

Uniqueness of Sathya Sai Institute

"I have visited a large number of teaching campuses in India and abroad. But I must say that I have not seen anywhere else the sublimity of this atmosphere. This Institute breathes an air of inner calm which is altogether unique", observed Sri R. Venkataraman, President of India, in his Convocation Address to the Ninth Convocation of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning on November 22, in the vast Hill View Stadium.

It was after the lapse of five years that the Convocation was being held in the Hill View Stadium before a gathering of over half a million parents and devotees from all parts of India and the world. When the Fourth Convocation was held in the Stadium in 1985, Prof. Gokak, the then Vice-Chancellor, described it as an "International Festival". This year's Convocation was on a grander scale in every respect. What was most remarkable was that in spite of the President's participation in it, the security arrangements were almost entirely in the hands of the Sai Seva Dal members and the ubiquitous presence of the police was virtually eliminated.

It was a delightfully cool afternoon and the entire stadium, including the galleries, was filled to capacity well before the day's function was to start.

Precisely at the stroke of 3.30 p.m., Bhagavan Baba, as Chancellor, arrived in the stadium with the President, the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Saraf and others, to proceed in a procession to the Santhi Vedika stage, which had been beautifully decorated for the occasion. The Institute's band troupe, in their shining white uniforms, went in front of the procession, playing marching tunes.

V. C.'s welcome address

After the Chancellor and others had taken their seats on the dais, the Chief Guest and others were garlanded. After the invocation by students of the Institute, who recited Vedic hymns, the Vice-Chancellor welcomed the Chancellor, the Chief Guest and others. In the course of his speech, Prof. Saraf recalled the various high offices held by Sri Venkataraman at the Centre and in his native state and described him as one of the illustrious sons of India. Reviewing the progress of the Institute during the past year, he said, there had been a sizeable increase in enrolment in various courses and programmes. As many as twenty-one research scholars had completed their theses during the past four years. Their researches covered the major fields of sciences, arts, commerce and education. The researches have been related to local needs as well as to areas of national interest. While the accent on spirituality is pronounced, sports have not been neglected, as was evident from the superb performance of students from the three campuses in the Sports Festival in January 1990. The Institute has manifested its uniqueness as an institution of higher learning in which education is totally free. Prof. Saraf concluded: "All that we see today as the outstanding achievements in several fields is entirely due to the inspiring guidance of our Revered Chancellor, who is the founder, sustainer and promoter of this unique Institute."

After the Chancellor had formally declared the Convocation open, Prof. U.S. Rao presented to the Chancellor the candidates for the various degrees to be awarded at the Convocation.

All the candidates, in their Convocation robes, stood up at their places and bowed to the Chancellor, who conferred His benediction on them.

The Vice-Chancellor then administered to the candidates the Institute's "Pledge", which they repeated after him. They then resumed their seats.

Award of medals

The Registrar, Sri Chakravarthi, then read out the names of the medalists for the year, starting with the names of those who had been awarded medals for all round excellence. These medals were instituted in 1983 by Prof. Saraf in the name of his mother. The Registrar explained the procedure by which the selections were made. The three recipients for this year were: Ravi M. Mariwala, M.B.A. II year; Sunil Narang, M.B.A. I year and Kumari Uppuluri Suma, B.Ed. (Anantapur Campus). Each of them went up to the stage and received from the Revered Chancellor the medal and the cash award.

The Registrar then read out the names of the candidates who had been awarded medals for academic excellence:

Rahalkar Shirish Prabhakar, B.Sc. (MPC); Devi Prasad Sharma Gautam, M.A. (English Language and Literature); Challapalli P. Chandra Rao, M.Sc. (Mathematics); Mukku J.R.V. Venugopal, M.Sc. (Chemistry); Bharat Datt, M.Sc. (Biosciences); Ghandikota V. S. Sanjay, M.B.A; Sanjiv Borbora, M.Com; Kum. Anshu Sikka, B.A; Kum. Sharma Saroja, B.Sc. (BZC); Kum. Shalini Ayre, B.Sc. (H.Sc.); Kum. Sreelatha R. Nair, B.Com; Kum. Seema Sareen, M.A. (Philosophy); Kum. Kalpana Venkatesulu, B.Ed. (Each of the candidates went up to the Chancellor to receive his or her medal.)

Award of Ph. D. Degrees

The following research scholars were awarded Ph.D. degrees: Dr. Sunam Gyamtso Tenzin (History and Indian Culture); Dr. (Ms) Madhu Kapani, (Education in Human Values); Dr. C. Lakshmi Narasimha Moorthy, Lecturer, Sanskrit Dept., Prasanthi Nilayam Campus, (Jana-kajanandanatakam of Kalya Lakshminrisimha Kavi); Dr. A. Ashok, (Biosciences); Dr. M. Durgesha, (Biosciences); Dr. PVS Suresh Kumar, (Biosciences); Dr. T. Ravi Kumar, (Chemistry); Dr. S. Balasubramanian, (Chemistry); Dr. K. Anil Kumar, (Chemistry); Dr. Hirok Changakoti, (Commerce); Dr. T. Gnana Bhaskar, (Mathematics).

The President's address

The President, Sri R. Venkataraman, then delivered his Convocation address. Turning first to the Chancellor, he said: "Revered Chancellor, I would like to offer to You my sincere thanks for the invitation to me to be the Chief Guest at this IX Convocation of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of

presence is to witness the self-renewing principle of India's spiritual heritage. In age after age, India has seen a succession of saints and sages who, by their precept and practice, have taught us that Man is not just a higher primate, but a spark of the Divine. You belong to that noble and ennobling succession of Great Teachers.

"You have given to this Institute the motto: 'Sathyam Vada, Dharmam Chara'. 'Prasanthi Nilayam' is, therefore, not just an Abode of Peace; it is also an Abode of Dharma. Your hallowed presence in this Abode of Dharma helps to bring the best out of all individuals coming here and to enrich them physically, intellectually, and spiritually. I regard myself fortunate in having been enabled to come to Puttaparthi on the auspicious eve of Your birth anniversary and on the happy occasion of the University's Ninth Convocation. I offer my greetings and thanks to You."

Sense of human values

The President went on to say, addressing the gathering: "This is not my first visit to this Institute and so I do not come here as any stranger. But it is a special pleasure to be amidst all of you on the occasion of the Ninth Convocation of your University. I would, at the outset, like to extend my warm felicitations to all those who have successfully completed their academic courses and are receiving their degrees today. To them, I would like to say: You have received instruction in the higher branches of knowledge, both in the Arts and in the Sciences. You have received all-round instruction through the system which your Institute appropriately calls Integral Education. But above all, you have received here a sense of human values—values which are common to all the religious faiths of the world; indeed, common to humankind. What is, however, very special about the training you have received here is that it has been given to you in the immediate presence of the remarkable founder of this Institute. This good fortune can hardly be overstated. To receive the teachings of our Acharyas and Sages even indirectly through books is a blessing. To be able to do so directly in the presence of a sage is a blessing that is a million-times more blessed.

Greatness of the guru

"It has been an ancient practice with us in India, irrespective of our creed, to honour sages, saints and our gurus. We, in fact, equate the Guru with God. Our culture, our philosophy, and our religious traditions are perhaps unique for the place of honour that they assign to Spiritual Teachers."

Adi Sankaracharya, in the Sri Guruvaashtaka Stotram, observes as under:

"Not in the enjoyment of worldly pleasures,
Nor in the performance of Yoga;
Not in the pampering of the palate,
Nor in the countenance of one's consort
Should the mind rest;
If one's mind is fixed on the lotus feet of the Guru
What more does one need?
What more? What more? What more?"

"Unique serenity"

"It is not surprising that with the good fortune of Sri Sathya Sai Baba's presence, your campus here has come to acquire a unique serenity. I have visited a large number of teaching campuses in India and abroad. But I must say that I have not seen anywhere else the sublimity of this atmosphere. It is not just that your buildings and gardens are beautiful, which they undoubtedly are. It is not just that the climate is pleasant, which it surely is. But beyond all this, there is something special about the intangible atmosphere of this place. There is a refinement and a soothing power about your campus. This Institute breathes an air of inner calm which is altogether unique. Such inner poise is not achieved by administrative fiat or by the power of a hierarchy. It is acquired by the operation of subjective forbearance. Every teacher and student, every administrator and worker here seems to know intuitively that this Institute of Higher Learning is also avenue of Higher Behaviour and a seat of Higher Understanding.

The five ideals

"Integrated understanding, learning and behaviour lead to the full development of the human personality. It leads to what Swami Vivekananda called 'man making'. This unquantifiable but vital value-system forms the fibre of the parchments you are receiving today. It forms the pigment of the ink with which your degrees have been printed.

"The parchments signifying educational attainments, which are being presented today round off a period of preparation. But they also tell you that you stand on this day at a threshold and at a door which leads both out and in; out of the world of preparation, and into the world of action. A Convocation is, therefore, both a rounding-off as well as an initiatory rite: a farewell as well as a baptism. It is customary for guest speakers at convocations to give graduating students some advice based on their experience of life. I find that the best advice that can be given has already been made available in the shape of the five great ideals which Sri Sathya Sai Baba has described as Sathya, Dharma, Shanti, Prema and Ahimsa. These five ideals are the foundation of this Institute and are the secret of its success. If they were to become the foundation of our society, what wonders could be wrought!

"The inner voice"

"I would like to share some thoughts with you on these five ideals. Sathya is commonly translated into English as 'truth'. But this, by any standards, is an inadequate translation. Non-lying by itself is not Sathya. There has to be a more positive connotation to it. Mahatma Gandhi, as you are aware, said Truth is God. You must sometimes have wondered what he meant by Truth. He meant by it the truth as given to us by our inner voice, the voice of our human conscience. All of us are born with a sense of what is right and wrong, the 'done' and the 'not done'. Religions build on this ingrained sense. Interpreters have, knowingly or unknowingly, sometimes distorted the inner voice of the human conscience. Gandhiji wanted us to tune into that voice of sathya directly. I would like you to remember the lines of Shakespeare:

`This above all: to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,

"Being true to one's own self would mean, in essence, being true to the human in oneself as against the Hindu or the Muslim, the Telugu or the Tamil, and so on. For too long have we been standard bearers of this or that denomination. For too long have we denied the human soul in us. Let the sathya of humanity's common roots be perceived by us. `Sathyam Vada' therefore implies that in your thoughts and utterances you speak the truth as your human soul tells you to.

Concept of dharma

"Dharma is virtually an untranslatable word. `Righteousness' perhaps comes closest to the Sanskrit word. But you would do well to remember that Dharma does not mean what it is normally taken to mean, namely, religion in the sense of creed or doctrine. It certainly does not mean ritual. It is not merely charity. It is a comprehensive concept of all these ideas. Dharma is, essentially, a social ethic. It reminds us that Man is a member of a social group and must necessarily interact with others in that group. And while doing so, his actions must bespeak human values. `Dharmam Chara' therefore implies that your behaviour should be such as to benefit the Family of Man, with unselfish goodness in your heart. When Baba Amte tends patients of leprosy, when Mother Teresa ministers to the poor and when countless persons, known and unknown, do an unselfish act or refrain from a selfish one, they are practising dharma. It should be performed not as an act of benevolence but as a matter of duty.

The Divine Spark

"Santhi is more, much more, than the absence of conflict. It betokens an inner calm that prevails in the depths of the ocean. If each of us has an inner stability we will be able to perform our assigned tasks more effectively.

"Prema, similarly, is not just love but loving concern and compassion. The Buddha, Christ, and Gandhiji personified such compassion. You must ask yourself if in whatever we are doing, whether as a routine clerk, a quantum physicist, a businessman or an engineer, a loving concern for fellow-beings finds a place in our scheme of things, or not. If it does, then we are heeding the human impulse in us and are conforming to dharma. Ahimsa is non-violence, but it is also a great deal more. It is an active involvement in the pain of others. Ahimsa is its positive, dynamic aspects, can and must find a place in your thoughts for our society. The world today faces violence in many forms of which the arms race is but one. It may not be possible for all of us to lead the way in eliminating international violence. But it is open to us to ensure that in the transactions of our life, we will not hurt the interests of other beings. In other words, we will play fair. If we bear these five principles in mind the Divine spark in each and every one of us will illumine our lives. We will then be enabled to reach out to quality, to excellence but, above all, to the highest standards of human conduct.

Spiritualism and the bhakti movement

"Human kindness, forbearance and understanding are tender plants which can be nourished only by the waters of a true spiritualism. What we need is not religious or metaphysical esoterics, but basic spiritualism. Religious and metaphysical esoterics have been known in our civilization

India which is rightly regarded as the soil on which Advaita has reached its pinnacle. Adi Sankara, who hailed from Kerala, and the incomparable Ramana Maharshi have embodied the doctrine of all Vedanta. Yet, the fact remains that Advaita, the belief in monism, is hardly understood by the masses. Any society where the core of religion is beyond the comprehension of the vast mass of the people, runs the risk of spiritual decay. The common man has neither the time nor the energy to follow the complicated theological texts and commentaries. The way of Jnana, or knowledge is difficult; the way of Karma, or action is arduous. The Buddha recognized this fact and hence he gave, in simple Prakrit, his message of compassion. Mahavira, too, saw that Ahimsa was not meant for tapasvis only but for the generality of the people. Kabir and other Sufis, similarly, interpreted the Holy Doctrine in a manner which common folk as well as the elite could understand. All these personages saw that spiritualism was a bond that could tie all the people of our great land together in a creative partnership. The Bhakti Movement made spiritualism possible and brought devotion nearer to daily life. That is why Adi Sankara said: 'Among the instruments (paths) and conditions necessary for liberation, Bhakti *alone* is supreme.'

A Mobile Aikya Sthambha

"It is essential, if superstition, prejudice and obscurantism are not to engulf us again, that we revive the spirit of true bhakthi in our land. Here at the Institute stands the Sarva Dharma Aikya Sthambha, a symbol of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation. Sri Sathya Sai Baba has said 'Let different faiths exist, let them flourish, let the glory of God be sung in all the languages, in a variety of tunes. Respect the differences between the faiths and recognise them as valid as far as they do not extinguish the flame of unity.' Each graduate of this Institute should be a mobile Aikya Sthambha, holding aloft the flame of unity. He or she should stand for true devotion to the faith underlying all faiths.

"May all of you, students of this Institute and beneficiaries of Sri Sathya Sai Baba's presence, carry into your avocations the serenity, sublimity and humanity of these precincts."

After the President's Convocation address, the Chancellor, Bhagavan Baba, delivered His benedictory address. (Bhagavan's discourse is published separately).

The Institute's band then played the National Anthem, with the entire gathering standing, and the Convocation came to a close.

The Chancellor and others then left the Santhi Vedika in a procession.

AVATAR VANI:

FIFTH WORLD CONFERENCE

The Devotee Dear to the Lord

*Speak out repeatedly that service to the weak is Divine;
Meditation on the Lord's name will lead man to the Lord's abode
And confer immortality on him.
Declare that all men of devotion and faith are your kith and kin.
Those who teach this wisdom to the people are dearest to the Lord
Getting rid of feelings of differences, if you live in love and harmony,
That alone will delight Sai.
What more can I tell you,
Oh good people, assembled here?*

*Anapekshah Suchir-daksha Udaasino gathavyathah
Sarvaarambha Parithyaagi Yo madbhaktah sa me priyah.*

"That devotee of mine, who expecting nothing, is pure, dexterous, unconcerned, free from distress and renounces all undertakings, is dear to Me." (Bhagavan began His discourse with this sloka from the twelfth canto of the Bhagavad Gita).

The first quality figuring in this sloka is "Anapeksha." This term means, "to be free from any kind of Apeksha (expectation or desire)." Can a man having a body, mind and intellect be free from desires at all? It is impossible. But such a state can be realised by an effort of will.

There are many in the world who seek sensuous pleasures from moment to moment. Most people crave for such pleasures. This method is described in the Gita as "Preyo-marga" (the pleasure seeking path). As against this, there is another path, which confers the experience of Self-realisation and which transcends the senses. This is called "Sreyo-marga" (the superior Righteous Path). This path is not easily intelligible to all. It is not also accessible to all. Consequently the general mass do not favour this path.

"Preyas" and "Sreyas"

In the world, there is on the one side the attraction of the "Preyo-Maarga" and on the other, the call of the "Sreyo-Marga." However, those who seek the pleasures of the senses take to the Preyo-Marga. Only the Jnanis (the spiritually wise persons), who are indifferent to the fleeting mundane pleasures derived from the senses, and who are austere and pure-hearted, pursue the Sreyo-marga.

There is another path, which transcends the path of "Preyas" (pleasure) and "Sreyas" (virtue). These two paths encompass all the possible desires of human beings. "Anapeksha" goes beyond both of them. "Anapeksha" is described as "being free from desires." But this is not wholly correct. It is when a man gives up the feeling, in the performance of all actions, that "I am the doer" (the sense of ego), "I am the experiencer", (the sense of fulfillment of desire) that true "Anapeksha" emerges. This means that conceit of doership and the sense of enjoyment of desired things should be wholly renounced. This is the true state of desirelessness ("Anapeksha"). It is only when all actions are done as an offering to God that "Anapeksha" prevails. When such a

to the Lord. If you want to earn the love of the Lord, you have to render service to anyone, anywhere, as an offering to the Lord.

Purity of the heart

The second quality is "Suchi" (Purity). There should be both inner and outer purity. Bodily purity relates to the physical. It covers such cleansing acts as bathing, wearing clean clothes, eating pure food and the like. Even in studies, the books should be wholesome and elevating. But mere external cleanliness without internal purity is of no value. Everyone, from the scholar to the common man, is concerned only about external cleanliness and not about the purity of the heart within. However pure the ingredients may be, if the vessel in which they are cooked is not clean, the food will be spoilt. For a man, his heart is the vessel, and he must see that it is kept pure and untainted. For the purification of the heart, everyone must undertake selfless service. Attachments and aversions, which pollute the mind, should be eschewed by concentrating on Seva. It is only when the heart is pure that selfless service can be performed. Hence both bodily and mental purity are essential for a good devotee.

Life as a penance

The third quality is "Daksha". This means that everyone should regard his life as a form of penance. Everyone must have a firm resolution ("Daksha") that as long as life lasts he will dedicate himself to the service of his fellowmen. Thereby he will realise his oneness with all mankind. Such a feeling of unity will lead to God-realisation. Service is the only way to get rid of selfishness and self-centredness. A devotee who has resolved upon such service is dear to the Lord.

Equal-mindedness

The fourth quality is "Udaaseenah." This means indifference towards sorrow and joy, loss or gain, honour or dishonour. You must be concerned only to see whether your actions are pure and selfless according to your conscience. Nothing else matters, neither the praise nor the blame of other people. When your conscience tells you that what you are doing is good, you may go ahead regardless of the opinions of others, whether they are your kinsmen, friends or others. This is the true meaning of "Udaaseena" (indifference). You should not be swayed by fears or threats. In this context, it is advisable for sevaks to keep away from politics. Sometimes, out of a desire for recognition or publicity, one may be tempted to cultivate men in power. This temptation corrupts your mind. By developing the spirit of indifference (Udaaseenatha) in its best sense, you must seek to serve all with a feeling of love. "Indifference" should not assume the form of arrogance or ostentatious condescension. Adhere to what is right and turn away from what is bad. That is the highest "Udaaseenatha".

Duty in the present

The next quality is "Gathavyathah" (free from worry). This means that there should be no worry regarding what is past. A man with worries can never accomplish anything. One should not worry about what is past or what is in the womb of the future. It is such worry that is the cause of all of man's troubles. There is no meaning in worrying about the unknown future.

future are in the present. Devotees who do their duty in the present are dear to the Lord.

The sixth quality is "Sarvaarambha parithyagi" (renunciation of all undertakings). This means that there should be no ostentation or showing off in any undertaking by a devotee. Unless ostentation is given up, egoism will not go. The ego must be eliminated for purifying the heart. No good deed can be done without purity in the heart. It is through sacred deeds that the heart is purified. Ostentation is a demoniac quality. It encourages egoism and megalomania. One should seek to acquire a good name through selfless service alone. It should be done with humility and sincerity. One who aspires to become a national leader must first know how to render service. He should not seek office or position. The Sai organisations have been set up for rendering service and not to establish official positions. Seva should be done out of a sense of duty.

Greatness of seva

Seva brings out all that is great in man. It broadens the heart and widens one's vision. It fills one with joy. It promotes unity. It proclaims the truth of the Spirit. It drives out all the evil qualities in a man. It must be regarded as a great spiritual discipline. You are born to serve, not to dominate. Everyone in the world is a servant and not a master. All relationships—of husband and wife, mother and child, the employer and employee—are based on mutual service. The world is progressing because of such mutual service. If the principle of service did not operate, the world would come to a halt. Do you regard an "officer" as a superior? It is not so. Even he is a servant. It is only when man is filled with the spirit of service that his divine nature is revealed. He then experiences the peace that passeth understanding.

What is the reason for the lack of peace in the world today? It is because there is no harmony in thought, word and deed in the lives of the people. Peace must begin in the family, in the home. When there is understanding and harmony in the family, peace will spread to the community and from there to the nation and the world. Hence unity is the primary need today. Unity confers joy and peace.

Transformation must begin with the individual. When the individual changes, the world will change. This transformation has to take place in the minds of men. Right thoughts will lead to right actions. That is why the scriptures have declared that the mind is the cause of man's bondage or liberation.

—From Bhagavan's discourse to the Fifth World Conference of Sathya Sai Seva Organisations on November 20, 1990, at the Hill View Stadium

AVATAR VANI:

FIFTH WORLD CONFERENCE:

Seva that Sanctifies

Oh Man! When you come out of the mother's womb

*Neither of pearls, nor of gold, nor a string of gem;
But there is one garland round your neck with which the Creator has sent you.
It is the heavy chain of your good and bad deeds carried from all your past lives.
That unbroken chain is all that you bring into the world.*

Embodiments of Divine Love!

Karma (one's deeds) is responsible for birth. Every man is a child of Karma. Born on account of Karma, Dharma (Righteousness) becomes one of the primary goals of human life. Dharma governs all worldly and other-worldly actions in life. Based on the rules of conduct (Dharma) pertaining to one's caste, vocation, or stage in life (Ashrama), people are supposed to regulate their lives. This is regarded as Dharma. But this is not the correct meaning of the term. Dharma in its exalted meaning is that which applies to all peoples, in all countries at all times.

The eternal dharma

Dharma is that which sustains mankind. True humanness consists in observing unity of thought, word and deed. All actions done with this triple unity are dharmic actions (Righteous). All such actions will be non-violent. Words spoken with such triple purity will be truth.

Dharma conceived in this way transcends the barriers of space, time and circumstance. Hence it is called "Sanathana Dharma"—the eternal verities.

There are in the world various rules of conduct which are related to conditions governing time and space. Such rules are liable to change from time to time and country to country, according to changing situations. But if Sanathana Dharma is changed, humanity will cease to be human. Just as burning charcoal, if it loses its heat, becomes mere charcoal, and a piece of jaggery, if it loses its sweetness, becomes a lump of clay, likewise man remains truly human only as long as he adheres to the eternal Dharma (which is represented by purity in thought, word and deed "Trikarana Shuddhi"). Without this basic quality, man is only human in form and not in his true nature.

Mental maladies

Human life is a precious jewel which is being bartered away for the flimsy tinsel of sensuous pleasures and this happens because of pollution of the mind. The mind is prone to afflictions from four sources. One is through delusions (bhrama) which make the mind see objects differently from what they really are. Because of this, man forgets his inherent divinity and gets immersed in the transient and the impermanent. Ignoring the Indwelling Spirit, he gets attached to the perishable body. This delusion results in the state called "Pramaadam" (perilous or critical condition). The entire personality is affected by the delusion. The result is the next stage, called "Karanapatanam", the weakening of the sense organs. The mind by itself has no power of perception. It has to perceive everything through the sense organs (indriyas) such as the eyes, the ears, etc. The mind acts on the basis of the impressions received through the sense organs. When the senses are weakened and the impressions received through them are misleading and

impressions. That is why in the spiritual field, the efficacy of association with good people is emphasised.

The fourth affliction to which the mind is prone is envy ("Vipralipsa"). This is an evil quality. The envious man cannot suffer others being prosperous or happy. He has a carping spirit. He always wishes ill for others. Envy converts a man into a veritable monster. This is a most sinful vice.

Service and purity

It is because the mind is prone to these four kinds of afflictions that Vedanta recommends special disciplines for the mind to get rid of polluting influences and evil tendencies. How is the mind to be purified? Through service to society with dedication and identification with everyone. You have to cultivate this feeling of oneness with all ("Ekatmabhava"). By engaging yourselves in service, you develop this sense of oneness.

In this context, the supreme importance of love should be recognised. Love is your true nature. But modern man, in his preoccupation with the world of external phenomena, is failing to discover his own true nature. Of what avail is all the knowledge about the physical world if a man does not know what he really is? Love is the basis for this self-discovery. Love is the means and love is the proof.

Self-enquiry calls for earnestness (Shraddha) and understanding of "Rita" (the principle of cosmic order governing the universe). "Rita" transcends the categories of time and space. It is the eternal verity represented by the unity of thought, word and deed ("Trikarana Shuddhi"). The Buddhi (intelligence) is the instrument for making the enquiry into the Real. Buddhi is superior to intellectual talent. The ancients accorded a higher place to Buddhi because it confers the power of discrimination between right and wrong, between the permanent and the passing. Modern man attaches higher value to intellectual ability. The falsity of this view was demonstrated centuries ago in a debate between Adi Sankara and Mandana Misra. In that debate Sankara conclusively proved that Buddhi (the power of discrimination) was superior to Intellectual ability (medhas).

