na Mukti" "no salvation". Those who are concerned only about their individual liberation, will not achieve liberation.

Prema is basic

To understand the true meaning of Self-realisation (Paratwa), the first step is to grasp the significance of the Love-principle. For everything, Prema (Love) is the basis, the cause and the consummation. If there is no love, there is no life. When love is developed, anger automatically ceases. When you feel angry, sit down with a hearty laugh. Limit your speech. Too much talk leads to heated exchange of words.

The lesson to be learnt in the year Krodhana is the cultivation of peace by keeping anger under check and developing a large-hearted love for all. The values a man must cherish as his

life-breath are: Sathya (Truth), Dharma (Righteousness), Santhi (Tranquility), Prema (Love) and Ahimsa (non-violence). Of these five vital principles, Prema is the foremost. It is Prema that flows as the under-current for the other four values. How does it flow this way? When Prema is associated with our thoughts, it manifests itself as Truth. When Prema is associated with feelings, it produces Peace. When Prema animates actions, it results in Dharma. When Prema is combined with understanding it becomes Ahimsa (non-injury). Therefore whenever you feel angry, think of Prema (of love), develop thoughts of love in your heart. You will have peace.

This is the way you have to develop human values. Anger and hatred are demoniac qualities. Asooya (envy) is worse than either of them. You must get rid of these demoniac qualities and attune your life to divinity. When anyone reviles you, do not retort in the same way, you then descend to the level of the other man. You should not do yourself what you consider bad in others. You must strive to develop sacred qualities not for this year alone, but for your entire life. Awareness is life. You must know everything that needs to be known, but make only the good things part of your life.

Call to women

All must be careful about their behaviour during this Krodhana year. Women in particular must be on their guard, because women are capable of making great sacrifices either for good or bad purposes. So, make all your sacrifices for good causes. Develop good traits and eschew all that is evil. When the housewife has such good qualities, the house becomes a miniature paradise. When the mistress of the house indulges in bad deeds, there will be no peace in the home. Controlling their tendency to quarrel over petty differences, women should try to behave like sisters, developing harmony and mutual regard.

Men also should learn to behave like brothers, believing in the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. Young people should realise that the nature of their actions will determine the nature of their future. Bad actions can result only in bad consequences.

Practise reticence

Moreover, in this year, it is advisable for everyone to practise the virtue of reticence (mounam). Control of speech is highly desirable. Whatever thoughts may arise in the mind, let them not find expression in words. It has been said that restraint in speech gives abundant peace. Excessive talk harms the mind. Even in restrained speech, there should be sweetness and joy.

Apart from the warning against giving vent to anger, the Krodhana year is fraught with some unwelcome happenings. Poor harvests are in prospect. Scarcity of food is likely. Excessive rains in some parts and poor rainfall in some others are likely.

Karma is inexorable

These occurrences are the results of past misdeeds (Karma). Hence everyone should be vigilant continuously regarding every one of his actions. When the actions are bad, even a stick can turn into a snake. There is no escape from the consequences of one's actions. Only by vigilance can disasters be avoided. (Swami then recited a poem).

Can you escape from Karma, oh man?

*Whatever your scholarship,
Whatever your daily worship,
Whatever penance you may perform
Can you avoid the results of Karma?
Whether you fill your vessel
In a small pond
Or the vast ocean
It will be filled only
upto its capacity.*

Therefore, if you keep watch over your actions, the results will be appropriate. You cannot indulge in sinful deeds and hope to realise the fruits of meritorious actions. Hence embark on good deeds and sanctify your life. Do not get needlessly agitated over the name of the year. Shed all fear and, placing your faith in God, transform even a dreadful year into a divine one.

(Bhagavan concluded His thrilling discourse with the singing of "*Bhajan Bina*" and "*Prema Mudita Manase Kaho*".)

AVATAR VANI:

From Creation to Creator

Although science and technology have made rapid strides, man has not acquired the divine qualities. Technology is the child of science. But very much anterior to science is the Veda. Science seeks to know all about creation, but the Veda reveals the knowledge about the Creator. All the natural sciences are concerned with knowledge about created things. But there is a Creator who is the source of all of them. In the quest for understanding the objects in creation, man is forgetting the Creator. By forgetting the Creator, man is failing to develop the quality of Love. Why? Because God is Love and Love is God. When we forget Love we forget God. When God is forgotten, how can love grow?

Science has been enormously helpful and has achieved many wonders. But, simultaneously it has done incalculable harm. Science as such is not to be blamed for this. It is the wrongful use of science that is responsible. Science discovered for man the secrets of nature and the cosmos. But what is the benefit we derive from knowing these secrets? Knowledge is one thing; its proper utilisation is a different thing. Of what avail is it to know the power of the atom if we have not learnt how to put it to good and beneficial use? The knowledge derived from science should be used for sacred and righteous purposes.

We need today a science that can promote love. Instead of the Spirit of Love we are witnessing today a "splitting of Love". The Spirit of Love is being broken up and destroyed. Thereby love is receding into the background. Imagine what should be the state of man in an age in which science and civilization have advanced to such a degree far beyond anything conceivable in an earlier era. Yet, in the so-called dark ages of man, without much knowledge, man led a purer and nobler life. Man today indulges in greater cruelty than wild animals. It would be an abuse of

language to regard as human beings people who indulge in large-scale killing of each other. Man has lost respect for life. Where, then, is our boasted progress?

Man has explored the secrets of Nature and has even acquired control over the five elements. But he is not aware of his own true nature. Long time ago, in an earlier epoch, the young lad, Prahlada, told his father, "In a brief period you have been able to conquer all the worlds; but you have failed to master your senses and your mind." Likewise, today we are acquiring mastery over the external universe, but are unable to control our senses. It is only when we use science for control of the senses will we be able to bring Science and spirituality together and integrate the two. Today love seems to be absent even between parents and children, between husband and wife. Science must seek to discover means of promoting love and turning mankind away from the path of self-interest.

There is an internal relationship between Nature and Divinity. The ocean, the moon and man are inter-related. The ocean swells on Full Moon day. What is the connection between the ocean and the moon? The mind and the moon are inter-related. Without our being conscious of it, our minds are affected during Full Moon days. Mental afflictions are aggravated during those days. The scientist should develop an Integral approach towards Nature, Man and Spirit. Only then can he realise the underlying divinity that unites man and the cosmos.

Men today act upon what is stated in an almanac. But when the Vedas declare "Tat Twam Asi" ("That Thou Art") they are not prepared to believe in it. Men who are prepared to believe in some tale in a newspaper or a novel, will not believe in the Vedic pronouncement of their inherent divinity.

Many scientific inventions are extremely useful to man. But if they are not properly used, they can cause great harm.

For instance, Television can be a valuable means of educating and entertaining people. But how is it being used today? As soon as a boy returns from school, he throws away his books and starts looking at the TV. His mother serves him food near the TV set. Both mother and son keep watching the TV without regard to their other duties. Several hours of precious time are wasted in watching the TV. The fault lies not with television, but with the excessive and wrongful use of the instrument. It is like a knife which can be used for slicing vegetables or stabbing a person. It is only when science is linked to spirituality that the results of science can be fully harnessed for the good and the elevation of mankind.

—*Bhagavan's discourse in Bombay on 26-1-85*

Special Birthday Issue of "Sanathana Sarathi"

"Sanathana Sarathi" (November, 1985) will be a Homage Offering to Bhagavan on His sixtieth Birthday.

Contributions are invited from readers on the impact which the various aspects of the Avatar's Mission has made on their spiritual life; also on the experience they have gained by sharing in His Divine Plan to transform the process of education, to spiritualise Seva as Sadhana and to establish the unity of humanity on the basis of inherent Divinity, manifesting as Love.

Contributions, In English and Telugu, may please be restricted to a thousand words or less. They must reach the Editor, Sanathana Sarathi, Prasanthi Nilayam, Andhra Pradesh, India, Pin 515134, not later than 30th June, 1985.

Photographs that merit publication such as those that reveal His Glory are welcome.

—*Editor*

H. P. Government Goes Ahead

The Government of Himachal Pradesh has decided to introduce Education in Human values in all the schools of Himachal Pradesh from 1985. In this connection a meeting was held on 6th February 1985 in the office of Mr. M. K. Kaw, IAS, Commissioner-cum-Secretary, along with other officials. Dr. S. N. Saraf, Sri Sanjeev Choudhry and Prof. Shyam Sunder were invited to attend the meeting to assist the Government In the implementation of the EHV programme in Himachal Pradesh.

The entire scheme and the procedure for its implementation were explained to the officials who were highly appreciative of the programme and were keen to introduce it at the earliest. The following action plan has been drawn up for the State: Training of Key level persons; training of field workers/educators/teachers; implementation in the field; preparation of reading and learning material; educating students In the school and educating the neighbourhood/society through the students.

To begin with two key-level-persons training courses will be held in Simla by the Government in which the resources personnel for education will be provided by Sri Sathya Sai Education in Human Values Trust. The first course will be held for all District Education Officers, Deputy DEOs, Teacher Educators from 16th April to 22nd April. The second course for all Block Education Officers will be held in May in Simla.

The Government has agreed to send one hundred teachers to Prasanthi Nilayam to attend the teachers' rally on June 1 and 2, 1985.

Education confers humility, endows one with the authority to command; that will entitle him to affluence. With the help of this affluence, charity and compassion can be made fruitful, and by this means, happiness in this world and peace in the next can be won. Education is thus a great constructive force for mankind. But, reformers and reconstructionists have tinkered so much with the process of education that it has now been reduced to a caricature of itself. The effectiveness of the educational system, and the boons it could confer on man have been ignored and neglected; the name is now given to the art of collecting information of the objective world.

—Baba

"Love be my name"

Love is a sacred mystery, beyond words and explanations. Startling today, my inner feelings will be my names. If men see in me egoism, insensibility or bad habits, my name won't be Love. If misfortune takes over my being grieving will be useless. For this reason, my names won't be the same as before. From now on they will match my inner state.

Something very strange happened to my Self, and I am no longer happy with my previous names. I am reborn, and I wish to be christened Love. In reality, I want to be Love itself. How will I reach this state? Simply by listening to the clear and comforting voices coming from within my soul.

I will start with one letter at a time, making a new life for myself. With determination and faith, four simple letters will make of me a new and wise man. I will be loving every day, from dawn to dusk.

It's easy to love those who love us. From now on, however, I will be loving all beings in nature, without discrimination.

I will love the light because it guides me. I will love the darkness which shows me the smiling stars. I will love the sun because it heats my bones. I will love the rain which purifies my spirit. I will love the birds that show my hidden freedom. I will love the cows, for they are my second mother. I will love the dogs for their fidelity. I will love the cats for their detachment. I will love all men for their hidden Divinity. I will love the kings as human beings. I will love the humble people, because they are Divine. I will love the ambitious, because they inspire me. I will love the failed, who can teach me. I will love young people for clinging to their faith. I will love old people for their wisdom. I will love the wealthy for their loneliness. I will love the paupers, for they are many. I will love the liars and the Ignorant, because they live deceived. I will love those who speak the truth for they are wise. I will love the egoists, for they never knew the pleasure of sharing. I will love those who share for their infinite love. I will love the wicked, who will never have inner peace. I will love everyone equally. There will be room for all in my soul, because my name is Love now and my Love is big enough. I will confront the people with my effective weapon, Love. They may hate me, disapprove my way of being, dressing, or even speaking. Still, I will look at them with fixed eyes and say, "I love You." In the same way the sun beats the

coldest stone, my Love will then melt their hearts. Nobody can resist my secret weapon, since it is more powerful than any nuclear weapon. I would never sell it for all the gold in this world.

I will pray the Lord that Love be my name. I will pray always for everyone; I love all humanity now. From now on hate must be bled from my veins, because I have no time to hate, I have time only to love.

It is important that I love myself. I will take special care of everything entering my body, mind, heart and soul. I won't take in elements which may desecrate the temple of my body. I have to respect it; God lives there. I won't let bad thoughts into my mind, nor will I perform bad actions, nor will I allow my heart to be reduced or made small. Even If the world turns against me, I would rather share, so my Love will be revealed. No, I will never allow my soul to be satiated. I will always feed it with prayer and meditation.

Thinking this over now, I am aware that even if I have been denied many or all gifts of nature, I can achieve success by means of my powerful weapon: LOVE.

I am making a Solemn Oath today: I will not allow the formation of my new name to be interrupted for any reason. If I go on like this and reach my objective, I will realize all these hopes in this life, through the wisdom of the years. Then I will walk proud among men because I won't have the names I used to. A great miracle has occurred within myself

"My new name is LOVE."

—*Ambrogio Vittodini (Rome)*

The above article was written during the writer's stay in Prasanthi Nilayam in March 1985. Ed.

EHV ON THE MARCH:

National Workshop Spells out New Setup

December 30 and 31 were red-letter days for the programme of Education in Human Values, when the first National Workshop was held in Prasanthi Nilayam in the presence of Bhagavan.

The workshop was convened with the objective of restructuring the administrative set-up of the EHV organisation to enable it to discharge effectively its overgrowing vistas of responsibility. It had also been necessitated by the fact that EHV has taken firm roots in all the States of India and the interplay of the Sai organisation with the Government machinery has substantially increased with this growth. The workshop was attended by 39 members of the National Faculty (gurus) drawn from 18 states. Also present were the Trust members and EHV programme administrators from all these states.

The workshop was apprised of the new administrative structure and the role and responsibility of each agency in the new set up.

The Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas Education Trust has been rechristened as Sri Sathya Sai Education in Human Values Trust. It will continue to have two conveners at its apex and the conveners would be supported by an Adviser, a panel of experts, the National Faculty, the State Trust members and the Administrators in-charge in each state. The Adviser would be the link between the Government and other authorities on one side and the Trust on the other. Bhagavan has graciously nominated Dr. S. N. Saraf, former Educational Adviser to the Planning Commission, to act as Adviser. The Panel of experts will seek Bhagavan's guidance from time to time and work out the broad guidelines for implementation of the EHV programme. The National Faculty would constitute the core of the resource personnel for the academic part of the EHV programme. The Trust member in each state would continue to have the overall responsibility for the conduct of the programme in the State and would now be supported by an Administrator-in-charge in the State entrusted with the task of maintaining liaison and public relations.

The workshop went through an intensive and elaborate agenda during the two days. The three experts, Dr. S. N. Saraf, Prof. S. R. Rohidekar and Prof. V. Natarajan, spelt out the scope and dimensions of work and explained the new administrative framework. The Convener, Smt. K. Mani, explained the functional responsibilities. This was followed by theme presentations on Evaluation, Basic Human Values, and Teaching Techniques by Prof. Rohidekar, Sanjeev Chaudbry, Smt. Shanta Diwakar and Smt. Vatsala Acharya. On the second day the workshop went into three concurrent sessions with National Faculty, Trust members and Administrators conferring separately on their respective areas of work. The concluding plenary session was addressed by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the World Council, Mr. Indulal Shah and Mr. V. Srinivasan. The decisions of the workshop were also announced.

The crowning feature of the workshop was Bhagavan's inspiring discourse to the participants in the Mandir Hall.

DIVYA SANDESH:

Unity Key to Rural Progress

The ancient village of Nallathur, on the sacred banks of the Kusasthali River, was sanctified by the visit of Bhagavan Baba on February 2, when Swami declared open a number of buildings which had been constructed by the Sathya Sai Seva Samiti of Tiruthant in the village which had been "adopted" for all-round development.

A very large gathering of devotees and villagers from the surrounding areas had assembled from the morning for Bhagavan's darshan and benediction. Bhagavan was received with poornakumbham on arrival from Madras with Maj. Gen. Mahadevan, President of the Tamil Nadu Seva Organisation, Mr. T. G. Krishnamurti and others.

Bhagavan declared open the new building "Sri Sai Sundaram", in which a bhajan Mandir, a medical centre, a nursery and primary school and a village library will be run by the Sathya Sai

Bhajan Mandali of the village. The buildings were constructed by the joint efforts of the villagers and the Tiruthani Sathya Sai Seva Samiti. Bhagavan unfurled the Sai flag and blessed the Bal Vikas children and the children of the nursery and primary school.

Sri Raghavulu, Chairman of the Tiruthani Samiti, led Bhagavan to the tastefully decorated dais. Sri T. G. Krishnamurthi, Convener of the Tamil Nadu Sathya Sai Trust, welcomed Bhagavan and requested Him to give His divine message to the gathering.

Bhagavan began His discourse with a reference to the importance of "Samskaras" (right actions) in making human life meaningful and edifying. The goal of man is to realise the divinity that is in him. This can be achieved only by getting rid of all bad qualities and filling one's mind and heart with love and compassion. "Love is God and God is Love." A life without love is sterile and barren. Whatever one's difficulties or troubles, one should try to help others to the extent possible. Selfless, loving service to others is the highest form of sadhana. It represents true devotion-Bhakti. Such Bhakti is not affected by the reverses of fortune or changes in circumstances. One should not be concerned only about one's own welfare, career, and prosperity. It is not for the enjoyment of personal possessions and comforts that man has taken birth. He has a greater goal to achieve, something more permanent and lasting. It is the realisation of oneness with the Divine, which alone can give lasting bliss. Even while being engaged in the activities of the secular world, we should strive to sanctify all actions by dedicating them to the Divine.

Calling for unity and harmony among, the villagers in the reconstruction of their social life, Bhagavan said:

"Look upon each other as brothers and sisters and develop the sense of unity. Just as all the fingers in a hand combine to work together all the individuals in the village should combine to strive in unison for the welfare of the village and the progress of the nation. Petty differences over minor matters should not be allowed to create divisions amongst them. By recognising the divinity that is in everyone, they should come together and act as one, whatever their differences may be. For people consuming Rajasic food, it may not be easy to control anger or passion. But such feelings should not be allowed to grow into hatred and bitterness. There are in Bharat more than 70 crores of people. If all of them were to feel as one and act as one what is it that cannot be achieved by them? Unfortunately there is no unity amongst them. If four persons in a house have four different opinions, how can they achieve anything? Without unity, we cannot have either peace or happiness. Life will be meaningless like that of jackals and dogs.

You have been waiting in the hot sun for my arrival. It shows your devotion to me and your yearning to see me and listen to me. The patience with which you have borne the heat of the sun is a form of Tapas (penance) which you have performed out of your love. Your yearning for Swami and the joy I have given by my visit and address represent real unity of spirit. There is no use in mere talk about unity. There must be heart-to-heart unity based on mutual love. Promote love. Wake up with love. Do every act with love. Love in different contexts is called by different names. The love between a husband and wife is called Moham (fascination). The love between a mother and children is known as Vatsalyam (maternal affection). The love of relatives and friends is described as Anuraga (mutual regard). The love of God is described as Bhakti.

Although these forms of love are described differently, essentially love is one, divine in its essence. Love of anyone is a recognition of the divinity in everyone. When we become conscious of the omnipresence of divinity, our thoughts, speech and actions will become pure. We will not use offensive language against anyone or think of causing harm to anyone.

Engage yourselves in social service for the uplift of your village. Banish all differences and unite in the cause of promoting the welfare of everyone in the village. When the villages grow, the cities and the States grow and the nation as a whole prospers. The progress of the nation is based upon the progress of the villages. Everyone should be interested in the welfare of the villages.

What has been done in your village so far is gratifying, but much more remains to be done. You will have my blessings and support for all your undertakings in a spirit of service and dedication. After the day's labours everyone of you should devote some time to thoughts of God and to purify your hearts by sacred actions. From today you must cultivate unity of spirit and work harmoniously for the prosperity and progress of your village. You have the assurance that the Sai Organisation and Sai Sevaks will help you in every way.

AMRITA DHARA:

"Practise What You Learn"

In an address to the Study Circle for industrial workers at Santhi Deep, Dharmakshetra, Bombay, on January 30, Bhagavan said

A study circle does not mean only just reading and discussing and taking Information into the head, but also putting into practice what is learnt. If knowledge is stored in the mind, it causes confusion and confusion leads to blowing of the fuse. How will real jnana develop if there is too much confusion? For instance, if you go on eating all the 24 hours, it will result in indigestion. This will lead to disease. What is eaten should be digested and then only you should eat again. In the same way, you should listen (eat) in the Study Circle and put into practice (digest) what you have learnt. Again you can have another round of listening in the Study Circle. Now what you are doing is only loading and loading and no unloading. How much can you sustain like that? So, you should go on loading and unloading, listening and practising. You have to practise whatever is learnt. Then only it becomes a real Study Circle.

In the Study Circle, whatever we listen and assimilate in the mind should be distributed to others. In that way we show gratitude for what we have received. We should not listen and keep it with us only for our benefit. Whatever we hear and practise should also be distributed to society at large. Such gratitude is very important for man. If one does not have gratitude, he leads the life of an animal. Even a dog shows gratitude if you give a little rice. In the Sathya Sai Organisation, keeping this in mind, we should maintain unity and help the world. Other organisations may not know the inner meaning of this, but in our organisation we should know the inner meaning and practise it, otherwise it is of no use. You should therefore be an Ideal to others. In the Study Circle you can learn a lot of things, but the most important thing to be learnt

is your own true nature-your Atma-tatwa. Learning all about external things without knowing your real self is like studying the branches of a tree, ignoring its roots. There are many fruits on the tree. We can see the fruits. What happens if you water those fruits? They will fall down. But if you water the roots down below, the tree flourishes and will give fruits which can be enjoyed. You have to develop self-knowledge and self-confidence and then only you can help others.

SATSANG IN MILAN:

Sai Advent: Hope for Humanity

February 17th, the holy day of Shivaratri in India, became memorable to the people of Milan by the holding of the first public meeting of its kind in Italy, to present the message of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and explain the significance of His advent to a world divided by conflicts of every kind.

Unlike the Rome Conference of 1983, which was primarily a gathering of Sai devotees, the Milan meeting was open to members of the public and was attended by leading personalities from the spheres of art, culture, science and education. The meeting, sponsored by the Sathya Sai Organisation of Italy, was held in the prestigious Manzoni Theatre. Nearly 1500 people attended.

India's ambassador in Italy, Mr. Homi Talayar Khan, conveyed his greetings to the assembly, on behalf of India, and said that great Indian personalities like Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Mahatma Gandhi had emphasized the eternal verities in their lives and message. Bhagavan Baba's spiritual mission was of universal significance for the whole of mankind.

Mrs. Thrity Talayar Khan, who has been Baba's devotee for many years, spoke on the neglect of human values by modern youth, and pleaded for a complete change in the educational system, to bring about change in the character and conduct of students and their attitude to life.

Mr. Pio Russo, chairman of the Sai Coordinating Committee for South-Europe, introducing the guest speakers, said: "Experience of the sad story of mankind has not yet taught anyone that the salvation of man does not lie in economic or political nostrums, but In treading the path of Universal Love."

Prof. Antonio Alessandrini, professor of Italian and Latin at the 'Pacinotti' High school of Levanto, described the deplorable situation of youth today, who were caught up in a materialistic society, dominated by the ideas of Marx and Sartre. As against the negative influence of these thinkers, youth should be inspired by the ideals of the greatest figures in European literature like Rostand, Nietzsche, Pascal; Goethe and others.

Mrs. Sylvie Craxi spoke on 'Stridharma' and exhorted women to: "Make a temple of your home, become an example for the inspiration of your children and do your duty." "When woman refuses to do her duty and is unable to manifest her womanly qualities of patience and compassion and the spirit of sacrifice, the family, the nation and all of humanity are lost."

Baba and Jesus

Mr. Antonio Craxi, who delivered the concluding address, spoke on the theme: "Man needs God." Explaining the object of such meetings being organized by the Sathya Sai Organization, Mr. Craxi said: "They are meant to nourish our souls" by providing spiritual food to those sick in body and spirit. Sai Baba's mission is to reawaken man's consciousness to its divine nature, so that he may pursue goodness and realize the goal of this life.

Recalling an episode which happened during one of his journeys with Bhagavan Baba, he said: "Speaking of the unknown years of the life of Jesus Christ, I asked Him: 'Swami I Jesus passed most of His life in India. He must surely have been more Hindu than any Indian!' 'No', He replied quickly, 'Jesus never made such distinctions! Only man existed for Him. Humanity was His objective' and added: "Then, as it is now!"

Mr. Craxi added: "The two personalities, although identical in their divine nature, appear in two different aspects: While Jesus Christ's birth and life were an 'ascent' towards the Highest Goal of human incarnation, that is, the highest spiritual level which man can reach, in the case of Sathya Sai Baba, His birth is a 'descent' of God on earth, with all His powers. In nature, the two personalities are perfectly identical; One 'rises' and the other 'descends', their meeting point is the manifestation of God's plenitude amongst men. What is the difference between 'ascent' and 'descent', if the plane one must reach is the same? There is no difference! The mission of Sathya Sai is called the 're-establishment of Dharma'. It is a huge task which only a divine being and no one else could carry out! Only God can save humanity, no man can ever do it!"

Man and God

Mr. Craxi said: "Today, it is difficult to find a true man! Swami says that a true man is he who is pure in mind and body. The demon, on the other hand, is he who has let himself be invaded by the Internal enemies such as lust, anger, envy and jealousy, and who manifests these negative qualities. Why, we ask ourselves, has man forgotten his true nature? Because he looks for that which does not exist, the transitory, and not for the permanent and the ever-lasting. He has let himself be deceived by his senses. He has forgotten God and has deceived himself with the world. But man cannot live without God! God and man are Inextricably linked together. That which God has united, and is one forever and ever, cannot be separated by man's distorted vision. What must be done is to correct such a vision and learn to see unity in diversity."

"Men live on earth in order to learn, first of all, the art of being human, and then, to learn the art of being divine. Seen this way, life is a marvellous adventure, where man's every action, every thought and every word can manifest the Divinity which is latent in him. The harmony of creation is within the man who has reached the highest peaks of spiritual wisdom and which is then manifested through his words, thoughts and actions; God is within man's reach. It is said that God is as near man as his ears are to his eyes. The eye cannot see Him, but He is there, and He listens..."

"Only God can redeem man, only in God is his salvation, only in God will man find his true happiness! Man needs God! Many people ask: 'If God is present on earth, why does He do nothing to get rid of evils such as hunger, famine, illness and some say, even death?' He (Baba)

told us: 'I have not come to take these things away, but rather to teach you the way to face them. There is no effect without a cause. The egoism of man is the cause of all your evils'.

"The law of karma, or action-consequence, operates ruthlessly in every action, with its result, in every thought with its vibration, in every word, with its echo or resound. Do not blame God and His laws, which are perfect, but those who infringe them! Swami said: 'Mother Nature is perfectly able to nourish all Her children'. Resources are not lacking, only man's egoism is responsible for the huge plague that is hunger which stares in the eyes of people of the so-called 'underdeveloped' countries, with a tremendous accusation which makes us feel ashamed of ourselves. It would be enough, said Bhagavan, if the great nations stop their senseless race towards armaments, the stupid and useless conquest of space, to re-establish the equilibrium."

Educational Reform

About education, Mr. Craxi said, "Modern education informs but it does not transform and the most important aspects of education are being neglected. Many youngsters today are addicted to alcohol, narcotic drugs and other bad habits, thus wasting their lives. After having given their youth to the Devil, they look like old men, tired and without any energy left in the body, awaiting without hope for their physical death, because the moral death has already taken place! Why all this? Because adults have not been able to bring them up properly. The new generations must be prepared for a moral life, first of all, within the family, and then, at school. We shall then see the dawn of the new era."

About charity he said: "Have you ever asked yourselves why, despite the existence of so many 'charitable' Institutions and the existence of a modern welfare state, which can Intervene even In the smallest and remotest area, there still exist so many people who suffer from so much violence and so much moral and material poverty? The reason lies in the complete lack of love, of truth, of dharma, in the service offered. The United States of America have recently made a grant to the United Nations, an enormous sum of dollars, in order to meet the needs of the African continent. But In the case of hunger, disease, natural catastrophes and epidemics, if God's power is not within us, if there is no love and no 'dharma' behind that money, nothing will be achieved with it, and It will simply create new problems instead of solving them."

Speaking about politics, Mr. Craxi said: "Politics have now penetrated every aspect of social life. They follow us everywhere. I would even dare to say that they persecute us: in Parliament, in the schools, in the homes, in economic relations, in sciences, in culture, in religion, and so forth! We ask ourselves: 'Why is this?' The reason is that everything is reduced to a problem of money, and the power to be able to make money! There is nothing divine in that! For this very reason, Swami used to say: "Where there is politics, God does not exist."

The Power of God

Concluding his address, Mr. Craxi said: "Brothers and sisters! We are living in a historic period in which the power of God visibly manifests itself to help man in his search, to resolve his doubts, and to smooth the path which leads to Him. Jesus' fame spread around the then-known world only after His death, but today, luckily for us, Sathya Sai Baba will live for a long time, and His fame will spread amongst people of all continents while He is still living. We shall assist at His triumph over evil."

When the meeting concluded with the singing of "Jaya Jagadisa Hare!" and the offering of 'Arati' to Bhagavan by Mr. Craxi, many in the audience, who had been deeply moved by the solemnity of the occasion, were in tears over their ineffable experience.

Sai Family News

SAI SERVICE CENTRE IN BANGALORE

Bangalore: Sai service activities in Bangalore City and the surrounding areas will get a new fillip from the opening of the "Sri Sathya Sai Service Centre" at 43/30, Promenade Road, Cleveland town (Bangalore 5). The Centre is housed in a three-storeyed building, with provision for running a medical centre on the ground floor, a library and Sai literature bookstall on the first floor and a bhajan and meeting hall on the second floor. The Centre has started functioning from January 20. Mr. C. Srinivas, Convener of the Bangalore Seva Dal, is in charge. Information about all Sai activities will be available at the Centre. (Telephone No. 52555).

CHEER FOR THE HANDICAPPED

London: To celebrate Swami's 59th Birthday nearly 45 handicapped children from four different Homes in Wembley area were invited to a party which was specially arranged for them. The children arrived under the supervision of their teachers and social workers. They were entertained by Bal Vikas children who performed a Garba dance. This was followed by games and a dance competition in which all the children and their teachers and social workers took part. Two cakes with the Prasanthi Symbol engraved on them were arranged for the occasion and two of the invited children had the privilege of cutting the cakes which were later distributed along with the food brought by Sai volunteers. The food was enjoyed by all of them despite the fact that most of the children had never tasted Indian food before. Short Video films of Swami were shown. The party concluded with English Bhajans and also some popular English songs specially sung for the guests. At the time of their departure each child was given a small gift.

LONDON SEMINAR ON EHV

London: A three-day international seminar on Education in Human Values was held in London from March 29 to 31, 1985. The Sai Family in the United Kingdom has been active in the promotion of the Bal Vikas movement and the programme of Education in Human Values. The London seminar will help interested educationists and Sai devotees from various countries to learn about the British experience and examine how it can be applied in their own countries.

SAI MOVEMENT IN EL SALVADOR

Over four hundred Sai devotees from various parts of El Salvador (in Central America) attended the first public meeting to be held in the country to bring Bhagavan's message to spiritual aspirants. Dr. Michael Goldstein (U.S.) and Dr. Luis Muniz (from Mexico) addressed the meeting as guest speakers. George Teague opened the meeting with an exposition of Bhagavan's message regarding the process of self-enquiry ("Who am I?"). Dr. Muniz followed with an explanation of the disciplines needed for a spiritual life as Indicated by Bhagavan.

Michael Angel Aquino explained the Sai programme of education in human values and its relevance to El Salvador. Dr. Goldstein read a Spanish version of Swami's message to American devotees. The film "Universal Teacher" dubbed in Spanish was screened on the occasion. The meeting concluded with the singing of a bhajan in Spanish.

Following the meeting, a coordinating committee has been set up for overseeing Sai activities in El Salvador, with Mr. John Behner as President.

SINGAPORE CENTRE'S PROJECTS

Singapore: As part of Bhagavan's 60th birthday celebrations programme during this year, four Sai centres in Singapore have arranged joint bhajan sessions, of which the first was held on February 9 in the Khalsa Association Hall, Singapore. Devotees and friends numbering over a thousand attended, including a large number of Chinese. A four-page brochure entitled "The Devotee," was released on the occasion. The pamphlet emphasised Bhagavan's message of love and unity of people of all faiths and nations. Sai devotees in Singapore have set up Project committees to plan activities in Bhajans, seva exhibitions and talks during the coming months. For 23rd November a major assembly of Sai devotees has been planned in the Singapore Conference Hall, where a seminar, a spiritual Book Display and Exhibition will be held.

—*L.R., Singapore*

TRAINING CAMP IN M. P.

Sagar (Madhya Pradesh): A four-day training course for Bal Vikas gurus, on the lines of the new syllabus, was conducted at Sagar from January 12 to 15. Dr. M. B. Malhotra, Vice Chancellor of Sagar University, said that the Bal Vikas programme was designed to remedy a serious defect in the present educational system, namely the building up of the character of the children. In all 92 persons attended the course, including 52 who were receiving the training for the first time.

—*S. P. S., Bhopal.*

STUDY CIRCLES IN KERALA

Alwaye (Kerala): The Study Circle wing of the Sathya Sai Organisation in Kerala held during 1984 a number of sadhana camps, organised seminars for the public, ran several two-day mini-courses in spirituality and culture for college students, besides essay and elocution competitions, and started study circles specially for college students. Altogether 2000 students attended the mini-courses. Many principals have shown active interest in this programme.

Prema is filial piety when directed towards the parents, companionship when it flows towards friends, love when it is felt towards the partner, respect when it moves one towards elders and affection when you are drawn towards children: Bhakthi affects your acts in three forms: you do some acts consciously in order to demonstrate your love or to give vent to the Prema that animates you; you do acts as dedicated offerings to enhance the glory of the Lord, in a spirit of worshipful humility, as if you are laying at His feet all that you are and all that you are capable of; and you do acts which are full of Prema towards all as part of your mere existence, automatically, without any tinge of self or whiff of violence upsetting the performance of the act. The dedicated act leads on to all activity being dedication; the Ananda makes you feel that your effort has been worth-while. That is the end, the aim, the inspiration.

—Baba

The Artist and the Miracle

After a decade of intensive training under Guru Kalyanasundaram of Sri Rajarajeswari Bharat Natya Mandir, Gowri appeared for her "arangetram" in 1979 at the Shanmukhananda Sabha Hall in Bombay. Discerning lovers of the art blessed her with a bright future in her career. Gowri went from strength to strength. She danced at Bombay, Bangalore, Ahmedabad, etc. She was a member of the troupe which toured Nepal under the aegis of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. Finally she participated in Bharat Natya Presentation at the Asiad. It was hard work and training all the time. Challenging, of course, exciting all the same. She was busy with practice for the ensuing dance programme at Ambernath on 23rd December 1982.

And then tragedy struck her on 21st December 1982. It was a simple muscle cramp, the doctors said. She should be back on her feet on 23rd, to dance. Alas! Little did anyone realise the vicious and stunning blow fate dealt her. For almost fourteen agonising months, she was felled by an unknown and unidentified disease. She was bent and bed-ridden. The painful cramps laid her low. She could neither sit nor bend. Kindly medical experts visited her, suggested elaborate examinations and prescribed more medicines. Months rolled by. No signs of relief were seen. The Guru and the parents were distraught with grief.

And then, with equally stunning impact came the Love and Grace of God. By the end of 1983, several kindly devotees of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba happened to visit Gowri to help her. From then onwards, Sai seemed to take over her case. Books, Bhajans and blessings flooded in. Swami's Vibhuti Prasad started playing its "leelas" when excruciating pains vanished on its application.

In February 1984, the great pilgrimage to Prasanthi Nilayam started. Gowri and her parents were finally at His Lotus Feet. He poured His Love and Grace on her. By a sheer glance, He just cured her. All trace of illness and agony just vanished. After fourteen months, she bent and bowed to His feet completely. And, then just squatted on the floor at the Bhajan session. It was a miracle of Love and Grace of God. The overwhelming experience moved everyone around and thousands of others. The prayers of her Guru and many others ended in this grand finale.

Today, Gowri is back on the stage. The real miracle, in fact, is the total surrender of all actions to God. At least the effort to do so. Naturally, the first performance was dedicated to the Lord, Guruvayurappan, in October 1984.

May the Grace of Sri Sathya Sai be on everyone.

—V. V. Rao

The Circle of Life

MAN—

Starting out as an atom,
An infinitesimal particle of energy,
Following one of the great
Laws of the Universe—
That of attraction and repulsion-he
Finally becomes a moneron;
A mere speck of protoplasm,
But with all the properties
To begin that great journey of life;
And to keep evolving ever upwards,
Until he has reached the zenith
Of all Evolution-the Miracle of Man,
Equipped with all the means
To reach that highest pinnacle—
OF GODHOOD.

But the road is rocky
With its many ups and downs.
Not once, but perhaps, millions of times,
Must be return to continue
That arduous climb with its many pitfalls,
As well as fleeting joys,
That never endure-until the day comes
When he begins his search to find out
Who he really is.

"Who am I?" he wants to know. Ah!
He is beginning to wonder about
The struggle, the strife and the strain,
Which brings little happiness,
And oh, so much pain. Never before
Did he question the why's and
Wherefore's of this panorama of Life
That subsists on Life, nor listen
To the Wise who say that **NOTHING EVER DIES.**

Then, one day, the answer came,
At long last,

From somewhere inside.

"Don't look elsewhere-outside,

For what you are seeking is "I"
Right there inside, and there
Within, is where "I" abide."

Well, it's true. He did think that
God was up there—somewhere.
But the Voice, could it be true
That HE was there—INSIDE?
He thought he'd try and
Seek HIM there, but how?

He began searching and found that
There were many, ever so many,
Books that revealed that
God was not a being like
You, nor me I
HE was the SPIRIT, the LIFE FORCE.

That made you BE. The body,
The flesh, skin, blood and bone,
Keeps being born, lives and `dies',
Only to be FOOD for others
In that Incessant, upward struggle
To ETERNITY!

He found the secret (to think about
HIM deep inside) and to keep
Everything else OUTSIDE, which
Is *not* easy to do,
For the mind is very clever
And wants its way,
To cater to the senses and
To give them full play!

This took some time—until
One day he began to
Enjoy the quiet rest
That came his way.
Oh, what joy! What peace there was!
Sitting, relaxed, without care,
Without thought of becoming ensnared
By the `Sensory Generals' of
This `Super-Sensory' World,
His whole being became
Centered In God. Even his work
And his play included HIM, too;

For he came to realize that
ALL IS ONLY GOD.

What can this finite body of bones
And flesh do by itself?
It cannot see; it cannot hear;
It cannot speak nor move
WITHOUT that LIGHT within.
It cannot even claim any property
Or kin-for ALL belongs to HIM.

This he learned and much more.
Everything in the Universe
Is a circle, for all Life
Begins in HIM, from the smallest
Atom to the greatest Universe.
NOTHING IS DEAD!
The infinitely small atom, the plant,
The insect, the bird, the animal
And man-all have to make the rounds
And return to HIM,
The SOURCE OF ALL, In this
CIRCLE OF LIFE!

—*M. C., California*

The Power of Prayer

In His birthday message on November 23 last year, Bhagavan called upon Sai devotees to include in their prayers every day a prayer for the welfare of all beings in the Cosmos. "Loka Samastha Sukhino Bhavantu". This Vedic prayer "May all the worlds be happy" was commended by Bhagavan for daily invocation. Since then, Sai devotees all over the world conclude their bhajan sessions with this prayer.

The ancient seers in all countries recognised the value of prayer. And now comes evidence from the country, which has apotheosised science and technology, that even the power of prayer and meditation can be scientifically tested and verified.

Mr. Ron Laing, writing in the latest issue of the Sai quarterly magazine published from London, reports about an experiment "made in the small state of Rhode Island in the United States." Mr. Laing says: There have been specialists in mind power (or prayer) throughout the ages in the world's monasteries, of whatever denomination. Few people realise the beneficial effect this has had; without it the world would probably be in a far worse plight than it is. Monks are not escapists as some people think; they are performing a very necessary and useful service.

An experiment made in the small state of Rhode Island in the United States confirms this. A group of 300 volunteers, practised in meditation, set out to improve the quality of life in this tiny state. They divided themselves into 75 groups of four, and spread themselves out across the state. From June 12th to September 12th, 1978 each group meditated for an hour twice a day. The effect was startling. The suicide rate dropped by 45%, traffic deaths fell by 48% and, most sensational of all, the murder rate plunged by no less than 53%. Total deaths fell by 11%.

The National Weather Service reported that there were 10% more sunny days than in 1977. Admittedly this latter statistic is not significant. A mere 10% improvement in the weather could be accounted for by the ordinary vagaries of weather, but when the incidence of murder, suicide, and road fatalities fall by near 50% it is surely conclusive evidence of the power of prayer when properly applied. By this I do not mean the senseless and sterile repetition practised by orthodox religion, but the concerted power of will and mind by experienced practitioners of meditation.

Walter Zimmerman, who researched the experiment, said, "Little did we know what the results would be. The experiment proves conclusively that the human mind does possess amazing powers. It shows that the lives of every human being in the country can take a dramatic turn for the better. With meditation alone we have improved the quality of life in this State. We've created harmony."

John Tierney, deputy director of health for Rhode Island, said, 'The statistics are startling, I cannot think of any explanation, other than the effect of meditation, for these remarkable reductions'.

Dr. Alex Burgess, chief of the office of data evaluation for the Rhode Island Department of Health, said, "I am fully aware that there are some important effects in the relaxation response of meditation." While Dr. Ronald Gatty, statistician and professor of marketing at the City University of New York, added, "As a statistician I am deeply impressed. There appears to be a definite link between the meditation experiment in Rhode Island and the dramatic decrease in traffic fatalities, suicide, and murder in the State and I am speaking as a scientist, not as a man with any particular interest in meditation."

And finally, from Dr. Carrington, lecturer in psychology at Princeton University, 'Meditation has a tremendously calming effect on people. The technique is so powerful that the peaceful, gentle feelings it creates can be passed on to other people. It is being taken more and more seriously by the medical profession.'

For the first time, in modern America, an experiment has been conducted with scientific data, which should act as a source of inspiration to all those men and women of goodwill who wish to use their prayers or psychic powers to good effect. Imagine if the 4 billion population of the world were capable of emulating the example of these 300 modern pioneers. We could transform this sad old world of ours into a Garden of Eden In half a century! This experiment should act as an encouragement to all those little 'beacons of Light'—groups sometimes of only two or three people (and there are far more in the world than most of us realise) who are trying to send out the Light and must sometimes despair of the seemingly puny effect of their efforts.

Sai Baba has recently confirmed the great importance of sending out the Light at a time when there is so much gloom, bad news, and negative thinking in the world. Its importance can scarcely be over-emphasized. It is an exercise which even the elderly and immobile could engage in.

"The Ultimate Nectar"

The influence of Bhagavan is experienced by earnest spiritual seekers in a myriad different ways. In a recent book entitled "The Only Diet There Is" (published by Celestial Arts, Berkeley, California), one such experience is described by the author Sondra Ray, at the fag-end of the book. Calling it "The Ultimate Nectar", Sondra Ray writes:

"The week before I finished this book I was standing in Jody's kitchen in Seattle describing to Robert the most divine taste in the world. I had had it once in Paris and I was wishing I could give it to him. At that very moment, my good friend Michele came over and heard this conversation. She said she had some and did we wish her to get it? I could not believe my ears! It was a miracle.

There he was again, Sai Baba. The Elixir of Immortality materialized right out of his body. Nothing sweeter on earth had I ever tasted! The Essence of the Divine, and I could have MORE? I had thought that the time in Paris was an experience to be had once in a lifetime. But who was I to put such a limiting thought around the Divine? Here it was coming to me again and immediately upon my asking! I was very humbled. Could it really be the same?

I decided on a ceremony. I woke up everyone in the house. Jack agreed to sing and play music. I got Jody out of bed. When Michele returned, she began to sing chants of Sai Baba. We waited for the right moment. It was very holy, very holy indeed. She poured a drop into my hand. I said I hoped there was enough for everyone. How funny, now that I think of it, to say that of the Divine! My drop began to increase. It seemed alive. This Elixir of Immortality, Michele said, she had collected from a shrine in India where it dripped now and then out of his picture. I knew that what she said was true, even though I had never heard of the shrine before.

I licked the Elixir out of my palm. There could be no doubt. It was the same! One could never ever forget that taste, that moment. I licked it again. It increased until I had trouble believing what was happening. We were all speechless. We all melted into the floor. The others seemed to go into a deep stupor. Michele, who is my body therapist, began to massage my body. I could not feel a thing. I knew that my DNA was reorganizing. I knew my body was definitely going through a very big change. I knew that I had had total communion and I was forever blessed.

I can best describe that moment by sharing with you what I wrote to Sai Baba after that experience.

O, Sai Baba
I ate everything

But still hungered for God,
I drank everything
But still thirsted for God,
I touched everything
But still wanted to feel God,
I listened to everything
But I still wanted to hear God.
and then...
You came to me in Paris
three years ago,
You came to me again
In the volcano,
You came to me most recently in the
kitchen and many other times I did not
know.
I tasted your ash,
I drank your nectar,
And I was finally nourished
And I was finally satisfied.

The Way of Love

Bhagavan often refers to God as both Time and the Timeless (Kala and Kalatheetha). With His advent, it is clear that the Time-Spirit is at work transforming the consciousness of people in deferent ways. Here, for instance, is a poem by an English poet, Mary Crossberg, which reflects remarkably the quintessence of Bhagavan's teaching on the saving power of Love (Prema) as a divine quality

Think deeply, seeker, lifting thought above
This trammled Earth, to find the source of Love;
Love of mankind-love for the world, and more—
Not that self-centred Love you knew before....

Call, if you must, for help to find the way
And then be still, and if you need to, pray.
It will take time, but time is yours to spend
In treading that bright path if, at its end,
Is joy unending. Take your time and wait.
Think deeply, heart, and as you meditate
On all that Love means, do not count the cost
Or deem this patient time of waiting lost.

See clearly, seeker, set the self aside;

Cast off the time of selfishness and pride.
There are so many signposts on the way.
Lift up your eyes, and seek them, day by day.

Be grateful, seeker, that your ear has caught
The secret echo of the truth you sought.
'T's not the privilege of every man
So soon to sense the meaning of the Plan.
Go joyfully along your chosen way
Gladly and confidently greet each day
As one more opportunity to give
Of what you know and what you are. So live
That nothing man can do will change your mind,
Remembering that he who seeks shall find!

“What Can We Do?”

As devotees of our beloved Bhagavan, we aspire to *love God* with a pure heart, to *know God* and divine truth through the wisdom that comes from spiritual intuition, and to *serve God* faithfully and effectively. For this purpose Bhagavan has given his instructions to Sai centers all over the world to carry on a program of spiritual discipline, selfless service to mankind, Bal Vikas, Education in Human Values, study circle, meditation and bhajan. Through these programs, Bhagavan gives us solace, instruction and inspiration. He provides an environment that will nurture the spiritual growth of his devotees. As we grow, we develop the moral courage and the confidence to function in this world as instruments of Divine Will.

Sri Sathya Sai service organizations are distinct from all other organizations because our founder is the Lord Himself. When we do service, selfless service, it is the Lord within that is the server, and not the personality without. The objective of our work is to uplift ourselves and our fellow man to the pinnacle of joy, the ultimate of human potential, God consciousness.

Food to the hungry, medicine to the sick and comfort to the forlorn are not the end result of our service. When hunger is satiated, when disease is cured, when depression has abated, the recipient of the service that we have rendered will ask himself, "From whence does this goodness come?" If we have truly demonstrated brotherly love and compassion in rendering this service, then the recipient will know that he has been served by the Lord Himself. He will give thanks to God and ultimately seek the Lord within himself. This is "selfless service."

In addition to the alleviation of physical and psychological suffering, Sri Sathya Sai service organizations must deal with man's greatest affliction-ignorance of his own divine nature. We will address this problem by bringing the divine wisdom of Bhagavan Baba to peoples of all nations through Sai public meetings and the Education in Human Values programs.

If Bhagavan must tell us exactly what to do and how to do it, then we are servants of the Divine Household incapable of taking initiative. If Bhagavan shows us what must be done and we devise a means of accomplishing the goal, then we are children of the Divine Household and we grow and mature spiritually as we succeed in doing the Lord's work.

We, the devotees of Sai, the members of the Sri Sathya Sai service organizations, must ask ourselves these questions: WHAT CAN WE DO as members of the world Sai family to help the peoples of the earth realize their divine heritage? WHAT CAN WE DO as members of a national Sai organization to uphold the dharma of our land, to work within and change for the better the institutions of our society? WHAT CAN WE DO as members of the local Sai centers to improve the quality of life and uplift the consciousness of our communities? WHAT CAN WE DO as individual Sai devotees to inspire our family members, friends and every human being with whom we come in contact to look into their own hearts and find God? With Bhagavan's grace may we continue to seek answers to these questions until every human soul has merged with the Lord God.

(Dr. Michael Goldstein, Chairman, Sathya Sai American Service Organization)

What is Peace?

"What is Truth?" asked Jestin Pilate and would not wait for an answer. But an eight year-old girl in Britain, Michelle Rodgers, who was asked to write a few words on "PEACE", wrote as follows

What is peace? Peace is something quiet, not a noise, not a quarrel. Peace is very nice. It's something calm. No war. No fights. People who murder, that isn't peace.

Peace is love. Peace is gentle. Peace is not rough. Peace is when hands go together.

Peace is doing something quiet. Peace is not killing. Peace is playing. We should let animals have peace and freedom.

Peace is when Jesus was born. Peace is when children play and make new friends. It's wonderful.

(From the Spring, 1985, issue of the quarterly Magazine on Baba, published in London)

Contemporary Divinity

Greatly varied are the opinions about Sai Baba's divinity. Oh yes, he is a Great Teacher, a revered Master; he comes from Outer Space specifically to reestablish the spiritual Essence of India rather than to impinge his Presence upon the world ...he is the Cosmic Christ ...but he is not The One ...there is yet Another for whom millions continue to search.

To search is admirable, but surely care must be taken not to bypass that which is here and now. Did not Jesus of Nazareth suffer from the same contemporary dissidence? Is it ego that spurs man onto congratulate himself upon the wonders he has performed on earth, yet declines the possibility that the Universal Architect may well have timed to come among us to help us probe further the infinite power which is ours and conferred upon us by our Creator?

To me, the works and wonders of Sai Baba are the outer expression of the Christ Within. Man, in his search, is apt to forget that the eternal qualities of The Christ must first be established Within and from this blossoms a nobility of character willing and ready to accept that All men are One in the eyes of God.

Humanity continues to yearn for The Coming, but often fails to recognise He who has Come! Contemporary Divinity invariably meets with strenuous opposition in regard to nationality, station, and plain disbelief. Preconceived ideas may well blind us to God's preferences and plans.

Of course there will always be 'Another' because God sees to it that we have a God-man to guide us. But it may surely be our lack of comprehension of Celestial Timing that makes us ignore contemporary Divinity. At my age (in the over-seventies bracket) Sai Baba represents for me The Christ Within, and I accept his Advent within my particular Time zone; I am unlikely to see another in this lifetime, and am deeply grateful to have lived at the Time of an Avatar. For me, the Advent of Jesus some 2000 years ago in no way precludes the Reality of a contemporary Avatar.

Sai Baba, a man of miracles whose divinity is constantly revealed by 'his fruits'; nothing is hidden, all may investigate his works and his wonders. All may know his infinite love and bask in his wisdom.

The Embodiment of Love is truly with us. Let us revere the Here and Now. Let us give thanks that such a One walks among us.

—*Verity, Heralds of the New Age, Auckland, New Zealand*

Sai Family News

Delhi Sevaks' Meeting

A very fruitful meeting of workers of the Sathya Sai Seva Organization, Delhi, was held on 20th January at 12 Aurangzeb Lane, New Delhi, to take stock of the work done and consider the tasks ahead. It turned out to be the foggiest day of the year, but the miracle did happen once

again. Just about ten minutes before the start of the meeting, the sun smiled behind the fog and the warmth of Sai engulfed the whole area of 12 Aurangzeb Lane. Devotees out of their love for Bhagavan had not bothered about the weather and assembled in large numbers. Around 600 active brothers and sisters of the Sai family of Delhi were present.

After bhajans, the State President, Sri Kulwant Rai, spoke about the role of the organisation in the life of Delhi and emphasised that not only quantity but quality of work was very important.

Smt. Krishna Ghai, State Convenor, Mahila Vibhag, said that during this year the Mahila Vibhag should knit 1500 sweaters for distribution to needy people.

All Central Activity Conveners and Zonal Conveners gave reports of the work done and the targets for 1985. Everyone agreed that a lot of work had still to be done to cover the whole of Delhi.

It was emphasised that each bhajan centre must become a Sai Centre and have all spiritual and service activities in it. There must be a Bal Vikas class, a Study Circle class, First Aid Centre, Spiritual Library etc. and a Service Activities Centre attached to every Bhajan Centre.

SURFERS' PARADISE, QUEENSLAND (Australia)

The Sai centre here is "young but growing all the time," reports Mrs. J. P. Green from Queensland. "Since it was started, we have learnt so much about giving, helping and loving all those in need." Among the service activities of the members are help in transporting cancer patients to and from the hospital, assisting in providing "meals on wheels", counselling the aged and the lonely and collecting food for the Salvation Army.

IMPHAL (Manipur State)

Although Manipur State is in a disturbed condition and a recognised Sai centre has not been set up, a predominantly Nepalese colony in Manthripokri, a All age on the outskirts of Imphal, has a large number of Sai devotees, who have recently constructed a Mandir through their own efforts, with the blessings of Bhagavan. Some of the devotees had been to Prashanthi Nilayam and had secured the grace of Bhagavan. Besides conducting regular bhajans, they have been carrying out various seva activities. Thanks to their example, the Sai mesasge has spread to neighbouring villages like Kangla, Thumbi, Pokhao, Kalapahad, Mothing, Kangpopi, Chapkikorang and Moreh.

The new mandir at Manthripokrli—"Prashanthi Mandir"—was inaugurated on February 17th, when Mahasivarathri was celebrated with akhand bhajan.

—R. S. N.

The tree of Life has to be watered at the roots, but now, those who plan to raise the standard of living, water the branches, the leaves and the blossoms. The roots are the virtues; they have to be fostered, so that the flowers of action, words and thoughts may bloom in fragrance and yield the fruit of Seva, full of the sweet juice of Ananda. Planning for food, clothing and shelter is only promoting the well-being of the cart; plan also for the horse, the

mind of man which has to use the food, the clothing, the shelter and other material instruments for the high purpose of `escaping from the ego into the universal'.

—Baba

Delhi Teachers Meet Bhagavan

A team of eight officials from the Department of Education of Delhi Municipal Corporation visited Prasanthi Nilayam in March 1985 to report to Bhagavan on the progress which the programme of Education in Human Values had made in the Municipal schools of Delhi since 1981-82.

The Delhi Corporation runs over 1500 primary schools for over half a million children mainly coming from the weaker sections of society. The Corporation employs nearly 15,000 teachers. Since 1981 a number of courses have been organised by the Education Department with the active assistance of Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas Education Trust to train the Corporation teachers for introducing the Education in Human Values in all the primary schools in Delhi. In November 1984 Sri P. P. Srivastava, Commissioner of the Delhi Corporation, with officials of the Education Department called on Bhagavan Baba at Prasanthi Nilayam during the Convocation of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning and learnt from Baba how the basic universal human values are promoted in the Sathya Sai Educational Institutions.

The Delhi team, consisting of Sri L. C. Kaul, Dr. J. R. Dass, R. G. Arya, Horam and Mrs. Usha Vazze, Usha Chawla, Pushpa Sarana, and Km. Urmila Luthra, was received by Bhagavan on 20th and 21st March in exclusive Interviews in which Swami explained at length the need for imparting a spiritual content to the educational system to remedy the evils now prevailing in the system. The entire purpose of education must be to prepare the students for facing the challenges of life with courage and integrity.

Each Sai Centre—A Hand of God

The International Seva Dal Conference held in November 1984 at Prasanthi Nilayam had a stirring call for all the Sai Centres around the world. The message spelt the role of each Sai worker in the Divine Mission of the Avatar. The message was: "Each Sai Centre has to be a hand of God."

On an earlier occasion Bhagavan had explained the structure of the Sai Organisation with the example of the hand. The five fingers stood for five constituents of the Sai Organisation. The little finger represented the Bhajan group; the ring finger, Bal Vikas; the big finger, Seva Dal; the index finger, Mahila Vibhag; and the thumb stood for the Samiti with all its activities.

It is a matter of common understanding that no hand can function effectively even if one of the fingers does not co-operate. To ensure that the hand performs its stipulated function, all the fingers must act in unison and complement and promote each other's efforts.

Now Bhagavan has graciously added another dimension to this concept of 'hand' so as to make our understanding clearer. And that is that in this hand of Sai, the palm stands for the Human Values. We know that the programme of Education in Human Values underscores the paramount significance of five basic human values, viz., Truth, Righteous Conduct, Peace, Love and Non-violence, in the shaping of human personality and human excellence.

It is in this wider context that we have to reflect upon the role of each Sai Centre and the responsibility of each Sai worker.

The Centre has to become a generator and a 'power-house' from where the message and vibrations of human values spread in all directions. This essentially means that each of the five fingers co-operates and works in harmony without neglecting any other. But it also means that the origin and meeting point of all these five are the human values and that God represents the sum total of all these values.

At this juncture, the explicit responsibility of the Sai worker comes to the fore. The worker has to ceaselessly strive for imbibing these values. The very identity of a Sai devotee lies in the manifestation, through thought, word and deed, of these values. It is only when this is achieved that the power of Sai would flow through us and we would become instruments of this divine mission. Every departure from the framework of human values is a step farther from God. In fact, spiritual development is nothing but internalisation of these values.

The time has come when we must put our ear to the ground and listen to the clarion call of the Divine: "I expect each Sai worker to have unimpeachable standard of integrity in public and private life." In times to come, nothing short of this would be acceptable to Sai. It is for this reason that we have formed ourselves into this Organisation. When we prefix the name of Sai to this Organisation, we must ensure that nothing unworthy of the excellence and perfection attributed to divinity is done.

A hand of God is the hand that serves, the hand that gives, the hand that comforts and the hand that shows the right way.

The hand represents the thought, the motive and the action of the body. Thus when Bhagavan wants each Centre to be His hand, it clearly means that every Sai devotee has to rise to the level of spiritual eminence where his hand also becomes the hand of God.

In this year of the sixtieth birthday of the advent it is absolutely imperative that we realise the urgency of the call and dedicate our every breath to self-improvement through Seva sadhana. Then alone, we would be worthy of the love that transforms an individual into an instrument of God.

—*Sanjeev K. Chaudhry*

H. P. Government Committed to Value Education

"The Himachal Government is committed to the introduction of value education in all its schools," declared Sri Virabhadra Singh, Chief Minister, Himachal Pradesh, inaugurating an Orientation Course-cum-Workshop on Education in Human Values for key-level personnel and teacher-educators on April 8 at the HIPA Campus, Simla.

The workshop was organised jointly by the State's Department of Education and the Sathya Sai Education in Human Values Trust.

Sri Virabhadra Singh, in the course of his address, said:

There was a time when 'secularism' in education denoted the absence of moral, spiritual and value-oriented education from our curriculum. Over the years, it has been realized that the non-exposure of students to the higher values of life creates a gap in their thinking. Nurtured on the Darwinian hypothesis of 'nature red in tooth and claw' and the survival of the fittest, they look upon the world as a battlefield. They sharpen their faculties of scheming, backbiting, intrigue, duplicity and double-think. They forget that a human being is more than a mere body, and allow the springs of emotion and spirituality to dry up.

Fortunately for us, there is now an emerging consensus about the need for value education. There is no longer a taboo on the imparting of religious instruction in schools. The Central Government has taken the initiative by holding conferences on value education and State Governments are also exhibiting a keenness to include value education as part of the school curriculum. The debate now is not on whether to introduce value education, but on the modalities of introduction.

India has right from the days of our Vedic seers, expressed the view that Truth is one and sages describe it differently. In modern times, great saints like Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and Sathya Sai Baba have emphasized the unity of all religions. The message of all incarnations and prophets is one and the same, although their language is at times a bit different. The goal of life is not the mere pursuit of pleasure. There is a divine force which permeates the entire universe, including ourselves. It is possible to 'see' this force through a constant training of the mind, which may be done by any technique of self-discipline, be it fasting, ritual, worship, meditation or prayer. One can establish a relationship between the individual soul and the universal soul that loosens the bonds of the body-mind-intellect sheaths and leads to liberation of the soul. The soul recognizes itself as a part of the Universal Soul. This banishes fear, hatred, envy, jealousy, anger and violence from the mind. The attempt of all religions is to purge the mind of man of all such impurities, and transform it into a polished mirror in which he can gaze at the Infinite.

How the vast fund of wisdom contained in the world's numerous religions is to be distilled into an essence which is capable of being imbibed by the students in moderate doses is a subject on which experts will deliberate. To my mind, what children require is not the direct message of 'Do this' or 'Don't do that' but a subtle imperceptible seeping in of behavioral attitudes, intellectual approaches and emotional responses. They have to learn that the world is nothing but

the body of God and everything down to the lowliest blade of grass is sacred. They should accept the notion that God is immanent in everything and perceive Him not as an outside Big Brother keeping dreadful watch on them but as their inner consciousness which can be made eternally alert to maintain a self-controlling vigil. They should indirectly feel that differences of colour, race, religion, caste and community are but skin deep, and our real personalities are nothing but fragments of a single Person who is our mother and our father. They should realize that the world is not a madhouse, but a place with rigidly laid down rules which one infringes at one's peril; that there is a deeper drama of justice being played behind the seeming facade of foul play; and that honesty is still the best policy.

All this is a tall order. Even adults have difficulty in understanding the simple truths of spirituality. But this is because, having been conditioned in separatist belief, they have to unlearn untruths before they can grasp the gospel of unity and brotherhood and love. For children, the learning process should be easier.

Orientation of teachers

The Himachal Government is committed to the introduction of value education in all its schools. I am informed that some steps have already been initiated in this direction. Some meetings have been held to decide the manner in which value education will be brought into the school curriculum. Based on these, it has been felt that there is no need to overload the students with yet another examining subject. Value education will be imparted wherever the opportunity arises in the course of instruction in the prescribed syllabi. However, there will be a massive attempt at re-orientation of teachers so that they know what value education is and learn the substance and techniques of what they have to impart. This process has been initiated today with this workshop. In June next, 50 selected teachers will be sent for attending a Conference at Puttaparthi. A guidebook for teachers has already been drafted and is receiving the final touches at the State Council of Educational Research and Training, Solan. Orientation courses will be held at district headquarters, so as to spread the message. Value education is being included in the syllabus for the B. Ed. courses being run at the H.P. University, Simla, and College of Education, Dharamasala, as also for the JBT courses being run in five Basic Training Schools. 1985-86 will thus be a preparatory phase, and it is hoped that over the years value education, will become an integral part of the school curriculum.

I am grateful to the experts on value education, who have journeyed to these Himalayan heights with a sense of devotion. There was a time when wisdom flowed from the seers dwelling in the forests and caves of the Himalayas towards the plains. Now the time for the reverse flow has come. Let us pray to the Almighty that our efforts be crowned with success, so that we are able to create a new generation of people Imbued with eternal spiritual values.

Human Values for Europe

My experience regarding Human Values in Europe has been and still is a continuous process of discovery and a constant proof of how much the power of truth can contribute to the improvement of mankind.

Religion, we know, has acted as brake on the development of economic and political materialism which has brought man to the verge of total destruction. Despite the fact that all Religions have preached peace, brotherhood and charity, man has continued to be and still is that "homo homini lupus", whose ferocity is second to none and, indeed, far outstrips that of many wild beasts.

What is the reason for this? Have the Religions failed, perhaps, in their objectives?

In my opinion the problem is different. The Religions, each in its own way, have done much for man's evolution but they have lacked the power to radically change or influence those beings who by their destiny were and are Karmically predisposed to indulge in evil. For those beings religion is worse than useless. They are, one might say, completely immune against any call of the soul because they are wrapped up in their own ego and alien to the reality of the Divine presence in all things in creation.

It is for these beings that Sri Sathya Sai Baba has come on His mission of protection of Dharma.

Dharma is the sum of absolute truth, of unselfish love for everybody and everything, of peace for oneself and for others, of non-violence towards all beings. These are the values which, once they have been inculcated in people of all ages and classes, will have the miraculous power of improving adults and children alike. When the chain of effects which springs from right conduct based upon truth, produces peace, love and non-violence, it will help to promote the spiritual evolution of a being.

In South Europe, I have had the opportunity to note personally the beneficial and progressive effect of such teaching on human minds, and I can state that from children to grown-ups, from mature men to the elderly, the awakening brought about by such values leads to beneficial results.

At the moment, in the countries comprising Europe Group II, we have not as yet introduced organised activities for developing Human Values. There will be a first meeting on this theme towards the end of May in Nuremberg, Germany.

In Christian countries, moral behaviour and helping one's neighbour are regarded exclusively as acts of goodness or charity towards oneself and others, independent of the Law of Karma and the principle of reincarnation that Christianity tends to overlook. I am referring to Christianity as taught by various Christian churches and not to Christ's teaching. And so when the concept of God-man (avatar), of cause and effect, is not constantly borne in mind, one loses the awareness of the real and direct link which exists between oneself and one's actions. Pythagoras had envisaged such a relationship, raising it even to the level of a mathematical formula with the axiom "as a man sows, so will he reap." Rama, Krishna, Christ and Mohammed spoke of reward

and punishment for the good and bad actions of men, but man, with the exception of a very few devotees, in my opinion has not understood the infallibility of the law of reward and punishment, because he is distracted by thousands of different reasons which he considers scientifically convincing, as against religious dictates which are held to be nebulous and intangible.

So it happens that man, who from childhood keeps on asking why and is never really satisfied with the answers he gets, grows up acquiring day-by-day mistaken convictions. Then, once he comes into contact with the deceitful Maya of life he no longer recognises it as such because he is completely misinformed on the true reality. He inevitably ends up discouraged and bewildered.

As we know, the human mind needs to be satisfied, and so, when, because of ignorance, it is not convinced about facts which it deems to be unreal, it forms a quite different conviction which leads it into error. It is necessary therefore to spell out the why and the wherefore of the Primary Cause which embraces and unifies everything because it is in everything: that Universal Infinite Principle which we call God. The child as well as that adult devotee must learn to see and recognise the same God in the significant and in the insignificant matters of life, in the whole and in the part, with, however, a fundamental and extremely important distinction. The God seen in details must not separate but unite, merge into the universal without limits of time and space. It is thus that love for a single, specific, limited entity is transformed into universal love for all things and all creatures.

The same applies to Dharma. This must be founded on laws which take into consideration the predominance of the universal Interests over the narrow and the selfish, and not the contrary. The same applies to Sathya and so on. Only by meditating upon the Universal Infinite, which God and His Laws represent, can the child and the man have a correct and valid vision of verification of the Law of Karma and the principle of reincarnation.

—Pio Russo, Chairman Europe group II, Naples

In this Kaliyuga, the principle of prema is not in evidence. It is smothered in jealousy, conceit, hatred, fear, falsehood and greed. That is why it is best referred to as the kalahayuga, the age of faction, marked by fights between mother and daughter, father and son, teacher and pupil, guru and guru, brother and brother. The recitation of the name of Krishna is the best method for cleansing the mind of all these evil impulses.

—Baba

LOOKING AHEAD:

"Integrating the World Community"

The Sai movement has come along way from the First World Conference held in Bombay in 1968 to the Fourth World Conference to be held at Prasanthi Nilayam in November 1985. Additional significance attaches to this world conference as it will synchronise with the Sixtieth Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan Baba.

Elaborate preparations are already going on, under the direct supervision of Bhagavan Himself, for the historic gatherings in November. Round-the-clock work on numerous constructions is going on, in expectation of unprecedented numbers of devotees coming for the celebrations, besides over 15,000 delegates and volunteers and a large number of special invitees.

With a view to finalising the programme of the World Conference and setting up the committees which would be in charge of specific items of the programme, a meeting of State Presidents, Convenors of the State Trusts, members of the Central Trust and Regional Convenors and Coordinators of the World Council was called at Ooty in Nilgiris (Tamil Nadu) on April 20 and 21, by the President of the World Council, Sri Indulal Shah. Bhagavan not only addressed the opening and valedictory sessions, but was present informally all the time to give His advice and guidance to the delegates. Altogether about 60 delegates were present, representing all the States. The meetings were held at Nandanavanam. The delegates met in subcommittees as well as in general sessions.

It was decided to hold the birthday celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam between November 17 and November 24, 1985.

The Fourth World Conference of Sathya Sai Organisations will be held on November 17, 18 and 19. The theme of the World Conference will be "Integration of the World Community." The conference will highlight the efforts of the spiritually motivated members of the Sai Organisations to render service to humanity throughout the world. It will also consider how to plan the activities of the organisation to promote this objective from 1986 onwards.

Among the major subjects to be considered at the World Conference, the future of the Bal Vikas and Education in Human Values programme will occupy a prominent place. Extension of the rural development programme will also figure in the agenda.

The meeting laid down the criteria for selecting delegates to the Conference from various levels and wings of the organisation. It is expected that over 15,000 delegates will attend the conference.