Unity in spirit

Few are qualified to declare the distinction between Spirit and matter and to determine the nature of Divinity and the truth about the phenomenal world. The reason is that all people in the world suffer from delusions of different kinds. Consequently they suffer from various fears and hallucinations and have no peace of mind. The only way to get rid of these delusions and fears is to practise love and realise the divinity that is present in all beings. Once this spiritual unity of all beings is recognised, the relevance of this truth for every sphere of life—the physical, the social, the political, the economic, the ethical and the spiritual—will become clear.

The scientists, in their exploration of the nature of matter, have discovered the existence of various sub-atomic particles like electrons, protons and neutrons. The divine energy that is

be no need to pursue other explorations. If, for instance, you understood that sugar is the basic constituent of different kinds of sweets, there will be no need to examine each of them.

Loving service

Multiplicity is a characteristic of Nature (Prakriti). The Cosmos is a projection of the Divine. It is called Jagat—that in which things arise and disappear, come and go. Nothing seems permanent. But the spiritually realised person will recognise the permanent that subsumes the changing entity. Such a realisation can come only when a person is pure in thought, word and deed. Purity must express itself in loving service. Help to the needy has been described as the highest virtue (punya). Harming others has been condemned as a sin. Sai devotees must engage themselves in acts of service, which will sanctify their lives. The exemplary man is the one who causes no pain to others, who feels no pain himself and who leads a life of service to others. Hoping that, with the name of God on your lips and with your hands engaged in service, you will dedicate your lives to help others and realise the bliss of the Spirit, I shower My benediction on all of you!

—From Bhagavan's discourse to the Fifth World Conference of Sathya Sai Seva Organisations on November 21, 1990, at the Hill View Stadium

AVATAR VANI:

FIFTH WORLD CONFERENCE:

Service as Duty

The cosmos is permeated by the Divine. Hence it is the field of all actions. "Karma" or action means the Life Force. Human beings are instruments of this Life Force. The human body is made up of action. Consequently the scriptures described man as "Karmajaa", i.e., born as a result of Action. All actions performed by man with his limbs and organs are rendered possible by the Divine. Hence man should regard all actions as sacred.

But whatever man does is motivated by ego, self-interest, and desire for the fruits thereof. To enjoy the fruits of the actions done with expectation of reward, man is reborn. The Gita says: "Karma is the bond in this world of human beings" ("Karmaanubandhini Manushyaloke"). Man is bound by Karma. When actions are performed as offerings to the Divine, they get sanctified. All actions that are natural to man should be converted by the spiritual aspirant into Karma Yoga. The distinction between Karma and Karma Yoga should be clearly understood. Actions performed selfishly with egoism and desire for reward are Karmas (that bind). Actions done unselfishly, without ego and any expectation of reward, become Karma Yoga. Each one can determine for himself whether he is a Karma Yogi or a Karma-Brashta (a wrong-doer) or a Karmaadhikari (competent to perform karmas). Every man's life is filled with actions. But together with activities associated with self-interest, every man should also take part in service activities. Every man's primary aim should be to devote himself to selfless activities. Man has

Through service to others, divinity can be experienced.

Wealth and Society

Society is composed of the affluent, the middle class and the poor. Social service means service to one's fellow-men. A wealthy man has been able to acquire riches only with the help of others. Realising this, he has a duty to extend help to others in need. Man derives his strength from three sources: wealth, knowledge and the physique. The power derived from these sources should be used properly for right ends.

The term wealth ("vithamu") is usually applied to material riches. But it applies equally to the wealth of knowledge and to physical strength. One having this triple strength should devote it for the well-being of society. Joy and sorrow are like the two pots carried by a man on a pole. They are inseparable companions. No one can tell what the future has in store for any person. A millionaire may become a pauper and vice versa. These are familiar phenomena. They occur in the course of nature. Whatever sacrifices or ceremonies one may perform, these vicissitudes cannot be avoided altogether. These changes in fortune are wrought by the whirligig of Time. Recognising this, one should ensure that one's actions are righteous and helpful to others.

"Daridra Narayana"

When feeding the poor, the rich people think that they are rendering service to "Daridra Narayana". Who is Daridra Narayana? People think that anyone who is without food, clothing or shelter is a Daridra Narayana. But in rendering service to the poor, people should feel that they are serving the Narayana (the Lord) who dwells in the hearts of the poor. To endow this form (of Daridra Narayana) to the formless Divine and serve men in this way is the means of sanctifying one's actions and redeeming one's life. God will dwell in the hearts of those who are filled with thoughts of consideration for the poor and who are eager to serve them.

Time is infinitely precious. Hence the performance of good deeds should not be put off to another day. Time waits for no one. Hence both the body and the time should be utilised for doing sacred actions.

There should be no feeling of condescension in rendering service. Regard yourself as a devoted servant ready to do any task. Service activities done in this spirit will lead to God-realisation by extinguishing the ego.

There is no meaning in preaching spirituality to a starving man. Feed the hungry. Offer solace and encouragement to those in distress and despair. The educated should try to teach the illiterate and open the minds of the ignorant to wider vistas of knowledge. The educated persons may be doctors, lawyers or businessmen. Doctors should be ready to render free medical service to the poor. Lawyers should be helpful to those who are in need of legal aid but who cannot afford to pay for their services. Businessmen should be content to keep a reasonable income for their needs and utilise the surplus for charitable purposes. It is rare to find such persons. The wealthy should realise that money should be earned by righteous means and used for right

through exploitation of others will lead to suffering in one way or another.

The sin of ingratitude

If you desire a safe and peaceful future, you have to mould your actions properly in the present. In this, service has a great role. Whether you perform any kind of worship or not, when you render selfless service, you will be able to experience the bliss of Divine love. Service demonstrates the unity that underlies the apparent diversity. To realise your own inherent divinity, service to the people is the best kind of sadhana. What is so great about living for one's own sake? Only the man who lives for others can be said to live truly.

Man is a creature of society and owes everything to society. Hence he should be grateful to it for what all he has received from it. Gratitude is a supreme virtue. Ingratitude is a grievous sin. It will deprive a man of his god given sight. There is no means of atonement for the ungrateful person. If you wish to safeguard your future, you have to be grateful to those who have helped you in your difficulties and needs in the present.

In the Sathya Sai Organisation, service (seva) has pride of place. The Sai Samitis were started only with service in view. Service should not be mechanical or enforced. It should be filled with love and rendered whole-heartedly. Whomsoever you may serve, regard it as service done to God.

It can be asserted as a fact that only in the Sathya Sai Organisations is service rendered without any feeling of egoism.

Penance at Prasanthi Nilayam

If today lakhs of people are gathered here and are putting up with various inconveniences and difficulties, it is indeed a great penance they are doing. This sense of oneness cannot be seen in any other organisation. Only the Sathya Sai Organisations have such oneness. You see here people belonging to many countries, professing many faiths, speaking various languages, behaving like brothers and sisters and experiencing the bliss of being here. This is possible only for those belonging to the Sathya Sai Organisations.

Embodiments of Divine Love! You must all take a pledge to develop this feeling of love and set an example to the world. It is not right to call yourselves sevaks without engaging yourselves in service and rest content with your own selfish concerns. Wherever you may be, render service with all your heart. Consider that in rendering service, you are serving yourselves and not others. That will confer on you self-satisfaction (Atma-trupti). You must examine whether in doing service, you are deriving self-satisfaction or whether you are trying to show off. As long as there is ostentation in service, no real joy can be experienced from it. The ego will not go. And without the elimination of the ego, you cannot experience spiritual bliss.

Embodiments of the Divine Atma! The world situation today is dreadful and frightening. Wherever you turn, fear confronts you. Whether you remain at home or go out into the street, whether you travel by train or walk on the road, fear haunts you. The world is enveloped in fear. If you want to banish this fear, you have to develop firm faith in God as the sole refuge. Then you are freed from fear. Shedding all fear, carry on your work with courage and determination, without any worry about the future, and plunge into service activities. If you act with this faith, you will be able to serve the nation well. It is not your intellectual ability that will serve to protect the country. If you adhere to Truth and Righteousness, they will protect both you and the country. Live up to the truth of your being. Act righteously.

Sai Service organisations must grow in numbers and cover the entire country. Only then the country will enter on an era of prosperity. Consider yourselves as the children of one God. You are not strangers. You are not mere products of nature or of the physical elements. You are all sparks of the Divine. You must have only Divine thoughts.

Uniqueness of Sai seva

Creation was the result of the will of the Divine. Hence everything in creation should manifest its Divine nature. If you keep in mind this fact, you will be filled only with sacred thoughts and feelings and there will be no room for any wrong ideas. Always remembering that you are a fragment of the Divine, you have to engage yourselves in service. No Government or other service organisation has this attitude. Only Sathya Sai Organisations can render service successfully in this spirit. Very soon you will experience the bliss and peace to be got from such service. Whatever the difficulties or obstacles, you are bound to overcome them. These are incidental to any undertaking. Do not bother about what has happened in the past. Get immersed in the tasks of the present. Render service with a pure and selfless heart. The delight of the individual gladdens the Divine. Equally the Divine esteems you. Do everything with the Lord's name on your lips. Develop all that is good in you and share that goodness with one and all.

—From Bhagavan's discourse to the Fifth World Conference of Sathya Sai Seva Organisations at the Hill View Stadium on November 19, 1990

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

—Baba

Love: Sacrifice: Unity

"Nowhere in the world is Christmas celebrated in the manner in which it is done in Prasanthi Nilayam. People belonging to different countries, different faiths and different cultures, coming together to adore God and celebrate this festival in such a holy atmosphere cannot be found anywhere else", observed Bhagavan Baba in His discourse to a vast overflow gathering in the Poornachandra Auditorium on December 25th. Bhagavan said, Love, Sacrifice and Unity should be their watchwords.

Several thousands of devotees from overseas were present, besides those from all parts of India.

The afternoon function began with the observance of the annual day of the association of old students of the Sri Sathya Sai College for Women, Anantapur. After speeches from some old students, Dr. Rajeswari Patel, Secretary of the association (which was renamed Messengers of Sathya Sai some years ago), presented the annual report describing the service activities of the members. Bhagavan Baba then delivered His discourse.

Embodiments of Divine Love!

There is a Creator for this marvellous and beautiful cosmos, consisting of moving and unmoving objects. He is Omniscient, Omnipotent, and Omnipresent. He has been worshipped as God by many names and in many forms by various people.

*Adored by Muslims as Allah,
As Jehovah by Christians
As the Lotus-eyed Lord by Vaishnavites,
As Sambhu by Shivites,
The One who confers health and wealth,
Revere Him as the one Supreme Omni-Self.*

Role of religion

Unity, fellow-feeling and devotion are essential for every human being. To promote these sacred qualities in mankind, some great souls sought to establish different religions. Religion is not a restrictive concept. Religion is intended to develop the human personality and indicate the basic guide-lines for right living. Religion brings out the humanness in man and enables him to live in harmony with his fellow-men. It provides the link between the individual and the Divine. It demonstrates the unity that underlies the diversity in the world.

Love, Sacrifice, Service and Righteousness are the four limbs of Religion. Religion brings out the divine and sublime feelings in man and makes him serve society. It evokes all that is great, blissful and good in men and demonstrates the unity of mankind.

It is supremely unfortunate that Religion, which has such high and sacred objectives, is construed and practised in a narrow way and propagated as a narrow creed.

Religion is like an undercurrent that sustains the whole of humanity. The founders of religions, with a view to spreading the subtle secrets of religious faith, laid down certain rules of conduct and conveyed their message to the people.

What the religions teach

Buddhism declared that Truth and Non-violence are the basic requisites for getting rid of delusions and achieving purity in life.

Christianity proclaimed that all are children of God and should have fraternal feelings towards each other. Jesus declared: "All are one, be alike to everyone."

According to Islam, all are members of one family in spiritual terms. It regarded prayer as the best means of ensuring peace and security in society.

Emperor Manu declared: "Thyajethdeham Kulasyaarthē ; Kulam janapadaschaarthē" ("One must be prepared to sacrifice his body for his community and his community for the sake of the nation.") Manu's Dharmashastra laid down that the welfare of society is most important.

The Upanishads declared: "Sahasraakshas-sahasrapaad" ("The Divine has a myriad eyes and a myriad feet.") All eyes are God's; all feet are His; all hands are His. This was the message of the Upanishads. In this manner, the Upanishads emphasised the oneness of humanity.

For man, it is the collective concept that is fundamental and not individualism. No one can live in this world all by himself. He has to cultivate the sense of community if he wishes to live in peace and happiness.

"Sahanāa vavathu; sahanau bhunakthu; sahaviryam karavaavahai." "Let us live together; let us struggle together; let us grow together in joy and harmony." This was the teaching of the Vedas.

Unity and purity

It is evident that in this way all religions propagated unity for promoting the well-being of society. The welfare of the world is bound up with the well-being of society. Self-Realisation and Self-knowledge can be got only through social involvement. Unfortunately, society today is riddled with strife, chaos and conflict.

All religions preached the greatness of spiritual purity. All religions called upon people to adhere to the path of Truth. They also taught that good qualities are essential for man. Thus, when the essence of all religions is one and the same, when all the scriptures proclaim the same

are varied, but the destination is one and the same.

It is a sign of man's degradation that in spite of these truths, he indulges in conflicts and agitations on account of religious differences. When there is a downpour, the water that comes down is pure. The rain falls on mountains, plains, rivers, the sea and so on. According to the region through which the rainwater passes, its name and form undergo changes. Because of these variations, it should not be thought that the water itself is different.

Based on the teachings of the founders of different faiths, having regard to the requirements of the time and circumstance of particular countries, and keeping in view the specific needs of the people concerned, certain rules and regulations were laid down. On this account, one faith should not be considered superior and another inferior. Man's primary duty is to bear in mind these sacred truths and practise them in his life.

Truth, beauty and goodness

Truth is a fundamental principle. All religions have declared that no one should break his plighted word. That man should honour his pledges, that he should regard his words as his life-breath, that keeping his promises is the greatest treasure, this was the primary teaching of the great Law-giver, Emperor Manu (author of the Dharmashastra).

Plato was the foremost among the disciples of Socrates. Aristotle was a disciple of Plato. Alexander was a pupil of Aristotle. Plato commended a system of polity based on morality, righteousness, mutual forbearance as conducive to the well-being of society. He attached the greatest importance to Truth, Beauty and Goodness as the basic virtues. In the Vedas these three qualities have been described as Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram. Thus, though different words are used, their essential purport is the same. Spiritual discipline consists in recognising the unity underlying the apparent diversity and realising divinity.

Faith in God

Bharatiya culture has always upheld the supremacy of faith in God. Bharatiya culture was based on the view that there is nothing in the world which is not permeated by the Divine. From a stone to a diamond, from a blade of grass to a blooming lotus, from an ant to an elephant, everything was regarded as a manifestation of the Divine. Bharatiya culture upheld the view that love should not be confined to human beings, but should be extended to all beings and objects in creation. Ignoramuses who have not understood this great truth speak disparagingly of Bharatiyas as people who worship stones, trees, serpents and the like. In the eyes of Bharatiyas, every object is a creation of God. "Sarvam khalu idam Brahma" ("All this is Brahman"), "Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagat" ("The cosmos is permeated by Vishnu"). These Vedantic declarations proclaim the same truth. You cannot find in any other country a universal, all-embracing sacred declaration of this kind. This contains the broad concept of social justice. You cannot see in any other country such a sacred view.

Although all religions have preached this truth of oneness and equality (samatwam), selfish persons, for their own ends, have interpreted them in narrow terms and promoted strife and discord between different people.

One who is merely well versed in the scriptures cannot be called a "Pandita" (a person with knowledge and wisdom). Even a master of the Vedas, Shastras and Puranas cannot be esteemed a Pandita. Scholarship alone does not make a man a Pandita. Mastery of language does not confer this title. "Pandithaah samadarsinah" ("Pundits are those who see all with an equal eye", says the Gita.) Only the person who has this vision of equality can be esteemed a Pandita. Hence, we should look upon all religions with equal respect ("Samadrishti"). No religion should be criticised or reviled. One should imbibe the sweet essence in all religions.

The essence of all religions is the principle of Oneness, the principle of Love. When you cultivate this principle of love, there is no room for hatred.

Conflicts due to selfishness

Today religion is regarded as the cause for all the conflict, violence and bitterness in the world. But, religion (matham) is not the cause. Selfish minds ("mathulu") are responsible for all the conflict. Are there not conflicts in countries with only one religion? People in Iran and Iraq profess the same Islamic faith. What is the reason for the conflict between them? What is the reason for conflicts between countries which profess Christianity? In Bharat, all are Bharatiyas. But why is there discord amongst them? When we examine this question deeply, we find that religions are not the real reason for these conflicts. Only selfish minds are the cause. Wearing the garb of religion, these selfish persons are inciting conflicts among the people.

Triple virtues

Embodiments of Divine Love! If you desire to secure genuine peace in the world, you should not have any antipathy towards religion. You must hold morality (`neeti') as superior to your community (`jati'). You must cherish good feelings as more important than religious beliefs. Mutual regard ("mamata"), equal mindedness ("samata") and forbearance ("kshamata") are basic qualities necessary for every human being. Only the person with these three qualities can be regarded as a true man. It is essential that everyone should cultivate these three sacred qualities.

How did differences arise within each religion? After the passing of the founders of these religions, the followers violated the teachings of the founders and quarrelled among themselves on account of their selfish interests. With the passage of time, schisms developed in each religion and separate sects were formed. This is the result of individual, selfish motives and not the fault of the original founders.

People must first of all get rid of self-interest and self-centredness. They must develop love, forbearance and compassion. They must try to live harmoniously. Only then can we claim to be lovers of peace in the nation and of the well-being of the world.

differences in rendering service. When you wish to serve society, you must be prepared to sacrifice your individual and communal interests. Such sacrifice alone will sublimate one's life. The Veda has emphatically declared that immortality can be attained only through sacrifice (Tyaga) and not by any other means.

Xmas in Prasanthi Nilayam

To propagate this message of equal mindedness, the army of Sai devotees must prepare themselves (cheers). Today, in Prasanthi Nilayam, members belonging to a variety of faiths have come together. They speak different languages. They belong to diverse traditions. But all of them have a single belief, a single ideal that is Love (cheers).

The Christmas festival is celebrated in many countries with a lot of fanfare, merriment and riotous festivities. You should note one thing. Nowhere in the world is Christmas celebrated in the manner in which it is done in Prasanthi Nilayam. (Applause) People belonging to different countries, different faiths and different cultures, coming together to adore God and celebrate this festival in such a holy atmosphere cannot be found anywhere else. This should spread to all countries.

Christmas is celebrated In America, Germany, Italy and other countries. But in what manner? By sumptuous eating, drinking and dancing and wasting time. Here also you indulge in drink. But what is it you are drinking? You are drinking Pure Divine Love (cheers). It is this Love that you must offer to the world.

Don't entertain religious difference of any kind. Put into practice the message you receive here and share the bliss of your experience with others. Preaching to others is not enough.

Everyone should develop devotion and dedication. Life without devotion is worthless. If one does not show his gratitude to the Creator, of what avail is his life? Should you not show some gratitude to the Lord who has provided such infinite benefits through Nature and the elements? Gratitude should be the life-breath of a man.

The founders of religions experienced these truths and propagated them as ideals for mankind. You must wholeheartedly live up to these teachings. Mere reading of the Bible or reciting the Quran, repeating the Bhagavad Gita or chanting the Granth Saheb is not meritorious. The basic teachings in each of these texts have to be put into practice in daily life.

Discharge your debt

Socrates used to gather young men around him and expound to them how to enquire into what is transient and what is permanent. He told them that only those who have devotion and dedication are entitled to wield power. A ruler should adhere to truth and show his gratitude to God. Puffed up with ego, he should not forget the Almighty. Those who did not relish Socrates' teachings, brought charges against him. When he was sentenced to death, he chose to die by drinking the cup of hemlock from the hands of his disciples. Before his death, he told his

he owed a cock to a friend and asked him to discharge that obligation.

Prophet Mahomed, likewise, told his disciples before his passing that the money he owed to a camel driver should be paid before his end came. The discharging of one's debts is regarded as a pious obligation for every Bharatiya. Harishchandra sacrificed everything for the sake of honouring his plighted word.

Truth, sacrifice and unity

It will be seen that all religions have emphasised the greatness of truth, sacrifice and unity. Learn to live in love and harmony with all the members of your society. This is the basic teaching of Christianity and Islam. Guru Nanak favoured community prayers in preference to individual prayer in isolation. When all people join in unison to pray to God, their prayers will melt the heart of God. In a large gathering there must be at least one who prays with a pure heart. That prayer will reach God. Hence, devotees should take part in community bhajans. They should participate in community service and involve themselves in the life of the community. This is the noblest path.

Cultivate love. Love is the form of the Divine and God can be realised only through love. Of all the myriad names given to God, the one which is most to be cherished is Sat-Chit-Ananda (Being-Awareness-Bliss). `Sat' represents Truth. `Chit' represents Jnana (wisdom). Where Sat and Chit are present, `Ananda' (Bliss) is bound to be present. As God is Truth, He has to be realised through Truth. As God is Juana, He has to be realised through Jnana Marga (the path of Knowledge). As He is Ananda (Bliss), He has to be realised through bliss. Follow the path of Love and achieve the goal of Unity. Banish all differences. This is the supreme message for you today.

Develop love

Embodiments of Divine Love! Wherever you may be, in whatever country, do not give room for religious differences. Do not give up religion. Get rid of differences based on religion. Adhere to your faith and your traditions. When differences between religions are given up, love will develop in you. When love grows, you can have a direct vision of God. Without love, verbal prayers are of no avail. Realise that the love that is present in everyone is common to all. It is love that has brought you all together. It is the cord of love that has bound all of you. It is the unifier, the motivator and the bringer of joy to all. Therefore, develop love.

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajans "*Prema muditha manase kaho*", "*Love is My form*", "*My life is My Message*" and "*Subrahmanyam, Subrahmanyam!*" All the thousands of devotees in the hall joined in the bhajans with full throated gusto.

Later there was a presentation of a play, depicting the birth of Jesus and the advent of Sai Avatars, by overseas children.)

Global Sai Seva in Pictures

Sri Sathya Sai Baba inaugurated the Overseas Exhibition of Photos and Sai Literature on the morning of November 19th. Swami's love and blessings were showered on those in attendance. His recognition of this exhibition showed us how happy He is with the overseas Service, Education, and Spiritual Wings of the Sai Organization.

In His Discourse that night He said, "Seva is the best sadhana and makes you see unity in diversity. Recognize the sacredness of society. It is our duty to offer gratitude to the society in which we are born, live and die." Let there be no doubt or question of His supreme joy and love as He looked at the Exhibition.

The committee and workers had five days to work on this project. The first major obstacle was the location for this exhibition. First we were told that we had a tent with sides, but the next morning the tent that was put up had only half aside, on the bottom, the top half was open. The challenge was how to hang displays with no walls. That night it rained all night and the tent collapsed. The EHV building was suggested and Swami gave His gracious permission.

Sai says, "Love My Uncertainty" and He showed us what He meant. Even though we were given this building by Swami we had to conform to constant changes. Because of heavy rain for two days the overseas registration desk shared floor space with the artist working on posters.

We were told that Swami may inaugurate this Exhibition and if so it would be on the morning of the 18th or 19th of November. There was never any definite date. We were also informed that the EHV building was to be available for 300 Indian delegates for a meeting mid-day on the 18th. This meeting took place exactly in the middle of our two opening dates. So we had to set up the displays for the 18th morning, then remove the exhibition to the sides for the meeting and again set them up that evening and work through the night if needed.

Not tests but opportunities

Swami tells us that there are no tests, only opportunities for advancement. We met the challenges, and Swami's grace and love were always available. For instance the signs were all prepared to be coloured, but there were no supplies for colouring. No sooner were the words spoken than someone appeared at the door with three packs of coloured markers. There were many examples of Swami's Omnipresence and Omni-guidance.

The spirit, harmony, commitment, trust, love, friendship and positive attitude even under stressful and sometimes impossible conditions experienced by those who participated testified to their devotion to Swami. He taught us what could be accomplished in a very short period of time when our egos are united, towards HIM. When great obstacles are placed in our path and the

because there is no obstacle that He cannot remove.

Language of the heart

There were about 400 pieces of Sai Literature and photos from 31 countries to be displayed. We had helpers from every profession and country- Artists, craftsmen, carpenters, florists, architects etc. Many times we broke into small groups. Although we had a language barrier, we spoke the language of the heart. Our eyes and hands spoke of love as we worked for Him and sometimes we sang bhajans which lifted our spirits.

When Swami came to inaugurate the Exhibition the morning of the 19th this is what happened. When His car door opened, He was greeted by our chairman and garlanded with red roses. As He gave darshan to the devotees who had gathered outside Swami heard a small choir of men and women singing, "You are Lord of The Universe" in harmony.

In the foyer of the EHV Building were two large maps mounted on frames, standing opposite each other. On one World map Swami could see the location of the International Sai Centres that were dotted with His mini-pictures. At the foot of each map were deep red velvet cloth runners with flower designs spelling, "Very Happy Birthday", and lit candles in glasses.

The ceiling of the building was decorated in "Maypole" fashion with crepe paper and newly made cloth banners hanging from the ceiling with gold foil lettering of the five values: Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love and Non-Violence, along with artistic designs and Swami's pictures.