Responsibility for different arrangements in connection with the Conference has been assigned to various State Presidents and Committees headed by them.

All cultural activities will be organised by the Institute of Higher Learning.

The meeting reviewed the progress of the development work in the "adopted" villages and decided to complete the target of 6000 villages before November 1985. The State Samitis were

directed to complete at least three of the service activities laid down for each of the adopted villages.

It was decided that the monetary contributions collected under the "Ceiling on Desires" programme should be utilised in the first instance for support to the Sai educational institutions in the respective States and then for other service activities.

Mobile Exhibitions

With a view to acquainting the general public all over the country with information about the life and mission of Bhagavan Baba, it was decided to organise two mobile exhibitions which will go round 60 major towns and cities in the country between June and September 1985. Described as "Sathya Sai Darshan" each mobile unit will tell the story of the life and mission of Bhagavan in pictures, photographs, charts and other visual aids. The exhibition will be open for two to three days in each place. Three to four major centres in each State will be covered. One unit will cover the States of Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, West Bengal, Assam, Calcutta and Hyderabad from June 1 to September 30. The second unit will cover the States of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana, Delhi, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir from June 9 to October 1.

Ramadas And Sivaji

Samartha Ramadas appeared before Sivaji, with his usual call for aims; Bhavati Bhikshaam Dehi. Sivaji realised that the guru is God; so, he wrote something on a piece of paper and deposited it reverentially in the alms bag of Ramadas. For the relief of hunger, how can paper suffice? asked Ramadas. Sivaji prayed that the paper may be read. The paper recorded a gift of the entire kingdom and all that Sivaji owned to the Guru. Samartha Ramadas replied "No, my dharma is dharma-bodha, the teaching of dharma, instructing the people in the right way of life; kshatriyas like you must follow the dharma of ruling the land, ensuring peace and content to the millions under your care." Yagnavalkya too once refused a kingdom, because he cared more for the kingdom of Moksha, the realm of freedom. Vasishtha is also said to have renounced a kingdom offered him by Rama.

—Baba ("Chinnakatha")

EHV ON THE MARCH:

International Conference Hails Programme

Delegates and teachers from 26 countries assembled in the spacious premises of the Froebel Institute, near London, for the first International conference of its kind on the Education in Human Values programme.

The Conference was planned to orient and guide teacher-trainers from the participating countries in the aims and techniques of Bhagavan's programme of Education in Human Values

so that they may go back to their respective countries and implement the training programme for the teachers in their schools.

The Conference was opened on March 29th by Mr. Lucas Ralli, President of the U. K. Sathya Sai Seva Organisation. Mr. and Mrs. Ralli had worked tirelessly to arrange for the stay of the participants at the Institute and a fruitful discussion on the Conference programme.

The first part of the conference Included addresses by leaders of various religious faiths on how the five Human Values of Truth, Right Conduct, Love, Peace and Non-violence were fundamental to the teachings and scriptures of the Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish and Mahomedan religions. It was clearly demonstrated that all major religions proclaim these five values.

Then Dr. Jumsai from Thailand set forth the true meaning of each of the five Human Values. He concluded that Truth + Right Conduct + Love + Peace + Nonviolence = God.

Mr. Sanjeev Chaudhry from India explained to the delegates how to teach the Human Values, calling attention to the fact that learning Human Values is the purpose of education, and not a separate academic subject. One must teach the subjects prescribed in the syllabus, but look for the Human Values in each subject, and teach the values as another dimension to each subject. The five values are the essence of human personality and the core of world religions.

The next day, Mr. Victor Kanu took over the chairmanship of the meeting. He and his wife Genevieve had worked diligently on the organisation and planning of this event. The delegates were presented with technical aids and insights by several speakers.

In the afternoon several workshops were held in which different classroom techniques were demonstrated. The delegates were later offered a delightful programme of music and dance, topped off by the Sri Sathya Sai Choir of London.

On the next day, reports from the six workshops were presented, besides a bird's eye view of EHV in Northern Europe. U.K., Southern Europe and the U. S. A. England is the western country where most work has been done to date.

The Sathya Sai Society for Education in Human Values has been established as a legal entity in England, and the Society is supported by community leaders, politicians, and religious leaders as well as teachers and educators from many schools and universities.

We were given a peep into the future. As Swami's Divine scheme for changing the world's youth was expounded by very able educators, we could clearly see that this Divine Plan will succeed. Our hosts inspired all of us to return to our countries and apply these important lessons in training EHV teachers and preparing teaching material in the language of each country. Mr. Victor Kanu concluded the conference with a dynamic call to all Sai brothers and sisters to roll up their sleeves and get to work: "EHV is Sai Seva!" he said.

—John Behmer, El Salvador

FROM THE VIDYAGIRI CAMPUS:

Sai and the Irate Missionary

One March evening I found myself dropped like a hot-cake within the towering grey walls of a convent school run by foreign missionaries in a Himalayan town and the gates closed behind me. I found myself amidst sons of ministers, aristocrats, diplomats, and what-not. I found something missing in them I could not help stealing away from their company. At times I felt lost in this big world, but slowly learnt to accept it as a part of my life. I kept myself at a safe distance from the stern-looking missionaries. Not a day passed without my hearing the "whoosh! Whoosh!" of a cane and uncontrollable sobs and cries of some unfortunate child. I was destined to spend a fraction of my life there.

One day I received a rude shock. A photograph of Bhagavan Baba which I had with me was taken away and was locked in a cupboard. In my loneliness I derived consolation from the book, "Sathya Sai Speaks: I" which was kept well hidden beneath my bed as I feared it would be confiscated too.

One cold night, just before supper, the warden came in with a grim face and announced, "Henceforth none shall keep any books beneath their beds. If books are found they shall be confiscated. Even if any religious books are found, they shall be torn into bits. The boys found guilty shall be caned severely." My heart leaped on hearing this and it raced fast. The supper refused to pass down my gullets. I rose and walked out of the dining hall.

I tucked my gloved hands into the pockets of my overcoat and went out into the open grounds behind the convent. An icy wind from the snow-covered mountains greeted me. I brooded, "what am I to do with that book of Swami. How could I give it away! It was my only source of joy and consolation, whose support and companionship I sought during those deserted moments." My mind was now determined that I would continue to keep it beneath my pillow and face the consequences. I knew it was a severe test, and my Lord would make me pass.

A week passed and nothing happened. None had come to check. One night, it was roundabout 10. I was still wide awake in my bed. The cold wind from the Himalayas whistled outside my window and it made the glass window rattle loudly. All the boys in my dormitory were fast asleep, perhaps dreaming of angels and fairies, unaware of the terror that was to strike that night.

The lights of the dormitory were suddenly put on. There stood the warden with another missionary with a thick cane in his hand, that knew no compassion. They pulled the sleeping boys out of the bed and the beds were checked. Many had comics and fairy tale books which were found beneath their beds. Blows rained upon them. The cane fell upon them terribly, its sound came rhythmically, and the cries for mercy; equally kept pace with it.

While it was freezing outside, I was perspiring profusely. I covered myself and lay still and chanted the Gayatri Mantra frantically. I could hear the soft footsteps of the missionary approaching my bed. It was my turn now. I felt a light tap. My lips went dry. My tongue refused

to chant any mantram. But I felt myself yelling within, "Baba! Baba! Baba!" I opened my eyes and tried to present an innocent look. I slowly got off my bed. The missionary gave me a sarcastic smile. I was afraid, surely not of the cane, as I was cocksure that my soul would jump out before the cane could land on me. I feared the dreadful fate that awaited the book. The missionary overturned my pillow with his cane and "Sathya Sai speaks: I" showed itself lovingly. He looked at me ferociously. He hit the book with the cane. I felt the blow, a little cry escaped from my lips. He asked me, raising his gruff voice, "What is that I see?" I remained silent. The boys stood motionless in dreadful silence, while tears streamed down the cheeks of some. The angry missionary pounced on the book, and took it in his big rough hands. The story of Prahlada and the saviour Lord Narasimha flashed back in my mind! I stood in terror expecting him to tear it into bits. But I found the book still safe in his hands. He was staring at it and kept muttering: "Sathya Sai Speaks! Sathya Sai Speaks! Sathya Sai Speaks!" He stared at it unceasingly and after a few minutes he opened the book. The picture of our benevolent Sai stared at him. He stared at the beautiful picture and it stared back at him. I wondered what had happened to him.

A few minutes later the missionary asked me softly, "Who is he?" I was silent, and felt I had lost my voice. He repeated his question again, "Who is He?" Finding my voice, I said, "SAI BABA!" The cane fell from his hand. He stared at the picture with greater concentration. I did not know what was happening to him. Even now I am at a loss to know what happened in those few fleeting moments between the missionary and Bhagavan. It remains still a baffling mystery to me.

The missionary placed the book gently on my bed, to the astonishment of all, and tip-toed out of the room. Tears of joy and gratitude trickled down my cheeks, for my beloved Lord had made me feel the warmth of His Love even in the distant Himalayan region.

—Giri Naidu, XII, C.A.E., *Prasanthi Nilayam*.

However superfine the paper, however artistic the envelope, however poetic the composition of the letter, it will not reach the addressee by post, when it lacks the 20-paise stamp! So too, the trappings, vestures, shawls, robes, and rosaries are ineffective; they cannot reach the addressee, God. What will take their prayers to the addressee is the 20 paise stamp-dedication or Bhakti.

—Baba

The Chariot and the Car

Of the four basic qualifications for an earnest enquiry into the nature of the Self, —equanimity, self-control, withdrawal of the senses and steadfastness—Bhagavan Baba attaches greatest importance to self-control.

Self-control means the development of will power and also the strengthening of *Buddhi* or intellect or determinative faculty, which controls all the senses. Bhagavan Baba illustrates this point by employing two images—the image of the chariot and that of the car. While the image of the chariot is drawn from the Katha Upanishad, the image of the car—Bhagavan's own concept—serves the purpose of conveying the significance of self-control in the contemporary idiom.

In the parable of the chariot, the body is compared to a chariot in which is seated the Self, its Master. The *Buddhi* or intellect is the charioteer and the mind, the reins. The senses are the horses and their objects are the roads along which the chariot moves. The chariot serves the purpose of taking us to the destination, which is the Master who is the supreme Self. But the supreme Self is temporarily identified, through ignorance, with the body, the senses and the mind. If *Buddhi* or Intellect is weak and the mind (reins) is not steadfast, then the senses become uncontrollable and unmanageable, like the vicious horses of a bad charioteer. On the other hand, if *Buddhi* or Intellect functions properly and effectively, and the mind obeys its dictates, then the senses remain under control like the trained horses of a good charioteer. A well-developed *buddhi* or intellect, like the able charioteer, controls the senses and the body, and the indwelling Self or the Master reaches the destination, which is the supreme state of Godhead.

The other image Bhagavan employs to convey the significance of self-control is that of a car. The car is like a machine or an instrument which is extremely valuable. The body is a valuable car. The four wheels of the car are the four *Purusharthas*—*Dharma* (righteousness), *Artha* (wealth), *Kama* (desire) and *Moksha* (liberation). The tyres of the wheels should have the desired pressure-range; the air pressure should be the optimum for efficient use. This air is what may be called faith or conviction or belief.

Faith or conviction should be at the optimum level in all the four tyres of *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama* and *Moksha*. Then, there is the steering wheel inside the car which controls the movement of the wheels. The mind is the steering wheel in man. As the mind turns, so the wheels turn. In this journey of man the four *Purusharthas* have to be in tune with the route proper; the steering wheel or the mind should be held in check.

The two lights in front of the car are the two eyes. The horn is the mouth; the gas is the food we take; the oil of the car is the tea, coffee and other drinks. The comfortable, cushioned seat in the car is the heart and seated in the heart is the owner, God. The ignition key which starts the car is *Buddhi* or intellect. *Vijnana* (knowledge of life) is the clutch and *Brahmajnana* the accelerator. The more you press the accelerator of *Brahmajnana* the faster will be the running of the car. Therefore, if we wish to reach the destination safe and fast, then these two parts of the car—the brake (controlling of the senses) and the accelerator—are absolutely necessary.

If the brakes and the accelerator are under perfect control, you can manipulate the steering wheel according to the condition of the road.

It is the steering wheel (the mind) which is responsible for our troubles, difficulties and problems. The process of keeping the steering wheel under control depends on the brakes (control of the senses). The brakes should be in good condition. Keeping this in view, Vedanta

proclaims that it is the mind which is responsible for one's liberation or bondage. Without control of one's senses, any amount of Sadhana or spiritual practice one undertakes would be futile.

—*Dr. N. R. Sastri*

The Divine Call

When I thought of it, it was really an impossible task to bring my mother, an octogenarian, to the Abode of Supreme Peace and Love, from the distant Himalayan land of Sikkim. But no task remains impossible once His Divine Grace is showered in abundance. A comment passed by a close friend of mine is still vivid in my memory: "You should have taken your mother earlier. Now it seems to be too late for the journey because of her advanced age and ailing health and it may not be possible for her to travel. You may consider it as impossible a task as trying to fill a bamboo-cane basket with water." This in fact hurt my feelings since my dear old mother had been all the time wishing and praying to find refuge at His Lotus Feet in Prasanthi Nilayam for the last five years. Yet I did not lose heart but went on yearning and cherishing like a good optimist with all my unwavering faith in the Divine Grace of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. I had given up pessimism since the time I had come to know about Bhagavan; has HE not assured that He will not forsake those who seek refuge in HIM?

Time kept on passing swiftly and my heart too kept on throbbing all the time with a worry as to how to proceed on the long journey. Yet, with a firm and steady faith, I could muster enough courage with all the patience that could be squeezed out of an ever-hopeful heart.

Ever since her young days, my mother had been allergic to the smell of petrol and she preferred to travel either on horseback or on foot rather than riding a motor-vehicle in which she would feel very uncomfortable and suffered from nausea. Now, due to her old age and physical weakness, travelling by car was ruled out; more over, the doctors advised that she should not travel by plane either, because of her heart trouble. Yet, wonderfully enough, she had much courage in store to travel by all means with a sense of total submission to His Mercy. It was most encouraging to hear from her words that were steeped in devotion. "This time, the Lord will surely listen to my prayers and take me to His Divine Abode."

In January 1979, I got the rarest opportunity again in my life to be blessed by Bhagavan at Brindavanam. It was a wonderful Interview. My experience at the interview reminds me all the time that even our parents cannot love and care for us so dearly and selflessly as Swami does. His Love is impartial and infinite and He is ever ready to forgive our shortcomings and mistakes. His Love is for each and every being in Creation.

A great moment

I prayed to the Lord with hands folded, whether it was possible for me to bring my mother for His Divine Darshan. To my relief and satisfaction, Swami told me that it was possible without the least doubt and that she could travel without any fear of sickness throughout the journey. A beautiful silver locket was materialised and given to me and Swami said: that I should take it

home very carefully to be given to my mother so that it would protect her all the time while proceeding on our journey and also throughout the rest of her life. After this great moment, I was once again back to my home in Gangtok, the capital of our Himalayan country, Sikkim, although my heart did not permit me to leave the portals of His Abode. To be candid with my views and to dwell upon the true experiences of my life, I do not have the least doubt that it is just because of Swami that I have been blessed with a new life, in pursuit of the real Destination.

Dwelling on the first stage of the journey from Gangtok, I would like to share with all the fact that my mother had the vision of our Beloved Lord, who seemed to be keeping pace with the speeding jeep even when she was wide awake. This happened when we were on our way from Rangpo to Tista, the two main check posts on the route from Gangtok to Siliguri, the nearest railway station. It was late in the evening of Monday, the 31st January 1983, when He granted this vision to my mother. The effect was so miraculous that she felt very happy and quite at ease. All the time, she sat in her seat, lost in an inexplicable sea of joy. It was as though the Lord of Parthi had touched her with His Divine magic. She did not feel travel-sick or fatigued till we arrived at Siliguri in the late hours of the night. We found her still fresh, hale and hearty and the arduous journey through the twisting and winding roads had not affected her in any way. We knew that this was the most difficult part of our journey. Yet this visible sign of His care and Grace inspired us to proceed on our journey without worries and fear. After this, the journey was quite pleasant and comfortable, till we arrived at Prasanthi Nilayam, the Divine Abode of Eternal Bliss.

Gifts of grace

What followed after reaching Prasanthi Nilayam can only be described as the unfolding of another chapter of how He, our Lord Sai, lives every second of the day for giving His Love to His dear and wayward children, of how He draws them to Him with all the care of a mother nursing her first-born child. He granted us interviews, chiding us to crave instead, for the inner-view of our Real Self, the grandeur of the spirit, which will confer upon us the gift of Paramananda. He gave a nice and cosy room for my mother to stay in and also other gifts of His Grace. What more can a child aspire for from a mother. Even to think that the Lord cares so much for every being, even insignificant people like us, who had not been able to offer anything to HIM and had always aspired to achieve His Grace, truly unfolds volumes of His Divine Glory.

Now we all feel that the bird has at last found its refuge. It has no more destinations to reach, no more vistas to explore. This is really the final 'homecoming'.

The sentiment of heartfelt gratitude that wells up within the deep recesses of my heart cannot be described in words and yet I feel so grateful to the Lord for all times to come for having opened my eyes from the deep slumber of ignorance to bring me to the path of Light and Truth.

—Mrs. P. Tshering Tenzin, Prasanthi Vidya Mandir, Tibet Road, Gangtok, E. Sikkim

The Message of the Lotus

Swami often says His Life is His Message. He reveals Himself in His deeds as much as in His words. Therefore, to study and understand His message we must also study His work. Swami is not only busy shaping mind and hearts. He is also raising a number of edifices to further His work. The distinctive style and special features of these buildings form a part of His message. They are significant symbols of His message.

A very important sculptural element that we come across in all buildings devoted to Swami's ideals is the Lotus. Besides the now very well known free-standing lotus structure in front of the Prasanthi Mandir and the Unity Lotus column to the South of the auditorium, the walls, ceilings and the pillars of the Mandir are full of lotus reliefs. The low walls on three sides of the Mandir, and on both sides of the concrete aisle leading to the Gopuram: all the buildings of Vidyagiri campus carry this distinctive symbol. The gigantic lotus on top of the Institute building at Prasanthi Nilayam is easily its most remarkable feature. No structure devoted to Swami's ideals is considered complete without this all-important Lotus. It is as if Swami has been delivering a single message to us all these years, "Be like the Lotus".

We should brood over the silent message of the Lotus. It has been adored by poets in India for ages as the purest flower. Its fragrance is mild, soothing and its sight elevating. A lotus in full bloom has the strange power to calm an agitated heart and attract a run-away mind. It is said in the Ayurveda sastras that padma madhu (honey collected from lotus) is the best variety of honey. The lotus is employed as the metaphor to describe the eyes, feet, etc. of worship-worthy deities and divine incarnations.

Beauty and delight

The lotus stands on water, rising from the mud and slime underneath. It draws the sap of life from the earth and turns it into the fragrance of heaven. It unites in itself, as it were, earth and heaven and stands apart from both. Earth is not to be despised if we know how to make use of it to touch heaven itself, and then go beyond to see the unity. The lotus stands for a poetic or mystic unity of life, not a monolithic unity. The language of this unity is Beauty, which is also Delight.

The lotus resides in water, but water doesn't live in it. It points out the mantra Swami has given us: "Live in the world, but let not the world live in you." The lotus carries this message of detachment which comes out of self-satisfaction, a satisfaction born out of an experience of self-fulfillment. This detachment does not mean despising the earth but seeing God's love in it. The earth sustains us with its rasa, and this rasa is God's compassion, God's kindness. Then how can one shut one's eyes to the beauty of God's gifts? But if we fail to see God's hand behind it, we see no beauty in this life. On the other hand it becomes a 'tale told by an idiot'

The lotus grows in the mud, turns the shape of life into pure beauty of God, but ever remains untouched by the mud. That is true detachment. God is never described as a starving tapasvi who denies everything, but as the poet of poets, who transmutes the ugliest into the most beautiful; He accepts all, but breathes into them the rarest of virtues. Yet He is the Yogeswar, the Supreme Yogi.

The lotus and the sun

The earth fosters the lotus till it is a bud, ready to open. Then comes the sun. The lotus cannot bloom, without the sun. How happy, how joyful it is when touched by the rays of the sun! It drinks in the light, the warmth, and the purity of the sun and the rasa of earth becomes the rasa of heaven, Amrita! When the Lord's light and love touches our hearts, all the many loves and desires that infest them are transmuted into pure honey of spiritual life. The body and the mind must be kept ready for the baptism of light and love by incessant prayer and detachment. The lotus gives us this message of ceaseless efforts to rise above the slush and slime, rising above the tantalising temptations of life around. Its story of unceasing yearning, and silent efforts at rejecting all that is secondary to reach the highest, is the story of the human soul.

In spite of all this epic struggle, how soft, tender and sweet is the Lotus! There is not a scar of this gruesome battle on its body and spirit. Who can outshine it in heroism? Life is a battle, fight it-is the slogan of the heroes. And this fight makes them rough, harsh and hard. The sweet juice of life dries up and what remains as a testimony to their victories is an over-weening ego I Shelley's Ozymandias is a perfect example of this acme of arrogance; "My name is Ozymandias, king of kings; Look on my works, Ye Mighty, and despair!"

The lotus, by contrast, is the very picture of quiet dignity. It exhibits a grandeur before which the toughest fighter, the greatest hero should bow his head. It is the kind of meekness about which Jesus said: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Swami is the very embodiment of such glorious meekness. He will do the most astonishing things in a totally unaffected manner.

The sweetness of life is the sweetness of experience; the fragrance of life is the fragrance of wisdom; the tenderness of life is the tenderness of compassion. The lotus has them in plenty. The Lotus gives itself to the sun fully, totally, before falling away. When it opens its heart and body to the sun, and the Lord of light fills it with sweetness, with fragrance, with tenderness, the lotus lives only to give all these gifts away to those who need them. The honey goes to the bee; and the rest of it soothes our fever and fret in life. Here is a concept of surrender that the lotus practises. To give away freely all that the Lord gives us, to all those who need them, is the surrender of the Lotus. What can we give to our fellowmen? Sweetness, humility, understanding, compassion, love, steady devotion, ... all that the good kind Lord gives us.

The lotus in yoga

Besides the message of beauty, love and delight, the lotus conveys the message of power as well. The power of God installed in man, the Yoga scriptures say, lies dormant as a sleeping serpent, the Kundalini, at the base of the spine. The awakening of this power, till it reaches the highest, has seven stages, and all these stages are described as lotus-centres. Each centre is represented by a lotus with a definite number of petals. The Muladhara lotus has four petals while the fifth, the Visuddha centre has 16.

If we examine the lotus reliefs in the Prasanthi Nilayam Mandir, we find the lotuses have 8 or 16 or 32 petals in their outermost ring. This is very significant. In the portico we have 3 hanging lotuses. The middle one has 32 petals while the other two have 16 each. The lotuses inside the Bhajan Hall have all 32 petals each. The low-relief lotuses on the pillars of the Mandir are of two

types. One type has 8 large petals and 8 small ones between them. The other type has 16. There are lotus fixtures also on the doors. They are 3 types; the smallest has 8, the largest 32 and the medium 16 petals in all rings. The lotus structures on the compound walls, and on other buildings have 8 petals. This eight-petal lotus has become the insignia of Sai Institutions. All these lotuses refer to the Vishuddhi chakra of the spine. When the serpent power reaches this Vishuddhi centre, the individual, according to Devi Bhagavatham (VII, 35) is made pure. This lotus stands for utter purity.

Unless one passes through this centre of purity one cannot go on to the next, the Ajna chakra, on his way to the final stage of Sahasrara. The yoga shastras say this Vishuddha lotus has a 'Smoky purple hue'. That is exactly the colour of the hanging lotus reliefs in the portico and the Bhajan hall of the Mandir.

Purity and unity

The lotus is yet another reminder of Bhagavan's dictum: Purity is Divinity.

Then we come to the other two freestanding lotus structures, one within the circle in front of the Mandir, and the other the Unity lotus. They have 12 petals. The 12 petal-lotus is the fourth centre—the centre of heart—where one hears the primordial Pranava, the WORD, the Anaahata. It is called Anaahata because this sound is not generated by striking one object against other. It is a centre which establishes the Unity of all life. Hasn't Swami said: Unity is Divinity?

The heart—the spiritual heart—has a special place in Swami's message of love. Swami has said many times. 'It is the heart that reaches out to the goal, not the mind.' The 12-petal lotus spells out this all-important message of Swami at this most crucial period in human evolution when the broadening of the heart is more important than cultivating the mind.

This 12-petal lotus adorns the centre of the emblem adopted by the Sai Organisation as the heart of Swami's message to a strife-torn world. Love alone awakens in man this experience of unity, and the heart is the seat of love.

We must recognise in the sculpture of the Mandir a very vital message of Swami delivered to us in a symbol, which is eloquent in its silence and beauty.

—Bejo, K. Misra, Prasanthi Nilayam

The New Catechism

"Abhyuday", the new monthly journal, edited by Sanjeev K. Chaudhry, devoted to reports on the worldwide progress of the movement for Education in Human Values, carries in its March-April issue, the following piece on "A New Catechism" by Allan Glathom, a leading educationist:

Who is the pupil?

A child of God, not a tool of the state.

Who is the teacher?
A guide not a guard.

What is the faculty?
A community of scholars, not a union of mechanics.

Who is a principal?
A master of teaching, not a master of teachers.

What is learning?
A journey, not a destination.

What is discovery?
Questioning the answers, not answering the questions.

What is the process?
Discovering ideas, not covering contents.

What is the goal?
Opened minds, not closed issues.

What is the test?
Being and becoming, not remembering and reviewing.

What is a school?
Whatever we choose to make it.

The Primal Cause

`Living' implies the operation in the individual of the life principle that activates all beings. The attributeless Divine assumes certain qualities as its nature and becomes Saguna. The individual thus formed seeks to know and experience the variety of names and forms that are exposed to its senses of perception and its mind. This is, in short, the process of living, the project of "knowing", of expanding one's awareness. The process has a beginning and an end. It involves success and failure, good and evil.

"I am Jivi, a live Individual," "I am a spark of Consciousness," "I am embodied Atma"—declarations such as these do not reveal a knowledge of the life-principle. The Jivi is Divine Consciousness, installed in a chariot. It is not a bundle of inert stuff moulded into a form and labelled with a name. There is only One all-pervading Consciousness but man experiences it in fragments and, mistaking it as Many, he gropes in the confusion caused by his own Ignorance.

Many scriptures instruct men the truth that God dwells in his body along with the Jivi, God Inducing him to aspire for the heights and the self advising him to be content with the low. The Jivi has faith in the reality of the world and of itself. The Divine Principle, on the other hand, asserts that it is present, both close to man as well as far from him. The fact is, people feel it is far, because they are not aware of its being near, nay, in their own hearts. The truth that the scriptures teach is that God is everywhere, near and far, above and below, inside and outside. God is One, indivisible, omnipresent.

In order to awaken to this truth, one has to attain higher levels of wakefulness. Indeed, there are four such levels. The first is, the apparently wakeful attentiveness with which we move about and busy ourselves every day. We are very much like others, alert and aware, when thus awake. But, Vedanta reveals four categories of wakefulness: the fully awake, the wakefulness of the mind only, as while dreaming, the wakefulness of the self alone, as in deep sleep, and the illumination of the self awakening into the Overself. These are named Sthoola, Sookshma, Kaarana and Maha Kaarana, the Gross, the Subtle, the Causal and the Super-Causal.

The gross body that is activated in the waking stage is the composite of many items—the five senses of perception, the five senses of action, the five inner instruments, the five elements in creation, the five vital airs and the self—26 in all. This is the Jagrat stage, wakefulness. The subtle body that dreams has only the five vital airs, the five senses of perception, and the five fundamental elements—fifteen items in all as the Sookshma, the Yatana vehicle which, according to Vedanta, undergoes the consequences of good deeds and bad.

Causal or Kaarana body is the third. It possesses only one nature, namely, Prajna, Consciousness, pure and unmixed with the subjective and objective worlds. Since the sthoola body is fully involved with the objective world, the Vishwa, it is called Vishwa; the sookshma body or the dream body is illumined by the mind and the inner light (Tejas) and so it is called Tejas; the body in the deep sleep stage, when it is latent in the cause, subsumed in the Consciousness, is called Prajna.

The truth, namely, Brahman, eludes all these three bodies. They are all involved in 'bhrama' (illusion), not in Brahman, the Absolute. What appears true in the dream is falsified when one awakes; what one experiences while awake is distorted and devalued in dreams; sleep wipes out of memory both the dream-world and the wakefulness-world. The awareness that survives these three passing stages is the Maha Kaarana, the Super-conscious.

The Super or Supreme Consciousness is the Thought that became all this, the Hiranyagarbha, the Golden Womb, the primal urge, the first concretisation, Easwara. When Being "thought", it became the Many, or rather, it put on the appearance of Many. The Maha Kaarana, is *beyond* Consciousness; the Sthoola, Sookshma and the Kaarana bodies into which it proliferated are *beneath* Consciousness. The former is true knowledge (eruka, in Telugu). The latter is illusory experience (marupu in Telugu). God is the Lord of *eruka*, the Jivis the slave of *marupu* (forgetting).

The Maha Kaarana, the Cosmic Consciousness, is often denoted as "Param", "beyond", in Vedanta; since the concept is obviously contentless, it does not arise and fade; nor does it

originate and disappear. It has no name and form, for it cannot be defined or limited or identified as separate. It is understood as Brahman unchanging, immovable Totality (Poorna), the Eternal, the True, the Pure, the Attributeless. Just as the unchanging road enables the car to move along it, the Brahma principle is the basis for the existence and activities of the Jivi.

In fact, there is only One. The One appears to the split vision as two. Look outward! It is Jivi. Look inward, it is God. The outer vision makes you forget; the inner makes you remember. When man seeks to rise to the divinity which is his reality, he is remembering, struggling to know and experience. When he grovels in the lower levels of consciousness and is entangled in disease, he is caught in the coils of forgetfulness. Removing selfish desires and expanding one's urge to love and serve are the most effective means to succeed in merging with Supreme Consciousness, the Primal Cause, the Cosmic Thought, the Maha Kaarana.

—*From Bhagavan's Yugadi discourse, Prasanthi Nilayam, 22-3-85*

To Baba—with Love

Morning is sweet,
With the fragrance of roses....
Delicate ...wafting
On morning's fresh breeze,
Mingling with bird-song
And new golden sunshine...
And shimmering dew drops
Hung, bright,
On the trees...

And, here, at this time,
I quietly remember
A morning a-far,
in a Land o'er the tide;
The Master had Beckoned,
And, obedient and eager,
I flew like a bird...
To be there at His Side.

As many before me,
With tears over-flowing,
I knelt at His Feet,
Striving, in vain,
To express my Devotion,
While Something within whispered:
"He understands..."
Was it A Life-time...?

Or ...merely a moment...?
I know not,
But, O...What is Time,
After all?
For, warm, in His love,
It was not for Earth's Dwelling...
But somewhere in Paradise,
This, I recall I
And The Grace He Bestowed
Seemed A Gift
Right from Heaven...
And This, I have treasured,
With gratitude-deep...
Thru' long weary days,
When the Burden is heavy...
And, when night-time is lonely,
And, elusive, my sleep I

For, I know He is there
in my moments-of-longing...
To show me The Way
When My Pathway grows dim...
Bringing me Light,
When the clouds overtake me...
And, taking my hand,
When I reach out to Him.

Whenever the dawn breaks, soft,
Thru' my window,
My thoughts wander back
To that warm Holy Place...
And there, step-by-step,
From The Door of the Temple,
The Master emerges...
Bestowing His Grace;
And, whenever I kneel at my Shrine,
In Devotion.
Or reach thru' my tears
For the Touch of His Hand...
I know He'll be there,
To Direct and Uphold me,
With His Silent Assurance:
"I understand..."

And, when Life demands

I be done with the dreaming,
I kneel ...just once more,
With my thoughts High Above...
And, a small yellow rose-bud
I place on The Altar,
With whisper-sweet Message
"To Baba ...with Love."

—*Grace Burford, East Bentleigh, Victoria (Australia)*

Unscheduled (Divine) Love

The air is tense with excitement and anticipation. The Chancellor, Bhagavan Baba, is visiting the Institute Campus to witness a display of gymnastics and physical feats.

As the Chancellor arrives, He is received with due respect by officials of the Institute and hostel who, along with a Guard of Honour, escort Him to His seat at the Ganesha temple from where He will witness the demonstration.

With military-like discipline, the hostel students, ranging from the VIII class boys to the Post-graduate students, commence their intricate formations and gymnastics, the intermissions between events being spiced with the antics of clowns.

As the participants begin their march-past, marking the conclusion of their performance, there is a distraction in the wings. One of the clowns vainly attempts to restrain a stray dog from entering the field and becoming the 'star' attraction! But this is no pre-planned playful feat, for the hungry but determined canine succeeds in entering the field, while three hundred students, standing at attention in salute to the Chancellor, do not dare to break their formation to stop the 'intruder'. To the consternation of everyone (except the playful Lord!) the solitary canine works its way upto the base of the Ganesha temple and, with a look which only a forsaken soul can give, transfixes her gaze on the Divine.

"If you look to Me, I look at you," says the Lord. And lo, from above come morsels of God's love. Bit by bit the Lord relieves the enceinte animal's pangs of hunger. What a sight! For in the midst of a highly planned and formal occasion, the focus of attention is turned on this unplanned, informal, but most Divine act of Love. As the Lord prepares to leave, He abruptly turns back to pick up a few more tid-bits, and, to the delight of everyone especially the recipient, proceeds to hand-feed more morsels to the uninvited guest and then lovingly strokes the infinitely blessed creature.

Who else would in the midst of a performance, care to shower love on an 'unworthy dog'? Only the Lord can love all beings in the most natural and endearing way.

Humans jostle against each other in the attempt to earn the Grace of the Lord, but this four-legged creature was a perfect example in good behaviour. Its one pointed determination, (Stop not till the goal is reached), its mute but appealing gaze on the Divine and the Lord's Sudarshanam are a lesson for us all, not only with regard to one-pointed determination but also in the matter of devotion.

In the final analysis, what remained was not the pageantry of the occasion, or the coordinated programmes, but a lesson in simple and natural love, proving to be the most significant event of the evening and leaving an indelible Impress on everyone's heart.

—*G. V. Ravishankar, I year M. Com., Prasanthi Nilayam*

A Journey with Bhagavan

The day dawned on the 26th of May 1985 heralding a new phase in the history of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning and in our national life. Having willed that the International Year of Youth shall be marked by the involvement of His students in His village adoption programme, Swami took us, boys and girls, and the teachers of the three campuses at Prasanthi Nilayam, Brindavan and Anantapur, to the two villages, Kammavaripalli and Ammagondapalem, in the Sri Sathya Sai Taluk.

Earlier, under Swami's guidance, service activities in the villages had commenced on the 16th itself. Repairing roads, making soak pits etc., were some of the activities taken up by the boys, while health and hygiene in the villages was the concern of the girl-students.

It was a big convoy (12 vehicles in all) that left Prasanthi Nilayam early in the morning. It passed through a number of villages with the students singing bhajans on the way. It was thrilling to watch the reverence with which the villagers greeted Swami as His car passed by. At one place there was a virtual roadblock by the villagers wishing to pay their homage to Swami. It was tactfully cleared by the students in the escort party.

After almost a two-hour drive through hilly country, the convoy stopped on the outskirts of Kammavaripalli village. Swami was welcomed by the village elders and He entered the village with the students doing Nagarsankirtan. The procession halted at the pandal set up in front of the village temple.

Swami installed in the inner sanctum the idols of Rama, Lakshmana, Sita and Anjaneya and presented a set of musical instruments to the village Bhajan Mandali.

Swami asked then the Institute boys to give a recital of the Rama Katha with its lilting folk tunes. This was followed by a short speech by Sri Challa Subba Raydu, who hailed Swami's visit to the village as akin to the sanctification of Ahalya by Sri Rama.

In his discourse to the villagers, Swami stressed the need for developing a spirit of sacrifice as the primary requisite for sublimating one's life. Comparing the two villages of Kammavaripalli and Ammagondapalem to His two eyes, Swami said that He would provide all amenities to them if only they live in a spirit of unity and fellow feeling. The awareness that Divinity is latent in all would promote true fraternal feelings amongst them. Stressing the need for the development of faith in God, Swami said that five minutes of `sincere prayer would fetch them fifty five minutes' worth of grace. He exhorted them to preserve the devotional atmosphere at the temple, which had been constructed and consecrated by Him. Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema are the virtues that would contribute to their happiness and prosperity.

The village Seva dal convenor then read out his thanksgiving address on behalf of the villagers and placed before Swami the needs of the village.

To the immense joy of all gathered there, Swami waved His hand and created first Vibhuti Prasad and later a ring for the Seva dal Convenor. At Swami's instance, sweets were distributed among the villagers.

From there, Swami proceeded to the Harijan colony and presented a set of musical instruments to the Harijans there for doing bhajans in the temple constructed by Bhagavan for them.

The convoy then proceeded to Ammagondapalem, a furlong away. There was another rousing welcome there. Flowers were strewn by the villagers on the path which Swami tread. Doing Nagarsankirtan, the procession reached the village temple, which Swami had got renovated. Sweets and saris were distributed among the villagers. Here too Swami presented the village Bhajan Mandali with a set of musical instruments. The villagers enthusiastically participated in the bhajan at the temple. It was indeed a joyous occasion for the villagers, some of whom got their children blessed and named by Swami. While returning, Swami again halted at Kammavaripalli. In response to the prayers of the Harijans of the villages, He again visited the temple where they performed Arati. Swami walked upto the outskirts of the village waving to the villagers who were singing bhajans alongside the road.

Finally, the convoy began its journey back to Prasanthi Nilayam. As was to be expected, villagers had lined up at many places to have darshan of Bhagavan. Swami stopped the car at some places and Himself distributed Prasad to the villagers. It was a sight to see Swami standing on the foot-board of His car and waving to the villagers at Janakampalli. The escort party had a trying time keeping the devotional enthusiasm of the villagers in check.

We reached Prasanthi Nilayam around noon. It had been a great day for us, a day not easily to be forgotten, a day when we had literally journeyed with God. At the end of it, we could only express our gratitude to Swami for having given us an opportunity to participate in His Divine Mission.

Sanjay Sahani, Postgraduate Student Prasanthi Nilayam

NATIONAL EHV SEMINAR:

Bhagavan's Exhortation to Teachers

"You are dealing with tender children as their teachers, guides and examples. You have to equip yourselves for those roles by living the values that distinguish man—the values of Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love and Non-violence," observed Bhagavan Baba, while inaugurating the first National Seminar-cum-Workshop on Education in Human Values at the vast Poornachandra Auditorium, Prasanthi Nilayam, on June 1.

It was a historic gathering in more senses than one. For the first time nearly 3000 primary school teachers, men and women, drawn from all States of India, and high-level education officers from State Governments and municipal corporations had assembled in the Poornachandra Auditorium to consider how to intensify and spread the movement initiated by Bhagavan Baba for imparting Education in Human Values to children in primary schools all over

the country. It signified the new dimension the EHV programme had acquired by becoming an authentic national programme for the transformation of the educational scene in the country.

The 3,000 teachers were drawn from among 33,000 teachers who have already been trained by the Sathya Sai Educational Trust in EHV in various parts of the country. Many had been deputed by the State Governments of M.P., Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Kerala, Haryana, Punjab and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi. The largest contingent, nearly 600 teachers, came from Orissa.

The proceedings started with a prayer song rendered by EHV Teacher-educators explaining the inner significance of all the five values—Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love and Non-violence.

From Bal Vikas to EHV

After Bhagavan Baba lit the lamp, to mark the inauguration of the Seminar, to the chanting of the "Asathomaa Sadgamaya" prayer, Smt. Maniamma, Convenor of the Sathya Sai Education in Human Values Trust welcomed Bhagavan Baba and the gathering. She traced the evolution of the Education in Human Values movement from its beginnings in the Bal Vikas programme for children of Sai devotees in 1969. It was a decade later that Bhagavan felt that the benefits of the Bal Vikas Programme should be extended to children in all schools in the country. Since 1979 the EH V programme has been gathering momentum, both as an educational programme and as a programme designed to raise the moral tone of society. Smt. Maniamma said the training of teachers for Education in Human Values became the responsibility of Bal Vikas Gurus whose experience was made available to teachers serving in public and private schools. So far more than 30,000 teachers have been trained and oriented in the EHV programme. Among the public authorities who have committed themselves to the programme in their schools are the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, the State Governments of Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Orissa. Recently the Governments of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab and the Union Territory of Chandigarh have also agreed to introduce the programme in their respective areas. It is proposed to approach the Governments in other States to introduce the programme in their institutions. Smt. Maniamma said, "The impact on the teachers undergoing the course is very positive and consequently the schools are improving as well as the behaviour pattern of the students. Throughout the country, many innovative practices have been evolved, evaluation criteria refined, pedagogical methods improved, which have significantly contributed to the richness of the programme. Considerable useful reading and instructional material have been brought out in different languages. Novel techniques of story telling, role-plays and games, with accent on values and moral judgment, have been devised. The programme is on the move," she concluded.

It is expected that by the end of 1985 about one lakh teachers and teacher-educators would be covered by the various aspects of the EHV programme with the co-operation of State Governments and other educational authorities.

Mr. C. Srinivas, of the Sathya Sai College, Brindavan, said that the Sathya Sai Educational Trust's work was "the greatest thing that could happen to students." He mentioned that in connection with the National Seminar two exhibitions (which were opened by Bhagavan Baba

on May 31) had been got up, one on teaching aids used in the Education in Human Values Programme and the other a mobile exhibition of photos depicting Bhagavan's life and mission.

Sri Indulal Shah, President of the World Council of Sathya Sai Organisations, spoke on the scope and purpose of the National Seminar and invited Bhagavan to inaugurate the Seminar and confer His benediction on it.

In the course of His discourse Bhagavan Baba called upon the teachers to remember that they were dealing, with tender children and that it was incumbent on them, by example and precept, "to let the urges for Truth, Right conduct, Peace, Love and Non-violence blossom in their hearts. These spiritual treasures alone can ensure happiness and joy."

Bhagavan Baba urged the teachers to infuse into the teaching of even academic subjects one or other of the human values (details of Bhagavan's discourse are published elsewhere).

The seminar then adjourned for the afternoon session, which was addressed by Dr. S. N. Saraf, former Educational Adviser to the Planning Commission and at present Adviser to the Sathya Sai Education in Human Values Trust, Mr. Art-Ong Jumsai from Bangkok and Sri Sanjeev Chaudhry from New Delhi.

Dr. Saraf said that the EHV programme has two facets, a minimum programme, comprising school cleanliness, morning assembly, prayers, silent-sitting, observance of holy days—religious and national—and national unity, which are directly linked to the basic human values. This programme will be introduced in all schools after the heads of institutions are put through awareness courses. The other facet is an intensive programme of value orientation which will be introduced in selected institutions in an educational cluster in order to make the best use of the available resources in personnel and to assess the impact of the programme on teachers and children.

Believing that the primary stage of education is the most impressionable and formative period in a child's career, the programme of Education in Human Values is confined to primary schools and primary school teachers. Considering the magnitude of the numbers involved, this is a big challenge. The orientation and training of primary school teachers gets the first priority. The orientation programme should be of such a high order that it develops positive attitudes and imparts necessary skills so that the teacher plays the role of a human bridge between the school and the outside world.

It is expected that by November 1985, all State Governments will have initiated necessary steps to introduce the programme with the help of the Sathya Sai Education in Human Values Trust. The National Council of Educational Research and Training, which is the technical arm of the Union Ministry of Education, has realised the crucial role which the Sathya Sai Organisation is playing in developing a dogma-free programme for inculcating moral values among children. The programme has now become a national movement of educational reform and is also having its impact on many countries abroad. "There is no turning back," he said.

Science and Human Values

Dr. Art-Ong Jumsai, a leading scientist from Thailand, delivered an illuminating address on the scientific basis for the practice of human values in life. He illustrated his thesis by pointing out how human values such as Truth and Love, which were considered primarily spiritual qualities, are found to be valid even from the scientist's point of view. Scientists, for instance, have now found that what is observed by the human eye may be an illusion or a misrepresentation of the reality. They are also coming to the view that what is subject to change cannot be true. Dr. Jumsai gave an example of his experience in London when he saw, during a period of meditation, the picture of an instrument for measuring microwaves, which was the subject of his doctoral thesis. This experience revealed to him that there was a cosmic source of knowledge which was superior to the instruments used by scientists. "All we have to do is to learn to turn to the Universal and experience the Truth."

He referred also to experiments conducted in the Bangkok University, which had shown how plants responded to the display of love or hatred towards them. It was found that "love is a form of energy and when we show love towards someone, it comes back to us in the same form." "It has been proved that even thought is a form of energy and when our thoughts are motivated by desires, we cannot be peaceful. If we free the mind from desires and thoughts we will have peace." Dr. Jumsai pointed out that our thoughts influence our environment and hence we should practise non-violence towards everything around us. "We must love animals and birds also as a part of us; we must not abuse Nature by destroying trees and natural things." The density of Carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is increasing in the world with the result that within 15 years the temperature in the world will rise by another two degrees and this may bring about a rise in the sea level owing to the melting of the Arctic icecap. This poses a threat to cities like Bangkok which are only a few feet above sea level. The scientific basis for observing non-violence towards all things in creation is becoming increasingly clear. The five basic human values are an integral part of the science of human life, he concluded.

Mr. Sanjeev Chaudhry spoke at length on the role of the schoolteacher, the headmaster, the inspector and the educational authorities in implementing the EHV programme.

Impact on students and teachers

The delegates to the seminar met later in the night, statewise, for fellowship sessions and discussed at length their experiences in implementing EHV in their schools. These sessions gave an opportunity to the delegates to exchange views and reinforce their commitment to this vital programme.

The next day, the morning session was devoted to demonstrations of key teaching techniques. There were talks, accompanied by demonstrations, on story telling, integrated approach to value teaching, silent-sitting and evaluation. Each of the four speakers—Kum. Sujatha Vijayaraghavan, Smt. P. Kameshwari, Sri Sanjeev Chaudhry and Smt. Kamala Pandya—explained the concept and methodology of each of the techniques concerned. Prof. S.R. Rohidekar, who presided over the session, made significant comments and clarified various points arising out of the speeches.

An interesting session was devoted to presenting impressions of teachers about implementing EHV in their schools. Nine speakers took the floor: Sri L.C. Kaul (Delhi), Smt. Pramila Nair

(Bangalore), Mr. Rizwanul Haque (Jamshedpur), Srimati Amuda Jayram (Surat), Sri C.N. Shanmugasundaram (Madras), Smt. Urmil Luthra (Delhi), Sri Madhav (Bombay), Sardar Lambhar Singh (Dharamsala, H.P.); and Sri N. Radhakrishnan. The delegates were enthralled to learn how EHV had improved the working atmosphere in schools and how the students were enthusiastically responding to it. Instances of parents' satisfaction with the programme were also mentioned. Sri M. K. Kaw, Commissioner and Secretary of Education, Government of Himachal Pradesh, presided over the session. He thanked the teachers for their significant contribution.

The valedictory session of the Seminar, which was held in the afternoon, was addressed by Sri K. C. Pant, Union Minister for Education, who had flown by helicopter from Bangalore earlier in the morning.

The session began with the mass chanting of the Sarvadharm prayer by all the delegates.

Dr. V. K. Gokak, Vice Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, welcomed Sri Pant and other distinguished visitors and gave a profile of the special features of the educational scheme of the Sathya Sai Institute.

Sri Indulal Shah gave an outline of the activities being carried on by Sai Organisation in the fields of education and community service.

Sri Sanjeev Chaudhry presented a report on the recommendations of the Seminar-cum-workshop to serve as guidelines to all the delegates.

Reiterating its full commitments to value—oriented education in the country, the Seminar viewed the efforts of the Sathya Sai Trust to have a uniform pattern of education in Human Values all over the country as a significant step towards achieving national integration. In the light of the experience gained by the programme of Education in Human Values in various states the Seminar committed itself to the five basic human values of Truth, Righteous Conduct, Peace, Love and Non-Violence as values which are universal and represent the essence of all world religions. Noting with satisfaction the progress of the programme in various States of India, the Seminar rededicated itself to the task of intensifying the programmes in all schools in the country.

The workshop directed all the delegates to the following course of action:

- (a) Foremost, all delegates shall strive their utmost for practising human values in their own personal lives.
- (b) The family is the starting point for harmony in the Nation and the delegates shall work towards making their own homes the nurseries of human values.
- (c) The delegates will carry the message of human values to all their colleagues in the respective schools and motivate them to undergo a formal course of training.
- (d) The delegates will work in co-operation with each other to achieve cent percent coverage of all the schools in their respective towns and cities.
- (e) The intention behind this would be to supplement each other's efforts by earliest implementation of the programme in all the schools.

- (f) The worship has reaffirmed its confidence in the combination of teaching devices suggested under the programme, namely, Direct approach and the Integrated approach of the text and co-curriculum. The focus of attention will continue to be the impressionable primary age-group.
- (g) Wherever the State Governments have already introduced the programme in the school system, the delegates under the guidance of the Trust, will offer their mite to support the noble attempt of the government in achieving success in its avowed policy of value-based education.

The delegates expressed their complete faith in the global perspective of the EHV Programme and regarded it as a vital element in achieving peace for the individual and collective peace for the whole world. The delegates expressed their heart-felt gratitude to Bhagavan Baba for giving them this programme and providing an opportunity to conduct their deliberations in His divine presence.

Mr. Pant Commends Sai Education

Sri K. C. Pant, in his address, hailed Bhagavan Baba as "an eminent spiritual leader who is revered by millions," and who has built up a magnificent educational institution in a remote corner of India. Mr. Pant observed that all ideas that are necessary for meeting the needs of Indian education are already being tried out by the Sathya Sai Institute at its various campuses and in Prasanthi Nilayam.

Mr. Pant went on to say: "We have to give a new orientation to our education." He said: The Government proposes to present a document setting out the present state of education in the country and diagnosing its weakness. The public and all those interested in education will be given an opportunity to discuss this document and present their views. Government's new educational policy will be formulated after such a public debate. "We are keen to take into account the views of all the teachers, students and thinkers in the country before we formulate our policy," he said.

Mr. Pant deplored the fact that out of five lakhs of primary schools in the country nearly two lakhs did not have proper buildings and as many as 37% of the schools were single teacher schools. Sixty percent of the children in primary schools are drop-outs at the elementary stage itself. The teachers should see that this is prevented by approaching the parents. Non-formal education may be necessary to children who are unable to attend school. There was also the problem of adult illiteracy. There were nine crores of illiterates.

The primary school teacher plays the role of a path-finder. It is important that the teacher must practice what he preaches. If that is achieved, there will be no need for anything else. The nation will be safe when teachers practise these basis values. Stressing the importance of national unity, Mr. Pant said there has been a great deal of turmoil in the country. "There can be no compromise where the unity of the country is involved. This country is one and will remain one in the spirit of love and harmony. We have to solve our problems through dialogues, through discussions in a democratic process and abide by non-violence." Mr. Pant condemned the wave of terrorism in the country. The children should be taught that terrorism is cowardly and should be rooted out. The need for developing human values was never greater than now. Information is one of the

most important means of teaching, as I saw in the library and the exhibitions. While the teacher is entitled to know about a good teaching method or a good examination system, I think that he has to find a way of winning the confidence of the child and develop him as a good citizen." The whole world is looking towards India to provide a synthesis by which the world can be united, regardless of creed, religion, nationality or language. Mr. Pant commended the enthusiasm of teachers who had come from all parts of the country to participate in the workshop and the seminar.

"Being in this campus I need not say anything about value-oriented education. Let the glory of this Institute spread all over the country," he concluded.

Bhagavan, in His valedictory address bringing the Seminar to a close, said that knowledge about the physical world can help to meet the physical needs of man, but cannot confer peace. Food is necessary but is not everything in life. Even as material comforts increase, mental worries increase. What we need today is the perfection of the heart. Broadening of the heart is the true purpose of education.

Wherever we turn, Bhagavan said, we hear high praise of human achievement in science and technology, in discovering the secrets of atomic and sub-atomic phenomena. But, mankind is sunk in fear and anxiety, greed and hatred. Man has no peace of mind, for that can be gained only by purifying the mind. The mind can be cleansed only by means of moral discipline, curbing of evil desires and the removal of selfishness. Selfishness can exclude all else as beyond compassion and consideration. When you present human values before the children, and through them to their parents, you have to emphasise this point: love and understanding, sympathy and respect must extend to all men, without distinction of region, religion, race and nationality. Unless this is done, human civilisation built up in the course of centuries will be imperiled and even destroyed. Moral decline is a calamity far worse than economic backwardness.

For, man does not and cannot live and move away from and apart from society. Individual freedom has to be moderated and regulated by the norms and ideals formulated by society for the common good. The arrogant ego has to be tamed, so that the person can be a useful limb of society. It is not mechanical submission, but fruitful co-operation in the task of earning peace and prosperity. The social sense is the source of gratitude and responsibility. Encourage it in the children; they must share with other children the things they value. They have the duty to spread love, to keep away from falsehood, violence and hatred. They must feel one with the members of the family and their mates in the school and friends outside. They can be examples of the value-based life, when they adhere to Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Non-Violence and Love. Education has become a process of agitation; it must become a process of elevation for the individual and society. As teachers, you must keep this ever in view. Induct the children into programmes of meaningful social service. Let them taste the joy, along with you.

Besides the five values mentioned, I want you to plant in the tender hearts of children reverence for the motherland. It is the source of the heritage which they have to maintain and develop. Children of today have to grow into guardians of the glory of Bharat. They have to imbibe the ideals held aloft by our culture and dedicate their lives to preserve and promote it. You have to plant in their hearts a pardonable pride in the country and its culture. They must

learn to revere Bharat, and to maintain untarnished the honour of the Motherland. "This is my motherland, this is the land of my birth and the breath of my life," they must joyfully assert. Of course, you, teachers, must have the love steady and strong, so that you can impart it to these tender children whose destiny you are shaping.

Each state is a limb of Bharat. The body has hands and feet, eyes and ears, all doing their share to keep the body alive and active. When the body is cut into pieces, the life principle is destroyed. The unity of the country must be maintained by each limb contributing its share and cooperating with the rest. It is a narrow view to emphasise the limb and ignore the body. Only small minds will entertain such ideas. Every one born in Bharat must resolve to serve Bharat, with all the strength, all the skills, all the enthusiasm and knowledge Bharat has given him. Inspire the children to follow this path.

Nowadays, children of Bharat are fascinated by foreign lands; they have no confidence in the progress of their own land. As soon as they secure a B.E. or M.B.B.S. degree, they emigrate to Iran, Iraq, Dubai or U.S.A. and neglect the needs of the home country. "What Bharat cannot give is not worth accepting", is an ancient Sanskrit proverb.

Love of one's country, the duty to serve it to the best -of one's capacity, the desire to develop it into a prosperous land—these do not mean hatred towards other countries and contempt for other cultures. No. When each country rises to the full height of its stature, mankind itself will reach its consummation. There is only one caste—humanity, there is only one language, the language of the heart; one religion, the religion of Love. Implant these ideas firmly in the hearts of children.

The historic Seminar came to a close with the singing of National Anthem by the entire assembly.

From The East

Slowly the Orange Halo is coming over the Eastern Horizon,
only a few years back could hardly be seen
and now many seekers have gone
Slowly the footprints of gold are walking round Bharat
and soon they'll come to our distant shores
With the revival—touching the hearts of millions
there is a re-legion-into love
that finally unites all in a common bond
Service Projects, new education measures—
the adoration of God in Form
Slowly the Sun is rising—Orange and bright Light
spreading at the dawn—
And when He comes His Message will have already begun to be sung—
and the weary souls will take heed—

almost unable to believe who has come
blinded eyes will see as the scales of death and ignorance drop off
dead ears and mute tongues will hear and new sounds will be heard
proclaiming the Power of Love—
From all yugas—since Vishnu began and Brahma enacted—
As Sri Sathya comes over the horizon—the eyes of the populace
have never witnessed such an Advent
The dawn has broken—the message has come—
May every soul get drenched in the Glory—The Beauty—The Truth of the ONE

—*Michael Hollander*

Sing a Song When You Are Angry

In his discourse on Yugadi day this year, Bhagavan spoke at length on the damage which hatred can do to a person and gave several recipes for controlling anger and hatred.

Here is a piece, contributed to the American Sai Newsletter by two children, which reveals how they have imbibed Bhagavan's message:

"One day my sister and I weren't getting along so good. When we feel bad, mad, or sad, we sing, so we made up this song:

I see the spark in you,
It's the same bright spark in me,
So I could never hurt you,
It's the same as hurting me.

You are my loving brother,
It's true as true can be,
I see you up and down and around,
And living inside me!

Joshua Kintz, age 10, Tara Kintz, age 8 1/2, Idlewild, California.

NATIONAL EHV SEMINAR:

"Live the Values and lead the Children"

Erudition is of zero value,

*When man has no truth, right conduct,
peace, non-violence
Generosity is of Zero value,
Powerful position is of no worth,
Praiseworthy action is valueless*

*When man has no truth, right conduct,
peace, non-violence;
For these four are the walls of the hoary
mansion of Sanathana Dharma.
The life within, the vital force of all the four,
Is Prema—Love, selfless, steady, sublime.*

Embodiments of Love,

All living beings on earth have bodies composed of physical elements, but, the human body is unique in many respects. This makes man the crown of Creation. For instance, man has his spinal column erect and not horizontal like the rest. As a result, he can, by Yogic exercises, awaken the latent vital energy, the Kundalini, and train it to ascend to the Sahasrara, the thousand-petalled lotus that crowns the brain. The gross impulses become subtle; they unite and are sublimated there by.

Another feature of the human body, another boon man has been blessed with, is his intellect, (Buddhi) which enables him to analyse and determine what is right and what is wrong, what is lasting and what is ephemeral. The head is the most important part of the body (Sarvasya gathrasya siram pradhanam). The head discriminates and decides upon action and behaviour, which build up habits which shape one's character (Seelam). This too is possible only for the human species.

The animal in man

But man is unaware of these boons. He spends his years of life as a beast does. Beasts are deluded by the desert mirage; they run towards it in order to quench their thirst; they die of despair and exhaustion. Men, too, are deluded by the objective world; they run towards it in order to quench the thirst of the senses for pleasure and happiness. They die, disappointed and exhausted. The dream is real until one awakes. The pleasures derived while awake are known to be unreal, when one awakens into the light of one's Divine Substance.

However, man is not allowed to know his glory, by the six thieves who hide in his mind—lust, desire, anger, greed, undue attachment, pride and hatred. They pollute his values by their emanations. There are also eight waves of pride which obstruct his attempt to know himself—the pride of caste, of physical strength, of scholarship, of youth, of wealth, of personal charm, of overlordship and one's spiritual attainments. No one discovers that these are liable to disintegrate very soon. Sankara has warned men against placing faith in any of these sources of pride. "The All-Powerful Time robs you of these in a trice," Sankara has said. Even while laughing and playing as a boy, youth overtakes you, and old age creeps in even while you imagine that youth is still with you. Death waits round the corner, even as old age overtakes you.

Prema the basic principle

Just as the rays of the sun absorb water vapour from the sea, gather them into clouds, drop them as rain on earth so that they may flow as rivers back into the sea, the senses of man contact the world and collect experiences out of which the sacred and sustaining ones are selected, stored and utilised by the mind, as values, as instruments for individual and social uplift. They are Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Non-violence and Prema. For the first four, the last value, Prema, is the life-giving spring. They can be achieved most quickly by Prema.

Prema (Love) is the basic principle of human nature. That short two-syllabled word has immeasurable potentiality. Too often, it is confused with the affection of the mother for the child, the attachment between husband and wife, the dependence of friend on friend or the relationship of teacher and pupil. In every one of these, a trace of egoistic need can be discerned. Love untainted by ego is genuine Love. It is all-inclusive, pure, full and free. It is the Love that urged Meera to walk away, Tukaram to sing and Chaitanya to dance. Love can emerge from the heart and brighten with delight only after anger (the mastiff), pride (the boar) and the ego-sense (the buffalo) are put out of action and removed from the heart. So long as these beasts occupy the heart, man cannot escape being a beast. Being a human, what does he aspire for? Absence of grief and presence of Ananda, and freedom to follow one's will. Grief and joy are like night and day, inevitable phases of life. Freedom for one's will can cause disaster to oneself and others. No. Man must know that he is the Atma; that knowledge is all that is needed for one's Ananda.

Example and precept

You are dealing with tender children, as their teachers, guides and example. You have to equip yourselves for those roles by living the values that distinguish man. Establish the values in yourselves, practise them and derive Ananda there from yourselves. "As the King, so the subjects," says the proverb. Live the ideals and lead the children along. Let the urges for Truth, Right conduct, Peace, Non-violence blossom in their hearts. These spiritual treasures alone can ensure happiness and joy. Or else, why did Dasaratha, the heroic emperor who fought on the side of the Devas and granted them victory, seek guidance from sage Vasishta, or Emperor Janaka welcome the sage Yagnavalkya to his court? Why did the indomitable five, the Pandava brothers, seek Krishna's counsel and cure for their ills? And consider how Sivaji sought the advice of Samarth Ramadas, for ruling the empire he founded.

These authentic human values cannot be learnt from books or from lessons given by teachers or gifted by elders. They can be acquired only by experience and example. You must be the examples and the children have to experience. You have come to Prasanthi Nilayam for this seminar and workshop, from long distances, spending large sums of money, and taking days for the journey. Gather from here in return all the information and inspiration you can. For, these values are 'he goals, the bases, the roots, the keys of human progress.

Truth is unity of thought, word and deed. When action is saturated with Truth, it becomes Dharma or Right. When all actions are right, Peace reigns and one's mind is free from traces of violence. Love is the sustenance for all the four. Love as thought is Truth, as action it is Dharma, as feeling it is Santhi and as understanding it is Ahimsa, Non-violence. When these four fundamental values that raise man to even Divine levels are practised and propagated by you, in

school after school, in village after village, Bharat will justify the meaning of that name: Bha (light) rath (delight)—drawing delight from light.

Spiritual arithmetic

The subjects that you teach at school may be different but, through everyone, you can emphasise human values. The human body is a vastly busy, well organised chemical laboratory. Every limb is activated by rasa. When you hit the table, the table too hits you with equal force. Learn from this that every action has to meet with reaction. While teaching mathematics, you can explain the role of plus and minus as affecting, even in life, the fate of man. In arithmetic three minus one is two. But in the mathematics of the spirit, three minus one is one. God mirrored in Nature is seen as the Image, Man. There are three entities here, but remove the mirror and what remains is not two but only One, the One God.

And, above all, be always aware of the two meanings of the Sanskrit word for man—Manava. (1) Maa means 'not' and nava means 'new'. Man is not new. He has come trailing the impact of countless lives. (2) Maa (Ignorance) na (without) va (acting). Man should act with full jnana, with no trace of ignorance. Model your lives on the lines of these two meanings and be blessed.

*—Bhagavan's inaugural discourse at the National Seminar-cum-workshop on
Education in Human Values, Prasanthi Nilayam, 1-6-1985*

A Lesson for a Rani

There is a small story with regard to Ramakrishna Paramahansa. In the midst of giving a discourse, he found a disciple by name Rani Rasmani sitting and pretending to listen to the discourse. He went straight to her and gave this Rani two slaps. Others who were witnessing this event were surprised and were thinking that Ramakrishna did not have a sound mind. Rasmani also was surprised at this and was trying to think if anything was wrong with her and why the guru was treating her with disrespect. Truly, if one knows one's own faults, he will not commit those faults. In fact, because Rasmani did not know her fault she was not able to realise what was wrong with her. Ramakrishna told her that if she came there to think of her problems of litigation, and not to listen to the discourse, she might as well do so in her house.

In the same manner, some people who come and sit here to listen to what was being said here waver and flutter like the leaves of a tree. They move about and look around as if they are crows. They are not able to sit steadily. They look this side and that side. They are unconcerned and unaffected by all that happens here. They cannot even sit properly. Unless you have a steady mind, you cannot understand matters relating to the Atma. They also set a bad example to others. People who have a wavering mind cannot be true yogis, even though they may pass off as good devotees in external appearances.

—Baba ("Chinna Katha")

London Conference's Call to U. N.

A call to educational authorities in all countries "to adopt an open-minded attitude towards the EHV initiative, examine the programme and put it to the test," was made by 'he International Conference on Education in Human Values held in London during March 29 to 31 (a brief report of which appeared in our May issue). The Conference urged the United Nations to declare 1986 as Education in Human Values Year.

Mr. Lucas Ralli, President of the Sathya Sai Baba Council of the United Kingdom, reports that the following resolutions were passed at the end of the three-day Conference:

The Conference takes cognizance of the decline in spirituality and the attendant consequences in the world on all fronts, and accepts the EHV Programme as an effective instrument in bringing about a reversal of this decline.

It calls upon educational authorities at both local and central levels, state/ country and federal/national levels, to adopt an open-minded attitude towards the EHV initiatives, examine the programme and put it to the test.

It calls upon individual teachers and teachers' organisations to come forward and be enriched by the EHV Programme so as to enable them to teach effectively.

It calls for the provision of teacher trainers as a necessary adjunct to the successful implementation of the EHV Programme. This should be given the highest priority.

It calls for the pooling of effort in EHV activities, such as seminars and symposia on value orientation to education, throughout the international community.

It calls for the intensification of EHV research, development and exchange of results and ideas, so as to reap the benefits of cross-fertilization.

It calls upon the United Nations Organisation to declare 1986 an Education in Human Values Year.

Since the Conference ended, already fifty teachers have indicated their willingness to become teacher trainers for the Education in Human Values programme, says Mr. Ralli.

U.S. centres to go ahead

In the wake of the Conference in London, which was attended by several delegates from the U.S., the newly formed EHV/Bal Vikas Board of Directors in U.S. convened two special meetings on April 20 to inform officers and members of American Sathya Sai Centres about the London Conference decisions. A national meeting of the Sathya Sai American EHV/Bal Vikas Committee was held at the residence of Dr. Michael Goldstein to review the progress of the EHV/ Bal Vikas movement in the U.S. and to plan the programme for the coming years. A teacher-training manual will be produced shortly. A Course for trainer-teachers will be held in

mid-August with the help of teacher-trainer teams from the U.S. and other countries. Mr. Denis Dake, Editor of the Sathya Sai Children's Newsletter, has been appointed national Bal Vikas Convener. Regional Conveners will be appointed in due course.

EASWARAMMA DINA SANDESH:

"Revere Truth and Love as your Parents"

*"The body is impermanent
All one's wealth is transient
Children and Wife are shadows
Only one's good deeds are lasting companions
Who realises this truth is a true man. "*

Embodiments of love!

All beings in creation, except man, live according to the laws of nature and carry out their functions. Without any concern for the morrow, they lead their lives, content with whatever they can enjoy. Nature sees to it that they do not lack anything needed for their existence. Man, on the contrary, is never contented, however much he may acquire and whatever comforts he may enjoy. He yearns for various things and looks upon the desire for these objects as love. But if such attachment to objects is fostered, there is no end to the process. He does not realise that such love is based upon self-interest and self-centredness. It should be clear that what passes for love today in the world is really selfishness and self-interest. In every thought, every word, every action of his, the demon of self-interest is present. Man has become a plaything of selfish impulses.

Caught up in the coils of selfishness, his entire life becomes a delusion and a snare. He is a prisoner of his selfishness. Such a person can never experience what is real freedom.

What, then, is true Prema (love)? Pure, unselfish love towards all living beings, considered as embodiments of the Divine, with no expectation of reward, is true Love. "Adweshta sarvabhoothanam, Maitrah, Karuna evacha" ("Free from dislike, friendly and compassionate towards all beings"). With this attitude, when one regards divinity as present in all beings, only then he can have true love. Whatever the vicissitudes one may face, whatever the personal sorrows and privations one may undergo, true love will remain unaffected. Today, when any difficulty arises or when some trouble crops up, love turns into hatred. True love is the sweet fruit that grows out of the fragrant flower of good deeds. Love rules without recourse to the sword. It binds without laws.

True love

Only one who has such true love can be described as human. The man without such love is only human in form. Like the lotus which blooms when the sun rises, the heart of man blossoms when love enters it. Like the glow of the flame in a fire, like the rays of the sun, like waves in the

ocean, divine love is the basic quality of a true human being. It is only when one is filled with pure, unselfish love that he can be called a human being.

It is the association of such pure, divine love with the desires and concerns of the body that affects its purity. Who are one's parents? Who are one's children, relations or friends? Who are we? What were we in our previous lives? What will be our future? Immersed in thoughts of these impermanent relationships, we are losing sight of the Divine Love that is everlasting and unchanging. Even in experiencing temporary relationships, the nature of Divine Love should be understood. Human birth implies the existence of parents. But the relationship between a son and his parents is corporeal. The parents are instrumental for the birth, but they are not the cause. However, even as instruments, elements of the Divine are present in them.