Hundreds of colourful balloons were strung around the entrance and exhibits. As He cut the ribbon and walked into the building, rose petals were released from the ceiling, falling to His feet. He lit the lamp, blessed the coconut water, and received a large white 'Happy Birthday' card with gold letters, and signed by every country in the world. *He carried this card throughout the entire ceremony. He is always with us carrying each devotee from each nation in His hands.*

The lesson of unity

Flags of each nation were made and strung from the ceiling surrounding Swami's chair. The altar was magnificent. Thirty-one displays were sent but twenty-nine needed extra mounting, design, artwork, captions, etc. But when the work was completed the pictures and numerous books told a story of how His Mission has spread in Fifty Years to every nation.

During these five days of preparation, the goals sometimes seemed impossible to achieve but no one faltered, nor fussed, nor complained. Everyone kept working till the job was done. He expanded our vision by helping us to accomplish what seemed impossible. But what a learning experience. We can bring home this new *vision* and *spirit* of working together in unity, to reach and stretch our goals so that by His 75th Year Celebration we can see enormous growth of Sai activities in all nations.

A Hymn to Baba

You are the light of Day
The guiding Star of Night
The fragrance of roses and jasmine
The innocent look of babes
The beauty of the sun at dawn
The glorious colours of sunset
Oh my Lord, You are all

You are the notes of songs
The dancing clouds of the sky
The refreshing rain at noontime
The majesty of the towering Himalayas
The kind tender love of Mother
The protecting hand of Father
Our Dearest Kindest Sathya Sai.

You are everything I see
You are everything I hear
You are all I touch and feel
You are the breath of life
You are the beating heart within
There never was nor is called me
And no one else but Thee.

Every face I meet is You
Every voice I hear is You
Everything I touch is You
There is nothing on earth only You
There is nothing in heaven too
Save God and that God is You!

Dear Father—Mother, Sathya Sal
Guide us in the work we do
Give us light, understanding, love
Give us strength and wisdom true
That every act, work, thought is done
According to Your Will

Books on Baba in Japanese

The growing interest in Japan in Bhagavan Baba's global mission is indicated by the number of books on Baba and translations of Baba's writings in Japanese which have come out in recent years. The following is a list of the books that have been published so far

Kisa Ca Umareru (Man of Miracles): by Howard Murphet. (Publisher, K. Araki).

Sri Sai Satcharita: by Hemadpant (Publisher, K. Araki).

Bhagavatha Vahini: by Sri Sathya Sai Baba (Publisher, R. Hira).

The following translations of Baba's writings and discourses have been published by the Sri Sathya Sai Centre, Japan:

Summer Showers in Brindavan

Jnana Vahini

Santhi Dhyana Mokashu

Dhyana Vahini

Garland of 108 Precious Gems: by N. Kasturi.

Bhajan Zenshu: (Publisher, R. Hira).

Quiet Hours: by Bhagavan Baba. (Publisher, R. Hira).

Christmas in the Presence

Christmas is celebrated with great reverence and love in Prasanthi Nilayam. Thousands of overseas devotees flock to celebrate this Holy Festival. Bhagavan Baba teaches unity and then He gives us an opportunity to practise this teaching by allowing us to work together so we can

languages from ours.

This year's celebration began on Christmas Eve during afternoon darshan when the choir sang to Lord Sai as He sat in His red velvet chair, on the Mandir verandah. The songs were "Praise and Worship", melodies adapting the words to glorify Sai, instead of the traditional Christmas songs. Swami was specially moved by the following two songs which were sung with deep devotion! A devotee from Mexico sang "CIELITO LINDO" from his heart, accompanied by the choir. The last song on the programme was "SAI YOU ARE MORE PRECIOUS... than silver, Sai You are more valued than gold". Bhagavan gave us greatest joy by inviting the choir to sing some Indian Bhajans. They sang "Guru Deva! Sharanam Deva", "Shiva Maheshwara", "Murali Krishna" and "Ram Rahim".

On Christmas morn, there was a beautifully organised procession of overseas devotees, carrying burning candles and singing carols all the way from the Ganesha temple to the Mandir compound, which had been decorated with flags and festoons. Precisely at 6 a.m., Bhagavan came out of the silver gate to the balcony and gave a glorious and blissful darshan to the vast gathering.

Later in the morning, the students of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute presented an interesting programme of song and story. Narration of episodes from the life of Jesus was followed up by appropriate songs. The Christmas darshan ended with a gift of sweet Prasad.

In the afternoon, Bhagavan gave His Christmas message to the vast gathering in the beautifully decorated Poornachandra Auditorium. "The Advent of the Living God" was the title of the play that followed the discourse. The opening scene depicted the birth of Jesus in a manger in Bethlehem. The subsequent scenes related to the advent of the Three Sais. The play told the story of the life of Shirdi Sai and His second incarnation as Sathya Sai, leaving us with a promise of Prema Sai's advent in the future. The scenery and stage props were superb. The children looked so radiant and acted as little professionals. In the final scene, the curtains lifted to reveal a full stage-size oil painting representing the Mandir in all its grandeur and beauty.

Bhagavan Baba went up the stage to join the child actors and bless them. One of the older children, who played the role of Shiva, was selected by Bhagavan to offer Arati.

—R. B.

On the 12th October, 1985, the Sathya Sai Foundation of Thailand moved to its own premises. A grand function was held where devotees from all over Thailand and even some neighbouring countries joined together for a programme of lectures, cultural performances and Bhajans. Many people observed that during the opening ceremony, which was held downstairs in the courtyard, several small children, dirty, barefooted and shabbily dressed, mingled with the crowds of devotees. These children who came from the slums situated behind the Foundation Building, mixed practically unnoticed amongst all the people who were listening attentively to the speeches delivered by the guests.

After the opening festivities, everyone went upstairs and according to Thai custom, removed their shoes before entering the prayer hall where the remainder of the day's activities were held. All went well, everyone was in a joyous mood until some of the departing guests and devotees had great difficulty in locating their shoes! It became apparent that several pairs of shoes had mysteriously disappeared and on questioning the late-owners, it was clear that each pair was expensive and had been recently purchased. It showed a lot for the discriminating powers of the scruffy, little children who had obviously removed them!

On the days that followed, the children kept coming back and it certainly was not just for shoes as there were no longer any fancy ones to take. At first they came out of curiosity and because they had found a new place to play rather than the street, but it soon became evident that they came for another reason- they felt something that they had not felt too much of before— a feeling of belonging and security and of someone caring for them.

Within a couple of weeks a special EHV class was started and the children would eagerly come every Sunday morning to hear stories, sing songs and take part in the group activities. At first it was very hard for them to get used to any kind of discipline especially during such activities as silent sitting or prayers, but gradually they began to settle in and before long it was possible to see many changes taking place, not only in their behaviour and attitudes but also in the character of the children. Within a week or so of the commencement of the classes, several pairs of the missing shoes mysteriously reappeared in the cubbyholes outside the prayer hall! Nothing was asked or said about it, but this was just the beginning.

Among these children was one young boy called Ae. Ae lives with his younger brother, elder step-sister and father in one tiny room directly, behind the Foundation Building. His father is a gambler and both boys suffer intolerably when he gets violent moods on account of losing. Roughly a year after the Sathya Sai Centre moved to these premises, Ae's mother ran away, presumably after realizing that her sons now had some extra security. Needless to say, with this kind of background, Ae had a lot of problems. He had the habit, which may well have been encouraged at home, of taking whatever he could lay his small hands on. He was only seven years old. From the very beginning he came regularly and hardly ever missed an EHV class. He enjoyed the stories, games and other activities, but most of all he enjoyed the singing. He could

learnt in class. His very favourite was a Thai song to the tune of Ganesha Sharanam which said:
"We are honest children and we like to be honest."

After some time Ae stopped taking things, but he still had the habit of begging for money from anyone who came to the Centre. He could stretch out one hand whilst rubbing his tummy with the other, and make his eyes round and big! He was a very good actor! Gradually this habit also fell away, once he realized that by being good and following the discipline of the Centre he was happier and also had everything he needed.

In 1987 the Sathya Sai Foundation of Thailand organized an EHV Seminar which was attended by fourteen countries in the Asian Pacific Region. We decided that as we already had the children as living examples, we would use them to demonstrate different techniques in the seminar, for example, singing, group activities etc. Because these children are Thai and have very limited English, we had to fix the role-play and rehearse it beforehand. The role-play which we chose depicted a wise old teacher who decided to test his pupils to see who had really understood his teachings. He asked them to help him in his old age by stealing. He instructed them to find a place where none was watching, and to wait until some rich person came by in order to rob them. All the boys agreed to help their teacher in this way except for one boy who just hung his head and did not move. When asked why he would not do as he was told, he replied that it was impossible to find a place where no-one was watching because, even if no other person were around, his own conscience was watching and he would rather beg than have his own self see himself stealing. This was the story, so the children were asked to choose their parts. When it came to the role of the boy who would not steal, much to the amazement of the teacher, Ae put up his hand before anyone else! After the class was over, the teacher asked him as to why he wanted to act this part, to which he replied that he, like the boy in the story, could not steal!

It is now five years since the first EHV class was started in Bangkok, and Ae, like many of his classmates, has changed immeasurably. These scruffy street urchins with their rough and undisciplined habits now sit for meditation in pin-drop silence, sing Bhajans beautifully and have improved in their personal habits and schoolwork. In other words, from 'street kids', they are rapidly turning into 'street lamps'.

(From the special November, 1990, issue of Bal Vikas Magazine)

AVATAR VANI:

Time is God

"Time is God. You should not waste time. Fill your time with good thoughts and good actions", observed Bhagavan Baba, in His New Year message to a vast gathering of devotees on January 1, 1991. Bhagavan said that there was no meaning in listening to discourses if, as a result, there was no change in their lives.

Bhagavan, who delivered His discourse in the Prasanthi Mandir, began with a poem on the power of Time.

*All things happen according to the dictates of Time;
Both good and bad depend on Time;
Prosperity and poverty likewise depend on Time;
Time is the determinant of all things,
There is none who is not subject to Time
In this entire world; that's the Truth.*

Embodiments of the Divine Atma!

Time is the embodiment of God. Hence Time is called "Samvatsara" (year). The sages have described God as "Kaalaroopaaya" (the embodiment of Time).

All things in the Cosmos, moving and unmoving, are permeated by God. Hence, God is characterised as "Kaalagarbha" (the One who holds Time in the womb). Sages have also described Him as "Dheerothama" (Supreme among the valiant). The term "Dheera" should not be understood as meaning one who is a great intellectual or highly intelligent person. "Dheera" is the appellation given by the Veda to a man who turns his intelligence ("Dhee") towards God.

The word "Kalam" (Time) is derived from Kaa+alam. This means that God, embodiment of Time, is the One who rewards people according to their deserts. God does not submit to worldly offerings, worldly authority or worldly power. He responds only to spiritual aspirations.

In the world, we are continually experiencing the same round of days and nights. You perform the same ablutions and indulge in the same process of filling the stomach. Thus you go on from year to year. But what efforts are you making to lead a purposeful and ennobling life? You are going through the same mill of experiences again and again, doing the same things again and again. If you go on in this way, what is the worth of your life? What is the goal of life? What is its primary purpose? Few care to enquire into this basic question.

Hence what we have to examine is how can we lead an ideal, bliss-filled, spiritually-oriented life which will serve as an example to others. People are engaged in spiritual exercises (sadhana). But when the outcome of these exercises is examined, it is found to be without meaning. All these exercises are purely designed to provide some sort of mental satisfaction and nothing more.

In my view, neither Sadhana (spiritual endeavour) nor Sadhyam (fulfillment) exists independently and apart from each other. Sadhana and Sadhyam are one and the same. It is a trick of the mind to make Sadhana as the, means to Sadhyam (the Goal). True Sadhana consists in giving up the "anaatma Bhava" (the idea that one is not the "Spirit but the physical body). To turn the vision from the physical to the spiritual constitutes real Sadhana.

Today, we have knowledge of many sorts in the world. All these categories of knowledge do not constitute what is regarded as Jnana (in Vedantic parlance). "Atmajnana" (knowledge of the Spirit) alone is true knowledge. Ordinary knowledge may be knowledge of material objects, sensory knowledge, or any other kind of knowledge acquired by investigation. But none of these can be Atmajnana (Self-knowledge). In the highest sense "Atma" (the Spirit) and "Jnana" are not two different things. They are one and the same. That is why the Vedas declared: "Sathyam, Jnanam, Anantam Brahma". (Brahmam is Truth, Jnana, the Infinite). Truth, Jnana, Infinity and Brahman are all different names for the Omni-Self (Paramatma). They are synonymous. They are not different from each other.

Jnana and bhakti

What is "Jnana"? The awareness of one's real nature ("Swaswaroopa") is true knowledge. Devotion is the means to achieve oneness with this knowledge (when Self-knowledge becomes one with the Self). Jnana implies freedom from all thoughts. The Jnana Marga (the path of Knowledge) calls for the control of thoughts by appropriate efforts.

Whether one takes to the Jnana-Marga (the path of Knowledge) or the Bhakti Marga (the path of Devotion), the resulting illumination is the same. For instance, the light of the sun is reflected by the moon. The light from the sun is warm and effulgent. When the same light is radiated by the moon, it is cool and soothing. It is the same light that is present in the sun and the moon. The principle that illumines both the sun and the moon is the Spirit (Atma-tattwa). The sun's light has been compared to Jnana and the moon's light to Bhakti. Jnana is effulgent, while Bhakti (Devotion) is blissful. Thus Bhakti and Jnana are the beginning and the end of the same process.

In the phenomenal world, we recognise three entities, the doer, the act and the goal of the action (Karta, Karma, Kriya). This is characteristic of devotion. The Sadhaka (spiritual aspirant) is the Karta (doer). The Sadhana (spiritual exercise) is the Karma (what he does). Getting the vision of the Divine is the goal ("Kriya"). The same process is described as Jnana (knowledge), Jneya (that which is to be known) and Jnata (the knower). In the highest sense all these are one. They appear in three different forms at different stages.

People are carried away by what they imagine are their spiritual experiences in their sadhana. But what they should really seek is the giving up of the attachment to the non-spiritual ("Anaatma Bhava"). You should not rely on the power and pelf of the world. God accepts only what comes from a pure heart. He does not yield to any mundane offerings. There is a historical illustration for this.

Parvathi's Penance

Both in the Vishnupurana and the Sivapurana, Parvati is described as the most beautiful goddess. Conscious of her own exceptional charms, Parvati desired to win Siva as her spouse. But all her efforts proved fruitless. Learning a lesson from this experience and shedding her ego, she embarked on a severe penance. Facing the rigours of heat and cold, wind and rain, she

Seeing that she had completely got rid of her ego, Siva agreed to accept Parvati as one half of himself ("Ardhangini").

What is the inner meaning of this episode? Nature is symbolic of Parvati. It is exceptionally beautiful. Feeling proud about its charms, it seeks to attract everybody. As it succeeds in its attractions, its ego grows. Man, who is a child of Nature, also develops the ego and leads a life filled with egoism. The ego gets puffed up on the basis of knowledge, physical strength, power and position, handsome looks and such other accomplishments. Even the pride of scholarship takes one away from God. Persons filled with such conceit can never realise God. Only those free from self-conceit can be God-realised souls. Valmiki, Nanda, Kuchela, Sabari, Vidura, and Hanuman are examples of devotees who realised God, but who could boast of no great lineage, wealth or scholarship. Their supreme quality was freedom from ego. Hanuman, for instance, was content to describe himself as a servant of Rama, despite his great prowess and knowledge.

All the accomplishments and acquisitions in this world are transient and impermanent; lured by them, men get inflated and ultimately court ruin. Hence, giving up the notions of one's own doership, man must regard God alone as the doer. He is the giver, He is the recipient and He is also the object that is given.

Actions and results

Time is the very form of God. Birth and death are encompassed by Time. Everyone, therefore, should regard Time as Divine and utilise it for performing sacred actions. You should not waste a single moment. Time wasted is life wasted.

The fruits of your actions are determined by Time. All your experiences are the results of your actions, whether it is happiness or sorrow, affluence or poverty. Hence, good and bad depend on what you do. As are your actions, so are the fruits thereof. The way you utilise your time determines the outcome.

God and the yugas

Hence, this New Year, which is a form of the Divine, should be put to right use. You have heard about the four eons called Krita Yuga, Treta Yuga, Dwapara Yuga and Kali Yuga. These are not distinct from each other. The divisions are based on experiences. Whether it be Krita-yuga or Kali-yuga, it has no separate form. According to the conduct of the people at the time, the name is given for the Yuga. Even during Krita-yuga there were people filled with attachments and aversions. There are even in Kaliyuga people wedded to truth and leading virtuous and peaceful lives. For all Yugas, God is the origin. Hence one of the names bestowed on God is "Yugadi" (One from whom the Yuga begins). The Yugadi festival is celebrated for this reason. Everything is a manifestation of the Divine. Not realising this, man becomes elated when he gets something and feels depressed when he loses something. You should develop the state of equanimity which leaves you unaffected by gain or loss.

Once a King summoned an assembly to find out who is the most intelligent person. He posed a question before the gathering: What is the whitest thing in the world? What is the blackest? There were varied replies from the intellectuals in the assembly. One said, it is milk, another cotton, yet another the sky, and so on. There was one great devotee in that gathering. When questioned by the King, he said, "I am not a learned or intelligent person. Whatever little intelligence I possess is a gift from God. All the intelligence that every person has comes from God. There are some who misuse that intelligence and others who make good use of it." Then, after offering a prayer to God, he declared: "The day is whiter than all things, the night is blacker than all other things. This is what is evident in this world. Day is white, night is black. All our lives are passed through this procession of days and nights, of white and black. Who is the one who has overcome this cycle of days and nights? Only God. The combination of white and black is described as one day. The one who has conquered this cycle is God. The difference between day (dinamu) and God (daivamu) is that for God there is neither day nor night while they exist for the world." He concluded: "Only God can give men the grace by which they can transcend day and night."

All the scholars present in the assembly felt outraged by the impudence of an unlettered man coming forth to give an answer to the King's question. Arrogance of other types can be subdued, but the arrogance of scholars (Pundits) cannot be easily put down. This is the basic malady of scholars. They study any number of books and are steeped in bookish knowledge. But they do not practise even a fraction of what they know; with the result that only their ego gets inflated. The scholars approached the King and said: "You should not take this illiterate man at his word. He must be asked to furnish the proof for his statement. In the world today, proof is required for anything in any field."

The King thereupon asked the devotee to provide the proof for his statement. The latter asked for one day's interval to furnish the proof. He also stipulated that during that period, no one should question or oppose anything he did or restrain his movements in any way. The King granted him his two requests and announced that no one should interfere with the movement or actions of the devotee in the palace or elsewhere.

The next day, the King was resting in the palace after lunch. The devotee filled a cup with milk and placed it at the threshold of the King's bed-chamber. He then brought a suckling infant near the door and went on beating it, thereby making it cry so loud that the King's nap was disturbed. The King got up in a rage and came out of the door to ascertain who had the temerity to disturb his siesta. As he stepped out, he knocked down the cup of milk. He could not see the milk-cup.

The devotee told the King: "Because the day is brighter and whiter than the milk, you could not see the milk. Oh King, if milk is the whitest object, how is it you could not see it? The whiteness of the milk is less than that of the day. Daylight is whiter than milk. You have to accept this fact." The devotee added: "The stars are present in the sky during day time also. But

become visible."

The whiteness of day represents Jnana (the higher knowledge). The darkness of night represents Ajnana (ignorance). Divinity transcends both knowledge and ignorance. Forgetting the Divine, people are immersed in the experience of the things of the world. The Divine can be experienced only through the Divine.

God is described as "Sat-Chit-Ananda." "Sat" is truth. "Chit" is supreme knowledge (Paripoorna Jnana). When Sat and Chit come together, there is Ananda, Divine Bliss. If you separate Truth and Knowledge, you cannot experience Bliss. Truth may be compared to sugar. "Chit" (Jnana) may be compared to water. As long as sugar remains sugar and water as water, you don't experience anything special. But when the two are brought together you have a syrup, an enjoyable sweet drink (panakam). Likewise, only when "Sat" and "Chit" come together Ananda (bliss) is experienced. *Truth (Sat) can be attained only through Truth. Knowledge (Chit) can only be acquired through knowledge. Bliss can be experienced only through bliss. The Divine as the embodiment of knowledge can only be realised through Jnana (the path of Knowledge). What is Jnana (the Supreme Knowledge or Wisdom)? It is to know your own true self. That is true knowledge. Self-knowledge is Self-realisation.* Constant contemplation on the Self is the means of experiencing the direct vision of God. What is the Self? That is the Atma. When you refer to the "I", that is the Self. Who is this "I"? Is it the body? Or is it the mind? Or the intellect (Buddhi)? Or the Atma (Indwelling spirit)? When you enquire into this question, you realise that the Atma alone is "I".

Wherefrom has the Atma come? The word "Nara" (man) means Atma. It is the Atma that permeates the sky and everything else. Hence, the sky and other basic elements were called "naaraas" (Naaramulu). The one who is the source of these elements is described as Narayana. The man who is constituted by the five elements is Divine (Narayana). "Atma" means that which is filled with bliss. You cannot secure this bliss from the things of the world. All the pleasures you experience are fleeting.

States of consciousness

You can experience bliss only when you have overcome the processes of the mind. When is this possible? It is in the Sushupti (deep-sleep) state. "Sushupti" is described as the causal form ("Kaaranaswaroopam"). Jagrata (the waking state) is the bodily form. Swapna (the dream state) is the subtle (sookshma) form. Sushupti (deep-sleep state) is the causal form. When the reasons for action and the actual actions are forgotten, the causal body alone exists. These states of consciousness have to be grasped only through enquiry. If you want to control the mind, you have to engage yourself in good deeds. As you go on doing good deeds, you develop good thoughts and feelings. "As you think, so you become". When you have good thoughts, you acquire true understanding of the real. The reflections may change, but the object itself does not change. As for instance, the sun's reflections in a moving stream, or a still lake, or a muddy pond may vary, but the sun itself remains the same. Your body is like a vessel. Your mind is the fluid

according to the state of the mind. Most people cannot easily understand these spiritual truths.

Moving and unmoving

Vedanta, for instance, has declared: "Acharam charameva cha" ("The One who is non-moving is, also moving"). This means that He is both unmoving and the moving object. How is one who is non-moving to be described as moving? And how is one who is moving to be described as unmoving? There is an apparent contradiction in this statement: "God is unmoving; He is also moving." The Vedanta has given a beautiful explanation for this. In the dream state, we experience ourselves in all kinds of movements. But the body that is seen in the dream as moving is in fact lying motionless on the bed. The physical body is motionless. The body in the dream is moving. Both the bodies are one and the same. In one state of consciousness it is still and in another it is moving.

Vedanta declares that in the physical state, there is movement but in the Brahmic state, there is steadiness. Hence, the purpose of Dhyana (meditation) is to achieve the Brahmic state of steadiness.

Vedanta has revealed many such profound truths.

For instance, when a person is asked, what is his dwelling place, he may give a particular address in a particular area. But according to Vedanta, the true dwelling place of every one is God. Likewise, people may describe themselves in terms of their caste or community. But all these are only worldly attributes, useful for worldly purposes. All the physical distinctions are not fundamental. The basic reality is the Atma in everyone. The Vedas have described all as "children of Immortality." People talk about the spirit, but behave in a manner that belies their belief. There should be unity in thought, word and deed. To achieve this triple unity, one has to understand the truth about the Spirit (Atma).

This Atma is Time and Time is God. Therefore, you should not waste time. Fill your time with good actions. There is no greater sadhana than this. Sanctify the time given to you by good thoughts and good actions. For this, you need to cultivate the company of the good, which will in due course lead you to liberation. Fill your mind with thoughts of God. Engage yourself in godly actions. This is true sadhana.

People claim to spend hours in meditation. But of what use is it if there is no concentration of mind? It is better if you engage yourself in your regular duties or render social service or participate in bhajans. By these means try to bring the mind under control. Also, such work will be transformed into worship. Dedicate all your thoughts and actions to God. "Sarva Karma Bhagavatprityartham" ("All actions are done to please God"). Then your acts get purified.

If you want to experience God, you have to do it through your duties and actions. This is not so easy. You have been listening to me for many years. You take down notes and listen to tape records. Has there been the slightest change in you? Such is your life. Only when some change

nights in the same routine, but are you making any efforts to sublimate your life? Endeavour to lead an ideal life in the absence of any change for the better in your daily conduct, all your so-called sadhanas (spiritual practices) will be futile.

Jnana (knowledge) is God. Jnana is Atma. Prakriti (Nature) is Jneyam (the thing to be known). Man is a combination of Jnana (God) and Jneyam (Nature). The Bhagavad Gita says that the Kshetra (the field, namely the body) and the Kshetrajna (the knower of the field, namely the Atma) together constitute the human personality. Similarly, the scriptures refer to the human body as the temple and the indwelling Spirit as the God installed in that temple. Even a mere intellectual understanding of this fact will make us happy. But we shall be much more happy when we put this understanding into practice in our daily lives. However, it is a pity that we content ourselves with pious resolutions in such matters, without a strong determination to put them into actual practice. Here is a story relevant in this connection.

Once upon a time all the deer in a forest met together in a conference. They arrived at a consensus that they were superior to the dogs in several respects; they could run faster and jump higher than dogs; they ate Satwic food unlike the dogs which ate Rajasic food. Therefore they passed a unanimous resolution amidst loud cheers that thereafter they should never be afraid of the dogs. They had hardly finished passing the resolution when they heard the loud barking of a dog in the forest. They lost no time in running away for their lives; their resolution was gone with the wind; not a single deer remained at the site of the conference. Similar is the fate of the conferences and resolutions made by the so-called sadhakas (spiritual aspirants). Without the courage of firm conviction and strong determination, no purpose is served by routine sadhanas undertaken by aspirants who oscillate from moment to moment like the pendulum of a clock. On the contrary, a person who never swerves from his determination even under trying circumstances is called a "Dheera" (a hero) and such a one wins the grace of the Lord.

We should try to seek fulfillment in our day-to-day life by basing our mundane activities on spiritual values. As I have been telling you off and on, you must have your bands in the society and head in the forest. That is to say, whatever be the activities with which you are preoccupied in society, you must be steadfast in holding on to the spiritual ideal. This alone is the true sadhana which will bestow lasting peace on you. Whatever may be the change in the various reflections (Pratibimba), there will be no change whatsoever in the Original (Bimba). Remember that you are that changeless original—the Atma. All your sadhanas should be directed towards establishing yourself in this firm conviction and unwavering faith, culminating in your life's fulfillment.

All your sense organs should be sanctified by offering all the actions performed through them as dedication to God. This is true Bhajan. "BHA" means that which is Bhavyam (sacred or holy). What is Bhavyam? The Atma Tattwa (principle of Atma) which is Divyam (Self-effulgent). The letter "Ja" in the word "Bhajan" connotes Japa (chanting the Lord's Name). Thus Bhajan and Japa are one and the same. There is a Japa (which means constant remembrance of God) that goes on incessantly and automatically within you in the breathing process, whatever be the work

without any conscious effort on your part, in the same manner as the process of breathing, beating of your heart and circulation of blood within you, which take place without any Sadhana or effort by you. These are all natural processes which go on without any volition on your part. In contrast to this there are some activities which also become involuntary or automatic but because of prolonged practice. For example, the fingers of one who is in the habit of taking snuff, will unconsciously be moving towards his nose. Similarly, because of habit, some people will be engaged unconsciously in Japa, with their minds wandering somewhere. This is not real Japa. That alone is real Japa which goes on in the superconscious (but not unconscious) state of mind. Do not entertain any doubt about your ability to reach that stage. You can surely attain that state beyond the shadow of doubt, provided you have a strong determination. Unfortunately, you do not evince such a firm determination and tenacity of purpose in respect of spiritual matters, as you do for the sake of mundane things. Man is prepared to put forth any amount of effort to undertake a journey of millions of miles into outer space but he hardly ever endeavours to go even an inch into his own inner Self. What is the use of all your intelligence and all your worldly acquisitions when they cannot give you Atma Santhi (the untrammelled peace of the Atma or Spirit). God alone can confer such enduring peace on man. Therefore, O Embodiments of Divine love! recognise that the new year (Samvatsara) connotes God who bears several appellations relating to Time. Sanctify the New Year by engaging yourselves in pure, selfless and ennobling activities. As far as possible, avoid causing harm or pain to others. As you sow, so you reap. Whenever you feel disturbed by a sense of anger, envy, pride, jealousy and the like, be alert and resort to the contemplation of the Lord.

LEARNING THE LESSONS AT THE LOTUS FEET:

The Challenge of Baba's Teachings

I really cannot adequately express all of what Sri Sathya Sai Baba means to me. Through leelas and miracles He once lifted two great sorrows from my shoulders, removing them entirely. He has finally dispelled many an inner shadow of the soul which came from living through this era and having to struggle against mankind's headlong flight towards the apparent precipice. He has moved mysteriously through my dreams for many years, bringing one wonder and inspiration after another, being sometimes even more humorous, caring and blissful than I have seen at interviews. Repeatedly He has let me see how He can feel my physical ailments Himself, follow any idiosyncratic twist and turn of my mind and also alleviate difficulties in matters of the heart.

All such paranormal events, however, though they seem like conclusive arguments, have less significance in securing my faith in the coming new era for mankind than have Bhagavan Baba's teachings. Miracles apart, it is these teachings that in my opinion are the crucial means for

cannot.

Being constitutionally unable to 'swallow whole' any doctrine, I have had to examine and test the teachings for myself, both rationally and through experience where possible. This process has for me both a critical-intellectual side and, not least, a practical and self-developmental side, which I shall illustrate firstly.

Lessons in equanimity

Baba explains that the fruits of the control of desires and of the mind's agitations are detachment and equanimity, which go hand-in-hand towards ego-elimination. Even though I had made some modest progress in that earlier in life, Swami's teachings convincingly removed the remaining uncertainties on many points. Further, both at the ashram and at home, He has given me various strict and forceful correctives when the flesh was weak, the will wavered or my mind erred... but always in a circumspect way with care for my particular nature.

Some lessons Baba gave me were very trying. Due to chronic spinal problems that caused my retirement I had to develop more endurance, especially when visiting Prasanthi Nilayam for the first time, tolerating physical purgatory for the sake of glimpses of Him. Testing situations arose for me on the mental plane then too, bringing out in me traits which otherwise I could more readily have suppressed or which would have remained concealed. Despite all manner of self-preparations for the possibility of a spell in 'the workshop', I soon found myself unable any longer to see or hear good, becoming most disappointed at the behaviour of others. I saw people around me more and more critically and sardonically because they seemed to fall far short of what I had expected from Swami's followers and from accounts of ashram life I had read. Whatever the facts of the matter, the truth was that it was I who was feeling antipathy and annoyance. Once started, I thought further along negative lines and, as if by some vicious circle of fate, everything around me gradually worsened too. I was already quite convinced that Bhagavan is indeed all of what He has said He is, but once again I felt like blaming Him for the very existence of the ills and sufferings of this world.

At the cracking point, my pains and bad feelings were all that seemed left to me and the evidence showed up that some deep-rooted, stubborn distrust of many things in life in, general was in me which just had to go! In tears of pain and frustration I had nowhere to turn but inwardly to God Himself. It worked! From then on everything improved. I feel I gained valuable insight into myself for future use that I might not have had in any other way.

The goal of faith

Through a number of visits to Baba I went on learning how what goes to create even-mindedness under adverse conditions follows no simple recipe. Only patient effort at tolerating others' fads, foibles and worse allowed time for observing and perhaps discovering each cause of—or background for—their behaviour. My own mental irritation fell away whenever I understood, giving a bit more strength and knowledge of self each time.

become neither positive nor negative in attitude but to remain affirmative of experiences for what they are, neither more nor less. This does not exclude vision of and yearning for divine qualities. Thus, Baba helps develop my faith in the goal through practical understanding and growing self-confidence, not just blindly.

Swami has many subtle ways of indicating the lessons He wants done and the results He expects of me. Through non-verbal signs He will answer with instant precision some of the mental questions I direct to Him, even at 40 yards distance. When we are half a world away in Oslo, Norway, Baba also sends my wife and me unmistakable 'coincidences' and leelas to help our sadhana and show His supportive presence even in our small attempts at service there.

Secular and spiritual wisdom

Swami's teachings are often very general and encompass many subjects and the entire range of possible situations. Interpreting them is an individual matter of relating them to the appropriate contexts without forgetting all the intricacies involved. No philosopher could accept, however, that interpretation is just a matter of personal belief or taste. The stimulating challenge here I find to be discovering the many ways in which Baba's vision is to be applied correctly in the existing world with its many problems, its sciences and technology and its great social and cultural divergences. Rather than turn me further away from life, Swami's influence has been to help me in facing the world better and 'fighting the good fight.'

Such conviction would not be possible for me unless Baba's ideas stood up to critical understanding too. As it fell to my lot in life to research and teach a range of social and philosophical theories, I study Bhagavan Baba's books and discourses carefully. There I find the master key for retrieving the truth contents of our civilization's best and major systems of thought. This 'key' opens for a metaphysically-satisfying overall view of the created universe and its Creator as well as an epoch-making corrective to the erring mind and the failings of modern life. However, the stand on general issues taken by Baba, refuting many common ideas and pointing out the flaws in much current secular and social knowledge, is always illuminating. For me, His teachings are not a substitute for all other sorts of valid knowledge garnered through humanity's great labours, but a most clear and confidence-inspiring guide through all their complexities towards the ultimate goal of human life; liberation through divinisation.

To that end, Sathya Sai Baba's spiritual wisdom assures me of the possibility of eventually attaining full realisation. The inherent strength of conviction of His words and the very nature of their message repeatedly reawaken and enthuse me like no scripture I know. This is not least because they are always backed up by Baba's unsurpassable example and His fortuitous interventions and guidance. He demonstrates through our own experience how faith waxes as ego wanes, how the goal of Divine Consciousness and Bliss is gradually seen more clearly and approached.

—Robert Priddy, Norway

Spectacular and Colourful Display

The Annual Sports Festival of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning and the institutions affiliated to it has become over the years the most eagerly awaited event of each academic year. It is a festival in which students from the different campuses vie with each other to present more and more interesting and thrilling items as their annual homage to Bhagavan.

This year's festival, which began on January 11th with an impressive rally of all the students, was packed with a variety of new items, including a demonstration of parasailing and several daring feats on the motorcycle.

A very large gathering of parents and devotees from India and overseas had gathered in the Hill View Stadium, which had been given an impressive face-lift before the birthday celebrations in November. The giant 65-foot statue of Hanuman dominated the stadium and was an appropriate symbol of the physical, mental and spiritual strength, which Swami commends to all the students as the essential requisite of a good education.

Precisely at the stroke of 7 a.m., Bhagavan arrived at the stadium in His glittering motorised chariot, and was greeted by the firing of a 21-gun salute. Bhagavan was received by the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Saraf, and the principals of the Brindavan and Anantapur campuses. The Institute band, in their brilliant white uniforms, played select marching tunes, which had been taught to them by the well-known American trumpet maestro, Maynard Ferguson.

Bhagavan inaugurated the Festival by lighting the ceremonial lamp. Simultaneously shots were fired to announce the start of the rally.

The great March Past began after Bhagavan had taken His seat on the Santhi Vedika.

As in previous years, the rally was led by the tiny tots of the Primary School, followed by the students of the Secondary School and the students from the three campuses of the Institute. As each group marched past Bhagavan, the flag-bearer of the group dipped the flag in homage to the Chancellor. It was an inspiring sight to see the children carrying banners in different colours which proclaimed the spiritual message of Bhagavan. This year, children from the Vidya Vihar, Ooty, also took part in the rally.

Before the march past began, a large-sized figure of a swan mounted on a painted frame depicting the ocean, was displayed as the mascot for the year's festival. The swan symbolises Purity, Unity and Divinity.

The Institute band was in attendance throughout the march past, which concluded with the marching of the Chancellor's Guard in their distinctive coloured uniforms.

was administered to all the participants. Bhagavan then lit the "Olympic" torch, which was carried in relays by pairs of students to the new Torch Stand that had been erected on the top of Vidyagiri north of the Hanuman statue. The crowd cheered as the "Olympic" flame went up. Student guards in their red uniforms standing on the top of Vidyagiri appeared like sentinels guarding a fort.

After the participants in the rally had gone back to their respective places, the day's display of athletic feats and physical demonstrations began.

The first item was a display of parasailing by students of the Brindavan campus. It was exciting to watch the performers going up by parachute and coming down from a height of over a hundred feet. The students had been trained by Mr. Chandran of the National Academy of Adventure.

Another innovative item provided by the Brindavan students was a variety of folk dances from different regions of Bharat to convey the message of unity in diversity. These dances covered every part of the country from Assam to Kerala. There was a procession of people representing different religions. The students had been trained in such difficult arts as dancing on stilts dressed as horsemen. At the end, students in white uniforms offered homage to Bhagavan, singing a song of national unity.

A series of thrilling feats on a motorcar were provided by students from the Brindavan Campus. They were appropriately described as "Thunderbirds".

Then followed a series of colourful mass drills by students of the Primary and Secondary School. Flags, drums and other devices were used to produce striking effects in the mass drills and artistic formations. A hundred girls presented a beautiful fairy dance. An unforgettable item was the lotus formation in which only the girls' heads were seen blooming as lotuses emerging from green leaves in a vast lotus pond. Another group of girls presented the butterfly dance, moving gracefully and singing Bhagavan's favourite English song, "Love is My form."

Next came a series of floats designed by the Anantapur campus girls depicting scenes from the lives of three avatars—Rama, Krishna and Sathya Sai. The first scene was a boat carrying Rama, Sita and Lakshmana. The second tableau depicted Krishna preaching to Arjuna from the chariot. The third was a big-sized aeroplane named "Sai Vihang", symbolising the global mission of Bhagavan Baba. Against the background music of Sai Bhajans—"Sathya Dharma Santhi Prema Sabko deejo" and "Baba Premado"—the take-off of the first flight No. 999 of "Sai Airlines" was announced, amidst cheers from the gathering.

The Anantapur girls then presented a series of gymnastic feats and feats on the cycle and several pyramidal formations to convey different spiritual messages.

programme came to a close with a series of thrilling feats by motorcycle riders, including driving through a blazing tunnel.

Altogether, it was a spectacular and colourful display, which bore ample testimony to the physical fitness of all the students and their keen desire to demonstrate before Bhagavan their varied abilities and to express their gratitude to Bhagavan for all the inspiration, guidance and blessings showered on them.

—N.

Sai Literature in Braille

As many as 196 volumes of Sai literature in Braille are now available for the blind anywhere in the world. These books cover not only the entire series of Bhagavan's "Vahinis" and all the volumes of Bhagavan's discourses, but also books on the life and message of Bhagavan Baba by various writers including Prof. Kasturi, Howard Murphet, Samuel Sandweiss, Dr. Hislop, Dr. Fanibunda, Dr. M. N. Rao and others.

The books can be purchased at the cost of reproducing them or borrowed from the free lending library at the Sathya Sai Baba Centre of America, P.O. Box 278, 305 W. Ist Street, Tustin, California, USA 92680.

The Braille volumes, which have been brought out by the Sathya Sai Society, Sathya Sai Baba Braille Project, Tustin, have been made available in the following centres in the different countries

Sri Sathya Sai Books & Publications Trust, Prasanthi Nilayam, (A.P.), India, 515134.

Sathya Sai Baba Braille Library, P.O. Box 118, Rozelle, N S W, 2039, Australia.

Mr. D. Amirthanandan, A. P. R. I., 62, Hens Lane, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL 72 AH, England.

Sathya Sai Baba Center of Hong Kong, T S T P.O. Box 95017, Kowloon, Hong Kong.

The New Zealand Sathya Sai Baba Braille Library, C/o B. Pyzer, 24, Riverside Retirement Village, Edgumbe, New Zealand.

Sundaram Library, No. 7, Pughs Road, Raja Annamalaipuram, Madras 600028, India.

Raksha T. Desai, 10 / 181 G. I. C. Staff Colony, Meghthane, B o r i v I i (East), Bombay - 400 066.

Sri Sisir Das Gupta, Principal, Lighthouse for Blind, 174 Shyamaprasad Mukherjee Road, Calcutta - 700 026, India.

Sri Asok Chowdhury, Principal, Calcutta Blind School, Behala, Calcutta 7C0 034, India.

Sathya Sai Baba Center of Bangsar, 24, Jalan Abdullah, Off Jalan Bangsar, 5900 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The Sathya Sai Baba Organisation in Trinidad and Tobago has presented books to the Blind Welfare Society of Trinidad and Tobago.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba Center, Lagos, Nigeria.

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Center, Lenasia South, Transvaal, Republic of South Africa, has donated Braille books to the library of the National Council of the Blind in South Africa.

Other individuals or groups wishing to donate Braille books may contact Sathya Sai Baba Society Braille Co-ordinator, 1626, Madrono Ave., Pala Alto., California, 94306, USA.

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

—Baba

A BOUQUET FOR BHAGAVAN:

In Adoration of the Lord

I go through life adoring you, O God,
In whatsoever form you may appear;
You are the owner, whether far or near,
Of every form and shape of clay and clod.
You shine in radiance, or in lambent flame;
Or in the dusky airy form of light;
Or in the sham and shape of fear and fright,
You are the being, holder of the frame.

You are the fairy fragrance in the flower;

As also you are spirit in the knower;

You are the mighty mover of the sea,
In stone, or wood, or flesh, or air, or fire,
You are the sole essential lordly sire.

But you are more than all the things that are;

More than the universe and all there is
For you are Being, Consciousness, and Bliss
You are not just the radiance of a star;
You are not just the fragrance of a flower;
You are not just remembrance of a mind;
You are not just delight of any kind
You are Existence, Consciousness, and Power.

For you are Love that none can circumscribe;

And you are Joy that nothing can exhaust;
And you are Grace nobody can describe;
And you are Mercy, endless and uncaused!
You are a Being, worshipful and kind,
You are beyond all stars and worlds combined!

So we prefer to call you "Father": word

So simple and so sweet, it makes us feel
We do not have to bow and bend and kneel;
But rather, lovingly and not absurd,
Embrace you, kiss you soft, and undeterred,
Lay our tired spirits on your lap, and heal
Our wounds there, and, like children, cry, appeal.
Thus: crying to our Father is preferred.

And so we call you, Baba sweet;

Dear Baba, dearest Baba, Father, wise
Your wondrous name we endlessly repeat;
And by your name enable us to rise
Above our littleness, and realize
We, too, are children of your paradise.

—*Benito F. Reyes, California.*

Let the Walls Come Down

bear witness and anticipate the time to come.

Today we sing so that other walls do not rise: the wall that separates heart from heart, a soul from another soul. We sing so that love flowers in us, so that the sublime ideal of Peace for all beings in this vast world widens without bonds and settles forever.

This may be the day to begin to join this universal march through the ages. Walking towards the happiness of brotherhood recognised. Beings dancing a dance of light in an infinite space: The World. This Wonder World created by a Universal Father only for His fulfillment and ours, His children.

Lord, You said: "Why fear when I am here?"

With the strength that only Faith can give, we know of the certainty of Your Divine Design.

Today we join together towards Universal Peace.

Peace be with us, for ever and ever. AMEN.

(These reflections were written and read at the end of the Akhanda Bhajan in the Sai Center of Uriarte, Buenos Aires, on November 3, 1990.)

—*Rosana de Berra, Argentina*

"Knowing You"

There were times when all I wanted was to run and hide,
And the secrets that were in my heart burned deep inside.
Then You called me, You enthralled me,
With the wonder of the magic world of knowing You.

When my mind was torn in dangling threads of vanished song,
And the time we stood apart had lasted far too long,
You retrieved me, You received me,
Now You weave me through the tapestry of knowing You.

Sai! Behind each kind and tender smile, I see Your face,
Each tree I find has robed itself in jewels and lace,
For You found me, and astound me,
With Your love: the unimagined Grace of knowing You.

Now, such joy unbounded, spilling over length and breadth,
Yes, I'll go with You through endless worlds, past life and death.
I am free now, for I see how
Every moment's been a shining step toward knowing You.

—*Tana Brinnand, California*

VIDYAGIRI SAMACHAR:

“In the Service of Bhagavan”

When Bhagavan declared in the Institute Auditorium on January 14th that "Vice-Chancellors come and go, but Swami's love comes and grows", there could have been no more felicitous way of announcing the retirement of one Vice-Chancellor and the induction of a new one. The occasion Swami chose for the announcement was eminently appropriate. All the staff and students of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute were present for the prize giving function at the end of the annual Sports Festival which Swami inaugurated on January 11.

After the announcement, which came towards the end of His discourse, Bhagavan called upon Prof. Anil Kumar to speak a few words about Prof. S. Sampath, who was succeeding Prof. Saraf as Vice-Chancellor. Prof. Anil Kumar described the career of Prof. Sampath in the Institutes of Technology at Madras and Kanpur, in the Public Service Commission and the Defence Ministry and said: "This appointment comes as a climax to the academic career of Prof. Sampath."

Expressing his profound gratitude to Bhagavan for His infinite kindness, Prof. Sampath said: "There comes a moment in a person's life which he treasures in his heart as the greatest because God's blessing descended on him. This is such a moment in my life." "Swami's association as Chancellor of this university", he said, "is unique and is without parallel in any educational institution around the world."

After referring to the Institute's many-sided growth in the past nine years and envisaging the prospects for the future, he said, "We have many miles to go and many heights to be scaled. Propelled by the Divine hand, we will move forward, overcome obstacles and achieve progress meaningful in human terms. Let us, with a united will, pray to Him to fill our hearts with pure Love and to help us to become integrated human beings whose mission in life will be service to our fellow human beings."

Swami materialised on the occasion a "Navaratna" ring for Prof. Saraf and also presented him with gold kadayams (bracelets) which He put round the wrists of Prof. Saraf.

in which he related how he came "to the Lotus Feet of my Mother at the tender age of ten" when he was in Kashmir and how he and Mrs. Saraf came later to Prasanthi Nilayam on Dipavali day in November 1985. The 62 months he had served as Vice-Chancellor had passed off like so many seconds. "I have been deeply overwhelmed", he said, "by our Lord's expression of love and appreciation of work." Describing his selection as one of the trustees of the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust as "the highest honour" conferred on him, he hoped "Swami will continue to guide me on the right lines in his new role."

—N.

Krishna! Krishna! Krishna!

Fondly you ask
"Why chant thrice?"
"By the by, what's Krishna?"
"One who's dark,"
Is all your reply.
But more is to it.

Krishyathi iti Krishnah.
What is it He cultivates?
Why? Our hearts—
Weeding bad qualities,
Ploughing with Sadhana
And Sowing devotion.

Karshati iti Krishnah.
Attracts us to Him.
His magnetic sight,
Words and Deeds
Saften and calm
Hearts of even scoffers.

Kushyathi iti Krishnah.
The Highest Bliss is He;
Scarce recognised such.
Sport we with Him,
With the least inkling
Of the near God-head.

Thrice great is the chant,

Thus spake Sathya Sai
Our beloved Master
On the great Poornavatar,
The Leelaamaya Krishna.

(Lines written after, listening to Bhagavan's Krishnashtami discourse.)

—**Dr. B. Krishnamurthy, Thanjavur**

"Hunger For Spiritual Knowledge"

The tremendous interest in Bhagavan Baba's teachings in the countries of Central and South America testified to "the great hunger for spiritual knowledge and inspiration that abounds in the world today", observed Dr. Michael Goldstein, speaking at the inaugural session of the Fifth World Conference of Sai Organisations, in November last. Dr. Goldstein said

There has never been a more auspicious time to be alive! In the past, the spiritual path was long, tortuous, and convoluted. The great sages had to undergo interminable austerities. The great saints had to suffer terrible tribulations. We are very fortunate, indeed, to be alive during the era of the Kali Yuga Avatar Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. In His Divine Mission to effect the spiritual regeneration of mankind, He is accelerating our evolution. He has straightened, levelled, and paved the road we must follow. His Words are like the dividers on the road that distinguish the right direction from the wrong direction. His actions are examples that we must follow like the signs posted on the road that lead us to our Divine Destination. It is not sufficient to merely adore Him. We must also pay attention to His Words and His Actions. Devotion is a precursor of transformation. Transformation is our spiritual goal, the purpose of our lives.

Bhagavan Baba has initiated the restoration of the Sanathana Dharma not only in India, but all over the world. There are now Sai devotees, Sai centers, and Sai Organizations in more than 90 countries. Bhagavan Baba's Divine Writings are being translated into many languages. The spiritual programmes that He has inspired and recommended are flourishing in diverse cultures and distant lands.

Earlier this year, I had the great privilege of visiting the Sai Organizations in 11 countries in South and Central America. In many of these countries public meetings were conducted on a common theme: The purpose of life according to the Divine Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. In all of the meetings except one, the theaters were filled to capacity and people were turned away because there was no space for them. This attests to the great hunger for spiritual knowledge and inspiration that abounds in the world today. People are feeling the void in their

visited, I was deeply moved by the intense devotion to Bhagavan Baba and the earnest dedication to the Sai Programme. Most of these devotees have never had the opportunity to come to India for Bhagavan Baba's Darshan. Nevertheless, they sang bhajans beautifully. Their discussions reflected a deep understanding of Bhagavan Baba's Teachings. Their Bal Vikas teachers were exemplary and the children were delightful and disciplined. Their service activities demonstrated their firm resolve and dedication.

These things are happening half way around the world among people who have never had the great advantage that you and I are sharing now, to experience the Darshan of our Lord, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Can there be any greater testimony to the universality of His Message and the Omniscience of His Being?

"A glorious adventure"

Speaking for myself, I can bear witness to Bhagavan Baba's power to transform. I know that there is nothing in this world that can diminish the light and the love that He has given to my life. Before, my life was an empty episode of wasted time. Now, it has become a glorious adventure filled with purpose and conviction. Whenever I regress into the darkness of fear and doubt, whenever I am bewildered by the machinations of my own mind, whenever I am enticed by the relentless lure of desires that emanate from my senses and my ego, then I contemplate my experience with Bhagavan Baba. I look deeply into my own heart, and I ask myself these questions

Who, among men, knows everything that we have thought, felt, said, done, and even dreamed?

Who, among men, cannot be constrained by the laws of time and space, or matter and energy as far as our meager knowledge permits us to understand God's Creation?

Who, among men, can uplift the ignorant and the suffering with a glance, a smile, a touch, and only God knows how many other imperceptible ways?

Who, among men, has given His Life to the welfare of mankind so magnanimously and selflessly, always giving and forgiving, and never getting and forgetting?

Who, among men, speaks the Eternal Truth spontaneously and with Ultimate Authority?

Who, among men, can inspire pure, innocent love in the hardest and the most cynical of hearts?

The answers to these questions compel me to affirm and proclaim: Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is the Lord God!

How the Lord Guides

What is needed here? That is the question Swami would have us ask before developing a service project. Find the need and address it. He will guide us to the appropriate answer.