Truth, love and wisdom

It should be understood that human birth is the progeny of Truth as father and Love as the mother. Even if one's natural parents are absent, one should not forget the real parents, Truth and Love. When Truth and Love beget Jnana (Wisdom) as son, the true lineage of man is established.

Truth is sacred. It is valid for all time; past, present and future. It is unchanging. Love is eternal. It is indescribably sweet like nectar. Can such Truth and Love beget an unrighteous and evil-minded son? Only one who is wise and free from illusion and ignorance can be a true human being.

Ignorance is not the inherent characteristic of man. There is no room for aberrations in him. Egoism is out of place. He should revel in the ecstasy of Jnana (the consciousness of the Divine). His true form should be bliss. Discrimination should be natural to him. Today this true nature of man is being forgotten.

It may be asked whether Truth and Love have begotten only a son (Jnana) and not a daughter. There is a daughter, who can be identified as Santhi (Peace). Hence, wisdom should be the characteristic quality of men and peace and serenity should be the distinguishing quality of women.

So are to be regarded as friends and relatives? The Yogis should be looked upon as friends and good qualities should be considered as true Kinsmen. Yoga does not consist in meditation and austerities or various forms of breath-control. True Yoga is the mergence of the individual soul in the Omni-Self. It is the withdrawal of the senses from external objects and turning them inwards. To allow the senses a free rein is not Yoga but bhoga (sensual enjoyment). Such indulgence will lead to 'roga' (disease). Yoga implies self-control and renunciation, leading to the experiencing of Ananda (bliss).

Student's duty

Addressing the students, Bhagavan said you owe a supreme duty towards your parents who are responsible for all that you are. You will be less than human if you do not show your gratitude to them for all that they have done to you. Parental love means for the children what the sun's rays mean for the blossoming of a flower. Wherever you may go, whatever you may achieve, whatever position you may occupy, you must always remember your mother with love and

reverence. The man who fails to remember the mother and the motherland (the land of his birth) with affection is a veritable demon. There is nothing human in such persons. One should cherish one's mother and the land of his birth with the deepest regard. There is no birth without a mother. Because the mother is responsible for one's existence, devotion and love for the mother are the marks of a true human being.

To have the qualities and lead the life of a human being worth the name, one must develop pure, unselfish, unbounded love. Man derives many kinds of benefits from animals, birds, plants and trees. They do not confer these benefits out of any self-interest or the desire for reward. Man enjoys these benefits without displaying any sense of gratitude. Today man not only does not help others but even harms himself by his actions. He is thereby dehumanising himself.

Eschew selfishness

There is, therefore, a compelling need for youth to develop the true spirit of love through the Sadhana of Seva (service) and sublimate their life. They should not fritter away their life-span in the pursuit of ephemeral pleasures and comforts. They make no effort to understand the basic purpose of human life, what is permanent and enduring. They are promoting dissensions and differences instead of cultivating unity and harmony. Selfishness is the root cause of these undesirable tendencies. Without abjuring selfishness there can be no true self-conceit (ahamkaram). Ostentation (adambaram) is the son. Those who are filled with envy and ostentatiousness are really the children of conceit. The first requisite is to get rid of Ahamkara (egoistic conceit). All evil traits arise from this 'Ahamkara'.

What is the basis for this conceit? If one is conceited, there must be something which justifies the feeling. If there is nothing in one which warrants his conceit, what is there to gloat over? You may be a scholar or a wealthy person, or very clever and intelligent. But all these do not help you to secure God's grace. Saint Tukaram sang: "Oh Swami! I am not endowed with knowledge. I am incapable of performing Yagnas and Yagas or doing severe penance. There is one easy path that I know to win your grace. That is the path of Divine Love. It is the royal road that will lead me to the Presence of Rama." Tukaram declared emphatically that Rama cannot be realised by any other path except the path of love. This is the inner meaning of the statement: Love is God and God is Love.

Seva and purity

Hence, in this precious period of your youth, in this sacred golden time, you must cultivate sacred thoughts and holy attitudes. You must be filled with a sense of selfless dedication. This can come only through seva (service to others) in which there is no egoistic pride. You must revel in giving rather than receiving. When the Divine is there to give all that you need, why seek or receive anything from others?

All your actions must be aimed at purifying your minds and hearts to experience the Divine. When the heart is pure, the light of wisdom shines. The illumined heart becomes the receptacle of pure love. Love is everything. A person without love is a living corpse. Love is not the relationship between man and man, or between man and other objects. It is inherent in every being. "Mamatma Sarvabhootatma" ("I am the Spirit immanent in all beings"). The Divine (Atma) is present in all beings. The Atma has no form. It is experienced as Love. If there is no

Love, there is no Atma. Hence, love is our life-breath. Love is our soul. Love is our everything. It should be unchanging. Young people should cultivate unwavering love and a steady vision.

Bhrama and Brahma

The basic things we should know are: Karma is the root cause of our birth. The root cause of Karma is sorrow. Ignorance is the cause of sorrow. Ignorance itself is the result of Bhrama (the delusion which makes one regard the real as unreal and the unreal as real.) And as long as Bhrama persists, the Brahman cannot be recognised. When we are rid of this delusion, then sorrow will cease. When sorrow goes, ignorance disappears.

Love of God (Daivapriti) and fear of sin (Papabheethi) are the two requisites for sanctifying our life. You have to strive constantly to please your parents. If you do not show your gratitude to the parents who have brought you up with so much love and labour, to whom else are you going to be grateful? You must cultivate a broad heart and develop love towards all beings as emblems of the Divine. You have to live up to the Upanishadic injunctions to regard your father, mother, guru, and guest as God. Your love should not be based only on the physical forms. Bodies are perishable and impermanent. Beyond the biological parents, there are permanent parents whom you should revere. They are Truth and Love. Though the body may go, Truth remains as the permanent father. Likewise Love is the eternal mother. It grows with the passage of time and never diminishes. By regarding Truth and Love as your parents, as essential for your existence as your eyes or as the two wings for a bird or the two wheels for a cart, lead worthy lives. On this sacred day of remembrance, firmly enshrine in your hearts reverence for Truth and Love, and make your lives sublime by rendering dedicated service to your fellow-men and women.

(Bhagavan concluded His inspiring discourse with the singing of "*Prema Muditha Manase Kaho*" and "*Bhajan Bina*").

(Bhagavan's discourse at Prasanthi Mandir on Easwaramma Day, 6-5-1985)

Sai Jagat Samachar

Singapore: The Sathya Sai 60th Birthday Celebrations Committee, representing four Sai Centres here, got up a cultural programme at the P.U.B. Auditorium to observe Easwaramma Day. Bal Vikas children staged dance-dramas, plays from the epics and dances. Mrs. Saroja Paran spoke on the significance of the Mother. —**L. R.**

Bombay: The seventeenth anniversary of Dharmakshetra was celebrated on May 12th, with the newly elected Mayor of Bombay, Sri Chhagan Bhujbal, as the Chief Guest. The Bal Vikas wing of the Sathya Sai Organisation held the spotlight, winning all the laurels in the anniversary programme, which included a "Sai Olympiad" in April, a "mock" U.N. Assembly on May 11 and the presentation of a "U.N. Resolution" on May 12 to the Mayor. Sri Bhujbal said that Sri Sathya Sai Baba will be remembered for thousands of years for what he was doing for the good of mankind.

The Bala Vikas "U.N. General Assembly" was held in the old Council Hall. A "resolution" calling upon the countries of the world to adopt a "life style based upon the five basic human values and on the unity of thought, word and deed, so as to establish world peace by creating an atmosphere whereby man can realise the inherent divinity within," was passed, after an exciting debate. The large gathering of devotees and invitees appreciated the programme.

SEVA IN MANILA

Manila (Philippines): The Sai Centre in Manila, which was started in 1981, has been engaged in service activities such as visits to hospitals and mental patients, organising Narayana Seva on two Sundays in a month, supplying food to children in a charity home run by Mother Teresa's organisation and running weekly Bal Vikas classes. Besides weekly bhajans, various festivals are celebrated attended by hundreds of devotees.

BHAGAVAN AT EYE CAMP

Prasanthi Nilayam: Bhagavan Baba inaugurated on May 4th in Easwaramma High School a free eye camp organised by the West Zone wing of the Tamil Nadu Sathya Sai Samithi with the help of a team of specialists from the Arvind Eye Hospital, Madurai, headed by Dr. G. Venkataswami. Out of 563 patients examined, including over a hundred Muslims, 152 were operated on for cataract. On May 10 spectacles were given to them. Bhagavan distributed dhotis and towels to the men patients and saris to the women. Many of them felt a thrill of joy when they were able to see Bhagavan with their new spectacles. Seva Dal members from Tamil Nadu and students of the Sathya Sai Institute took good care of the patients and assisted the doctors in every way.

HOUSES FOR THE BACKWARD

Bhopal (M. P.): The services of the Sathya Sai Seva Samithi of Bhopal in improving the living conditions of backward communities in the "adopted" village of Sookhi Sevama were commended by the Chief Minister of M. P., Sri Motilal Vora, when he formally handed over on May 21 the keys and pattas of 12 houses constructed by the Samithi. The beneficiaries were seven Harijans, four Adivasis and a village pundit. In addition to the houses, which were built on sites provided by the Government, the Samithi has set up a permanent health centre at a cost of Rs. 40,000. Construction of latrines and smokeless chulas and provision of drinking water have been taken up.

God is the source of all Love; Love God, Love the world as the vesture of God, no more, no less. Through Love, you can merge in the Ocean of Love. Love cures pettiness, hate and grief. Love loosens bonds; it saves man from the torment of birth and death. Love binds all hearts in a soft silken symphony. Seen through the eyes of Love, all beings are beautiful, all deeds are dedicated, all thoughts are innocent. The world is one vast kin.

—Baba

AVATAR VANI:

Students and Seva

The process of education involves the process of self-control and self-denial. No person is free to live as his impulses prod him. Even the impulses are the products of unseen and unknown impacts of previous lives and the pressures, social, cultural and economic, of this life. The impulse for action and the nature of action are determined by various hidden factors. As a result, when one claims that he has achieved or accomplished some thing, he is only revealing his pride and his ignorance. Man is so bound by circumstances and conditions that he cannot act independently of society, of cultural traits and of the will of the Supreme.

This world belongs to God. It has not been mortgaged to Man to be used as he likes. It has to be used for advancing His glory and demonstrating His Love and Power. Man has been endowed with senses, mind and intellect for this very duty. He has therefore to keep them pure and efficient. Of the eight steps laid down by the science of Yoga in order to succeed in this effort, Sama is the first and foremost.

Sama means mind-control; the mind, if properly trained and directed, can liberate man; or else, it can degrade him to the level of beasts. Sama is a great exercise in Tapas or Asceticism. An ascetic is not a person who flees into forests, lives on leaves, and spends his time in God-centred thoughts. True Tapas lies in the mastery over the intellect, the mind and the senses. Now, why are they to be mastered? For achieving constant awareness of Brahman, and be immersed in the Ananda which it is.

The Sadhana for achieving this goal is to concentrate on coordinating one's thoughts, words and deeds and directing them along holy paths. Every thought has to be examined rigorously—can it promote love, joy, peace in us, in the society, in the nation, in the world? Thoughts arise from bursts of emotion or passion. These must be tested and rejected if they would cause evil later or bring ill-fame, if acted upon. Meditation (Dhyana) is the only saviour for such.

Meditation is of two types—meditation on the Personal and on the Impersonal. The first is centred on an idol or picture or an object with form. The mind, while engaged in such meditation, is liable to waver or wander. The second type does not depend on name and form. It dwells on the Universal and the infinite Cosmic Consciousness, Brahman. Its consummation lies in mergence, as heat penetrates an iron ball, immanent, totally and inseparably. Mergence is the result of selfless surrender, as gold surrenders to the smith who melts and rolls, hammers and hits, to turn the gold into a jewel.

Education has to endow you with this eagerness to surrender. The uneducated may assert that his desire must prevail, he must be allowed to correct himself and he ought to shape his career as he wills. But, the learned will be humble and eager to follow the Lord's will. These virtues can be discovered in man only when he engages himself in some activity, say service of his fellowmen. The activity will reveal to him his plus points and faults and help him to improve himself and advance spiritually.

Since you are entering upon intensive social service in the villages of the Sathya Sai Taluk, I must tell you that this activity must open the doors of your minds and hearts, in order to let in the

Light Divine. Your minds and hearts are now moved by gusts of emotion and waves of thought. There is no stability or fixed loyalty. You are led hither and thither by desires that delude and pleasures that are phantoms. So, you must take refuge in the Divine and recognise the Divine in every object and event.

Know that nothing can exist or happen without being willed by God. Egoism and envy are blinding men from this Truth. Bhakti is defined as the awareness of the Lord being one's Reality (swa swarupa anusandhanam). The ego prevents the awareness of this fact. Utilise the time allotted to you in attempts to acquire the awareness and live in that ecstasy. Time flows fast, regardless of circumstance. Time has no friend or foe, no kith and kin, no favourite or competitor. So long as man is bound to the relative world of name and form, he is bound to the wheel of time. But, he can transcend the relative world, if he sanctifies time by good Karma.

Of all good deeds, the best is Seva, intelligent and loving service to those in need. The body is the Temple of God. He resides therein; the intellect, the mind and the senses which constitute the Temple are His, not ours to be handled as our whims dictate. They are His Instruments, to be used by Him, for Him. In the Gurukulams of ancient India, the sages, saints and scholars communicated this message to their pupils and imprinted it on their hearts.

They implanted the seed of 'dedication to the Divine' in the heart, ploughed by faith. The sapling was to be helped to grow by seasonal showers of Dhyana. In time, the flower of Santhi (Peace) turns into the sweet fruit of Ananda. The seed has to be firm; the dedication has to be unconditional. Reality speaking what right has man to desecrate the Temple of God? His duty lies in maintaining the holiness of the Temple and use it for puja, prayer, dhyana and devotion. The intellect, mind and senses are the furniture that belongs to the Temple. They have to be revered as such and used with care. God, residing therein, is the master, the maker and the motivator. You have to worship Him with pure unblemished thoughts, words and deeds.

How can a person escape from blemish? By watching the antics of the mind as a witness and not allowing the body to assist the mind to fulfill its foul desires. The mind by itself cannot commit theft; when it longs to commit it, do not allow the body to obey. When the mind is foiled in this way when it calls upon the body, the mind will give up its evil tendencies. When the child runs forward, the mother tries to catch up. Hence, the child tries to elude her grasp and, falling, hurts itself. Instead, if the mother turns her back, the child too will return to her side. Cultivate this Sadhana. You can master the mind and keep it on the God-ward path. When a festival involves large-scale feeding, people borrow for the occasion cooking vessels from rich persons. After using them, they clean the vessels spick and span before returning them. The rich man will be greatly disturbed and disappointed if the vessels are returned, damaged and unclean. God has lent us, for use in the festival of life, vessels like intellect, mind and senses. We have to use them with gratitude and return them in clean condition.

While in the stage of earning Vidya, you should not yearn for Vishaya. Vidya or study is a spiritual exercise. Vishaya or objects allure and deceive. Cultivate a steady mind and a fixed vision. This is the Tapas that has to supplement studies. Vidya and Tapas are the very breath, the Sadhana of inhaling and exhaling, the proper Pranayama.

Social service is also a Tapas, a spiritual exercise. It promotes the practical application of your knowledge, skills and virtues. Wealth, scholarship, power and prestige are all despicable if they are not directed towards moral ends. Ravana tried to win Sita by parading before her, while She was a captive, his might and wealth. But, Sita threw a blade of grass in his direction and said that he was worth much less. For, he had no mastery over his mind. The mind had rendered him a mean coward and thief.

Youth alone can transform youth. The youth of the villages will be inspired when they find you, graduate and post-graduate students, in Khaki work clothes, evincing practical interest in the cleanliness of the environs, the health of the villagers and in fulfilling their needs. You must bring the youth together and form them into a group which can, with the guidance of the elders, maintain and expand the work done by you. Discover what their needs are, so that we can attend to them. We can, for instance, open gruel centres for the aged poor and their dependents. You have to win their hearts through love. When Love is planted and fostered, factions will disappear from the villages.

Villagers are basically good-natured, God-fearing folk. But politics as well as the attractions of city life have led them to the present impasse. When they hear wise counsel from the lips of children, they are bound to be affected. Train yourselves to speak in their own language to gatherings of villagers.

When you have offered service for some days, I shall proceed to those villages with you and bless your work and the villagers you have served.

Bhagavan's address to students of the Sathya Sai Institute, at the Mandir, Prasanthi Nilayam, 13-5-1985

The Handkerchief

Having had the privilege of living at Prasanthi Nilayam for fourteen months, I carefully observed one particular phenomenon associated with our sweet Lord, Sri Sathya Sai Baba. My observation became focused on Swami's use of the handkerchief after He makes Vibhuti. It brought back memories of my early Catholic upbringing when the altar boys gave the priest a clean white handkerchief in preparation for the transfiguration of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. To me there was always something very sacred about that clean white handkerchief. It seemed to represent a very pure service to the Lord. Inwardly I always wanted to be an altar boy in order to be one of the nearer servants of God. However, being a girl, this privilege was denied to me.

I really never gave Swami's handkerchief much thought until I closely started observing the people who offered Swami a handkerchief. Many of the people who consistently had a handkerchief ready for Swami were those who were doing Seva in the Ashram. I thereby concluded that offering Swami a handkerchief represents serving the Lord.

What is the meaning of 'handkerchief'? Within it we find two key words 'hand' and 'chief'. Basically, the hand represents service. For example, 'lend me a hand', 'give me a hand'; 'chief' comes from the French and means head, also master. Symbolically then, handkerchief can be translated to mean service to the Divine Godhead.

Having decided on the symbolic meaning of handkerchief, I resolved to put my thoughts into direct action. At the next opportunity, I would be prepared to offer Swami a handkerchief. What was required for me to carry out this simple task for Swami? I bought a white handkerchief and placed it in a plastic bag so as to keep it clean and ready for Baba's use. It was important to remember always to carry it with me, as I had no idea when Swami might use it. My dream to become an altar boy was turning into reality.

Shortly thereafter, Swami made Vibhuti box a woman on my immediate right. While I was intently looking at Swami making the Vibhuti, I realized here was my opportunity to serve the Lord. But where was my handkerchief? I had to search deep in my purse, open the plastic bag and offer it to Swami. When I finally looked up and held out the handkerchief, there was Swami patiently waiting for me to serve Him. I wondered who was serving whom. When Swami tossed the handkerchief back into my lap, I was overwhelmed by His powerful love, a love that is even greater than a mother serving a child. To serve Baba, one must have no thought of self.

This experience taught me that I needed always to be prepared. This meant having the handkerchief out and ready for Swami at every single Darshan. I needed also to pay very close attention to every single movement Swami makes so that the handkerchief will be offered when He makes the Vibhuti.

The next handkerchief episode went off very smoothly until I was holding Swami's used handkerchief. At that instant, the woman next to me started asking me some things about the handkerchief. At first I became very irritated with her and simply wanted her to quit bothering me so I could continue to watch Swami give Darshan. She persisted until it finally dawned on me that I should give her the handkerchief. I already had one and certainly did not need two. Immediately, one of the great teachings of the Gita came to my mind: Do not be attached to the fruits of your action. I handed the lady the handkerchief and was immediately rewarded by her sweet 'Thank you'.

As the handkerchief saga continued, Swami again materialized Vibhuti. However, this time nobody offered Him a handkerchief. I was very reluctant to hand Him one, because I was sitting in the third row and would have to climb over other people. My thoughts were primarily concerned with what other people would think of me. (Pushy Polly) How can one be of any service if one is only concerned with one's self-image? As a result of my inaction, an opportunity to serve was lost, but a very powerful lesson was learned. If your action towards Him is pure, your steadiness towards Him will be rewarded.

Only a few days later, I was given the opportunity to practise my new lesson. This time Swami made Vibhuti some distance from me. I immediately held out my handkerchief for Him, knowing that someone else would probably offer Him one before He reached me. What happened is that He took one handkerchief from another lady. As I started to put mine away, He

immediately came and plucked it out of my hands and graciously wiped His Loving Hands. What joy and love I felt for my Lord who was only rewarding me for a deep inner need to serve Him.

The above situation happened during morning Darshan. I usually purchased a new handkerchief immediately after Swami used one. However, on this particular day I became side-tracked and forgot to make the purchase. I quietly said to myself that Swami would not make Vibhuti near me twice in one day, that was highly improbable. But the highly improbable soon became a stark reality. Swami made Vibhuti almost directly in front of me and then He quietly waved his Vibhuti—filled finger near my face. Nobody offered Swami a handkerchief. The people who usually had one ready for Him were nowhere to be found. What a difficult lesson for me. I was not even capable of doing the smallest service for the Lord. How would He ever use me for some more difficult task? You cannot forget the Lord's service for even one single moment.

There were still more lessons to be learned about service because Swami once again took my handkerchief. But this time, instead of tossing it back to me, He threw it to the Italian lady sitting directly in front of me. I selfishly pulled it out of her lap before I realized that I should let her have it. In `my mind' I had already promised this handkerchief to someone else. My `I' got in the way of service by not truly letting Swami work through me. The Italian woman insisted I keep the handkerchief.

Approximately 15 minutes after the above incident, while I was quietly sitting in my favourite Mandir window seat waiting for Bhajans, this same Italian lady fell on the back steps in the Mandir and cut her head. I was immediately called to help and administer first-aid measures and take her back to her room for comfort. I reluctantly had to make the supreme sacrifice of giving up my favourite Bhajan seat to serve the lady. If you are pure in your desire to serve, you must be willing to sacrifice (even one's greatest love, which for me was sitting for Bhajan with Swami.) Swami says, `Where there is love there is sacrifice'. Learning to serve with love is learning to sacrifice.

My final episode with the handkerchief Leela involved one of my last Darshans. I was having visa difficulties and had been praying to Swami that I could remain in His Physical Presence. On this particular day, Swami made Vibhuti for one of His teachers very near the Mandir. I was sure that either a student or teacher would offer Swami a handkerchief. However, he walked straight to me and took my handkerchief. I prayed for His guidance regarding my visa and that He use me as His Divine instrument. Almost immediately, I returned to the U.S.A. and began taking care of my father, who was suffering from a recent illness. Once again Swami demanded that I sacrifice what I most desired, which was to remain in India. True service involves the sacrifice of what we most desire. I have only begun to understand the great significance of these handkerchief leelas.

Each morning as I look at Swami's pure white handkerchief that He so delicately touched with His loving Hand, I am reminded of these wonderful lessons:

1. To serve, one must have no thought of self.
2. Always be prepared to serve the Lord.

3. Do not be attached to the fruits of your service.
4. Think only of your service to the Lord, and not of thoughts concerning your own self-image.
5. Do not forget the Lord's service for even one single moment.
6. Learning to serve with love is learning to sacrifice.
7. True service involves the sacrifice of what you most desire.

I pray that by putting these lessons into practice my own flesh and blood will be transformed into Swami's Divine love, just as bread and wine were transformed into the body and blood of Christ at the Last Supper. I pray these experiences will have some meaning for my Sai brothers and sisters.

—Polly Kirby, New York

AMRITA DHARA:

The Individual and the Atma

Devotee: What is the best way to relate to the world?

Baba: Do not think about the world. Do not spend time thinking about your relationships to individuals or to the world. These are all impermanent relationships. They have to do with the body. The body is like a water bubble. The mind is like a mad monkey. Do not follow either the body or the mind. Follow the Conscience. It is above the mind. It is permanent. It is the voice of God, the voice of unchanging truth inside.

Devotee: How do we make out the voice of Conscience from the other voices?

Baba: Conscience is always only one. Whenever there are many voices we can call it the conscious, but not Conscience. The Conscious relates to the little self; it is the condition of the mind in the waking state. In it there will be many voices and differences, but Conscience is always one and unchanging. Conscious, Conscience and Consciousness...these are three terms that must be understood. Consciousness refers to Chaitanya. Chaitanya is the omni-present Supreme Spirit, the One Reality pervading everywhere. From it comes Conscience, which is the voice of truth inside. Conscience is the soul, the spark of the divine. The Conscious refers to the various instruments. All this in the world can be called conscious; it is all part of the conscious state.

There are four states. The waking state is the conscious. Then there is the subconscious, which relates to the dream state. The deep sleep state is unconscious. In and above all these is the Super-conscious. Conscience is the voice of the Super-conscious, the divinity residing within. On the spiritual path you rise from the conscious, which is what you perceive in the world, to Conscience, the divinity which is in your heart, to Consciousness the one, omnipresent, unchanging sound. These are the three stages in life which have been spoken of in a number of different ways. First, we think, 'I am the body'. In the Veda this is called, 'Aham Jivasmi', 'I am this individual soul'. This is the human quality. Swami has been telling this in other ways also. You are not one person, but three. First, the one you think you are; that is the physical quality. Second, the one that others think you are; that is the mental quality. Third, the one you really are;

that is the Atma quality. This was stated by Jesus in another way. First he said, 'I am the messenger of God'. This is the Dvaita stage. Between the messenger and God there is a vast difference; it is the master-servant relationship where God is the master and you are the servant. This is the initial stage of devotion. After some time Jesus felt, 'No, no, I am not just a messenger, I am the Son of God.' Now he felt the close family relationship of father and son. This is near and dear; it is an inner not an outer relationship. This is the Visishta-advaita stage. Afterwards Jesus announced, 'I and my Father are one.' At that point Jesus and God were completely inseparable. Both were one, the one Holy Spirit. This is the Advaita stage. This is real. It is the true and permanent relationship. At the beginning you are aware of the physical relationship. You say, 'I am a devotee, I am a servant, I am a messenger'. After that you speak of an inner, subtle relationship. You say, 'I am a spark of the divine, I am the reflection of God, I am the son of God. Then you realize there is only the One, 'I and God are One.' There is no difference; there never was a difference. There is no separate I and God which have become one. Always there was just the One, without a second. Truly at that point, you can only say, "I am" or 'I am I'. At that final stage you would not even say, 'I am God', for in that there is still a trace of dualism. You only say, 'Aham Aham', 'I am I'. That is the highest truth. To reach this ultimate state you must not allow yourself ever to think that you and God are separate. Think always, 'God is with me, inside me, around me. All there is, is God. I am one, only one. There is no one else besides me. I and God are one and the same'. To realize this unity, the first step is to develop self-confidence. Where there is self-confidence, there will be love, there will be, peace, there will be truth, there will be God. Without self-confidence there cannot be God. So first there must be self-confidence. It comes when you realize that God is not outside of you. It means thinking all the time, 'God is in me; God is doing everything; without God I cannot be; all this is God; I only want to think of God'. But, now, what are you thinking about? You are thinking only about the physical. You are forgetting God. You are thinking about the body. But the body is just a water bubble. The body is just a dress, only a dress.

Devotee: Swami, isn't the body also God, if everything is God?

Baba: When all you think of is God, then there is only God. But now you are thinking of the body, not of God. Body is matter, matter is always changing. The world is also always changing.

Devotee: Is Swami's body an instrument?

Baba: This body is like all bodies. All bodies are just instruments. All bodies are only temporary. They have birth and death. The Indweller of the body is permanent. That is the Atma. That is the real you.

Devotee: How to rise up to that highest level? How to become perfect?

Baba: Through love. Only through love. Develop divine love. Divine love is completely selfless. Human love is mostly selfishness; all the time it is I, I, I. That I is ego. Ego is a very bad quality. Ego sees everything as separate; it sees everything as duality. You must remove this ego and see only the unity. Where there is duality, divinity will not be present. Think only of unity; think only of the basis of everything. But now for you there is only desire, desire, desire. 'I want this, I want that'. These desires are all just passing clouds; they come and they go. One moment they

give pleasure, the next moment they give pain. They cannot give permanent joy. It is these that make up the mind; mind is nothing but a bundle of desires. Don't follow the mind; don't follow these passing clouds. Desire comes and goes, but morality comes and grows. Morality is very important. Follow morality; practise it. Talk is quite easy but practice is difficult. Practise, then you will get the results. Remember the real goal, which is immortality. What is the way to immortality? It is the removal of immorality. Immorality refers to anger, ego, jealousy, lust, hatred, greed. Remove all these immoralities. That is the only way to attain immortality. This is very important. To remove immorality we must follow the Conscience. It is the voice of immortality.

Devotee: Swamiji, should we think of God as both mother and father?

Baba: Your physical mother is with you only for some years. She is your temporary mother. Your physical father is also only temporary. The real relationship is different. Truth is your real father. Truth is permanent. With Truth there is no change, no birth, no death. Prema, divine love, is your real mother. Here also there is no change, no birth, no death. Devotion is your real brother. Wisdom is your real son. Peace is your real daughter. For all these there is no change, no birth, no death. These make up your permanent relationships your God relationship. This is your permanent family.

Devotee: But should I not take care of my family at home?

Baba: Yes, you must! That is your duty. Do your duty.

Devotee: But if it takes me away from God?

Baba: No, no, no! Take care of your husband and children. Do your duty. Duty is God. Work is worship. You must not forsake your duty.

Devotee: But when God calls?

Baba: God is in you, with you, above you, below you, and around you. He is not calling or sending for you. He is always with you. You yourself are God. Think like that... 'I am Atma. I am the all.'

Devotee: Baba, what is the relationship between Atma and the individual?

Baba: Where is Atma? Atma is everywhere. How do you know? Well, you do not know, now. What you say now all comes from your imagination. You have no experience. Do some Sadhana. Experience it! Realize it!

Devotee: But what I wanted to ask is this. Do I have an individual higher self that is related to me?

Baba: Who is the individual? Individual is just your imagination. When Atma is one without a second, when Atma is everywhere, where is the individual? Only in your imagination. It is just an illusion. Atma alone is real. Realize it through meditation.

Devotee: Then there is no higher being related to this body, judging me and guiding me?

Baba: Now you are in hundred percent body-consciousness. But do not stay with this body-consciousness. Remove that. What will remain will be Atma-consciousness. Then there will be no anger, no hatred, no envy, no jealousy, no hunger, no desire... only complete Ananda, bliss, bliss, bliss!

Devotee: But then what is reborn in reincarnation?

Baba: Only the body is born. Birth and death have to do only with the body. Ego also relates only to the body. Similarly, rebirth relates only to the body. Do not think of the body. Think of Atma. Atma is one, unchanging. For Atma there is no incarnation, there is no reincarnation.

Devotee: Do I as an individual exist at all?

Baba: I? I? First you must inquire, 'Who am I?'

Devotee: Is there no individual anything?

Baba: When you realize the Atma there is no individual. The individual is like a light bulb. There will be a difference of bulbs, a difference of wattages and a difference of colours. But everywhere, the current is the same. That current is you. You are not the different bulbs; you are the one current in all.

Devotee: Swami, is there any difference between I and God?

Baba: You are God. You are not the ego. You are God! You are God!

Devotee: I am God?

Baba: Yes. You are the Atma. You are permanent. The physical ego is not permanent. The physical is not the Atma. You are Atma, not the physical body. You are God. Think like this always. Do not think about the body. Think about God. The body comes and goes; for it there is birth and death. But you are not the body. Body is just rust and dust.

Devotee: Baba, I ask for healing.

Baba: Healing comes through God. Think of God. God is everything. He will do what is needed. Think only of surrendering to God. Some person will say, 'I am healing others.' But this is just ego speaking. Healing cannot come through the ego. Thinking that you are doing healing is very harmful. You are not the one who is doing. You are only the instrument. He is doing everything. Think only of Him. Love Him. Be Him.

Devotee: Swami, how can we love something we don't understand?

Baba: Develop self-confidence, then love will follow; it will come naturally from within. That way, the love will be pure. First comes self-confidence; that is the foundation. Then comes self-satisfaction; it is like the wall. Next comes self-sacrifice; it is like the roof. Finally comes self-realization, which is like the Indweller who comes and lives inside this house. Without the foundation the walls will fall. Without walls you can't have a roof. Without a roof there cannot be a house. So, it all starts with self-confidence and ends with your realizing the Self. That Self is you. It is everything. It is God.

Devotee: Does self-confidence mean confidence in the Self?

Baba: Yes, that's what it means, confidence in the Self. That is very important. How to develop that confidence? Be equal-minded, be satisfied with what you have. Be happy. The secret of happiness is not in doing what you like but in liking what you have to do. That is a great truth. And you must always have complete faith in God. True greatness comes from faith. Now there is no confidence in you. Without confidence, faith will be wavering. Then where is there room for Grace to come, and for the Divinity to be found inside? If you shut the door how can the Spirit be revealed?

Devotee: Lord, I want to arrive very early to You. What do I have to do?

Baba: Through love, only through love. Love is everything. Love is God. Live in love. Start the day with love, spend the day with love, fill the day with love and end the day with love. That is the way to God.

Devotee: How do we develop this self-confidence and selfless love?

Baba: It all comes through God's Grace. Without Grace you cannot do anything. First do your duty and think about God all day from morning to evening. See everything as God. Be happy. Think, 'O Lord, You are my everything. You are my goal. You are my breath.' Do not think, 'This is mine, that is mine.' Instead think, 'All is You. All is Yours.' Think, 'I am separate from the body. This body is just a water bubble. I am separate from the mind. This mind is just a mad monkey. I am the, Conscience. I am the Atma. I and God are one.' Think like this. Before this body formed you were there. After this body leaves you are there. Without this body you are still there. You are omnipresent. You are the unchanging Atma. You are the all. To reach this truth you have to do some Sadhana. You have to inquire, 'What is God? Who is God? Who am I?' Jesus spent twelve years in the desert; then he realized. You must also realize. The first step in realization is to always think of God. Then after some years you will realize you are one with God. In the beginning you can think of this body and the world like this, 'the world is like a stage. I am only an actor. God is the director. All are actors. He is directing everything.'

Devotee: Shall we tell these things to others also, Swami?

Baba: Do not talk so much. First do some Sadhana. First do, then be, then talk. Do some meditation. Do everything with love. Do good, be good and see good. After that you can talk... but even then only a little. After you develop self-confidence and love for God, then you can share with others. But it is a good rule to talk very little, even about God. In Sadhana there will be internal talk with God. You will give up all attachments and attach only to God.

Devotee: Swami I have been waiting six months for You to call me.

Baba: Months and years are not important. Purity of heart is very important. Where there is no purity, there is no unity. Without unity you cannot attain divinity. Then your life is just a waste. First purity, next unity, then realize the divinity.

Devotee: And purity comes from Seva?

Baba: Purity comes from selfless service and love. All are one family, serve all... not just the Sai family, but the whole world family. All are brothers and sisters. All are one, be alike to everyone. That is unity... the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God.

Devotee: In a country like Germany where there is not much spiritual feeling...

Baba: Germany, Japan, Italy or France -only the countries are different. The heart is the same.

Devotee: It's the Seva I wanted to ask about. Can I do it in Germany?

Baba: You can do it anywhere, wherever you like. With Swamiji there is no consideration of quantity. It is quality that is important. Do not do service with the mind, do it with the heart. You do not need to consider big programmes, doing for many. It is enough if you do your Seva for one, heart-to-heart. You should also limit your desires. Do not waste time, do not waste food, do not waste money, do not waste energy; these are all aspects of God.

Devotee: In meditation my ego seems to get in the way.

Baba: Where there is ego there is limitation. Meditation is beyond the senses. There is no trace of ego there. Where there is ego, there cannot be meditation. If you think of God and live in love, if you limit your desires and do some selfless service, the ego will soon disappear. Then meditation will be pure and the mind will be quiet. Now you say, 'I want peace.' But remove the I, which is the ego, remove the 'want', which is desire, and the peace will be there, waiting.

—*Alvin Drucker.*

(Report prepared from notes taken at an interview Bhagavan gave recently to Western devotees.)

Unique Planetarium for Prasanthi Nilayam

The massive domed building, which will house the most up to date multi-purpose planetarium, for which the foundation was laid by Bhagavan Baba on November 23, 1984, is coming up rapidly close to the new four-storeyed Institute Library, inaugurated by Mr. K. C. Pant, Union Minister for Education, on June 2, 1985.

The system to be installed in the planetarium is "a state-of-the-art computerized astronomical projector" made by Spitz Space System of Pennsylvania. It will be installed, complete with lighting system, projection dome and computerized automation of all sensory effects.

The planetarium is designed to teach mathematics, astronomy, ecology, architecture, health, medicine, cultural history, and many other subjects.

The Spitz 512 planetarium system is an offering from the American Sai Organisations to the Sathya Sai Institute on the occasion of Bhagavan's 60th birthday. It is expected to be ready by November 23. The American Sai organisations consider it a privilege to be allowed to donate this major addition to the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, which within three years has grown into a unique centre of value-oriented, spiritually-inspired seat of learning, under the direct inspiration and guidance of Bhagavan.

The library

The newly-opened library is an octagonal structure, simple in design but functionally well designed to provide easy facilities for study. With over twenty thousand books on all subjects, the library is unique for its fine collection of books on religion and philosophy and the Indian classics.

Mr. K.C. Pant, who flew from Bangalore by helicopter on Sunday morning, was received by the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Gokak, and taken to the Administrative Building on top of Vidyagiri. Prof. Gokak explained to Mr. Pant the unique features of the education system being developed at the Sathya Sai Institute.

Mr. Pant later arrived at the Library building with Bhagavan Baba, in a procession led by students of the Institute reciting Vedic chants.

After inaugurating the new library building, Mr. Pant went round the ground floor to have a look at the bookracks and the facilities for reading provided for the users of the library.

Mr. Pant expressed his appreciation of the efforts to build up a worthy library for the Sathya Sai Institute. He then proceeded to the Institute building, where he went round two exhibitions—a mobile exhibition of pictures on the life and message of Bhagavan Baba and another got up in connection with the National Seminar on EHV to present a comprehensive picture of the aims and methodology of Education in Human Values.

The way to Peace

The only way of hope in the enveloping gloom of fear, violence, and cruelty, of enforced conformity, of hatred and persecution, is the Peace that one can win through self-control and

Sadhana. That peace will pervade and purify the inner consciousness as well as the outer atmosphere. Sadhana is the life-breath of man; struggling for power, pelf and pomp is but the breath of poison. Poor silly man craves for the air that will destroy him, the food that will torment him and the drink that will defile him! He revels in ruining his nature and denying his excellence! That is the tragedy of civilisation.

See God in every one you meet; see God in everything you handle. His Mystery is immanent in all that is material and non-material; as a matter of fact, it has been discovered that there is no matter or material. It is all God, an expression of His Mystery! Derive joy from the springs of joy within you and without you; advance, do not stand still or recede. Every minute must mark a forward step. Rejoice that it is given to you to recognise God in all and welcome all chances to sing His Glory, to hear His chronicle, to share His Presence with others. God has His Hands in all handiworks; His feet on all altitudes, His eyes beyond all horizons, His face before every face.

—Baba

Al-Muhaiminu: The Guardian

"It is His Plan that is being worked out, His drama that is being enacted on the stage of Creation" - BABA (Jnana Vahini)

*For You alone the white jasmine-bud
Uplifts its folded hands
In dawn's dew-soaked light
Its fragrance quietly sings Your praise
Before it ripples at dusk
Into the pattern traced
By Your Orange Robe
For You alone, Ocean of Love,
The crystal drop of water,
Enraptured, dances
Front earth to heaven
In myriad images.
It touches Your Feet as You gently sit,
Closed-eyed, Beautiful,
And dream, Your dream of Creation,
Never tired of guarding, sustaining,
This dream of Love.*

—(Mrs.) Zeba Bashiruddin

AL-MUHAIMINU: One of the attributes of God in Islam.

STUDENTS' CORNER:

Baba—My Only Refuge

In need I turn to Him
In joy I do the same
He is Baba to one and all
Sathya Sai is His name

He gives me strength when in need
He imparts joy when pleased,
He cares for me night and day
Happy, gloomy, disturbed or gay

He keeps vigil like a mother
He keeps guard like a father,
He gives company like a brother
He is all in one altogether

My sorrows I pour out to Him
He listens with ready ears,
He calms down my disturbed mind
And disperses all my fears

When in a vacant mood I sit
And try to think of Sai
I feel Him standing close to me
My divine father from high.

When troubles stare at my face
And helpless alone I stand,
My saviour Lord is omnipresent
To stretch His helping hand

"Why fear when I am here,"
He'll smilingly tell me
Reassurance will I get
And all troubles will shunned be

He will place His loving hands
Upon my head and bless,
All troubles will vanish in a moment
And I'll get calm, peace and rest

He is my only "Refuge"
My Divine Father Sai,
Forever ready to shelter me
With His loving care

Take me closer to these, Baba,
Help me to know Ye better,
That I may love Thee more and more
And In the end come out a winner

—*Sugandha Aikat, Class XII.*

Be Thou as a Child

It is not possible to hear Baba's discourses or to read anything of his writings without observing that he constantly speaks of love. He says, "Love cannot be disregarded." His devotees are told, "Love is the Royal Highway to God." His teaching proclaims, "God is love,

and love is God." He addresses audiences as "Embodiments of love. " He says that when Self is realized, the love which is Self is not different from the love which is God.

It is the experience of mothers the world over that very small children, if loved and protected, are themselves embodiments of love and this gives great joy without end to mothers. Love is the genuine spontaneous nature of the small child. That this spontaneous and natural love becomes modified by the worldly nature of the child as it grows older and as the world becomes part of consciousness does not negate the fact that the child's spontaneous nature shines forth as love.

The devotee of God must become as a little child, with God as Divine Mother and with the fullness of love flowing from the devotee's unguarded heart to the Divine Mother. This open, unrestrained and unmodified love, spontaneously embracing the Divine Mother is devotion to God. The little child, when its being is love incarnate, shines with happiness and one can see that in love the child is in ecstasy. Thus, the joy, the ecstasy, the happiness for which we long and for which we would willingly pay any price, will naturally be ours when with open and unguarded heart we merge in love with God. Baba tells us there can be too much love between persons and that too much love between persons becomes destructive, but that love for God is totally without danger and may be totally unrestrained.

To know our Self is to be our Self. To know God one must be God, not just an observer of Him. Things which are alike can merge together. Fire can merge with fire but does not merge with the ocean. Baba patiently explains that God is love and that if we would know ourselves as God, we must know ourselves as love. In love only are we God and thus merged in Him.

Since we have the interest to transform our worldly life into spiritual life and remove that veil which obscures our truth, we pay close attention to what Bhagavan Baba has to say about the significance of love. How does the heart rekindle, or release from constraint that flame of love in purity which was ourself as a little child? Bhagavan Baba assures us that it is never too late to turn in love to God, who ever resides in our heart. Baba says that although Divinity remains in the background, leaving the stage to our ego, that Divinity is ever ready to respond if called upon.

That Baba advises that it will be beneficial if we open our hearts to God and love Him without restraint, does not mean that our family and those people very close to us should be denied our love. Baba points out that we now have a myriad of loves for various people, objects, and pursuits. He advises that we may gather all these streams of love together into a full and strong river of love and love God with that fullness of love. To explain this, Baba uses the simile of a tree in our garden. We notice that its leaves are shrivelled and dry and we at once feel compassion. We put a garden hose in place and direct a spray of life-giving water to the leaves, but they do not respond, they do not benefit from the water. However, if instead of spraying the leaves with water, we give water to the roots of the tree, that life-giving water quickly finds its way to the trunk, branches, leaves, flowers and fruit. Similarly, if we gather together all our loves and love God with the fullness of love, then our family and friends will naturally and inevitably receive the love they need.

—John Hislop

Bhajans in Biblical Days

The saints and prophets before the advent of Jesus Christ had always emphasised the importance of chanting the Lord's Name with single-minded devotion. In the Book of Psalms of the Bible the devotees of God were told "to give unto the Lord the Glory due unto His Name and worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." The Book of Psalms teaches us the continued internal prayer of the Lord and calling up the divine Name, imploring His grace in all trials and temptations. We also learn that the power of uninterrupted invocation of the Name of God and His glories and constant remembrance is the sole means of salvation.

Silent prayer in the mind and heart may be difficult to practise because our mind is always full of anxiety, fear and thoughts of worldly cares. Most of us cannot concentrate on meditation. There is one thing that we can certainly do. That is repetition of God's Name. Namasmaran is emphasised throughout the Book of Psalms in the Old Testament. It is still easier to do vocal prayer preferably loud singing in praise of His Name and His Glories.

The Psalms convey spiritual teachings and code of conduct for human beings. Mystical experiences and feelings are exquisitely expressed in the Book of Psalms. It contains devotional songs expressing strong emotions and love to the Lord. Probably these devotional songs were sung collectively in public worship of God in the days of the prophets Moses, Elias and King Solomon. The Psalms were originally composed in Hebrew. The group singing of the Psalms—the Biblical Bhajans—was similar to our Namasankirtan sessions, as can be deduced from the following psalms:

O, clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph (47-1)
Evening and morning and at noon will I pray and cry aloud and He shall hear my voice
(54)
So I will sing praise unto Thy Name for ever that I may daily perform my vows (61-8)
Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands. Sing for the honour of His Name: Make His
praise glorious.
All the earth shall worship Thee and shall sing unto Thee; they shall sing to Thy Name
Se'lah E66-I to 4)
Sing unto God. Sing praise to His Name; extol Him that rideth upon the Heavens by His
Name JAH and rejoice before Him (68-4).

It appears from the Psalms (chap. 68, song 25) that the singers were accompanied by instruments players and were followed by women playing with timbrels. This again reminds us of our bhajan sessions. Let us study a few more songs from the Book of Psalms.

Take a psalm and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with psaltery.
Blow up the trumpet by the new moon in the time appointed on our solemn feast day
(81-283).
It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord and to sing praise unto Thy Name—O most
High.

To show forth Thy loving kindness in the morning and thy faithfulness every night—upon instrument of ten strings and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with the solemn sound (92 1 to 3).

The devotees of Biblical era employed music for praising God's attributes. The ancient musical instruments such as trumpets, cornets, harp, psaltery, tabors, tambourines were used as accompaniments to singers. The psalms in Hebrew must have been set to musical tunes and rhythms. Trumpet is an orchestral wind instrument with bent tube and cupped mouthpiece. It is played by action of the lips and breath pressure. It produced brilliant tone. Cornet is a woodwind, treble brass valve instrument more tapering than trumpet. Harps and psaltery were musical instruments which were played by plucking strings. Tabors and tambourines were drums like our tablas played either with the hand or a stick.

The psalm singers in the holy cities of Jerusalem and Bethlehem had evinced great interest in the composition of new devotional songs from time to time. The devotees in the days of David and Solomon attached more value to the invisible God than to worldly things as revealed in these Psalms:

O sing unto the Lord a new song; sing unto the Lord, all the earth.
Sing unto the Lord, bless His Name, shew forth His salvation from day to day (96-1 & 2)
Some trust in chariots, some in horses, but we will remember the Name of the Lord our God (20-7).

During and after the advent of Jesus Christ the practice of group singing of devotional songs continued as we learn from the Epistles of St. Paul to Ephesians and Colossians, preaching them the Will of God:

Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. (Ephesians Chap. 5-19).
Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. (Colossians 4-16).

The power of Namasmaraṇa was proclaimed to people of Israel through the medium of psalms more than two thousand years ago.

Indeed the Lord answered the prayers of His devotees wherever the Name is remembered, sung and called upon with deep devotion. Even now we have the Lord's assurance in His divine words:

"Wherever My Bhaktas sing of Me there I install Myself; where My Bhaktas tread the streets filling the atmosphere with songs of the Divine Splendour, I shall verily come down and dance with them. Remember Sai does not live in structures of stone or brick and mortar. He lives in soft hearts warm with sympathy and fragrant with Universal Love" —**Baba**

—*S. Narayanan*

LETTER FROM El Salvador:

Bhajans Instead of Memorial Service

The body was, placed in front of the altar in the Sathya Sai Centre in San Salvador. About 400 people had gathered to pay homage to a fine young man, only 38 years old, who had left his mortal coil almost voluntarily.

The story starts about a month earlier, When our devotee won a premium in the national lottery and used the money for his second visit to see Sri Sathya Sai Baba. But upon reaching Bombay, the immigration authorities refused him entry because his visa, they claimed, was invalid. His visa read, "Good for triple journeys if passport remains valid." So our devotee returned half way around the world to El Salvador, unable to accomplish his only wish. He spent the remaining two weeks of his vacation with his wife and children. But the shock of being unable to arrive at the Lotus Feet of Sai also acted as a catalyst for our devotee to undergo intense sadhana.

Almost since his knowledge of Sai several years ago, he opened his home as a Sai Centre. He was always first in service activities, and worked diligently with the Centre Committees. During his last days, he passed much of the time in meditation. He owned some beehives and started giving away the honey. Food no longer held any interest for him. He urged the devotees around him to do more and more service.

Then early in the morning of his death (in May), he experienced a sharp pain in the base of the spine. His wife, who is a doctor, took his pulse and checked his heart but all was normal. He was in excellent health. Then the pain left him, and he spent about two hours in a bliss-like state before leaving his body in the arms of his wife.

Devotees from all the Sai Centres united to sing bhajans instead of holding the usual memorial service. His relatives, friends, and many employees from the company where he had worked also gathered at the Sai Centre.

A Catholic priest, who was his uncle, led the prayers and everyone joined. His two brothers, one an evangelist minister, the other a member of the Hare Krishna group, were present. All the visitors were amazed when our devotee's wife, who is one of the regular bhajan leaders, started leading bhajans. There were many discrete inquiries as to where one could learn this new philosophy which seemed to enable one to understand death and gave so much peace in trying circumstances. The devotees sang bhajans all night and the visitors stayed on, unable to leave as if a magnet was pulling them. It was Swami's Grace that brought together so many religions at the moment of death, and that inspired the singing which united all into the consciousness of oneness. It was a real tribute to a true devotee of Sai.

—John R. Behner, El Salvador, 30-5-85

From the Individual to the Impersonal

Man's greatest need is happiness, but his greatest failure is the wrong identification of the means to meet that need. This is a curious state of things; I know what I need. But I do not know what I do not need. Therefore, my real need and pseudo-needs get mixed up and cause most of my misery.

My need is happiness. That is a stage where I am no more in need, that is, freedom from needs. This I know. I am happy after my lunch, for I no more need it. So, this is the stage of fulfillment. But what I do not know is how to arrive at this stage. Conceptually speaking, there are two ways to this stage of happiness. One, fulfilling all our needs. Two, elimination of needs. Whichever way we travel, fulfillment of needs or their elimination, we arrive at only one stage—Freedom from needs or Happiness.

Our needs arise from our incompleteness, our dependence, our imperfection. Therefore, the instruments we are going to use to bring us completeness, independence or perfection suffer from an inherent deficiency. How can deficiency eliminate deficiency? If happiness is a stage of self-sufficiency, of freedom, it follows that one cannot arrive at it by pursuing fulfillment of one's needs.

Elimination of needs

But that doesn't bring us to an easy conclusion. If the other road appears a little more logical and convincing, a very difficult proposition meets us at the beginning. How can I eliminate needs by refusing to fulfill them? I found to fulfill all my needs is an unacceptable proposition. So I will eliminate them. That leads to another difficulty. When we talk of the need for happiness, and the way we always feel frustrated in attaining it, we are not primarily concerned with those simplest creature needs—food, sleep and shelter, even though they cause a lot of concern in our lives. We are mainly worried about our other cravings—for more comfort, more power and authority and psychic satisfaction. While I do not much worry about a lunch or a dinner, my incessant craving that causes ceaseless misery is for other things—a car for conveyance, a comfortable house to live in, a T.V. to watch, a telephone, and ego satisfaction of various types. Each of the items mentioned above can be broken into a thousand and eight by lanes in which my happiness has fled.

And to talk of eliminating such needs, we believe, is sheer ignorance of human nature. It is unreal and impossible. Is that really so? Let us face the problem and try to understand it properly. What causes misery and unhappiness, is not my need for a car or a T.V., but my craving for them. What upsets me is not my lack of something that is essential, but my conclusion that I must somehow get them for my enjoyment. Not the things, but my enslavement to them dehydrates me of my happiness. Again, I do not crave for all that I can naturally afford, but I crave for all that are just beyond my reach; and I entertain no scruples to adopt any means for this end. I do not need happiness itself as much as things as means to it.

Therefore, elimination of needs does not mean stifling them, or denying them, but refusing to be overwhelmed by them. Unless one arrives at a stage where one just doesn't feel the need for them even though he can afford them, elimination is not possible. To achieve this, one has to manifest from within a sense of innate freedom that rises above all the needs. One must be able to see in oneself a power that stays ever fulfilled. Then all these needs shall turn out to be 'earth's vain shadows', and cease to be *needs*.

We are affected, pursued, tortured and driven insane by our needs so long as we see ourselves as nothing but a person—a body-mind complex. This mass of matter called a person can only disintegrate and disappear. It cannot stand up, look in the face of these ghosts and ask who are you? It needs the courage to stand out of oneself, to disengage oneself from oneself, to see the "Imperson" in the person, to enquire and contemplate. One must be able to touch in oneself a something, vaguely though, that stands out of this heterogeneous structure called the person. He must genuinely suspect that he is not what he has been thinking he is, or what others have been thinking he is.

Practising detachment

That is another way of saying that one must practise a great deal of detachment. It is the capacity to come out of the personality and observe the "Imperson." It is an intellectual understanding of the existence of a no-need being within us that is above the craving for external things. It is not a negative no-man's land where inhabitation is not possible, but it is the awareness of a creative contemplative entity within the personality which is sufficient unto itself. It is sufficient not because all its needs have been fulfilled, but because it has passed the stage of running after needs.

Therefore detachment is not only de-attaching the person from its needs, but reattaching itself to God, the state of no-need. This detachment is not a self-exile, in which case the feeling or craving for needs only remains hidden away; it is transcending the need for needs. Detaching oneself from the physical space alone will not be enough. One must detach oneself from time as well; that means one must be unafraid of death. Death may be looked upon either as inevitable, natural, even necessary; or as unimportant as it is not the extinction of the being. Therefore the "Imperson" in the person is to be conceived of as free from space and time. That will enable one to develop true detachment which will not appear as a gruesome self-mortification. It will bring a joy unknown to the personality that runs after fulfillment of needs. This is elimination of needs, a sure way to lasting happiness.

Once one is able to touch the "Imperson" in oneself, one's whole approach towards all needs will undergo a sea-change. Even the craving for basic creature needs will fade away, and nothing, neither suffering nor death, can ever cast a shadow on one's happiness. This will come to one stage by stage. One will be able to take the blows of life with greater fortitude, much less worry and with infinite patience. Our success and affluence will have much less power over us, our judgement will be more clear and correct.

Relation to God

Our relationship with God also has to be viewed in this perspective. Swami refers to this perspective when He advises us not to forget His essential Divinity by observing His human

ways. He is a person, but much more, an "Imperson". He loves, commands and chastises us as a person, but all the time remains serene, unaffected, unattached as the "Imperson". God comes as a person to generate in us a spark of recognition and awaken our "Imperson" so that we can really understand Him. Therefore inspite of the fact that He lets us treat Him as a friend, a parent, a teacher and adorer, He wants us to go beyond these relationships, dive deeper into our own personalities, know Him there and see within the unconditioned state of happiness which is His real gift. That is achieved not in the mad fury of proliferating needs and running after them, but by standing apart from this rush and tumble and recognising the "Imperson" in our person.

Swami refers to this process of proceeding from the person to the "Imperson" in a very interesting manner. He has said time and again. "I give you what you want so that you will begin to want what I want to give you." He wants to give us Freedom, Happiness, the stage of no-need. But how does He achieve it by initially fulfilling our needs? By fulfilling our harmless desires, He generates in us a want for higher things. We are no more interested in 'Coffee Powder'; we begin to perceive the need for a life of no-need. The secret of divine gifts lies in an apparent contradiction. He gives when we cease to ask. Which means, when we feel the need of a stage when we shall not run after needs of all sorts, God understands we are ready to accept what He really wants to give us.

Therefore, to rise above the many needs that our mind and body crave for is the way to fulfill our real need. And to achieve it, we must identify the "Imperson" behind our personality.

—Bejoy K. Misra, Prasanthi Nilayam

"Essentially Spiritual"

Sai organisations should remain essentially spiritual organisations even if they take up service activities.

This view was expressed by Bhagavan Baba, when Mr. John Hislop sought Bhagavan's advice regarding the function of Sai Centres and the activities of Sai devotees in the United States during "the next ten years."

The text of the interview, as published in the American Sathya Sai Newsletter of Spring 1985, is reproduced below:

Hislop: Ten years ago (in 1974) when Swami formed the American Sai organisation, He gave what He said was the single most important rule for American Sathya Sai Baba Centres. For the next ten years, what is the single most important rule for our Centres?

Sai: What is your idea?

Hislop: Swami's first rule—have as little as possible to do with money. It seems to me it must continue.

Sai: Yes, that is correct. The rule cannot be changed. It must continue unchanged through the next ten years.

Hislop: Then what shall be the particular emphasis for American devotees for the next ten years?

Sai: The emphasis must be the spiritual discipline (sadhana) of purity and sacrifice. Purity is Divinity. Through sacrifice there is purity of mind and heart. By purity, Divinity is realised. Sacrifice is an offering, a giving up to the Lord, a dedication to the Lord. What is to be sacrificed to the Lord is the sense of ego, of "mine." Once all sense of ego is sacrificed to the Lord, given up to Him, then the heart and mind are purified of ego attributes and Divinity can then be realised.

Hislop: During the course of the next ten years, is the American Sai organisation to remain a spiritual organisation, or is it to change its mode of life so as to become primarily a service (seva) organisation?

Sai: The organisation is to continue to be a spiritual organisation with some changes, but not major changes. Devotion to God, the purifying of mind and heart by sacrificing to God all ego tendencies, is to be the purpose and the practice of the Sai devotees in the American Sai organisation.

GURUPURNIMA SANDESH:

God is the Only Sadguru

Who is the Sadguru whom one should reverse as the authentic spiritual preceptor? What are his attributes? What is the difference between such a Guru and those who claim to be gurus but are yearning for something or other themselves?

Bhagavan devoted his Gurupurnima discourse on July 2nd, in an overfilled Poornachandra Auditorium, to answers to these questions, taking as his text a Sanskrit verse in which the ancient sages expressed their reverence for the Sadguru who is none other than God.

Bhagavan concluded his memorable discourse with a four-line aphoristic stanza setting out the do's and don'ts for the real seeker. The four directives Swami gave to the devotees are: "Give up the company of the wicked. Welcome the chance to associate with the good. Be continuously engaged day and night in good deeds. Remember what is lasting and what is impermanent."

The gathering in the auditorium was larger than in previous years and included nearly 2011 members of the EHV Society of U.K., headed by Mr. Victor Kanu, and a thousand Seva Dal members from all parts of India, who had come to Prasanthi Nilayam to attend a training camp for the Prasanthi Service, which will be in charge of security arrangements during the birthday celebrations in November.

After the invocation and the welcome speech by Mr. Indulal Shah, Mr. Justice Bhagawati addressed the gathering, hailing Bhagavan as "the Guru of all Gurus." "We are all instruments in his Divine hands. Only through unqualified surrender can we realise our identity with God," he said. There is no higher worship than service to man. They were all supremely fortunate in living in the presence of air Avatar. "Let us prove worthy of His affection," he concluded.

Mr. Shankar Dayal Sharma Governor of Andhra Pradesh, who spoke text, urged that what was needed was putting into practice the teachings of Bhagavan. A foreign observer had remarked that "Indians were hypocrites. They talked high ideals but did not practise them." This charge should be falsified. Bhagavan had initiated the EHV programme to inculcate in the young the five basic human values. The whole world is in need of moral values. Bhagavan alone can transform the moral climate of the world. There is need for total submission to the will of the Divine with full faith in the Divine. The ego should be completely eschewed. Even the "Aham" (I) in claiming "I am a great devotee" should be given up. "Let us pray to Bhagavan to give us the strength to follow the right path," concluded Mr. Sharma.

Who is the sadguru?

Bhagavan then delivered his Gurupurnima message, reciting the following stanza as the text for his discourse.

*Brahmaanandam paramasukhadam
Kevalam Jnanamurthim*

*Dvandvaathitham Gaganasadsam.
Thathwamasyaadi Lakshyam*

*Ekam Nithyam Vimalam Achalam
Sarvadhee Saakshibhutham*

*Bhaavaatheetham Trigunarahitham
Sadgurum Tham Namaami*

The Rishis of ancient times were revered with the utterance of this laudatory verse as gurus by those who approached them for spiritual guidance. This day being Gurupurnima, when aspirants for spiritual illumination pay homage to the gurus who lead them to the goal, we shall probe into the implications of this authentic summary of the credentials attributed, in this verse, to the Sad-Guru or Proper Preceptor.

Brahmaanandam: The Guru is the embodiment of Brahma-Bliss, since he is merged in the Ananda which Brahman is. It is not imported or acquired or attained. It is inherent in every heart. The world, the cosmos, every particle, is Ananda Itself, but being ever in it, with it, of it and for it, man is unable to be it, on account of the darkness that misleads him and deludes him.

Brahmanada and man

The Upanishads attempt to give men a faint idea of the measure of that Brahma-ananda. The Taithiriya assumes the height of human ananda as the unit for estimation. A person having all the wealth he desires, all the renown man can earn, all the learning that can be gained, perfect health, perpetual youth, and undisputed sovereignty over the entire globe-his Ananda is an understandable base from which to proceed. A hundred times this Manushi-ananda is the Ananda of celestial singers (Gandharvas); a hundred times that is the Ananda of the souls of departed

beings dwelling in heavenly regions. Hundred-fold of this is the Ananda of the divine entities (Ajanma-ja). A hundred times this is the Ananda of the gods (Deva); the Lord of the gods, Indra, is ever in Ananda that is a hundred times more than that of the Gods; Brhaspati, the preceptor of Indra, has Ananda a hundred times more than Indra; and Prajapati, the Lord of Creatures, has a hundredfold Ananda when compared to Brhaspati. Hiranyagarbha (the Cosmic Golden Manifestation) is the source of a hundred times more Ananda. The supermost Ananda, the Brahma-Ananda, which is the characteristic of the Guru, is that of Hiranyagarbha.

Eliminate the "I"

Man has the potency to elevate himself to this Ananda. Only he has to get rid of the obstacles that deny this experience. He is Brahman and so his nature is Brahma-anandam. But, he does not know that all he believes he knows is known only as distorted or deluded. His waking experiences are as unreal and self-contrived as his dream experiences. The I-sense, the ego, constructs the world it is after. It shatters the One into many and takes pride in deceiving itself. It reduces the Ananda by resorting to pullulating desires and actions. When 'I' is eliminated, Ananda is experienced fully. One becomes truly and genuinely one's Self when this I does not intrude. 'I' sets one apart and establishes Duality, Dvaita. No-I brings together and establishes Unity, One-without-a-second, A-dvaita, Non-dualism. 'I' sense arises, persists and disappears. It is Kshara, liable to deteriorate. The One-without-a-Second is A-Kshara, it is symbolised by OM, the Pranava, the Ever-alive. The Guru who is ever in this consciousness has Brahma-Ananda. Such a one is the Guru to be sought.

Parama-sukhadam: The Guru grants the highest joy. What exactly constitutes this joy? Is it physical well-being? Mental poise? Intellectual alertness? Sharpness of the senses? No. The rishis declare that words return crestfallen after attempting to describe that state. Even the mind with its fast-moving wings of imagination cannot reach that state. The highest joy has its source and spring in the Atma, the spark of the Cosmic Splendour. The person who is ever aware of the Atma in him and in all is therefore the Sadguru.

Kevalam: Beyond all limitations of time and place the guru is pure Chaitanya, Is-ness; his consciousness is all pervasive; that is to say, God alone is the Sad-Guru.

Embodiment of wisdom

Jnana Murtim: What is meant by Jnana? "Advaita Darshanam Jnanam": the awareness of the One, without a second, is Jnanam, or the supreme wisdom. And the Sadguru is the embodiment of that wisdom, having unbroken experience of the One. Those who are commonly known as gurus are sign-posts, name-boards. They have not travelled the entire journey and reached the goal. But the Jnanamurti is with you right through, beside you and before you, smoothing the path until the journey ends in him.

Dvandvaathitham: The Sadguru is unaffected by the inevitable dualities of life: joy and grief, profit and loss, ridicule and respect.

Gaganasadrsam: Untouched by happenings and incidents but forming the perennial base, like the sky enveloping nature.

That-thwam-asyaadi Lakshyam: The living exponent and experiencer of the four crucial axioms of Vedic thought That thou Art. (That-thwam-asi), This Self is verily Brahman (Ayam Atma Brahma); I am Brahman (Aham Brahmasmi) and Consciousness is Brahman (Prajnanam Brahma).

Ekam: The One; though apparently passing through varied experiences and even no experience while awake, or dreaming, and in deep sleep, the One is unaffected and remains as one-the guru is firmly established in the One.

Nithyam: Eternal, untouched by time, the Sadguru is eternally pure, aware, serene.

Vimalam: Faultless, nothing can tarnish its purity. The Guru has no desire or sense of want. He is perfect.

The eternal witness

Achalam: The Sadguru, which is another name meant for God, knows no change in his primal perfection, whatever form he may assume. The motion picture film projects 16 pictures a second on the screen in the cinema but they give transitory and counterfeit experiences. The Achalam is the unmoving screen.

Sarvadhee: All pervasive, all activating intelligence.

Saakshi Bhutham: That which has become the witness of everything, everywhere, like the sun which activates but is only the witness of the activity.

Bhaavaatheetham : He is beyond all urges, emotions, feelings and thoughts.

Thrigunarahitham: Not bound by the three modes or qualities that divide living beings into categories-the serene mode, the active mode and the dull. When bound, you are human, when you are free from entanglements and limiting characterisations, you are divine.

Sadgurum: The worthy Guru.

Tham: To Him.

Namaami: I offer my reverential homage.

Who are not gurus?

The Guru who deserves homage must possess these attributes. This is only another way of saying that God alone can be the guide, the path and the goal. Gurus available for aspirants are themselves deluded into foggy paths and faltering faith. The genuine guru must have overcome Maya and the ego; he must be free from desire and need. When a person yearns for some benefit or profit and is engaged in sadhana with that view, he cannot be accepted as Guru.

The verse which speaks of the guru as Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara (Siva) is quoted often. But, the One has not broken into three, one part in charge of creation, another who fosters and

maintains and the third, dissolves and destroys. The Pranava mantra OM is the symbol of the One; it is composed of three sounds A (as in far), U (as in push) and M (as in hum). Brahma is A, Vishnu U and Siva is M and all three are indivisibly united in OM. The problem this verse poses is whether Guru is God or God is guru. The answer is—God is Guru, the ever-present, the ever-compassionate, the Witness who resides in the heart.

Vyasa Poornima

This day is celebrated as Vyasa Poornima, the Full Moon Day dedicated to the memory of sage Vyasa. There are four full moon days holier than the rest in the Hindu calendar—the full moon which occurs in the months Vaisaakha, Aashaada, Sraavana, and Magha. This is the month of Asshaada. On this day, the day when the moon (the presiding deity of the mind) is full circle and the moonlight cool, pleasant and clear, Sage Vyasa completed the composition of the immortal scripture, the Brahma Sutra. Sutra means string. He revealed that the Brahma principle interpenetrates and holds together the many in the ONE. That principle does not wax or wane, it is Poorna and it projects Poorna, in spite of that projection: The passing clouds cannot act on that fullness. This was what Vyasa, the Guru, taught mankind.

Just as God projects Himself as Man, Man too can concretise God, and persuade God to become man, by sincere prayer and agonised yearning. Prahlada's prayer induced the avatar of Narasimha. Prayer and personification are complementary, like the positive and negative poles in electricity. The dark fortnight and the bright fortnight alternate like grief and joy, pain and pleasure, by God's decree to foster equanimity, to lead man towards the reality beyond both.

Four directions

The reality is cognisable everywhere; why, it is evident most in oneself, when you earnestly seek it. You can experience it, even while performing selflessly your duty to yourself and others. I shall indicate to you, today, four directives for sanctifying your lives and purifying your mind, so that you can contact the God within you.

Thyaja durjana samsargam
(give up the company of the wicked)
Bhaja Saadhu Samaagamam
(welcome the chance to be among the Good)
Kuru punyam ahoraathram
(Do good deeds both day and night)
Smara nithyam-anithyathaam
(Remember which is lasting, which is not)

When one does not attempt to transform himself thus, he is apt to blame God for his sorrows, instead of blaming his unsteady faith! He blames God because he announces himself as a devotee too soon, and expects plentiful grace. Grace cannot be claimed by such; God must accept the devotee as his own. One has to use his talent of discrimination to sift the trash and discard it in preference to the valuable. Doing punyam or good deeds means doing selfless service to others. One has to flee from bad persons to search for and win the friendship of the good, who can cleanse us and heal us.

Man is consumed by time; God is the master of time. So, take refuge in God. Let God be your Guru, your path, your lord. Adore Him, obey His commands, offer Him your grateful homage, and hold Him fast in your memory. This is the easiest way to realise Him as your own reality. This is the one and only way.

—*Poornachandra Auditorium*

DIVYA SANDESH:

"Install Rama in your Hearts"

"Unity among themselves and faith in God will enable the villagers to accomplish anything they want," observed Bhagavan Baba, addressing a mass gathering of villagers, at kammavaripalle, in Sathya Sai Taluk, on May 26.

Bhagavan was visiting the village with students and teachers of the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. Kammavaripalle and the adjoining hamlet of Ammagondapalem are villages, on the outermost boundary of the Sathya Sai Taluk, which had been chosen by Bhagavan for the construction of link roads by the students of the Institute as part of their social service programme.

Bhagavan installed the idols of Rama, Lakshmana, Sita and Hanuman in the renovated village temple at Kammavaripalle. Addressing the villagers who had assembled in front of the temple, Bhagavan exhorted them to install Rama in their hearts and lead a righteous life which will give them lasting bliss.

In the course of His inspiring discourse, Bhagavan said: Whatever qualities a man may possess, he cannot make proper use of them if he lacks the company of good people. Through the company of good persons ("Satsangam") one can develop good qualities, good thoughts, good feelings and do good deeds and thereby transform his human nature, into divine nature. This, in fact, is the primary duty of every individual.

Value of satsang

To develop good qualities, one has to get rid of one's bad traits. If you want to cultivate unity, you have to give up hatred. If you wish to develop a sweet temper, you have to rid yourself of bitterness. As long as hatred remains, unity cannot grow. Even if there are differences of opinion, these should not be allowed to stand in the way of united action for promoting the welfare of the village as a whole.

A village is made up of an aggregation of families. Therefore every householder has an obligation to the village as a whole. Just as the five fingers of the hand have to act together to carry out any work efficiently, all the villagers have to work in cooperation for the welfare of the village.

Indian culture and civilisation have been built up from ancient times on rural communities. Even today this culture survives predominantly in villages. The national life is sustained by the villages. It is wrong to ignore the interests of the villages or to allow them to decay.

Lack of unity

Our ancients built temples to help the people to cultivate right feelings and act righteously. They felt that there should be no village without a temple. A school without teachers, a temple without a deity, a wire without current and a field without water are of no use. Every one should regard his heart itself as a temple and strive to realise the divinity that is in him.

Villagers should seek to share all the amenities available in the villages. They must learn a lesson from the behaviour of the crow. When a crow sees an edible, it cries, 'kaw, kaw' to attract other crows to the place. Likewise, when an ant sees a piece of jaggery, it does not start eating it alone. It brings other ants to the place. Rows and rows of ants can be seen coming towards the lump of jaggery and eating from it. Look at the unity and cooperation among ants and crows. Such unity is not present among men. Personal differences are ruining life in the villages. Enormous progress can be made by villagers if only there was unity among them. There will then be no need for approaching the Government for help. If the villagers are united there is nothing which they cannot accomplish.

Faith in God

The first requisite is to promote the love of God. The Lord is the real and sole protector. Many powerful men are, in the ultimate reckoning, unable to protect themselves. Hence, you should put your faith in the Lord, who is the protector of everybody. Every morning and evening and on every occasion when you have the time, you have to go to the temple, recite the name of the Lord and pray to the Lord to fill your hearts with love and enable you to lead a right life.

You must see that every action of yours is pure and sacred. It should be based on truth and should be intelligent and purposeful. The ancient Rishis used to pray, "Tasmai-Namah Karmane" (I bow to the all-powerful Karma.) We tend to waste our precious life in activities devoted to worldly matters and petty pleasures. No time is devoted to the achievement of the enduring and sacred bliss that is derived from the enjoyment of the Self. Time is not any one's exclusive property. It is common to all whether he is a multi-millionaire or a destitute. All are subject to the dictates of Time.

All must cultivate the spirit of equal-mindedness. This is the mark of a true human being. It is the spirit of serenity in which one looks upon praise or blame, honour or dishonour, pleasure or pain alike. We tend to shrivel up when somebody abuses us. The whole world looks gloomy. We swell with pride when anybody praises us. What we should cultivate is an attitude in which we remain unaffected in both the situations. Mental tranquility (Santhi) is necessary for experiencing the truth of the Self. There is no greater thing on earth than peace of mind. Every effort must be made to acquire "Santhi."

Unity and cooperation

The villagers lack many things. But they should not think that it is enough if they have clothes to wear, houses to live in and food to eat. How many, who have all these, are really happy? For

real happiness you must have a large and loving heart. If you cultivate fraternal feelings towards all the people in the village, you will not only acquire real happiness but will also help to make the village a prosperous and harmonious community. Whenever I see such villages I feel extremely happy. There is generally more peace in the villages than in the cities. There is hardly any peace in the cities, with their hustle and bustle. Rural life should not be considered lowly and contemptible. The atmosphere in the villages is pure and healthy. With proper housing and good water supply, life can be very enjoyable in the villages. This village has been visited by many political leaders but because of lack of unity in the village, it has not received any aid from the Government. If you have unity, I shall be prepared to render any amount to help for your improvement. From today you must lead a life of unity and cooperation.

The idol of Rama has been installed in your temple today. You must feel that Rama has been installed in the hearts of everyone of you. When you have this feeling, you will begin to follow the path of righteousness. Righteousness protects those who act righteously. As farmers, you know the gains from sowing a bushel of seed to reap a harvest of a bag of grain. Likewise if you devote five minutes to prayer in a day, the Lord will give you fifty-five minutes' worth of grace.

You must cultivate unity, cooperation and mutual trust. Love is the basis of all other human qualities like Truth, Righteousness and Peace. If the four qualities of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema are present in a person, he will manifest the divinity that is in him.

Not many of you may know that I first visited this village nearly 35 years ago. I have looked upon Ammagondapalem and Kammavaripalle as my two eyes and that is why I decided to initiate the installation of the Rama idol in the temple here. This village is at the periphery of Sathya Sai Taluka and is very backward. I shall be prepared to help you and promote your welfare in every possible way.

Mass Upanayanam at Prasanthi Nilayam

The first of the series of auspicious functions associated with Bhagavan's sixtieth birthday celebrations this year took place at the Poornachandra Auditorium on June 12, when Bhagavan imparted Brahmopadeshm and performed the Yajnopavitadharana ceremony for over 120 boys.

Nearly half the vatus belonged to the Sathya Sai educational institutions, the others being children of devotees. All the vatus were given special clothes and the Brahmachari danda by Bhagavan on the 11th. They assembled at the Mandir on the morning of the 12th and went in procession to the Poornachandra Auditorium, where they sat in rows with their respective parents. Bhagavan first distributed Yajnopavitams to all the vatus and then initiated them into the Gayatri mantra, asking them to repeat it thrice.

After the ceremony Bhagavan blessed the vatus and their parents, showering 'akshada' on them.

The entire ceremony was a supremely edifying experience for all concerned and the children realised that to receive the Gayatri mantra from Bhagavan was the greatest experience in their lives.

Thirty students who had been brought from Alike (S. Kanara) for the Upanayanam, on their turn, took a pledge on June 30 that they will recite the Gayatri mantra regularly three times every day—morning, noon and evening—and lead a life of purity and devotion.

New Building for Parthi School

This year's Gurupurnima became a glorious and memorable day for the people of Puttaparthi, the birthplace of Bhagavan, when He ceremonially opened the new two storeyed building for the Primary School in the village.

The older premises, which were in a ramshackle condition, were pulled down in March last and Bhagavan got the new building constructed within less than four months. Situated in the main street of Puttaparthi, at one end of which is the Sathyabhama temple and at the other, the new Siva temple, consecrated by Bhagavan four years ago, the school has eighteen rooms, with provision for running two sections in each of the five standards. The admissions this year are expected to reach 700 children, including over 250 girls.

The entire street had been gaily decorated with festoons and flags for Bhagavan's visit. Preceded by a Nadaswaram troupe and scores of students from the Sathya Sai Institute, singing bhajans and reciting Vedic chants, Bhagavan arrived at the school at 8.30 a.m. and was greeted with folded arms by thousands of villagers who had lined up the street or filled all the places around the school. Over a thousand children, assembled in the courtyard of the school, greeted Bhagavan as He entered the building. Bhagavan cut the ribbon at the entrance to the central room of the building and lit a lamp to mark the inauguration of the building. Swami then went round the class rooms and returned to the Mandir after blessing the prasadam (laddus) to be distributed to the children.

Many of the elders present at the ceremony could not fail to recall how much Swami had to endure in his childhood when there was no school at all at Puttaparthi and He and his school-mates had often to wade through the Chitravati River to go to the school at Bukkapatnam.

The glow on the faces of the boys and girls as they looked up at Bhagavan showed how grateful they were for the blessing Bhagavan had conferred on them.

Preparations for the Big Event

Once again, thanks to the Lord's Grace, I find myself at Prasanthi Nilayam. The joy that I feel each time I come defies description. And each time I gain greater appreciation for the sharp contrast between here and the world outside. Outside one finds so much stress and strain, guilt and guile, aggression and agitation. But within these hallowed walls contentment reigns supreme. Even disappointments are taken in their stride somehow being easier to recognize as Grace also.

The progress made in construction work since December is positively astounding. It is almost as if Swami just waved His hand, and there were all these new buildings. The new Institute Library, a most beautiful structure, has already been formally dedicated, and is being put to good use. The magnificent new planetarium is more than two-thirds finished.

Now for those of us wondering where and how the four hundred thousand delegates and other devotees will be housed during that illustrious fourth week of November, we will just have to bear the suspense. However three round buildings are nearing completion, and new halls (or sheds as some persist in calling them) are already in place. In addition, a large new (western) canteen is well on its way to be completed.

Are we ready?

So, it is clear that the Ashram will be ready. But will we visitors from overseas countries be ready on our part? This is a very real and very serious question. Will our conduct and behaviour add to, or detract from, the glory of the occasion? As indicated above, elaborate preparations are being made to make our stay a most pleasant and spiritually beneficial one. If we can reciprocate by exercising a little self-discipline and observing, and showing respect for, the customs and traditions of our host country, then all will be perfect.

We can begin by resolving beforehand that we will not fall a prey to the temptation to spend time wandering about outside in the little commercial bazaar that has sprung up over the years. Swami has repeatedly made known His wish that foreign devotees should not spend the precious time we have here, milling about outside. He has especially advised that we do not eat or drink in the places out there, as proper sanitary procedures may not be observed, and significant health risks are posed. He has also broadly hinted that there are spiritual pitfalls associated with sitting in those 'off limits' coffee houses and eating establishments.

One might be tempted to conclude that our simply knowing that such behaviour displeases Swami would be deterrent to its enactment. Would that it were! Sadly, we must admit that most of us find our memory too weak, and our discipline too underdeveloped, for that fact to check our behaviour. But if we need them, there are also other good reasons. To begin with, we should keep in mind that everything that Lord Sai does is for the good of the devotee, not His. He has no needs, no preferences, no ego. From none of the many things going on and going up here does He personally benefit in the least. Everything is done for our comfort and convenience.

Fortunate and blessed

Out of His infinite mercy, and in response to the prayers of generations of the good, He has come among us as a human in order to lead mankind back along the path of righteousness. A small number out of the billions of souls inhabiting the plane have been fortunate to know of His

being here. And of that very small number, only a fraction are enabled to come and be for a time in His physical presence. A little reflection leads to the realization (albeit brief) that we are extremely fortunate and abundantly blessed to be able to come to Prasanthi Nilayam. To squander, waste and even abuse this hard-earned opportunity (which may not come our way again) would be the height of folly.

It is reliably reported that the vibrations here during those six days will be unprecedentedly high and spiritually beneficial. Hence, it will be wise for us to remain inside the ashram so as to soak up the maximum amount possible.

We should be equally vigilant and careful about our actions inside the gates of the ashram. We must suppress the urge to strike up new relationships. Too much talk is harmful to our spiritual progress. Indeed, when we find ourselves stopping to chat for more than a minute, we should immediately become suspect that we are draining and damaging those batteries we have come here to get recharged.

Act your part

As we all incur great expense and trouble to get here, it follows that we should keep in mind why we have come. We do not come for a holiday. We do not come to sight-see. We do not come to form new attachments. We come so that we might express our obeisance to the Lord, and progress further along our spiritual journey. We come so that we may return home stronger and more self-confident, and thus be brighter lights in our communities. Sai devotees have to act the part. We have to see good, do good, and be good—no easy task with conditions being the way they are in the world. Judicious use of the time we spend at the ashram can add enormously to our ability to shoulder that mighty burden.

Finally, we must, while here, be good representatives of the countries from which we have come. We do that best by dressing in a dignified and proper manner, by studiously avoiding bringing ourselves to unfavourable notice, and by quietly and strictly obeying the rules and regulations. The behaviour guidelines and code of conduct are prominently posted throughout the ashram. We would do well to read them each day, and then follow them. In fact, the formula for a wonderful, maximally beneficial visit to Prasanthi Nilayam is simple and painless: Know and follow the rules.

If we do this, we are sure to take back home something valuable indeed. Not only that, we will please the Lord! It is probably not presumptuous to say that this would be one of the best birthday presents we could give Him.

*—William Harvey (U.S.A.)
Prasanthi Nilayam, 2-7-85*

AVATAR VANI:

Qualities of the Sadhaka

When the "Sanathana Sarathi" was launched in 1957, Bhagavan began a series of articles entitled "Prema Vahini." The message which He gave to spiritual sadhakas then are even more relevant today. The following extracts show how vital Bhagavan's message is to all aspirants and seekers.

The Sadhaka should note the distinction between the conduct of the natural man and the aspirant. Sahaja man is one without SAhana or Fortitude, with a HAM-kara, or conceit, and one who is full of desires relating to the JAgat by which he is trying to have a contented Janma: The Sadhana man is he who is engaged in Sarveswarchintha as ceaselessly as the waves of the SAgara or sea, who accumulates the DHANA (treasure) of Equality and Equal Love to all, who is content in the thought that all is the Lord's and nothing is his. The, Sadhana man will not, like the Sahaja man, easily bend before grief or loss, anger or hatred or selfishness, hunger, thirst or fickleness. One should master all the above things as much as possible, and journey through life with fortitude, courage, joy, peace, charity and humility.

Realising that the tending of the body is not all important, one has to bear patiently even hunger and thirst and be engaged uninterruptedly in the contemplation of the Lord. Instead, quarrelling for every tiny little thing, losing one's temper, becoming sad at the slightest provocation, getting angry at the smallest insult, worried at thirst, hunger and loss of sleep, these can never be the characteristics of a Sadhaka. Rice is its natural state and rice that is boiled, can these two be the same? The hardness of natural rice is absent in the boiled one. The boiled grain is soft, harmless and sweet. The unboiled grain is hard, conceited and full of delusion. Both types are Jivis and Men, no doubt; those who are immersed in external illusions and Avidyamaya are "Men"; those who are immersed in internal illusions or Vidya Maya are—"Sadhakas", and God is immersed in neither, devoid of both. He, who has no external illusions, becomes a Sadhaka and when he is devoid of even the internal illusions, he can be termed a God. Such a person's heart becomes the seat of God. Therefore, it is possible to deduce the seat of God. Therefore, it is possible to deduce that all is pervaded by God. Though, of course, the Lord is situated in every heart, Sadhana is necessary so that they may discover it for themselves. It is not possible for us to see our own face! We must have a mirror to show us its image! So too, a basic Marga or Path, a sadhana method is necessary to become devoid of Gunas.

Harvest of a sadhaka

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

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

the disease and sufferings are but the drugs we take. In the midst of these worldly pleasures, one rarely entertains the desire for attaining the Lord.

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

True bhakti

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

Of the various types of Bhakthi, Namasmarana bhakthi is the best. In the Kaliyuga, the Name is the Path for saving oneself. Jayadeva, Gouranga, Tyagayya, Tukaram; Kabir, Ramdas, all these great Bhaktas attained the Lord through just this one Nama. Why speak of a thousand things? Even Prahlada and Dhruva were able to enjoy the Darshan, Sparshan and Sambhashana of the Lord through Nama only. Therefore, if every Sadhaka will consider the name of the Lord as the very breath of his life and have complete faith in good deeds and good thoughts, if he will develop the spirit of service and equal Love for all, then there can be no better Path for Mukthi. Instead of this, if one sits in some solitary nook and holds his breath, how can he master his innate qualities? How is he to know that he has mastered them? Ambarisha Bhakthi, and Durvasa activities, the combination of these two will result in the fate of Durvasa himself; at least, in the end. Durvasa must fall at the feet of Ambarisha. May you avoid becoming such Trisankus; may you experience the eternal Truth, achieving the genuine State.

Every person is apt to commit mistakes, without being aware of it. However bright the fire or light, some smoke will emanate from it. So also, whatever, good deed a man might do, there will be mixed with it a minute trace of evil. But, efforts should be made to ensure that the evil is minimised, that the good is more and bad, less. Of course, in the present atmosphere, you may not succeed in the very first attempt. You must carefully think over the consequences of whatever you do, talk, or execute. In whatever way you want others to honour you, or to behave with you, in the same way, you should first behave with others and love and honour them. Then only will those honour you. Instead, without yourself honouring and loving others, if you complain that they are not treating you properly, it is surely a wrong conclusion. Besides, if only

those who advise others about "Which principles are right, which are true and good, which conduct is best etc," themselves follow the advice they give, there would then be no need forgiving that advice to all. Others will learn the lesson simply by observing their actual behaviour. On the other hand, if Vedanta is spoken parrot like to others, without any attempt to put it into practice in one's own conduct, it is not only deceiving others, it is even worse; it is deceiving oneself. Therefore you must be, as you want others to be. It is not the nature of a Sadhaka to search for faults in others and hide one's own. If your faults are pointed out to you by any one, do not argue and try to prove that it is right or do not bear a grudge against him for it. Reason out within yourself how it is a fault and set right your own behaviour. Instead, rationalising it for your own satisfaction or wreaking vengeance on the Person who pointed it out, these are certainly not the traits of a Sadhaka or Bhakta.

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

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

It is not a fault if it is done in ignorance; but having once known that it is wrong and harmful, and after continuing Dhyanam and Japam with that Name and Rupa faithfully, if they

are subsequently changed, it certainly is wrong. Sticking faithfully to the Name and Rupa is the highest vow, and the highest austerity. Even if elders advise you, do not give up the Path approved by your mind! Of course, which elder will suggest to you that you should change the Name of the Lord and give up the Name that you adore? Do not consider those who tell you to do so as an elder: consider them as dullards. Again, see that as far as possible, the time and place of Dhyanam and Japam are not changed and shifted. Sometimes, as while travelling, even if it becomes necessary to change the venue, the time at least should be kept unaltered. Even if one is in a railway train, or a bus, or some such inconvenient surrounding, at the specified time, one must, at least, recall to one's mind the Dhyanam and the Japam done by oneself, at the same time in the past.

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

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

Parithraanaaya saaddunaam
Vinaasaaya cha dushkrithaam
Dharmasamsthaapanaarthaaya
Sambhavaami yuge vuge.

That is to say, all incarnations of the Lord are for the protection and promotion of Sadhus. This word, Sadhu, does not refer to any single religion, caste, or family or stage or life, or community or even any single species, like the human! It refers to all religions, all stages of life, all races, and all creatures. The Lord has revealed in the Gita His Universal Mind. It is because of this universal message that the Gita has become so essential and so famous.

Why! Sri Krishna Himself has declared in plenty of situations and places that He is the dutiful servant of His devotees. An example of this is His accepting to be the Charioteer of Arjuna.

If the culture of the ordinary man himself results in such elevation, each one can judge for himself how much more purified and holy will be the character of those who are engaged in

spiritual exercises and the incessant contemplation of God! For both these types of people, the quality of the character is the important criterion.

SAI JAGAT SAMACHAR:

Sai Message for the U.N. Community

The Sathya Sai Study Circle at the United Nations made history on May 2, when it celebrated its third anniversary with a programme to present Bhagavan's life and message, which was attended by around 250 U.N. diplomats, senior officials of the United Nations and a large number of Sai oriented international civil servants hailing from all the five continents and belonging to different religions, races and cultures.

Dr. G. V. Subha Rao, Head of the U.N. Energy Unit and President of the Study Circle, inaugurated the celebrations, which were held in the Dag Hammarskjöld Auditorium. The programme was designed to acquaint the U.N. community with the ideas and mission of Bhagavan Baba whose varied activities are transforming the lives of millions all over the world in a positive god-ward way. A video film on Bhagavan's life and message was shown.

Among the speakers were Miss Hilda Charlton, Dr. Doudou Diene, Director, UNESCO liaison office at the U.N., and Dr. Robert Muller, Assistant Secretary-General of the U.N., and Dr. Samuel Sandweiss. Anjali Chawla and Aruna Subramanian presented two classical Indian dances to the tune of Sai songs.

The meeting revealed the intense interest, among U.N. diplomats and officials in the global mission of Bhagavan Baba and its relevance to the present world.

Sai Centres in Argentina

Buenos Aires: Sai devotees in Argentina have been intensively active during 1984 in spreading the Sai message, organising Bhajan centres and promoting Seva activities. There are now Bhajan centres in the city of Lahlata, in Salto, and Rio Cuarto (Cordoba province) and a study circle in the city of Cordoba. A full-fledged Sai centre is operating in Buenos Aires. The study circle here has weekly meetings for the study of the Vedas and the teaching of Sanskrit, besides discussions on the teachings of Bhagavan.

The Seva Dal wing is engaged in service activities like the distribution of food, clothing and medicines to poor families, organising relief during floods, improving housing and sanitation in slum areas. Comprehensive service is being rendered to the families in an "adopted" village. Government aid has been used for building houses for the poor. Work among children on the lines of the Bal Vikas movement has also been taken up at the Buenos Aires centre.

The centre has brought out several books in Spanish, including translations of "Sandeha Nivarini," Bhagavan's discourses on the Gita and "Sathya Sai Speaks—Vol. VIII".

A group of 92 devotees visited Prasanthi Nilayam in 1985 and received the blessings of Bhagavan.

Mauritius goes ahead

Mauritius: Nearly 2000 Sai devotees from all over Mauritius attended a rally held on March 10 to review the activities of the Sai centres in the island. Mr. Bala S. Sunnassee, Chairman of the Committee, related his experiences at Prasanthi Nilayam during a three-month stay and the progress of the educational and service activities launched under the inspiration of Bhagavan Baba.

Meerut (U.P.)

Sai Seva Samitis in Uttar Pradesh have installed nearly 1000 smokeless chulas in the houses of villagers in 700 villages all over the State. Following the lead of the Sai organization, Government agencies are now providing more chulas to villagers. These smokeless chulas not only serve to prevent diseases arising from the pollution of the atmosphere within the villager's homes but they also serve to promote greater economy in the use of firewood and help to prevent fire accidents.

The Sai Seva Sangh in U.P. organized in recent months three Polio camps at Rishikesh, Moradabad and Gorakhpur. Out of 3000 cases examined at these camps, 476 patients were selected for surgery. The operations were carried out in April by a team of orthopaedic surgeons headed by Dr. C. Vyaghreswarudu from Andhra Pradesh. At the medical camps medicines and food were supplied free to the patients.

—D. D. G.

Salem (Tamilnadu)

A free eye camp was conducted by the Sathya Sai Seva Samiti, Namakkal, at the Government Boys High School on June 9. A team of doctors from Arvind Eye Hospital, Madurai, examined 831 patients of whom 91 were selected for operation. These patients were operated on at the Arvind Eye Hospital in Madurai and provided with spectacles.

Certificates of affiliation blessed by Bhagavan Baba were given to ten new Sai centres, bringing the total to 15. There are nearly a hundred Bhajan groups all over Mauritius. New Seva Dal scarves were given to all active workers.

Bal Vikas programme in Australia

Sydney: Over 50 Bal Vikas Gurus and trainees from all the states of the Commonwealth of Australia participated in a two-day training programme on April 6 and 7 at Canberra, the capital. The Canberra Sai Centre hosted the training programme. Interim certificates were issued to the participants after the training to enable them to serve as Bal Vikas Gurus.

EHV In Assam

Gauhati: (Assam) Headmasters, Headmistresses and teachers from ten primary schools in the state attended a seminar, held at the Bapuji Prathamik Vidyalaya on May 11, on Education in Human Values. Srimati Lily Mazumdar, member, E.H.V. Trust, Assam, explained the aims and scope of the E.H.V. programme. Sri J. Gogai presided. Trained teachers gave lectures on various

aspects of the E. H. V. programme. Sri Anandeswar Sarma exhorted the teachers to dedicate themselves to the all-round improvement of the children.

Blood Donation

Ahmedabad: (Gujarat) Between February and May this year, the Ahmedabad district Sai Seva Samiti organised four blood donation camps at which 206 devotees, including 17 Mahilas donated blood.

God is the source of all Love; Love God, Love the world as the vesture of God, no more, no less. Through Love, you can merge in the Ocean of Love. Love cures pettiness, hate and grief. Love loosens bonds; it saves man from the torment of birth and death. Love binds all hearts in a soft silken symphony. Seen through the eyes of Love, all beings are beautiful, all deeds are dedicated, all thoughts are innocent. The world is one vast king.

—Baba

Sai Message for Germany

The first public meeting in Germany to present the message and mission of Bhagavan Baba was held on February 23, at the Bavarian capital, Munich. Elaborate preparations had been made for the meeting, which was held in the assembly room of a large hotel. (The blessings of Baba had been obtained earlier by German devotees for holding this meeting.)

Gen. Bernhard Gruber welcomed the gathering consisting of more than 500 persons, nearly half of whom were non-devotees and who knew little or nothing about Bhagavan till then. He referred to Baba as the 'spiritual phenomenon' of our century. His spiritual influence had transformed many doubters and sceptics into earnest devotees. Gen. Gruber dwelt on the programme of education in human values and the work being done by Sai educational institutions. He referred to the International Seva Dal Conference in Prasanthi Nilayam in November last and emphasised that the entire Sai movement was based on the four basic values of Sathya, Dharma, Prema and Santhi.

Ingrid Froehlich recited some passages from Baba's discourses.

Dr. Antonio Craxi, speaking about "unity of religions," pointed out that "unity" does not mean unifying different cultures and historic developments in various countries or reducing the different spiritual paths and religious practices to one uniform pattern or promoting a new religion. "Unity" means realization of the fact that all great religions have the same basis—"devotion to the one and only God." One should acknowledge this basis in other religions than one's own and respect them as representing different paths to the same goal. The advent of Bhagavan Sathya Sai Baba marks the beginning of a new era and a new chapter in human history.

Dina Rees spoke about her personal experience of being cured of cancer by Bhagavan Baba and how his immense love was enabling her to serve people in distress in many ways. She related the changes and joy she found in many people whom she had been allowed to take to India for Swami's darshan. She read out passages from a letter written by a dying girl to her parents. In this letter the child expressed in moving words the failure of her parents to live for and in God and prayed to God that He may help the parents to come to Him. In the simplicity of this letter could be seen, she said, the failure of modern man to realise what is most important in human life; at the same time it is a revelation of the love of an innocent child for God.

In connection with the meeting, an exhibition of photographs of scenes from Prasanthi Nilayam and the activities of Sai organizations in many countries had been got up. In addition, the German Sai Book Centre arranged for a display of books in German about Bhagavan Baba's life and message. So far as many as 17 titles have been published. Two days prior to the meeting the German translation of Dr. Sandweiss's book, "Sai Baba the Holy Man and the Psychiatrist," had come out of the press and immediately became a best seller.

(Report from Europe)

The Easy Way is God's Way

*What we desire and what we require are opposite ends of a pole,
For one relates to worldly things, the other to our goal.*

*We imagine our desire is right and stubbornly refuse
To listen to the Tender Voice that always brings good news.
Our way of doing many things is usually hard and long,
And yet we struggle with the task and won't admit we're wrong.
Yet if we were to listen to the softly spoken voice,
We'd find, as time would prove to us, it was the ideal choice.
And the task becomes a joy because we learn from someone higher,
That The Easy Way is God's way and that is what we should desire.*

An Innocent Question

*What does God look like? we hear a child say
And most of us stop and look in dismay
And think, what to say to someone so small,
And yet all we need do is heed to the call ,
Of the voice from THE MASTER, so pure and so kind,
Who softly rebukes us for being so blind
For GOD is like a tree or a flower or bird,
He is the sound of a breeze or a soft spoken word,*

*He is the soil all around and the sky up above,
And above all, my child. HE's the feeling of love.
And sometimes we're lucky and GOD lets us see
In the form of a person, like you and like me,
And today there's a person whose body does harbour
The True Living God, and HIS name is SAI BABA.*

—Fred Inman, Queensland (Australia)

VIDYAGIRI CAMPUS NEWS:

What Bhagavan means for Africa

"I wish Bhagavan Baba had incarnated 200 years ago so that this fine Institute had been in existence and from it had come the missionaries, administrators, traders, and philanthropists that swarmed Africa. The, place of Africa in world history would have been different from what it is today," observed Mr. Victor Kanu, former High Commissioner for Sierra Leone in the U.K., addressing a meeting of students and staff of the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher learning on June 27th.

Mr. Kanu, who is President of the EHV Society of U.K., said: "Sixty years of the presence of the Poorna. Avatar, Sathya Sai Baba, on this earth plane has brought about tremendous transformation in the lives of millions of people from all walks of life throughout the world. You, as students, may not be aware of this fact and may not appreciate fully the immense value of Bhagavan Baba to you personally and to the world generally. If there are such students among you, these may be fairly likened to the landowners of the Eastern Province of Sierra Leone whose backyards were littered with diamonds and yet knew nothing about their true value. They used the diamonds either as playthings or as instruments of occultism. Not until the arrival of Mr. Pollett, an English geologist and his subsequent reports to his superiors in London, was the British company, the Sierra Leone Selection Trust, formed with the exclusive monopoly rights to prospect for and mine diamonds throughout Sierra Leone and sell them overseas, and Sierra Leoneans realised what they had missed.

"Fortunately for you students of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, you have in your midst a body of wise men, soaked in Indian culture and spirituality and guided by the Avatar Himself. You are therefore in excellent hands receiving the right kind of education which upholds not only all that which is good in India but also that which is good and abiding in the world—the Fatherhood and Motherhood of God and the Brotherhood and Sisterhood of men and women. You are thus being trained to become universal men—men who will become torch-bearers and living examples of the imperishable human values of Truth, Love, Peace, Right Conduct and non-violence. In short, you have been specially chosen by Bhagavan Baba to be educated in such a way that you become worthy instruments in his Divine mission.

"The task that lies ahead is gigantic but not impossible. All that is required is an unqualified love and devotion towards Bhagavan Baba and the duty and discipline to adhere strictly to his teachings which are clearly exemplified in his life.

"Africa has been subjected to numerous external influences all of which professed to seek the interest of its people. There is clear and abundant evidence that this has in fact not been the case. The primary concern of these forces was to promote the interests of the countries and organizations they represented. Their motives were ill-founded and contained not an iota of mutual respect and love for Africans and all that was good in Africa. Their doctrines, practices and life-styles have not succeeded in lifting the African continent from its spiritual, moral and social malaise. How could this have been possible when the self-confidence of Africans, a prerequisite for self-realisation and for success of any kind, was destroyed? Take, for example, my case. I had spent the greater part of my life under missionary influence where I grew up to believe that my soul or Atma was black and inferior! Not until I met Bhagavan Baba six years ago did I realise that the soul or Atma has neither colour, nor shape nor any characteristics within man's comprehension; that the Atma is one and the same in all; that it is god, the same God that resides in me, the Englishman or the Indian. This single example of many of Bhagavan Baba's teachings restored my self-confidence, rekindled my faith in God and love of his creation. The restoration of myself-confidence was the result of direct contact with Bhagavan Baba.

"If experience is to teach the African any lesson it is this: In matters of salvation and especially when God incarnates and moves among humans, no matter where, how far or what colour that physical form takes, it is preferable that efforts are made to reach Him directly.

"Bhagavan Baba is the only hope of Africa. From this 60th Birthday, Africa will not rest until she has played her rightful role in this great and captivating Divine mission, and in the community of nations."

—*Prasanthi Nilayam, 27-6-85*

"The Active Worker"

The category of "active workers" constitutes the backbone of the Sai organisation. Addressing a camp for "active workers" held in Delhi in April last, Mr. Justice V. B. Eradi, Judge of the Supreme Court and a member of the Sathya Sai Central Trust, said:

Basic Human Values have not only to be understood by each one of us, they have to be practised in our day-to-day life. We have to equip ourselves with proper tools for service to society. An active worker in Sai Organisation is different from the same category in other organisations. The constant awareness of Bhagavan's omnipresence must keep us straight on the righteous path throughout our lives. It is not an organisation to do seva to Swami, but is meant for service to the needy. Service can be best performed if we assimilate Swami's teachings and practise them. There should be no hypocrisy in this organisation, -that means in the workers who make up this organisation, —with the name of Swami attached to it. Love should manifest itself

in action. Sincerity and dedication are necessary. Bhagavan should recognise us as His instruments. It is not enough if we join the organisation and start calling ourselves His instruments.

We have to develop the five basic human values and practise them in our day-to-day living. At all times silent Japa must continue. Always think of Baba wherever you are and then you will always do only that which He wishes you to do. Kill the petty ego by Namasmarana and Nagarasankirtan. Read Swami's literature, at least one chapter each day, and imbibe the message. Each time you read you will find a new message coming out of the discourses. Give up bad habits, one by one; the ceiling on desires programme is there to help us out. Each Sai Home must be example of a model house where love, harmony, peace and all other good qualities are manifest in all the members of the family. Nothing should happen in the house which is unworthy of the great sacred Name of Sai. Active workers must always be engaged in Nishkama Karma. It is the quality of work and the attitude with which it is rendered which matter. All work must be transformed into worship. E.H.V. is a must for all.

A Momentous Event

On Palm Sunday, March 31, 1985, something monumental began as the Rev. Andrew Brown, pastor of the St. John's Missionary Baptist Church in Indianapolis, Indiana, prayed with his congregation to "Let the breath of the Lord now breathe on me."

Rev. Robert E. Pipes of Washington (D. C.) led the congregation—and probably those in the U.S. and in Africa who were listening to the radio broadcast—in chanting the words, "I am the Lord God, shining brighter than one hundred thousand suns." Backed by Scripture, proclaiming the truth, Rev. Pipes infused the congregation with a new thought—a `spiritual truth—and with awakened awareness of their true nature.

A thrill went through us Sai devotees in the congregation to hear the name Sathya Sai Baba spoken from the pulpit. Our Lord's message that we are three people—the one we think we are, the one others think we are, and the divine one we really are—was imparted as the Sai message.

But that wasn't all. Rev. Pipes was back on Monday evening. We chanted in unison. "I am God and you are God and we are God." On Tuesday, Rev. Pipes spoke of reincarnation and the incarnation of Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

On Wednesday, he instructed the group how to establish spiritual relationship with Him and realize our divinity and oneness with God. He pointed out that the original name for Jesus was Isa. With Scripture backing him, he disclosed that God wanted to hear His name, Abba, spoken. Then Rev. Pipes led everyone in the bhajan, "Jesus Abba, Jesus Abba, Jesus Abba." The experience was moving and spiritually charged.

With the introduction of bhajans and the repetition of the Lord's name as a means of making our spiritual connection, Rev. Pipes offered the second part of the formula—selfless service—and along with it offering up our work as worship.

The culmination of this blessed week was on Friday, Good Friday, when a life-sized picture of Baba was placed on the altar. To see Sai Baba on the altar of a church in Indianapolis, Indiana, was a momentous event for all. It revealed the unfolding, in the East and West, of the world-saving Message of Sathya Sai Baba, the message of Unity, Love and Purity.

Thank you, Baba, for blessing us in this way.

—Barbara A. Rodgers Indianapolis, Indiana, U.S.A.

STUDENTS' CORNER:

A Mother's Agony and Ecstasy

Two years of primary schooling were over. The third year was also arriving to an end that summer.

One warm summer afternoon, I returned from school swinging my bag to and fro all the way and silently let myself into the house. I was greeted by some sighs and sobs that were issuing from the kitchen. I keyed my ears to recognise the source of the sobbing voice. It was Sampoorna crying. Sampoorna was a poor lady who used to help my mother in her household chores. Often I would see tears running down her cheek while her hands were busy at some work. But I was completely ignorant of the reason.

One day mother confided to me the cause for the flow of the old lady's tears. It was the tale of a mother's broken heart. It was a tale of despair on one side and of hope against hope on the other.

On that fateful day, her husband had dealt cruelly with her elder son who was only ten years old; he beat the young lad black and blue and drove him out of the house. The mother pleaded for mercy but he gave no ear to her appeal. This caused untold grief to the mother and left a deep scar on her heart. The mother passed the day in grief, praying and hoping that her son would return home at dusk. But he never turned in that night. Ever since then from dawn to dusk she used to sit at the threshold of her hut and wait for her lost son to return. She would strain her eyes and look into the face of every stranger who passed her house, hoping to find her son. Nor was she tired of asking travellers if they had seen her dear son, though she always got a negative reply. Days rolled by into weeks and then into months, and months into years.

Now it was twenty years since her son had vanished from her life. The agony of separation which the mother bore patiently became chronic. She at times wondered if praying for the welfare and return of her son was of any use as there seemed to be little chance of his surviving the hardships and dangers he would encounter in a pitiless world.

One Thursday evening mother presented Sampoorna a nice picture of Bhagavan Baba. The frail old lady accepted it with reverence, but regretted her ignorance of rituals and her inability to make any offerings. Mother consoled her and told her that she need not offer Swami anything; her love and devotion for Swami were more than enough. There was a faint smile on the wrinkled face of the old woman as once again she saw now a ray of hope entering her hopeless life. Since that day onwards she experienced a sense of peace and joy in her heart. A week passed and Thursday came again destined to end the agony of separation from the life of Sampoorna.

On that memorable Thursday morning, while the old lady was busy inside her hut, she heard some one shouting at the door, "Mother! Mother!" She saw a young man at the door. It is needless to say, who he was. She was choked with emotion on seeing her long lost son and knew not what to say.

She did not let him in the house, but instead she caught the hand of her perplexed son and invaded our house and broke the glad tidings to my mother. Before mother could verbally express her joy, Sampoorna seized her son's arm and invited herself into our Puja room. In front of the altar, Sampoorna told her son: "I am not your mother." Then pointing her finger at the picture of "Mother Sai," she said to her son. "Prostrate before that, she is your real mother, who

has protected you all along and brought you home safely." The son prostrated before Baba and there were tears in the eyes of the old mother. This time they were tears of joy.

—*Giri Naidu, 1st Year, B. Com., Brindavan Campus*

The True Bhakta

Thiruthonda Alwar was a devotee who belonged to Tamilnadu. Once the Lord appeared to him in a dream and told him that he would be granted- whatever boon he wanted. If he had wanted, Thiruthondar could have asked for oneness with Divinity itself. But he did not ask for it. He said: "I want to be the servant of your servants (Dasanudasa) I only want to serve your servants, Oh Lord! This is my only wish. Grant me, Oh Lord! This single boon."

Today people fight shy of even listening to the word `dasa' (servant). They ostentatiously proclaim themselves as devotees. Some declare that they are devotees of Sathya Sai Baba. But by merely saying, "I am a devotee of Sathya Sai Baba," does one become a devotee? Not at all. Whether one is a devotee of Rama or Krishna should be announced by Rama or Krishna: "My dear son! You are my devotee." Instead, what right has any one to approach Rama and say: "I am your devotee." To proclaim that one is a devotee is more an attempt at self-glorification than an act of self-purification. By merely performing bhajans people do not become Bhaktas (devotees). Nor by merely rendering service does one become a devotee. By sitting in meditation or doing japa men do not become devotees. Only when the heart has been made pure can one become a devotee. It is only when one is unaffected by pain or pleasure, prosperity or adversity, and his heart is purified and has developed steadfastness, can he become a true devotee. It is to such devotees that he should render service.

—*From Bhagavan's discourse on 2.7.85*

"Bad Digestion"

One of the most common phenomena found among those who profess to be adepts of Vedanta, or 'Vedantins', is the indiscriminate use and application of the concept of the Absolute in all the incidents of day-to-day life. They will say, 'everything is God's will, everything that happens is His will, and we cannot do anything! Therefore, let's look after our own self, God will do the rest.'

Those who speak thus have generally read a lot of books on Vedantic philosophy and they suffer from 'bad digestion'. This bad digestion is revealed in their actions and ways of thinking; thus the most ancient and highest of all philosophies ever elaborated by man, is used in a casual manner to hide selfishness and laziness, the final result being neurosis and mental instability.

The least occurrence is interpreted by them with the key of Vedanta: "I am God, all are God, so when I look after myself, I have looked after everyone else!"

Belief and experience

Another frequent affirmation is, "Everything that happens is part of 'karma', it is 'destiny', what can we do? Everything is God's will!" At best, we remain there contemplating the greatness of Divine Justice! It even comes to the point of feeling that no prayer will help, because "anyway, 'karma' has to be gone through!" Such affirmations denote so little love and compassion! The declaration that one is the 'Atman' or 'God' and only serving as an instrument in His 'Divine Hands' remains a mere aspiration, and not an EXPERIENCE! In a group interview Swami said to one of the devotees, "What do you do in your country?" The young boy answered, "I am a student of philosophy." "What is philosophy?" asked Swami, and before the boy had time to answer, He went on to say, "Philosophy is the enquiry for discovering Godhead! But... What is God?" And He added, pointing to each of those present, "You are God! You are God! This is God!" —pointing to the fan, the chair, the table, and Himself. "Everything is God!" Then He took His handkerchief and asked, "And what is this?" and everyone replied in chorus, "This is God!" "No!" said Swami, "This is a handkerchief!" Everybody laughed. Little did they realise that that was a pure lesson in Vedanta! Swami says that we are not entitled to say that this or that is God until we have actually had the direct experience of this Truth! For us the handkerchief is a handkerchief, and only the One who has realized the Truth is allowed to affirm that it is God! First experience, then affirmation!

There are many who are convinced that they know everything about Vedanta, and they seem to be great pundits, showing off their knowledge on every conceivable occasion, without humility or compassion. There are also those who have received Bhagavan's message very recently, and who, with pure heart, intuit His Divinity. Many fall into deep depression for want of 'right information'. When they fall into the hands of these 'pseudo-Vedantins', their mental confusion increases and faith in the Master decreases. They say, "We have renounced everything in life, our body, our country, our parents, our brothers and sisters, our sons and daughters." They regard as 'detachment' this perfect indifference towards the 'bonds' that 'tie' them to the 'world', and they find no room in their hearts for their own mother, father, and no respect towards people who live a happy married life.

We have many examples of people who, upon returning home to their country, and after having received such wrong advice, started 'renouncing everything', transforming their once-happy homes into desert islands and ending in divorce or separation. This is a symptom of ignorance. We should be careful and know that, until we have realized our true nature, we have to live in illusion; this is true surrender. Swami says, "You cannot walk without shoes, and illusions are your shoes!" We have to use the world, which is illusion, to overcome it. To discover that God's will is one with mine, I have to perform actions and prove to myself that God is working through me.

Renounce desire

How do we work towards this? The problem is to renounce desire from the very depths of our being until it is no longer a part of us. Until this is done, there remains a great danger of neurosis, frustration and strange behaviour.

Renouncing desires, which include evil thoughts, words and deeds, is the most difficult thing, and success depends on many lives spent in doing `sadhana'. Bhagavan's teachings are so simple; they can be contained in three short words: "DO YOUR DUTY." He says that whoever does his duty will be in harmony with God's will and progress will come automatically like the ripening of a fruit under the rays of the sun. Unfortunately, those who do not know their duty, but know the essence of Vedanta, are many! To do one's own duty does not mean sitting cross-legged in meditation, waiting for the Guru's grace to grant liberation and grace. It means deep introspection and enquiry into `Who am I, what am I doing now? What is my relationship with the world around me? What do I want? What is right? What is wrong?' Once we answer these questions, the sense of duty will come automatically. One will realise that it is his duty to love his parents, his country, to respect society and to pay his debts towards it by serving all.

Once a friend came to visit me. He had just come from his country to the ashram: "How many blessings, how many blessings—from Bhagavan!" he said. "What has happened to you, tell me?" I asked, surprised to see his face full of joy. "So many blessings," he went on. "My country is in a terrible economic crisis, but guess what! MY business is flourishing better than ever!" I was astonished and remembered a passage from Mahatma Gandhi's life when He was praying thus: "God, I do not wish to be born again, but if ever it is Your Will that I incarnate again, let me be an untouchable so that I may help them in their misery!" That is a true example of a Vedantin.

Without love and compassion, there cannot be any `education', `knowledge'—or `experience'! How many times has Swami told us: "Without the values of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema, every word, thought and deed comes to nought!"

In the face of such an attitude, let us pray that God grant us the gift of intelligence so that we may know, one day, who we really are, what we are really doing, and where we are going. Let us pray together with Gandhiji: "Sabko sanmathi de Bhagavan" "O Lord, give us all the light of Your intelligence!"

—A.C. (*Translated from the Italian edition of "Sanathana Sarathi"*)

Beacons of Love

I do not think we can understand the importance or true significance of Seva until we realise who we are. So, who are we?

In 1983 Swami said to me: "I AM YOU, YOU ARE ME, ALL ONE, ALL GOD." Those simple divine words apply to everyone, for we are all part of the whole, the Atma or God Himself. It is just like the waves and the ocean which in reality are one and the same.

So when we serve our fellowmen, we are actually serving ourselves and this concept will become easier to understand when we learn to see God in everyone. For me, that is perhaps the highest secret of life, not only to see everyone as God but to treat everyone as though he is God,

or better still as Swami Himself. Our whole life will be transformed when we put that teaching into practice and begin to see Swami in everyone, or more important, to treat everyone as though he is Swami.

Unlimited opportunities

Would you not do anything for Swami if you were given the chance? Well you have that chance every moment of the day and that is the best way to start all seva activity. And it is good to remember constantly that when you help others you are actually helping yourself, for you and that other person are ONE. In the same way you can say that what you do to others you are really doing to yourself, so if you hate or dislike anyone, you are really hating yourself.

The actual opportunities for seva are unlimited and our life should be filled with seva activity from morning to night. However, all the Sai Centres have a seva wing and convenors will help devotees to participate in group seva activity. Great joy, happiness and satisfaction can be realised through dedicated and loving service, for instance in regular visits to Old People's Homes.

Many Sai Centres both in U. K. and abroad are now working on those lines with the most wonderful results, and their activities cover a very wide field, although there is usually emphasis on helping the old, the sick, the handicapped and the children.

The desire to serve should come from the heart and be motivated by LOVE, our love for our fellowmen. LOVE is the God force itself and if we allow this love to flow, not only will it transform our own lives but also the lives of all those around us.

I conclude with some lovely words which came to me in 1981 when I said to Swami in meditation, "Swami, what can I do for you?" The reply came instantly: *"Be like a beacon in the sky, radiating love and light. That is what you can do for Swami."*

As we start each day and contemplate our seva activities, let us all set out to become beacons of love and light, remembering that it is **HIS LOVE** and **HIS LIGHT** that we are radiating. In this way all our seva activities will achieve something worthwhile and the world will become a better and happier place.

—Lucas Ralli, London

Carry the Torch

I was freezing cold—the bones seemed to be rattling
the teeth were shaking—and I was numb—
you gave me a blanket for warmth—
you touched me

I was poor and lonely—had fallen on hard times
even without a home—and no money—

you stopped to see how I was
you gave me shelter
you tried to help

I was arrogant with the bilge of modern education
your love pierced through the walls of
intellectual conceit—
you brought home the message of goodness and truth
you educated me
and I am starting to change

I was stuck inside where senses rage for pleasure
the world held me in a whirl wind
the light of truth was gone
and then compassion came.
When I saw the error of my ways
you saved me—and to You I owe my all

May we touch another to relieve the cold winds of winter—
give to the poor and needy—who once were us in a different dress—
bring forth Sai's Message of love—
deepen insight to humble the proud
and teach them who forgot;
bring about a change—when pleasures have taken hold and peace has fled—
learn from experience—and carry the torch ahead.

—*Michael Hollander, New Jersey*

THE CHANCELLOR SPEAKS:

God, Nature and Man

The Cosmos has one Source, One Support, One End. That is an eternal entity, self-sufficient, totally luminous. The Chandogya Upanishad, while narrating the instruction given by Sanat Kumara to Narada, reveals that though we deal with different numbers as three, five, seven, nine, eleven, thirteen, fifteen, seventeen, nineteen and twenty-one, there is Only one in reality, the Brahman.

Multiplicity is how the One appears when it assumes Name and Form. Then it becomes the Jagat, the Flux, the Cosmos, the Universe. God was alone before the Cosmos appeared. He projects, He protects, He dissolves and draws it into Himself. This is the Truth.

Man has the rare good fortune of adoring Nature as the Body of God and offering grateful worship to God. But, is he conscious of God being the source and sustenance? Does he give God the first place in his thoughts which is His due? Or, is he engaged in the activities of life in total disregard of God? It is a pity that, instead of paying attention to God, Nature and Man, in that

order, men today are concerned most with themselves, more with Nature and very much less with God. From birth to death, from dawn till night, man pursues fleeting pleasures by the exploitation, the despoiling, the desecration of Nature, ignoring the truth that it is the property of God the Creator, and any injury caused to it is a sacrilege which merits dire punishment.

Ravana's crime

Ravana ignored God and coveted Nature, courting disaster. This story is the subject of the famous epic, Ramayana. He desired to own and master Sita (personified Nature; she was the child of Mother Earth, found in a furrow) and brought her away from Rama, the Incarnation of God, who was her lord and master. His own brother reminded him of the iniquity and advised him to seek refuge in Rama and restore Sita to her rightful Lord. Ravana was so proud of the success he had achieved in imprisoning Sita that the warning fell on deaf ears.

Hanuman, who discovered Sita and conveyed to her the Message of Hope and the Assurance of Hope, managed to enter the Audience Hall of Ravana. He revealed to him that Sita was the Mother of all the Worlds and his own mother. He described the might and majesty of God in the Rama form and drew ominous pictures of the destruction that was in store for Ravana. He advised him to restore Sita and surrender to Rama. He said that eternal disgrace was the fate of every one who thrusts his ego forward and keeps God behind, beyond consideration.

All the twenty four hours, all the days of life, men are active in worshipping their bodies and minds, catering to the senses, submitting to the clamour of carnal desires, earning the wherewithal to feed themselves. They have no time to spare for meditation on God. How can men secure peace of mind, when men have no contact with the Vast, the Timeless, the Almighty Providence? When God is last, life is lost.

Mahabharata lesson

The Mahabharata Epic teaches the same lesson. Arjuna was third among the five Pandavas. Duryodhana was the eldest of the hundred Kauravas, their cousins. The Kauravas developed such deep envy, greed and hatred against the Pandavas that a fratricidal war was rendered inevitable. Both sides started gathering allies and resources. The Pandavas adhered to righteous norms and were loyal to Sri Krishna, whom they revered as God. On their behalf, Arjuna hurried to Dwaraka to secure the most precious armament they knew, namely, Krishna's blessings. When Duryodhana knew that Arjuna had left for Dwaraka, he wanted to forestall his enemy and journeyed to Dwaraka as fast as he could. The Divine Play-actor sensed the approach of the rival claimants for his favour. So, he quietly laid himself on the bed and pretended to be fast asleep.

Arjuna reached the place. Since he was not only a devotee but a companion and a kinsman, he tiptoed into the room and, drawing a three-legged stool from a corner, sat reverentially near the Lotus feet. Duryodhana barged in very pompously. He had the air of a ruling monarch. He was too proud to sit and wait like Arjuna. He found a high-backed chair near the head of the cot. He plumped on it with a sigh. When ego swells the head, man becomes unruly and wild. Duryodhana fretted and fumed at the delay.

Krishna was amused at the restlessness of the Kaurava supplicant, who dared to eject a few fake coughs in order to awaken him. Arjuna, however, was struggling to breathe softly and

silently. At last, Krishna sat up and noticing Arjuna facing him with folded palms accosted him with his characteristic sweetness. "Oh! when did you arrive? How do you do? How is Draupadi? And your brothers?" Duryodhana was consumed by envy, anger and pride. Krishna stoked the fire. He enjoyed the scene, this picture and that. "An Emperor has honoured his home! Yet this bundle of conceit talks to that commoner so long and so fast, as if I am non-existent," thought Duryodhana. "Is this his way of treating his guests?" he asked himself.

Arrogance v. faith

At that moment, Krishna turned to him, with the question, "When did you arrive? Are your parents doing well? How are your brothers faring?" Duryodhana replied, "The war will soon be on. I seek your help." On hearing this, Krishna questioned Arjuna, "What are you seeking?" Arjuna replied, "I seek your blessings." Krishna designed a dilemma for both.

Krishna proposed to give his army of ten thousand warriors to one party and himself alone to the other. "I shall not wield any weapon. I will not fight. At least, I can serve as a charioteer. Now, announce your choice," said Krishna. Duryodhana was furious. "This is a calculated insult, allowing him to choose," he said to himself. "The ten thousand will be his and I will be burdened with a dark-skinned log," he feared. Krishna wanted Arjuna to decide which of the two he wanted. "I saw your first, so you choose first," Krishna prodded Arjuna. Duryodhana was on tenter-hooks. Arjuna placed his head on the Feet of Krishna and said, "You are all we need." He knew that Krishna was God, the embodiment of power, wisdom and Love. He pleaded, "Be the Charioteer of my vehicle and, I pray, for the journey of my Life as well." Duryodhana was relieved. He preferred Nature to Nature's Master. He led the ten thousand to his camp. Arjuna had God, installed before him in the chariot, guiding him to Victory. Duryodhana was punished with defeat, death and disgrace for preferring the world to God who is its life-breath.

The lord's grace

During the battle, one day, when Krishna brought the chariot back at sunset to the Pandava Camp, Arjuna was so intoxicated with pride at his exploits on the field that he appropriated for himself the first place, relegating Krishna to the second; he was the Master and Krishna was a charioteer holding a whip and the reins, he felt. So, he insisted on the driver alighting and pulling the steps down for him to land. Krishna knew what he suffered from; he was determined to cure him. So, he commanded Arjuna sternly to get down. Arjuna could not disobey. He required Krishna's service for a few more days! When he had moved a few paces away, Krishna rose and jumped down from his seat. The gems on the jewels he wore on the ears, shoulder and chest flashed in blinding brilliance when he leaped. The moment he stood on the ground, the chariot was enveloped in flames and turned into a heap of ash!

Krishna explained the reason to the astonished Arjuna. The enemies had shot many arrows of fire at the chariot that day in order to kill Arjuna but Krishna had held them in check. If he had left his seat on the chariot with Arjuna still in, he would have been caught in the conflagration. Luckily, Arjuna had yielded and was saved. He learnt the lesson that man should endeavour to please God first, the world next and his self last.

During worship at the domestic altar or in temples, you offer God 'naivadya' (eatable items) in the form of fruits and sweets. Sour or bitter things are not offered, for God is sweetness

personified. Earn His Grace by avoiding sour temperament and bitter behaviour. Fill every thought, word and deed with the sweetness of Love. Then, you can enter the battlefield of the World, sure of Victory, since God has promised to serve as your Charioteer.

—Bhagavan's address at the Sathya Sai Institute Auditorium, Prasanthi Nilayam, 17-7-85

Love of the Lord

The Rama Principle is the Principle of Love that descended from Heaven, a Gift of the Gods, as a result of the, re Sacrifice. Rama means Delight! Nothing delights more than one's own innate self, and so, Rama is also known as Atma Rama. How then could Bharata agree to usurp the throne, of which Rama is the rightful heir? He and Shatrughna were at the Kekaya capital, when Rama was exiled and Dasaratha died heart-broken at the separation. News was sent to him, and when he entered the palace, unaware of the double tragedy that had cast its gloom over the City, he sensed some calamity. Vasishta, the family preceptor, advised him to ascend the throne, for the empire was suffering an interregnum!

Bharata appealed that he be allowed to go to "the God of my prayers, the Lord who receives the homage of my unceasing adoration." Vasishta told him that it was his father's command, 'and preceptor's counsel that he sit enthroned as Ruler. Bharata replied that the request was, proof of the extreme hatred that the parents, the people, the preceptor and everyone in Ayodhya had towards him, for, had they loved him, they would not have pressed him to commit such a mean sin. Bharata stood before Vasishta with folded palms; he prayed, "Is it just, is it fair, that you should burden me with the sovereignty over a kingdom, which slew my father, widowed my mothers, exiled my dearest brother whom I value more than my very breath to the demon-ridden jungle, with his dearly beloved queen and which finally brought indelible disgrace on my mother? My empire is the realm which Rama ruled over, namely, my heart; which is too small to contain His glory." Bharata's name itself signifies that he is saturated with love of Rama. (Bha—means, Bhagavan—the Lord, Rama; ratha—means, pleased by, happy over, attached to).

Let the Love for the Lord grow in you, as it did in Bharata. Let that sense of adoration, which discarded even a throne, flourish in you. Then, you can be of great use to your country, your culture, your society, your religion and your community. Or else, all this bother that you have undergone, to attend. Satsang, to listen to spiritual discourses, study spiritual texts, etc. will be a colossal exercise in futility.

—Baba (From "Chinna Katha")

Power of the Name

Some time ago, I was at home translating into Spanish a play found in the "Om Publication" on the life of St. Francis of Assisi. As I was reading how St. Francis was able to conquer the wolf's savage nature, I heard my cook scream in terror. I thought she had had an accident, and I ran to the kitchen to see what had happened. But before I could reach the kitchen, I saw a man in frantic state, as if he was drugged, grinding his teeth. As he was menacingly approaching me, he started screaming that he wanted to kill me. I noticed that he seemed to be holding a gun under his shirt. He threw himself at me, grabbing my neck with one hand, holding the gun with the other. He pushed me against the wall.

I breathed deeply, and told him in a very calm way: "You do not gain anything by killing me." And then I started repeating, "Om Sai Ram," loud. He thought I was trying to talk to him in English (our native language is Spanish) and he started mumbling phrases in English. Then, he noticed I was wearing two chains, one with a small Baba medallion (with an Om symbol on the back), and the other with a pendant with my name inscribed on it. He tried to take them by force. I motioned to him to stop, and said that I would give them to him. I unhooked the chain clasps and he removed them from my hands. But his movement was so abrupt that, while pulling the chains from my hands, the Sai pendant remained in my hands.

He was very nervous and his anxiety increased every minute. I glanced at the hand supposedly holding the gun, and I noticed that he did not really have a gun. In desperation at my discovery, he asked me for a gun. All of a sudden, I had an idea and told him I had a room full of guns. He anxiously wanted to see the room. He told me to take him there and he held my arms twisted behind my back. I took him to my pooja room where I have a huge silkscreen picture of Swami and several other pictures of Swami, including one of Lord Ganesha. When I opened the door, he was astonished and I had the impression that a force was holding him back from going into the pooja room. He seemed to be frozen at the door and kept rocking his body back and forth.

He yelled: "You are ridiculous! Don't talk to me about Jesus." I answered back: "I have not mentioned the Name of Jesus. I am saying the Name of Sai Baba." And I constantly kept repeating aloud, "Sai Baba, Sai Baba, Sai Baba..." He asked, "Who is Sai Baba?" I replied, "Sai Baba is the most wonderful being on Earth. Sai Baba is God." He then said, "I need a drink." I told him I would give him something to drink. While we were going back to get him a drink, he saw my television set and video recorder and he wanted to take them. But every time that I said Baba's Name, his eyes would go out of focus and he would forget what he had asked to take.

I kept trying to lead him to the main door. When we were near the main door he asked me once more for a tape recorder. I usually keep in my car a small tape recorder that I use in my work at a local radio station, and I offered it to him as a gift. He motioned me to the car and I put the tape recorder in his hands. While trying to lead him to the street door, he yelled in astonishment, "I am a thief! Why is it that I cannot steal anything from this house? The devil is inside this house!" I pushed him out and locked the door inside.

As I walked back into the house I found that he had dropped his identification disc. So I learned that he was only 21 years old. That night, when I told my husband what had happened, he decided to look for the young man to turn him in to the authorities. After a couple of days of searching for him, we found out that his mother had a severe form of cancer, his father was so

old and weak that he could not work any more, and the young man had become so desperate that he had resorted to drinking. While drunk he had decided to get some money by stealing. We talked over the problem and decided that to send him to prison would not be good for his future life.

I think that Baba knew that nothing was going to happen to me. Baba was rather protecting him, because if he had tried to rob any of the neighbouring houses, he would certainly have been killed since all my neighbours have armed bodyguards who are ready to shoot any stranger in the house. I am the only one that has Baba for my bodyguard and His Name for my gun.

—*Connie de Bolens, El Salvador*

Another Reminder

Devotees know that Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has no disciple, agent, intermediary or representative, authorised to act or speak on His behalf. He is the omnipresent Lord, showering Grace directly on all, wherever they may be. In spite of our frequently announcing this Truth and publishing occasional reminders, instances are still being reported of persons claiming such special relationship and gathering benefits therefrom—this time from India, Europe and Canada. They pretend to be initiated disciples endowed with the right to raise funds, to transmit oral counsel and even obtain from Bhagavan written answers to problems presented by them on behalf of their clients! Some of them dare use clever imitations of letter papers with imprints familiar to devotees to beguile the simple-minded. Therefore, we desire to remind our readers, and others through them, of their duty to dissociate themselves from such individuals and to rescue the gullible from being led astray.

—*Editor*

Prayer: The High-way to God

Most of us pray to God in one way or another. Some of us pray to Him in difficulties hoping that He will deliver us from them. Some of us pray that God could be induced to avert unknown difficulties on our way and free us from future worries. Some of us pray because it is the first sign of religious life, and one should be (or at least appear to be!) religious. There are yet some others amongst us who pray because it is good to make God aware of our needs, so that He can fulfill them in time. Some others pray because they believe that if they don't, God will become indifferent to them, and no wise man should risk God's indifference! One must go on reminding God of one's existence and requirements. One's name should always be in God's list of Grace. So they pray out of fear. There is still another attitude associated with prayer. If I pray, and then commit a sin, it will not attach itself to me. Since I have taken the precaution of praying to Him, and He did not prevent me from committing the sin as was His responsibility, the sin goes to

Him! So, in this case I pray to shift responsibilities. Yet there is a fairly small group who pray because they like to.

Every religion urges its adherents to pray and there is no poverty of books expounding the efficacy of prayer. Various people pray for various reasons, and some of them loudly proclaim how through prayers they have done great deeds. Similarly there are many more who actually loudly complain that prayer is useless as God did not respond to their prayers when they most needed His help. It appears that both these categories have quite strong reasons for holding their respective views, leaving the rest of us confused and undecided.

All those considerations rest on a simple and single idea that prayer is primarily a way of doing things. We can hardly see any other utility of prayer if it cannot serve us the way we want it to. It is regarded most often as a channel through which the omnipotent power lends itself to our use. Therefore it is generally looked upon as synonymous with asking the giver for gifts of our own choice.

Seeking gifts

At times we use defensive method. We say to God, "God I love you, therefore you must love me; and therefore out of your love for me, fulfill this small request of mine." We claim we express our love for God in our prayer, yet our primary concern is our 'small request'. This doesn't work. We neither taste real love as we profess we do, nor do we get our 'small request' complied with by God as we want Him to.

Sometimes we are quite large hearted in our prayer. We proclaim we pray for the well-being of entire humanity..."Let everyone see good, do good, be good...etc." This attitude and approach is certainly commendable. But in this case also lack of proper understanding plays mischief. I pray for the well-being of humanity so long as I have enough of the good things of life myself. If I fall sick, meet with misfortune and ruin, all my large heartedness evaporates! Therefore, when I was praying, "Let everyone enjoy health and prosperity..." I was in fact praying, "Let me enjoy health and prosperity..." There is no sincerity in this prayer.

Contact with God

Granting that prayer may or may not be responsible for getting the gifts we have asked for it can yet serve a more noble and better purpose in life. Whether prayers are articulate or inarticulate, something very sacred and important happens just before we start praying. We pray to God because we believe (1) God is all powerful (2) His power is available for us (3) God is very generous and (4) He cares for us. This belief, vague and indistinct though, precedes our prayer. In other words, we ring Him up and connect the line before we actually speak into the receiver. Before we start praying, we connect ourselves to Him. The contact is made as soon as we think of Him, or call out "God". This is the primary purpose of prayer. All the rest are only words, words, words. And, we employ these words only to keep the connection longer. Therefore even the idle words serve a purpose, provided there is sincerity in these words.

Islam advises us to pray five times a day. Hinduism insists on three 'sandhyas'. All religions prescribe praying at least twice, morning and evening. All these moments are moments when we connect ourselves to Him, try to make ourselves ready for Him to flow onto us. Then we

formulate words and thoughts. The most important thing is to establish this connection. This moment has to be an intensely personal moment, unshared by others. That makes our prayer intimate and memorable. It is the most glorious hour in the eternity of time.

If the contact is properly made, we don't have to say a prayer. It itself is a prayer. The fulfillment or non-fulfillment of prayer is not whether the request made to God is complied with; it is whether the contact with God has been intimate. God fulfilling our request is not integral to prayer. He may grant it in spite of our forgetting to pray. God may clear our difficulties, give success in a right endeavour and o a thousand things, because we request him for help, but we should not make our prayers conditional. Prayer is not a way of doing things as much as a way of restoring our intimacy with God which we have lost. When the prayer is intense, we forget to make any requests to God. We are overwhelmed with a feeling of nearness to God.

A sublime moment

Therefore, prayer should be considered a highway on which God walks to us, or we walk to Him. Tennyson describes prayer as a sublime moment when man in God and God in man become one. In fact, there is no walking as such; it is only being aware of the Truth that He is always very near. Prayer must give one this feeling of nearness; it ought not to be constrained by our attempt at getting our applications granted. It may come about, it may not. But prayer should not be affected; prayer should not lose its sublime role of relating man to God intimately.

Then prayer becomes both a very personal an impersonal act. It is personal because it intensifies our personal relationship with God. It is impersonal because it is not tied down to a list of our needs and requirements. It is the most universal of personal acts. It is a self-offering of the individual to the Lord. It is the best of all rituals—yet it is no ritual. It is dedication, surrender; it is preparing the individual for expression of the Cosmic Will.

—B.K.M.

DIVYA SANDESH:

Sadhana and Seva

A call to residents in Prasanthi Nilayam, who had settled down in the ashram after retirement, to combine their spiritual sadhana with service activity of some kind, was made by Bhagavan, in an exclusive address to them in the Prasanthi Mandir on July 7th.

Bhagavan said:

You have worked very hard in your life discharging worldly duties and come to Prasanthi Nilayam, seeking rest for the body and peace for the mind. That being so, it might look strange if you were asked to undertake some kind of work here also.

In the olden days the Guru would collect his disciples in the forest and give them different types of work, sometimes for 10 to 12 years. This was done with a purpose. One important object of work is purification of the heart or Chitta. Once the heart is purified one is ready to receive the teachings of the Guru. Therefore, in the olden days the disciples were given work in the

beginning, and after the disciples were purified by doing work, and the teacher was satisfied regarding the student's ripeness for receiving spiritual instruction, the teacher would start teaching Brahma Vidya.

The five yajnas

Besides this, there are other reasons why one should undertake work. Every family man is engaged in a number of activities in the course of which a number of small creatures and insects may be destroyed. In these and other ways, sins may be committed, knowingly or unknowingly. For removing such sins, the Shastras have prescribed five types of Yagnas: Brahma Yagna, Deva Yagna, Pitru Yagna, Manushya Yagna, and Bhuta Yagna.

Brahma Yagna includes the study of sacred books and scriptures. Deva Yagna includes offering worship, Bhajan, Upasana etc. Pitru Yagna refers to ceremonies to departed parents. The fourth one, Manushya Yagna, refers to extending hospitality to guests, invited and uninvited. Bhuta Yagna refers to offering food to animals, birds and insects, etc., and looking after wild animals. By engaging in acts of service and fulfilling the requirements of these Yagnas, we will be atoning for sins of various kinds that might have been committed.

Service activities undertaken in other places, such as construction of roads in villages, or in the construction of temples or feeding the people, help to serve only that village or town; but by undertaking service activity in Prasanthi Nilayam one would have an opportunity to serve God directly. Any work done here is an offering to Swami Himself. Work has to be taken up in this spirit. One should not be idle. Whatever work is done here, should be done out of a feeling of love. You can take up whatever work is appropriate, in keeping with your aptitudes and capacity. While doing such sacred work, residents can carry on their own Sadhana, whether it be Shravanam, Kirtanam, Vishnusmaranam, Padasevanam, Archanam, Vandanam, Dasyam, Sakhyam or Atmanivedanam.

Test—not obstacles

Sometimes people say that many obstacles occur during Sadhana. When obstacles come they should be taken as tests. Tests are intended not as punishment, but they are given for ascertaining one's fitness for promotion. Frequent tests mean frequent opportunities for promotion. If there is a big time lag between tests it only means that promotion is not possible for a long time. The obstacles in Sadhana should be taken in this spirit, and you should try to overcome them.