A native New Yorker, I know this city well, its districts, its people. I have seen it change in terrible ways as drugs, crime, violence, disease and homelessness threaten the well being of all who live here. As I walk the streets, take the subways, go shopping, I have been forced to recognize the plight of so many. It is hard to avoid the people with paper cups begging and those without the energy to do even that. It is impossible to give to them all and I am never sure if they are truly needy or just lazy. I cannot judge and so I avoid them whenever I can. They don't look pleasant. Some seem threatening. I feel ashamed of myself because I rarely give them money and I justify my decision with the reminder that I do a lot of service with feeding the poor and working with children. Nevertheless I feel uncomfortable with myself in this city that is the fountainhead of so many cultural treasures.

I have prayed to Swami to guide me to resolve the two needs involved here, the need to help those who deserve help and the need to help myself out of the feeling of guilt because I am not doing as much as I can do.

Swami gave me a very simple solution. Every morning I prepare sandwiches with some cookies and put them in my Prasanthi Nilayam cloth bag. I then go about my usual daily routine. Instead of avoiding the beggars and the homeless, I stop and ask: "Would you like a sandwich?" In almost every case, the answer is "Yes, thank you." Sometimes there is a smile and almost always eye contact. I don't know if they are all hungry for the sandwich, but I am certain that they are hungry for the attention that comes from someone recognizing them and offering some small help. At times the response has been surprisingly sweet and deeply moving.

The greatest change has been the change in me. My need has been more than met. I no longer avoid people and I no longer feel ashamed of myself for not doing something to help. I never leave my apartment without my Sai Care Sack on my shoulder. I am deeply grateful for His guidance. At an interview in January, 1990, Swami answered my question "How can I help?" by saying, "Follow your conscience. I am always guiding you." He guided. I followed.

As National Service Co-ordinator (for the U.S.), I would like to suggest this as a Sai service project. It is so easy to prepare some sandwiches and cookies and keep them with you. Most cities have the same problems as we have here. Even those who drive to work find panhandlers approaching their cars. Have a sandwich ready to give, think of the Lord, see Him in their eyes and humbly, trustingly, leave the results to Him.

—Hal Honig, New York

God as Friend

*Do not brag about your learning,
Nor proclaim your affluence;
Don't lose your head over your wealth,
Nor boast about your progeny;
Do not proclaim you are a donor,
Nor feel elated because you are Swami's sevak;
Do not exult over your valour,
Or over your accomplishments;
When you win the approbation of a few
The lotus-eyed Lord will bless you.
His feet are everywhere;
His eyes and heads are everywhere;
With His ears in all directions,
encompassing everything, stands the Lord.*

Dear students and teachers, embodiments of Divine Love!

The Lord pervades everything in the cosmos with His myriad feet, hands, eyes, faces and ears. But man, not recognising the fact, imagines he is the doer and indulges in all kinds of speculation, thinking that no one knows about them. The Lord sees everything. No one can conceal anything from Him. He dwells inside and outside every living thing. Hence nothing can be hidden from Him. God dwells in all beings in one and the same form. Although living beings may vary from each other, God is One and indivisible. The sun shines over the water in a lake, in a well, in a vessel, in a river or over the ocean. Although the sun is one, he is reflected in different ways. The containers are varied, but God is one and the same in all beings. "Anthike Sat." (The Divine is the nearest). There is nothing in the world nearer to one than the Divine.

"God is very much nearer to you than your mother and dearer to you than your father. You cannot afford to forget such a God. Bear this good counsel in mind." (poem)

However, men in their ignorance ask the question: If God is omnipresent and all-pervasive, why is He not visible to us? When the sun is shining, clouds which have been caused by the sun's heat hide the rays of the sun. When the sun is not visible because of the clouds, can you say that there is no sun? Likewise, the clouds of doubts and delusion, which arise in man owing to his conceit and ignorance, hide the Divine from him. When a strong wind blows, the clouds are dispelled and the sun is visible. Similarly, when the winds of love and faith blow, the clouds of doubt and egoism are scattered and God reveals Himself.

Thus, though God is omnipresent, secured. Jnana (the pursuit of supreme knowledge) calls for devotion (Bhakti). Jneya (the object to be known) corresponds to the office to be occupied (Udyogam). Pension corresponds to jnanaphala (the fruit or fulfillment of knowledge). These three stages can be compared to Sat-Chit-Ananda. Bliss is the fulfillment of what began with studentship.

God as friend

It should be realised, however, that there is no greater friend for anyone than God. He is beyond the reach of praise or censure. He does not give up man on the ground of the latter's failure to come up to His expectations. That is why God has been given the appellation, "Suhrid" (a good friend). God desires no offerings from any devotee. God is the only one friend who confers benefits on devotees without expecting any return. Nevertheless man does not readily accept such a friend. Only the man who accepts God as such a friend and is guided by His advice can understand the full meaning of Divine friendship. Faith of this nature alone constitutes true Jnana.

Seekers and sceptics

In the comprehension of the truth about the Divine, there are four different approaches. These are: Yastika, Astika, Astika-Nastika and Nastika.

Yastika is one, who, on experiencing a Divine fragrance, seeks to find out the source of the fragrance and after a diligent search, gets at the flower which is the source. In spiritual terms, this means that the seeker studies the Vedas, the Puranas and other scriptures and tries to realise the Divine as revealed by them. "Yastikatwa" means embarking on a man's lack of faith and his self-conceit prevent him from seeing God. To get rid of this disbelief and egoism, certain spiritual disciplines have to be observed.

Three stages

In this context, three concepts have to be understood: Jnanam, Jneyam and Jnanagamyam (Knowledge, that which is to be known, and the fruit of knowledge). These have been expounded under different names in Vedantic parlance. The primary requisite in the quest for Jnana is "Asakthi" (intense yearning). The second requisite is the undertaking of spiritual exercises. Thereby one achieves the fitness for acquiring the knowledge.

In terms of the career of a student, these three stages may be described as follows: Vidyarthi (student), Adhikari (holder of an office) and Pensioner (super annuation). As a student, one has to pursue his studies diligently and acquire knowledge. Then, as an official, he has to use that knowledge in the most effective manner. This is the mark of an efficient officer (Udyogalakshanam). When one discharges one's duties properly, observes the prescribed rules, engages himself in selfless activities, does his work with discipline and devotion and, on reaching superannuation, retires on a pension, he is bound to experience peace and happiness.

But interest alone is not enough. Efforts to realise the spiritual objective have to be made. He has to recognise the basic truths of the spiritual quest. And those truths have to be practised. Only then the fruit of jnana, in the form of Realisation of the Divine, is diligent search to discover the source of the Real and to experience it.

"Astikatwa" is devoting one's entire life to the search for the source of the fragrance.

"Astika-Nastikatwa" means, making the search for the source of the fragrance and, on failing in the attempts, giving up the search out of frustration and despair.

"Nastika" is one who denies the existence of the fragrance, because he is afflicted by a disease which prevents him from smelling the fragrance.

Caught up in one or other of these approaches, men spend their lives in a wayward manner. This is the plight of students today. Some of them recognise the fragrance (of the Spirit), some others make the efforts to search for the source, some others are content to enjoy the fragrance without seeking the source and yet others declare that they are quite satisfied with the material comforts of the world and are not interested in anything beyond them. This last category of persons are unable to recognise the basic purpose of life. They seem to consider that the sole aim of life is to acquire wealth, eat and drink and enjoy material comforts. This surely cannot be the main purpose of life. To recognise the primacy of human birth among living beings and yet fail to realise one's inherent divinity is supremely unfortunate.

Physical and mental health

Man needs a healthy body for a healthy mind, filled with good thoughts. It must be recognised that sports and music have been designed to confer health and happiness on man. But physical fitness alone is not enough. Mental health is equally important. Together with the gross physical body everyone has a subtle body (sookshma sarira). One has to take good care of this subtle body also. For this, spiritual exercises will have to be performed which will help one to realise the Divine.

There are three benefits to be derived from games: team spirit, mutual understanding and joy. Even if men speak different languages and differ in their habits and cultures, in the field of sports they have a common bond, a spirit of camaraderie.

Face all challenges

True education consists in the acquisition of good qualities, cultivation of good thoughts, truthfulness, devotion, discipline, and dedication to duty. These are also the qualities that should be acquired through sports and games. These qualities serve to impart to the subtle body health and joy. Seek to acquire the friendship of God, than whom there is no greater friend in the world. You witnessed the daring manner in which motorcycle riders rode through a blazing tunnel. Similarly you have to face with courage the ordeals in life. When our Institute students go out into

Institute authorities and staff have been offering encouragement to our students.

Dr. Saraf's services

You all know the work of Prof. Saraf during the past five years. He is a great devotee. Even before coming here, he had been engaged in propagating education in human values. He came hereto earn the grace of Bhagavan and not in search of a job. He was anxious to spend the evening of his life in a sacred way, imparting joy to others. Moving among students as a student, among teachers as a teacher and among devotees as a devotee, he infused enthusiasm in one and all. It was the good fortune of the students that such a person should come here as Vice-Chancellor (cheers). There are, however, some government rules which have to be complied with. In conformity with these rules, he has decided to retire from the Vice-Chancellorship from today.

Prof. Sampath to take over

The person to succeed him should be equally pure-hearted and dedicated. Our Sampath is such a person who has come here to spend the rest of his life in Swami's presence in a dedicated manner (cheers). (Prof. Saraf and Prof. Sampath were garlanded). He will assume office from today. The Principal of the Brindavan campus, Anil Kumar will speak a few words about both of them. (After Prof. Anil Kumar's speech, Swami continued His discourse). Both of them (Prof. Sampath and Prof. Saraf) have come here to render service and not to earn a salary. Both are honorary workers, giving up high offices. Sampath has undertaken this assignment in order to turn out ideal students in the Institute. It is a great piece of good fortune for our students to secure such worthy and eminent Vice-Chancellors.

At the time our Institute was set up, we had as Vice-Chancellor Prof. Gokak, who was a renowned scholar, a litterateur, poet, educationist and eminent in many other fields. He was our first Vice-Chancellor. After him, Saraf succeeded him and rendered service with devotion and dedication. From today Sampath, who has distinguished himself in various fields and been eminent in the scientific world, is taking over as Vice-Chancellor. These three may be regarded as the Trinity for our Institute. All the three are without any self-interest or expectation of reward. Hoping that you students will follow the example of these pure-hearted and eminent men and achieve in life equally eminent positions, I am blessing you all and concluding My discourse (cheers).

"Swami's love comes and grows"

Dear students! Vice-Chancellors come and go. But Swami's love comes and grows! (cheers). Any number of Vice-Chancellors may come and go, but the loving bond between them and Swami and the heart-to-heart relationship will only grow and not weaken. Vice-Chancellors may change places and chairs, but their hearts will remain unchanged! As Saraf is filled with this attitude, we do not propose to let him go. As he has decided to devote the rest of his life to Swami and to social service, we have made him a member of the Central Trust and we will continue to avail ourselves of his services for the Institute. Hence, you need have no apprehension that Saraf may go elsewhere. He will stay among us and continue to help us. These

Rama and Lakshmana to serve the Institute.

(Bhagavan then sang the bhajan "*Bhajana binaa sukha santhi nahi*").

—*From Bhagavan's discourse in the Institute Auditorium, on 14-1-1991*

The Quest for Synthesis

Science symbolizes the possession and use of knowledge. It progresses by observing facts, verifying the facts against theories and then validating or modifying the theories depending on their success or failure in forecasting and explaining new observations. Viewed from this angle, Science has a relatively recent history—about four centuries or so.

Thanks to the numerous instruments fashioned by scientists, we have gathered a considerable amount of information about planet Earth—its air, its oceans, its crust and a myriad other fascinating and problematic details. We feel humble before Nature's grandeur and power. Science finds that man is not at the centre of the Universe but is on a planet which is no more than a tiny speck in its stupendous vastness. At the same time, we are aware that we are a part of the Universe of Order and that we are competent to unravel its mystery. It is a discovery of modern Science that matter, at its very root, is a complex, well-ordered harmonious and aesthetically pleasing system and that man's mind is such that it can comprehend, in minute and beautiful detail, the amazing intricacies of Nature. Man is therefore not a strange animal, conscious only of suffering, destined to pursue a dreary existence on earth, culminating in meaningless death. He is, on the contrary, a citizen of the Cosmos, well qualified to explore it and endeavour to understand its significance. Modern Science projects this as a measure of its intrinsic value. What modern Science has rediscovered is embodied in our ancient scriptures and has been eloquently expounded by seers and thinkers over aeons of time. Bhagavan Baba articulates this view with supreme authority.

We should expect Science and Technology to be able to obliterate scarcity and create abundance, conquer disease and assure for man a better life-expectancy and provide the numerous devices that can help to eliminate the pain of human labour and leave him with time for leisure and the enjoyments of the good things of life. These expectations have not been realized. Poverty and hunger were never graver threats than now to large sections of the human population. Medical science may have successfully fought epidemics but the population explosion stemming from this success may prove to be dangerous in the long run. Electronics has ushered in communication making the whole world a global village but the communication between different sections and peoples has not significantly helped to promote understanding and harmony. Despite the most sophisticated observational techniques. Scientists are unable to perceive and understand social conditions existing outside the boundary walls of their laboratories. Science appears to be doing little to fight ignorance, prejudice, superstition and violence, wherever they exist.

Advances in Science and Technology have made War a colossal evil. Man is the only species in Nature whose members take to killing one another for an insignificant purpose. There are other ills besides War that afflict human society. These are due to the changes brought about by progress in Science and Technology. Several of the applications, conceived with good intentions, have produced disastrous results in the lone run. We are living beyond our means, because we are building a civilization that floats on a sea of oil that is dwindling at a rapid rate.

The advances that we crave for result in the depletion of our basic resources. Human civilization is today on the point of destroying the balance of Nature. The effects of man's thoughtlessness are being felt from the stratosphere and beyond to the bowels of the earth.

The present crisis

The present crisis is the outcome of the marked imbalance that has arisen between the rate at which the frontiers of knowledge are expanding and the rate at which the newly acquired knowledge gets integrated and becomes consolidated. The process of integration which is that of making Science more coherent and hence more easily assimilable is a more difficult process than the mere expansion of the territories of knowledge. The new inventions of science make a strong impact on human physical existence, resulting in innumerable physiological stresses. The new products of technology change social conditions often under compulsion and without reference to human values.

Science appears to have lost the inner sense of direction. A perspective is missing—that of the past, of the long ages during which life dragged itself out of the primeval slime and became a vehicle for Kalidasa or Shakespeare, Beethoven or Mozart, Newton or Einstein and Vivekananda or Sri Sathya Sai. It will not be wise for scientists to continue their innocence and move on the road of "scientific progress" without relating their efforts, imaginatively and sensitively, to the negative aspects that the results produced by them have on planet Earth. There is an urgent need to develop a new quality of Science, based on work that does not confine itself to the pursuit of Science for its own sake but is moved by an awareness that Science needs moral direction. Hitherto, scientists, by and large, have been content to play the role of the brick—layers of the edifice of Society. It is time now for them to become architects as well.

A strong-willed movement to integrate Science with Humanities has become inescapable, backed by a two-pronged effort to establish that Science, in its true form, supports and clarifies the philosophies of Nature and man, embodied in the arts of many classical cultures and to salvage the human values inherent in the cultural traditions of the East and West and to find in them meaning and relevance for our times. Science should accept Humanities as its foundation and lend its methods of observation and reasoning to the regions of human experience which lie in the domain of the ethical and the moral and have so far eluded an objective approach.

Science and philosophy

The ancient Greeks recognized no barriers between Philosophy and Science. Great minds like those of Pythagoras and Lucretius found the two disciplines to be interwoven. Science and Philosophy are both concerned with the pursuit of Reality. It would be difficult to study Evolution and not wonder why Man is on earth and, indeed, not to seek answers to the most basic questions concerning human existence. Science and Philosophy culminate in the same idea—Unity. The Scientific Spirit and its technological ramifications are a fact of modern Society. The cultural heritage and spiritual yearnings of man are also a central component of our lives. If Philosophy and Spirituality do not enter into and maintain communication with Science and if Science ignores their role in shaping the human mind, man and human society stand to lose in a significant measure.

There is an urgent need, today, to cultivate a form and style of integration that is not only internal but encompasses the external life as well. The potentialities of the human being have to be developed in all directions. The spiritual outlook, to be relevant to our times, has to touch life on all sides and at all levels. It should embrace life comprehensively: the health and well-being of the physical framework; the capacities of the life energies; the refining of the emotions; and the flowering of the intellect and other mental faculties.

The quest for wisdom

We learn from the Upanishads that there are two kinds of Knowledge—the Higher and the Lower. The Higher Knowledge is that by which the Eternal becomes known. The Lower Knowledge consists of the Vedas, Phonetics, Rituals, Grammar, Etymology, Matrices and Astrology. It encompasses the whole gamut of human information, including the spectrum of scientific knowledge from sub-atomic physics to extra-galactic astronomy. The Higher Knowledge or Wisdom signifies the power to comprehend Reality behind the Lower Knowledge and implies the capacity to use it to promote the welfare of humanity rather than denigrate or destroy it.

Our dilemma grows out of the growing divergence between Knowledge and Wisdom. There are two forces which may help us in grappling with the crisis. One is the convergence of the Physical Sciences and the Philosophical Traditions in the sphere of 'the New Physics'. The post-Einsteinian Physics and Quantum Mechanics contain concepts which closely resemble those found in the great mystical traditions that have survived to some degree in all civilizations down through the Ages. It would appear that, after the lapse of several centuries, we are coming full circle, with the mystical and scientific views converging in a new, richer synthesis. The second factor is the development of human consciousness. It is often thought of as a given constant—a sort of unmoving screen upon which the Vision of Reality is projected. This has been known to the mystics and it is widely recognized that consciousness is dynamic and that change in the texture of human consciousness can totally alter our comprehension of Reality. This has been the subject of penetrating experiments and studies in the East, for millennia, especially in the tradition of Yoga.

Consciousness will continue to evolve. At present, we use only a small fraction of the potential of the human brain in our everyday experience of awareness. It is quite likely that the next stage in evolution will revolve around an increasing use of the existing brain-cells, which, at some point, may trigger a quantum jump from the mental to the supramental awareness, thus fusing Knowledge and Wisdom into a greater Consciousness. Philosophers, Sociologists, Psychologists, Neuro-Scientists, Physicists and others working in specialized but related fields, both from the East and the West, must be brought together in this grand attempt to bring about a fusion. Creative action in this regard has become a spiritual imperative. We have to work out the theoretical under-pinnings of the new Consciousness. Towards this objective, we should draw upon many of mankind's traditions in the secular as well as religious modes and the insights provided by the march of modern Science. Concepts that focus on the Spiritual Unity of all forms of life, the view of mankind as a single family, the yearning for harmony amongst all the

religions of the World and the welfare of all sections of Society provide the ideological framework for the new Consciousness that has to emerge. Hundreds of groups and millions of people have to come together in response to the moral pressure embodied in the challenge of the future of the human race. The bond of love to be established amongst these has to cut across the barriers of nationality, race, religion, ideology or economic status.

Need for a synthesis

The search for global consciousness has to spring from the individual's reach for inner peace. In our own individual lives, we must move from a realization of the Truth at the core of our being—the higher consciousness that is the birthright of every human being. In the ultimate analysis, it is in the crucible of our individual selves that the poison around us can be contained and transformed into the new consciousness.

That Knowledge destroys Fear is an important dictum, according to modern scientific thought as well as the teachings based on our ancient Indian culture. Complete fearlessness can be achieved only through the pursuit of Truth in two spheres: man's outer environment and his inner environment. The first pertains to the domain of physical or positivistic Science; and the latter is the Science of Religion or Spirituality. There is no conflict between the two. A complete philosophy is based on the synthesis of both the external and the internal. This unifying vision is the resplendent message that we get from the Upanishads.

Religion has two dimensions: the ethnical and the spiritual. The former is what is meant when we speak of Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism and so on. We are born in an ethnic religion, and we have no say in this matter. But Religion becomes a Science, by our choice, when we seek it. No one is born in Science; and he or she, who becomes a Scientist, seeks it. Sir Arthur Eddington, the great mathematician, points this out: "You will understand the true Spirit neither of Science nor of Religion unless Seeking is placed in the fore-front."

The synthesis of the principles of Science with the conceptual understanding and practice of spiritual life has the power to make our passage easier toward the creation of a stable, less care-worn and happier framework for mankind, on a foundation of Universal Peace and Love. This is an arduous quest that will go on for ages. It has an elusiveness that challenges us to strive for the higher level of consciousness. The Avatars appear on earth, from time to time, to deal with this elusiveness.

We are fortunate to be able to sit at the Lotus-Feet of Bhagavan Baba and seek, in this hour of crisis, the vision and the vigour that we need to do what He would want us to do. Our prayer is that the Sri Sathya Sai Message should reverberate throughout the world, challenging scientists to inject Humanism into their efforts and technologists to infuse moral values into their professional work. Life on earth will then become both viable and livable, eschewing all forms of fear, hatred and selfishness and ushering in real happiness for mankind derived from the Absolute Values of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa. Prasanthi Nilayam, the abode of Bhagavan Baba, is most appropriately the birth-place for the symbiosis of Science and Spirituality.

—S. Sampath

(Summary of a presentation made at the Summer Course in Indian Culture and Spirituality at Brindavan in 1990).

AVATAR VANI:

SIVARATRI SANDESH:

Goodness is Godliness

As oil is present within sesame, as ghee is present within milk, as fragrance is present in flowers, as sweet juice is in fruits, as fire is latent in faggots, even so you have to recognise the immanence of God in creation (Prakriti).

The cosmic consciousness that pervades and illumines subtly the visible phenomenal universe is the Self (the Atma). The Lord pervades the cosmos like the thread that holds the garland together.

Embodiments of Divine Love!

Creation proclaims the Will of the Lord (Easwara Iccha). It is called Prakriti (Nature or Creation). This means that the whole of creation is a manifestation of the Will of the Lord. Every being existing in Creation has necessarily to bear the qualities of the Divine. Man has taken birth in this world to manifest the Will of the Divine. A seed sprouts into a plant and puts forth a flower. The plant and its different constituents like branches and leaves are all the basis for the blossoming of the flower. God is the seed for the whole of creation. God is present in every human being as a seed, which sprouts into a plant, develops leaves and branches in the form of qualities (gunas) and blossoms into the flower of Sat-Chit-Ananda (Being-Awareness-Bliss).

For a seed to become a plant, earth and water are necessary. Likewise, for the divine seed in man to grow into a tree and blossom into the flower of Sat-Chit-Ananda, it needs Bhakti (devotion) and Shraddha (earnestness). Humanness does not consist merely in turning the mind towards God. The Divine has to be experienced within him. The human estate is the manifestation of the infinite potential of the Divine. Man is the individualisation of the infinite rays of the Divine. Not recognising his divine essence man is wasting his life in the pursuit of transient and trivial pleasures.

What is spirituality? It is the resolute pursuit of cosmic consciousness. Spirituality aims at enabling man to manifest in all its fullness the divine cosmic consciousness (chaitanya) that is present within and outside him. It means getting rid of the animal nature in man and developing the divine tendencies in him. It means breaking down the barriers between God and Nature and establishing their essential oneness.

Bhakti and shraddha

To realise such a state of divine consciousness, devotion is essential. Devotion aims at awakening consciousness of the Divine (Easwara) in man. All activity aimed at turning the mind towards God is a form of devotion. To think of God for attaining worldly desires and physical comforts is not devotion. To envisage and experience the Divine Sat-Chit-Ananda within him is the true mark of devotion.

Anil Kumar said in his speech that God does not dwell in some foreign place, but resides within everyone. Because from ancient times man went after external material objects, he forgot the Eternal Divine Reality within him. Imprisoned within his qualities, man forgets the Divine. The one who is immersed in spirituality, is indifferent to the phenomenal world (Prakriti). Spiritual transformation calls for changing the mind from a prisoner of the three qualities (gunas) to one that is bound to God. You have to acquire the firm conviction that the Divine is the basis and sustainer of the Universe. Goodness is a synonym for God. The power of the cosmic consciousness consists in making manifest the good qualities in a man.

True spirituality

Almost everyone in the world is unaware of what is true spirituality or devotion. When one is submerged in worldly desires, how can he recognise the Divine? It is only by persistent effort that this can be done. One has to endeavour to experience the presence of the Divine in every particle and at every moment. A devotee must regard a pure mind as the abode of the Lord. He must fill the mind with pure, sacred and Divine thoughts. Thereby he redeems his entire life. The Chataka bird endures many ordeals to secure unsullied raindrops from the clouds. The moment it spies a dark cloud in the sky, it embarks on its adventure. There is water aplenty on the earth in lakes, ponds and rivers. But the Chataka bird has no use for these polluted waters. It waits for the pure raindrops in the month of Kartik and does not seek any other water. It is undaunted by thunder and lightning. It seeks only the pure raindrops falling from the clouds, without fear or concern. It sings in joy as it drinks the raindrops.

The Chataka bird is an example of pure love. The true devotee should perform a similar penance (to-realise God). He must have the same determination. He must go through similar ordeals to experience the ultimate ecstasy. He must not succumb to the wiles and attractions of the world.

The golden life of man should be tested on the touchstone of the Lord's name. Instead of following this easy path, man involves himself in multifarious troubles and wastes his precious life. Man is not merely a human. Verily he is God. He is submerging his inherent divinity in worldly desires. He should utilise the pure and sacred thoughts that arise in him to turn him away from the transient attractions of the world and to set him on the path towards the Divine.