While practising Sadhana one has to follow the rules laid down in the scriptures or follow the command of the Guru or that of God. While following these rules or commands, one should not worry whatever obstacles come. One should continue with one's prescribed Sadhana and achieve success, even at the cost of one's life. Some people say that they are following Swami's commands, but they are getting so many obstacles in their Sadhana. This is not the correct attitude. In fact, if one follows Swami's instructions carefully and correctly, no obstacles will come. If obstacles come it means one has not followed the commands correctly. Before undertaking Sadhana there are certain things which one should know. Sadhana refers to an activity undertaken for achieving one's goal or purpose in life. The Sadhaka has to decide what he wants to achieve, what his purpose is. Then Sadhana has to be carried on until one achieves that goal. If one undertakes Sadhana without knowing these aspects one will falter, face obstacles

and problems. Then one may lose faith in the Guru, which could result in a total fall and destruction of oneself. So, one must be very careful in doing Sadhana.

Six steps

In Sadhana there are six steps: Sama, Dama, Titiksha, Uparathi, Shraddha and Samadhan. Sama, Dama and Uparathi have to do with various aspects of mind and sense control. Titiksha refers to having equal-mindedness in gain or loss, in pain or pleasure, and in praise or censure. Shraddha is very essential in spiritual life. Only the one who has Shraddha, faith, will get illumination and wisdom. So whatever work is undertaken, one should do it with interest and faith. Samadhan refers to contentment. He who has the least desires is the richest man in the world. He who is filled with desires is the poorest man in the world. Therefore, one should have contentment and self-satisfaction. Self-satisfaction comes from self-confidence. Self-satisfaction can lead one to self-sacrifice and through it to self-realization.

These three are important for man: Knowledge, Skill and Balance. If one approaches knowledge with skill, one will get balance. Balance is very important. It means equipoise in praise or censure. For balance, skill is necessary. For skill, knowledge is necessary. If you lose balance, suffering will soon follow.

When you are given some work, you should put your heart and soul into it, and do the work with the utmost sincerity and dedication, to the limit of your capacity. Take for example a person who is entrusted with planting trees and developing a garden. If he does the work wholeheartedly the plants will come up well, and the garden will grow into a thing of beauty. When Swami comes to see that garden and feels happy with the condition of the plants, then Swami's joy becomes the Grace He bestows on that person; and that Grace will confer great happiness on that individual. Here is an example of this:

Winning the guru's grace

Sri Sankaracharya had a number of disciples, of whom 13 were considered important. Of these, four were the closest to the Master. They were Hasthimalika, Thotaka, Suresha and Padmapada. The first three chose to study the scriptures under their Guru, but the last one said that he would be most happy just serving the Guru. Sankara asked him what service he wanted to perform. The disciple replied that he wanted to wash the Guru's clothes and have them ready for the Guru each day. The other three would ridicule him for choosing only service to the Guru, while they were learning the great scriptures, but the fourth disciple was not at all bothered by that. Every day he used to take the Guru's clothes to the middle of the river so that they could be washed in the purest water available. One day there was a flood and he was caught in the middle of the river. He was not worried about losing his life, but he was greatly concerned about getting the clothes to the Guru, in time. He began rushing across the river, which was now in spate. Wherever he placed his foot a stone lotus sprang up. Thus he got the name of Padmapada. When he brought the clothes to the Guru, the Guru was so pleased with the disciple's devotion that he showered his Grace on him, and immediately Padmapada became a great scholar. This is the greatness of service to the Guru and the Grace it can evoke from him.

If you can earn Swami's Grace then everything will be added unto you and you will be happy here and hereafter. Whatever work is being done by you, do it with utmost sincerity. Always use

polite language and speak sweetly. During Swami's 60th Birthday Celebrations, lakhs of devotees will come here. They should be treated as guests. Show them all possible courtesy and consideration. Do not hurt their feelings. They have not come here for your sake, but for the sake of Swami, in the same way as you came here for the sake of Swami originally.

If you are in charge of accommodation and someone wants a room, but none is available, then you should politely tell him so. He may repeat the request but you should not shout back at him. You should politely tell him that there is no accommodation.

Four stages

There are four stages in the journey to God: Salokya, Samipya, Sarupya and Sayujya. Now you have entered the first stage of Salokya, which is coming into the Divine Presence. You should progress forward to Samipya, which means coming nearer; then move on to Sarupya, where you shine with the very form and splendour of Divinity. Finally, you enter the stage of Sayujya, complete mergence, where the bubble bursts and finds itself to be the Sea. Service will give you the opportunity to progress along these steps and come nearer to Swami!

—*Prasanthi Nilayam*

Three Types of Aspirants

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

—**Baba**

SAI JAGAT SAMACHAR:

"Sathya Sai Darshan"

"Sathya Sai Darshan"—the mobile exhibition of pictures on the life and message of Bhagavan and the activities of Sai organisations—which was got up in June at Prasanthi Nilayam during the National Seminar on Education in Human Values, has been making its rounds in South India, starting with Karnataka.

The exhibition was opened at Bangalore at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan by the Governor of Karnataka, Sri A. C. Bannerjee. It attracted unprecedented crowds at the Bhavan and was an

eye-opener to many regarding the wide range of service and educational activities carried on by Sai organisations in India and abroad under the inspiration and guidance of Bhagavan Baba.

After its tour of cities and towns in Karnataka and Kerala, the exhibition was brought to Coimbatore where large numbers of people visited it during three days.

From Coimbatore, the exhibition was brought to Madras and was formally opened by the Governor of Madras, Sri Khurana, in the spacious hall of "Abbotsbury" on July 21. The Governor, who showed a keen interest in every one of the exhibits, said he considered it a privilege to be associated with the monumental work of the Sai organisation. Sri Sathya Sai Baba was the latest in the long line of spiritual leaders who had appeared in India through the ages and who had given to humanity the greatest spiritual truths. In emphasising the basic ideals of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema, Bhagavan Baba sought to unite all mankind regardless of race, religion or nationality. Sri Khurana stressed the supreme relevance at the present time of Bhagavan's message and work in the sphere of education and social service. He suggested that the Sai organisations should coordinate their activities with the working of other public agencies to ensure the largest benefits for the people.

Dr. Sundaresan, Vice Chancellor of Madras University, speaking on "Education in Human Values," said that as a scientist engaged in research he had worked abroad for many years. He headed also for some years the Society of Research Scientists in the U.S. He found that all their work was a futile exercise as long as "human values" did not receive their rightful place in the scheme of scientific research. He resigned his post and decided to come back to India to devote his time to the study of India's immemorial culture. He felt that Bhagavan Baba's scheme of education in human values was the real answer to the basic problems facing the world today. There can be no peace in the world unless men learnt to live it life based on Truth, Righteousness and Love.

The exhibition, which was open for three days, was visited by thousands of persons.

The mobile exhibition will be taken to Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and other States in the coming months.

Mass eye camp at Salem

One of the largest eye camps to be conducted by the Tamil Nadu Sathya Sai Seva Organisation was inaugurated on August 3, by Sri. V. Palaniswamy, I.A.S., Collector of Salem, at the Senguntha Mudaliar Kalyanamandapam, Salem. Elaborate arrangements had been made for taking care of nearly 3,000 patients who turned up from Salem town and the surrounding villages. After examination, 510 cases were selected for cataract operation by Dr. G. Venkataswami and his team of doctors from the Aravind Eye Hospital, Madurai. By the grace of Bhagavan, all the operations were successful and many poor patients were given free spectacles. The Kalyana Mandapam authorities have offered to make the place available for such camps whenever required by the Sathya Sai Organisation.

—K. S. S.

Boy regains sight after 11 years

D. Babu, a 11-year old boy from Dandivaripalli, who had been regarded as blind from birth, got back his sight after a cataract operation. He was one of 342 patients who were examined at a free surgical eye camp conducted by the Chittoor District Sai Seva Samiti in Irala village, near Chittoor, from July 21 to 27. Sixty-one cases were selected for operation, including the young boy, by Dr. M.S. Rama Krishna Rao and his team. The parents were grateful to Bhagavan and the Sai sevaks for restoring the sight to their son. Mr. K. C. Varadachari, District coordinator, and several members of the Seva Dal participated in conducting the camp, which was one of the largest to be arranged in the District.

On July 11, the Chittoor Samiti organised a mass marriage ceremony for 13 couples belonging to weaker sections of the Community. Gold Mangalsutrams and new clothes were given to them by the Samiti. The newly-weds were taken in procession after the marriage.

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

—Baba

The Words and the Experience

Many devotees have discovered frequently the astonishing connection between the words they have read from the sayings of Bhagavan Baba and the experience they have gone through. Maisie M. Carlisle, (Seattle, U.S.A.) has sent the following account of her experiences and the passages from Shirdi Baba's and Sathya Sai Baba's teachings to which they are related:

The words:

Shirdi Baba says, "My nights are not intended for sleep!" With HIS divine eye of supervision he is keeping watch over HIS Bhaktas all over the world and averting danger from them. (From the life of Sai Baba by Narasimhaswami)

Actual experience:

We had taken an old road in Pennsylvania called the "Stage-coach road". In the old days this road was traversed by horse and coach. At one junction there was rest for the driver and a change of horses. "This was the inn at which we sought cover for the night. After room assignment I decided to find a place for meditation. In the shadows I made out a tap tree with grass at its feet. I nestled down deep into it. Instantly across the street a dog began an insistent barking. It became more so; the dog leapt off the porch and began to run in my direction. I thought, "He means

business,” and huddled lower in the grass. At that moment the owner recalled the dog and all was quiet.

At length what happened can't be explained. A high vibration swept me out momentarily. Time and space ceased to exist.

After this experience, I decided to return again in the early hours prior to departure. Five A.M. found me under the same tree settling down again in the tall grass. The sun had not risen, but the sky was getting pink, prelude to the beauty of the oncoming day. I heard a squeak above me, a motel door opens, a voice ventures this information, "Ma'am you don't know it, but you are sitting on bedrock that is infested with rattlesnakes."

"May HIS glory be the clarion call throughout!"

How Omnipresence Works

THE WORDS:

The Ashtothara Sathanama Rathnamala says of Baba, "Being in every heart, Baba knows all our actions, even while they are willed and planned. Being everywhere in Space and always in Time, Baba makes Himself visible when He so wills, any time, anywhere, even in the physical form He has assumed now. Being all-wise, Baba knows what is best for each of us. No one with equal or more Sakthi has appeared on earth, since Lord Krishna, except the Sai Sakthi." (Taken from Garland of 108 Precious Gems - pp. 59)

EXPERIENCE: Jan. 11 and 12, 1983.

A penniless musician purchased a used car. The next day, to no-one's surprise it would not go. Thus located in the woods of Rhode Island, miles from a garage, on a week-end he found himself marooned, miles from his home and upcoming date of work.

My heart went out to him as he lifted the hood and spent the cold day in winter looking at the engine. My ears longed to hear the sudden spurt of an engine, but to no avail! Periodically I'd peer out of the window at this scene as the hours of the day sped by. As late afternoon turned to dusk I found myself asking Baba why the car wouldn't start?

Seeking to give at least moral support, I put on a coat and stood by the boy and the engine. Casually, I mentioned what looked to be a newly installed coil. Curiously, the young man ejected it for examination, and on closer scrutiny found a metal chrome conductor missing. I took him to town for the new part. And miracle of miracles, the car started right away. Remember, I am a mere woman and know nothing about engines.

What sweet sleep he had that night knowing he could travel to town and work the next day.

Bearing the Burden

THE WORDS:

In the book, Gita Vahini, Baba gives us the assurance, "Yogakshemam Vahamyaham". "I shall bear the burden of your welfare hereafter." This is His promise to those who live life according to the ordinance HE sets down.

EXPERIENCE: May 5, 1983.

With much renovation to be done at my house, I needed timber of great length. Moreover, I needed them at a minimum of cost. I prayed to Baba about this need. A perusal of the Newspaper led me to a building doomed to immediate demolition. "Yes," they said, I could have some lumber if I took it in one day's time. Carefully I loaded Twenty-foot logs on top of a passenger car and carried them thirty miles. Thanking Baba for the good fortune I thought of returning for a second load. It would have to be carried out prior to sunrise the next day. This meant rising very early or even working in the dark.

The alarm clock was set at 4.00 a.m. I retired, but could not sleep. Fitfully thus, I spent the night and when 4.00 O'clock came I turned off the alarm.

Later I got up in a state of puzzlement over why HE would grant me one load of lumber but make it difficult to proceed for the second one. Seeking an answer I began to recount and reevaluate my thoughts and actions of the day before.

In mid-morning I noticed that a sacred object used in meditation seemed to be missing from the puja room. Where could it have gone from its recent use it was traced to a particular pocket in a jacket, from there it was traced through the actions while the jacket was worn. I had worn it at midnight, while unloading lumber. With a dread I approached the lumber pile and the truck. There on the hood lay the gem! Had I driven off during the night it would never have been recovered.

Red Signals

Baba says,

"I am the dance master,
I am Nataraja, Prince of Dancers,
I alone know the agony
Of teaching you each step
In the Dance of Life."

—(From Kasturi's book, "The Chosen Mother").

The experience of discerning "the steps" HE would teach took place on October 9, 1983. I was four hundred miles from home and driving a car built in 1968. Descending the Sisquiw Mountains can be hazardous, and something told me to stop before proceeding into the Institute Highway for the long trip home. Again, the rational question, "Why?" Nonetheless, I did stop, phoned south to ascertain the health of my mother. I was reassured, leaving me no alternative but to proceed north onto the Freeway. With a nagging doubt of unknown origin I proceeded to drive on. Twenty miles up the road the entire alarm panel lit up. Warnings from oil gauge, heat gauge and battery charge, I slowed down in an effort to gain a little time to accept the reality of the situation, Once on the shoulder of the road a quart of oil was added. I drove on, still the pannels were bright red.

Pulling off the road again, I leap the fence, make my way to a farmhouse and get a pail of water. The old car reacted negatively to my attempts to quench its thirst. I dare not proceed, it

being Sunday when few stations are open. I remembered having seen one three miles back. The freeway of the interstate road was built as a boulevard, it was impossible to turn around. I would have to back down the freeway from which I had just come. This accomplished, a cursory glance by the station attendant assured me that he could see nothing wrong with the condition of the engine.

Again I cast around to pluck up courage to proceed on the long trip. With a wary last glance at the attendant once again I make my way along the Highway.

Twelve miles pass, fifteen, then twenty and the panel again is full of warning. I cast about wondering just what Baba wants me to do about the situation???

The exit was there to remind me about Gervais. It is, a little town, where a lone boy Lived. Perhaps I thought, Baba wanted me to visit that boy. Reluctant but obedient I took the exit, Throughout the landscape was a veritable graveyard of old cars. From out of this wreckage appeared the lad I was supposed to see. I told him of the plight of the car. He lifted the hood and could find nothing.

Over a brief dinner I told him where I had been. After dinner he enjoyed not one, but three movies about Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. I fell asleep, but he looked on. In the morning over breakfast, this neophyte confessed to the that he thought Baba had contrived the warning signals to force me to stop so that he too might know, something about the GREAT AVATAR. After sharing a little Vibhuti with him I drove to Seattle. Three thousand miles have since been added to the old car; but the warning panel has not lit up once.

Om! Sri Sarva Bhaya Nivaarine Namah!

—*Maisie M. Carlisle; Seattle, Washington, U.S.A.*

How is Prema to be cultivated? It can be done through two methods: (1) Consider always the fault's of others, however big, to be insignificant and negligible. Consider always your own faults, however insignificant and negligible, to be big, and feel sad and repentant. By these means, you acquire the qualities of brotherliness and forbearance, (2) Whatever you do, with yourself or with others, do it, remembering that God is omnipresent. He sees and hears and knows everything. Whatever you speak, remember that God hears every word; discriminate between the true and the false and speak only the truth; whatever you do, discriminate between right and wrong and do only the right. Endeavour every moment to be aware of the omnipotence of God.

—Baba

"Wait! Wait! Wait!"

Devotees who come to Prasanthi Nilayam or Brindavan are familiar with this word. Most often when we try to draw the attention of Baba to our presence or pray for Padanamaskar or an interview, we hear Swami's sweet voice saying in Telugu, "Undoo! Undoo! Undoo!" or "Thehro! Thehro! Thehro!" in Hindi or "Wait! Wait! Wait!" in English. In fact, this waiting is an annoying experience and sometimes very frustrating. Somehow we infer that Baba does not appreciate the urgency of the problem which has drawn us to Him.

Baba's answer is, "Wait!" The question arises, "For how long?" Baba does not clarify this. We are left guessing. Sometimes He may call us and solve the problem without much delay but most often He lets us wait and wait so, long that we lose all hope of His ever calling us in. That seems to be the right time for Baba to shower His Grace! I know from personal experience that once in a while He does not respond at all only because He has decided not to! When I was working in Assam as the Director of the Geological Survey of India way back in 1967-72, the Sai movement had just penetrated into that part of India. I took earned leave for 15 days and came to Prasanthi Nilayam to voice the yearning of the devotees there and request Swami to visit the States of Northeast India. I had planned to be at Prasanthi Nilayam prior to the Dasara Festival so that I could get the maximum opportunities in the Darshan line to be noticed and called for an interview. Baba was, as always, sweet and smiling. But He passed me by on all the days before the Festival. The interviews started again after Vijayadasami. He would stand before me and ask every day, "When are you going?"

The date of departure came closer and closer but He did not call me at all for an interview. Later, when my son visited Prasanthi Nilayam, Baba called him for an interview and during conversation told him, "Your father had come," adding with a chuckle, "I did not call him for an interview!" So, He had deliberately not called me for the interview I longed for. Of course, whatever He does has some beneficent purpose. A confirmation of His intent was not required at all, but I was unacquainted then with Swami's methods of dealing with seekers of Grace.

Seekers come from distant places; they plead that they have come "all the way" from San Francisco or Casablanca or Auckland, as if there is any other way of coming other than "all the way"! If you do not come all the way, you have to stop en route; you don't reach your destination! Since there is no way of wangling an interview, we have no alternative except to sit in the Darshan line and "undergo" the tantalising ordeal of "waiting", whether He expressly asks us to wait or not! We have no choice unless we decide to pack up and get back. But few have the temerity to do that.

Initiation

Waiting is also made quite uncomfortable because we have to sit on the sand for hours. Mercifully, the sand is smooth and fine, thanks to the seva of those who sweep the premises of the Nilayam, (as is done in the Zen temple at Kyoto, Japan), so that as Baba walks, His footprints leave their impress clear. This enables many a devotee to carry home the sanctified sand as a talismanic memento. Waiting for Darshan and Sambhashan (interview), and, sitting cross-legged on the sand seem to be a part of the rites of initiation into Spirituality at Prasanthi Nilayam.

Everybody who comes to Prasanthi Nilayam seeking "interview" with Baba has to go through this "sand rite." Longing for Darshan, manana on our problems and on what we seek from Him,

anticipating the thrill of intimate conversation with Him, planning to get Vibhuti from Him, to get photographs and books blessed by Him, hoping to touch His Lotus Feet as they come by, these are the thoughts that fill our mind. At last Baba saunters towards the line of devotees. He moves slowly along as we wait. Now is our chance to seek and hopefully receive His blessing. Baba passes before us... beyond us; we are depressed. The person next to us is called. We wonder why He did not call us. Why? O Why? What wrong have we committed? Is He angry with what we have been doing or talking or thinking? Since He is aware of everything. He must be knowing our innermost secrets, secrets we hid from our nearest kin and even from ourselves.

The "sand therapy"

Face to face with Divinity for the first time in our lives, we begin the process of self-examination. We start discovering and admitting our mistakes. Baba lets this process of spiritual awakening continue as long as He deems necessary. He intervenes only when we have become pathetically desperate and there is imminent danger of the process being cut short. So, what appears an ordeal is actually a therapy, the "sand therapy", for curing the deep illness of the mind. This is the real reason we are told to "Wait!"

Baba makes us wait until we are ready to receive the special Gita He has promised to teach each one of us. So unless we have been awakened and tuned to a receptive mood, the Gita will not soak in. The land has to be broken and tilled, the soil loosened and watered, until it is ready for the seeds to be sown. It is our job to get the soil ready for Baba to sow the seeds of the Gita. It is this job we are encouraged to do by Baba as we "wait and wait."

The problem is, we are impatient. We want quick results, instant remedies, miraculous cures, guaranteed success. This is the ethos of the day! The urgency is heightened since we come under crisis conditions to Baba as the ultimate hope, having tried everything else under the sun. And hence the anxiety, impatience and frustration. But Baba lets us go through these experiences because that is a part of the therapy. "You cannot run away from me," Baba told Arnold Schulman, "for no one can come to Puttaparthi, however accidental it might seem, without my calling him." Baba clarified the statement further: "I bring only those people who are ready to see me and nobody else, nobody can find his way here. When I say 'ready', there are different levels of readiness..." So, if we have come to Puttaparthi, it is only because Baba has called us. We are ready, in His merciful estimation, to see Him. In fact the 'crisis condition' may well be the sign by which He estimates us to be ready.

Lessons to be learnt

We are ready to be called; and so we come. But there is still a long way to go. Baba raises us to higher levels of readiness by making us 'wait' and go through the Sadhana of self-examination, self-study (Swaadhyaya), Shravanam, Mananam, Nidhidhyasana, Satsang, Namasmarana etc. Asking us to wait, He allows us to inhale longer and deeper the holy atmosphere of Prasanthi at the Nilayam. He breaks us into new habits such as rising from bed at 4 a.m. to enjoy the unique calm of the Brahmamuhurtam. He tempts us to chant Omkar, recite the Suprabhatam, and participate in Nagarsankirtan. If He calls us as soon as we arrive without this unpleasant 'wait' we would leave the Nilayam satisfied, but not sanctified. We would not have known more lasting values and the secret of living 'happily' ever in the protective Presence of God. We value a gift far more when we have waited and languished long for it. Having called us to Puttaparthi when

we are ready to seek Him, Baba mercifully makes us `wait' to learn the lessons He has come to teach in order to declare us Victors in the battle of life.

Spiritual cataract

Our readiness for our spiritual unfolding is determined by our karmic `bank balance'. All of us are here in our various roles as a consequence of the inexorable law of karma, the law of cause and effect. We rarely realise that the most important effect of the karma we engage in now is on our character through the cumulative effect of its impressions. A good Samskara, a beneficent karmic effect, has apparently, drawn us to the Presence of Baba. But further chiselling, refining, erasing, eliminating and training have to be done in order that we may become fit instruments for His Task. Baba knows our past, present and future as determined by our karmas; therefore He knows what to do and when. A cataract cannot be operated on in its incipient stage; we have to let it grow until it is ready for operation. This is equally true of spiritual cataract. Baba speaks of three factors to be considered while refining ourselves; Time, Place and Circumstance—Desha, Kala, Paristhiti. For anything to happen at all, and truly to happen properly, there is an appropriate time, a suitable place and a congenial circumstance. Failures occur because the three do not coincide. In our anxiety we hasten to do things at the wrong time; how often have we discovered that we should have waited a little longer. We also may have waited too long and missed the boat. We may be attempting to do things at the wrong place or when the circumstances are unfavourable. But Baba has full knowledge of when something has to be done, and how. So, He makes us wait for the right time, place and circumstance.

Karmic ordeals

Very often Baba hastens the process of settling our karmic accounts! He makes us go through varied troubles and travails, in fact, encouraging them! Often, as a result, our faith and the faith of those around us, is shaken to its very roots. He puts us through fire to be cleansed of impurities. Baba has told us, "Sorrow affects you because you feel you deserved joy and did not get it: but there is an impartial distributor of joy and sorrow who gives what you need rather than what you desire. You may need the tonic of tragedy to set you on the road to recovery. The Compassionate One, the Eternal All-Knowing God, He know best. Welcome the tragedy and fight your way through with the armour of the Memory Divine." This explains why Baba hastens the clearing of karmic accounts so that we are ready to receive the wisdom which is the Key to Perennial Bliss. Sometimes in His Mercy He does not make us wait too long. The dross of many lives He graciously burns off in a few years of this life itself!

Liberation—the goal

What is the purpose of all this Concern and Counsel? Baba has declared that "Curing and consoling are incidental to the main purpose of the Advent! which is to give each one of you Liberation itself, Mukti." Mukti is not a five-star hotel. It is a state of bliss when we are unaffected by the ups and downs of events and their consequences, when we are beyond pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow. Baba told Schulman, `They ask, "Why don't I do this? Why don't I do that? Why don't I stop all wars forever and get rid of all diseases and suffering?" `What they don't know is that I'm not responsible for suffering. I don't cause suffering any more than I cause chains and their own prisons." Baba elaborated these points in a discourse. `God is not involved in either reward or punishment, he only re-flects, re-sounds and re-acts. He is the Eternal unreflected Witness! You decide your own fate. Do good, be good and you get good in return; be

bad, do bad deeds, you reap bad results. Do not thank or blame God. Thank yourself, blame yourself... Let the petty wishes for which you now approach God be realised or not. They are not so important after all." He said, "Welcome disappointments for they toughen you and test your fortitude," Baba then reveals the end of all sadhana. "The primary aim should be to become Masters of yourselves, established in intimate and constant communion with the Divine who is in you as well as in the Universe of which you are a part."

The sadhana of surrender

All of life's experiences are opportunities to learn the secret of rising from bondage to freedom. The whole purpose of whatever Baba does is to teach us this basic truth about living. He has said, beautifully. "The play is His; the role is His gift; the lines are written by Him, he directs, He decides the dress and decoration, the gesture and the tone, the entrance and the exit. You have to act well the part and receive His approbation when the curtain falls. Earn the right to play higher and higher roles by your efficiency and enthusiasm—that is the meaning and purpose of life."

This is the sadhana of "surrender." Many are reluctant to surrender. They stick to their "free will." But with His infinite patience He makes us learn freedom by surrendering freedom, Baba has said, "Do not get too attached to the world, to its tangles. Keep your emotions always within hold. The waves agitate only the upper layers of the sea; it is calm below. So too will you be free from the agitation of the waves when you sink into your depth. Know that most things are of no lasting value and can therefore be brushed aside; hold fast to the solid substance only. Use your discrimination to discover which things are lumber and which are timber."

We ask: "Why does Baba make us go through this silly game? Why does He make us plan these petty projects while warning us at the same time that it is all trash, of no lasting value?" But how else can we know how to discriminate between what is real and what is not, unless we struggle and suffer? He wants us to learn the lesson on our own using our own experience to convince ourselves of the Truth.

This is a tough job indeed. It means we must wait for the next move Baba will mercifully design for us. Let us be content. For, in His infinite Patience, Baba is also waiting for us to progress so that He can promote us to higher levels of readiness for the realisation of the Goal of Life. When He says, "Wait! Wait! Wait!" this is not only a piece of advice to us, but also an announcement of His boon—He too will wait for our sake!

—Dr. M. V. N. Murthy in "The greatest Adventure."

When the Door Bell Rang

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba entered into our lives in the strangest way. Ever since His grace flowed for the first time in 1966, the bond of love has maintained its pace all these nineteen years and is growing strong. This article provides a glance into the first vision and its permanence not only in memory but also in its impact.

Between 1963 and 1967, our family, consisting of my wife and myself, my father and my mother and my grandmother and an uncle, lived in Jamshedpur, Bihar State, India. The life in the family was that of a typical Indian extended family with one main earner, and three generations living together, sharing the love, worship, joy and sorrow. In late 1965, it was known that the fourth generation was about to be launched. My wife was pregnant and the lady doctor taking care of her informed us that the expected delivery date would be around the 20th of July 1966.

In early 1966, my father, who was 61 and who had retired from regular service, took up a part-time job. In July, his employer requested him to go on an official trip to Durgapur. My father liked to go on the trip except that he was quite keen and firm about being present at the time of my wife's delivery. When he found out he would travel by car from Jamshedpur to Durgapur, a distance of some 300 miles, and that he could leave on the 10th of July and return in a few days, he was quite sure that he would be back in time for the arrival of his grandchild.

Father left on the 10th of July for Durgapur. He specially took my wife's permission to go, and assured her that he would return to Jamshedpur by the 15th, well before the expected delivery date of July 20. On the 14th, we were blessed with a daughter. The arrival surprised the hospital staff who did not expect the delivery almost a week earlier. In any case, all concerned were relieved and happy that the delivery was easy and the baby and mother were healthy. We were all eager to share with my father the news of the baby's arrival. He was expected on the 15th.

My father did not return to Jamshedpur on the 15th. Starting that day there were unusual rains in the whole of Bihar State. Railway, telegraph and telephone lines were all disrupted. Road bridges were either damaged or not visible in the floodwaters in many places. The situation was very bad by the 16th. We were getting worried about father's safety. Our concern was that he might attempt to come by car and meet with an accident or other mishap. By the evening of July 17th, there was no news about father and there was no sign of his possible return to Jamshedpur. My mother and grandmother especially were getting very worried about father's safety. All of us could not really enjoy the presence of a darling three days' old baby since on top of the joy was the anxiety about father.

"Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram"

On the 18th of July (1966), I went to the office with a heavy and melancholic heart. A pious person by name Gopalam visited me in the office that afternoon. Gopalam and his family were greatly devoted to Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He brought for me a copy of "Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram" in Telugu and advised me to read it so as to understand the life of Baba. I was not really in the mood for it, but received the book and kept it in my briefcase. In the evening, when I returned home from the office, my first question to mother was whether there was any news from father. Her response was the same. The atmosphere at home was depressing and my mind was going in all directions: what could have happened to father? Could it be that the car was involved in some accident? What about his life and safety? I did not express my deepest fears to mother, nor did she say anything to me. Grandmother was also getting agitated about her son. My wife, while taking care of the baby, was also concerned.

That evening, after a shower and snack, I started to read "Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram" just to pass time and know a little bit about the Bhagavan. The first couple of chapters in the book were interesting. I probably did not think much of the early *leelas* of Baba. I read about a quarter of the book by dinner time and then continued after dinner.

By about 10 p.m., when I had completed a little over half of the book, I was truly amazed at the miracles performed casually by Baba. As I continued to read, tears were rolling down my cheeks. Baba once rescued an elderly gentleman from a deep ground well; He saved someone about to commit suicide; He cured some incurable diseases; and so on. The important thing to note is, He had saved the devotees by His presence at far off places while physically being present at Prasanthi Nilayam, the abode of peace and the residential township of Baba. As I continued reading, it soon became a routine of tears, wiping, reading and tears. There were far too many miracles page after page to free myself from the force of devotion instantly formed—towards a Baba whom I had not met before.

An appeal and a challenge

"You did countless miracles. You saved so many people from misery and difficulty. Is it all true? Are you really divine? Are you God? Baba! If you are divine, please bring my father. Can you materialize him for me?" Such were the thoughts crossing my mind every other second. After a while I resolved as follows: "Baba! The book is what is pressuring me to believe You. Here is my resolve and challenge: before I complete the book, bring my father. If You do, I will be devoted to you from now on and will bring a picture of Yours into my prayer room. In case You cannot bring father, I will throw the book down the balcony, pay the appropriate amount to the lender of the book, forget about all I have read, and will never have anything more to do with You!"

After throwing the challenge at Him, I continued to read the book, was a bit nervous about the consequences of my resolve and still shedding tears as I read. By about 12 midnight, when I came to the penultimate page, I prayed to Him with all my heart. The doorbell rang. I asked my mother to wake up and open the door and assured her that father had come. Indeed, he was there! He gave his story—he had to use various modes of transport, travel for a long duration and somehow managed to return safely. He was very sad for not being present at the time my daughter was born.

Slowly and calmly, I told everybody how Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba came into our lives that very minute and how he brought father to us at that moment. I quickly went into my room and with all my heart, shed tears of devotion, the translucent pearls that divinity accepts when the devotee offers them. "Bhagavan, You decided to be my own God," so I thought and completed the last page of the book.

—V.V. Bhanoji Rao, *World Bank, Washington*

AUSTRALIA BECKONS:

Baba and "Baime"

It's true, when the Light of Sai dawns in your life, you change. New truths are not revealed, but by His Grace, the eternal realities are unfolded in a manner that each may recognise.

One of my most treasured experiences occurred in this auspicious year of our Lord's 60th birthday: I was invited to be a Bal Vikas Guru. As yet I cannot comprehend how or why; but, for this blessing I place my humble pranams at Bhagavan's Lotus Feet.

Even in such a short period of time, this blessing has provided a myriad opportunities. Previously I had looked to Baba for answers. Now I look to the Sadguru for the questions! And never have I been disappointed.

Could I even begin to describe how I am guided to and through the various lessons? It is a pure joy to observe the way—a story comes along, that fits a song, which suits the lesson, and suggests the activity. In fact, every situation now becomes an instruction opportunity. (What can I learn from it? How does it stand in the light of Sai teachings, and how can I use it?) The Sarva Dharma Principal sits very close to my heart. It is so blissful to immerse oneself in the various faiths and learn of God when He walked in other times and places. Here, too, in Australia, God walked among men....

During the days of Creation, called "Dreamtime", the Great Spirit made His abode in a nearby mountain so He could live and talk with the people he loved. But, in order that they could grow and find their true place, God said He must leave them! "But I will always be with you, because I am still your Father Spirit." He also said He would come back to us as a man, in a form they could recognise.

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba tells us He is the In-Dweller in the heart. My land of Australia has a big and beautiful heart. This heart is an ancient and sacred place, one known as "Uluru". An unwavering eminence, standing on the horizon; attracting people from many lands, clothed in raiment of orange hue; an aura extending across the earth and skies: sending forth brilliant and soothing rays of pink, or blue, or gold, or purple. Today this sacred monolith is called "Ayers Rock."

How blessed are we who may be able to witness the fulfillment of promise from ancient texts and scripture.

I feel the superlative occasion of our dear Lord's 60th Birthday heralds the dawn of a Golden Age, when God, the Great Spirit, "Baime", now walks in the land of Bharat.

—Kristina Clifford, Brisbane (Australia).

From Fear Set Free

"The most dramatic and significant effect Sri Bhagavan Sathya Sai Baba has had on my life, on all levels—physical, mental and spiritual, —is that by His Presence I am now able to live each moment completely devoid of fear! The realization that the Lord, as a living avatar, now walks amongst us, loving, guiding and protecting us, automatically brings peace and re-assurance of the highest order.

As a prelude to this realization, my own personal release from Fear came as a result of an inward encounter with Bhagavan Baba in January 1977. At that time, Swami, as an Inner Voice and Presence, imparted to me that there is absolutely nothing to fear in the entire Universe because all there is is LOVE—no matter what it looks or feels like! From that moment forward, I was so thoroughly convinced of this Truth, that the entire Universe *truly* loves, protects and cherishes me that "Fear" has had nothing to draw on for support. By being released from Fear, all that usually accompanied Fear was also released, such as—anger, worry, tension, anxiety, resentment, etc. More and more have I now experienced Love, Joy, Peace and Truth rushing in to fill the void Fear once occupied.

In gratitude for this exquisite and magnificent gift of freedom from Fear, which so beautifully reflects Swami's Infinite Compassion and Love, I pray that my life may become a true Beacon of Light, serving the Lord and my fellow-man. May all Praise, Honour and Glory turn to Our Beloved Baba, the Master of all Creation.

—*Michele Joy Ferrari, U.S.A.*

Welcome the blows of Fate

Welcome all the blows of fate, all the misfortunes and miseries, as gold welcomes the crucible, the hammer and the anvil in order to get shaped into a jewel; or as the cane welcomes the chopper, the crusher, the boiler, the pan, the sprayer, the dryer, so that its sweetness may be preserved and used as sugar by all. The Pandavas never demurred when disasters fell thick upon them. They were happy that they helped them to remember Krishna and call upon Him. Bhishma was in tears on the arrow-bed, when he was about to pass away. Arjuna asked him why and he replied, "I am shedding tears because the miseries undergone by the Pandavas pass through my mind." Then he said, "This is done in order to teach the Kaliyuga a lesson: never to seek power, position or pelf, but to submit to the will of God, in a completely resigned way, so that you may be ever happy and unmoved."

—*Baba*

In Thy Hands

The World is full of anger and hatred
craving for lust, power and money;
it is on the brink of destruction.
O! My Lord, the Love Incarnate
Show us the direction, dispel darkness,
destroy the evil, sow the seeds of love.
In this faltering, fleeting transitory world
Lead Kindly Light!
Make every act of mine, sublime;
Make me, my Lord, an instrument of peace
in Thy hands.

—*Tumuluru Krishna Murthy*

Puppet Theatre

*He gives us the word we say:
He writes every line;
He decides what part we play
Which role to assign.
Ranga*! Ranga! Sai Ranga!
We perform His puppet play.
Peep behind the curtain,
You'll find Swami there.
Look into the audience,
You'll see His crown of hair.
Underneath each person's mask
You'll see His shining eyes—
Every person cruel or kind
Is Swami in disguise.*

—*Susan Caffrey, Prasanthi Nilayam*

* *Ranga: Name of Vishnu, the great director of the world stage.*

Life is the Best Teacher

I remember the first time I came to Prasanthi Nilayam in the summer of 1977, I expected to find various classes and seminars on Hatha Yoga, meditation, Patanjali, Vedanta philosophy; a separate hall for meditation, one-man rooms in which one could meditate all day long and have peace and quiet. I expected that Sai Baba would speak to us everyday, and explain to us the various spiritual truths and the techniques with which we can realize them directly. I expected an atmosphere of silence somewhat like a monastery; reflective, peaceful with plenty of time for contemplation.

During my first two visits in 1977 and 1979 I was able to create my own little world, somewhat in line with my expectations, because I managed to have a room for myself—a luxury no longer possible with the ever increasing number of devotees who arrive here every day.

Then, during my subsequent three visits, I gradually began to understand that a different game was being played here, that a different method of spiritual growth was being applied. I had been asking myself why we were packed three, four or five in a room, why we were packed into sheds with 50 to 1(X) others, why so many dogs barking day and night, building all day long and even at night when you were told that your lights should be off and should sleep? Why there was no room provided for meditation, for quietness; no classes, seminars, techniques being given? (Although lately some have been started for foreign devotees). Why Swami did not speak to all of us everyday and explain to us what to do? So inane whys? Finally when the mind stopped asking "why", and started listening to why, some answers started to become apparent, and they seemed very logical and important. What were they?

The school of life

It began to become apparent that here at Prasanthi Nilayam (and for that matter, all over the world) Life itself is the teacher. Life is God. God is life. Need there be any other teacher than Life itself? This process of learning from the experiences of Life seems, however, to be accelerated here at Prasanthi Nilayam. It feels like an electro-magnetic field in which lessons come fast and heavy, and one's weaknesses, fears, egoism and various other obstacles to spiritual growth come up to the surface. One begins to understand that absolutely nothing in life happens by chance or accident, that there is a Divine Hand guiding our every experience, giving us in every moment exactly the objects, persons and situations which we need in order to come face to face with our ego and overcome it.

This is not always a pleasant process, and often those experiences which we need are the last ones we would want. We may be put in the sheds to stay where there are hundreds of mosquitoes, babies crying, people coughing, sneezing, talking, laughing, snoring, opening and closing doors and walking across the floor with sandals which bang with each step. When there are large groups, one may shout to the other across the hall while you are trying to sleep or meditate. All this occurs not only during the day, but occasionally even at night.

It would be silly to think that Swami could not build hundreds of thousands of other rooms, giving one to each pilgrim. His power is unlimited. He, however, has directed this energy

towards other projects, i.e., schools, hospitals, housing for the poor, first-aid and hygiene centres. We can only assume that these conditions exist for a reason.

Purifying the butter

An image comes to me from childhood which in some way helps me to understand this reason. When my mother made Easter sweets with butter, she heated about 3 kilos of butter in a large vessel. As the butter was heated, it began to send a foam with various impurities upto the top of the vessel. She then scraped this foam off the top, and this way purified the butter.

Prasanthi Nilayam is a large vessel. The sheds, the dogs, waiting for hours in the heat or rain, colds, coughing, snoring, loud neighbours, thousands of people with different ways of acting and living habits and conditions rubbing together: all this creates much PSYCHIC Heat and INNER Turmoil. We are the butter which begins to melt and the foam with our impurities flows up to the surface of our beings in the form of negativity, resentment, anger, doubt, feelings of injustice, indignation, that we are being treated in this and that way, that things are not run as "they should be," that no consideration is being given to our "problems", that Baba is not paying any attention to us, that the others are not paying any attention to the rules, that Baba is taking for interview those who are not following the rules—on and on goes the monkey mind. All of this creates friction with the others, with other groups, between groups and individuals, between us and ourselves, between us and how we see Baba. The mind comes into conflict, confusion, the foam floats up to the surface with all the impurities which have been long stored there, not only since childhood, but `samskaras' of many life-times.

Then comes the Cosmic Mother in her long flowing orange gown waving her hand in circles and scrapes off the foam with a word, a smile, a gesture. Relief comes, the impurity has been removed, at least lessened, the samskara slightly weakened. The butter is a little lighter, more pure, more wholesome. But the Cosmic Mother sees that the butter still has many impurities and continues to boil it in the cauldron of experiences here at Prasanthi Nilayam. Again, not to say that this does not happen at every moment of our lives wherever we may be. Here, however, the heat is turned up a little higher because the mother is physically present to our physical eyes so that we can be relieved of our foam more easily. Not that the relief comes only through that physical form clothed in orange. Mother Sai is not limited to that form which gives darshan twice a day at Prasanthi Nilayam. This too is one of the important messages that Baba might want us to take. We are being asked to see Sai in every being that we meet. There is no value in bringing our hands together before Him in darshan if we come into conflict with Him in the form of our room-mates or ashram personnel later on. The message from life comes on strong that God is everywhere. Sai can speak to us through our room-mates, through the dogs, through our diarrhoea, through the 'Saying of the Day', the lecture of the day, through our meditation, a book that we are reading or through any annoyance that any person or situation may stimulate in us.

The problem and the gift

Every person, animal, situation or event which stimulates negative feelings within us, is a blessing in disguise. It is a blessed opportunity to discover our weaknesses, attachments, aversions, fears, expectations, insecurities or selfishness. We never feel angry or upset out of strength or correctness. We feel upset only when deep inside us there is some fear. That fear may be expressed as many emotions such as anger, hurt, bitterness, jealousy, hate, insecurity; but all

are based on the identification with the separate vulnerable ego-body and the ensuing fear. Every time this fear is aroused in some way by our environment, we come face to face with ourselves and have a chance to discover the very false beliefs about ourselves which prevent us from feeling inner peace, inner security and love for ourselves and others. These beliefs are the result of ignorance, the lack of evolution of the soul which cause it to believe that it is weak and vulnerable and that it needs certain things, persons, attitudes (from others) and situations in order to feel secure, content and affirmed as a being. As long as we are controlled by such beliefs, we will try to find happiness, security and affirmation through establishing specific conditions in our environmental reality.

When conditions here (or wherever we may be) do not allow us to fulfil those 'prerequisites' which we 'believe' we must have in order to feel okay, then we usually feel insecure, hurt, bitter or angry and sometimes even revengeful. If we, on the other hand, accept that nothing comes into our life without it being Baba's Will, the plan of God, our own plan for our release from the dark prison of body identification, then we will ask, "What is life trying to teach me in this situation."

Once we ask this question with sincerity and accept that we have exactly the room we should have, the room-mates, the heat, the illness, the reactions from Baba, the behaviour from others, that we need in order to learn the next lesson on the spiritual path, then we will start having daily lessons from the Sad Guru Himself, God. Life is the Best Teacher.

Psycho-drama therapy

Thus, Prasanthi Nilayam as a whole becomes a great class-room, a continual seminar, a technique in itself—the technique of life, which requires no classrooms, teachers or Gurus. It becomes a psycho-drama in which each one is projecting his own problems and obstacles within his mind and onto the people and environment around him. And many times even onto Baba Himself. He becomes purified and renewed in this way as his blockages are brought to the surface and healed by the underlying love pervading the atmosphere as a result of Swami's example, presence and teachings.

A hundred seminars, a thousand classes, and lectures, a million books could not be as effective in creating such real and permanent changes on the mental, emotional and physical levels as this "psycho-drama" is. Thus, here we are forced to employ the philosophy of love, patience and unity or else we suffer. In this way there is the potential of feeling the greatest happiness, bliss and love, and also moments of the greatest separateness, fear and depression. Some people, specially when they first come, experience an emotional roller coaster in which they rise and fall between these two extremes many times in the day.

The veterans begin to see that it is all a game, a purification process, a process of learning and self-discovery. Although they still go through the ups and downs, they try to dis-identify themselves from those movements which are taking place in the vehicles (koshas) the body and the mind. They try to identify with the Witness, the pure consciousness in which this illusory drama is projected. They become more identified with the Atman, the sea, rather than with the personality, the wave. But the process is endless and the tendency towards identification with the

body is one which we have developed over millions of years of life-cycles on the Earth. So the sadhaka is forced to develop love and patience until he can free his mind from its fluctuations.

Thus the Cosmic Mother continues to apply heat to the cauldron and to remove the foam. The only thing we can do is to realize that it is happening, accept it, enjoy it and not resist it. We can look for our impurities (rather than blaming our environment and others) and offer them up willingly in the form of purification to the Divine Mother.

When we start to do this, "Life the Best Teacher" will always be with us, and everywhere we go will be 'Prasanthi Nilayam' and every moment will be 'Interview'.

—*R. Najemy*

SAI JAGAT SAMACHAR:

Sai Message for South America

Delegates from Sai Centres in six South American countries—Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Venezuela, Mexico and Paraguay—gathered in Buenos Aires for a three-day conference in July at the Coliseo Theatre, Buenos Aires, under the auspices of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organization of Argentina, to present the Sai message and consider how Sai Seva activities in the educational and other fields can be promoted in South America.

The conference was attended by over 2500 persons. On the dais of the tastefully decorated Theatre hall, Bhagavan's pronouncement 'Purity and Unity constitute Divinity' was blazoned forth in a striking banner across the stage. The message read in Spanish "DIOS ES PUREZA Y UNIDAD."

It was a historic occasion for Sai devotees from the South American countries. The conference meetings began on July 20th and concluded on the 22nd. During the three days, the delegates considered various aspects of the Sai programme, including Bal Vikas and Education in Human Values, and the many-sided seva activities of the Seva Dal. Dr. Goldstein, member of the World Council, guided the deliberations at every stage. He availed himself of the opportunity to visit a village near Buenos Aires which had been "adopted" by the Buenos Aires Sai Centre for all-round development as proposed by Bhagavan Baba. The seva activities in the village covered the areas of *health*, education and spiritual development. Sixty two children were attending the Bal Vikas classes in the village.

At one of the sessions of the Conference, Dr. Goldstein gave a detailed account of the Bal Vikas and Education in Human Values programme as worked out by the United States Education in Human Values Trust. He presented sample Seva Dal scarves to be used by Sai Centres in South America. Dr. Luis Muniz, President of the Sathya Sai Coordinating Committee from Mexico, and Dr. Arlette Meyer, President of the Caracas Sathya Sai Centre, actively participated in the conference.

A notable feature of the conference was the presence of representatives from all religions prevalent in Argentina. The conference was addressed by Rabbi Reuben Nisembom, (Judaism)

Mr. Gerardo Aboud, representing Tibetan Buddhism, Rujien Tog Tokuda representing Zen Buddhism. At the valedictory meeting on July 22nd, a choir of Sai devotees sang hymns in praise of God, drawn from different religions. After the discourses, the film, "The Universal Teacher", was screened.

In his concluding address, Dr. Goldstein said that "We who follow and revere Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, believe that real peace and bliss are only attained after one has found the real purpose of life by acquiring a deep and permanent faith in God based on genuine spiritual experiences."

As an attempt at presenting the Sai message to a mass audience in South America, the conference was a signal success. Many participants received a new insight into the global mission of Bhagavan Baba and were inspired to promote in their respective areas the Sai programme of service to mankind.

Conference in Trinidad

A mini-conference of devotees and office bearers of Sathya Sai Organisations in the West Indies was held on July 27 at the Chaguanas Sathya Sai Centre in Trinidad, to review the working of Sai Centres in the West Indies and to consider proposals for expansion of Sai seva activities. Dr. Goldstein who had arrived in Trinidad on July 25th, and had visited various Sai Centres, was welcomed by Mr. Tajmool Hosein, TC, QC, Convenor of the Coordinating Committee for the West Indies. He was invited to speak on organizational problems and seva programmes.

Dr. Goldstein exhorted the devotees to have a deeper commitment to Sai ideals and engage themselves in various Sai activities according to their aptitude. He emphasised the importance of the Bal Vikas and Education in Human Values programmes and invited the West Indies Centres to send teachers for a Teacher-Training Course in Los Angeles in August.

In the wake of the conference, Dr. Goldstein and Messrs. Tajmool Hosein, Ramsaran and Maharaj met a senior official at the Ministry of Education on July 29, to explain the objects of the E.H.V. programme and the need for its introduction in schools in the West Indies. It was decided to have further discussions with the officials of the Ministry after the teachers deputed for training at Los Angeles returned to Trinidad.

A largely attended public meeting was held on July 28, at which Dr. Goldstein and Mr. Tajmool Hosein spoke on the life and teachings of Bhagavan Baba. A film on Bhagavan Baba's life was shown. Sai literature, which was on display, was in great demand.

Singapore forum on E.H.V.

Singapore: A clarion call to teachers and parents to impart to children the basic human values of Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love and Non-violence as an essential part of their education, was issued by a Forum on Education in Human Values organised by the Sri Sathya Sai Baba 60th Birthday Celebrations Committee, Singapore, at the D.B.S. Auditorium on August 18. Some 300 devotees and invitees, including doctors, lawyers, engineers and educationists and religious dignitaries attended the Forum.

Mr. Lenny P. Rodrigo, Chairman of the Forum, observed. "We in Singapore should be alert to the fact that we are somewhat in the same groove of industrial development as the cities of the highly industrial states and generate similar features such as intense urbanisation, the fast pace and social malaise." In his overview of human values, the guest speaker Ervad Behram R. Vakil, President of the Inter-Religious Organization, pinpointed the three types of values, namely, operative, conceived and objective, and the gaps between the values of children and parents. The students should be encouraged to develop positive values through creating conducive learning experience. "Ultimately the child puts his faith and trust not in parents but in God," he concluded; "Let us march always forward towards the goal of Goodwill with a SHINE in our EYES, HOPE in our HEART, PEACE in our HEAD and LORD ABOVE."

Mr. Samuel S. Dhoraingham, former Assistant Director of Education (Humanities), traced the genesis and development of Moral Education in Singapore since 1959. The Ong Teng Cheong Report on Moral Education in 1979 proposed a programme based on the three broad areas, namely, Personal Behaviour, Social Responsibility and Loyalty to the country. This was followed by the Goh Keng Swee Report submitted to the Prime Minister in February 1979 and the Prime Minister's reply wherein he commented on the two missing crucial subjects: Moral and Character aspects of education, and teachers who set good moral examples and who care for their pupils. Mr. Dhoraingham said that at present three programmes—Good Citizen, Being and Becoming, and Religious Knowledge, —are underway. Dr. Yeoh Kian Hian, explaining the Sai EHV Programme, observed: "If we accept the fundamental truth that man is divinity, the answer to securing those human values which we hold dear lies in tapping this divinity, realising it, because when we do realise it, everything else unfolds and blossoms like the flowers of a plant. It is futile to try and list all the human qualities that we hold dear, that we want loyalty to, society, loyalty to nation and so on. If you know that the core of it all that gives rise to all the leaves, the branches, the fruits and the flowers, is the main trunk and the roots of that tree and that's man's divine nature, and you tap it, everything else blossoms automatically."

Cheer to the aged

Ninety Sai Volunteers from different centres in Singapore visited the Woodlands Home for the Aged on August 11 and entertained the 666 residents to a programme of songs and dances, besides serving them tea and snacks. The residents joined in community singing and had altogether an enjoyable evening. The Superintendent of the Home, Mr. Wong, took the Sai volunteers round the Home and indicated the areas in which they could render service to the inmates.

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

Those who have not trodden that and those who are not aware of its existence cannot explain it to themselves or to others.

—Baba

Snow White

(... Where Does the White Go
When the Snow Melts?)

... Snow, Snow
So lovely and lovely white
But ere I look
You've gone and to
And now, quite out of sight!

Yet, in the water left behind
New snowflakes yourself, we find.
Sparkling all bright in both your forms
Behold a miracle, the Lord performs.

As *Thought you* follow your calling
As Mater you fall - foe and friend –
Thus, round and round the journey goes
First up ... then down, then up again –
The story winds and wends .

...Alas, Snow-bright Snowflake
You'll follow whiteness, then whiteness
Until your snow white mission ends –
and BABA, THE LORD, calls you home.

- James Johnson, Cleveland, Ohio.

The Smile

Rama came armed with a bow;
Krishna came armed with a mace;
Sai came armed with a smile.
The lack of which.....devastates.

—Jon Gilbert

The Embodiment of Love

It is a great fortune to be at Prasanthi Nilayam even for a day in the presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and a greater fortune for those who have had the opportunity to stay here for days, months or years. But then Bhagavan Baba says:

"You may boast that you have been visiting Prasanthi Nilayam for twenty years, that you have made the place your permanent residence. But unless you follow the principles I emphasise, that boast is mere vanity. If you develop love for all beings believing that God resides in all, you may be anywhere else, yet your prayers would reach Me."

How far these golden principles of Baba are being followed and how far efforts are being made by those concerned to develop Love for all beings is a question to be answered by each person to himself.

The writer has had the opportunity of living in Prasanthi Nilayam for a little over three years. He has listened to a hundred Divine Discourses and also read and noted down a thousand "Thoughts for the Day" written at the Nilayam for the benefit of the devotees. I have known from this that the whole philosophy of Baba revolves on one word 'PREMA'—'LOVE'—Love for all beings. Although the Sai philosophy is based on five main pillars—(1) SATHYA (Truth); (2) DHARMA (Righteousness); (3) SANTHI (Peace); (4) PREMA (Love); and (5) AHIMSA (non-violence)—the common ingredient, the most precious and powerful of them, is Love. The whole Universe is supported by this word Love. For everything, Prema is the basis, the cause and the consummation. The very purpose of life is to Love God. Love is God and God is Love. Baba says: "Love all, serve all, help all to the best of your ability. Endeavour to be as beneficial, as sweet, as soft as possible." and again, "Begin the day with Love, spend the day with Love and end the day with Love. This is the way to God."

Love all, serve all

The path of Love is full of obstacles. Anger, malice, greed, envy, jealousy and a horde of others—these have to be removed by constant sadhana (spiritual practice). Baba says: "Every being needs Prema, inhales and exhales Prema. Prema is the basic breath. Everyone is the Embodiment of Prema. Prema knows no fear and so it needs no falsehood to support it." And again, "God is the source of all love. Love man as God. Love the world as a vesture of God..." Baba declares that it is only through Love that a man can merge in God, the ocean of love. Baba emphasises that this Love must be cultivated and shared with our brothers and sisters of all colours, creeds, castes and countries. The royal road for the spiritual journey and self-realisation is Love and Love alone. God is love and can be won through the cultivation and practice of Love in the service of men, who are starving for Love. And then, Baba says, "He yields Grace only when His Commands are followed—commands to love all, to serve all."

Love means love for all beings. It means that we have not only to love human beings but the entire creation in this vast universe—the birds and the animals too, as not to love them would mean not to love Bhagavan Baba. Let us all pray to Bhagavan to make us strong as the sun, pure as the moon, radiant as the stars and humble as a blade of grass so that the spark of Love in us radiates and expands to spread joy and happiness around. Love is the supreme Dharma.

When a person has pure Love in him, he will have all the good qualities in him - fearlessness, purity of heart, control of the senses, steadfastness in knowledge and devotion, benevolence, austerity, uprightness, non-violence, truthfulness, freedom from anger, renunciation, tranquility, aversion to slander, compassion to living beings, freedom from sensuality, gentleness, modesty, steadfastness, humility, forbearance, fortitude, freedom from vanity and above all Peace of Mind.

Baba says:

"See your chosen deity in all. In every being there is SAI. So do not hate anyone. Do not do unto another what you do not like to be done unto yourself. For the other is really you."

In this way the golden principle of 'Brotherhood of Man and Fatherhood of God' is declared by Bhagavan Baba.

Unity of faiths

Baba emphasises the unity of all religions when he says that all religions teach that God is all forms and all Names. The religion of humanity is the sum and substance of all these faiths. For there is only one religion and that is the Religion of Love. Various religions and faiths appear separate and distinct, but they are fostered by that single and same stream of LOVE. As soon as the realisation comes to a man that God resides in all beings, where is the question of hatred, jealousy, envy, anger and greed?

Another important teaching is that of Nishkama Karma—Selfless Service—desireless action. It is through this type of service that we can realise what is permanent and eternal. Every action done without ego leads us to Divinity. If we ignore this truth, we indulge in meaningless action. The Gita says: "Work alone is thy concern, not the fruit thereof."

Service is sadhana

"There is no greater Sadhana than SEVA," observed Bhagavan Baba in His Valedictory address to the Seva Dal Conference in 1984. Service is the primary means through which the heart is purified and it is again through service that man finds fulfillments in life. Baba further says that "The service of man is more valuable than what you call 'service of God'. God has no need of your service. Please man, you please God. When you serve man, you serve God." Baba says that the body is given to man to help others and do service to the community.

Baba emphasises the importance of keeping the mind under control in almost all His Discourses, when He says:

"Make your mind strong to resist the forces of ignorance and the wiles of the senses. Remember, the mind can lead you to bondage or liberation."

All scriptures call upon man to have his mind under control in order to reach the highest. The Gita says that "Though the mind is difficult to control, this can be done by steady practice and cultivation of dispassion for worldly enjoyments coupled with strong aspiration for the higher life."

Tagore says: "When the mind becomes purified like a mirror, knowledge is revealed in it. Care should, therefore, be taken to purify the mind."

Lord Buddha says: "It is good to tame the mind and to guard one's thoughts. A tamed mind and thoughts well guarded bring happiness."

Madam Blavatsky says: "The mind is a good servant, but a cruel master."

Our mind must be directed towards higher contemplation and we must aim at the Supreme Bliss. This is man's ultimate goal. Even good desires are a hindrance for higher contemplation as all desires result in restlessness. We must, therefore, make efforts to tame our mind so that we are able to realise the highest. When the mind becomes peaceful, Santhi and Ananda ensue. Happiness does not lie in the fulfillment of our desires and worldly objects but in their curtailment. One satisfied desire leads to another and forms an endless chain and the result is unhappiness around.

Baba has very strongly emphasised that we must not waste time in criticising others, because this is a great sin. Fault-finding appears to be easier than anything else, as it needs no character, no brains, no talent and no funds to start this grumbling business. It should be our constant endeavour to try to shed our faults like dead leaves and not think of others' faults.

Baba has emphasised in almost every Discourse, to beware of Egoism as "Egoism is the seed-pot of greed, envy, anger, malice, conceit and a host of other down-dragging tendencies. It is necessary to cleanse the mind of these through regular sadhana, to turn the little will to the infinite Will of God so that it becomes merged in His glory."

We have to make sincere endeavour to create a bond of inner relationship between ourselves and Bhagavan Baba. He lights the flame of Life Eternal for us by explaining through His Discourses the secrets of Adhyatma-Vidya; there by He unties all the knots of our ego and brings us face to face with Reality. We have to know the Reality He is. The opportunity is given to us by His Grace and we have to try through out dedication and devotion to work, through our love for all beings, to know our Reality; that is the goal of life.

—G. C. Ahluwalia, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning

Students' Corner:

The Glory of the Divine Name

I can't believe it, but it did happen to me. In February 1985, I casually participated in the 8th All India Music Competition, sponsored annually by the 'Sur Sangam' Club, Jaipur, and just by singing a simple bhajan in praise of Swami, I secured a second position in the women's Group.

Why was this achievement so important for me, you may wonder? I belong to a family of Sai devotees and have been singing bhajans since the age of four or, five. I had received no special training in music until I was in High School when I took vocal music as one of my optional subjects two years back. I had heard this particular bhajan, "Prem Swarupa Jagat Ke Swami" (set in rag Bhopali) sung at the Sathya Sai College, Jaipur, during Swami's last visit. I was so enamoured of the melody that it lingered in my mind and I sang it on some occasions—each time it was greatly applauded. Last year, when I entered Maharani's College, Jaipur, I was asked to sing this same devotional song for our first introductory programme. At once it caught the attention of our Department of Music, where there was no dearth of talent, with girls doing post-graduation in Music. But I was selected to sing this same piece for other college programmes, in which despite so much variety in song and dance items, this special bhajan always received great applause.

I had no courage to enter the above-mentioned competition. I knew I stood no chance. I had no 'guru', no regular training like so many other entrants coming from different parts of the country. Some one had brought me a form, I reluctantly filled it. I was called for the first preliminary test. I felt lost in the crowd, I knew no one who would even accompany me on the instruments. I sang with Swami's image in my heart and was selected. There were four such elimination rounds at the district and state level etc. Each day I went quite diffidently. Somehow unexpectedly, I reached the Finals at the All-India level. But a complication cropped up. Word came that the dates of the competition clashed with my Vocal Music Practical examination in College. With a heavy heart I would have to forgo the 'Sur Sangam' finals. The next day, I was relieved and happy to learn that my College examinations had been postponed for a week. Again, it was His help.

My mother accompanied me for my final performance. The auditorium was full with music lovers, cameramen and the Press. A solemn row of Judges including two noted Cine Music Directors occupied the first row. I was cold and clammy, my throat was dry. My name was listed at No.8. As the lights came on, my mother reassured me; she said, "I can see Swami sitting smiling on the dais. Keep your courage." But after listening to the seven wonderful performances preceding me, with semi-classical and film songs, and the accompanying musicians, I decided not to take my turn and be a laughing stock. I was almost hustled on to the stage in a daze. I thought I'd step down without uttering a note. But Swami came to my rescue. Two well known musicians appeared from the wings and volunteered to play for me. I prayed for a second and it seemed to me that Swami was singing through me—melodiously, appealingly—my favourite bhajan. Every one said it was well done. But the competition was tough. A simple bhajan stood no chance as against the latest hits. It was late evening by the time the results were announced. I was quite despondent. But my name was called out as being 2nd in the Women's Group. Tears of joy and humility streamed from my eyes. I thanked HIM a million times. It was the sheer magic

of the Divine Name—I was merely the instrument singing His Glory. He gave me so much recognition and acclaim at such an inexperienced stage. I feel quite humbled.

It was at His instance (in my dream) that I started observing fast and 'Saraswati' sadhana on Wednesdays. Despite my chronic, allergic throat problem, He gives me the Grace to sing His Name.

In my own humble way I can only offer my Merit Scholarship award for the Sathya Sai Education Trust.

May we all unite in chanting the Glory of the Name Divine!

—*Priya Pota, 2nd Year Arts, Jaipur.*

The Journey to Sai

Devotion is a passionate longing for the object of worship—thinking of nothing else but the Object, total surrender of the mind and heart full of love and affection towards the Object. It is a gradual process, producing a slow but steady transformation. It is possible as is usual and normal, that many a human heart might be churned and filtered out and may not reach the ultimate goal of devotion. But one who reaches that goal is fully qualified to be called a 'Sai devotee'. During the process of churning and filtering the person becomes so meek and humble that he never calls himself a devotee, rather he simply admits that he is 'nothing' - everything is Baba. But others realise that he is a 'devotee'.

The spiritual journey towards oneness with Baba involves going through four stages. The first stage is the feeling of surprise and awe at the '*beholdment*' of some divine leela concerning Baba. The second stage is '*adoration*'—the person is overwhelmed and enthralled by the surge of emotions generated by the visual impact of Baba's photographs and mental impact of books on Baba. The third stage is the beginning of 'faith' in Him, which starts with some personal experience in which Baba helps the individual or guides him in some day-to-day problem. The development of faith is a very slow and gradual process in most cases. But it is steady. This stage may extend over many years—which are the years of 'real test'. The individual is being tested like a piece of gold by the Divine Goldsmith. The human sample is heated, stretched in different directions, again heated and then given some beautiful shape and design to convert him into a shining piece of ornament—to be looked and adored by others with appreciation, admiration and a desire for emulation. This stage of journey towards 'Sai' is very important, in which some individuals may feel tired, frustrated, disenchanted and may leave the path itself to follow some other path or may go back to the starting point. But those who stick to this path, in spite of the journey being 'tiring' and 'testing', reach the fourth stage of '*devotion*'. This stage is a stage of total surrender and complete confidence in whatever Baba says. The reasoning and doubting faculty of the mind is being completely shut off. The human being is totally aligned and tuned to

Sai ideals and Sai teachings. After this stage, only the ultimate Goal—that is Baba Himself—remains, in which the devotee has to merge.

Let me conclude this article with one of Baba's sayings about 'devotion': "Devotion is not a uniform to be worn on certain days when you gather for worship and then to be laid aside when the service is over. It must mean the promotion of an attitude that is ever present. It is the sustenance of the *heart*, just as food is sustenance for the body."

—*Prof. P. W. Mandvikar, Satna (M. P.)*

ONAM DIVYA SANDESH

The Royal Road to God

This land is made holy by many saints and seers kings and scholars who have enriched its culture and brought joy and peace to the lives of people. It is a source of inspiration to remember their teachings on days set apart for the purpose and to resolve to put them into practice.

Sankaracharya was one of the greatest of these. At a very young age, he mastered the scriptures, and composed elaborate commentaries on the Upanishads, the Brahma Sutra and the Bhagavad Gita (three basic treatises of Sanathana Dharma). He journeyed by foot all over India, visited the famous shrines and holy places, and spent some years on the Himalayas, before his death at the age of 32. He revealed that the fundamental message of the seers and sages was Advaita, Non-dualism. The Vedic axioms, Aham Brahmasmi (I am the Absolute), Tat Twam Asi (That Thou Art) etc. are expressions of Truth which are validated by scripture, logic and experience. The individual is the same as the Universal. There is never any two; all are One, the omnipresent Cosmic Consciousness, the Formless, Nameless Impersonal Attributeless Being.

Advaita did not encourage or inspire devotion to a Personal God. There was no room for surrender to a master figure. The masses who longed for the removal of an inner thirst had to be led, step by step. Ramanuja interpreted the basic texts and discovered that man can realise God through worship, using the gift of Nature as instrument. God is the Kernel, the shell is man and the fibrous stuff is Nature (as in the coconut). They are intimately intertwined, as limbs in the body, parts with their own peculiar characteristics. Man, Nature and God are One without a Second (Advaita) in a special and unique sense (Vasishta). So, Ramanuja's philosophy is named Qualified Non-Dualism.

However qualified, Advaita was an experience not easily accessible to ordinary men. They would put their faith in a compassionate all-knowing, all powerful God to whom they can pray and offer life and love. Madhwacharya, whose original name was Anandatheertha, declared that man is totally distinct from God, that man is neither God nor Divine. Man's highest destiny is to serve God, as Radha adored Krishna. Longing for the service, yearning to see and fill one's eyes with the beauty and majesty of the Lord—that is the most potent Sadhana. The aspirant would much rather be an ant nibbling molecules of sugar than becoming a lump or a mountain range of sugar.

This process of devotion and dedication is the royal road, the smoothest path, to spiritual success. This day, people of Kerala state, wherever they are, do experience this holy process. The Kerala region is today, the Onam festival day, refreshed by the monsoon rains; forest, lowland and coast are bright and burnished; the earth has a carpet of golden blossoms. The country is resplendent with an atmosphere of worship. A wonderful story explains this widely spread expectation, hope and gratitude.

Hiranyakasipu is described in the Puranas as a demonic ruler, he denied God and terrified his subjects. While he asserted that God is nowhere, his son Prahlada affirmed that God is everywhere. As a consequence, God was nowhere for the father, though He was everywhere for the son. Prahlada's son was Virochana and the hero of the story behind the Onam Festival, was the son of Virochana. He was named Bali, Balichakravathi (Bali, the Emperor). Being the grandson of the devout Prahlada, Bali too was engaged in the glorification of God and in the material and spiritual uplift of his subjects. There was no trace of poverty or ill-health in his empire. Every home was lit with joy; every day was a festive occasion.

Why the Lord incarnated

He decided to celebrate an elaborate Sacrifice, called Viswajit, which would propitiate the Gods so much that, with their blessings, he could extend his beneficent rule over the entire world. The Lord utilised this opportunity to shower Grace on him. He incarnated as Vamana and proceeded to the sacrificial altar in the form of a mendicant student, just initiated into spiritual life. Bali was happy to welcome Him. When Vamana was asked, which gift he would accept, He replied that he needed only three feet of ground, measured by His feet. Bali was surprised at this answer. For a short second, he doubted the intention and identity of the strange visitor. His preceptor, Shukra, warned him against promising to agree. But, Bali stood by his word. He permitted Vamana to measure for Himself the three feet of ground.

The Lord had incarnated to bless Bali, not to destroy him. So, when He had measured the earth with one stride and the earth with the second, He placed his foot on Bali's head and accepted the Emperor as the third foot, of ground. That foot released Bali from the recurrent cycle of birth and death.

But, Bali made one last, lingering wish, which the Lord agreed to fulfill. He prayed, "Allow me to come to the Kerala I ruled over, one day in the year, so that I can see people I love and the land I cherish in my heart." Onam is that day. The word Shravanam, when it is applied to this month, has become Chingom and when applied to the star with which the moon is associated this day, has become Onam-Shravanam, Vanam, Onam. Bali chose for his annual visit the day of the Shravanam Star, in the Shravanam Month.

A day of rejoicing

The people of Kerala celebrate the arrival of Bali with great rejoicing. it is a holy day, when they prepare delicious sweets and offer them to the Lord. Everyone wears new clothes (Ona-Kodi), every home is decorated with festoons, garlands and floral designs. The atmosphere is fragrant with incense from every domestic shrine. Villagers spend the day together in dance and song. Lamps are lit in front of each home; they are placed on doorsills, held before temples by rows of children. The lighted lamp symbolises the individual (Jiva) whose self is but a tiny

flicker of the Cosmic Light. Old and young, rich and poor, are all equally immersed on Onam Day in grateful adoration of the Lord and of Bali who earned the grace of the Lord by sacrificing his ego.

The lesson that Onam imparts is: A lifetime spent without devotion to the Almighty Lord is a pitiful waste. Ridding oneself of identification with the body and its adjuncts, one must involve oneself with the Spirit. This alone can reveal to him his reality—the Atma. Once the Atmic Core of oneself is contacted, it needs only one step more to discover that all else have the same Atma as their reality. Thus, man becomes aware of the Unity that is the Truth, that is God.

Man is now suffering from a totally topsy-turvy view of things. He believes that Man is real, Nature is Real and God is a figment of the imagination. But God is the seed which has expressed itself as Nature, of which the human body is a part. Just as in every fruit that the tree yields, the primal seed is evident, the Cosmic Consciousness (Paramatma) is the core of every being too.

The lower self or ego acts like a fog to hide this truth, which when known can make man free. The ego is the unseen cause for the ups and downs which one struggles with all his life. To remove the fog, to cleanse the mind of desire and distress, man has to engage himself in positive activity. Man is prompted towards activity by the better nature rooted in him. But, out of sheer perversity, he pursues ruinous activity which pollutes his thoughts, words and deeds.

The ear ought to be eager to listen to the glory of God. The tongue ought to love the taste of His story only. Every action must be worthy enough to be an offering to Him. I have told you often, "See good; hear good; speak good; do good; be good. This is the way to God." I often add, "See no evil; hear no evil; speak no evil, do no evil; be not evil. This is the way to God."

Experience of God

There are today people who affirm that there is no God. But Hiranyakasipu who belonged to this category was confronted by his own son, who asserted even as a child, that God exists and can be experienced. Those who deny God cannot prove that He does not exist, except by their limited reason and logic. The experience of God earned by sages in all ages and all lands cannot be argued away with the help of reason, which can be affected by prejudice, pride and even ill-health. There are many truths which are too stable to be dismissed. The magnet attracts iron, three plus three add upto six, a green betel leaf with white lime on it when chewed with a brown nut produces red coloured saliva, a sapling hung with the roots above grows nevertheless upwards as is its wont—these facts cannot be negated at all. The awareness of God, which is the very purpose of human existence, has to happen—however long the time taken, however difficult the process. When the heart is purified and the consciousness is illumined, the task is easy.

God is minuter than the minutest. When you are unable to see the air which you know is all around you, how can you see God who is minuter? God is vaster than the vastest. When you are unable to picturise the Cosmos which astronomy has not succeeded in unravelling, how can you see or imagine the vaster than the vastest? Emperor Bali, who is welcomed into their hearts and homes by the people of Kerala on Onam Day, had unwavering faith in God. He served his subjects, as if he was commissioned by God (Narayana). He offered all he earned, all he was,

himself, most gladly to God. He overcame the clouds of ignorance and rose to the heights of supreme wisdom. His self expanded so vastly that it merged in Divine Consciousness. Purity leads to Unity and Unity to mergence with Divinity. This is the Message that the Onam festival and the story of Bail conveys to mankind.

—*Bhagavan's discourse at Poornachandra Auditorium on 28.8.85*

Cultural Programme

Bhagavan's discourse on Onam day was followed by a cultural programme in which boys and girls from the Sathya Sai High School, Srisailam, presented a series of dances based on the leelas of Krishna and the Vamana Avatar. The Poornachandra Hall was packed to capacity. Thousands of Keralites, who had come for the festival, were present in the hall.

Bhagavan was welcomed by two rows of girls carrying lamps, dressed in the traditional Malayali costume, as He came out of the Mandir to proceed to the Poornachandra Auditorium. The entire Prasanthi Nilayam grounds had been tastefully decorated for the occasion.

Bhagavan watched the cultural programme with intense interest and showed His appreciation of the children's performance.

SWATANTRA DINA SANDESH:

The Victory

The Motherland which bore children who earned immortal renown all around the globe;
The Battleground, which witnessed the flight of heroes from the West who ruled;
The Bharat-land which shone so brilliant with seers and scholars, each a gem;
The Happy land which fostered and brought to fame songsters and poets, thinkers and teachers;
The Birth-land of beauty and charm divine through master artistes of brush and chisel;
This Mother, Bharat, to guard her Dharma treasure, O! Students! Yours is the bounden task.

The world is the manifestation and expansion of the five fundamental elements. Its innate nature is duality - the entity and the result, the cause and its effect. This duality is evident in the alternating experiences of joy and grief, praise and blame, victory and defeat, profit and loss. These are the consequences of the right and wrong we indulge in. It is not wrong, if you slip into wrong; repeating the wrong is the thing to be condemned. One must learn lessons from the mistake, repent and resolve not to commit it again.

The history of India holds forth before us the folly of repeating the wrong already done. The French, the Portuguese, the Moghuls and the Afghans have all warned Indians against this characteristic. Dupleix has recorded that he was able to establish French rule in the then

Karnataka region with the help of the Nizam. Mir Jaffar helped Clive to conquer Bengal. Raghunatha Rao Peshwa helped the foreigner to conquer Maharashtra. Foreign rule was established in India, with the help of Indians themselves.

Inhabitants of an island, eleven thousand miles away, were able to conquer India, sixteen times its size having eight times its population, and rule over it for one hundred and ninety years, because of one basic defect, disunity caused by mutual suspicion, selfishness, jealousy. Union is strength; disunion brings disaster.

When Gandhi was twenty four years old, he proceeded to South Africa at the invitation of an Indian Business House to conduct a Court case. There he witnessed the humiliation being heaped upon Indian settlers by the Whites. Differences can exist between man and man in health, education, wealth and temperament. But, fundamentally, all men are equal and should be treated as such. But racial animosity was the accepted policy of the White rulers in South Africa.

Satyagraha

Gandhi stayed on among the oppressed Indians and native blacks and devised the strategy of passive resistance or civil disobedience (Satyagraha) to end the exploitation. When the movement showed signs of quick success, General Smuts invited Gandhi for discussion. Gandhi explained to him that he had to resort to non-violent Satyagraha since the inhuman policy of insulting and injuring humans having brown and black skins, had to be resisted and exterminated. General Smuts retorted by pointing out to Gandhi how millions of Indians—human beings like the rest—were kept out of villages and condemned as untouchables. The General's words acted as a bullet shot right at the heart of Gandhi. Gandhi felt that he had no right to correct another while he was himself infected with the same evil. He decided to return to India and to practise the strategy of Satyagraha for the removal of untouchability and other social evils and to free his Motherland from exploitation by foreigners. Satyagraha was the path of Truth and Love, of the means being as pure as the ends. Verily, he who accepts criticism gladly and thanks the critic for his remarks is the one really human. Since Gandhi was willing to learn and had the humility to acknowledge criticism, he could mould the people of this land and be hailed as the Father of the Nation.

He looked upon the country as one. He planted the seed of unity of all faiths and all communities, which under his guidance grew quickly into a big tree. He built a great movement on the basis of soul-force (Atmabalam) that strengthened unity and self-confidence. Selfishness, that had possessed the nation like an evil genius and ruined its progress in material, moral, political and spiritual fields, was suppressed while the movement was on. The people suffered much but suffering is the prelude to success. There is no rose without thorns. Without giving, no one can gain. How can anything great be achieved without overcoming internal and external obstacles?

Swatantra

The Independence we celebrate today was finally achieved and proclaimed at midnight on August 14/15, 1947. What exactly does the word 'independence' mean? It means we are not dependent on any one, any longer. We are dependent on ourselves alone. The Indian word is Swa-tantra, for "Independence." It means "Our Tantra." The word 'Tantra' means "The Heart"

(Hrdaya, Hridaya, in the heart, Hrd). The Yantra (the machine, the apparatus) is the Body; The Mantra (saving formula) is the Breath and the Tantra (the heart, the source of life) is the Atma. So, Swatantra means independence from everything except the Atma. The resident of the heart is the only Guru; there is no dependence on others. He is the only Master, the only God. This is the stage of Swarajya, sole monarch of oneself. The word Swaraj commonly used for an independent state connotes only absence of worldly dependence. Independence can be enjoyed by man only when he gets rid of the bondage to the senses which drag him into tantalising ventures. The attainment of Yoga, involving sense-control, expansion of love, and cleansing the consciousness, so that God's glory may be reflected therein, is the goal.

Unity and divinity

You have to be the leaders of this country, in a few years' time. So, I insist on the development of a sense of unity, a bond of brotherhood, and an awareness of Divinity. Purity strengthens Unity, Unity promotes Divinity. One should strive for unity of minds, unity of hearts, not the temporary association between moneyed people or persons in positions of power. Unity must result in Unity of thought, word and deed.

Love for one's motherland is good. But, it should not lead to hatred towards the mother-lands of others. Your prayer has to be, "May all the world be happy and peaceful." For, only when the world has peace and prosperity, can India be peaceful and happy. It is only when India is peaceful and happy, that Andhra Pradesh will be peaceful and happy. It is only when Andhra Pradesh has peace and happiness that Anantapur District can have peace and happiness. It is only when Anantapur District have peace and happiness, can Puttaparthi be peaceful and happy. Only when Puttaparthi has peace and happiness can you have peace and happiness! Your peace and happiness are linked with the world's peace and happiness. Any act of hatred or violence committed by you will pollute the atmosphere of the world. Adore any living being; the adoration reaches God, for He is in every being. Insult any living being; the insult too reaches God. So, expand Love towards all, everywhere.

The flag is the symbol of victory, of the Joy of Independence. Each nation has a flag for itself. Pay attention to another flag to symbolise another laudable victory over one's lower instincts, impulses, passions, emotions and desires, the flag that has to be unfurled on every human heart. When you achieve that victory, you will become true inheritors of Bharatiya Culture.

Bhagavan's Discourse at the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Prasanthi Nilayam

GOKULASHTAMI SANDESH:

The Yoga of Samatwam

God is a word on the tongue for all
But, what do they gain there from?
Until they grow godly goodness
How can they see the word as Vision?

The Reality which sustains the Cosmos and the Cell is one only, the all pervasive Consciousness, named Brahman. When this infinite vastness is spoken of in relation to Cosmos (Jagat, the Super-flux) it is the Paramatma (the Overself) and it is the Atma (the Self) when it is conceived as the core of individual beings. All three are one entity, but they 'appear' different and delude the short-sighted. This characteristic is known as Maya. The Reality is Existence (sat, Isness) Knowledge (Chit, Awareness, Consciousness) and Bliss (Ananda). The Appearance or the Power of Diversification uses the three gunas or modes to embody itself differently. The Gunas are Serenity (Satwa) Activity (Rajas) and Inertia (Tamas). The gunas urge man towards either knowing or desiring or working.

When the "urge to become", namely Maya, impels Brahman to project Itself, it appears as Easwara or God when associated with Satwaguna, as Jivi or Man and Living Beings when associated with Rajoguna, and as Prakriti or Nature when associated with Tamoguna. Brahman is, the basis of all three, just as the rope is the basis of the snake for which it is mistaken. Maya is the mirror in which Brahman is reflected as Personalised God, Man and Nature. We are able to know Brahman, through Nature, which is saturated with it or identifiable with it.

The snake is the product of the mind. The external is the creation of the internal. Brahman has manifested itself as all this. How can an image occur with no object? How can a person be a father without a child? God created the world; the world conferred on God the glory of 'Creator'. Man through his yearning, imagination and intensity endows God with a form and name and a large bunch of attributes from which he hopes to benefit. But, God is above and beyond human traits and characteristics, known as Gunas.

Krishna tells Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita "I have no need to engage myself in any activity. But yet, I am busy acting, in order to promote the well-being of the world and its inhabitants." Through His works, He can be known. The Gita refers to each of its chapters as a Yoga. Yoga means union, union of the self with its source. How do the eighteen chapters, each a yoga, help man to fulfill the destiny? The Gita provides the answer.

"Samatvam Yogam uchyathe" (Equal-mindedness, equanimity, sense of balance, unaffectedness is what yoga means). We can distinguish five fields in the attainment of this Samatvam (Equal-mindedness).

(1) The field of natural ups and downs (Prakritika). One has to welcome both summer and winter, for they are both essential for the process of living. The alternation of seasons toughens and sweetens us. Birth and death are both natural events. We cannot discover the reason for either birth or death. They simply happen. We try to blame some person or some incident for the injury or loss we suffer but the real reason is our own karma or action. When the background of the event is known, the impact can be lessened or even negated.

(2) The field of social ups and downs. One has to welcome with equal-mindedness fame and blame, respect and ridicule, profit and loss, and such other responses and reactions from the society in which one has to grow and struggle. Fortune is as much a challenge to one's equanimity as misfortune.

(3) The field of knowledge with its ups and downs: Until the summit of knowledge wherefrom one experiences the One which has become this vast make-believe, there are many temptations and obstacles that lead the seeker astray. The student is inclined to give up the climb altogether when he feels exhausted or when he feels that he has reached the summit. The Gita defines a Pundit or learned man as a Samadarshi, he who has gained the awareness of the same One in all beings. The Jnani has gained Samatwa when he is convinced of the One being the Truth of all and when his thoughts, words and deeds are guided by that conviction.

(4) The field of devotion with its ups and downs: Here too there is a great deal of faction and fanaticism, prejudice and persecution, which arise out of ignorance of the One, the sameness of the God whom all adore, through various rites and rituals, modes and methods. There is only One God and He is omnipresent.

(5) The field of activity with its ups and downs must be sanctified by divinising the purpose. When work is sublimated into worship, defeat and disappointment will not dishearten. Success will not promote pride; it will lead to humility and gratitude for grace. Work performed as duty, as due from us, to society brings the reward of joy, for we have utilised the knowledge and skill, endowed by God through society, for serving society itself.

Radha-Krishna

The equal-mindedness (Samatwam) that can sweeten and lighten life is best exemplified in Radha and her Devotion to Krishna. It is the awareness of the unity of the river and the sea, the individual self with the Omniself, the Atma with the Paramatma. Reaching the Source is the Destiny; desire to flow steadily and straight towards the Source is Devotion. The pang of separation, the agony arising from neglect, the yearning to overcome obstacles, the joy of contemplation, the ecstasy of self-annihilation—these add up to the supreme identification of Radha with her Lord, Sri Krishna.

Jayadeva

"Geeta Govindam" the Book of Songs of Govinda (Krishna) by the great mystic and poet, Jayadeva of Orissa is the immortal portrayal of Radha Bhakti in its manifold manifestations. Jayadeva could express it with such charm and clarity that even the man behind the plough sang those songs and filled his heart with divine delight. The ruler of the land, Lakshmana Sena, was stricken with envy. He prepared a parallel book of songs and ordered that they be sung, instead of Jayadeva's outpourings, in the temples of the land, including the greatest of them all - the Jagannath Temple at Puri. When his order was received with universal protest, the king had both books placed at the Feet of Lord Jagannath and the shrine locked and kept under strict vigilance. When the doors were opened in the morning, the king saw the Lord having Jayadeva's 'Gita Govindam' in His Hand, while his rival book written out of envy and pride was thrown into a far corner. The Lord had announced that He showers Grace on inner purity, not outer pomp.

When one has established himself in equal-mindedness, Krishna installs Himself in his heart: His voice becomes the conscience that guides him at every step. Through Yoga, fortitude must be acquired; through Japa, sense-control must be earned; through Sadhana, the mind should be filled with peace. But, these effects are not noticeable, though the causes are practised. People close themselves in their shrine-rooms and perform puja, offer flower and fruit and later, emerge

from the place, only to shout and swear, frighten and fight with all and sundry. Man must be a yogi always, under all circumstances (sathatham yoginah), says the Gita. This means he will be ever in Ananda. Faith in God can ensure equanimity and balance. Knowledge must develop into skill, which must be directed and regulated by a sense of balance. Or else, skill degenerates into 'kill'.

Education for Samatwam

There are many assembled here, who have joined the University in search of knowledge and skill. They must endeavour to know the Atma resident in them in order that faith in Atma can grant them Wisdom, which is knowledge of the Highest. Now, seekers of knowledge are concerned only with what they think they are and what others think they are, ignoring the genuine quest of what they really are. Therefore, they are their own enemies! They are caught in the coils of anxiety, fear and misery. They are fascinated by the trivial tinsel that they see. They believe whatever is seen and waste their life struggling, succeeding and losing. Pashu (animal) is the name given to such beings who put faith in Pasyathi (what is seen). People raise the clamour, "I want peace" but they do not discard the "I" (the ego) and the "want" (desire). How then can they get 'peace'? They will only go into pieces.

Though education by itself cannot confer Atma-ananda on you, you have to acquire education, in order to serve the world. It should not be used for collecting monthly wads of bank notes and for selfish revels. The process of teaching and learning should not be reduced to vomiting what the teacher has learned and the student consuming what has thus been vomited. It has to be creative, positive, and productive.

Crores of rupees are spent on 'research' in this country when one examines the value of the result achieved, it has to be judged as a big waste. Those engaged in research must try to give back to the country the sum spent multiplied a thousand fold. Or else, it would be tantamount to treason.

Plough and cattle

Consider the ideal placed before mankind by Sri Krishna and His brother, Balaram. Balaram had the plough as his inseparable weapon. The plough is not a destructive weapon; it is a tool for the production of food. Krishna tended cattle, also essential for every agricultural operation, from preparation of soil to transporting the grain, after harvest. The message they convey to you is: Produce, put your knowledge into practice and produce things that can fulfil essential, elevating needs. Domestic furniture, agricultural implements, school accessories, home building materials, clothing fabrics, etc. etc. Always question yourself: What have I contributed to the happy living of my fellowmen? Expand your heart; let your love enfold more and more of your fellowmen. Therein lies divinity.

These are the years when you have to use time most beneficially. Teachers must cultivate knowledge and develop it by sharing it with their students. Students must accept, treasure and expand that knowledge by putting it into practice.

True service

Earn Ananda for yourself, promote prosperity for the country and peace for the world. The motherland should be freed from dependence on others for its welfare and progress. Declare proudly and fearlessly, "This is my mother tongue; this is my motherland. I shall serve her and honour her. I shall preserve and promote the heritage handed over to me.

The name Krishna means, He who attracts, He who cultivates the heart-land, He who is ever in Bliss. Students have to bear this in mind. Krishna draws people into His presence, sows, grows and harvests Love in barren broken hearts and confers supreme delight. Balaram asks for dedication to Bhoomata (The land) and Krishna to Gomata (The cattle). They have raised agriculture the process of providing food, to the level of sacred sadhana.

Srinatha, the highly patronized court poet was brought home in a palanquin borne by palace servants. He noticed the son of Pothana, the author of the immortal Telugu epic, "Bhagavatam", ploughing his bit of land. Srinatha ridiculed him and called out "Farmer!" The son replied, "This is much nobler than your profession of mendicancy, flattering a human being and feeding on what he drops into your palm." Maintain self-respect. Develop self-confidence. Proclaim aloud, "This is my Bharat. The people of Bharat are my brothers."

Krishna is worshipped as Gopala. The word 'Go' Means 'Jivi' (living being). So, when you serve fellow men and other beings with self-less Love and total compassion, you are offering to Krishna the worship He accepts most gladly and with full grace.

—Poornachandra Auditorium 7.9.1985

A Memorable Jayanti

For the thousands of devotees from all parts of the world, who were in Prasanthi Nilayam on September 7, the Gokulashtami celebrations that day were doubly memorable—the function in the morning when gorgeously attired cows from the Nilayam Gokulam were brought in procession to the Mandir; and Bhagavan's discourse in the evening in the crowded Poornachandra Auditorium when Swami gave new insights in to the concept of Samatwam and revealed the true meaning of Radha's devotion to Krishna.

It was a beautiful morning when Sri Krishna entered Gokulam to bless the cows on the auspicious day. They had all been colourfully dressed up. Sai Geetha, the elephant also richly caparisoned, was ready to head the procession to the Mandir.

The procession was led by the Nadaswaram Troupe of pipes and drums. It consisted of students reciting Vedic chants and singing bhajans. The cows came in the rear chaperoned by students belonging to the Brindavan and Prasanthi Nilayam campuses of the Sathya Sai Institute.

It took nearly forty minutes to reach the Mandir. On either side of the road devotees watched the pageant with joy and cheered as it passed. It reminded them of the Bhagavata and of the discipline therein of Gokulam and Brindavan.

When the procession reached the Mandir, the cows were lined up on either wing of the darshan quadrangle in front of the Mandir. Bhagavan fed Sai Geetha and the cows with fruits and fondled and caressed them while the orchestra of students gave a recital of songs in praise of Sri Krishna.

While at Prasanthi Nilayam

Having taken birth as human beings, you must make every effort to live up to human values. What is the distinction between human life and the life of other animals? What is the purpose of human life? Very few people think about this. They continue living much like animals. But that is not humanness. Compassion, love, humility, understanding, good manners,—these are the qualities unique to human beings.

You come to me, after much effort and spending a great deal of money. But, you waste your time strolling about, engaging in gossip and getting involved in new attachments. Realize that time is precious. Lose your health, you can regain it. Lose your wealth, you can get it back. But if you lose time, you will never be able to get even a single second back. Every living being, every object is being carried away by the stream of Time. Therefore it is foolish to get attached to beings and objects that have no permanent value. Hold on to God. Do not waste your precious time on lesser, useless things.

Having come to this sacred place try to rid yourself of at least some habits that demean you—for example, the habit of men gazing at women and women gazing at men. Another bad habit is improper conversation between men and women. Control your speech! Let it be short, gentle and pure. You talk of developing friendships through conversation, but how permanent can these friendships be?

Your friendships are based on self-interest; they do not last. Nothing can be gained from such friendships based on worldly desires. Develop instead Divine Love, selfless Love. Remember, you are embodiments of love; you are Atma. Listening to scandal and enjoying stories about others' faults and failures is another bad habit you have to give up. This tendency pollutes the heart. Keep the heart pure, by constantly turning it towards God.

Develop sadhana

Ask yourself why you are alive at all? Choose a noble ideal and live for its realisation. Ask yourself every day if you are achieving the purpose for which you have come. You are wandering around even here in noisy groups. Is that the purpose for which you have come? Learn to sit quietly and practise meditation on God; that way you will be sanctifying the precious days allotted to you.

You have come here leaving behind your close ties with your family. Why should you cultivate relationships here? The only relationship which you should develop here is between you and God. This does not mean slighting anybody or developing animosity towards them. You may greet each other with "Hello!" ... "Hello!"... "How are you?" ... "Good bye!" "Goodbye!" That is enough. There may be some relationships that cannot be avoided because of some work that has to be done together or some such necessity or purpose; keep these down to an absolutely low minimum. Be alone and develop spiritual Sadhana.

When you wear two or more bangles on one wrist, they will jingle, and rob you of peace. But when you wear only one bangle? In other words, when you remain alone, there will be no noise, no talk and the mind can enjoy full peace. Value the use, the nearness and grace of the Divinity that is here to free yourself from bondage. Work for liberation. Do not seek to acquire snore desires and bonds; they can only hinder your spiritual progress. In this world there is no peace which you can imbibe. Peace can be derived only by internal search. It is a treasure awaiting discovery from within.

Therefore, keep yourself centered in your heart, experiencing the peace, bliss and quiet which are naturally there. The heart is by nature pure, but desires add dirt and dust. Through Sadhana you can cleanse it and save it from contamination. Evil desire or lust is the enemy No. 1 of those who are on the spiritual path. Thoughts must be about God; the mind and the heart must turn towards God. This is the primary Sadhana which everyone has to undertake.

Life is a valuable gift from God to be used for reaching God. But now you are spending it to reach the external world. How long can that world last? Man obeys the "monkey mind" and caters exclusively to his body and its demands. That is the reason why human qualities are declining everywhere. We have to reverse this trend. Wherever you are, remind yourself that you are human, far above the level of animals. No. That is not enough; you should remind yourself that you are divine.

"You are God"

The body is the vesture you wear. You change your body just as you change your dress. Birth and death happen only for the body. For the Atma, which is your Reality, there is neither birth, nor death. You are the Atma. You are God. Don't think of the body, don't think of the mind; think of the Atma. That is what you truly are. When difficulties, losses and troubles confront you, do not be bothered. Be fearless! You are the Atma; you cannot be harmed. Treat these as challenges. Treat life as a game. Experience Me as a stream of Love. The difficulties are passing clouds. During times of trouble and worry, think only about God. Then the mind becomes calm and you acquire peace.

There is one more thing which I must tell you. You are living and moving in the world as individuals in society. Therefore, you should behave in a manner which is not offensive or repulsive to the society which surrounds you. When you are in your own country, you behave according to the laws and customs of your country, no one is offended. But when you are in India, you have to be careful about your conduct. The first requirement is dress which conforms to standards of this country. Many of you are coming here dressed in what is regarded as unbecoming by people. They find your clothes skimpy, loud, short, and even dirty and

undignified. if the clothes are such how can the mind be clean? Here, you should dress in accordance with the customs of India. Your dress should not distract or attract the attention of others. Be demure, simple and silent. People will judge you and your country from your appearance and your conduct. When you come to Prasanthi Nilayam, you must have good manners, modest dress and proper behaviour. This is not only important here, but when you earn respect here, know that you can earn respect wherever you go. When you return to your country you will be able to teach these ideals to others.

Good behaviour

Physical cleanliness is as important as mental cleanliness and respectable dress. Another requirement is good behaviour, which is the mark of a high character. Still another requirement is silence. The mansion of spirituality is built on good manners, discipline, proper behaviour, proper dress, restraint in talk. These have to be observed while at Prasanthi Nilayam and even while you are elsewhere.

There is still another thing which needs to be pointed out to you. Many of you will have plenty of money, and you will sometimes give ten Rupees for something that is worth only one Rupee. Ten Rupees may not mean much to you, but for the local people it is a big amount. You are staying here for a short period. By paying large amounts for things, you are making life difficult for the permanent residents. When you pay too much for things, do not imagine that you are doing some service. You are really doing harm. Don't waste money. Misuse of money is evil. A lot of money is being wasted on unnecessary journeys and tours and on unnecessary gadgets. Good money is also given to beggars, who use it for drugs and drink. When they are hungry, give them food, but do not give money. Be careful not to waste money in many ways. Do not waste food: do not waste energy; do not waste time. if you waste these God-given gifts, life itself becomes a waste. You have come to acquire devotion for God. Therefore, concentrate on developing this devotion. Once you have earnestly made this commitment, Swami will say to you, "I am yours and you are Mine!"

—From Bhagavan's discourse to overseas devotees at the Mandir on August 20, 1984, Ed.

START NOW

How sad it is that this human life, precious as an invaluable diamond that cannot be priced at all, has been cheapened to the status of a worn-out worthless coin! There is no use repenting, after wasting time without profit, without meditating on God or practising any Sadhana to realise Him. What is the use in planning a well, when the house has caught fire? When is it to be dug? When will water become available? When is the fire to be extinguished? It is an impossible task! If, at the very start, there was a well ready, how helpful it would be on such critical occasions! Beginning to contemplate on God during the last moments is like beginning to dig the well after the fire has broken out. So, if from now on, one equips himself by the contemplation of God off and on, it will stand him in good stead when the end approaches. Start today the Sadhana that has to be done tomorrow!

—Baba

Sentenced for life

Take life in the world as a compulsory duty imposed on you. You are now in jail under a sentence for crimes committed in a previous birth. The Superintendent assigns various duties: cooking, drawing water, hewing wood etc. You have to do the work assigned to the best of your ability, without any expectation of reward. If you behave well, cause no trouble, and do the assigned duties without demur, then some days, may be written off your sentence and you may be released sooner, with a certificate that you are reliable and good. This attitude will give you practice in Nishkama karma, which is very valuable for curbing the senses.

—Baba

A "Garland" from the kids

Knowing that Bhagavan has placed a ban on the offer of garlands to Him, children of the Vidya Vihar at Ooty hit upon an acceptable method of presenting Swami with a "garland" in the entertainment programme they got up during Bhagavan's stay there in April.

The "flowers" in the garland consisted of pearls from the Divine lips. Before making the offering, one child came forward and said to Bhagavan: "We, the little children of our Beloved Lord Sai, have picked up a few pearls that fell from our Lord's lips. We have made a Garland out of them. Now we pray for our Lord's gracious permission to place them around His Lotus Feet."

After that, one child after another came forward to recite the allotted piece and take his or her place in the semi-circle in front of Bhagavan, which became a garland for Swami. The following "pearls" glittered in the garland:

"Lord, you have told us that by cultivating devotion, that is Love for God, from childhood, we can reach Him, who is the treasure of all Ananda. You have also told us that how much we think we are, and not more, are we and so help us to learn more and more and then become better and better."

"We also know that Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa are the chief noble qualities that we have to cultivate from our childhood and continue it throughout our lives. Because, Swami has said, Life is a search, explore it; Life is a challenge, meet it; Life is a game, play it; Life is a dream, realise it; and Life is Love, enjoy it."

"So, for this we have to start early, drive slowly and reach safely. But we have to remember, 'less luggage more comfort', and we should always remember Love is God and God is Love and so we have to live in Love. If we do so, we will enjoy our lives."

"In order to enjoy life, we must put a ceiling or limit on our desires. We must put a limit on our expenditure of our money. We must not talk too much thus wasting our time and energy. We must not waste food, because food is God, and when time is wasted, it is equal to life being wasted."

"So, we have to remember that one of the best ways to spend time is, by doing good service to others, because doing seva to humanity is doing seva to divinity, that means serving God and helping God's creation is the same thing. When we please man, we please God."

"We have also to do our duty in life with discipline and devotion. For that, we must start the day with love, spend the day with love, fill the day with love, live the day with love and end the day with love and remember love lives by giving and forgiving and self lives by getting and forgetting."

"And when we talk, we must remember to talk soft, talk sweet and talk the truth. We must watch our words, watch our actions, watch our thoughts, watch our character and watch our heart and we must also avoid backbiting, falsehood and harsh words."

"Also we must remember that one must not only do the work one likes, but like the work one has to do. We cannot always oblige but can always speak obligingly. Swami has said, we are all caskets of divine love and so we must share it, spread it and express that love in thoughts of compassion, words of sympathy and acts of service."

"Not only that, we must practice Ahimsa and Brahmacharya. We must cultivate humility, fearlessness and develop a sense of sacrifice and renunciation. Also we should eradicate ego, lust, anger, breed, envy and jealousy and practice selflessness, generosity and tolerance and thus make ourselves better persons."

"For this, what we have to do is to "See Good, Be Good and Do Good, because that is the way to God." The past is beyond recovery. The future is uncertain. The given moment is now and here. So sanctify it with holy thoughts, words and deeds and thus make life a rose that speaks silently in the language of fragrance. Remove desire, attachment, and cultivate patience, fearlessness, control tossing of mind and temper; Love God, Trust God and Surrender to God."

"So, for making us better persons, we must take a dose of Japam and Dhyanam for breakfast; have Satchintanam, Sat-sang and Satparana for lunch; do pooja and archana for Tea; consider an hour of bhajan as Dinner; and do Manana, as a cup of milk at bedtime. This diet is enough to make our being happy and healthy."

"And so we pray to our Lord to accept this little garland of pearls. We also pray to our Lord to help us to "Follow the master, Face the devil, Fight to the end, and Finish the game" and when we become big, to be considered by YOU as Your fit instruments to carry out YOUR Message to Your complete satisfaction. Lord! Bless us all for that."

Compassion—A Sign of the Great

Once when Samartha Ramadas was moving about the countryside with his disciples, those behind him seeing a fine field of juicy sugarcane, entered it and started pulling out the cane, crunching it with great relish. The owner of the field naturally enraged at their behaviour and at the loss to which they were subjecting him, fell upon them with a stout cane. The Master was sorry that his disciples broke discipline so objectionably drawn by the desire (the tongue for the sweet juice. Next day they reached Emperor Sivaji's place, where a great welcome awaited the Guru and his followers. Sivaji offered to attend personally to the Guru during his ceremonial bath; when Ramadas undressed, Sivaji was shocked to find broad red marks, indicating that he had been beaten! Such was the sensitive sympathy of the great saint, that he received on his back tile blows meant for his pupils; Sivaji sent for the owner of the field of cane; and, when he stood shivering in fear before the Emperor and his Guru, Ramadas was requested by Sivaji to inflict on him any punishment he liked. But, Ramadas accepted the fact that a wrong was committed by his disciples and blessed the farmer, granting him a boon that his lands would be tax free for ever.

—Baba ("Chinna Katha")

"Be Happy"

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, with all calmness and patience, tells the human world over and over again to be HAPPY. Baba, with divine openness and love, advises and instructs, yea, even pleads and appeals for Universal Happiness. Has the world really heard Him? His last birthday message from Prasanthi Nilayam to Creation was: "Let all beings in all the worlds be happy."

To me personally the answer to this mighty love appeal is quite simple. If there is happiness abounding, there must certainly be peace—The Peace which the Master had in mind when He, too, called for Peace On Earth.

Now, to become Happy all must have a Joy within and a Joy without. Mankind knowingly or unknowingly yearns to be Happy. God gave the Heart and the Heart is truly the Well of Happiness. Drink freely and freely drink of it. Enter the door of the heart daily. And, daily, all day—all day long—Drink the cup of Love and Joy.

What kind of tools and equipment are needed to be happy? Well, just make yourself a 'Happy' list. You can very well start it with a grin and a smile. I'm quite sure the Lord looks kindly on such a simple childlike approach. Why, you can even step aside and count your blessings—one by one. Yes, you can see and feel—what God has done.

Let's all spiritually push and spread the good word—BE HAPPY! When Sai Baba says, "Be Happy", Baba means BE HAPPY. Put on your HAPPY FACE.

—James W. Johnson, Cleveland, USA

Eliminating the Ego

In one of Baba's discourses on the Bhagavad Gita, He points out that egoism or selfishness leads directly to attachment. Its cause is the universal mistake of identifying with the body and the personality, instead of with the True Self residing within the physical vehicle. As a result, the emphasis is on the difference and separateness of each person. Our bodies and ego-identities appear to separate us from one another. Actually, the inner reality of everyone is the same identical essence, and at that level we are all One.

Since most of us habitually think and act from the position of "me" and "mine", we are daily reinforcing the erroneous belief that we are separate and apart from everyone else. In order to change this attitude we need to recognize that our different bodies and personalities are merely the costumes we have assumed to enable us to act out the roles we are destined to play. By continuing to cater to bodily cravings and personality demands, we blind ourselves to our true identity and become crystallized in our roles.

Baba repeatedly tells us that desires have their origin solely in identification with our bodies and egos. Our Real Selves are desireless. The belief that our bodies and personalities are our

Real Selves makes us slaves to our senses. How can we be released from this bondage? Baba has given us a very simple method, appropriate for this difficult era (Kali Yuga): the repetition of the name of God.

However, many of us who have tried this method have discovered how difficult it is to practice while engaged in daily routine. We only imagine that the outer world of tangible objects offers security. We need to stand back and observe ourselves, instead of being so self-engrossed that we fail to be aware of other people, their needs, and the effect of our actions on them. To put into practice such an exercise, we need to act the role of a detective, searching for examples of our self-involvement. When do we put our own desires first? Are we willing to sacrifice those desires in order that someone else may be happy?

Baba has given examples to illustrate self-interest. "Students in India know that when they have finished their examinations in the tenth standard, the results are published in the newspaper. The published lists include test scores of all students, but each student is concerned only with his own results. This is an example of selfishness and we should try this to understand selflessness. Another example: Someone has taken a photo, but each one is interested only in identifying his own picture among the others. This is also a type of narrow and selfish vision. Instead, what is needed is a feeling of 'we', 'our' things, and 'our' people, then one would be truly able to care about the welfare of all people."

However, there is a common pitfall which traps many of us. In most relationships one of the people involved is stronger and tends to dominate. Thus, when one acts selfishly, the other may be forced to be unselfish. Conversely, if one strives to be unselfish, the other often becomes selfish. The only way out of this familiar dilemma is to follow Baba's advice and seek His will. In that way, growth and learning will result. If we do not wish to do as someone else requests, then Baba has another suggestion. He says, "You need not oblige, but you must speak obligingly."

Self-interest attracts us to the objects of our desires and creates separation from the Baba within us. In the Kali Yuga, the temptations of the tangible world are more powerful and better able to lure us into believing that they will provide us the security and happiness we crave. The only antidote is the one Baba offers: repetition of the name of God. He also advocates repeating, "I am God." As we do this, we will gradually identify with our Real Selves. As that happens, our egos or false selves, with all their "I want" or "I don't want," will diminish from lack of energy.

To help us still further, Baba tells another story to illustrate this point. "When the elephant Gajaraja was fighting the crocodile, he depended on his own physical might. He felt, 'What is the strength of this crocodile as compared to my own might?' Goaded on by this ego, he fought. Gradually he lost his physical strength and his ego began diminishing. Then he cried, 'O Lord, You and You alone. There is nobody else. Do come and save me.' If he had had this understanding at the onset of the fight, of 'You and You alone,' he would not have suffered because of the crocodile. So long as you have a sense of ego and attachment, you cannot free yourself from suffering. So our effort should be directed toward curbing and putting down the sense of ego and gradually the ego will be exterminated. Rather than being carried away by

insights about the body, try to be dedicated to the spark of Divinity within you that is your higher consciousness."

So, to eradicate egoism and selfishness, let us try to remember to preface all our activities with "You and You alone, Lord, act through me." In that way we can gradually avoid slipping back into the old selfish habit of identifying with the ego, and can thus be free to act from the God willing each of us.

—*Phyllis Krystal, Pacific Palisades, California*

"God is in Action amongst Us"

The thrilling assertion that, "in a world in which all sorts of dark forces are rampaging about," the advent of Bhagavan Sathya Sai Baba has offered "the supreme hope that God is in action, amongst us, and there is the possibility of redemption through the power of love," was made by Sir George Trevelyan, Founder President of the Wrekin Trust, addressing a meeting in Westminster Central Hall, London, on June 29.

The meeting had been organised by the Sathya Sai Baba U.K. Council to celebrate Bhagavan Baba's Sixtieth birthday and observe Guru Poornima. Devotees from Sai Centres all over U.K. were present.

Lucas Ralli, President of the U.K. Council, welcomed the devotees. Dr. Owen Cole, a lay preacher in the Church of England, spoke on "Unity and Divinity in the world Religions." A Bal Vikas group presented a musical drama on the life of Mother Theresa.

Sir George Trevelyan, recipient of the alternate Nobel Prize for his work in the field of adult education, received a standing ovation when he concluded his brilliant and inspiring address on "Redemption through the power of Love."

Prof. Hasan Askari, of the Faculty of Comparative Religions at the University of Amsterdam, spoke on "Religions as Inter-Religions". He urged the need to go beyond the limits of rigidly structured religions, as "every Master is one with all Masters and all knowledge is One."

Ron Laing described Sir George Trevelyan's address as "one of the greatest orations of our time" and "in due course Sir George's words would become historic." We give here excerpts from Sir George's address:

Entering a New Age

We are looking at the most extraordinary phenomenon in our time. Here we live in a world in which a great many people are greatly disturbed and even in despair, when all sorts of dark forces are rampaging about, and doing damage and harming and creating fear. And within this comes the supreme hope in our age of turmoil, a tremendous realisation that God is in action, amongst us, and there is the possibility of redemption through the power of love.

Listen to his (Baba's) words: "I am with you always. Your heart is my home. The world is my mansion. Even those who deny me are mine. Call me by any name, I shall respond. Picture me in any form, I shall present myself before you. Do not slander or injure anyone; you are slandering me who is in him."

Just look at that claim! This is a tremendous thought. The implications of this are so enormous. Either that claim is so much arrogance and nonsense, or it is true. And we know that it is true. In this age of ours we are breaking through into the vision of wholeness. This is the notable thing about our age. Out of a period of materialism, of separation, of apartness, of a sense that we are all separated individuals in a world made up of a mass of separate things, in a world essentially dead, in which life has appeared as by accident, in our time comes this turnabout in consciousness, in realisation of the vision of wholeness. It is virtually a recovery of what is called the Ancient Wisdom. It was known in the great mystery temples of old that the universe is mind, not matter, not mechanism, but a great ocean of thought poured out from the Creator; that the whole of apparently empty space is filled with this vast ocean of Being. The whole is life, in a sense it is an ocean of life, an ocean of living ideas which are the thoughts of God, which are in fact beings, and which are able to embody themselves in form.

Humanity—one organism

It needs an effort of imagination on our part to grasp the implications that this earth on which we tread is a living creature, a living organism, with its own breathing, bloodstream, sensitivity and intelligence; and furthermore, we human beings are not just separated, isolated people, as we feel. Here is the step in imagination, to grasp that humanity is itself one organism. The intellect, the senses, don't show us this, it is the intuition and imagination that can grasp this thought. Get hold of that—that humanity is one living organism and every one of us is a cell of that organism. And furthermore, we are integrally part of the whole of nature. We are that point where nature has become self-conscious. The planet is able to look out consciously, and creatively, into the universe.

Now the two great principles of the Ancient Wisdom are first that the universe is Mind; the second is the Law of Correspondence—as above so below, as in the great, so in the very small, as in the macrocosm so in the microcosm; and the implication is that the human being, the microcosm, contains all the secrets of the universe. The Greeks carved above their temple at Delphi, 'Man know thyself, and thou shalt know the universe'—a remark which must mean nothing to rational materialism, but holds the stupendous truth that this organism, this ensouled body, is the temple into which a spiritual being can descend.

Science and mysticism

We grasp now, in reversing the materialistic world-view, that every human being, the essence, that which can say 'I', is a droplet of divinity. I stress again that this is, in the West, an absolute turnabout in the centre of our consciousness. The Orient has always known it. We, through three centuries, have forgotten it. Science and mysticism are now flowing once more together, for the most advanced scientific thinking is discovering that matter is energy, that the solidity of matter is a great illusion, and that everything is in movement and is alive! When everything is flowing into everything else we grasp the great Oneness of things. We are part of this immense Oneness.

We are that point of nature which has become conscious. The real 'we' is not this body which, I repeat, is the temple that enables a divine being to operate in the heavy density of the physical world. If we are each a droplet of God, the droplet is axiomatically immortal. It always was and it always will be. As the Bhagavad Gita says:

Never the spirit was born,
The spirit shall cease to be never.
Never was time it was not,
End and beginning are dreams.
Birthless and deathless and changeless
Remaineth the spirit forever;
Death hath not touched it at all,
Dead though the house of it seems.

In our Death-ridden culture, when ninety percent of every news on television or radio is about death, murder, disaster of some sort or another, we are discovering the stupendous truth that the part of a man or woman that matters, the 'I', is a deathless droplet of divinity. It cannot die. It can be released from the body to return to source. But it is immortal. This is the most important thought that we can inject into our culture.

The advent of Baba

And here comes the wonderful phenomenon of the appearance of Divinity, of God, in manifestation in our midst. One who can say to us, 'the universe is the body of God. All creation is the vesture of God. Love God in every creature. Love God and you will see God in every creature.'

What we have to do is to activate the powers of imagination and intuition which have gone dormant, in most of us. In the West here, through three centuries of materialistic, intellectual, rational, scientific thinking, we have activated and developed what the scientists call the left hemisphere of the brain, the masculine, controlling, ordering power that enables us to build a great technology. And the price we have paid is the atrophying, the dying, the going dormant of the right hemisphere of the brain, the capacity to apprehend the living Oneness, to see beyond the limited senses, with the eye of the mind, into the one life present in every living form, to see again the world of nature spirits, and the angels, and to realise the presence of God in everything.

Now the majestic picture we are getting is that humanity is not an accident of chance natural selection, as our grandfathers here thought. We are one of the great purposes of the universe. This beautiful planet is the chosen point for a great experiment of God, that a part of creation should itself become creative.

"God made manifest"

There have been great human beings who have shown the potential humanity. But we are today doing honour to a being who is more than that, for if Sai Baba's claims are true, which I do not doubt, the implication is not that he is just a human being who is tapping the source of all knowledge, but that he IS all knowledge, a universal being that can manifest itself, reveal itself, in human form, in other words, he is God made manifest.

Listen to this: *'My power is immeasurable, my truth is inexplicable, unfathomable. I am beyond the reach of the most intensive enquiry and the most meticulous measurement. There is nothing I do not see, nowhere I do not know the way no problem I cannot solve. MY sufficiency is unconditional. I am the totality. All of it'.*

The claim is either fantastic and absurd arrogant, or it is God speaking and God present. We would not be here unless we felt it was the latter; that in our benighted and rather terrible age, when it looks as if the world is falling to bits, we are really seeing the presence of God in our midst. *'I have come to repair the ancient highway to God. I have not come on behalf of any sect, or creed or religion. I have come to light the lamp of love in the hearts of all humanity.'*

I've said that humanity is one organism. Now, when in our little microcosm here, cells decide not co work to the divine design and programme, but to go off on their own, you call it cancer. We are cells in the body of humanity, we are not separated. Every one of us here today is a cell in this, great body. How many of those cells are not following the divine programme, but are following the desires of the ego, greed, ambition, desire, striving for possession of property and power, filled with hate and rivalry and readiness to kill? In other words, the Earth is cancerous, for we are the Earth, we are the point where the Earth and nature has become conscious. We are the stewards of the planet, and through its the whole planet is going cancerous, and the disease looks as if it may be terminal.

The impetus to change

Humanity is beginning to wake up now. Everything points to the fact in these last years of the century the impetus comes to change, to take it reversal of consciousness, individual human cells orientating once more and rededicating themselves to the service of God.

The truth is this: an operation for the cleansing of the planet is taking place, and the form it is taking is the raising of the frequency rate which will lift any human beings who are capable of attuning to it, will lift them towards a higher consciousness, and will repel and will throw out those who are vibrating on another level. And they may well, in some way, be washed away, blown away, on to some other planetary level—not dead, for there is no death for the 'I' of man—but gathered on some lower planetary level, while those attuned will be capable of bringing to birth the New Age. This is the tremendous epoch in which we live. Listen again now: *'The calamity which has come upon mankind will be averted. A new Golden Age will recur. I shall not fail. It is not in the nature of Avatars to fail.'*

What a tremendous age we live in! You see, if the materialists and rationalists are right, the world is so bad, so mad, so wicked, and so ignorant, that nothing is going to stop disaster. Somebody is going to push the damned button, and we shall end with searing flame, if we are not washed out by tidal waves before or frozen out by a new Ice Age. That is the kind of world we live in.

"God in action"

But there is another factor, wholly ignored in our politics, our economics, even our ecology—God in action, the spiritual world. You see, if this planet is indeed a living creature,

then the intelligences of the Higher Worlds are not likely to tolerate the irritant of a sick and dying organ in the body of the solar system. Something has got to happen.

Do you honestly think that the Higher Intelligences of the universe are going to tolerate a planet destroying this wonderful web of life that has developed? They won't.

The stuff you see on television, sensational though it be, is only the news of degenerate man, caught by the forces of darkness. The real news is that the powers of Light are taking over, that this great force-field of Light is lifting the frequency rate in the whole of matter, and if once that force-field is established, whether around the aura of an individual, or round a group, or even across a country, it gives absolute protection. It is indeed the only protection.

And talking of nuclear war, be sure that no nuclear device will work in that force-field of Light. They have said that again and again; 'we have complete control. We can neutralise any nuclear device, instantly.' This was a wonderful thought. They just won't work!

But inevitably God must play, can we say, the game of brinkmanship. He won't really show his hand until the moment of great crisis. Remember this. If we come to the point of absolute crisis, that point where mankind always sends up the cry of despair, 'Oh God! Oh Christ! Oh Jesus!' that is the point when the thing will happen. When we attempt to go to war the reply will come from higher worlds and the weapons of destruction will melt in our hands. They won't work.

God's presence

We are living out this great saga, this vast drama-and we all have a part to play in it and this drama involves the actual entry of God into the scene. And He has entered. And He has manifested Himself as Sai Baba. 'The calamity which has come upon mankind will be averted.'

Just because the world situation is so grim, it is totally valid for us to take this superb picture-that God is on the march, and that God is present on Earth now as a power of Love, bringing redemption through the power of Love.

Note this now. We all have the power of apprehending an idea. We can seize an idea out of the ether. (Gosh! how wonderful! That would explain life!) Take such an idea and put it in your heart, and decide to live with it as if it were true. Try it out. These spiritual ideas are alive. They are beings. Angels are strands of the thought of God. They are the ideas, and you can seize on an idea and live with it, and if it is true, because it's alive, it will draw certainty to itself. If it is not, it will fade out of your consciousness. This is a real technique for exploring into imponderable invisible worlds, and it is the great adventure. We are living through this great adventure, the most wonderful period of a living saga, a drama in which the last act has now begun. And it is going to be dramatic indeed.

And we are the forerunners of the new vision, who realise the possibility and are prepared to act as if it were true, that God is in everything and that God is alive and with us on the world now. We can then work creatively with this power. This is the greatest honour we can do to Sai Baba on this day coming up to his birthday, that we really recognise that we can dedicate ourselves to working in these tremendous events at the end of the century.

I will end with a quatrain from one of our poets, James Elroy Flecker:

Awake! awake! the world is young
For all its weary years of thought.
The starkest fights must still be fought,
The most surprising songs be sung!

Let us in that senescing together!

On a Letter from Toronto

Our August Number contained a Note reminding readers of Swami's Assertion that His Grace is given direct, without utilising intermediaries or instruments. It warned readers against people parading boons or specially allotted powers. This Note has provoked letters from many who are unwilling to accept that Assertion.

For example, Michael Carreron writes about a couple at Toronto, Canada, Ken and Sandra. He writes that Swami (according to them) "has outlined a *special* mission for Ken and his wife, at a *special* Darshan at Prasanthi Nilayam in December, 1983" and that at Toronto, "He visits them in *person* and *in private*" and writes "answers to questions on letterheads from *Prasanthi Nilayam*." "Swami has authorised many to exorcise demons in His Name."

Cameron also surprises me when he writes, "I understand you were introduced to Ken by Bhagavan in Prasanthi during Christmas, 1983, and told of his past-future missions!" For, this story is an audacious fabrication, as I have not seen Ken even once so far. On the basis of this lie, Cameron resents my Note and requires me to make amends. I find that the letterheads to which Cameron refers are Xerox copies of those used for some years by the Old Boys' Association (Kingdom of Sathya Sai) of the Sathya Sai College, Whitefield.

The "Sanathana Sarathi" is devoted, since 1958, to the sacred task of spreading, from Prasanthi Nilayam, the Avatar's Message and keeping that Message bright and clear, before those who love It and live It.

—**N. KASTURI**

E.H.V. IN AUSTRALIA:

Head Start for Programme

Australia is the latest among countries outside India which have come forward to take up the programme of Education in Human Values in right earnest so as to give an ethical and spiritual orientation to the education of the young and inculcate in them right values.

The first meeting to launch the programme was held in the University of New South Wales, Sydney, on August 10. The Director of Education, Mr. Garry Spring, who delivered the keynote address, said: "The ethical goods can perhaps be summarised as Love, creativity and inquiry (in the sense of seeking the truth, not just asking questions). These qualities have been regarded as good by many different religions and philosophies. These are also the qualities which hold any society together.... All children have potentialities for good. They are alert and inquiring, interested in making, doing, discovering and ready to be friendly and co-operative. Children also have potentialities for bad activities. The work of the educator is to develop the good way of life. He or she provides the environment in which good activities can develop."

A week later, a seminar on E.H.V. was held at Brisbane on August 17, attended by delegates from all States of the Commonwealth. Mr. T. Sri Ramanathan, Coordinator for the Sai Organisations in Australia, explained that the seminar was a preparatory exercise for launching the E.H.V. programme in all the States. The participants will carry the message of E.H.V. to teachers, parents and others in their respective States and help to make education in basic human values an integral part of the educational process.

Mr. Ramanathan announced that to assist in the implementation of the E.H.V. programme and to organise other Sai Seva activities in Australia, a Trust called The Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation Australia, was being set up, with the blessings of Bhagavan Baba. He hoped that the Trust would help to promote unity among people of all races and faiths in the country.

Mr. Ramanathan concluded: "The Sathya Sai Movement of Australia must organise goodness by all its resources particularly by its Education in Human Values programme. Australia is a multi-cultural society with people of many heritages and cultural backgrounds. The programme if effectively introduced would make Australia a cohesive society with people of wide range of religious beliefs living together, working together, with a vision of a Great Australia where its people have found the good life, a satisfying life, where Truth, Love, Justice, Faith—so clearly propounded by Swami—will make every Australian strong and warm with qualities of compassion and competency to become the harbingers of the new Age of the spirit as foreshadowed by Swami."

SAI MISSION ON THE MARCH:

Historic World Meet

Activities on an incredible scale are keeping thousands busy within the Prasanthi Nilayam Complex and in the vast area around it, in preparation for the Fourth World Conference of Sathya Sai Organisations and the Sixtieth Birthday Celebrations of Bhagavan Baba to be held from November 16 to November 24th.

Compared to the Third World Conference, held in November 1980, the Fourth Conference will bring together far larger numbers of delegates and devotees from more countries and regions of the world. It will herald a new chapter in the history of man for, the global mission of Sai will

raise humanity to a higher level of spiritual consciousness, in which Unity is achieved by the recognition of Divinity.

The Conference will be inaugurated by Bhagavan Baba on the 17th November in the Poornachandra Auditorium, which is being enlarged to accommodate the vast concourse of delegates.

But, apart from this inaugural function, almost all other meetings and cultural and other programmes during the festival week will be held in the spacious Hill View Stadium, being got ready for the participation by lakhs of people. From an imposing dais, named Santhi Vedika, erected at the southern end of the Stadium, Bhagavan will give darshan to the vast gathering and deliver His divine message. The Santhi Vedika has been designed as a spiritually inspiring edifice, with the multi-religious symbol of the Sai Organisation figuring on the facade, and Kalasams on the top in consonance with the ideals of temple architecture. The dais will be the stage on which many musical concerts and cultural programmes will be presented during the festival. Multi-tiered galleries for seating people have been erected along the hill slope and on the sides of the stadium.

On the 17th, after the Inaugural address, Bhagavan will release a large number of new books and other publications offered in various languages by units of the Organisation and devotees from far and near. The book of "Homage" from the "Sanathana Sarathi" will also be placed in the divine hands.

"Integration of world community"

The World Council has chosen, for consideration by the Fourth World Conference, the theme, "Integration of the World Community." Besides keynote Addresses on this theme by distinguished guest speakers, there will be discussions among delegates on different aspects of the problem of World Unity at their meetings on November 18, 19 and 20.

Bhagavan will be adored by the delegates on 19th November at a Dedication Meet at the Hill View Stadium. Bhagavan addresses the Valedictory Session of the Conference on 21st November, for which delegates will move in procession from the Prasanthi Mandir to the Hill View Stadium.

During the seven days of the Birthday Festival there will be bhajans in the morning or the evening at the Hill View Stadium. Cultural programmes will be presented by Samitis from each State in rotation each evening.

As the expression of their devotion to Bhagavan, teams of doctors from America, Britain and India will hold medical camps in the "adopted" villages in Sathya Sai Taluk for three days from November 14 to 16.

The annual Rathotsavam festival, when the idols of the deities in Puttaparthi are taken in procession, will be celebrated on November 18th. Bhagavan will inaugurate the festival by lending His divine hands in drawing the Chariot carrying the idols from Prasanthi Mandir.

As part of the Birthday Festival, grihadanam and godanam (gifts of houses and milch cows for the poor) are arranged. In addition there will be mass feeding (Narayana Seva) when clothes will be given to thousands.

Fourth convocation

On November 22, the Fourth Convocation of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning will be held in the afternoon. It will be a unique event in the annals of higher education. The Convocation will be held in the expansive Stadium with hundreds of thousands watching the solemn ceremony of young men and women receiving their degrees at the hands of the Divine Chancellor and taking the oath to live up to the ideals of the Sai Institute.

Earlier in the day, Bhagavan will declare open the new Sathya Sai Space Theatre which is nearing completion on the grounds south of the Sathya Sai Institute Library.

November 23 will be the day of days. Bhagavan's Sixtieth Birthday will be a joyous festival for the lakhs of devotees who will gather in the Hill View Stadium to fill their eyes with the Divine Form and listen to Bhagavan's birthday message and receive His blessings. As their homage to Bhagavan on His birthday, students of the Sathya Sai Institute will present a music programme in the evening when Bhagavan gives all His benedictory blessings from the Jhoola on the Santhi Vedika.

Announcements

1. Subscribers will be glad to know that the Homage of 'Sanathana Sarathi' to the Inspirer, Instructor and Indweller, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba will be offered at the Lotus Feet on His Sixtieth Birthday (23rd November 1985). It will be a compilation of valuable votive Contributions. The Book will be released with Divine Blessings during the Birthday Festival and placed for sale with the Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust, at Prasanthi Nilayam.

2. Subscribers are informed that, since the Birthday Festival will be celebrated for nearly two weeks in November, the 'Sanathana Sarathi' for both November and December will be mailed to them, before Christmas Day as a combined bumper issue, including accounts of events and functions during the Festival.

—Editor

"Make the First Step"

How often we hear people say: "Sai Baba is not calling me." Pondering over this excuse people use for not living the way as shown by Sri Sathya Sai Baba, I wrote down the following message which came to me:

Sai Baba is always calling you, only you have to be ready to listen; you have to be willing to be called. You should wish that you should be called. Your pride must go before God. After all who are you? —A tiny little microscopic dust particle in the universe!

He stands outside the door—waiting to be invited in, but you do not even know that He is there—and after knowing it you must open the door to your heart—then you will hear His call and come to the door—the rest He will do!

There is no need to be afraid. He does not demand anything. He is all Love. A Love that is omnipotent, all-embracing, sweet and soft!

God does not recognize the human personality. He sees only the soul which is His divine spark. In this respect you are one with Him, part of Him, in tune with Him. The individual ego stands between Him and His spark and that (ego) exists only in the mind of the individual. The ego also feels that it should not take the first step but should "be called"; it wants to be recognized as "special". This ego which says, "I am the body" has to die! Only then is life in God possible! It clings to transient and momentary situations. It is short-sighted and short-lived—a dream which can end any moment. What is real and permanent is your relationship with your creator. To realize this, your soul has embodied itself. To reach and be one with Him your soul has donned this body. To ignore this purpose, is wasting this lifetime.

Baba has come to coax us into the mood to go this way. He has embodied Himself into this limited human vesture to lead us away from the dream of life in matter.

Sai Baba is not another religious founder in search of devotees. He is full and complete in Himself, but we need Him! Without Him we are like the 'Children of Israel in the desert'—lost, hungry and frustrated—dancing around the "Golden Calf" of material beliefs. He alone knows the way and to save ourselves we must follow the given direction. He is persuading us to give up our material clings and turn to Him (to life in Spirit where there is no disharmony, no limitation, sin, disease or death). He can only say, "Come, I help you get there." But we must start going the way. We must make the first step!

To benefit from a fan, we have to go near the fan. In Sai Baba's own words: "Come and experience! It is only when the coal is in contact with the live-ember that it itself can become live-ember."

—A devotee, *Prasanthi Nilayam*

AMRITA DHARA

Sabari's Sadhana

Sabari had a very tender compassionate heart. How she came to Matanga Rishi and stayed at his hermitage is a very interesting story. Her marriage was arranged by her parents, and as was the custom among the Adivasis a goat was to be offered to the tribal Goddess, on the night previous to the ceremony, in order to win the Grace for the couple. When Sabari came to know

about this slaughter, she wept, and fell at the feet of her parents, praying them to save the goat. She asked, "How can our married life be happy, when the dying bleat of this goat is the prologue?" But, the father pushed her aside and proceeded with the cruel rite. That night, Sabari stole out of that den of torture, and hid herself in the depths of the jungle that was not far off.

When day dawned, her parents as well as the groom's party were plunged in grief and anxiety; they combed the area, even where she was lying low amidst the thick bushes, and they went back, saying among themselves, "She could not have gone to the hermitage, for no woman would be given asylum there." She heard these words and so, she concluded that the hermitage was the safest place for her. She felt that some monk will take pity on her, and not send her back. Matanga espied her and gave her permission to be in his habitation. He told her that God in the form of Sri Rama was coming to the hermitage some day, since he had been exiled into the Forests for 14 years and He is eager to save the monks and seekers, doing Tapas in the forests, from the ravages of the demonic enemies of peace! Rama, he said, was proceeding from one region to another with His consort Sita and His brother, Lakshmana.

From that day Sabari had no other thought than that of Rama, no other desire than the desire to have the Darshan of Rama, the chance to touch His Feet and the opportunity to speak with Him. Her heart was saturated with the Ramarasa, the sweetness of the Rama principle. She had no other Japam or Dhyana or spiritual exercise. She spent her time preparing for the visit of Rama to the hermitage; just as she cleaned the paths, she cleaned her heart, too. Pebbles and thorns disappeared from both through her efforts. She walked through the undergrowth and removed overhanging creepers and briars, for she imagined Rama would not have combed His hair and it might get caught. She broke the lumps of earth, for she feared the tender soles of Sita will be hurt when she walks over them. She gathered fruits and tubers from the jungle trees and plants and kept them by every day, for no one knew when Rama will arrive! And, she took no risks. She tasted every fruit, whether it was bitter, sour or sweet, so that Rama could eat the best. She smoothed the surface of all stones that lay by the side of the tracks in the jungle for, she expected Rama, Lakshmana or Sita to sit upon any one of them when they got tired of walking. She hoped that one of them would rest awhile on one of the rocks she had polished with great care. Thus her heart became Rama-hridaya!

Sabari was so immersed in Rama that the ascetics lost all awareness of her sex; they allowed her to remain in the hermitage, after Matanga related to them the high level of her Sadhana. Matanga also left this body and gave away his hermitage to Sabari, saying, "You alone deserve to be here when Rama arrives!"

The Sadhana Sabari did to earn the bliss of serving Rama, you can do, when you serve Sai Rama in the poor. By this service, you realise the Self as Rama.

—Baba

By regulating your diet and avoiding certain bad habits, you can preserve health. Moderate food, and food of the Satwic type, will promote mental poise and also physical happiness. Mitha-ahara is always to be welcomed. Many people consume more than the necessary quantity or rich food and such have to practise moderation. So too, if you do not

smoke, you escape a number of illnesses that follow that Rajasic practice Any intoxicant or stimulant, because it disturbs nature's even trend, is harmful. Moderation in food, moderation in talk, and in desires and pursuits; contentment with what can be got by honest labour, eagerness to serve others and to impart joy to all—these are the most powerful of all the tonics and health—preservers known to the science of health, the Sanathana 'Ayurveda', the Veda of the full life.

—Baba

Sai Jagat Samachar

American Devotees' Meet

New York (U.S.A.) On September 6-8, approximately 300 devotees from New York, New England and the Mid-Atlantic states gathered at Camp Colang in the Pocono mountains of Pennsylvania. A separate area of the camp was set aside for the Bal Vikas camp which was conducted simultaneously. About forty children participated.

Since the week-end marked the traditional date of Krishna's birthday, a special bhajan was held from 10 p.m. to midnight on Saturday night. The rest of the weekend was devoted to talks by guest speakers, workshops, bhajans, a performance by the children and video.

Mr. C. Balasingham, a member of the World Council, spoke on "Krishna Reborn". In the course of his inspiring talk, Mr. Balasingham told the group that Swami has said that many of his devotees are reincarnations of the gopis who adored and played with the young Krishna in the past. Regional Director, Hal Honig, gave a moving address on devotion, and Nadine Clegern, editor of the E.H.V. Journal, talked about the progress of the Human Values programme throughout the world. Teacher-trainer Bea Flaig, reporting on the success of the pilot project in the borough of Queens in New York City, said that originally fifteen teachers were incorporating the E.H.V. programme into their classroom curriculum; there are now forty-five.

Robert Bozzani, Council Director and chairman of the Sathya Sai Society, also spoke on the Krishna theme saying that "we are all Arjunas." He spoke of his own spiritual struggles and emphasized Baba's teachings on love.

Mr. and Mrs. Art Clokey from California and Council Director Anne Sohani also spoke. Anne Sohani emphasized the practical nature of all Swami's familiar sayings.

Singapore: To commemorate the 60th year of Bhagavan Baba's advent, four Sai Centres acting in unison came together to form the Sri Sathya Sai Baba 60th Birthday Celebrations Committee, Singapore, and organised a series of spiritual, educational and service activities within the ambit of Unity of Faiths, since February 1985. The objective was to foster unity among Sai devotees as well as to spread the Divine Message to the society at large. Starting with the first centralised Bhajans held at National level on 9th February, the activities organised so far include: Sivarathri celebration on 17th February, a panel meeting on the life and teachings of Bhagavan Baba, attended among others by High Commissioners of India and Sri Lanka, Easwaramma Day on

May 5, in which over one hundred children from many Sai centres presented a colourful pageantry of drama and dance. Celebration of Vesak Day on 3rd June, celebration of Guru Purnima Day on 2nd July, a three-week-end Seva Dal Spiritual Training Programme from 29 June to 14 July attended by more than 100 Seva Dal members and aspirants. Observance of the International Seva-Dal Day on July 21 when some 20 volunteers attended the first-ever day-long conference on the 'Role of Volunteers in Welfare Services'; a forum on Education in Human Values held on 18 August. The first-ever BHAJAN WORKSHOP held on 1st September was attended by Bhajan singers, devotees and office-bearers from Sai Centres.

Service activities comprise regular visits to the Homes for the Aged and Sick and Retarded Children, Orphanages and Hospitals. Sai volunteers also visit Drug Rehabilitation centres every Sunday for counselling and spiritual uplift of the inmates, and have adopted needy families for monthly supply of food and other necessary items.

Windsor (Ontario, Canada)

A National Bal Vikas retreat for Sathya Sai Centres in Canada was held at "Camp Samac" Oshawa, Ontario from August 2 to 5. About 160 Bal Vikas Students from various Sai Centres attended the camp, apart from about 280 parents, teachers and guests.

The three-day programme included Bhajans, Lectures, plays by the children, study circle discussions by the children, games and sports and Sadhana Sessions.

Ranchi (Bihar): A three-day training programme for Education in Human Values was conducted in the Russian Hotel of the Heavy Engineering Corporation in August. The participants included 45 lady teachers, 52 headmasters and 47 officials belonging to public sector enterprises and the Government of Bihar. Dr. R. S. Mishra, who presided, emphasised the need to introduce Education in Human Values in all primary schools. Leading educationists and officials from the H.E.C. and other enterprises addressed the trainees. The programme was coordinated by Mr. P. K. Suri, Administrator for E.H.V in Bihar.

Bangalore (Karnataka State)

The Sathya Sai Trust of Karnataka state conducted an essay contest for High School and College students on August 31 with a view to promoting ethical, moral and spiritual ideals in our youth. Six subjects were selected for the Essay contest: 1. Science and spirituality 2. Spirituality in daily life, 3. What the Bhagavad-Gita means to me; 4. My idea of God; 5. The spiritual leader who influenced me most; and 6. Service to humanity is service to God.

The response was overwhelming. Out of 1250 students who registered their names through Institutions, 1000 Students actually participated in the Contest, about 700 from High Schools, 200 from Junior Colleges and 100 from Degree Colleges. Eighteen prizes were awarded. About 100 of them wrote about Science and Spirituality, 50 on spirituality in daily life, 150 on the influence of Bhagavad Gita, about 200 on their idea of God, 200 on the spiritual leader, who influenced them most and the largest number of about 300 on "Service to Humanity is service to God."

The trust arranged for the spot evaluation of all the answer scripts on 1st September by Seva Dal Workers and some teachers.

The Essay contest reaffirmed the faith of the Sathya Sai Trust in the creative ability of our youth and their sense of values.

Cash prizes ranging from Rs. 500 to Rs. 1000 were awarded to the winners. Shields were presented to the St. John's Indian High School, the Vijaya Junior College and the N.M. R.V. First Grade College for Women.

AVATAR VANI:

Significance of Ganesha Worship

*No one knows all that has to be known.
There is none who knows nothing of anything.
Many there are, knowing something of some things;
Sai alone knows everything of all things.*

The five-element body of man equipped with five senses has as its life-breath the five-lettered formula, enshrined in the Namaka section of the Yajur Veda,—"Namah Si-vaa-ya". It is a basic mantra which means "that which can save, when meditated upon." Every mantra has a seed-sound (bija akshara) which precedes it and provides it with additional potency. Sound emanated first through the will of God. So the bijakshara is fundamental for the mantra and its efficacy. The Akshara is sanctified by the Vedas or by the Tantra texts. The bijakshara for the five-lettered Namahsivaaya is the Vedic Sound, OM.