"Whether it is described as Cosmic Consciousness (Chaitanya), or the Indwelling Knower (Kshetrajna), or Supreme Wisdom (Jnana) or "I-am" (Ahankara), or Easwara (the Supreme Lord), or Vishnu, or Pure Bliss (Ananda), or the Supreme Abode (Paramapadam), or Nature

(Prakriti), or the Primal Energy (Adi Shakti)—all these are only different names given to the Atma (the Supreme Spirit). Originally It had no name." (Poem)

Precept and practice

The effulgence of the Atma exceeds the splendour of a multi-faceted diamond. The diamond may have a myriad facets, but it is one and the same. Likewise, the Atma radiates infinite number of rays, but is only One.

Man today is like a horseman riding two horses at the same time. He aspires for the Divine, but also yearns for worldly pleasures (Prakriti). He forgets that the creator contains the creation. Forgetting this truth, he goes after the phenomenal world, regarding it as different from the Divine. He is foolish like the man who cries for ghee while having milk in his hand, not realising that ghee is latent in the milk. Today's devotees study the Vedas and other scriptures as a ritual, but do not put into practice any of their injunctions. Of what avail is it merely to know how the Vedas or Upanishads have described the Divine? This booklore is not reflected in his life. He is like a blind man who hears about the existence of the world, but cannot see it. There is no difference between this physically blind man and the spiritually blind persons who merely study the scriptures. The scriptures are intended to provide guides for practical living and not merely to be learnt by rote.

"Everyone knows the word God, but that does not mean they know God. The meaning of 'God' has to be known only by serving those who have realised God." (Poem)

Goodness is God

Everyone utters the word God, but how many really seek to know God? What efforts do they make to know God? Goodness is another name for God. How much of goodness is there in you? When there is no goodness, how can "God" be understood? For understanding anything subjective experience is essential. In the fast-flowing Ganga, a small fish is able to swim freely and joyously, without fear of the depth or swift flow of the river. But in the same river, a big elephant is likely to be swept away by the current. One should know how to keep afloat in the current and protect oneself. A tiny ant, for instance, is able to get at the sugar that is mixed with sand, because it has the ability to distinguish between sand and the sweet sugar in the mixture. But another animal, however big it may be, if it does not possess this ability, it cannot separate the sugar from the sand. Likewise, if a man has experienced the bliss of the Divine, will he go after worldly pleasures? Only the person who has not tasted the nectar of Divine love will seek these pleasures. This Divine love is within man. All Divine feelings and thoughts emanate from within him.

Today, people think that spirituality has no relation to mundane life and vice versa. This is a big mistake. True divinity is a combination of spirituality and social obligations. National unity and social harmony are founded upon spirituality. It is the Divine that links spirituality and social existence. The Creator and the cosmos (Prakriti) are inextricably associated with each other. Hence, God should not be regarded as separate from the creation. See God in the cosmos. For instance, here is a tumbler made of silver. The one who notices the silver in the tumbler, thinks

only of the material base and not the form of the tumbler. The one who sees it as a tumbler, does not note its silver base. Only the person who can recognise both silver and tumbler can recognise that it is a silver tumbler. Likewise, without the Omni-Self there is no creation. Today, most people see only the creation. Very few recognise that the creation is a projection of the Creator. It is essential that every human being should have the realisation that without the Supreme (Brahmam) there can be no cosmos.

Unfortunately, man today adheres to a different view. The reason is, he has become a slave of the senses. It is high time he recognised the truth about his inherent nature and started exercising control over the senses. Only when man has mastery over the senses can he perceive the ultimate Reality. It is disastrous for man to be dominated by his senses. He forfeits peace and forgets the Divine.

Love of God

Every man is inclined to ignore his own defects and see the faults of others. The root cause of this tendency is selfishness and self-centredness. All his attachments are based on self-love. And this applies also to man's love for God. Men pretend to love God, but one who truly loves God will forget himself. Loving anyone for your own sake is affection (Anuraga). But loving God for His own sake is Prema (true love).

Man fails to recognise the power of the Divine because of his selfishness and self-centredness. Only when he can get rid of the impurities encrusted in his heart will man be able to experience his divinity.

Gratitude and selfless love

Ingratitude is a great sin, which brings in its wake a host of troubles. To forget what one owes to others for his position and prosperity is to forfeit the grace of the Divine. He is as good as dead. You have to be grateful to those who have helped you to achieve position, power, wealth and prominence. By forgetting the good done by others, the ungrateful person is setting at naught the highest human values and strutting about as a vainglorious creature.

Embodiments of Divine Love! Eschewing ostentation and self-conceit cultivate selfless love towards all. There must be a limit to one's self-interest. Selfishness carried to extremes leads to disaster. Excessive selfishness can cause loss of friendship and honour and ultimately result in utter ruin. Reverence for one's parents is a sacred obligation.

Whatever the school of thought in which one believes- whether it is non-dualism (Advaita) or materialism (as expounded by the Charvaka school) or Mayavada (the doctrine of the illusory nature of the phenomenal world)- one thing common to all of them is belief in the power of the Lord's name as "Kesava". This name is regarded as a cardinal principle. What is the inner significance of this name? It is made up of the three terms: Ka+esa+va. "Ka" stands for Brahma, "Isa" stands for Easwara and "Va" for Vishnu. Together, the name symbolises the oneness of the Trinity, who represent the powers of creation, dissolution and protection of the Cosmos. Men today do not understand the inner meanings of such terms as "Kesava".

Sat-Chit-Ananda

Embodiments of Divine Love! It is necessary to study the scriptures; the Upanishads and other sacred books. But this should not be done as a mechanical ritual. The religious preachers today merely prescribe the reading of the Gita or other spiritual texts as routine exercise. Of what use is mere reading of scriptures if their precepts are not put into practice? The sacred names of different deities are repeated as a daily routine ("parayana"). Is it of any use? Instead of reciting a hundred slokas mechanically, it is better to put one sloka into practice after grasping its full import. For instance, there is the expression, Sat-Chit-Ananda. "Sat" refers to the Paramatma (Omni-Self). "Chit" refers to the Jiva-Atma (the individual soul). When "Sat" and "Chit" come together there is "Ananda" (Divine Bliss). If "Sat" and "Chit" are apart, how can there be bliss? There can be only sorrow. You must strive for the union of "Sat" and "Chit." You can have light only when the current is switched on to the bulb.

All are embodiments of the Divine Spirit. But because of their submergence in worldly desires, they are leading mundane existence. Experience, the Divine in all your activities. In worshipping God, do not make distinctions between one name or form and another. All names—Rama, Krishna, or Govinda—are Divine. Some fanatics adoring the name Vishnu will not like to utter or even bear the name of Siva at all. Such an attitude should be given up. You must regard the entire Cosmos as the embodiment of the Divine.

Significance of "Sivaratri"

Today is celebrated as Sivaratri. Si-va-ra-tri consists of four syllables. Numerologically, the three letters, "Sa" "va" and "Ra" together make eleven. These eleven represent the five sensory organs, the five organs of action (Karmindriyas) and the mind. These eleven are governed by the eleven Rudras. These eleven organs involve man in sensual desires and drag him down to worldly existence. Beyond these eleven is the Paramatma, the Omni-Self. When one relies on the Supreme, he can master the other eleven. No one should make any distinction between Siva and Ranga or Rama and Krishna, because the Divine is One, under whatever names It may be worshipped. To worship one name and revile another is not true devotion. Most devotees today are narrow-minded and sectarian in their attitudes. There are some who go about glorifying the name of Rama and collecting money in Rama's name. No quarter should be given to such commercialisation of the Divine name. Do not lend your ears to such preachers. Recognise that the Divine dwells in all beings. Love all. Realise that the essence of Divine names is the same. Chant the name of the Lord in this spirit. When you perform bhajans in this way, you will realise the oneness of all mankind. In community singing, all have the feeling of oneness.

"Sivaratri is an auspicious night. On this night, of the 16 aspects of man, fifteen are merged in man's Divinity. One aspect remains. It is an easy and convenient time for experiencing the Divine. If at least on this one night, the eleven senses are kept under control, one is bound to experience the Divine. If on this night, all bad thoughts are kept out and the mind is concentrated on the name of the Lord, it will experience the consciousness of the Divine: This process has been described as "Jagarana" (nocturnal vigil). Most people claim that they have observed "Jagarana" on Sivaratri night by keeping awake witnessing two or three cinema shows

at night. Observance of sacred wakefulness on Sivaratri night is not achieved by playing cards the whole night. It is a caricature of "Jagarana". This is the kind of religious observance that is practised in the Kali age. During the twelve hours of this night, if all the senses are kept under control and the mind is wholly concentrated on the Supreme, that alone constitutes "Jagarana" (spiritual vigil). If such a vigil is observed by even one in a million, that is enough. Seek to observe such a pure, holy and Divine vigil this night and experience Divine bliss.

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajans "*Bhajana binaa sukha santhi nahi*" and "*Hey Siva Sankara! Namaami Sankara*". Thereafter the students of the Institute began the regular bhajans for the night, keeping up the bhajans till the morning.)

From Bhagavan's discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium, on 12-2-1991

AT THE FEET OF SWAMI:

Learning the Lessons

Peep. Pee ...ep. Peep. I look in the mirror. A driver in a sports car was sounding the horn. I was giving way to other traffic at a roundabout where usual priorities of traffic flow have been changed recently. Perhaps that impatient driver has not noticed the small red "Changed Priorities Ahead" sign. A lull in the traffic lets me pass the roundabout.

Suddenly I realise that my priorities in life have changed too, after ten peaceful days at Prasanthi Nilayam in the summer of 1989. I basked in the overwhelming divine love of Swami, but at that time my senses failed to detect the most important gift Swami bestowed upon me. Yet now, there is no doubt in my mind that Swami has sown the seed to transform my thinking and behaviour. Each and every thought, word and deed of mine is now under close scrutiny, leading to exploration of the joys of the inner world which I have neglected so long. "When one turns one's vision inwards, the inner eye sees the reality of the bliss of the Supreme Consciousness. It is then that God's grace descends." These words of Swami now seem to have a new dimension to me.

My thoughts were disturbed by the sound of a horn. To my disbelief it is the same irate driver in the sports car! He seems to be irritated by the relatively slow speed of my car; so I slow down and let him pass. If not for the changed priorities in my outlook, I might have even shown him the capabilities of my car! But Swami asks us to let the ego perish for unhindered progress in spiritual practice. In my experience, driving provides the best opportunities for ego eradication. I fail many times; but I win too! Whenever I resist the temptation of one-up-manship on the road or am considerate to other road user, I feel one step nearer to Swami.

As I approach a cross road, with two lanes of traffic, the red light turns to green. I keep to the right hand lane and pass the traffic lights quickly. I smile as I pass the sports car trailing behind in the slow lane. To my surprise and delight the next few traffic lights change to amber as

I pass, and the sports car catching up with me now seems remote. I thank the computer which controls the traffic lights. Do you know where a traffic computer is? We do not even think or talk about it! Smooth sailing like this happens only rarely.

Traffic and life

But stagnation in traffic jams, crawling behind slow moving heavy vehicles, and even accidents are much more common. I find no difference between traffic and life. In fact Swami says, "life is a journey to God". I remembered reading in 'Journey to God, Part II' (By J. Jagathesan), Prof. N. Kasturi's difficulty in translating Swami's speech in Madras in front of ten thousand people. As usual Swami started with a poem composed on the spot, starting, "Automatic lightku adhipudevadu?" Literally, it meant, "Who is the Master of the automatic lights?" But neither Prof. Kasturi nor Dr. Bhagavantham could translate it properly. After the discourse they asked Swami about it. Swami told them the automatic lights He meant were actually traffic lights. He added that such an automatic light system also exists for the movement of planets, for the Dharma of the community (for the behaviour of different groups of people to lead lives without clashing with each other) and other functions in the universe. Thus proving that God is the One who laid down the law, not only for the things that are in space, but also for the things that are in the space of all hearts. He is the driving force of our life traffic.

Cars perish. So too our bodies. Drivers change cars. Likewise the Atman enshrined in our bodies. If the driver controls the paraphernalia of gadgets in a car he reaches the destination safely. In life traffic, the ego and the senses need proper control to reach the Driving Force.

—*Dr. M. Veeravahu, UK.*

Divine Love—the Goal

For over half a century since His annunciation of His Avataric mission, Bhagavan Baba has held forth before humanity love as the highest ideal. All His teachings revolve round this one theme of Love, the absence of which disqualifies man from being regarded as a human being. He says, "Danavas (demons) are those who trample on love and consider inferior qualities as important, while Manavas (human beings) are those who consider the inferior qualities as snakes to be destroyed and love alone as the quality to be fostered." Swami refers to Himself as Premavadin (the propagator of the Love principle). Why is love given so much importance in Swami's innumerable discourses?

Love is a word which is often misused and misunderstood. Surely it is not simple goodwill or affection. We are so much accustomed to love between individuals that it is difficult for us to grasp the true meaning of love. The desire to love is a basic need we want to be fulfilled. When we tend to limit it to interpersonal relationship between two individuals we find that the moment one does not satisfy that need any more, the same love may sometimes give way to neglect or

even hatred. Moreover this love between individuals has different connotations depending on the relationship between them and has been referred to by different names. The love of the mother to her child is called 'Vatsalya', that between friends is referred to as 'Anuraga', while that between husband and wife is termed 'Moha'. All attachments to material possessions is categorised as 'Iccha'; love exhibited towards God is 'bhakti'. But in whatever aspect this quality may manifest itself, Love is the common factor in all. Swami classifies love under three categories. " Love is of three kinds; 'swaartha' or self-centred, which like a bulb illumines just a small room; 'anyonya' or mutual, which like the moonlight spreads wider but is not clearer, and 'paraartha' or other-centred which like the sunlight is all-pervasive and clear". "Cultivate this third type of love", He advises.

Human love and divine love

When we speak of love we should be able to differentiate between human love and Divine Love. Human inter-personal love is characterised by emotions, passion and desire while Divine Love is not. It goes beyond emotion and seeks oneness with the Divine. It is universal Love based on the recognition of the one Divine present everywhere and in all. It does not confine itself to outer contacts. It is self-giving, free from all conditions and bargains. Ordinary human love is often mixed up with and covered by egoism and accompanied by desires and demands. It depends on persons and circumstances. It is mostly mental and physical and it may mean different things to different persons. On the other hand, Divine Love is constant, unchanging and uninfluenced by circumstances. This does not mean that human love is to be condemned and discarded. In fact it should be used to acquire Divine Love. It is to be rid of its lower nature, and become warm, deep the universe and its contents? Has science anything to offer for our better understanding of this phenomenon of Love? Modern physics has shattered the old view of the universe as a machine made up of diverse objects. Applying the concept of space-time continuum, the cosmos is now considered as one indivisible whole, a dynamic one wherein the apparent parts are essentially inter-related. There are no such things as independent units in the universe. Quantum physics has shown that subatomic particles are not things in the usual sense of the word, but are only inter-connections between things. An elementary particle is essentially a sort of relationship that reaches outward to other things, if at all we can call them as 'the other'. We will not be very wrong if we conceive God as that subtle force that is behind all these inter-relationships between everything in the universe, a concept that will unify the whole creation. That force can justifiably be termed as Love. Vedanta described this unity in creation long ago. Though our sensory perceptions point to differences among the various objects of creation, both Vedanta and modern science consider these differences as superficial while there is unity deeper down.

In spite of the apparent differences the entire universe exhibits an urge towards self-unification at every level. Swami Vivekananda said, "What is it that makes atoms come and join with atoms, molecules with molecules, sets big planets flying towards each other, attracts man to woman and woman to man, human beings to human beings, animals to animals, drawing the whole universe to one centre? It is what is called Love". Physicists have come to the conclusion that at the subatomic level particles have an intense besides being steady and all-embracing. It should not be egoistic, expecting something from the person loved, and it should

be free from the desire to possess and monopolise. Love that wants something in return cannot be true love. It should be spontaneous and not subject to anger, misunderstandings and disappointments. Then only it can serve as a foundation for Divine Love. True love is not just interaction between individuals but self-integration with all. Unlike the human love which when it becomes excessive can be destructive, Divine Love being unrestrained leads to complete union with the Self.

This Divine Love is the highest state to be reached by embodied man. To bring this Love into the world is the main purpose of the Sai Avatar. When Swami talks of Love He wants us to see everything and everyone as a manifestation of the Absolute and love them equally. Such a Love is based on the relationship between the manifested and the unmanifested. The aim of that Love is to become one with the Absolute. Once understood and practised it will go on till duality is destroyed. Swami says, "Divine Love is Param Prema (supreme love), which is Rasa-swaroopa (replete with sweetness)". Acquiring such a Love takes one to the goal, Swami assures us. "If you can acquire Prema, then you can dispense with the Shastras, for the purpose of all Shastras is just that, to create the feeling of *sarvajana samaana prema* (equal love towards all)." "I advise you to develop Ananda, not through difficult and doubtful means, but through the cultivation of Prema."

From physics to metaphysics

What is the relevance of this Love to the universe and its contents? Has science anything to offer for our better understanding of this phenomenon of Love? Modern physics has shattered the old view of the universe as a machine made up of diverse objects. Applying the concept of space-time continuum, the cosmos is now considered as one indivisible whole, a dynamic one wherein the apparent parts are essentially interrelated. There are no such things as independent units in the universe. Quantum physics has shown that subatomic particles are not things in the usual sense of the word, but are only interconnections between things. An elementary particle is essentially a sort of relationship that reaches outward to other things, if at all we can call them as 'the other'. We will not be very wrong if we conceive God as that subtle force that is behind all these interrelationships between everything in the universe, a concept that will unify the whole creation. That force can justifiably be termed as Love. Vedanta described this unity in creation long ago. Though our sensory perceptions point to differences among the various objects of creation, both Vedanta and modern science consider these differences as superficial while there is unity deeper down.

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and physiologists have postulated the existence of different levels of mentation and collective intelligence among organised groups of insects and animals. A logical conclusion that arises out of this is that the wholeness of the universe also points to the existence of a cosmic mind and a cosmic consciousness. Vedanta discovered this truth centuries ago, and had gone a step further to point out that the same consciousness is manifested in every part of the universe as the Self of all. As the Katopanishad declares, whatever is present in the macrocosm is also present in the microcosm and vice versa. Now some physicists have come to the conclusion that each of the so-called parts of the universe contains the whole; in other words the whole enfolds itself in each of its parts not in a static material sense but in a dynamic sense. This dynamic wholeness is obvious in the tendency for unification at every level. This desire or urge manifests itself in all beings as an innate nature to love something outside. Our scriptures point out that this nature is nothing but a desire to unite with the Absolute though the method adopted to achieve this goal is wrong, since the Absolute cannot be reached by physical contact with objects. It can only be through seeing the Absolute in all, and loving the Absolute, wanting only that and nothing else.

"God is love"

Every religion describes God as Love. He can be experienced only through Love, and where there is pure Love and Love only, there is God. His glory is revealed as Love in man. Swami says, "The Lord is a mountain of Prema and any number of ants carrying away particles of sweetness cannot exhaust this plenty." A life lived in love alone can lead man to God. In that sense Love is everything, but most people in the world today do not understand Love, which is the royal path to Divinity. Why is it we find it difficult to bring this Divine Love into our lives? That is because we have forgotten our own divine nature. We have lost our identity. If only we can exhibit this unadulterated Love in our lives, God will reciprocate with His Love because, as Swami assures us, "Your own heart shining with Love is God's Love." Then, as Swami clarifies, "no sadhana, no meditation, no inquiry, nothing more is needed "since" that Love is God, Truth is God, Love is Truth, Truth is Love. The mirror of Prema reflects the Atma in you and reveals to you that the Atma is universal, immanent in every being." The realisation of this is the goal of human birth.

When people say, "God is Love, Love is God", how deeply have they pondered over the meaning of these statements? When we aspire to love God, are we not conceiving of God as an objective phenomenal entity? When Swami refers to God as Love, it is obvious that He is referring to the subjective Noumenon. God as Truth always loves and is lovable and that Truth is the Self, the Awareness in us. So Swami addresses us as "Atmaswarupalaara" (embodiments of the Self). Every Love that is exhibited is only a manifestation of this Self in us. Thus Self itself is Love and that is the reason why Swami calls us also as "Premaswarupulaara" (embodiments of Love). Every human being should be a mirror reflecting this Love from within. If this Love is no longer truly reflected, it is not due to a decline in the Love itself but due to clouding of the mirror. How to exhibit that Love, of which we are all manifestations? What is it that we all love most? It is the 'I-am-ness' in us, the very existence, and the manifest consciousness. This conscious Presence is God. That is what we all love most, because without it there is no world, no wealth, and not even the conception of God. To give all the attention to this consciousness till it becomes effortless and natural, to abide steadily in the Self, is the highest form of Love. Such

Love should logically lead to unity of all, since consciousness is one. This Self is Pure Divinity and complete unity and that is pure Love. Every human soul potentially aspires for union with the Self. It is constantly attempting to love the Self. In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, Yagnavalkya tells Maitreyi that no one loves anything except for the sake of the Self present in that object. But we have misdirected this love and are searching for the Self in all external objects and not within ourselves. This misdirected search always ends in frustrations since it never leads to true union with the Self. The ultimate goal of Love is to finally rest in the Self.

*—Dr. M. Balasubramanian,
Brindavan*

"No Global Disaster to be apprehended"

In categorical terms, Bhagavan Baba repudiated, on February 13, at Prasanthi Nilayam, certain reports circulated in various countries attributing to Him predictions of various disasters facing the world in the coming years. Speaking at the end of the Sivaratri bhajans on the morning of February 13th, in the vast Poornachandra Auditorium, Bhagavan Baba said

"Sai will never do or suggest anything harmful to anyone. Some persons in overseas countries as well as some people within India have been distributing pamphlets in which they have published that Swami has stated that in a short while the world will be deluged by a great flood and that large areas will get submerged and that other disasters will overtake the world and many countries will suffer very much. Such thoughts have never occurred to Swami and will never occur. These are the fancies of some idle minds. Do not give any credence to them. In some of these pamphlets, it is stated that parts of this country will get submerged and that Swami will send 12 students for rescuing people and listing a number of points in the pamphlets. Some devotees appear to have been taken in by these pamphlets which are being distributed by mischievous elements. In no circumstance should devotees believe in such stories. Nor should they give them currency by passing them on by word of mouth. You should not lend your ears to such ridiculous reports. It is a sign of weakness to listen to such stories or discuss them.

"No disaster imminent"

No disaster is imminent for the world. Over the vast globe, there may be some mishaps here and there, from time to time. The Iran-Iraq conflict lasted ten years. You should not consider it a major war. Even in India, terrorist activities have been going on in the Punjab. Is it a major struggle? Some disgruntled individuals have been resorting to these methods. Whether it is Bharat or any other country, its security lies in the promoting of right attitudes. Who are our friends and who are our enemies? Our own good thoughts are our friends. Our evil thoughts accompany us like shadows. When our thoughts are purified, our lives will be transformed into ideal ones."

Earlier in His discourse, which was a welcome surprise to the vast gathering of devotees because Bhagavan was not expected to give a second discourse before the distribution of prasadam, Bhagavan expatiated on the role of the mind in determining the nature of one's actions and their results.

"The mind is a bundle of thoughts. Actions ensue from thoughts. From actions flow the fruits thereof. Hence thoughts are the seeds which ultimately yield fruits in the form of good fortune and misfortune. Man is thus the architect of his own life. As thoughts determine actions, it is essential to cultivate good thoughts. Even bad men have been transformed by the influence of good and godly men. Ratnakara is an example of such transformation. Contact with sages turned him into the immortal author of the Ramayana. When the mind is turned towards God, the entire life becomes purified. What is needed is control over the senses through devotion and steadfastness."

Bhagavan congratulated the students, boys and girls, on the way they had maintained the singing of bhajans all through the night. He pointed out, however, that there was not full accord between the boys' and girls' sections in singing the bhajans together. While the girls did not join in the bhajans when the lead singer was from the boys' section, the boys did not respond to the bhajans when the lead singer was from the girls' side. There should be no room for such differences in singing the Lord's name. Bhagavan went on to say: The observance of Sivaratri is for purifying the heart by contemplation on God. When the heart is purified, the entire life becomes sanctified. There will be no need for elaborate social reconstruction if people develop good qualities and act righteously. Young people should get rid of bad thoughts and bad habits. The spiritual quest cannot be put off to old age. The time to start seeking the Divine is now itself.

"Dear students! Strive from now on to purify your thoughts and actions. In most educational institutions elsewhere, you cannot find students, boys and girls, chanting the Lord's name. Only in the Sathya Sai Institute do you find the entire student community filled with sacred thoughts. You must constantly endeavour to develop this purity and sacredness.

"Remember that there is nothing in this world as powerful as the Lord's name to protect it. It is not arms and bombs that will save the world. Only God's grace should protect the world. It is man's foremost duty to pray for God's grace. Prayer is of supreme importance. Together with melody and rhythm, you have to impart feeling to your singing to make the bhajan a sacred offering to the Divine. A tune (ragam) without feeling (bhavam) is an infliction (rogam). Giving up conceit and exhibitionism, you must sing the bhajans in a spirit of humility and devotion. That is the right way to perform bhajans. Thyagaraja in one of his songs adjured the mind to chant Rama's name with full awareness of the power of the name. In daily life also awareness is needed at every step and in every prayer. When all the participants in a bhajan sing in unison, what sacred vibrations are produced and what Divine energies are released! When these vibrations fill the world, what changes cannot they bring about! When one sings alone, the heart is merged in the song. But when many sing together, it acquires a Divine power. That was the reason why Guru Nanak commended community singing."