OM is how AU and M are jointly pronounced. Each of these letters is devoid of spiritual force but, together they arouse energising vibrations. 'Sivaaya' in the mantra means 'to Siva'. 'Siva' is that which confers good fortune, wealth, prosperity and happiness. Pundits have commented on this formula and explained it in various ways. They have interpreted 'Nit' as indicating Nandivahana, the God who has Nandi (the Bull) as Vaahana (vehicle). They take 'ma' as the pointer to another Name of Siva, Mandaaramaalin (wearing a garland of Mandaara flowers) and Si as Surya (the Sun which when it dawns on earth unfolds the Lotus of the Hearts of Brings) etc. Each one allows his imagination to lead him along.

But, the formula contains a more universal and abstract concept. It has to be pronounced always with OM. The namah (prostration) is for OM which is denoted as having the Siva attribute (being the source of peace, prosperity and success, of Mangalam in short). The process of worship is best described by Pothana in the Bhagavata he has rendered in Telugu.

Pothana speaks of "Chethulara Sivuni Puja" (worshipping Siva with the hands). By 'hand', he means, the 'five-fingered', representing the five-lettered mantra. Siva is the five-element-lord and

so He has all the power and wealth the five can yield to man who is himself a composite of the five!

The Vedas assert, "Atma Vai Putra naamaa asi" (Oneself is the person known as son). One repeats himself in the son. Ganesha is therefore Siva Himself, expressing certain aspects of Siva on certain occasions for certain purposes. Ganesha means the leader of groups. Ganapati too means the same.

The elephant symbol

The elephant-head of Ganesha is a symbol of intelligence, discrimination and wisdom. The elephant is ever alert and eminently conscious of its surroundings. Its memory is strong and deep. It treads through the thick forest imprinting huge footmarks on the track. One such print can subsume the marks left by scores of other animals, both wild and tame. It moves majestically through thick jungles; its very passage blazes trail for other animals to go through. It is a path-maker, helping others without being aware of it, because it is its nature. Ganesha guides the stars, the communities of men and their homes. He is Lord of Obstacles, causing them when needed and helping men to overcome them, when that boon will promote the well-being of the supplicant.

There is astronomical support also for the Ganesha festival, celebrated on the fourth day of the bright half of Bhadrapada month. A constellation with the appearance of the elephant-head becomes brightly visible on this very night.

Ganesha is the embodiment of intelligence (Buddhi) and achievement (Siddhi). He was approached by Sage Vyasa with a prayer to write down the Mahabharata, even as he composed the hundreds of thousands of its verses! Ganesha agreed immediately; He brooked no delay, even to secure a writing tool: He broke his sharp-pointed tusk and was ready to start!

Lessons for man

Ganesha can teach many a lesson to man. That is the reason for His being adored by people of all ages and professions. Take the problem of food. Thyagaraja invites Ganapati most endearingly, and delights in offering Him sweet Satwic items of food—coconut kernel, sweet fruits of various types, steam-cooked rolls and balls of modak etc. The elephant feeds on grass, sugar cane, bamboo-shoots, and twigs and leaves of the banyan tree. Devotees offer Ganesha, while worshipping, leaves, grass blades and flowers gathered from meadows and valleys. Ganesha, the Elephant-headed, is adored as the source of Love, Faith, Intelligence; Guidance and Grace.

Take into consideration another role assigned to Ganesha. When Siva is moved to supreme ecstasy and it is expressed as the Cosmic Dance of Nataraja, Ganesha, Master of Tune and Time, leads other Gods, marks time on the Mrdangam (drum). No wonder, the Gods are pleased when Puja is offered to Ganesha even before any of them is propitiated.

Man is bound by three tendencies. The first is the longing to possess (Kama). When that longing fails, anger (Krodha) raises its hood. When the desire is fulfilled and the thing is gained, the third tendency, greed (Lobha) overtakes him. If one's desire is beneficial, the Divine will

shower Grace. Ganesha has no desire, no anger, no greed. His Grace is available for all who seek good and godly goals. Look at the vehicle which He has chosen, the mouse! The mouse is a creature that is led, even to destruction, by Vasana (the smell of things). Men are all victims of Vasana (preferences and predilections stamped on our minds during past lives). Ganesha smothers and suppresses the Vasanas which misdirect man and create misfortune.

Since the mouse has been honoured so, it shares the worship offered to Ganesha. Association with Gods, as vehicles, ornaments, accessories or servants of Gods, endows objects, animals and men with specially sacred status. Elephants, Lions, Eagles, Snakes, Primates—all these and many more have been divinised thus.

This day is Ganesha festival Day. Since Ganesha leads when Gods are invoked, installed and adored, this Festival leads the long line of festivals for other forms of God—Navaratri, Deepavali, Sankranti, and Shivaratri. The duty this Day is to contemplate on the Universal and Eternal Truth embodied in Ganesha and worship Him with purity and faith, praying for the Grace which can prevent lapses and promote progress in all efforts to achieve the highest goal.

—Bhagavan's discourse on Ganesha Chaturthi day at Prasanthi Nilayam, 78-9-85

The Prayer and the Response

How the Lord responds to prayer was revealed to me in Riyadh (Saudi Arabia) while I was waiting for my Coronary bypass surgery in the Riyadh Armed Forces Hospital recently. It is all Baba's Grace that enabled the operation to be conducted and helped to bring me back to Hofuf where I work.

I was admitted in the Riyadh Armed Forces Hospital on 14th August for my Ischemic heart disease. After investigations, the specialist fixed the Coronary Bypass operation for August 31. He said if I did not get this operation done now, the next heart attack would be a massive one and the consequences would be serious.

So I consented to have the operation done and informed my wife, who was in India (Madras) at that time, and she came to Riyadh. I prayed to Bhagavan Baba to have the operation done safely.

Six days before the operation, on August 26, the Hospital authorities told me that my operation had been fixed on Saturday (31-8-85) (the operation was postponed to Sunday 1-9-85 later) and I must find ten persons to donate blood (10 units) by 28-8-85, otherwise the operation would have to be postponed till I got donors. I was nonplussed; I felt depressed and desperate.

Except for one friend I did not know any one in Riyadh. I was much worried how I could manage to get ten persons to donate blood for my operation. If the operation had to be postponed, what might happen to me if the next attack was a severe one?

I turned to Bhagavan. I prayed to HIM to help me get the blood donors and have the operation done in time. At that time, a Sri Lanka Tamilian, Mr. Sylvester by name, had undergone Coronary Bypass operation and was recovering in the same ward where I was. I saw many of his friends coming to see him. After praying to Baba, I went to Mr. Sylvester and told him about my predicament regarding blood donors for my operation.

I was praying to Baba every minute to help me in this affair. On the same day (26-8-85) in the evening some friends came to see Mr. Sylvester. Among them one person looked at me and said "Hello." Most probably Mr. Sylvester had told him that I was from Madras and going in for an operation. After some time he came, sat with me, enquired about me and told me that he is also from Madras. While talking, he asked me, "Doctor, please let me know if I can help you in any way. Do not hesitate." I was first hesitating to tell him to help me get ten donors of blood. How could I ask a person with whom I had a brief acquaintance to arrange for ten donors for my operation? Somehow, by Baba's Grace, I ventured to tell him about my problem. He said: "Doctor, you have told me about this.... NOW IT IS MY PROBLEM.... AND I WILL TRY TO ARRANGE THE DONORS. LEAVE THAT PROBLEM TO ME. DO NOT WORRY. IT IS MY RESPONSIBILITY." His name is Balakrishnan.

On 27-8-85, Mr. Balakrishnan phoned to me: "Doctor, tell me at what time and what place I have to bring these donors." After enquiry, I told him that they should be at the Blood Bank the next morning (Wednesday 28-8-85).

If this is not a response to my prayer, what else is it? The all-compassionate and loving God had sent this Mr. Balakrishnan like an angel and solved my Donors' problem. Not only this, some of my friends who came to see me from Hofuf, where I work, also donated blood when there was shortage of donors due to the rejection of two persons brought by 'Mr. Balakrishnan on account of their blood group.

Now I have come to Hofuf and am recuperating, fine, doing well by Bhagavan's Grace. This is a second life has granted me and I wish to serve at His Lotus Feet and pray to Him to guide me and make me always worthy of His Grace.

—Dr. Suryaprakasa Rao, Hofuf, Al Hasa (Saudi Arabia) 21-9-85

The Six Phases of Bhagavan Baba

Before Creation, in the unmanifested stage, He was known as 'Para-Brahma', without attributes and form. The whole cosmos was condensed at a single point, the entire universe being merged with Him (stage of Laya). When the desire for creation arose (Ekoham Bahusyaam), He became 'Brahma' - formless but with attributes, the three qualities 'Sat', 'Chit', and 'Ananda'. From this 'Avyakta' stage came the 'Mahat-Tatwa' and the three gunas—Satwa, Rajas and Tamas. With these three gunas and the five elements, He created all these names and forms, and then entered

into all the movable and immovable things as 'Antaryamin' (Sarvabhoothantaratma) —Isa Vaasyam Idam Sarvam—now He is known as God—Ishwara, the abode of all 'Aishwaryam'. He has now become Omniscient and Omnipresent. Now He has attributes and also form—the universe itself is His form—all names and forms are His only. We use these three terms 'Parabrahma', 'Brahma' and 'God' as synonyms, carrying the same meaning and significance, and when we say 'Aham Brahmasmi' (the Anubhava Vaakya), we mean merging with God—with our own Self or the Self of all.

When we worship Him as God, again there are two aspects—as Lord (or Prabhu) for getting prosperity (Aishwarya) in this world and as Vibhu, when we want His Grace (Vibhuti) for spiritual development and ultimately self-realisation. As Bhagavan Baba has pointed out, for this final attainment we should be prepared to get three zeros in our life, and yet remember Him and surrender to Him.

The fourth stage is known as 'Avatar'—whenever Dharma declines He comes down to resuscitate Dharma and bring Lokasamgraha. If the aim is just to carry out one duty or protect one single bhakta, He comes down assuming any form—that of a fish, or tortoise or boar or half-animal and half-man (Narasimha), or even in a short human form (Vamana), and disappears as soon as the purpose is accomplished. Whenever reestablishment of Dharma and Lokasamgraha are required he assumes 'Poorna Avatar' (like Sri Rama, Sri Krishna or Sathya Sai). In this role He lives in this world for a longer time, playing all leelas (chamatkars) to attract man, and culture him (Samskara) and make him fit for service (Paropakara or Manava Seva), and ultimately help him for Sakshatkara (liberation or Mukti).

When He takes Avatar as Man, He appears and behaves as man, mingling with people and rendering invaluable services to humanity. He leads a life which will be an example (or message) for all others to follow. It is in this fifth stage that we see Bhagavan in His beautiful human form, ever energetic and active, fully engaged in Manava-Seva so that Manava may be raised to the status of Madhava.

The first three aspects are almost incomprehensible to man, very difficult to understand, but possible to realise or experience through constant and strenuous efforts (Sadhana). The concept of Avatar (fourth stage) also is rather abstract, and only 'faith' can help us in understanding and appreciating this principle. It is nothing but the crystallisation of human prayers and yearning for a long time.

The fifth stage, in the human form, is the most difficult to comprehend, even though we are face to face with Him, and we may see Him, touch Him, or converse with Him. This is because of the incapability of our limited, conditioned consciousness (intellect) to rightly interpret and understand His words and actions. We are prone to disregard the inner significance of whatever He talks or does. He may show all 'chapalyas' when He moves among us and pretend to be an ordinary human being. The super-consciousness of the Super-Man, which is just like a diamond, cuts asunder all our imaginations and calculations. We forget the fact that He is the only Man who is born without any previous fruits of action (prarabdha), and the only one who could determine the place of His birth, the family in which to be born, who are to be His parents, etc., even before His actual 'coming down' to this world. Even before the birth of the Avatar (i.e. in

the stage when He lies in the womb of His Mother), He may show and exhibit the characteristics of 'Brahma', e.g., the 'Nada Brahma', as when the musical instruments of the Raju family began to make sounds even without human touch, while Easwaramma was carrying Him.

It is this incomprehensible and un-understandable human being that forms the sixth stage of His Existence (who is Existence Himself). In this form He gives us Divine spiritual discourses, compels us to do 'Service', and emphasises the various human values which have to be established in the life of the entire humanity.

When He speaks of 'Sathya' (Himself come as Sathyanarayana), He is Para-Brahma. When He preaches and puts into action Dharma, He is the controller of the 'cosmic dharma' (Rhythm) as 'Brahma' Himself. As God He tries to establish the third value 'Santhi', and the Avatarhood (fourth stage) is for spreading the light of Prema throughout the world (the fourth value). Now the 'Being' has come down as 'Becoming' and in His human form he encourages us to do service in the spirit of Ahimsa (non-violence), the fifth value. He often defines the term 'Hindu' as one who keeps himsa at a distance.

It is in the sixth phase of existence that He has added one more 'value' to be observed by man, and which we really cannot understand in its full significance and therefore find it difficult to practise. Let me call 'Ceiling on desires' as this sixth value, which is intended to help man to gradually realise all other values. It is only through reducing our desires we can adopt non-violence in our life, can develop love for others, maintain peace of mind, do rightful deeds and realise Truth ultimately. The entire universe itself has come out of Him simply because of the original desire—the Vaancha (Ekoham Bahusyaam). So ceiling on desires is the ultimate as well as foremost step we have to adopt in our life to merge with the Absolute Being, i.e., the Para-Brahma (with six faces), who is Himself the offspring of 'Siva' and 'Sakti' (Baba is also worshipped as Sivashaktiswarupa).

*Subrahmaniam Subrahmaniam
Shanmukhanatha Subrahmaniam
Subrahmaniam Subrahmaniam
Sai Natha Subrahmaniam!!*

—Prof. M. Krishnan Kutty Menon, Cochin

Unity is Divinity

At a divine discourse on India's Independence Day this year, Baba drove home to us the importance of Unity through a very simple and striking example. He asked how it was possible for England, a country so much smaller than India in population and land size, to conquer and rule India for so many years. The answer was simple—LACK OF UNITY on the part of the Indian people.

Baba has been trying to make us understand the deeper significance of Unity on the spiritual path for many years now, going so far as to say that **UNITY IS DIVINITY**: He also encourages this feeling of unity through emphasizing unity among groups who come to Prasanthi Nilayam, and speaking often of the Sai Family and the One caste, the Caste of Humanity. He speaks of love as the highway to God—Love in the form of service to humanity.

The word Yoga itself means to unite the individual soul with the Universal Spirit (Paramatman). The word religion comes from the Latin roots "re" (again) and "ligere" (to link) signifying the "Relinking" of the soul with God. But what is God but all of life, including humanity? Thus it seems that there must be two types of unity: Vertical unity with the higher aspects of one's Self and God, and horizontal unity with the people, nature and the world around us. It seems that the spiritual unity which is already a reality at the level of the one pure universal consciousness (Chit) must gradually be manifested in the lower vehicles of mental, emotional and physical bodies of humans and between all the various bodies which are simply manifestations of that one consciousness. This has been the goal of every religion and spiritual philosophy since the beginning of time. This will create the real heaven for man on earth, unity with his higher Self and with others.

There seem to be two basic forces operating in the universe, one is Involution of spirit into matter and thus into greater and greater separateness and involvement into matter. This involution into matter reaches its culmination in the development of the human Ego as the most evolved form of matter. This can be understood by comparing a two-metre bin full of separate cells to a man two metres tall. Let us say that a man has 35 billion cells (I have no idea how many he has) and that the bin also has 35 billion separate cells. There are the same number of cells, but do they have the same abilities in the physical world. Can the bin of cells, walk, dance, sing, build houses, create in various ways, think, philosophize, pray, love or discriminate? What is the difference? In man there is a unity between the cells. They are functioning together for a common goal: the health and happiness of the whole being. The cells are guided by 'he' sub-conscious of the man in each of their functions. They do not live for themselves as the 35 billion cells in the bin do. They live for the good of the whole and thus the whole, man's sub-conscious, looks after them. Each cell is provided with its needs through the work of the other cells, but all cells are guided in their function; by the man. There is unity and thus there is health, strength and happiness for the man and for the cells. If some of the cells should cease to cooperate with the organism as a whole then they would constitute a sickness in the organism such as cancer or leukemia. When a man's mental, emotional and physical forces are not united, then a small group of foreign cells can easily invade and conquer his body as the English did to the Indians.

Involution has taken place, and man's body and ego are exquisite tools for the expression of this power of the spirit in the physical world. Now the process of *evolution* must be tended to so that spirit can evolve out of matter again. In order for this to happen, the ego must undergo the same process the cells did during their development into human body. The ego must be united into the service of the body of humanity in the same way that the cells of the body, some point in their evolution had to give up functioning for themselves and start to function together with other cells for the sake of the large organism.

We find ourselves now in a time and place where the Incarnation of this universal Consciousness which is wanting to manifest itself now as the one body of humanity is now telling us, "Dear cells of my own body, please come together and cooperate in your functioning. Work together for the good of the whole body. And in that way I can provide for all of your needs as cells of my own body."

A recent scientific experiment may help us understand this. Kirlian photographs (which show the aura or energy field—Pranamaya Kosa) were taken of fertilized eggs on every day of their development. After some days the energy field of the embryo of the chicken-to-be appeared clearly on the photos. But when the egg was cracked open to see what was inside, there was no physical embryo yet formed. From this we could infer that the mental and energy bodies of the chicken form first and are present before the eventual development of and taking position of the various cells in the physical embryo. This would be true with Yogic teaching. We might imagine a similar situation in terms of the body of humanity. The Causal and Subtle bodies are there. They represent a united functioning between all beings on earth. The Sankalpa for the creation of that body has taken the form of Sai Baba who represents that universal Consciousness on the physical level, in order to encourage us and quicken and facilitate the formation of the body of God as United Humanity. But the cells have not yet taken their positions and started functioning in harmony with the universal consciousness. Rather there seems to be a great resistance on the part of most of us towards this process of giving up our personal interests and serving the whole with full faith that we will be completely taken care of. This promise of support and protection from God has been promised by Krishna, Christ and today by Sai Baba, but we don't yet believe it; we cannot take the leap.

How might we attempt to move towards greater unity and get in line with the functioning of the universal consciousness and the body of humanity? Baba has given us much advice on this subject. A few aspects of His advice follow.

First we must realize that we will gain on all levels. There can be no harmony on any level of our existence without unity. All levels, including the economic, social, national, religious, cultural and even the production of various modern comforts, depend on the cooperation of various members of society. When this cooperation is not there, we will all suffer physically, emotionally and mentally. This unity is PRACTICAL for all of us. We will all have more and no one will have less health, happiness or harmony.

Vertical unity

Vertical harmony with higher levels of our own being and ultimately with God can be achieved through the paths of Jnana and Raja Yoga. Through wisdom and self-control, we can bring the lower vehicles of the mind, energy and body into harmony with the higher will and ultimate truths. Through Raja Yoga one learns to discipline the senses, body, behaviour and thoughts so that they all serve one goal; the realization of the one universal consciousness behind all creation and the mergence with that consciousness. Thus, universalization and unity take place through disciplines such as fasting, observance of non-violence and various techniques for purifying the mind.

In Jnana Yoga, we continually bring the Truth to our mind in every situation, wherever we may be, whatever we may be doing. The truth is that there is ONLY ONE BEING, only one consciousness. Whatever we see including our own bodies and thoughts are simply manifestations of that one consciousness. We are all cells in that consciousness (Chit) but we have not yet tuned ourselves to it consciously. And how can we tune to the One consciousness consciously? Swami says, through the Conscience. The Conscience, He says, is the voice of our inner self which guides the functioning of all our cells simultaneously. When we can liberate that tiny voice of the Conscience from under the hundreds of loud voices of desires, attachments, fears, programming and expectations, then we will be attuned to the One Being and we will serve it and will be served by it. "Take one step towards Me, and I will take ten towards you."

Through these two Yogas, (Raja and Jnana) there is created the proper hierarchy between the spirit, soul, ego and body. Unity also requires the proper hierarchy or system of control. We cannot have our stomach making decisions or our brain digesting food. Nor can the mind serve the desires of the body or the soul be guided by the mind. Through gradual self-control, wisdom and the corresponding detachment and discrimination, the body learns to serve the mind and the mind the soul, and they move in union towards oneness with God. Energies are not lost in other directions, or simply for the fulfillment of the ego desires.

Gradually there will come the realization that we are not cells at all, but that we are in truth the one consciousness which is existing in all the cells and in which all the cells (beings) are existing. That each of us is, in truth, the One Being Consciousness who is appearing as all of these bodies.

This vertical unity is also achieved through careful attention to perfect consistency between the conscience, thought, word and deed. Otherwise, there cannot be unity with the being. Certain portions will be in conflict with others. There will be no peace, and of course, no unity with others.

Horizontal unity

Horizontal Unity is promoted by Bhakti and Karma Yoga. Through Love of the One Being who is in all beings, we learn to accept and Love all beings in our lives. This love for them allows us to cooperate with them, help them, serve them and to want them to be happy, healthy and successful in life. We will feel them as our family members and will help all in a spirit of love, cooperation, harmony and unity. Our love will be expressed towards that One Being in the form of service to all the cells which make up Its body. Each will do his dharma offering what it can to the whole, realizing that in truth he is serving himself in the end. If the cells in the body do not serve each other, then they will all remain unprovided for, unprotected, stranded without food, oxygen and surrounded by their own waste products. Exactly this has happened to mankind. Because each person is living for himself and there is no cooperation or love or unity, each is much more vulnerable, and it is much more difficult for him to provide for his own needs.

Thus through Love and service to all the other cells in our body of humanity, this universal body will start to take form, and in truth we will all have what we need to live in health and

happiness. There will be an atmosphere conducive to peace and spiritual growth. All of our needs will be fulfilled.

What we need now are BRAVE CELLS who are ready to believe God's message, that He will care for us if we just give up our self-interest and love and serve all beings. We need beings who can believe that in truth we are the consciousness of the body of humanity (Paramatman) and not the individual cells. Thus, it is obviously in our interest to promote the development of our *real* body, which is the body of humanity and not our physical body. Sri Sathya Sai Baba has indicated that He experiences us all as cells in his Being and Himself as the Consciousness in our beings. We too must start identifying with that one consciousness and take that brave step, and give up our self-interestedness and feelings of separateness and fear.

We, who have had His blessings, heard His words, experienced His love and felt His bliss, are in a better position than others to take this step. Let us give up living for our houses, our cars, our living rooms, our possessions. Let us give up living for our limited families only and start identifying ourselves with the larger family of all beings. Let us all try to open our hearts towards all beings and serve in every way we can. Let us give up T.V., movies, magazines, leisure time, vacations. Does He take vacations? Does He take time off from His mission? Each of us can move gradually towards, this self-sacrifice. No one will lose his talents, abilities, his unique qualities. A body needs all kinds of cells in order to function harmoniously. Our abilities and joy of creation and production will be enhanced. They will be directed towards the benefit of the whole, which includes ourself.

We can pray to Him (using any Name which suits us) to help us see Him in every being we meet, to love all beings at all times and to become instruments of His love, wisdom and peace here on the earth. Thus we will gradually become transformers of spiritual energy into words and actions which will facilitate the manifestation of this spiritual one-ness onto the physical plane.

Oh God help us to surrender everything up to you and to become merged into you.

—*R.N., Prasanthi Nilayam*

"Watch Your Thoughts"

Thoughts come and go. This is a continuous process which goes on in every human mind from birth to death. No gap is left in between two thoughts. Very seldom do we wait and examine our own thoughts. Thinking about our own thoughts really gives us an opportunity to look to our own image in our own mind. We are accustomed to look at our physical form in a mirror but we neglect to see the inner personality in our own mind. This is so because we are ashamed to examine the dark side of our own thoughts. I honestly feel that this is exactly where we need the divine guidance of Bhagavan Baba.

I first met Bhagavan Baba at Brindavan, Bangalore, on May 27, 1963. I personally consider this day as the most precious day of my life. It is Baba who first threw light on the weak side of

my mind and gave me valuable instructions to improve the thoughts which are responsible for building up one's career. Baba said that the time spent in examining our own thoughts does not mean wasting a variable part of our precious life, but it really means we are testing our mind for our own good. He further advised me not to commit any mistake in this regard; the word 'MISTAKE' consists of two words, viz. 'MIS' (miss) and 'TAKE'. He continued His advice and smilingly said that wherever and whenever we "miss" something, we necessarily have to "take" the consequence thereof. What a fine lesson for us human beings who generally never think about our thoughts.

The interview on that day which lasted about an hour gave me a new look towards my personal life. I became conscious of the purpose of human life and attempted to do every little action with great care remembering Baba from moment to moment. I really find both pleasure and peace when I mentally get His Divine association. All cannot get Baba's physical presence all through, but everybody can ensure His Omnipresence in one's own heart by always keeping it unsullied and pure. His image is wiped out from there only when unworthy thoughts peep therein. In this respect it is my humble experience that when the mind takes refuge in the void between two thoughts, the heavenly joy that I get can never be found anywhere. For this valuable experience, one should be able to see or locate where one thought ends and the other is yet to begin. It is exactly like resting the mind in between the recital of two Omkars.

Finally, I am of the opinion that the treasury of noble thoughts that one possesses is more precious than any other treasure in the world. One should be ever vigilant to allow only noble thoughts in the mind, strictly refusing entry to all bad thoughts. When one carries out this hard and difficult task, one can adhere to the following Advice which Bhagavan Baba gives in His discourses and personal interviews very often:

Be Good, Do Good and See Good. This is the way to God.

—*Shyam Juwale, Bombay*

Where God Dwells

*She dressed well and was not kind
He worked with Rajasic thoughts in his mind*

*They were a couple to see and behold
With new cars, houses and jewels of gold*

*Once a week to Church they would go
And when they arrived, they would make quite a show*

*Of giving money, for all to see
Oh, they thought, "people should be more like we"*

*And when Monday arrived, dawn of a new day,
They forgot about God, enjoying the earthly play*

*A kindly beggar, a friend in need,
They never looked, steeped too deeply in greed*

*To the world they appeared important and great
She in her jewels with her unsmiling mate*

*They knew the right people and joined the best club
Never thinking of their God with love*

*And as happens to all mankind
Their Atma lived and their bodies were left behind*

*They found themselves in front of God's temple
They thought His home was far too simple*

*And presently a Perfect Voice said to each:
"How did you live?" "Did you practise what you preached?"*

*Stunned, the man said in a voice fit to save:
"We went to Church every Sunday and gave"*

*"Many jewels and fine things my wife does possess
And can you not see how we dress?"*

*The Perfect Voice spoke out once more:
"What about the hungry beggar you left at your door
And those less fortunate you thought were a bore?"*

*"Did you extend your hand to serve another?
Did you treat anyone as if he were your brother?"*

*The Voice continued in a beautiful tone:
"You served only self and self alone"*

*"Your jewels and your money mean nothing to me
It is purity of heart I want to see"*

*Then the hungry beggar that had stood by their door
Appeared beside them on God's sacred, floor.*

*The beggar said to the Majestic Voice:
"Please, blame me, for I had no choice."*

*"It was I, not them, for I was poor Please;
it was me, your grace I implore."*

*The clouds clapped their hands and the thunder roared above
And the beggar knew peace, for he had been saved*

*In the hands of God he gently slept
While the man and his wife silently wept*

*God cares not for riches nor for fame
And whom else but "self" can we honestly blame?*

*The interior man is where God will dwell
For our thoughts bring us to heaven or hell*

*"Your jewels and your money mean nothing to me"
Echoed His voice, "I seek Purity."*

—Joy Ziegler

Why Elude Me, Lord?

Why elude me, my Lord?
I seek every bush and tree,
Cave and rock for Thee:
I frequent every temple and church,
Hill and dale, for Thee;

Why elude me, my Lord?
I visited many a sacred place
And plunged in holy rivers;
Fasted and prayed for Thee;
Why elude me, my Lord?

Ah! I know, I know,
You bide in the human heart,
Replete with love and kindness;
In the bosom of innocence
You bide in baby's smiles
Arid lover's glances,
In the young maiden's grace
And the lisp of children.

Ah! You bide in the red lotus of pain,
And in the poor man's hovel,
In the brow of effort
And the heart of sacrifice;
I see Thee in the mist of glistening tears
And the ripples of innocent laughter;
In the blasted hopes and ruined lives,
In the meek and the mild and the dumb,

In the oppressed and the down-trodden.

Ah! I hear you in the cry
of the deserted and the broken hearted;
I trace you in the agony of life,
In the heart of sorrow and the centre of creation;
Ah, my Lord, how you revel
In the World's Carnival of Pain!

—*Venkata. Rao Nemani, Katkin*

FESTIVAL FEATURES:

"A Mind-blowing Miracle"

For the lakhs of devotees who came from all parts of India and all the continents, Bhagavan's Sixtieth Birthday Festival was an unforgettable experience and the greatest event in their lives. Two devotees, who came literally from two ends of the earth—one from Sydney in Australia and the other from California (in U.S.A.)—have given their impressions of the Festival and its impact on the vast multitudes who came to Prasanthi Nilayam for receiving the blessings of Bhagavan.

Dr. S. Pavan, who came from Sydney, writes:

The Prasanthi Festival and the World Conference, in conjunction with the Lord's 60th Birthday, was something out of this world. Tens of thousands slept in the open wherever they could find space although a cyclone with heavy rainfall had been predicted by meteorologists. The heavy clouds preceding the festivities, merely provided shelter from the sun for the lakhs of people gathered in the open for the function. Who else could have had this command over the weather-gods?

On His birthday, Bhagavan, in His most affirming discourse, summed up His teachings and the purpose of His mission. He declared: "Jana seva binaa sukha santhi nahi." (There can be no peace and happiness without mutual love and service). Although He had said this all along, Bhagavan was most emphatic on this point of selfless seva in all His discourses.

No place in the world could cater free for the multitudes, in such variety and profusion, breakfast, lunch and dinner for full eight days -only a mind-blowing miracle:

Change of heart

The positive energies emanating from the Valley of Supreme Peace had a global impact. For the hundreds and thousands who had experienced it, a change of heart has been gifted so that they may render selfless service to their fellowmen as the most effective Sadhana. They have learnt that Charity, Purity, Unity and Divinity are the four steps for their own Liberation.

"A Meeting of Souls"

Mrs. Barbara Bozzani writes:

For months my husband and I had been anticipating leaving our native United States for the Fourth World Conference of Sri Sathya Sai Organisations at Prasanthi Nilayam. The conference had as its theme "Integration of the World Community." It was to be a truly international event of great magnitude, a spiritual meeting of souls united in their love for Bhagavan.

We left our home in California early so we could be adjusted to the time change, and feel rested and energized for the conference and birthday celebration. Upon arriving we were amazed at the new buildings and all the physical changes that had taken place in the ashram since our last visit.

As for me, the excitement of the conference mounted as time drew near. Swami gave a stirring inaugural address. He told us: "Sanctify your life by doing pure and noble seva."

My first day, sitting in the committee meeting on Organisation of Sai Centre and Service in the U.S., I couldn't help but feel a slight pang of disappointment. The suggestions that were given us were items that we had gone over many times before. I couldn't help thinking that we were repeating old themes and reminding ourselves of past mistakes. As the discussion drew to a close I could see a useful pattern emerge. Some of the axioms for running a Sathya Sai Seva Centre and giving service *had* to be repeated for the sake of those who might have forgotten or gone astray. Of course, new devotees *needed* to voice their opinions about organisational concepts, even if they were repetitious.

For me, the whole process was a wearing away of more layers of ego. After 12 years I still didn't know everything there was to know about the procedure for operating a centre or doing selfless service. Also it was most important to practise patience with those who have recently come into the Avatar's sphere of influence. Swami often tells us, "The only strength man needs is patience." A valuable lesson to keep in mind!

"Overwhelming!"

Being curious by nature, I couldn't help but ask several Sai brothers and sisters their reaction to the unique conference...

When I asked Audry Staton from St. Louis, Missouri, her impression, she said, "wonderful". It was her second trip to Prasanthi Nilayam. She works with the Bal Vikas children back home, and found that the review of the procedure for Sathya Sai Education in Human Values would be very helpful in teaching young children. She emphasised that EHV can easily be incorporated in the Bal Vikas curriculum. The training had given Audry the necessary information for teaching a lesson in love, right action or any subject, spiritual or secular.

In his disarming southern accent, Cosby Powell from Atlanta, Georgia, said, "I'm honoured to be here. By divine intervention everything is provided and arranged."

Denise Dake, an EHV teacher from the State of Oregon, answered my question,, "The conference was OVERWHELMING!" "The whole process was a kind of cleansing of one's negative emotions." She pointed out that "some of the delegates who attended don't get together in the U.S., but they had travelled half-way around the globe to this chance meeting." The invitation for such unlikely circumstances is, of course, the Avatar.

"A monumental step"

A psychologist from New York City, Dr. Al Levi, felt that the World Conference was "a monumental step in the spiritual evolution of humanity, a turning point, an important transitional stage."

Though the opinions were as diverse as the people who presented them, there was one theme that was evident. Each delegate expressed, in different ways, the concept set down by Baba in

the inaugural address when He said; "Coming, as you have done, from great distance, undergoing untold suffering and troubles on the way, having come thus to partake of these proceedings, it is My hope that you will make the best use of your stay every minute, and having listened to all the deliberations, you shall be inspired and encouraged to plunge into your service activities with greater dedication, and greater regard and vitality, this is My hope."

WORLD CONFERENCE:

"Bhagavan Building a garden of Love"

"You have come here from distant parts of the world, at great expense and personal inconvenience. Having come, you should try to imbibe good thoughts and noble feelings so that you may go back with the determination to lead exemplary lives and engage yourselves in worthy acts of service which will make your lives sublime" observed Bhagavan Baba, inaugurating the Fourth World Conference of Sathya Sai, Organisations, in the Poornachandra Auditorium, Prasanthi Nilayam, on November 17.

Over 13,000 delegates from 46 countries were present in the hall, which had been tastefully decorated for the conference. Apart from India, which naturally provided the largest contingent of delegates from 19 States, the following countries, which had one or more actively functioning Sai Centres, sent delegates: U.S.A., Canada, Argentina, El Salvador, Mexico, Peru, the West Indies, Guatemala, Chile (the Americas), Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, West Germany (European Group), Australia, Brunei, Fiji, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand (East Asia and the Pacific), Natal, Transvaal, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Zambia, Dubai, Nepal, Mauritius, United Arab Republic (Africa and West Asia). Apart from the delegates, only a small number of guests and invitees were present. In view of the limited capacity of the Auditorium and the large numbers of devotees eager to participate in the World Conference and Birthday Festival, all functions other than the inaugural meeting were held in the Hill View Stadium. Ever since the 1984 Seva Dal Conference, Bhagavan has been interested in getting the Hill View Stadium ready for the World Conference and the Birthday festival, as the stadium alone could accommodate the lakhs of devotees expected for the Birthday Festival. Every detail of arrangements at the Stadium had been initiated and supervised by Bhagavan, including the levelling and cleaning of the Stadium grounds, building of the imposing Santhi Vedika stage and the extension of galleries on the hill-sides.

Swami arrived at the Poornachandra Auditorium, headed by a group of Vedic chanters.

The proceedings started with the lighting of oil lamps by Bhagavan to mark the inauguration of the Conference.

After invocation, Prof. N. Kasturi, who has had the privilege of being close to Bhagavan for well-nigh forty years and who has seen the Sai movement grow from a slender sapling to a mighty global banyan tree with its roots in every continent, welcomed the delegates to the Fourth World Conference. In a voice choked with emotion, he said:

"At the first World Conference in 1968 of those who had responded to the call of the Avatar for peace on earth and goodwill among men, Swami declared that He embodies all the Names and Forms with which man has adored God. This is the Fourth Conference and the vast number of delegates from all the continents proves that millions have accepted the Sai Message of Love, Service and Serenity as the only remedy for the poison of greed, pride and hatred. The problem which this Conference has placed before itself is 'The integration of the Human Community'. I remember Swami correcting me once at Bombay when I translated one statement of His as "The World is My mansion." He interjected sharply, saying, "No! Not the World, but, the Universe." Truly, we are in the Presence of One who can, by His Will, forge all mankind into One."

Twenty years of Sai movement

Sri Indulal Shah, Chairman of the World Council, welcoming the over 13,000 Office bearers from every district of India and from 421 Sai Centres in 46 countries, said: "This vast gathering represents a mini-world."

Reviewing the work of the Sathya Sai Organisations all over the world during the last twenty years, he said: "Perhaps the most significant aspect of this organisation is the unstinted voluntary participation of all its members with all their resources with the sole objective of getting an ever-increasing measure of Bhagavan's Grace. One has to see it to believe the enthusiasm the active workers display in giving of their best in response to the slightest command from Bhagavan Baba. This, coupled with the experience of unfoldment of the inner voice that many among them experience, while doing their work, is the most miraculous aspect of Bhagavan's organisational glory.

Bhajan centres

On October 20, 1940, young Sathya sat under a tree and began to sing "Manasa Bhajare Gurucharanam." That was a musical start for our spiritual journey. The light which was kindled on the morning of 20th October 1940 is still burning brightly in over 10,000 Bhajan centres all over the world. It is this phenomenon of sacred songs inspiring large gatherings in towns and villages that has helped the Sai workers to form Bhajan Centres. Bhajan Centres are the true source of inspiration and backbone of our organisation and it is because of them that we have been able to form over thousands of centres like the Samitis; Bal Vikas, Mahila Vibhag and Seva Dal.

Our Lord Sai has prescribed two medicines in this scientific age. One deals with the modern epidemic in the young and teenagers. The second deals with us-adults. The medicine for the youth is called Education in Human Values and that for the older generation is called "Ceiling on Desires." Both these are interwoven and integrated with all the activities of the three wings of our organisation. In India the programme of Education in Human Values came out of the early Bal Vikas movement.

The programme of Ceiling on Desires is meant to regulate the lives of the adults. This can transform a greed-based social system into a need-based one.

Seeds of transformation

In an organisational network of global dimension, in the peerless educational institutions and programmes, in the thousands of villages we have adopted, in the innumerable Bhajan Centres and Study Circles and other centres of spiritual activity, and in the hearts of millions of his devotees, Bhagavan Baba has sown the seeds of transformation of the human being, and in the fullness of time these seeds would sprout and grow into a garden of love which would be a source of perennial bliss to all men.

The enthusiasm generated for celebrating Swami's 60th Birthday celebrations will not diminish once the celebrations are over. On the contrary, it is the genuine feeling of the active workers that the real work has just begun.

Even though we are a voluntary organisation and our participation in all its activities is completely our own choice, we must not forget that the projects that we have undertaken are related to mass welfare and they draw considerable public attention. Whether it is EHV or rural development work, we are watched by thousands. Thus it is of paramount significance to ensure that our work should be imbued with professional perfection. Over these two decades we have grown from a 'voluntary input—voluntary output' to a 'voluntary input—professional output' organisation.

These 20 years have made it clear that the Sai organisation is at best a fraction of Bhagavan Baba's divine mission. He operates at hundreds of levels and planes and without our knowing, keeps doing His work in His own way. While the Sai organisation is completely identified with Bhagavan Baba, the converse is not true. The organisation is a forum for us to channelise and pool our individual efforts to produce collective results."

"We need him"

Sri V. Srinivasan, Vice-Chairman of the World Council, speaking on the tasks ahead of the Sathya Sai Organisation in facing the challenges of the twenty-first century, said:

"The strength of the Sai Organisation has been its inner vitality and steadfastness through its faith in and devotion to Bhagavan. This has enabled it to change to meet the changing needs of society, while remaining unchanging in its motivation and basic objectives. Let us always remember that Bhagavan does not need the Organisation for his plan of Dharmasthapanam and that we always need Him for every facet of our existence and activity. The Organisation was, is and will always be an instrument for our self-improvement which Bhagavan in His munificent Grace has given to us.

We must understand the true meaning of Bhagavan's Omnipresence, Omnipotence and Omniscience, instead of just mechanically mouthing these words. In the beginning, Bhagavan's blessing to us was: 'I Manifest myself wherever my glory is sung.' These last few years, He has assured us with the profound benediction: 'I Manifest myself wherever my work is done.' We have seen and experienced countless proofs of this statement in the thousands of villages wherever our Seva Dal have ventured for Sadhana with Sai in their hearts. We must have the maturity to understand that if we practise in our life what Baba tells us, Sai becomes an intrinsic

part of us and we will automatically know what we are to do in any given situation. We need not then wait for Bhagavan to tell us to do something before we do it."

THE CHANCELLOR SPEAKS:

"Cultivation of love the greatest Need"

"The cultivation of love is the greatest need today. This vast gathering is a manifestation of love in action. This love alone can save the world," observed Bhagavan Baba, in His benedictory address to the Fourth Convocation of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, as its Chancellor.

Bhagavan began His discourse with a poem on the maladies of education today:

Modern education develops the intellect and imparts skills, but does not promote good qualities in any way. Of what value is the acquisition of all the knowledge in the world, if there is no character?

Knowledge has multiplied and with it desires have grown. The result is that one is a hero in words, but is a zero in action.

What is the use of acquiring intelligence and skills if even a small fraction of what is learnt is not put into practice?

"Sathyam Ekapadam Brahma. Sathye Dharmo Prathishtitah. Sathyamevavaakhridayam. Sathyam Sarvam." The one word Sathya is Brahmam. Dharma (Righteousness) is rooted in Truth. Truth is the heart of speech. Truth is All.

Embodiments of Love! Truth is the beautiful mansion of God. Dharma is firmly established in Truth. The Vedas which represent jnana and Vijnana (knowledge and the Higher Wisdom) are the embodiments of Truth. Those who seek to achieve higher stages in life must follow the injunctions of Truth.

Truth, charity, penance, sacrifice, friendliness, purity, straightforwardness, service to the Guru and study are the nine gems which every seeker of knowledge has to cherish. Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa are to be found in the state in which Truth and goodness prevail. The basic Truth is one, but the sages have called it by many names. The ideal man is one who adheres to Truth and does not give it up in any circumstance. He lives the true life. Truth does not exist for the sake of any one person. It transcends the limitation of time, place and personalities. It is the life breath for all countries, for all peoples, at all times. The grandsire of humanity, the great Manu, after deep enquiry, analysis and experience, gave this as his boon to mankind. "Sathyam Bruyaath, Priyam Bruyaath, Nabruyaath Sathyam Apriyam." Speak the truth, speak what is pleasing. But never speak truth that is unpleasant. You should not utter an untruth because it may

be pleasing. Nor should you utter truth which is unpleasant. This great advice was given by Manu to mankind.

Man can make genuine progress only when the idea that education is for earning a living is given up. The link between education and jobs should be totally snapped. Education should be for life, not for a living (cheers). Only one who realises this truth is a truly educated person. From ancient times this truth had been recognised by the sages of Bharat, who preserved the nation's cultural heritage. Knowledge does not mean mere book-lore. It is not the transference of the contents of books to the brain.

Education is intended for the transformation of the heart. Man today is proud about the little knowledge he has acquired about the physical world and boasts that he knows all about the universe. True knowledge is that which establishes harmony and synthesis between science on the one hand and spirituality and ethics on the other. Man, therefore, should at the outset determine the true value of education. Today, because of the striking growth of the physical sciences, man tends to feel he is highly knowledgeable. But only when man tries to understand knowledge of things beyond the physical sciences can he fully benefit from the latter. Beyond physics lies metaphysics. Of late some are beginning to realise this fact and are embarking upon spiritual explorations.

Great sages like Vasishtha, Vamana, Jamadagni, Vishwamitra, Gautama and Parashara were among the Saptarishis who achieved the distinction because of their spiritual greatness. Do we have such sages today? It cannot be said that the accomplishments of modern science are not prodigious. There is no question about the necessity of scientific knowledge. But it must be realised that it is necessary as much to develop our sense of discrimination for the proper use of science pari-passu with the development of scientific knowledge. It is because this discrimination has been lacking in the use of science we find that the world is facing many dangers and difficulties.

But even today there are not some noble minds, who, even in the pursuit of science, are exploring spiritual truths, analysing them and trying to see how these can be used for transforming man. Newton, after discovering the gravitational power of the earth, declared: "Although I have discovered the force of gravity, the gravitational force itself has been existing always before my discovery." He also admitted that while "I have been able to identify the force of gravity, I did not create it." He was convinced that there was a creator for the force of gravity.

Einstein also, after his scientific studies of the working of nature, turned his mind to spiritual matters. He realised that for spiritual pursuits, the company of good men was necessary, and that the association of good men can transform the human condition. He declared, "Tell me your company and I shall tell you what you are." This shows that what we are is determined by the character of the people with whom we are associated.

Heisenberg, a great philosopher, after studying various sciences, embarked on an investigation of the link between the physical sciences and spirituality. He discovered the great secrets contained in the Yoga-Shastras. He observed, "Master the mind: be a mastermind." Another great scientist, Schrödinger, found that science and spirituality were integrally connected and that

in fact spirituality was the basis for science. He also noted that the growth of science had led to a multiplication of wants, which brought about a weakening of man's will and intelligence. He declared: "More desires, more despair."

There was another great thinker, named Dirac. He sought to know the connection between science and spirituality. He tried to discover the one entity underlying all things in creation and conducted experiments for this purpose. He found the truth to consist in the statement: "Love ever; hurt never". Dirac's conclusion is nothing but an echo of Sage Vyasa's pregnant pronouncement, after completing his works on the 18 Puranas: "To help others is meritorious; to hurt others is sinful."

We have yet another modern thinker—De Broglie. Having begun as a critic of spirituality, after serious enquiry, De Broglie confessed that his criticisms were due to ignorance. He proclaimed from his own experience that divinity was at the core of everything in the universe.

Such seers of the truth are not absent in the world of science. These great scientists, who have examined, explored and declared the truth, are akin to the ancient Saptarishis (Seven Sages). Newton declared that the universe is a manifestation of God and everything revolves through the power of God. Fritz of Capra, at the present day, has explored the link between the atom and vibrations in nature. In ancient times, Vyasa declared that the universe emanated from the vibrations of the sound "Sita" and all things in creation—living and non-living—were the outcome of these vibrations.

Here is an episode from the Mahabharata. Once, when his wife, Subhadra, was enceinte, Arjuna, not knowing that the child she was bearing was the future hero Abhimanyu, began telling her all about warfare and the Padmavyuha, an intricate type of military formation. Krishna came in at that time and pointed out to Arjuna that the child Subhadra was carrying was being influenced by what he was telling her. It is an ancient practice in Bharat to relate to pregnant women stories about heroes and saints so that the child in the womb may be influenced by the vibrations produced by such sublime stories and the thoughts produced in the mother. The ancient Rishis knew this truth. No wonder that the children born under such conditions had noble nature and heroic virtues. It was a common practice to relate stories of exemplary children like Markandeya, Dhruva and Prahlada. They provided the inspiration and ideals for the children of those days.

What do we find today? Pregnant women are engaged in seeing Television, Cinemas and other deleterious media which play up crime and sex. The result is the children who are born develop undesirable tendencies.

What Krishna told Arjuna might have been dismissed as meaningless previously. But today, scientists in the West are realising that what was said in the Mahabharata is true. The Institute of Child Health and Human Development, attached to the Carolina University in America, has been conducting experiments on the factors influencing development of children. An eminent scientist in this Institute, Anthony Casper after various experiments, came to the conclusion that what Sri Krishna had said was true, though our ill-equipped minds cannot fully understand the profound truth underlying Krishna's statement. Anthony Casper announced his findings on 3rd January

1984 at a conference of scientists. Casper's experiments showed that the food taken by the pregnant mother, the thoughts she had and the words she listened to had their impact on the child she was carrying.

It is a welcome sign that there are open-minded scientists today who are prepared to explore the truths declared by our ancient sages and to seek the link between science and spirituality.

On the other hand, it is a pity that people born in this great country with such a precious heritage, are leading lives contrary to its ideals and wasting their opportunities.

The American cosmonaut, Mitchell, after larding on the moon, had a look at the earth from the moon. He saw the earth as a huge brilliant diamond set against a vast carpet of blue velvet. Experiencing this spectacle, he shed a few tears. He was stricken by the feeling: "Born on such a beautiful and brilliant land, why are men behaving like ignorant, evil minded beings?" Only a diamond can come out of a diamond and not a mere piece of stone. Why should evil men arise from the pure, holy soil of mother earth, he asked? And he found the answer in man's fascination for material things, ignoring the cultivation of good qualities.

Right conduct

It should be realised that whatever scholarship one may possess, whatever position or name one may have, without righteous conduct all these are meaningless. Right conduct is the only thing that really matters. What you do determines what you get. Hence you must concentrate on right conduct. Give up narrow feelings. Broaden your outlook. True education can be summed up in one word: Love, all-encompassing love. A life without love is worse than death.

Worldly knowledge is undoubtedly necessary. But it is not all. You must know also the basic Truth about life and the human destiny. Along with the acquisition of knowledge, you have to cultivate also the disciplines of right behaviour such as respect for elders, love towards parents and affection for friends. The affection you show must be constant, continuous and unchanging like your breathing.

Education today is a process of filling the mind with the contents of books, emptying the contents in the examination hall and returning empty-headed. True education consists in the cultivation of the heart. What you learn should become a part of your whole being. Only then will you have a sense of fulfillment, and establish complete harmony in thought, word and deed. The country needs today persons who lead such integral lives.

People in all countries talk about peace but their actions are contrary to their professions. They talk of peace on the one hand and keep the atom bomb on the other. The entire world is suffering from environmental pollution. The talk of star wars contains the threat of polluting even the outer space. The desire for peace must be built in the hearts of men.

"Love in action"

The cultivation of love is the greatest need today. This vast gathering is a manifestation of love in action. Here are assembled lakhs of people. Were any invitations sent to them? They have come out of love of and for Sai. There is no use in acquiring all kinds of knowledge and

performing of japas and meditation if there is no love in the heart. It is love alone which can save the world. Students, teachers and lovers of education! I wish that in your attempt to perfect the system of education you provide for love, dharma and moral values for these alone can take the country forward and enable it to regain its past glory.

SRI SATHYA SAI INSTITUTE:

"Fourth Convocation—A World Event"

The Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning (Deemed University), although an infant among Indian Universities in terms of years, has been making history in many ways. It has been unique in integrating academic education with spiritual and moral discipline in a manner not attempted elsewhere. It has set the pace in introducing many changes in curricula, methods of teaching and evaluation of the performance of students.

But, perhaps the most remarkable feature of the Institute is the open manner in which it holds its Convocation. The first Convocation was held in 1982 in the Poornachandra Auditorium, in the presence of an audience of over twenty thousand persons.

The Fourth Convocation of the Institute, held this year on November 22, went one better. It was held in the vast Sathya Sai Hill View Stadium, with over four hundred thousand persons watching the proceedings. Never in the annals of higher education anywhere has such a convocation been held in such picturesque surroundings with so many thousands attending it as interested participants. Such a phenomenon was possible only because of the personality of Bhagavan Baba, who is the Chancellor of the Institute and the inspirer of the Sai philosophy of education.

The academic procession, which used to start in previous years from the Prasanthi Mandir to proceed to the Poornachandra Hall, started this year from the grounds of the Hill View Stadium, with the Registrar carrying the Mace, flanked by two students, heading the procession. Prof. E. C. G. Sudarshan, the Chief Guest, the Chancellor, Bhagavan Baba, and Prof. V. K. Gokak, led the procession of members of the Trust, of the Governing Body, the Deans of Faculties and the Academic Council. The Institute's Band was in attendance as the procession arrived at the Santhi Vedika.

After they had taken their seats, the Chancellor and others were garlanded. The students recited invocatory chants.

"An international festival"

Welcoming the Chancellor, the Guest of Honour, Prof. E. C. G. Sudarshan, members of the Governing Body and the Academic Council, and the vast gathering assembled in the Hill View Stadium, Prof. V. K. Gokak, Vice Chancellor of the Institute, said:

I rise to welcome you to participate in this great event, the Fourth Convocation of this Institute. Convocations have been held these four years on the same day each time—22nd November. This day happens to precede Bhagavan's birthday and it has been our privilege to have for the Convocation the entire birthday audience too. This time because of Bhagavan's 60th birthday, our audience overflows our grounds. There are lakhs of people attending it and seeing and hearing it televised. This has turned the event into an international festival and it is with the greatest pleasure that I welcome you to it.

It was precisely four years ago that I came to Prasanthi Nilayam from Bangalore, suitcase in hand, to take charge of a university that was about to be born. The university was actually born on the 22nd November 1981. Time flies fast. I feel that it was only yesterday that I arrived here. But we are already in the midst of the 4th Convocation of the University.

Our Guest of Honour for this evening is Professor E. C. G. Sudarshan, Director, Center for Particle Theory, Austin, Texas, U.S.A., Director, The Institute of Mathematical Sciences, Madras, and Professor of Theoretical Studies, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. He is three in one because he holds three jobs simultaneously. He had a brilliant career as a student of Physics in Madras University. He did his Ph.D. from Rochester, USA, and was at Harvard University for post-doctoral research for about four years under Professor Julian Swinger, a Nobel Laureate. Dr. Sudarshan has taught at Texas and also at the University of Rochester, USA. He is one of the most outstanding theoretical physicists today and many honours naturally have come to him.

Every new physicist is a neo-vedantin and Professor Sudarshan is an eminent illustration of this possibility. The frontiers between physics and metaphysics are falling today and many eminent physicists are throwing a number of delicate filaments between science and spirituality, to bring them closer together. It is this that has drawn Professor Sudarshan to Baba and he is a very welcome guest now and then in Prasanthi Nilayam.

The Institute came into existence with its three Campuses on 22nd November 1981. Its assets amount to a few crores of rupees in the shape of spacious buildings. To these have been added during these four years the Administrative building on top of the hill and the new library and a planetarium and staff quarters. Only the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust with Bhagavan as its Founder Chairman, could foot such a tremendous bill. The stadium with its Santhi Vedika and its ancillary buildings is another phenomenon that has grown up during these years. This is only the physical part of it. The great significance of the academic counterpart is that the Institute has grown into a national Institute drawing its students from all the States in India and even abroad. For this reason English is the medium of instruction here.

It took three years to switch over all our students from the old S. V. University and Bangalore University courses to the new integrated courses evolved for this Institute. Once a student is admitted, he goes straight up to his post-graduate year and takes his M.A. or M.Sc. or M.Com. in five years. The syllabuses in all subjects are as modern as anywhere else. They have been built on a broad foundation including foundational courses that give a bird's eye view of the whole world of knowledge in the first year, tapering off during the fifth year to an intensive specialisation and to research in a topic at the Ph.D. stage.

Fourteen scholarships of Rs. 300/- per month have been instituted for poor and deserving students. The Institute gives its own research fellowships to 26 Ph.D. students. There is a first prize for the all rounder and several prizes in various subjects for rank students. Striving for excellence is the keynote of the Institute. Admissions are made only after an admission test. The Ph.D. course has been instituted since 1984-85. There are 26 students studying in 11-Ph. D. courses, 5-Science courses, 2-Social Science courses, 3-Language and Literature courses and 1-Commerce.

New developments will go on because the Institute has a beginning but no end. Each new Vice Chancellor as he comes will make his own contribution to its development. In June 1986 the Institute expects to start courses in Business Administration and in Economics, and Diploma courses in Music and Drama.

Bhagavan Baba is the Founder, Sustainer, Promoter and Chancellor of this Institute. He is its very soul. The Institute's ideal is as worldwide as the personality of Baba. I consider myself supremely blessed that I had for these four years his close guidance and inspiration. I came here for starting the university and he put me firmly on the path of my own endless pilgrimage."

Prof. Gokak then requested the Chancellor to declare the Convocation open.

After the Chancellor had declared the Convocation open, the respective Deans of Faculties presented the candidates who had been found qualified for their respective Bachelor's or Master's degree in Commerce, Science and Arts. The candidates stood up in their respective places and the Chancellor conferred his benediction on them.

The Vice Chancellor administered the Institute's pledge, which they repeated. The Vice Chancellor then read out the Convocation commandments from the Taittiriya Upanishad.

"Pursuit of excellence"

Dr. Sudarshan, in the course of his Convocation Address, devoted to the theme, "Heirs to two worlds," said:

All rituals are the preamble to a path of action. This ritual of convocation is no exception. I would like to tell you that whatever be the specific area of further study or work that you choose, you are today embarking on a rededicated life, one for which the strategy and the goal is Excellence. This unique institution has conferred on you steady and nurturing attention, not only, in the technical content of various subjects but also in the art of living.

Many institutions teach people the subjects that you have studied; some teach their students how to compete successfully. Competition is with other people, but excellence is competition with oneself. One competes against one's own achievements and tries to overcome one's limitations. Excellence is not a zero-sum game in which one person's gain is at the cost of another person's loss. It is a growth experience. Excellence is certainly not restricted to higher education, but those who have had the good fortune to undertake higher education have a better perspective of the challenges, additional skills to deal with complex problems and glimpses into

the work of others who have excelled. Further they have a social contract, additional responsibility to enrich society in return for the resources put at their disposal in the course of higher studies.

"Lights all our life"

An essential part of that social contract is the duty to seek excellence, to grow in knowledge and to propagate that knowledge. Not everyone is destined to be a teacher or professor, but teaching is done not only by teachers but everyone. Let our interaction in the course of living be a growth experience, so that we learn and others may learn. We have just celebrated the Festival of Lights: but the light outside is only a symbol of the light inside. Let us light the lights of our life.

Binocular vision

When I was a young student at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research in Bombay we used special nuclear emulsions to study cosmic rays. We had to scan the developed emulsions to see the tracks of nuclear particles. For this purpose we used high power binocular microscopes with low depth of focus. In the initial stages it was difficult to get used to the binocular vision. I was used to the usual microscopes in which only one view was used. The temptation was great to use only one eye; even when I used two eyes the two fields of view did not coalesce. It gave me a headache, but I was told that the two fields can be adjusted to coalesce; in the initial stages such binocular vision happened only in a transient fashion. When that happened, suddenly, the pattern stood out in depth, in three dimensions. The bad habit of wanting to see two different views got corrected in due course; and it became even difficult to remember how once I had to struggle to get the binocular perception.

You are graduating today, and more generally all of us living in this period are provided with the possibility of a binocular vision. On the one hand we live in an age of science; one in which not only are there more scientists than ever before but in which science plays an important role in our life. The study of the atom and its subunits has provided us with a richness of structure; and to explain them we have introduced new conceptual models beginning with quantum theory and relativity theory at the turn of the century, and subsequently incorporating quantum theory of fields and group theory.

Scientific thought and scientific experimentation is, for mankind at the present epoch, a source of new knowledge and consolidation of existing knowledge. An important by-product is technology, the practice and principles by which we selectively use natural phenomena for the fabrication, production and transmission of machinery, consumer items including food and information in all its forms.

But the essential character of science is on the one hand the systematization of its knowledge and on the other hand the willingness, even the eagerness, to change itself by the acquisition of new knowledge by experimentation. Science at its best deals with knowledge handed down only as a tentative hypothesis, one which could and should be modified by experimentation. It is true that such changes are never to abandon existing science but to make economical changes in its content. By such steps our point of view itself gets changed. The theories and even the experiments of today may not have been comprehensible a century ago. In elementary particle

physics the essence has changed from the time I was a research student. Being a scientist is to change one's point of view in a responsible and responsive way in the light of new knowledge.

The success of modern science in bringing together vast domains of human experience and its ability to give a fundamental basis consisting of very few postulates makes a scientist humble and aggressive at the same time: humble that there is so much science that can be reduced to so few fundamental principles; and aggressive that he may conquer all domains of experience for science. For most scientists it is unthinkable that any phenomenon of nature is beyond science. I am one such scientist.

The science of tradition

The other world view which could be called metaphysical, philosophical, spiritual or traditional deals with the world in a different fashion. We in this country have had the privilege of along tradition which continues without interruption to this day. This traditional world view takes *experience* as the basic entity rather than theory, and encourages the perception of a participatory universe in which the observer is not apart from the universe but each forms a part of the other! Just as the concepts of modern physics appear unfamiliar, strange and even nonsensical to the superficial student, the ideas of tradition appear equally strange, but that is not really the criterion.

Among the ideas that have stood the test of experience is that anything observable is transient and has both an origin and a demise: this includes not only waves in water and the leaping flame but also the stars and galaxies and the universe itself. So also, the mind that can be observed is as much *an object* as the body that can be observed. The apparent separation of the observer and the observed and the act of observation gives rise to a fragmented world of experience in which time, causation and interaction are important and which science has systematized and conquered. But it is possible to have a view beyond this temporal causal world which has its own richness. It focuses on the experience itself without comparisons, without onlookers and without acquisitiveness. It is the discovery of this traditional system that genuine happiness obtains when one can be *totally in experience*, in the eternal present, in an unfragmented universe. It is its *experimental* conclusion and authenticated perception that this is possible *here and now!*

If you were to take two theoretical physicists specializing in the same field and of comparable learning and proficiency and ask them to explain-the recent advances in their fields to an intelligent lay audience, their presentation would be quite different. Either presentation in itself would be adequate and should serve as an invitation to those capable of it to delve into the subject so that they may understand. A third scientist would find both expositions adequate and may even be able to correlate them in detail but one whose abilities do not extend far enough would benefit to follow one exposition; and not lose his energy and time trying to make a comparative study.

This lesson, so transparent in this context, is often forgotten by many well meaning people who look on different expositions of the traditional method as a subject of comparative study rather than as alternative paths to growth. It requires greater maturity and ability to correlate different methods than to follow a definite path. As one grows so does one see more connections and correlations: let them come by themselves rather than search for them.

Insights of seers

The great seers among our ancestors have conveyed to us their findings in the form of brief formulae, to remind us about the insights accompanying the experiential *sadhana*. Without either a teacher of insight or direct experience these formulae do not convey coherent meanings: somewhat in the same way as a text book on algebraic topology would convey little to someone with less than a high school education; or a hand book on IC's mean anything to a poet.

One of the causes of bewilderment for the scientist, used to causal temporal objective descriptions, is the eternal present of the path of Tradition in which all experiences are treated together: the language is unfamiliar and incomprehensible. In their frustration some even well meaning scientists revert to the mentality of the barbaric plunderers: that which you cannot carry away should be destroyed! Fortunately, unlike artifacts a perennial living tradition cannot be so easily destroyed.

Bridges between science and tradition

There are a number of common bridges between the path of science and the path of tradition. The one that I have found most impressive is the process of enlightenment, of learning, the functioning of *Vidya*. There is the period of darkness, of non-comprehension, of frustration when it appears that it is eternal and non-ending. Then comes clarity of perception, either through the instruction of a gifted guide or through a spontaneous process. In either case the light that shines on the problem resolves it so completely that it becomes difficult, to imagine that you could have ever not seen the revolution. The process of growth is thus a sequence of destructions and creations: and the modality of knowing is the functioning aspect of the great teacher, the guru, the remover of darkness: so we say:

Guruh Brahmah Guruh Vishnu
Guruh devo Mahesvarah
Guruh sakshaat Parabrahma
Tasmai Sri Gurave namaha

In the functioning of the living teaching there is no student but only the illumined perception.

The illumined perception carries joy with it: this is not a matter to be debated but experienced. It is the great discovery of our tradition that joy, Ananda is not brought, about by events and circumstances but is in the nature of reality. When the superimpositions are removed the misperceptions disappear and the true nature shines forth. In physics the First Law of Motion states that uniform motion is the nature of matter and called this property inertia, thus clearing away much contrived "explanations" of why an arrow flies forth; we should similarly refer to the First Law of Tradition that joy is the nature of true existence. Tunchattu Ramanuja Ezhuttachan, the sage poet of Kerala has stated this so beautifully in his "Hari Namakirtanam" to say: "When I realize that I am the eye that sees the eye that is the mind which in turn sees the eye that sees the lights like the sun and the fire, I am filled with limitless joy." So he prays: "Bless me Lord, that I may not ever become filled with ego; but if I am to feel the ego let the whole universe be identified with my ego."

Merging of two world-views

Can we reconcile these two views? Is it possible to have one eye trained on Science and the other on Tradition? The two views need not be (and must not be) identical, otherwise binocular vision contributes nothing new. It is in the reconciliation, despite the difference that a new vision in depth emerges. In this process corrections and misperceptions of one view tend to get eliminated: it is not merely a case of Science removing superstitions from Tradition, but also of Tradition separating shallow Science and immodest generalizations from the essence of Science.

Common to both the visions is, the supreme principle of nascent knowledge, the powerful present which illuminates: such penetrating insights are not the property of either the student or the teacher but of the creative confluence of the deserving student and the adept teacher.

The other common feature is excellence. In Tradition excellence is obvious, since the practice is to unify experience; there is no one to compete with, except oneself. In science the norm is the best, not the average. So the ideal in' this case also is the excellent. When we talk of Science it is not essential to hold up the incompetent or the obsolete; nor should we do that in the context of Tradition. In both cases we should not only look for the best but use them to excel.

The lazy-eye syndrome

There are persistent forces which urge us to choose monocular vision with either one eye or the other: to choose between Science and Tradition. This is sheer laziness: and a lazy eye needs treatment! The treatment is the adept teacher, the *Daksinamurti*, who unifies the two world views: as stated in "Viswam Darpanamana..." stanza of Daksinamurti stotram.

When you see with two eyes and perceive, depth configurations that did not make sense with one-eyed vision, would make sense. Education in Science enlarges one's conceptual models: non-commuting physical quantities, or one-sided surfaces are miracles if one is not familiar with the framework. So are the unusual conceptual configurations in Tradition.

You who are graduating today have been specially nurtured in this binocular vision. Let not the forces of laziness make you restrict your vision to one of the two. May this invocation at this *sandhya* be a blessing to us all."

Ravishankar, a second year M.Com. student, addressed the gathering on what the Institute and Bhagavan meant for the students and expressed their resolve to live up to the ideals of the Institute and the teachings of Bhagavan.

The Chancellor presented the gold medals to the following candidates:

Sathya Sai Seva Medal for the best all rounder: Gentleman candidate, G. Ravishankar (II M.Com), Lady candidate, Kumari Harijani Angella (III B.Sc.) Kumari A. Jyotsna Madhuri (B.Sc.); C. Sanjay Sahani (B.Com.); Kumari Milan S. Murgod (B.A.); Kumari Sushma Periwal (B.Sc. Home Science); Krishna Gopinath (M.Sc. Physics); M. Sai Ram (M.Sc. Chemistry); C. Ram Prasad (M.A. History); Kumari Aruna Swarup (M.A. Philosophy); M.B. Ram Narain (M.Com.)

Awards for excellence

The happy occasion of the Fourth Convocation, synchronising with the World Conference and Bhagavan's sixtieth birthday, was availed of by the Sathya Sai Central Trust to announce the institution of Sri Sathya Sai Award for Excellence. Shri Indulal Shah announced the names of the first three recipients of the Award: Dr. (Mrs.) Madhuri Shah, Prof. V. K. Gokak and Dr. Veni Shankar Jha.

Dr. Madhuri Shah, Chairperson of the University Grants Commission, had been Vice Chancellor of the S. N. D. T. Women's University and has been associated with the setting up of the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning.

The citation regarding Prof. Gokak described him as a brilliant "writer, thinker and scholar, who has been a crusader for perfection."

Dr. Veni Shankar Jha, a Ph.D. of the London University, started his career as an Assistant Professor of Philosophy in Morris College, Nagpur. After a distinguished career in the M. P. State Government, he served as Vice Chancellor, Benaras Hindu University (1956-60). A dedicated educationist all his life, Dr. Jha is the author of many reports and books on education.

The Chancellor presented the awards to the three recipients and blessed them.

Bhagavan Baba then delivered his benedictory address (published separately).

The Convocation concluded with singing of the National Anthem.

FESTIVAL FEATURES:

Homage through Books

Over 90 publications which had been published on the occasion of Bhagavan's sixtieth birthday as an offering to Swami were formally released by Bhagavan on the 17th at the Poornachandra Auditorium. Most of these books had been brought out by the Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust, Prasanthi Nilayam, and by Sai organisations in several centres, both in India and abroad. In addition, quite a few books were brought out by individual devotees as their votive offering to Bhagavan on His 60th Birthday.

Among these should be mentioned Prof. N. Kasturi's book, "Prasanthi—Pathway to Peace" (Published by Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust), written in his own inimitable style and containing a fine picture in colour of Bhagavan; "The Beacon," published by the World Council of the Sathya Sai Organisations. —a lavishly produced volume which tells the story of the life and times of Baba in a fine collection of pictures, which graphically present the varied activities of Sathya Sai organisations all over India; "Sai Chandan" —a collection of 60 articles, brought out by the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning as an offering to Bhagavan on His 60th Birthday. Among other notable books released on the occasion are:

1. Special souvenir volumes of Sanathana Sarathi in English, Telugu and Tamil with articles from a large number of contributors and pictures of Baba in colour.
2. 'My Baba and I' by Dr. J. S. Hislop;
3. 'Sai Ram' by Faith and Charles Penn;
4. 'Spirit and the Mind' by Dr. Samuel Sandweiss;
5. 'The Advent' a book of poems by Michael Hollander.
6. 'Moments of Beauty' —a colourful album of collages with Bhagavan's message, by Moyia O'Brien from Australia;
7. 'Offerings' —a collection of poems by P. P. Sharma of Kanpur;

In addition, several Overseas Samitis brought out souvenir volumes with articles on Bhagavan and pictorial accounts of their seva activities. Such souvenirs have been brought out by the U.K. Sai Organisation, the Sai Organisation in Sri Lanka, Australia, South Africa and Malaysia.