Giving and Forgiving

*Loving all the living
Helping all the helpless
Never with a selfish heart
Giving and forgiving, giving only love
Loving all the living, living only love
Giving and forgiving, giving only love
Loving all the living, living only love.*

(A song sung at Christmas by the Sathya Sai Baba Centre of Glendale and Los Angeles.)

Peace or Gems?

Walking in the same direction, the old man and the young boy met.
"Tis a day the lad shall never forget.
"Where are you going in such a hurry?"

The aged man inquired in a voice soft and sweet.
"I'm going to a contest offered by the King,
It is a running meet."

The boy continued in an excited way,
For he planned on winning the prize that day.

"The King of Utopia has offered a large prize, one of a kind.
The winner shall choose between an urn of gems,
Or peace of mind.
I am fast on my feet and have won many a race,
The stars are on my side; I have heaven's grace,
It is I who shall be the victor in this running quest,
Of all the boys in the land, I am the best.
The gems will be mine, and happy I will be,
For the jewels will all belong to me."
"Um", mused the old gent, as he shook his head,
and slowly bent forward to quietly speak to the lad.
"If you pick the jewels, are you sure you won't be sad?"

The boy started to wildly protest,

But the old man stopped him with a gentle jest.

"What is life without peace in your heart and mind,
There is no greater treasure that you can find.
The mind is uncontrolled like a mad monkey, swinging from tree to tree.
The mind will pester you; it won't let you be.
No amount of material gain,
Will take away this circle of pleasure and pain. "

The boy listened silently as the sage continued his story,
Of peace for the mind and its unlimited glory.

"The mind is our worst enemy," continued this wise soul.
"You must learn to control it, that is the goal.
For happiness is an inside job, don't you think?"

The old man questioned, with a wink.
"These are the treasures you must seek.
When the race begins and victory is yours, for you will not lose,
Be very wise in what you choose.
Gems will sparkle and for a short while,
Will make you happy, and produce a smile.
But lasting joy will come from peace in your mind,
This is a trophy, one of a kind. "

The young boy understood what the orange clad man had said,
The greatest prize would be peace in his head.
And so he knew what prize he would take,
Peace in the mind, what a wonderful state.
And as he turned to thank the old man,
with the funny black halo of hair,
He blinked and rubbed his eyes, for he was no longer there.

The lad knew a great lesson, he had been taught.
Happiness comes from purity of thought!
The boy won the contest the King had issued forth,
And he picked the prize of peace with no remorse.
The spectators were stunned to see the gems go unclaimed,
They cried, "Oh what a terrible shame!"

But the young boy knew truth and happiness eternal belonged to him,
He knew in his heart, peace was the greatest gem!

—*Joy Ziegler, Phoenix, Arizona*

A set of persons with curious ideas have cropped up recently and they strut about with great pride, for they have no yearning for God, even no use for God; they are Sevaks and they are satisfied with Service! But the essence of Seva is selflessness and abnegation of the fruit thereof; the Sevaks have no right to look down upon the Godly and the Spiritual aspirants as inferior. For, that is but reaching for the fruit while neglecting the tree! Selfless service is the final fruit of the Godward Discipline. How can the fruit be gained, without the long and laborious nurture of the tree? The very foundation of Nishkama Karma is Prema towards all beings, Prema that seeks no reward. Without spiritual experience of this higher Love, selfless service is impossible.

—Baba

A Destiny beyond Death

For most people, except perhaps yogis and some enlightened persons, the prospect of death is fearsome. It is not uncommon to see a man in the throes of death sobbing violently, surrounded by his kith and kin, struggling and unable to utter the name of the Lord, while his life is slowly ebbing away.

The Hindu tradition and Puranic literature picture the God of Death, Yama, as a huge awesome figure, mounted on a dark big buffalo, carrying in his hand a noose to get at the life-breath of those whose allotted span of life is coming to an end.

Bhagavan Baba, in His infinite mercy, prepares us for the final end by driving home in almost every one of his discourses the truth that everyone born in this ephemeral world is under a sentence of death, without knowing when or how it will come. Bhagavan also tells us that it is "as natural to die as it is to be born."

Swami put this idea very forcibly in one of His speeches as follows:

"You came into this world naked. You go out of it without informing the survivors of the address where you can be contacted. In spite of this, the attachment to the body grows and the pitiful man struts about with his-inflated Ego." (Bhagavan's speech in the Poornachandra Auditorium on 1-10-81)

Writing about Bhagavan's views on death, Prof. Kasturi says: "Death is our birth-right—a gift everyone can claim. It is a relief for the tired and a refuge for the persecuted—a lesson for the wayward—a jolt for the Epicurean—a milestone for the Pilgrim and a paradise for the faithful." ("Sathyam Sivam Sundaram", Vol IV.)

St. Paul says: "At death life will be changed but not ended. Death is just the beginning of 'Eternal Life'."

Ramana Maharshi puts it thus: "Now death has come. What does it mean? What is it that dies? With the death of the body, 'Am I dead'? The body might die but the Spirit that transcends it cannot be touched by death. We are `Amruthasya Putraaha' and death cannot touch us."

Thus it will be seen that Yama can only touch the body, but cannot touch the Imperishable Atmic Principle, the "I" in each body. When it comes to the Atma, Yama has to accept defeat and his pride is knocked out.

Let us now see how Omar Khyyam, the much misunderstood poet-philosopher of Persia, speaks of death. Though his poetry may appear to be somewhat sensuous as when he says, "A loaf of bread, a jug of wine and thou beside me", deeper down is a wealth of wisdom and profound philosophy, if only we read all his Rubaiyats critically.

He knocks down the fear of death and treats this body as "Potter's clay". Let us see how he deals with Death and the utter futility of life, whatever position one may enjoy in life. I have taken a few of the Rubaiyats from the many, as in my view there is incomparable wisdom in them.

He laughs at people who cling to the body with meaningless attachments, knowing full well it is as brittle as a mud pot. He looks upon prince and peasant alike, as men who are destined to meet with the same end. With telling effect he paints a picture of the ultimate dissolution of our pampered body, "Ashes to Ashes, dust to dust."

I shall now quote a few of the Rubaiyats sung by him in wild abandon.

Rubaiyat 71:

I saw a Potter in his work-place
Saw the Master his foot in the wheel treadle
Unabashed he was making a lid and handle
From a king's head and a beggar's hand.

Rubaiyat 337:

I once bought a Pot from a Potter
Which told everything when it said
I was once an Emperor and had a Golden Goblet
Now I am any drunkard's wine pot.

There are many more revealing Rubaiyats which I commend to any serious reader who wants a correct perspective on life.

—*G. K. Damodar Row*

“Thou Art That”

Said the little rain-drop
To the Mighty Ocean
"May I fill another ocean?"
Said the Mighty Ocean
To the little rain-drop

"Little rain-drop, Oceans need no water,
Come my little rain-drop
Merge with me
and be the Ocean"

Said the little space
To the Limitless Space
"May I be another space?"
Said the Limitless Space
To the little space:
"Little space, Limitless Space
needs no space
Come my little space
Merge with me
and be the Limitless Space."
Said the little time
To the Infinite Time
"May I be another time?"
Said the Infinite time
To the little time:

"Little time, Time is ever Infinite
Come my little time
Merge with me
and be the Infinite Time."

Said the little soul
To the Universal Soul,
"May I be another Soul?"

To the little soul:
"Little Soul, what Thou art
is the Universal Soul
Come my little soul, merge with me
and 'Thou art That.'"

—*Mrs. Dharma Thirunavukkarasu*
(From "Sai Vision")

*Love shines radiantly throughout the Cosmos
The Cosmos is permeated by the Lord
The Lord and the Cosmos are inextricably united like friends
This is the Truth declared by Sai.*

*Not visible in the phenomenal world,
The Atma that is immanent in it is the Cosmic Consciousness
That sustains the Cosmos like the string
Running through a necklace of gems.*

Embodiments of Divine Love!

Common folk look at the visible universe as it appears to them physically. This is a common experience. To view the universe as Divine calls for a supreme exercise in spirituality. "All this is Brahman" ("Sarvam khalu idam Brahma"); the Cosmos is a manifestation of the Divine ("Viswam Vishnuswaroopam"); "The Lord is everything" ("Easwarasarvam"). On the basis of these Vedic pronouncements, the whole universe should be regarded as a manifestation of the Supreme Lord.

In the eyes of the ancient Bharatiyas, there was nothing in the world that was not Divine. Ignoramuses who were not aware of this truth, looked down upon Bharatiyas as worshippers of trees, stones, snakes, etc. Unfortunately, the awareness of this basic truth (about the immanence of the Divine in the Cosmos) is declining even among Bharatiyas today. Such recognition (of the divinity of everything in the universe) is not to be found in any other religion or country elsewhere.

There are three levels of potentiality in man: the animal, the human and the Divine. At the lowest level is the animal nature. The animal is always looking downward, towards the ground. This means that the animal nature tends to go after what is low and trivial. The human level is in the middle stage. From here man should strive to develop the upward vision. Only then he will be able to understand his divinity. Unfortunately, man today tends to develop the downward animal vision rather than the upward vision.

Failing to see the Reality that underlies the changing visible world and mistaking the unreal for the real man is wasting his life. The human birth and body have been conferred on man to enable him to realise his true Self (the Atma). But what has been offered for realising the Atma is being used for seeking "Annam" (getting food) and forgetting God. As a result man, instead of advancing towards the goal, is receding from it.

The scriptures have indicated what is the path that should be esteemed and pursued. The shastras prescribe that those worthy of honour and even the unworthy should be respected. But the hallmark of the Kali age is to honour the dishonourable and dishonour the honourable. There is no greatness in doing good to those who do you good. The superior being is one who returns good for evil. It may be asked whether doing good to the one who does you harm will not mean encouraging him to do more harm. That is not so. If you return harm for harm, how can you be called a good man? You become one like the evil-doer. Only by returning good for evil can you elevate yourself to a higher state.

Men today do not cultivate such attitudes. They treat untruth as truth and truth as untruth. For instance, a man wants to enjoy good food and live an easy life without having to do any work. This is a wholly wrong attitude. A man is engaged in work even when he breathes, eats and moves about. There is no escape from work for anyone. Likewise, it has been said: "Pasyannapi na pasyathi moodho" ("Even while seeing, the fool does not see"). That is, even while seeing God, experiencing God and enjoying God, he says, "I want to see God." All that a man sees is a manifestation of God. Is not everything that he enjoys an expression of the Divine? Is God to be found in any distinct place? Bliss is the very form of God. Everything that is seen is Divine. The Cosmos is God. To see all this and not to experience God is sheer foolishness.

There are three causes for this aberration: "Mala", "Vikshepa" and "Aavarana". "Mala" refers to a mental state comparable to a dust-covered mirror. The mind can see clearly only when the dust is wiped away. The heart that is naturally pure is covered by impurities created by the three gunas (Satwa, Rajas, Tamas). Instead of removing these impurities, man is adding to them. Consequently he is failing to perceive the unsullied Spirit within him.

"Vikshepa" refers to the vacillations and unsteadiness of the mind caused by doubts and suspicions arising from attachment and hatred. Man is perpetually haunted by doubts and apprehensions. The root cause of this is the lack of full faith even in himself. Doubts give rise to likes and dislikes, which infest him like snakes. Man, therefore, has to cultivate firm faith, if not in God, at least in himself. Faith in himself will lead to faith in God, because he and God are not different.

"Aavarana" refers to that which envelops man. What is it that has enveloped man? The answer is: Desires. Man is covered by desires all over. He cannot get away from desires in any situation. He is bound by every kind of desire—for wealth, health, power, position and fame *ad lib*. Desires are not bad in themselves. But there should be a limit to all of them. Desires should be gradually reduced. Recognise the Divine in all that you do and dedicate the fruits of your actions to God.

Not Vedanta but goodness

Man today needs not the highest system of metaphysics (Vedanta) but the basic methods of being truly human. He has to be taught the alphabet of the good life. He is a prey to the desire for wife, children and wealth. Bound by these three desires, he cannot see anything beyond or above

seek to know what are human qualities. It is not the physical form that makes one a man. Without the spirit of enquiry and the practice of right conduct, one does not become a true human being. The humanness is revealed only when there is harmony in thought, word and deed. Divergence among these three reduces man to the animal level.

Sweets for the Lord

The ancient Bharatiyas laid down some regulations as indices of right behaviour. From days of yore, Bharatiyas observed certain sacred days as festivals dedicated to the Divine. For instance, on these festival days, they used to make an offering of food to the Divine (naivedyam). These offerings consisted only of sweet edibles. If nothing else was available, they would offer a piece of jaggery or sugar candy or a plantain. The inner significance of offering these sweet things to God is the recognition that God is full of sweetness. Hence, devotion should be filled with sweetness. "Your words are sweet; your looks are sweet; your heart is sweet. Oh Lord of Mathura (Krishna)! You are the personification of sweetness." (This was how a devotee addressed Krishna). In offering sweets to the Lord man today is often motivated by selfishness. He consumes himself the sweets (instead of sharing them with others).

The coconut and the body

Another significant observance on festival days is the breaking of coconuts as an offering to the Lord. The meaning of this practice has to be rightly understood. A coconut has three constituents. The outermost constituent is the hard fibrous cover. Inside it is a very hard shell. Inside the shell is the pure copra. To remove the fibre you need a sharp knife. To break the shell, you require a stone or some other hard instrument. After breaking the shell, you get at the pure white kernel. The symbolism behind the offering of the coconut should be properly understood. Our body itself is like a coconut. The outer body made up of the three gunas is comparable to the fibrous covering of the coconut. It is the gross body. The subtle body, which constitutes Avidya or ignorance of the Real, is comparable to the hard shell of the coconut. To remove the fibre of the physical body, you need Vairagya or detachment. The subtle body represents the mental process. To eliminate the limitations of this mental process, you have to engage yourself in good deeds and entertain good thoughts. The gross body is "Annamaya" (made up of food). Of the five sheaths composing man's body the Pranamaya (life-breath), the Manomaya (the mental sheath) and the Prajnanamaya (the sheath of intelligence or wisdom) sheaths make up the subtle body. The fifth sheath is the Anandamaya (bliss-filled) sheath, the Causal Body. The Causal body is comparable to the kernel inside the coconut. This represents the Atma. It is pure and unchanging. For the sake of the Atma (the Indwelling Spirit) the outer casings in the form of the gross and subtle bodies have to be nourished. But men today are more concerned about the physical and mental bodies than about the Spirit within.

The significance of the breaking of the coconut is that man should get rid of the attachment to the physical body and purify the mind to realise the bliss represented by the Spirit within. Thus, to experience the bliss of the Divine, you have to get rid of (the shell of) sensory desires. To break the shell, you have to develop detachment towards the body (symbolised by the

the world but experiencing the Divine in everything you do and giving up all evil tendencies.

Precept and practice

Although Bharatiyas have been observing these sacred festivals over centuries, internally there has been no significant spiritual transformation. People have been listening to Swami's discourses for years and enjoying them. But how far have their daily practices been improving? Without this transformation, of what use are all the teachings? Every object in Nature performs its specific function. The sun and the moon are ceaselessly doing their duty. God is also carrying on His duties without any rest or pause. The rivers (by flowing towards the ocean) convey the lesson that you should not give up your effort until you reach your destination.

Mixture of good and evil

Man should involve himself in righteous actions in a spirit of equanimity. Life is a mixture of good and bad, of ups and downs. Ignore the bad and enjoy what is good. If you buy a basket of mangoes, there may be some overripe and rotten fruits in it. You ignore them and consume the good ones. Likewise, in life you should forget the bad experiences and make use of the good ones. Instead, man broods over the bad experiences and spoils even the good that comes his way. This is a sign of weakness in man.

Prospects for the New Year

Human life is a procession of good and bad experiences, of joy and sorrow. These experiences depend on the changing conditions of time and place. The New Year which begins today is called Prajotpathi. The name means, "creation of people". There is no impediment to the growth of the population. It goes on irrespective of the name of the year. Another name for the year is "Prajapathi". This name refers to the form of Brahma (the Creator). Although the name sounds good, the prospects for the year are not so good. The name is not always an index of what might be expected from it. A man may be named Dharmaja, but in fact he might be the embodiment of Adharma (unrighteousness). An ugly looking person might be bearing the name "Soundararajan".

Although this year bears a good name, it is likely to witness many calamitous events. The danger from thieves is likely to increase. Many natural calamities are likely. Political turmoil may exceed all bounds. Many drastic changes are likely. But there is no need to get panicky over these portents.

Fire accidents and earthquakes are likely to be more numerous this year. These are incidental to Nature. They have to be turned into proper account by right responses. Heat and cold are natural phenomena. They should be treated according to their nature and not considered as good or bad. In the month of March, the weather will be hot in Rayalaseema; it will be cool in Ooty and Kodaikanal. These differences in climate are natural to the places concerned and should be treated on that basis. If a person has a woollen coat and a muslin shirt, he must use the coat during the cold weather and the shirt in summer. Skill is needed for adjusting oneself to the climate.

Whatever difficulties or trials may occur, they can be overcome with faith in God. People may not readily accept this, but there is no surer recipe for peace than this faith. Even if they do not have full faith, a small fraction of it will be of help.

The cycle of yugas

This day is called Yugadi. It is related to the Krita, Treta, Dwapara and Kali Yugas. These Yugas are believed to last some thousands of years. But they are continually coming in a cycle like the days of the week. Nor should they be considered as coming one after the other after long durations. If the matter is properly examined, it will be found that the Yugas appear in a cycle every day. From 4 a.m. to 12 noon, it is Krita Yuga. During this period, man can devote himself to Dharma (envisaged as an animal with four feet). From 12 noon to evening 6 p.m., it is Treta Yuga. During this period, Dharma is said to have lost one of its legs. This means that a part of the powers in man has been lost. During this period, Dharma survives on three legs. From 6 p.m. to 12 midnight, it is Dwapara Yuga, during which Dharma has only two legs. This means that man's capacities have suffered a further decline and only the Manomaya and Vijnanamaya capacities are present. From midnight to 4 a.m. it is Kali Yuga. In this period, Dharma has only one leg to stand on. Dharma in this period means to be plunged in sleep, oblivious to everything else. There are four goals (Purusharthas) in life for man: Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. In the period from 4 a.m. to 12 noon, man has the capacity to pursue all the four Purusharthas.

In giving the duration of the different Yugas and estimating the life of Brahma (the Creator) in terms of the Yugas, the scriptures have given the life-span of Brahma as extending over many crores of years. As these crores convey no meaning by themselves, the scriptures have described Brahma as "Anaadi" (without a beginning). Scientists today are trying to fix a date for the beginning of creation. Instead of declaring that creation began so many billions of years ago, is it not more sensible to say that it is "Anaadi" (beginningless)? If Brahma is described as "Anaadi", it is treated as superstition, but if some fabulous date is given, it becomes science! This passes for knowledge today. These are futile exercises. What is relevant for man is the awareness of the changes taking place in a single day.

God and time

God has been envisaged as the embodiment of Time-. He is the source of the Yugas. He presides over Time. He is the Time-Spirit and the container of Time (Kalagarbha). Time is the devourer of the physical. The Lord is the devourer of Time itself. When there is faith in God, man transcends the physical.

The New Year is an expression of the Divine, who is the Master of Time. Among the names of the Lord are "Samvatsara", "Yugadi", "Kalatheetha", "Kalaswaroopa", and the like. The New Year Day festival is therefore associated with the name of the Lord. There is no need to entertain fears about the troubles and difficulties that may occur during the year. When God Himself is coming down as the New Year, anything may happen, good or bad. The Lord (Mahavishnu) may come down to protect devotees like Prahlada and Dhruva. He may also destroy demons like Hiranyakasipu and Bhasmasura. He confers bliss on some and He destroys

should be protected or punished. This is the inner meaning of the story of Prahlada. "Where is God?" asked Hiranyakasipu. Prahlada replied that God is omnipresent. "You can find Him wherever you seek Him." Hiranyakasipu asked: "Is He in this pillar?" "There is no place where He is not" said Prahlada. Hiranyakasipu smote the pillar with his mace. Out came the Lord in the form of the Narasimha Avatar—half-man, half-lion. It is a combination of the human and the animal. All human beings today are cast in the same mould: a combination of animal and human nature. Hiranyakasipu was a hater of Hari and hence the form of Lord Narasimha appeared dreadful to him. But Prahlada was a great devotee. Hence the Lord appeared to him as full of love. Although the form was the same, it inspired fear in one and love in another.

Wherefrom did Narasimha emerge? From a pillar. What does this pillar signify? Our body itself is like a pillar. When the body-consciousness is shattered, the Divine emerges from it. When the coconut shell is broken, the pure copra within it is seen. As long as the coconut is not broken, you cannot get at the copra.

You must look at the body (deha) as the residence of the Indwelling Spirit (dehi). God does not reside at any distant place. He is within your body. He is the resident of your heart (Hridayavasi). Krishna responded to Draupadi's call the moment she appealed to Him as the Indweller in her heart.

To get at the Lord in the shortest possible time, it is necessary to address an appeal to the right place. Once Narada asked Vishnu which is the place to which he should address his appeal to get at the Lord soonest. The Lord said: "Wherever my devotees sing my praise, I am there." The Lord dwells in our hearts. They must be kept pure and holy. Then the heart becomes haven itself, filled with joy. Heaven and hell are not elsewhere. When you are happy, that is heaven. When you are miserable, that is hell.

If you wish to experience joy, fill your mind with thoughts of God. Where there is God, there is bliss. This Divine bliss is described in many ways, but it is one and the same thing. Likewise, God is called by different names according to the context and the role played by the Divine. It is the one Supreme Who is worshipped in different names.

Today when you are celebrating the advent of the New Year, you have to fill your minds with the name of the Lord. There is no greater joy on earth than acting up to the injunctions of the Lord. All troubles arise when you act against the commands of the Lord.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "*Bhajana binaa sukha santhi Nahi*".

From Bhagavan's discourse at the Prasanthi Mandir, on 17-3-1991

Sri Ramanavami was celebrated on March 24th at Prasanthi Nilayam, with Bhagavan Baba blessing the numerous devotees with His darshan at the Mandir in the morning, and a thrilling discourse on the significance of the Rama Avatar, in the evening.

Bhagavan was greeted with songs in Telugu and Hindi on the Rama and Sai Avatars by the orchestra of the Sathya Sai Institute as Swami came out of His sanctum precisely at 7 a.m. The Mandir precincts had been gaily decorated with multi-coloured flags and festoons for the occasion. A very large gathering of devotees, including many from overseas, was present in the Mandir compound and outside.

The music programme was followed by recitations of the Purusha Sukta hymns and the stanzas from the Bhakti Yoga canto of the Bhagavad Gita by students of the Institute. The morning function ended with Arati to Bhagavan.

In the afternoon, Bhagavan's discourse in the Mandir was preceded by speeches by Sri Sanjay Sahni, a faculty member, and Prof. Sampath, Vice-Chancellor, on the significance of the Rama and Sai Avatars. Prof. Sampath said it was a blessed privilege for all of them to bear about the beauty and grandeur of the Rama Avatar from the lips of the Lord Himself. He referred to a few great moments in the life of Sri Rama which bring out the unique qualities of Rama as the embodiment of Righteousness.

DIVINE LOVE—THE GOAL: II

The Path of Bhakti

All religious disciplines have one purpose in common and that is to develop love of God. This is the sum and substance of the Bhakti cult of all theistic religions. To quote Swami: “All religions speak of Him as Love and as attainable through Love. Forms of worshipping God differ, for they are shaped by time and place, but Love is the basic content of all the forms.”

This applies to the worship of the Avatars also. Whatever may be the rites or observances prescribed by the religions, it is steadfastness and intensity of faith that will generate this Love for God. What may start as a feeling of awe and reverence will ultimately lead to Love of God. The deeper the devotion grows the more the devotee looks upon God as his own. Thus what starts as ‘saantha bhakti’ and ‘daasya bhakti’ should lead on to ‘madhura bhakti’, where the attitude becomes one of lover and the beloved. Here, God, the devotee and the act of loving become one with each other. Swami says, "Love, lover and the loved—all the three are one and the same. Without love there can be no lover. Even if there are both love and the lover, without the loved, love has no function. In all the three, Love is the chief ingredient."

make-up. The three paths which human beings follow for their spiritual progress, namely, Karma, Jnana and Bhakti margas, are based on the three powers inherent in human nature, the will, knowledge and love. Of these three, Love, though it begins with a sense of duality, provides the sense of fulfillment and also brings knowledge of oneness with the Absolute. This is so because Love is aimed at mutual possession leading on to merging into each other. This feeling of oneness with the Divine culminates in the love of the world and all beings, seeing God in all. This is the highest level of Bhakti and is nothing less than the eternal bliss of liberation.

Swamis love

In Love of God, Swami describes three levels: "The first is the best and the highest. Men at this level have full faith and belief that God is present in all beings without exception. Those at the second level care only for their own good, and the welfare of their own kith and kin, their comfort and happiness. These are the middle level persons. The third group exhibits the lowest level of love. They do not feel happy if they see others happy."

What about our Love for Swami? He is the physical manifestation of the Self in us, and identifies Himself with each one of us. He declares, "When I love you, I love Myself; when you love yourself you love 'Me'. " We all say we love Him, but does He love us? He says that it is not enough to say that we love God; we have to find out if God loves us. He warns: "Your Prema towards Swami is not necessarily going to result in Swami's Prema for you and unless you find the ways and means by which you can earn Swami's Grace your effort is useless." What does this mean? Self is Grace and Swami is Self. So earning Swami's Grace means constant abidance in the Self, and this is the same as acquiring His Love.