Several Indian papers brought out supplements on the occasion of Bhagavan's 60th Birthday, including The Hindu, News Today (English-Madras), Dina Malar (Tamil), Kalki, Bhavan's journal and others.

JANMA DINA SANDESH:

"I will be closer to Devotees"

"I will never be distant from devotees. I will be available to them more and more from now." This heartening assurance was given by Bhagavan Baba to over half a million devotees from all over the world who had filled the vast Sathya Sai Hill View Stadium on November 23 to celebrate Bhagavan's sixtieth birthday.

Bhagavan was dispelling the rumours that had been afloat that after the sixtieth birthday He would not be as freely available to devotees as He had been hitherto.

Bhagavan devoted His ninety-minute discourse to explaining the integral relationship between Man and God and cleared up some mistaken impressions about the behaviour of some devotees and the "ceilings on desires" programme. Swami explained how His Sankalpa works and how, whenever He wills something to happen, there is a spontaneous move by some devotee or other to see that it is done. It was the spontaneous offer of devotees in many States to provide rice, wheat, gur and other commodities which enabled the free feeding of lakhs of persons to be carried out according to Bhagavan's Sankalpa.

It was a bright morning and thousands of devotees, who had been looking forward to that day with great yearning, gathered around the Mandir to have darshan of Bhagavan before He set out in a grand procession to the imposing Santhi Vedika in the Hill View Stadium for the historic birthday celebrations. The devotees were advised to settle themselves in the Stadium enclosures well before 8 a. m.

In the Mandir itself, the Ritwiks, who had been reciting Vedic chants from the 17th, got ready to join the procession.

A golden chariot, modeled on the traditional figure of the chariot driven by Sri Krishna in the Kurukshetra war, drawn by four magnificent white horses, drew up in front of the Mandir. Bhagavan's favourite elephant, Sai Gita, richly caparisoned for the occasion, stood in front of the chariot to lead the procession.

Loud cheers went up from a myriad throats as Bhagavan steps into the chariot for the historic procession. Milling crowds flanked the s as tine procession passed. Besides a Nadaswaram Troupe Sai Institute's band, Bhangra and Naga dancers from the students headed the procession.

Shouts of "Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba-ki-Jai rose as the procession reached the Santhi Vedika at the scheduled hour. Bhagavan was received by members of the Sathya Sai Central Trust and led to the dais. The entire gathering, which filled the vast stadium and overflowed on to the hill sides in the north and the west, had excellent darshan of Bhagavan and experienced the greatest moment of their lives.

Floral offerings were made to Bhagavan by the members of the Central Trust, the members of the World Council and the new Vice Chancellor of the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher learning, Dr. Saraf, who has succeed Prof. Gokak.

Bhagavan was then requested to deliver his Birthday Sandesh. The entire gathering heard with rapt attention Swami's discourse, which was delivered in the authentic accent of the Yuga Avatar, who has come to divinise mankind.

Bhagavan's discourse

Bhagavan began His discourse with a poem in which He declared His Avataric advent as the continuation of all the earlier avatars from Narasimha to Sri Krishna. Bhagavan said:

*He alone is a real man
Whose thoughts, words and deeds
Are in perfect harmony.
How can he be a genuine man
When his mind is divorced from speech and deed
And all three are not in harmony?
If birth, old age and death don't happen,
if desires don't fall and gain isn't lost,
If the world isn't the fleeting flow, it is,
How could man have affection, compassion, love?*

*The attributes and qualities which were assumed
When, to save Prahlada, the Supreme Person came;
The attributes and qualities which were assumed
When, to save the elephant, the Lotus-eyed came;
The attributes and qualities which were assumed*

*When, to save the poor Kuchela, the Lord of Veda came;
The attributes and qualities which were assumed
When, to save the boy, Dhruva, He came from Heaven;*

*Now, with all the attributes, all the qualities has come
He whom the gods adore, the Refuge of the Rejected.
The Lord of all the worlds, the Lord of infinite Glory,
As All Existence, as All Knowledge and All Bliss in one Form embodied
As Puttaparthi Sathya Sai, the Over lord of all that Is.*

God is known as Easwara, since He is the source and store of prosperity and power. He is known as Sankara, for He is the embodiment of sanctity and auspiciousness. God has no birth or death. He has no wants, no desires. There is no single thing which lacks and longs to acquire. But, man ignores the God who is the very basis of his life and refuses to recognise things as mere things. His mind has become a bundle of desires.

In Vedantic parlance, this striving and yearning, this desire which prompts men, is named Kama. When the spirit of inquiry gets sharper and deeper, it leads man beyond realms of the senses and even the feeble faculty of reason, beyond the stars and space, and helps him to dive into the boundless ocean of Bliss. Instead, if Kama gets bogged down in the distracting objective world, it plunges man in misery. When Kama is directed towards spiritual progress, it rewards man, filling his heart with Divine Delight. For, the Divine is free from mental modes or physical forms; it has no likes or dislikes; it is not bound by time or space. It is ever pure, ever conscious; it is free from the blemish of duality. Only persons endowed with unruffled serenity (Satwaguna) can have a Vision of the Divine (Sakshatkara), and achieve the heroic victory.

Sublimation of gunas

In money, there is no evil. In scholarship, there is no evil. In knowledge and intelligence, there is no evil. But, evil arises in the activities which man carries on with their help. Pure water has no colour. Poured into a black bottle, it appears black. Poured into a red bottle, it appears red. The water does not become black or red; the colour is due to what we have; done to it. When money, scholarship, cleverness, intelligence etc., are possessed by persons in whom Rajas (passion, emotion, extrovert qualities) predominates, they promote hatred, ambition and lust. When possessed by persons in whom Tamas (sloth, dullness, conceit etc.) predominates, they promote miserliness, greed and envy. When possessed, by persons in whom Satwa (equanimity, balance, purity) predominates, they promote love, compassion, urge to serve, the unity of all mankind, and World Peace.

The sublimation of character into the stage of Satwa is the duty which every one owes to himself. This is the path; this is the goal. You must try ceaselessly to tread the path and reach the goal.

God is the sole sustainer of human life—the basis, the structure, the consummation. Money cannot help him to cultivate godliness and merge in God, the source. Scholarship too is equally powerless. The Upanishad proclaims that release from death can be achieved; neither through entanglement in works, nor through one's progeny, nor through the accumulation of riches. It can

be gained only through Tyaga (acts of renunciation, detachment, unconcern, giving up). It is a pity that this warning is not heeded and man is engaged in mere grabbing and grasping. As a result he suffers from more and more bonds that get tighter and tighter.

Man's dharma

The best means to escape from this fate is to take refuge in the company of the good and godly, and journey along their beneficial path. This is the valid vesture (Dharma) that can protect man. One must take delight in wearing it and becoming worthy of it. Dharma also indicates the unchanging, genuine, nature of every entity, its essential characteristic. Consider a car, for example. Its shape is not its **is**-ness. It needs steering wheel and ball-bearings, tyres, lights and wires. These, however, do not constitute the Dharma of the car. Its Dharma is to transport the person safe and swift to **his** destination. The Dharma of man is to transport himself safe and swift to his destination, namely, the Divine. That duty has to be fulfilled. That destiny has to be realised. All the rest, attainments and achievements, are of secondary value, complementary, at best, to the main purpose. One must pursue this Dharma without faltering or failing in that duty. Of what avail is the length of years spent in living, if man is unaware of the meaning and purpose of life. It is not enough if one passes off as a human person and parades oneself as a good specimen of the race. He has to be judged on the basis of the motives of his actions and the ideals he follows. He has to recognise his Divine core and, attempt to unfold it in thought, word and deed.

Man cannot exist without God sustaining him. God too needs man in order to announce Himself. With no son, how can the father announce Himself as such? The word Nara (man) implies the concept of Narayana (God): Man creates God in his own image by the intensity of Sadhana and God creates man in His image by willing it to happen.

God and man

Most people are too weak to (conceive of Godhead, too weak in intellect and imagination. Egoism freezes flowing water into hard blocks of ice, but when the Sun of wisdom shines, they are softened and resume their real nature. Egoism prevents Sadhana and promotes intransigence and ignorance) intelligence gets perverted and the man becomes a fool. You may succeed in squeezing oil from sand or count the horns of rabbits, but you can never discover any notable virtue in such fools. Their greatest defect is their ingratitude to Providence.

Among the 1008 Names for the Sun, which the scriptures recommend for use during solar worship, are found four very, meaningful names—the destroyer of darkness (external and internal), the dispeller of fog (hesitation, doubt etc.), the destroyer of the enemy (darkness dare not face the Sun) and the destroyer of the ungrateful (ingratitude is the consequence of wrong outlook, distorted vision). The Sun is the light that makes the eyes see. So, the Sun punishes the ungrateful, by keeping away from such (that is to say, by rendering them 'blind'). The good they receive from the world is fast forgotten by the ungrateful; their hearts are rock on which it does not produce any impression. The grateful person will treasure as a gift even the smallest service, but, the ungrateful forgets the gift, however valuable, and even renders disservice to the giver.

"My love—the greatest treasure"

It is the nature of the world that every person has to encounter some one opponent or enemy. Sai alone does not find even a single enemy in the whole world. Some people following their own fantasy may assume that I dislike them. But; in my view; there is no one I do not love. All are dear to me. Let me-tell you that no one else in the world today has as much wealth, as much property, as much treasure as I have, not even the World Bank, not even the richest Emperors and Kings. What is that wealth, the property, that treasure? It is my selfless, universal Love. That uniquely potent Love has kept this body radiant and young. As the world goes, at the age of 60, the physique becomes weak and the mind loses its alertness. But, I skip along as fresh and active as ever. I see and hear, I play and sing, as bright and busy as a youth of sixteen. This sacred nature I have assumed will not allow physical or other weakness to hinder me.

Sour grapeism

Some people are misled by happenings that do not affect my Reality or my Purpose. They observe, with their feeble understanding, that a few have left my presence and they clamour that thereby my works are bound to be affected! Those who have left have done so, not because they do not like me, but because they did not get from me what they desired. Or, they could not receive here the status and respect available in the outer world. When they are questioned, they invent other reasons to explain their conduct. They do not realise that being with me and shaping their lives under my directions can be the source of even higher status and respect. I am glad, however, that they are contented with their lot, though they impute faults in me to buttress their action. That, too, is an act of service, a boon from which they draw 'benefits'.

Does the ocean depend on rivers for its existence or do rivers depend on the ocean for the rains that feed them? My status and success are based on my own will, my goodness, my Love. They do not grow or decline, when a few stay or depart. They alone are the beneficiaries or losers.

There was a garden of grape-vine, with thick bunches of ripe fruit. A fox which was passing by was delighted at the prospect of eating the juicy grapes. But, though it leaped high many times, it could not reach a single cluster. It was so exhausted that it dragged itself slowly away. A crow saw its plight. It cawed a question: "Brother Fox! Have you eaten grapes a stomach full?" The fox replied, "Disgusting! I didn't eat a single one. They are awfully sour." This is the explanation for their leaving the Presence.

They have the same foxy cleverness. They couldn't reach up to the standard set by Sai and so, they invent excuses.

The Sai reality

In fact, no one has the right or the reason to point a finger at any blot in me. My total selflessness, my compassionate heart full of eagerness to serve and save, my resolve to establish peace and prosperity, my determination to shower Ananda on the world, these are being manifested more and more from day to day and I am at all times in immeasurable Ananda. I am not affected by anxiety even for a moment. Consider! Is there any one in this world who can announce this? It is sheer ignorance that induces people to comment otherwise. When they experience my Love and witness the unfolding of my mission, the comments will cease, and the Reality that Sai is will be clear to them. That knowledge can bear fruit by transforming your

human-ness into Divinity, into Sai. **Brahma Vid Brahmaiva Bhavati.** (The knower of Brahman becomes Brahman Himself.)

Why ceiling on desires?

This project of transformation involves consideration of the problems that afflict the individual, the society, the nation and mankind. The rules and regulations laid down by Government cannot cure certain deep-rooted defects. So, the Sai Organisation was commissioned to promote among the members a ceiling on desires. People now yield, on account of weakness of will, to the temptations that clamour for their money. The richer they are, the more wasteful are the ways in which they spend them. Even a struggling middle class family attempts to adopt the spending habits of the reckless rich and suffers ruin. A worker drawing ten rupees as daily wages spends two rupees on drink, three on the Cinema and two more on some spree or other, forcing his family to starve. The message of placing a ceiling on desires and utilising the money thus saved into a fund was to use the money for social service among the villages, for the poor and the illiterate.

But, the underlying principle was generally neglected. What was offered to the fund was not savings deprived by desisting from desires. The old deleterious habits were not given up. Smoking, drinking etc. continue undiminished. The object of the programme was to put a brake on harmful desires and not the collection of money.

The power of Sai sankalpa

Of course, money is an essential requisite and those who have assumed responsibility for service projects do need it. Six thousand villages have been adopted by the units of the organisation and facilities for education and medicine are provided therein, besides roads and wells. When I decide on a project, the wherewithal for accomplishing has to be spontaneously available without any fund-raising campaign. My will has the power to concretise my plan. I willed that a College must rise in Puttaparthi; the Rajmatha of Nawanagar built it. In order to feed it with properly trained boys, I willed a Higher Secondary School; Bozzani from America asked that he be given the chance to build it. I thought that at this place education on Sai lines must be available to children from the Primary stage itself. Craxi, the brother of the Prime Minister of Italy, offered to build the School. At Bangalore, when I decided on a plan for a College and Hostel, Mrs. Elsie Cowan asked that she be given the privilege of completing it. Such is the might of my Sankalpa, my Will.

Free food for devotees

Another small event: For full eight days, hundreds of thousands of people are treated as guests and breakfast, lunch and dinner are provided in festival style. When ten persons are fed free, the host desires that it should appear with huge headlines in newspapers. But, who craves for publicity when one's dear relatives gather for meals at home? Though lakhs of people share in the hospitality, one finds no hurry and no parading.

When I entertained the idea of granting this boon to every one drawn to the Birthday festival, Dr. Bhaskara Rao from West Godavari District and Karunyananda from East Godavari District arrived at Kodaikanal and prayed that they be blessed with the sacred responsibility. I warned them that the lakhs would be too big a burden, but they persisted, saying: "With your blessings,

we can take on even crores.” And, promptly, without any fuss, 5000 bags of rice reached here from those two districts and from Krishna, Guntur and Nellore districts. Hundreds of bags of wheat, flour and soji arrived from Punjab, followed by the same number of sugar and jaggery bags from U. P. From Madras huge quantities of pulses were brought by members of the organisation. Did any one demand or ask for these? Can you get them by asking for them or demanding that they be given? Try and see what happens. Everything was offered spontaneously, silently, sincerely, with so much love and humility. This is their homage of Tyaga, of service through sacrifice.

A man should own wealth only as much as is essential. It is like the size of his shoes. If the shoes are too loose, he cannot walk; if they are too tight, he cannot wear them. Too much money is a torture; rich people will agree with this judgement. It is foolish to accumulate money and sit on the pile, which turns into garbage. Spread garbage over the cornfield, it will fertilise the crop and multiply the harvest. After all, how much and how long can a man enjoy? A dog can only lap up water, even from a huge lake. Like blood, money too should circulate to ensure health.

How the sevaks worked

Members of the organisation should understand and follow these ideals set before them. In fact, no other organisation has such selfless workers engaged in loving service. If you watch with an open eye, you find them cheerfully and enthusiastically labouring in the kitchens and serving the meals, cleaning and sweeping, though most of them are unaccustomed to manual work, and accommodating themselves in open grounds. Their faith has given them this fortitude. The volunteers and Seva Dal members, men and women, have toiled in the true spirit of dedication and surrender.

When the festival was just on, Kasturi repeated to me what he had heard over the radio. A cyclone was about to cross the coast, and enter Nellore and Ongole and cause heavy rains in Rayalaseema too. But, it did not happen. The devotion of the people gathered here and anxious to reach here was the shield that turned away the cyclone into insignificance. If it had swept in, devotees would have suffered much. Their devotion touched my heart and I willed that they should not be inconvenienced in any way. I have a heart, soft as butter, but butter too has to be warmed up in order that it may melt. Your devotion was the warmth. None has yet announced where the cyclone has gone! How can any one gauge the wonder?

Heroic messengers

Your disciplined devotion, your love, your fortitude are examples. It is not proper that I praise my own people. Westerners have come in large numbers, though everything here is discomfort for them. They are braving through all this. It is a real Tapas for each of them. You must devote your days, your actions, your intelligence and skills for transforming yourselves into heroic messengers of Dharma and Karma.

I desire one thing from you. Develop brotherhood with all. Adopt right conduct always. Give up selfish activity. Welcome all chances to serve the illiterate and the poor.

As part of the sixtieth Birthday Celebrations, I am prescribing a test, which you have to accept. When you undergo it and emerge victorious, you can be pronounced as real humans. The farmer

ploughs the field, sows the seed and watches the crop grow, until the grain is harvested. The next process is winnowing. The light chaff will then be carried away by the wind and the hard grain will stay. I shall start winnowing from now; the test will remove the chaff.

Sai and sevaks

Man justifies himself and proves his claim to be a worthy individual only through service (seva), undertaken sincerely, selflessly, and with no thought of worldly reward. Seva is the only path to self-realisation. It is the highest expression of love and of the sacrifice love involves. You have to expend yourselves in Seva, unto the very last breath. You cannot retire after certain years of Seva or when you reach a certain age. When you have such a Lord and Master, there should be no dearth of servants (sevaks). The Servants are the glory of the Lord. The Ahalya rock of steady Tapas had to earn the contact of the Divine Feet of Rama, to get Life, Love and Light. The resurrected Ahalya is the Glory of Rama. The Sathya Sai Prabhu (Lord) and the Sathya Sai Sevaks are inseparably bound by Love and Loyalty. Sai exists for you and you exist for Sai. We cannot be apart from each other.

One other point: A misgiving has spread; and it is causing confusion in people's minds; that after the sixtieth birthday; Swami will not be available and that a change will happen in Swami. Mine is not a changing nature. I will never be distant from devotees. I will be available to devotees more and more from now Sathya Sai is Sathya (Truth). How can Truth change? So, give up, all such guesses and imaginations and engage yourself in service of fellowmen. (cheers.)

Jhoola at Santhi Vedika

In the evening Bhagavan showered His benediction on lakhs of devotees by His gracious presence on a glittering silver jhoola in the Santhi Vedika. Senior students of the Sathya Sai Institute had got up a special musical concert programme for the function. Specially composed songs in Telugu, Hindi and English were rendered by them. Bhagavan fully enjoyed the programme.

After the jhoola, there was a display of fireworks, which was watched with delight by the vast crowds in the stadium.

Instrument of Faith

A friend, with whom I play and study, has listened to my endless tales of miracles and power of Bhagavan Baba with jest and plentiful teasing. But she didn't hinder me in my spiritual life. Instead, for form's sake, she once asked me for some of Bhagavan's Vibhuti, which cured her mother of the disease of the spine. This created faith in her mind.

It was the fourth day of our final examinations! As usual I went to my friend and asked her if she had prepared for it well. Instantly tears started pouring down her eyes. On that day she had the paper in Hindi in which she was very weak. In both the First and Second Terminal Examinations she had failed in this subject and even this time she was not at all prepared.

I gave her a Vibhuti packet from my compass box and advised her to eat a little and sprinkle the Vibhuti on the question paper and on the answer booklets, before reading the question paper. This calmed her a bit. There was still half an hour for the bell to go and so being in a class lower to me she went away under a tree with her own class mates to read.

But, I decided to follow her, in case she started crying all over again. But my supposition was wrong. She was silently reading away with a slight glint of satisfaction on her face. I left her.

After finishing my paper, I was eager to learn the story of my dear Vibhuti. My mind was caught in doubt and worry. I ran to the room where my friend was appearing for the paper. I saw her coming out of the examination hall, beaming with joy. She ran forward and pressed a kiss on my cheek. She had done very well in the paper and apart from passing she was sure to get first class marks in Hindi.

While I was following her homewards, I told her how I had run out of my class to hear the news! Now it was her turn to speak. She started scolding me saying, "So you don't have faith in your own words and the Vibhuti. Why did you doubt and fear?" She gave me a long lecture and opened my eyes. I thought, "I talk like a devotee—but it is she who has the faith. How wrong I was, to feel superior!"

—Miss Shiraz P. Pavri, Navsari

World Conference:

"Love is the only offering I accept"

"I accept only one offering from the World—Love, sacred selfless Love, manifested as service, as brotherhood, as tenderness of heart, as compassion," declared Bhagavan Baba, in His historic valedictory address to the Fourth World Conference of Sathya Sai Organisations on November 21, at the Hill View Stadium. Bhagavan concluded his discourse with ten directives to be observed by those in the Sai Organisations and others.

The ten directives included love of one's motherland, respect for all religions, universal brotherhood, purity of the home, elimination of bribery, self-service with regard to personal needs, eschewing jealousy and hatred, respect for the law, and the love of God.

Bhagavan's inspiring discourse was a fitting finale to the World Conference, which had brought to Prasanthi Nilayam the largest gathering of Sai devotees from every part of the world.

Besides 13,000 delegates who had come from 46 countries, the gathering of devotees in the Stadium exceeded four lakhs. The entire stadium grounds and all the galleries were fully occupied. Besides loudspeakers, arrangements had been made for video screens at a number of points to enable the widely dispersed gathering to get a closer view of Bhagavan and the proceedings on the dais.

After Sri V. Srinivasan had given a resume of the decisions reached at the conference, Sri Indulal Shah requested Bhagavan to deliver his valedictory discourse and bless the gathering.

Remedy for the world crisis

Bhagavan said:

We have here at the World Conference delegates from many countries, wedded to different cultures and traditions, languages and styles of dress, food etc. But, this variety should not hide from our vision, the unity of divinity inherent in all of you. The world today is afflicted with formidable problems and fast spreading fear-fear of war, of famine and of demonic terrorists, problems of racial, religious and regional conflicts, of economic recuperation and survival, of student indiscipline, of creedal clashes, of frenzy and fanaticism, of power-grabbing and extreme egoism. The only remedy for this creeping fear is an attitude of non-attachment, of Vairagyam.

When one is attached to the body-mind complex and the I-and-Mine limitation, fear is inescapable. The Advaitic awareness, that what we witness is but a super-imposition of your own mind on Reality, is the best cure: and service is the most effective Sadhana. Our deeds reveal our motives; our motives design our habits; our habits decide our character; our character determines our destination.

Deeds are the very roots of our fate. They sprout as birth, after death. The family and society into which one is born lead us through their moral code and the journey ends when the goal is reached. Jaya and Vijaya, the doorkeepers of Vaikuntha, the abode of God, fell into demonic careers on the world, as the result of an impertinent gesture against holy sages. Prahlada, though a demon by birth, attained the Presence of God as a result of his total dedication to Divinity. The mind-stuff of the former two was polluted with the poison of egoism, while that of Prahlada was cleansed by surrender to His Will.

Service rendered without egoism, however small, can be highly beneficial. It must emanate from a tender heart which responds to every sob and groan and is ready to renounce and suffer gladly. One must have the eagerness to get involved with others to feel fullness thereby. One must cultivate forbearance and inner strength, in order to avoid resentment at criticism and ridicule while one is engaged in joyful service. People are incurably perverse. If one wears good clothes, they say he is showy; if he dresses poorly, they say he is eccentric; if he observes silence, they say he is an idiot; if he talks, they call him a windbag. Do not characterise others thus; keep your mind pure and unaffected.

Five upa-pranas

The scriptures speak of five vital airs (Pranas) that energise the functions of the human body. More vital than these five are the five sustainers of inner health and strength, the Upa-pranas—Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa. Of these, Prema (Love) is the basic element, the motivator of the other four.

Man is certainly the crown of creation, but, nevertheless, he is born weak and dependent. The culture and traditions of the society, family, country and religion, that is to say, *history* has its impact on his life and thought. It moulds his *individuality* and endows him with loyalty and

affinity with *a nationality*. Thus, lie grows not as an isolated being, but with the consciousness of the divinity in all, which culminates in the experience of *unity*. These five are profoundly pervasive in this country and the word HINDU, by which those born here are known, is of deep significance. In an orange, many slices—separate and separable, each one as sweet as the other,—are enclosed and denoted by a single rind. So too "in India and the world, the one enfolds the many."

The four Purusharthas (life-goals), Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha have been laid down to teach man that he should earn Artha (wealth) through Dharma (right means) and direct Kama (desire) towards Moksha (release from bondage.) But man ignores Dharma and Moksha and struggles to direct Kama towards Artha. His sense of values has become topsy-turvy: for example, he is delighted when the sun rises and happy when it sets, for he can work during day and rest at night. He does not realise that the sun is with each passing day shortening the time allotted to him for earthly existence. He does not remind himself that the earth is but a caravanserai and that he has to leave behind all that he claims to possess.

Highest form of sadhana

So, the wise ones use money, strength, intelligence, skills, aptitudes and opportunities for helping others and making their lives happier. Thus, they win Divine Grace, for Seva is the highest form of worship. There are in this country millions who are hungry, desperate and miserable. I am directing you to limit the intake of food to actual need, so that you can share it with the poor. Do not waste food. Do not fritter away money for harmful purposes; use it for helping others. Do not waste time and energy; allow others to benefit by your skills.

Though desires have not been curtailed sixty lakhs of rupees have been collected from the States in India, as an offering to Swami, ostensibly as the sum so saved. I accept only one offering from the World—Love, sacred selfless Love, manifested as service, as brotherhood, as tenderness of heart, as compassion. Not this day, but all days in the past and for all days in future, money does not attract me or affect me. My hand is for giving, not receiving. Therefore I am returning this amount to the State Presidents themselves, so that they may give back the money to the districts which have contributed it. Let them utilise it for some service activity under the supervision of a Special Committee and the guidance of the State President.

Human family

I am emphasising another point today. You are using the name Sai family while addressing devotees, and referring to yourselves as members of the Sai family. This is a narrow, restrictive expression. I have no limits or restriction. I am in all, for all. There can be no distinct Sai family. Whatever the Name and Form they address, Rama, Krishna, Sai etc. they all belong to Me, to God. To assume that God responds to one Name only and can be adored in one Form only is a sacrilege.

The ten directives

Cultivate love and cleanse your hearts with that Love. Spend that Love in service and that will make it grow. I am now giving you, members and workers of the organisation, ten directives for you to follow. The first is: Love and serve the Motherland. At the same time do not hate or hurt the motherland of others. Do not defame or dislike other countries. The second is: Adore all

religions; they are all pathways to the one God. The third is: Treat all men as your brothers. All men are of one caste. Have faith in the Truth that Mankind is one indivisible entity. The fourth is: Keep your homes and the environs clean. This will ensure health and joy to you and society. The fifth is: Do not promote beggary by throwing coins at an outstretched palm. Help the beggar to earn a livelihood for himself. Provide food and shelter, in every town and village, for those who are too weak or aged. The sixth is: Do not get things done by offering bribes; do not accept bribes from others. The seventh is: While engaged in worldly activities, it is dangerous to pay attention to the caste or creed of people, for this will breed hatred and envy. Keep your caste strictly at home; do not parade it before society. The eighth is: Do not depend on others for serving your personal needs. This will make you lazy. Be self-reliant. How can a person so dependent serve others? The ninth is: Adore God. Abhor Sin. The tenth, which is relevant for all the nine, is: Observe the laws, rules and regulations laid down by the State and be ideal citizens.

Follow these directives with enthusiasm and with love and be examples for others, wherever you are.

THE TEN-FOLD PATH TO DIVINITY
(For members of the organisation and others)

1. Love and Serve the Motherland; do not hate or hurt the motherland of others.
2. Honour every religion; each is a path way to the ore God.
3. Love all men without distinction; know that mankind is a single community.
4. Keep your home and its environs clean; it will ensure health and happiness for you and for society.
5. Do not throw coins when beggars stretch their hands for alms; help them to become self-reliant. Provide food and shelter, love and care, for the sick and the aged.
6. Do not tempt others by offering bribes or demean yourself by accepting bribes.
7. Do not develop jealousy, hatred or envy on any count.
8. Do not depend on others to serve your personal needs; become your own servant, before proceeding to serve others.
9. Observe the laws of the State and be an exemplary citizen.
10. Adore God. Abhor Sin.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba Valedictory Discourse, 21-11-85 Prasanthi Nilayam IV World Conference

Medicos' Mission of Service

Among the notable service activities of Sai devotees during the Birthday Festival fortnight, the work done by doctors, who ran several medical camps in and around Prasanthi Nilayam, deserves special mention.

Doctors from all parts of India and from several overseas countries took part in the medical camps. They were assisted by students of the Sathya Sai Institute and Seva Dal volunteers. Their mission of service began on November 14th, when teams of doctors and para-medical personnel, including specialists from the United Kingdom, were flagged off by Bhagavan Baba as they left in buses for villages in the Sathya Sai taluk to conduct rural medical camps at eight centres. The medical teams and Sai Institute students had assembled in the morning at the Sathya Sai Hill View Stadium in front of the Ganesha image installed in the old stage facing the stadium. Bhagavan ceremonially cut the ribbon to inaugurate the programme and blessed the teams.

The three-day medical camps attracted large number of villagers who came for treatment for various ailments. Dr. Upadhyaya, eye specialist from U.K., who was in charge of the eye camp at Bukkapatnam, was apprehensive about the condition of the operation theatre there. On seeing Bhagavan's picture, with the slogan, "Why fear when I am here?" he felt completely reassured and, with Bhagavan's grace, all the 139 operations were successful and the patients were discharged within a week, with spectacles for their use. In all, 17, 700 persons were treated at the camps. In addition to the eye camp at Bukkapatnam, a polio camp was run by Dr. Vyaghreswarulu.

At Prasanthi Nilayam itself, which witnessed an unprecedented influx of lakhs of devotees from all over the world, ten medical camps were organised (five for men and five for women and children) under the overall leadership of Dr. C. G. Patel and Dr. A. Bapuraju. The camps were kept open all the twenty-four hours, two at Poornachandra Auditorium and the others at different points in the Prasanthi Nilayam complex and the Hill View Stadium. Over 275 doctors (including 100 lady doctors) rendered service at these camps (from November 14 to November 28). A special clinical laboratory was setup to conduct clinical tests. Patients requiring inpatient treatment were sent to the Sathya Sai Hospital.

Over 51,000 patients were attended to at the Nilayam camps, most of them for common ailments like cold, cough, fever, and minor injuries. Eighteen fracture cases were attended to by orthopaedic specialists. An emergency mobile squad, with ambulance and necessary resuscitation equipment, was kept ready at the Hill View Stadium, where the main functions connected with the Birthday festival were held and where the crowds at times exceeded three lakhs. In addition, a squad of doctors, with emergency kits, went round the various sheds and tents and buildings, which were crammed with devotees and delegates, and attended to the ailing on the spot.

In their report to Bhagavan, the doctors in charge recorded that despite the lakhs of devotees gathered at the Nilayam for the festival for over two weeks, the general health and hygiene of all of them were normal and no epidemic of any kind occurred. There could be no greater testimony

to the Grace and love of Bhagavan. The doctors were grateful to Swami for the opportunity afforded to them to render service to devotees on a memorable occasion.

New Space Theatre for S.S. Institute

On November 22nd, the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning achieved the unique distinction of being the only University in India having a most modern Space Theatre (Planetarium) for educational purposes from the primary level to the University stage.

The Space Theatre, which was built in record time, under the continuous and direct supervision of Bhagavan Baba, was inaugurated by Him on November 22nd in the morning in the presence of a distinguished international gathering.

It will be one of the star attractions of Prasanthi Nilayam. The dome of the theatre is faceted like a diamond and painted in different colours and is an architectural showpiece. The entrance to the theatre is modern in design. The ground floor foyer is to be used for an exhibition which will explain what the viewers in the space theatre will see.

Built by the Spitz Space Systems of the USA, the planetarium instruments employed in the space theatre provide a star field of 40,541 images including 88 recognised constellations and 57 navigational stars; besides Globular Clusters and Open Clusters, the Milky Way, Magellanic clouds and Nebulae. With the computer control and over 30 special effect projectors, almost any celestial or meteorological observation can be reproduced on the sky indoors. The tilted dome (hyposphere), a new innovation in planetarium projection, permits unidirectional viewing as in a cinema hall. The viewers observe events in the same direction as they are sitting and at their eye level. Thus they become participants in the programme. The theatre has facilities which permit its use as a class room. The planetarium has well equipped automatable multimedia, facilities which provide opportunities for multipurpose, interdisciplinary use beyond the realm of astronomy. With primary, secondary, college and university education at one complex at the Sathya Sai institute, the planetarium will act as a catalyst in not only creating interest but also increasing the understanding of the basic concepts of astronomy, mathematics, physics and other disciplines. Among the programmes contemplated for the entire range of education are night and day, Solar System, Seasons, Constellations and Zodiacal Signs.

At the inaugural preview in the theatre, witnessed by Bhagavan and special invitees, the show went on for an hour, with a commentary in English and background music in Indian classical style. It was demonstrated that the theatre could be used for presenting the configuration of the sky at any time in the past or the future. By way of illustration, the picture of the heavens as on November 23, 1926, the date of Bhagavan's advent and the picture of the sky as on November 23, 1985, Bhagavan's sixtieth birthday, were shown. It was a thrilling experience for every one.

WORLD CONFERENCE:

"Practise what you Preach"

Inaugurating the World Conference of Sri Sathya Sai Organisations, Bhagavan Baba declared that selfless service alone will please Sai. He gave the delegates two specific directives: "Don't preach what you do not practise. Act according to what you say. Remember the significance of these directives and carry on your work in a spirit of dedication." Beginning his discourse with a verse, Bhagavan said:

The quest for God does not mean doing bhajans, japa, worship and the like. These are merely means for achieving mental concentration and subduing desires and aversions. Why cry out, asking, "Where is God?" He resides in the heart. Offer service and receive Love. Thereby experience the bliss of Self-realisation.

In the land of Bharat two great streams of Higher Wisdom have been flowing from ancient times. One is Vedic Wisdom. In this, the Karma Kanda (rituals) is primary. It has its origin in Brahman. The Rishis received the Vedic intimations and propagated their message. The second stream is the scriptural heritage of the Puranas. In this Duty is paramount. The Rishis acquired them and spread their message. Both these streams are of equal validity.

The goal of Karma is Jnana and for Jnana Karma is the base. To combine the two in practice constitutes Seva. Through right conduct, the mind is purified and a pure mind leads to Atmic bliss. Hence, the duties that are enjoined on one have to be discharged. The foremost duty of man is to do good deeds with a pure heart. There should, however, be no egoistic feeling, "I have done these good deeds." It is not right to entertain the slightest desire for enjoying the fruits of these actions. Egoism and desire are the cause of bondage to Karma. Desire is the barrier between the pure mind and devotion to the Self. To regard the performance of right action as one's duty and to eschew egoism in one's conduct and desire in one's motives is real sacrifice.

Karma yoga

Karma yoga teaches how actions should be performed. It enjoins duty for duty's sake. "Yogah Karmasu Kausalam" (Yoga is excellence in action.) It enables man to recognise the image of the Divine in him. Righteous action and control of the senses are essential for the cultivation of universal love and goodness. It is the foundation for the good life.

Not all realise the true meaning of Karma Yoga. Many look down upon acts like cleaning of streets, relief to the sick, feeding the hungry, and service to the poor and the destitute as undignified. This is a grievous mistake. The supreme Lord of the three worlds, Sri Krishna Himself, when He came down to proclaim the divine destiny of man, rendered service to beasts and birds. He tended horses and cows with love. In the great Kurukshetra war, disinclined to wield the sword, He was content to figure as a mere charioteer. He made known thereby the ideal of selfless service.

The underlying truth of Karma Yoga is the demonstration of the unity that subsumes the diversity in the universe. Desireless action (Nishkama karma) demonstrates and promotes the Love principle. There is no greater spiritual sadhana than service. The tendency to distinguish

between the spiritual path, the path of service and the path of knowledge and regard them as separate is wrong. The three are not distinct; they are one. Seva (Service) is spiritual knowledge. Seva is the primary means to acquire Divine Grace. Without being a devoted follower you cannot become a worthy leader. Without being a Kinkara (one who is ready to do any work) you cannot become a Sankara (the Divine). Each one has to realise this truth. Service to society is the highest good. It adds to the joy of life and enhances its savour like salt.

Universal love sweetens life like nourishing food. The joy of giving makes life blissful. The dhyana (meditation) that is sustained by service is the real life-breath. Life requires, four elements: sweetness (ruchi), strength (pusti), fragrance (sugandham) and the vital breath (Prana). The unity of these four makes up the human entity. When you sit down for a meal, if there is no salt in the dal, you keep it aside. If that is the case, should not there be some sweetness and taste in a life led for sixty or seventy years? What is it that gives savour to human existence? Good qualities alone impart savour to life. Good conduct alone is the right source of strength to a man. A man without good conduct becomes a weak and pitiable creature. Again, good qualities like forbearance and sacrifice lend fragrance to the life of man. Good thoughts and feelings should be the life-breath of man. Without good qualities, righteous actions, and the attitudes of forbearance and sacrifice, life is worth nothing.

The light of seva

Sai's philosophy does not lie in encouraging devotees to sit in a corner, control their breath and go on uttering "Soham! Soham! Soham!" "Oh, Sadhaka! Arise! gird up your loins! Plunge into social service!" This is the Sai message. No room should be given for laziness and indifference. Controlling your senses, you should take to social service. A life not dedicated to service is like a dark temple. It is the abode of evil spirits. Only the light of seva can illumine the spiritual aspirant.

Therefore embark upon service to your fellowmen without any expectation of reward. Do not waste your time in profitless talk. Of what avail is it merely to mouth such expressions as that the Lord is All-knowing, Omnipresent and Omnipotent? You clap your hands when these epithets are used, deriving pleasure from simply hearing them. How many act according to the words they speak? There must be harmony between what is said and what is done.

All spiritual exercises like japa and dhyana are efforts to control the mind and prepare it for the journey to the Divine. Knowing the way is not enough. The path must be traversed to reach the destination. That journey is service to society. This service must be done with the awareness that the Divine dwells in every heart, in every individual and in every living thing. In the Bharatiya tradition one of the beautiful names of Bhagavan is "Sarvabhootha-antaraatma"—the Self that is the indweller in all living beings. To worship this Supreme Self residing in all beings and to experience this Self no separate temple or shrine is necessary. The body is verily the temple of God. The eternal Self resides in this temple of the body as the Divine that sustains the individual Jiva (self). Forgetting this truth, men beautify only the temple and are concerned only about its external appearance. They do not consider the basic Divine Indweller who sustains everything.

The body is not primary. What is important is the Indwelling Spirit. Keeping the goal of self-realisation in view, you must engage yourselves in service till the destination is reached.

Selfless, dedicated, pure-hearted service is the means. When the entire life is devoted to this purpose, direct experience of the Divine can take place. Eschew as far as possible attachments and aversions. Every effort must be made to keep the mind and body unpolluted.

*Know, oh man, Grama Seva is Rama Seva!
When love overflows it is Rama Rajya
There is no progress without Love
Without Service there is no hope for man.*

It is through service that man can expect to redeem his life. He is not a man at all who has no kindness and love in him. The path to Self-realisation lies through Love and Service. Cultivation of love is the first step. Faith is the basis for love. When Faith and Love are combined, Peace is attained. And in that peace resides Truth. Truth reveals the power of sacrifice (Tyaga), which alone holds the key to immortality.

Self-confidence is the basis of faith. How can a man who is not sure about his own future over the next few days, have faith in God? Only the man who has faith in himself, can have faith in God. Nara (man) is Narayana and Narayana is Nara. Love is the link that binds the two. With love as the motive force, and seva as the means, the aspirant should seek to attain the supreme goal of life.

Practice and precept

Embodiments of love! You have participated in many conferences, but what have you accomplished thereby? Without putting into practice the decisions taken, what is the use of endless debates and long resolutions? Conferences of such a nature are a sheer waste of time and money. You must try to implement at least one or two of the decisions. There is no use in listening to talks if you do not make use of the knowledge gained from them after you go out from the Conference.

Nowadays even avowedly spiritual organisations are involved in business. Sathya Sai organisations should never become such commercial institutions. The only kind of commerce in which they can indulge is: from heart to heart, from love to love. It is in such a sublime exchange that they should take part. They should have no financial or other material involvement. Organisations which get entangled in money or property do not grow. We should be concerned with genuine, God-oriented, heart-to-heart association. Seva must be done hand in hand in comradeship. This will demonstrate the unity of the Cosmic Being. The heart does not blossom out through the mere study of books or by listening to discourses. It is only the cultivation of love that breaks the knots binding the heart. One who does no service himself has no right to call upon others to serve. The right to speak has to be earned by doing service. Seva must be regarded as sadhana and service rendered to any one must be looked upon as service to God. To develop such an attitude of spontaneous love towards those whom one serves should be the primary aim of Sai organisations.

Selfless service

If there is no spirit of sacrifice in the bhajan or meditation you do, however earnestly you may do it, it becomes a self-interested exercise. There is self-interest in seeking one's salvation

(Moksha). To seek only your own future is equally selfish. To be concerned about your own Ananda (bliss) is also selfishness. Only the man who gives up his self-interest and regards the happiness of others as his own happiness and devotes himself to their well-being, is a truly selfless person. The Lord will love only those who love others. If you seek to win the Lord's love, you have to love others. You cannot win the love of others if you do not love them. Without worrying about what has happened in the past and without concern for the future, strive to make the best use of the present by cultivating love and doing service.

Many reasons are given for the problems in the world which we face today. But the root causes are really two. The old ruminate over the past and spend their time expatiating on the good old times when they were young and all their achievements and enjoyments in the past. What is past is past. What use is there in recalling them? As for the youth, they are engaged in imagining fanciful plans for their future after their studies and their service careers. The future is in fact unpredictable. No one knows for certain what the morrow will bring. What use is there in worrying about the unknown? The old absorbed in the past and the young concerned about the future, are both ignoring the present. This is the real problem. We should really be concerned about the Divine present. Only if you make the present holy and pure, can you attain goodness and purity in the future. Hence, avail yourself of the golden opportunity that has come to you now, without misusing it, and redeem your lives by engaging in service. Through seva you can experience divinity and inexpressible bliss. You can be an ideal to others.

Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa are in us like the five vital airs (pancha pranas). We think the five Pranas (Prana, Apana, Udana, Samana and Vyana) are protecting this body. But it is Truth, Right Conduct, Love, Peace and Non-Violence which give real happiness to the body. These are the real 'pancha pranas' (the five life-sustainers). In no circumstance should these vital principles be departed from or given up. Render service to society with these principles in your mind and with broad-minded dedication to the well-being of all. That alone will please Sai. Sai rejoices when Seva is done. All that Sai says or does is Seva. By acting according to what Sai says and does, I hope you will derive the joy of the Self.

You have come here from distant parts of the world, at great expense and personal inconvenience. Having come, you should try to imbibe good thoughts and noble feelings so that you may go back with the determination to lead exemplary lives and engage yourselves in worthy deeds which make your lives sublime. This is my benediction for you all.

Before I conclude, I wish to give you two directives which will make you understand the significance of this Conference. One is: Practise what you preach. Act according to what you say. The other is: Don't preach what you do not practise. If you talk about something which you do not practise yourself, it is deceit. If you do what you say, it is an index of greatness. Vyasa has said: "If you cannot do what you talk about, that is sin. To do what you say is purity." Remember the significance of these two statements and carry on your work in a spirit of dedication. Remember that world welfare and peace cannot be achieved without selfless service to mankind.

"Integration of the world community"

The Conference then adjourned. At the afternoon session, three prominent speakers were invited to speak on the theme of the conference, "Integration of the World Community."

Dr. John S. Hislop (of USA) said that the three parts of the Sai programme, namely, spiritual practice, service and education in human values will have a tremendous influence in all countries and bring about the desired change in the minds of men all over the world. He gave a number of practical suggestions for carrying out these three areas of work. He said that no undue publicity was needed-for their work. Even without fanfare and high pressure propaganda Sai devotees can achieve their goal as "we have the divine guidance and grace of Bhagavan Baba which will give us the requisite strength."

Mr. Antonio Craxi, Member of the World Council, said; "The world community has to overcome many obstacles to reach a satisfactory state of integration and to achieve peace and happiness. Today jealousy, greed, hate, lust, political crime and ego contaminate every field of social life. Divinity is the integrative element required to bring back the community along the right path. Bhagavan Baba alone has a clear idea of the situation and knows what needs to be done. We have to remove from the grasp of evil forces the very instruments which they use to weaken the human mind and destroy humanity. One of the most tragic phenomenon of modern times is the diffusion of tamasic literature and obscene publications which offend every sense of decency. A campaign has to be conducted in all countries against the printing of such foul literature. The campaign is already on in Italy led by the Sathya Sai Organisation. The unifying power of the community is God and on the basis of this reality, the human community will find the way to establish a perfect integration and inaugurate an era in which the brotherhood of man and fatherhood of God will prevail."

Prof. V. K. Gokak said that the Sathya Sai Organisation will not be able to promote the integration of the world community without achieving integration and unity within itself. The Sai organisation is not a propagandist body, a bureaucracy or even a theocracy. It is a God-intoxicated brotherhood not in the letter but in the spirit. Every member of the Sai organisation has to say to himself what Swami says: "What I see is truth; what I do is Dharma; What I feel is peace; and What I live is Love." If every Sai devotee lives up to these four basic values of Truth, Dharma, Peace and Love, he will be able to influence the community around him and thereby transform the world situation. Transformation of the consciousness of people is what has to be brought about. Since the Divine has come down in human form and is guiding the activities of the Sai Organisation, the desired goal can be achieved. The love of Bhagavan Baba is the only hope for the world today.

New books released

Bhagavan Baba was then invited to release the new publications that had been brought out by the Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust, by Sai Organisations in India and overseas, and by individual devotees as an offering to Bhagavan on His Sixtieth Birthday.

Bhagavan "released" the publications by unveiling a screen covering the new books on display on the stage.

The Conference then adjourned. During the next three days the delegates divided themselves into sub-committees to consider various aspects of the activities of the Sai Organisation in relation to the objective of promoting integration of the world community.

The World Council had prepared discussion papers for the different sub-committees dealing with spiritual sadhana, education in human values, Bala Vikas, Seva Dal, rural development and setting up of Sathya Sai Charitable Trusts and Foundations. The subcommittees of Indian delegates held their meetings in the Poornachandra Auditorium, while the Overseas delegates held their discussions in the Sathya Sai Institute Auditorium.

Valedictory session

The Valedictory Session of the World Conference was held on the morning of November 21, at the Hill View Stadium. All the delegates came in a procession to the Stadium.

Bhagavan was received with cheers on arrival.

Dr. Michael Goldstein, Member of the World Council, welcoming Bhagavan to the Valedictory meeting, said:

"Let us express our heartfelt gratitude to the Lord who has answered the prayers and yearning that we have conveyed to Him over numerous lifetimes that He should walk among us and lead us to the glory of our divine heritage. It has been said that God is love. He is so full of love, he is called an ocean of love. Just as waters of the sea rise as vapour to eventually fall as rain and flow through streams and rivers back to the sea, so too does love rise from God in the form of wisdom to eventually shower upon the world as grace and to flow as devotion back to reunite with the Divine. All of us carry drops of that Divine love which impels us to move toward the Divine. It is our good fortune that God has enabled us to join the great river of His organization which flows towards Him sustaining millions and millions of people along the way with loving service.

"Delegates of Swami"

If each drop of the river endeavours to remain pure and unpolluted by selfishness, then the whole river would be a pure and glorious confluence. So each of us should try to protect the pristine purity of the Divine love which God sends us to serve and sustain creation. Each drop of dew which whispers down through the serene skies, each drop of rain which separates itself from the flying clouds, comes down sure and straight as a Divine delegate to find and fill nature's needs. Each one of us is a delegate of Swami to the world. Swami is the personification of sweet and sustaining love. Each one of us should try to carry and convey that Divine love to serve and sustain people stumbling through the desert sands of selfishness.

Selfishness has turned this beautiful world of God into an arid desert. People are now inclined to chase mirages created by the heat of selfish passions rather than to try to find the rivers and oases of selfless love.

Swami exhorts us to be examples and He has set His own wonderful example before us to follow. He has said that His life is His Message and each day of His life is so full of sweet and sustaining love that even if we can follow his example and attain a millionth part of Swami's Love, we can sweeten all the lives with which we come in contact. I pray that Swami will bless us with the ability to follow his example and to convey through our lives His love and Message to sustain and sweeten the lives of those other children of His who are denied love and who need

selfless service, so that human lives may become more lovable and livable and the world which He has blessed with his physical presence may become a better and more beautiful place.

The pledge

"Dearest Bhagavan, We, your humble devotees from many distant lands, from all of the inhabited continents of the earth, from 46 different nations, we recognize that life is precious. That it is a time span of consciousness that You have given. We pledge not to squander this priceless and sacred treasure. We pledge that we will strive to implement the decisions taken here today, that we will fulfill our responsibilities as Sai devotees to ourselves, to the brothers and sisters of our respective nations, and to the world at large. We pray that you, in Your Divine Benevolence, will permit us to serve the Divine cause always, faithfully and effectively. Jai Sai Ram. Jai Bhagavan."

Sri V. Srinivasan, Vice-Chairman of the World Council, then gave a resume of the decisions and recommendations of the Conference, which had been submitted to Bhagavan for his approval. (A printed copy of the decisions and recommendations was made available to all the delegates on November 24.)

Sri Indulal Shah then requested Bhagavan to bless the delegates with his Valedictory Address. (Swami's address is published separately).

Conference decisions

The following is a summary of the decisions of the Conference which were given in a printed pamphlet distributed to all the delegates on November 24th:

The conference desires that there should be integration first of all within the Sai Organisation. This can be achieved by having as guiding principles on a Global basis the 4 objectives as set out by the 60th Birthday International Committee. These 4 objectives are:

- (i) ***National Health and Welfare:*** To add to this by putting in more man-hours in well planned activities for the well being of the weaker sections of society.
- (ii) ***Strengthening of spiritual base:*** To intensify our faith in Bhagavan's teachings by improving our own Sadhana through spiritual activities of all the wings of the organisation and through educational activities.
- (iii) ***Spreading the Message of Sri Sathya Sai:*** To devise ways and means of spreading the message of Sri Sathya Sai through specialised activities stressing Sathya, Dharma, Shanthi, Prema and Ahimsa:
- (iv) ***Ceiling on Desires:*** To put in practice the teaching of Bhagavan Baba of putting a ceiling on desires and exemplify it through our own savings by cutting down all unnecessary expenditure.

Every Bhajan Centre will hereafter be treated as a Sai Community Service Centre, and will be the conduit through which each of the 3 wings of the Organisation viz. Spiritual, Service and Educational, will attempt to implement the 4 objectives in an integrated manner.

As far as possible, office-bearers should attempt to mobilise the efforts of the 3 wings jointly for an activity to fulfill a particular objective. By this process, full opportunity is given to members to acquire and use skills in the service activities. At the same time, a spirit of team work will be developed, which will project the total resources of the Sai Organisation rather than only those of the individual segments: As the first step towards integration of the World Community, the Conference directs that the following activities under each objective be carried on in every country.

1. National Health and Welfare

- (a) Blood Donation
- (b) Service to the Handicapped

2. Strengthening of Spiritual base

Training of the Cadre of Workers in Human Values.

3. Spreading the Message of Sri Sathya Sai

Publication of certain Sai Literature on an universal basis.

4. Ceiling on Desires

Ceiling on Desires to be made obligatory as a way of life for every Sai devotee. Ceiling on desires must now become a way of life and not something which is limited by the 60th Birthday celebrations. It must be clearly understood that this is the only way to achieve happiness not only for the individual but for the society and the country. Nations can live in peace with each other only through limitations of individual wants and needs. Bhagavan has already guided us that we should not waste food, money, energy or Time.

The local Samitis have to re-assure the people that if at all they save the money by their ceiling on desires, it will be their own option as to how to use it judiciously for a good cause.

All Trusts (excepting the Central Trust and the Hospital Trust), Boards etc. that have been set up now and that will be established in future, will function under the control and guidance of the World Council and should function in a coordinated manner with it in fulfilling the 4 objectives.

Sai Gopala's Godaan

An international setting was provided for the memorable Go-daan programme on November 20th, when Bhagavan presented individually to the lucky villagers sixty milch cows and their first-born calves, in the presence of a vast gathering in the Hill View Stadium.

The scheduled programme for the morning was bhajans by Overseas Delegates. Bhagavan gave darshan to over 500 delegates from overseas, who had lined up in front of the Santhi Vedika to sing their bhajans in different languages. The bhajans began with the prayer, "Charanam namosthute, Baba," sung by a chorus in a 4-part symphony, followed by canons and hymns from Germany.

Bhagavan arrived while the bhajans were going on, headed by students chanting Vedic hymns.

After giving darshan to the overseas delegates, Bhagavan performed the go-daan ceremony, giving to each villager a cow, a calf and a bucket (for watering the animals) with His Divine hands. The donees had been carefully chosen from Puttaparthi and the surrounding villages so as to ensure that the animals were looked after well.

The cows themselves had been brought from Kangayam in Coimbatore district, which is known for its famous breed of cattle and the tradition of its cattle-breeders. (The Kangayam bull is the model for the Nandi figures installed in Siva temples in South India.) Bhagavan had insisted that each cow should be brought with its first-born calf. All the cows were brought in lorries in October and were kept in the Gokulum at Puttaparthi to acclimatise them to the conditions in the Andhra area. The cows and calves were led in procession from Gokulum by students. It was a moving sight for thousands to witness Sai Gopala presenting the cows with such love to the thrice-blessed donees. While Bhagavan was giving away the cows, the overseas delegates continued their bhajans in English and other languages.

The Many with the One

They came in hundreds from far and near, from skyscrapers and suburban villas, from towns and villages through land and sea and air to a sacred Indian hamlet, Puttaparthi, nestling amidst a ring of hills, on the bank of a fickle stream, away from airports and even railway stops. They came from Himalayan valleys, Rajasthan deserts, Kerala seashores, Vindhyan forests, Gangetic plains, from factories, clinics, fields and laboratories, on week-long journeys, to spend one full week in the Presence of the Avatar of the Age, and to offer Him homage on His sixtieth Birthday.

They were Presidents, Chairmen, Convenors, Secretaries, Co-ordinators, Teachers, Editors, Delegates and workers of the worldwide Sathya Sai Seva Organisation eager to communicate their gratitude to the Lord for the Love That was showered on them and for the opportunities given to them, to use Mat Love for brightening and lightening the lives of fellowmen. Those who have toiled in order to bring Peace, Harmony, Light and joy to 6000 villages of India were also hurrying to the Source of their strength.

They were men and women of many creeds, castes, countries and continents, engaged in a hundred professions and endowed with a thousand skills company directors and commuters, scientists and technicians, psychiatrists and physicians, poets and philosophers, monks and mystics, dialecticians and schoolmen, pundits and performers, artistes and administrators each one eager to know himself and to love his neighbour as himself.

Their cultures and traditions were as varied as East Indian and West Indian, American and African, Arabic and Mexican, Maori and Mongolian, but they were all fascinated by the voice of Sai, echoing in their hearts. Years of yearning and months of purification and preparation bore fruit when these thousands reached the Holiest of Holy spots on Earth, Puttaparthi, in time for the World Conference and Birthday festivals.

Meanwhile, Puttaparthi was joyously getting ready to receive, accommodate and provide hearty hospitality to the hundreds of thousands converging by car and cart, bus and rail, plane and scooter, on the Valley of Peace where Sai resided.

Schools and Colleges, hostels and dormitories were kept vacant. Hundreds of tents and scores of shamianas were pitched. New roads were laid and tarred. Bore wells and overhead tanks were constructed. An extensive area was leveled; and transformed into the Hill View Stadium, an imposing dais was built facing the amphitheatre and sanctified by artistic idols and paintings. Long galleries were built on the hill slopes to seat the onlookers. Dozens of flats were readied in newly built rotunda. Dining halls and kitchens arose on a massive scale. Enormous quantities of all varieties of provisions poured in from all quarters. Swami willed and Puttaparthi was ready.

And, in the first few days of November, the Nilayam campus was choke-full of volunteers, specially trained security personnel, Seva Dal members (men and women) to help the handicapped and the aged and keep the area spick and span, and guide the crowds. Cooks and helpers, the North Indian, South Indian, Western and other day-long kitchens equipped to serve breakfast, lunch and dinner. Flags and festoons lent colour and beauty to the newly painted Mandir and Gopuram and flats. Floral arches led the devotees along to the Stadium and the architectural gem, the dais, named Santhi Vedika.

During the World Conference, the Convocation and the Birthday Festival, Puttaparthi afforded unmistakable proof that the Integration of the Human Community which was the theme of the Conference, was proceeding apace. One could sense the four hundred thousand hearts, responding in harmonious, unison, to the vibrations of Swami's Love.

When they were returning, albeit reluctantly, to their fields of service, their eyes sparkled with reinforced Hope, their thoughts were charged with ampler Love, their hearts were inspired by deeper faith and their words were sanctified with Sweetness and Light.

—*N. Kasturi*

FESTIVAL FEATURES:

Veteran Devotees Honoured

A reception to, Bhagavan Baba was organised by the delegates to the International Conference on the evening of November 19th at the Hill View Stadium. Besides the delegates, a very large gathering had assembled for the occasion.

Floral offerings were made to Bhagavan by State Presidents, Convenors of State Trusts, Chairmen of World Foundations and one representative from each country represented at the conference. Each one of them went up to the dais and offered a flower and did Padanamaskar to Bhagavan.

Some devotees of Bhagavan, who had been associated with Him for over two or three decades, were chosen to offer their felicitations to Bhagavan on the occasion. Among them were Sri R. P.

V. Rayaningar, Sri G. K. Damodar Rao, Mrs. Kamala Sarathi, Sri M. M. Pinge, Mr. Wee Lin (Singapore) Miss. A. Mukherjee, Sister Chiyuka Tusiya (Japan), Sri Sanjiv Choudhury, Mr. Robert Bozzani (USA) and Mr. Jagatheesan (Malaysia).

Many of them recalled the days when it was an ordeal for the devotees to reach Puttaparthi to have darshan of the young Baba and related how over the years the Sai movement has grown into a global mission for divinising humanity and promoting love and cooperation among all peoples, irrespective of caste, religion or nationality.

Mr. Bozzani referred humorously to the fact that he came from a place which was equally remote from Prasanthi Nilayam, whether from the east or the west. Through Swami's grace and compassion and by coming to India, over the years he had experienced what Swami has often said that India is the spiritual heartland of the world. To him one of the highlights of the celebration was the example of Swami of "giving, giving and giving," which shows that it is only Swami who knows how to give. He was slowly learning the true meaning of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa. "Without truth there cannot be righteousness, without righteousness there cannot be peace, without peace there cannot be love and without love there cannot be non-violence. Let us be heroes in action and zeros in speech," Mr. Bozzani concluded.

On the same occasion, on behalf of the World Council, five octogenarian devotees, Sri N. Kasturi, Sri N. S. Krishnappa, Dr. B. Sitaramaiah, Smt. T. Krishnamma and Smt. Konamma, who had served Swami in various capacities, were honoured with mementos. In introducing them to the gathering, Mr. Justice Eradi referred to Prof. Kasturi's association with Bhagavan since 1948 and his editorship of "Sanathana Sarathi" and the production of 11 volumes of speeches of Bhagavan in addition to the only authentic biography of Bhagavan Baba under the title "Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram".

Sri N. S. Krishnappa came to Bhagavan in 1956 at the age of 66. He was looking after the Prasanthi Mandir Garden and succeeded Sri Seshagiri Rao as the priest in the Mandir.

Dr. S. Sitaramaiah came to Bhagavan in 1952 and settled down at Puttaparthi after his retirement in 1953. He was placed in charge of the Sri Sathya Sai Hospital when it was started in 1956 and continued as its medical Superintendent till 1975.

Eightysix-year old Krishnamma first met Bhagavan in 1946 at Masulipatnam. A good singer, she was invited by Swami to come to Puttaparthi and she settled down here permanently. Baba gave her darshan with His third Divine Eye which was a thrilling experience for her. She was the lead singer of Bhajans in the Mandir for many years.

Smt. Konamma, aged 85, a native of Bukkapatnam is one of the oldest devotees of Baba. She came to Baba after a grievous tragedy in which she lost six members of her family including her husband within a period of nine months. She was convinced of the divinity of Bhagavan and has remained a dedicated devotee ever since. She has been rendering service in the canteen for many years.

Bhagavan presented the mementos to each of them with His blessings.

The evening's programme concluded with a vigorous and lively Bhangra dance presented by the Punjab Sai Seva Samiti.

FESTIVAL FEATURES:

When Bhakti and Grace Meet

"Sarvathah Paanipaadam - Sarvathah Akshi-Siromukham" "His hands and feet are everywhere; His eyes and head are everywhere." So says the Lord in the Gita about the Omnipresence of the Divine.

The truth of this was experienced by lakhs of devotees during Bhagavan Baba's birthday festival, when Bhagavan was seen here, there and everywhere—giving darshan to devotees at the Mandir, receiving letters from them, blessing their Vibhuti packets, materialising Vibhuti on the spot for some ailing devotee, giving interviews to an endless stream of devotees from countries as far apart as Mexico in the western hemisphere and Japan in the east, meeting members of the World Council of Sathya Sai Organisations, having talks with the Vice-Chancellor of the Sri Sathya Institute about the Convocation, giving lessons in singing and acting to students taking part in the cultural programmes, going round the Prasanthi Nilayam complex to see how the new buildings are being got ready for the occupants, having a critical look at the condition of the sheds and the tents where the delegates and devotees would be staying, inspecting the sanitation arrangements, instructing the Seva Dal officials about their duties, inaugurating some new building or other—and, above all, continually showering His blessings and grace on the myriad devotees who had come to Prasanthi Nilayam with the sole object of experiencing His divinity and immersing themselves in the holy atmosphere of the Abode of Supreme Peace.

Sai seva in action

Although the major events figuring in the programme of the Birthday Festival were the Fourth World Conference of the Sri Sathya Sai Organisations, the Fourth Convocation of the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning and the Birthday Celebrations on November 23, there were several items in the programme calling for Bhagavan's presence, which inevitably attracted large crowds.

Well before the start of the World Conference on the 17th, five thousand Seva Dal volunteers from all parts of India were streaming into Prasanthi Nilayam to take up the duties assigned to them—levelling the grounds, laying roads, fixing up tents, decorating the Poornachandra Hall, fixing up illuminations at the Mandir and the Institute's administrative building, looking after the needs of the continuous influx of devotees, regulating the traffic, keeping a watch on anti-social elements, regulating the huge gatherings at the Hill View Stadium, and carrying out multifarious other duties connected with the orderly organisation of a great world event in which lakhs of people were involved.

The greatest challenge for the Seva Dal was posed on November 16th, when Bhagavan announced that from the next day all those coming for the birthday festival would be given free breakfast, lunch and dinner. From the 17th, three mammoth kitchens worked round the clock to

feed lakhs of devotees. It was a Herculean job, but, with Bhagavan's Grace, the Seva Dal volunteers arranged for the massive preparation and distribution of food with remarkable efficiency. Where, till the 16th, besides the Nilayam canteen, there were only two or three points for serving 'quick meals', with long queues standing for hours, from the 17th thirty eight counters were opened for serving food (19 for men and 19 for women) with the result that the long queues disappeared and all were served within an hour. More than a thousand volunteers were engaged in cooking, transporting and serving the food. Sufficient variety was introduced in the food items by having rice pulav, curd bhaat, lemon-rice, tamarind rice, chapattis, kazoo rice, channa bathura and various vegetables. Everyone was satisfied with the quality of food served.

All credit is due to the 790 Seva Dal volunteers (including 350 women) from Orissa who were in charge of sanitation and cleanliness of the entire Prasanthi Nilayam complex. They were ready with their brooms from 3 a.m. and did such a thorough job that hardly any litter remained on the streets and pathways.

Narayana seva

The Seva Dal did a fine job on November 16th when nearly ten thousand poor people, men, women and children, were fed in the Hill View Stadium and dhotis and saris were distributed to them. Bhagavan served food to a few persons and blessed the food, to be served to others. The smoothness and orderliness with which this Narayana Seva was conducted had not been witnessed in any previous year. The clothes were also distributed in such a way that there was not the usual scramble. The entire feeding and distribution of clothes was completed within a hour by the volunteers.

Karnam Subbamma Nagar

A colony of 60 cottages most of them built as twin-houses, was inaugurated by Bhagavan Baba on November 16th and named Karnam Subbammenagar in memory of the lady who was the first in Puttaparthi to recognize the divinity of Baba from his boyhood and in whose house the young Baba spent his early years. Subbamma delighted in serving the endless stream of devotees who used to come to Puttaparthi for Darshan and blessings of Bala Sai. Bhagavan Baba has referred often to the loving service rendered by Karnam Subbamma as an example of the unalloyed and selfless devotion of a true Bhakta. The 60 houses have been donated by Bhagavan Baba to deserving persons who are expected to lead a pure and godly life. The colony has provision for a park and for a Primary School. Located at the foot of a low hillock adjoining the Gokulam, the colony has all the requisite amenities for community living.

Cultural programme

The imposing stage-cum-dais, with its Gopuram and the sacred images of Brahma, Surya, Chandra and Subrahmanya, appropriately named, Santhi Vedika—Forum of Peace—was formally inaugurated by Bhagavan Baba on the morning of November 14th. For the eight days of the Birthday Festival, from the 17th to the 24th, it served as a rostrum from which Bhagavan gave darshan and delivered His memorable discourses.

No less memorable were the cultural programmes presented on the stage to the large audiences that had assembled in the Hill View Stadium. The eight-day programmes included a series of folk dances got up by the different state Samitis and three plays, written and directed by

Bhagavan Himself, staged by students from the Prasanthi Nilayam and Anantapur campuses of the Sathya Sai Institute.

The cultural programmes got up by the States included "Invocation to Lord Siva" (a lively and vigorous dance by a group of 12 professional dancers from Andhra Pradesh). Purulia dance from West Bengal; Tribal festival dances by gonds from Madhya Pradesh; a fine ensemble of musical instruments played by young children, called "Sangitha Vaidyamulu" from Tamil Nadu; a Kathakali presentation of Arjuna's fight with Siva as Kirata (hunter) from Kerala; an invocatory ballet from Himachal Pradesh; a fine presentation of "Gitopadesa" and "Dasavathara" in dances by artistes from Karnataka; group dances by a team from Maharashtra; a music performance by Maynard Fergusson (U.S.) on the trumpet, accompanied by Vemu Mukunda on the Vina, and the Institute students on the violin and other instruments; Dandia Rass dances from Gujarat; Yak dances from Sikkim and folk dances from Nepal and Orissa.

The outstanding items in the cultural programme, apart from the folk dances, were three plays two in English and one in Telugu-written and directed by Bhagavan Himself and presented by students from the Anantapur and Prasanthi Nilayam campuses of the Sathya Sai Institute.

The girl-students of the Sathya Sai Women's College at Anantapur presented on November 20, a didactic play—"Easwarah Sarva Bhootaanam"—intended to drive home the truth that the Divine resides in all beings and man cannot claim any superiority over the animals, and the supreme Master over all creation is God, who incarnates from age to age to teach the ways of God to mankind. The characters in the play are birds and animals which are the vehicles of different Hindu deities. The dialogue was gripping and the acting, in their different roles, was realistic and convincing.

On the 21st, the students of the Central School at Prasanthi Nilayam, staged the Telugu play, "Radha Krishna", in which the true character of Radha's devotion to Krishna was brought out. All the songs in the play, composed by Bhagavan, were rendered delightfully by the children. The costumes and make up were commendable. At the end of the play Bhagavan was photographed with all the child actors.

On the 22nd, after the convocation ended with the playing of the National Anthem by the High School Band, the curtain went up on Santhi Vedika for the play, "Here and There," written and directed by Bhagavan. For weeks before the performance, Bhagavan had been instructing about how the passages should be rendered and how the different scenes should be enacted.

The theme of the play was the moral transformation effected in students by the education in the Sathya Sai Institute and how Bhagavan comes to the rescue of a student who falls into bad company and loses his moorings and is about to be involved in serious trouble with the police. The erring student is saved by a double miracle—an external miracle in which what was thought to be a drug packet becomes a Vibhuti pack and an internal miracle in which the prodigal turns to Bhagavan. The denouement was superbly developed.

On the 23rd, after the Jhoola function. Bhagavan distributed gifts of silver tumblers to all the students who had taken part in the plays and in the musical programmes.

Natural resources and wealth are now being misused for the boosting of one's ego. But, when the Atmic Unity is realised, they will promote the new way of life through Love. What is now 'mercy' or legally enforced mutual 'help' will then be transformed into 'Divine Love' that can effectively purify the recipient and the giver. This consummation is beyond the region of common politics, ethics or economics. They cannot transform the receiver and thrill the giver, however much they attempt to equalise. They do not have the appeal and they have no power to sustain. The equality they establish will be haunted by a shadow, the shadow of the ego. This shadow can disappear only when Identity as ONE is known and felt.

—Baba