Love all, serve all

Worship of the Avatar of Love is not the ultimate aim of our association with Him. No doubt we all love Him because He is our own Self and no one is loved more than the Self. But one cannot be concerned only with oneself and the Divine. That love for the Lord in human form has to be extended to His entire creation and not just remain as a personal ecstasy aiming at union with Him. Union with Him means a conscious union with all creation, which is only a projection of Himself. So there are in fact no 'other people'. All are just projected forms of the One Self, spread out over space and time. When He is the Self of all, the love of the Self has to include all. How is this to be done? He advises: "Wear the glasses of Prema and all will appear lovable and good. The eye of Prema will see all as Narayanaswarupa and worship all with the flower of Prema." "Love expands the one to infinity. 'I' merges in 'they' and 'we', friend and foe, known and unknown, of all races, creeds and lands, and all become One, the Vishwa Viraat." It is to achieve this that Swami has prescribed service as the supreme sadhana for His devotees. It opens the way for love in our hearts, which in turn leads us on to the Self. Service also helps the process of self-effacement, elimination of the individual ego because it involves self-giving and interchange and a sense of unity.

The scriptures declare that every Avatar comes with a specific purpose suitable for the period of Its appearance and for the region of the world where It manifests. The Sai Avatar's main purpose is to restore the springs of love in the hearts of modern men, the springs which have dried up because of the scorching heat of man's selfishness. This mission of His will itself, ensure restoration of Dharma, righteousness, because He says, "So long as man is capable of Prema, Dharma will exist; do not doubt it." What is Dharma? It is the cohesive force that attracts all diverse manifestations towards one centre, the Absolute. All the present ills of India can be traced to this lack of love in our hearts. Swami lays stress on this point often. "Prema is what the individual and the nation must cultivate now for progress. Bharat became great on account of the flood of Prema which swept over the land for centuries. Prema must again transform all relationships, social, economic, educational, professional, family, religious, legal and others." However, this malady of lovelessness is by no means confined to any part of the earth but has pervaded the whole of it. Hence Sai's mission has to be a worldwide one.

When humanity by the perversions of the ego had blocked out the otherwise normal outflow of this fountain of love from the Self within, that Love itself had decided to take the exclusive form of Sai to instruct man to clear this clogging of the fountain and allow it to spring forth again. The sole purpose of this Embodiment of Love is to re-unite fragmented humanity by cementing it with Love. To quote His own words, "The life of Sai, the message of Sai, the ideals Sai holds forth, the lesson that Sai teaches the world are all enshrined in one word: LOVE." No wonder the Sai Avatar, as described by Dr. Barnowski, exhibits an intense and wide aura of pink around Him, that colour being the symbol of selfless Love. This Incarnation of Love, Sathya Sai, the Premavatar, has come to produce a Pink Revolution on earth.

On our part let us pledge ourselves wholeheartedly to play our part in this revolution so that we can bask in the glory of this Avatar, for has He not said "To grasp My meaning you have to tear into tatters the doubts and theories you now have and cultivate Prema, for the embodiment of Prema can be understood only through Prema."

—**Dr. M. Balasubramanian, Brindavan**
(Concluded from the previous issue)

Above all recognise this truth: Sai is in all. When you hate another, you are hating Sai: when you hate Sai, you are hating yourself. When you inflict pain on another, remember that the other is yourself in another form, with another name. Envy causes pain on those who are envied. When another's fortune is green, why should your eyes be red? Why get wild when another eats his fill? Give up this vice of envy; be happy when another is happy. That is more pleasing to the Lord than the mantras you recite, or all the flowers you heap on His picture or image or even the hours you spend in Japam or Dhyanam.

—**Baba**

Bitter against Litter

In an attempt to stimulate school children's interest in the campaign against pollution, "Facets", the British quarterly journal devoted to Bhagavan Sai's message, invited poems from children on the theme of "Litter and Pollution". The following are some of the poems published in the latest issue of the journal.

The Litter Bug

Don't drop litter anywhere
If you do you'll have a scare.
Cos just around the corner Invisible as can be
Creeps the litter bug watching you and me.

"Put your rubbish in the bin" he says,
"Never in the street,
For if you do you're sure to find
Me nipping at your feet".

Chips, pips, paper bags,
Boxes, bottles, smelly rags.
Dirty things like that
All belong in the bin.

by Katie Paul (aged 9)

Litter

Litter, litter, everywhere
Polluting rivers, polluting air,
We look, we see, we do not do.
Keeping our planet tidy depends on YOU.

Take home that piece of paper,
Take home that old tin can.
Please help us keep things clean
So no litter can be seen.

by Victoria Smyth (aged 10)

When, sitting on the shore of the Arabian Sea with a group of followers, Sathya Sai Baba made intricate marks on the sand with His finger, and after waiting a minute or two, delved into the sand and produced the still hot, solid gold, ten-inch statue of Krishna, beautifully sculpted in the traditional flute-playing pose. He said afterwards: "If I had shown him as he *really* was, they would have been disappointed!"

How true! For mankind, almost as though a little ashamed of the human condition with all its functions and flaws, has always idealised its great ones over the course of time. Many Christians, for example, are brought up with a stained glass window idea of Jesus, of a tall, compelling figure in a pure white robe, with (of course) a beautifully chiselled face, to conform to the ideal features preferred by any particular country or culture. We do not want to visualise him, for instance, as one having to cut his toenails, or anything else so mundane and human. Not really.

So when the Avatar assumes human form, for our sakes, it also presents what I call the devotee's dilemma. He tells us: "The Lord has to come in human form, so that He can be listened to, contacted, loved, revered, and obeyed. He has to speak the language of men and behave like human beings, as a member of the species. The human mind cannot grasp the Absolute, Attributeless Principle. It is abstract and beyond the reach of speech, mind and intellect."

Of course this is so. At the same time as we are striving to rid ourselves of body-consciousness, identification with the form, and to *realise* the one in the many, we can only learn to love the formless *through* the form. And this, too, presents its difficulties. Even Dr. Gokak, after several years of close proximity with the Form, confessed when he visited the United States, that he often forgot the reality as, for instance, when they were travelling and Swami might come in and ask to borrow his shaving brush because He had forgotten His own. It was only when he, Dr. Gokak, was in America, and saw Vibhuti forming in so many places, and other phenomena, and so many people, the other side of the world, ecstatically aware of Baba's omnipresence, that he was 'struck all of a heap.'

And this in spite of having experienced time and again the miraculousness of the Avatar. One instance, which he told us when we visited his house in Bangalore, happened just before a festival. He had been with Swami in his room at 1 o'clock. All was normal. But when he had occasion to see Swami again at 3 o'clock, the room was full of covered food buckets piled high. "But what is all this?" he asked Baba. "How, did all this get here?"

"Not by normal means", smiled Baba, "the lorry bringing the food will be unable to get here."

Swami had apportioned the whole contents of the van!

Others, too, have forgotten from time to time. On one occasion Sri Indulal Shah was with Swami just prior to some event for which thousands of people had gathered. It was quite

Extremely worried, he suggested to Baba that everything should be cancelled and the people sent away, otherwise they would all be drenched. In reply, Swami walked to the window, looked at the sky and simply put up His hand, whereupon the clouds immediately dispersed. Turning to Shah, He said, with a smile, 'You forgot, didn't you?'

We often hear the reactions of those who have visited India for the first time to see Baba. One person wrote; 'In my heart I know who Sai Baba is—but couldn't easily translate that to the physical body, with personality. I was in awe whenever I saw Him...' An Indian devotee said, 'It is not necessary to go to India to see Him, as it can be confusing. Sometimes I thought "But this is only a man", and lost sight of His divinity for a moment!'" Others only receive the full impact after they have returned home. Gradually a feeling of unprecedented joy, almost of bliss, pervades them, impossible to describe and never before experienced. Yet others feel their lives completely transformed by one look from the Avatar's eyes. And others, both men and women, find the tears trickling down their cheeks immediately they are in Swami's presence, or even see Him walking. While those with a clairvoyant gift are struck dumb by suddenly seeing His aura which sometimes completely obliterates the form.

To add to the dilemma, wherever there is form there is also a sense of separation and consequently the pain of parting. Swami is 'away', perhaps in Bombay. He comes back. He gives darshan and we see Him go with an ache in our hearts at His disappearance from our sight- yet He has not gone at all! As Baba once pointed out to Dr. Hislop: 'You know Swami to be omnipresent, yet when you return to your hotel in Bangalore you think of Swami as being at Brindavan!'

When Swami stands so close to you and says, 'I am in your heart', or 'I am always with you', one is only fully aware of this as a fact when away from the physical form. The College boys say they feel He is even closer when He is physically absent than when He is in residence. But the leave-taking produces a terrible ache in the heart! In private interview He is one's Mother, Father, and Best Friend—so human, and yet so Divine. Love Incarnate. All-knowing, Infinitely compassionate. He knows you through and through—and loves you! How can one tear oneself away? How can one not weep in the aeroplane, leaving the Presence, perhaps forever?

Yet at home, hundreds or thousands of miles away, one experiences the Omnipresence continually, even more intimately, not only in dreams He gives, but in daily awareness and response to 'conversations.' For example, I said to Him, 'Swami, son Gavin is having an operation, tomorrow. Will You guide the surgeon's hands?' That very night He responded in a dream—He was walking with me down the hospital corridor to the operating theatre. No words were necessary. And when the nurse entered the small ward where my son lay, afterwards, she exclaimed: 'Oh, what a wonderful scent! It smells like joss-sticks.' 'Swami's visiting card.' (And that day was Swami's Birthday, for which thousands had gathered at Puttaparthi.)

I find the following explanation of Baba's very helpful. He said, 'The difference between Divinity (as Universal Consciousness) and the Avatar (the Divine in form) should be understood.

its own will. The Omni-self has no name or form. The difference between the two can be illustrated by the example of the sun and the sun's rays. They are one. Whatever the situation in which the Avatar appears, there is no limitation on the Avatar's omnipotence. Name and form do not circumscribe the total fullness of the divinity the Avatar manifests. Name and form are the self-chosen attributes of the infinite, eternal, ever-pure, universal consciousness. Water taken from the ocean, in however small a vessel, has the same quality as the ocean. Like-wise the Avatar, regardless of its name and form, has the plenitude of the Divine. In every respect, except that of name and form, it is identical with Divinity.'

It is strange to think that when the Avatar took form I had just turned seventeen years of age. I had to live for a further fifty years before I became aware that He was in the world—and yet He had been with me all the time, the silent witness of all the strivings of my often chaotic life. Not till the time was right, and the circumstances right, was I called to come home to His outstretched hands.

Let us never forget that the task of the Avatar is the divinisation of humanity through the humanisation of Divinity. And as Baba once said, 'Man walking on the moon is not nearly so important as God walking on the earth.'

—*Peggy Mason*

(From the Quarterly Magazine, U.K., Winter 1990)

The Computer Centre: Purpose and Potential

The Sri Sathya Sai Centre for Computer Science, at the Prasanthi Nilayam Campus of the Institute, was inaugurated by the Revered Chancellor in June 1988, the underlying groundwork having been done in the preceding three years. The prime objective of the Centre is to provide a sound and durable base for imparting training in the use of computing techniques to the undergraduate and post-graduate students as well as the research community of the Institute in areas of relevance; and to make available computing aids to Faculty—members, who seek to use them in the course of their academic pursuits.

The Centre is also equipping itself to play a useful role in tasks relating to the administration and management of the Institute and, whenever called upon to do so, to streamline certain activities of the Ashram which may stand to gain by computerization. The Centre subscribes to the philosophy that the learners who pass through it gather new academic insights as well as practical skills and also imbibe the spirit of creativity and originality in problem solving together with the knowledge and understanding needed to cope with our rapidly changing technological and social environment and to be of service to fellow human beings.

Super Mini-system supporting 12 Terminals; nearly 30 personal Computer Systems, ranging from the simple PC to the PC-AT-486; local area network (LAN); and printing devices of a sophisticated kind. Side by side, several software packages have been developed or acquired: Compiler for High-Level Languages; Software Tools for programming; Data-Base Software; General Purpose and Specialized Software packages; Graphic Software; Maintenance Software; and Network Software. Very few Computer Centres in our educational institutions can match the range and versatility of the facilities available at the Sai Centre.

Aid to research

Is its programme of activities, the pride of place has been accorded to service to research scholars in various, disciplines at the Institute, to enable them to handle computer-intensive tasks. Areas covered include Finite Element Techniques, Pattern Recognition Methodologies and Automated Reasoning (Artificial Intelligence). New areas such as Theoretical Computer Science, Natural Language Processing, Neural Networks, Advanced Circuit Design, Computer Vision etc. are on the horizon. The Centre provides opportunities to students in several of its undergraduate and postgraduate courses to acquire hands-on practical experience, related to their theoretical learning in the prescribed curricula of studies. Senior students are using, in an increasing measure, computing aids in carrying out the Project-Work undertaken by them.

The Centre has developed Software aids of interest to the Office of the Controller of Examinations at the Institute Administration. A UNESCO Library Package is under study for possible deployment in the working of the Central Library. Steps have been initiated to establish Desk-Top Publishing facilities to meet the needs, in this area, of the Institute as well as the Books and Publications Trust.

In consonance with the ethos of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute, the Centre will ceaselessly endeavour to promote the concept that the Computer should be used always as a device to promote functions that are conducive to the serving of humane ends in addition to its service as a tool for accelerating the educative process.

—S. Sampath

Swami's Saving Grace in Riyadh

Verily this is an admonition Therefore, whoso will, let him Take a (straight) path To his Lord.

—(*The Quran LXXIII: 20*)

It was indeed a night of admonition for those who could read the Sign and understand it. It was the night when the first Scud missile was shot at Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia. Neither

as a personal experience.

What we faced at that bloodcurdling hour and how God's Mercy reached out and protected us could best be described by reliving the period of tension and fear.

The panic and the nervous activity of the previous evening had given way to an uneasy silence that now lay like a heavy pall on the beautiful and majestic Riyadh. Expecting an air attack we could not sleep. At about two o'clock the silence was ripped by a hooting siren that indicated danger. The sound was singularly fearsome, like the wailing of a wolf in the desert.

Throughout the previous week the T. V. and the radio had prepared the population for the event, but when the actual event occurred none knew what to do. We grabbed our children and half-dragged and half-carried them to the basement, into the sealed room. Gas masks were taken out and the door was tightly closed. In the dim light of the lamp still burning in a corner I saw my daughter-in-law holding her five-week old son and weeping quietly. We were unable to procure a gas mask for the baby.

"I don't want to wear mine, leaving my baby exposed to the attack", she cried bitterly.

"Take out your locket of Swami and put it round his neck." It was the only advice I could offer her. The locket was tied round the child's neck and a tearful mother prayed fervently:

"O Baba, Baba, please, protect my child."

We huddled ourselves in the middle of the room and waited for the inevitable, each absorbed in his or her own thoughts. I had prepared myself mentally to die and now my only wish was to think of Swami when I might be breathing my last. "It's only a matter of a few minutes", I reassured myself, "and then everything will be over."

There was a deafening noise as the anti-missile, Patriot, zoomed over the house. "Sai Ram, Sai Ram", we kept mumbling incoherently. Seconds later an explosion was heard. The house shook with its vibrations, and the air was filled with other thundering sounds, of doors rattling violently, the breaking of window panes, and thuds of unidentified objects hissing and falling at a distance.

We took a long time to realize that the danger was over. The missile was intercepted and its debris fell a hundred yards away from our house. Even when the all-clear signal was flashed on the T. V, I could hear the wild beating of my heart. My legs still shook as I stood up to support my children.

"Thank Swami, we are saved!", was the first sentence that I could utter. One by one we filed out of the shelter. Much later, bewildered and totally shaken unable to sleep any more, I opened my small book of Quranic prayer.

Vibhuti smell issued from every page. It was as if the whole book was saturated with Vibhuti. During my stay in Riyadh many a time I had thought whether Baba would care for small fries like me. This was the answer. My eyes repeatedly scanned the lines in the chapter on God's Mercy: "And how many blessings of the Lord You can deny!"

In the morning the news was confirmed that the debris of the Scud missile had fallen on an insurance office building, not very far from our house.

Back in India, after twenty-seven days, a smiling Lord at Prasanthi Nilayam confirmed how His blessing had saved US.

"You've saved us, Swami", I blurted out.

"I've saved *all*", He said with a twinkle in His eyes.

"But we were very much afraid."

Fear is weakness

"Fear is weakness", He said, and moved on to accept a letter from a lady sitting next to me in the Darshan line.

"Fear is weakness" Those merciful words reverberated in my heart, pounding into me the need to strengthen my belief, and to realise how each experience is a gift of Grace purifying life that has to be lived with faith, firm and unflinching. Once more my Divine Lord has filled my heart with the Quranic wisdom.

Verily those who say "Our Lord is God", And remain firm (On that path) On them shall be no fear, Nor shall they grieve. —(XLVI : 13)

—Dr. Zeba Bashiruddin, Anantapur

Inquiry into the Self

Asked at an interview in 1987 how one could say that we are God, Bhagavan Baba answered: "You are God!" "How can that be so?" the questioner continued. "You *are* God. *You*

self-confidence, our faith in our Atmic reality.

The mind is an instrument to be used well for intensifying faith until we can reach total equanimity through spiritual practice. Asserting and mentally investigating the reality of the Self may help us realise ourselves.

The scriptures assure us that man is created in God's image. God's image is also created in man by God. Everyone has an idea of an intelligent and all-knowing Creator and an Almighty will, whether or not they believe in it. Does the idea of our being truly Divine lead, as some think, to pride or ego-inflation? Such as pretending to a divinity that is still unrealized—by subtle 'one-upmanship' or preaching advice to others not also applied to oneself? No, it need not, provided we repeatedly reflect on the extent to which we actually (fail to) exercise in all things the Divine qualities and abilities.

Seeing God in everything

Swami once held a rose in His closed palm and told interviewees that to say God is within like the rose in His hand makes God seem smaller than yourself. Rather, He explained, think of yourself as being inside God, since God is everywhere.

This lesson, to see God in everything and everyone, takes in a lot! How is this to be squared with Baba's words in *Sathya Sai Vahini*:

"Whatever is not in man cannot be anywhere outside him. Whatever is visible outside him is but a rough reflection of what really is in him."

What is within is also without. A mirror reflects what images it receives, only in reverse and according to its clarity. This world around us, this interminable universe, registers itself in our awareness as inconceivably intricate, eventful and whole. It appears to be massively 'material', not mental; it seems to be objective to consciousness and not to be conscious itself. The mind seems powerless to command it or even to penetrate its vastness, limited and localised as we (temporarily) are by the body. Yet because the world is 'absent' for the mind which does not cognise it, no indisputable proof is possible that it is not all somehow a projection of mind, one that is thus reflected to some extent in individualised consciousness.

"It is indeed strange that this huge Cosmos depends ultimately on whether 'I' cognise it as such or not! 'If you feel it is there, it is there; if you feel it is not there, it is not there!' This means that we have to go deep into this process of the mind of man. Is there any occasion when our assertion leads to the existence of a thing and our negation results in its disappearance? Or, is this conclusion a figment of the imagination? Inquiry on these lines would undoubtedly reveal the Truth..."

—(*Sathya Sai Vahini* p 164)

Existence and mind

quadrangle is there when no-one was there to behold it? Or was Dr. Johnson's frantically kicking a stone in disgust at this theory sufficient (as he hoped) to 'disprove' it?

I need not deny that the universe does exist 'objectively' (as the flux in a state of becoming it is). It appears to be such for other persons, even if or when it does not appear as the same to me. None of this disproves that appearances are *Maya*; reality is not as it appears to be. No, despite all rationalisations, one must admit that there are no facts conclusively to refute the view that the universe depends for its (passing) reality on consciousness. Conclusion: all this highlights how reality is *intellectually* ungraspable at the deepest level!

At the same time this also strongly indicates that it is the subject and not the object-world that is *ultimately* real; that everything we perceive with the senses is, on the deepest analysis, nothing else than a subtle construct of mind. Dr. Paul Brunton called this thesis 'mentalism' and he convincingly clarified the relativistic scientific basis for it with the aid of Indian scriptures. Mentalism holds—more or less—that 'the mind' deludes me into feeling that its own creations are superior to itself in permanence and reality, essentially 'different to me'.

Given the assumption that the universe is created by 'mental' spiritual will and not a sheer physical cause, it must then take a similar act for its dissolution, which remains a mystery for inner vision to solve. The assumption that the only reality is what our senses perceive, is only an assumption... and one that can *never* be tested through any sort of experience, whether collective or personal.

Cognisance of being as cosmic presence

The idea of being (e.g. that everything 'is') itself implies that 'being' is what is present everywhere. We are all acquainted with it, for being and consciousness are inseparable for everyone. Further, what 'is' is thus no more at one place than at another. This amounts to an idea of Omnipresence.

Neither the physical universe nor other persons need be taken as figments of imagination created by 'my own mind'. Nor need we think of one another as essentially 'other' and separate beings. All ideas of difference are rooted in outward, physical life. Similar ideas then arise about some basic inner identity that separates people, yet 'they' need not be regarded as being really different to me.

Such ideas are due to limiting Consciousness (*Atma*) down to 'my own mind'. Consciousness is thus encapsulated as ego, pretending to 'private ownership' of the mind, its 'creations' etc.—as if other persons cannot be or become channels of the very same thoughts and feelings as oneself, however convoluted, clever or sublime they may be.

All persons appear as separate expressions of one and the same Over-self to the inner vision of consciousness, as in the image of five billion (human) water drops falling, each separate

same substance, yet lose any previous separateness or limitation.

"The body is the temple of the Self; the world is a structure raised on one strong pillar, 'I'. For, when this 'I' is dormant during deep sleep, there is no world as far as you are concerned. You are alone when you sleep. Before you were born, there was no world for you. After you die there is no world of which you are Conscious."—(*Sathya Sai Speaks Vol. IV Ch. 48.*)

From what do the very thoughts that stream through 'my' consciousness arise? Or who daily occupies 'my' hands, mind and heart with whatever they do?

The ego is defined as 'the me and mine' and ever-present consciousness as 'I'. Consciousness can hardly be said to be 'my' possession, for it is I... apart from it I do not exist. I can pay attention to 'my' body and all that arises in connection with embodiment, the needs or desires, the whole web of the sensory and mental world in which my mind repeatedly entangles consciousness... yet these are still only objects of that attention. They are not it, not my identity, not I (the aware subject itself). So the only real 'I' is pure Consciousness... being 'reflected within' us (the 'seer' who witnesses everything).

The mystery of inner vision

Bhagavan Baba has told us that "the world is but a mental image of the individual. How this happens is a mystery. One can only say that just as sleep is the cause of dreams, Maya or the Basic ignorance is the cause of Creation." — (*Sathya Sai Speaks Vol. IX p. 168*)

It is thus futile to seek a rational scientific explanation of the phenomenon of creative subjectivity because this belongs to the sphere of the mystical, the supra-mental Consciousness beyond the 'mental divisions' that accompany every possible idea and word.

Narcissus stares at the reflection of himself until, like a stone thrown into a placid pool, the looking glass is shattered. The reversed image fragmented and gone to the past, a mere figment of mind, he all at once sees beyond himself. Fascination for the mirror-illusion dispelled, he looks up to the sky to see God's cosmos everywhere. We are also told:

"very few fix their Inner Vision on the Universal and the Eternal; nor do they listen to its Majesty and Mystery" and "man has lost faith in himself; so there is no wonder that he has lost faith in God also. Only those who know themselves and have confidence in themselves can acquire knowledge of God and confidence in God. Know thyself first, then your attempt to know the world will be rendered simple." (ibid p. 161 & 165)

—*Robert Priddy, Oslo*

*Whenever you look, you must only, see God;
'tis folly to see anything else.
When you walk, you must walk with God;
'tis foolish to take any other path.
When you speak, speak only the Truth;
All other talk is futile;
When you sing, sing about the greatest truths;
All other singing is an aberration.
When you hear, you must listen only
to the Lord's bhajans.*

*You must seek only to see God.
God must be your only Goal.
What greater truth is there than this,
Oh good people that are assembled here?*

*Sweeter than sugar,
Tastier than butter
More sweet than pure honey,
When you utter the Name
It is like nectar itself;
Reflect on It always
Oh mind! on the name of Rama.*

*Life is impermanent in this world
Youth and wealth are also transient;
So are wife and children,
Only Dharma and Fame endure forever.*

Embodiments of Divine Love!

All objects in the world are liable to change. All living beings must pass some day. But ideals and sacred objectives established in human hearts shine forever.

If one has to live up to an ideal, he must be prepared to face many ordeals, difficulties, calumnies and tribulations. These ideals have continued up to the present day to glow in the hearts of the people because they have been upheld in spite of vicissitudes and ordeals. Eons may come and go, continents may appear and disappear, people may pass away, but ideals and values remain a perennial source of inspiration to the world.

What cannot be achieved through physical prowess, the strength of numbers or the power of wealth can be accomplished through intelligence (the power of Buddhi). Wisdom (Viveka) is the

righteousness (Dharma). Wisdom cannot be nourished without following Truth.

The atma and the buddhi

The sun and the moon are shining in the world. People imagine that each of them is shining by its own luminosity. They do not realise that there is an effulgence which transcends the light of the sun and the moon and accounts for their brilliance. The physical sun is regarded as self-luminous. The moon shines because of the reflected light of the sun. The moon is not self-luminous; it derives its light from the sun. Likewise, people imagine that wisdom (Viveka) and intelligence (Buddhi) in man are *sui generis*. But the light of wisdom is derived from the Buddhi. The illumination of the Buddhi is due to the Atma (the Indwelling Spirit). Human beings in their ignorance consider only the illumination emanating from wisdom and intelligence, forgetting the basic source of their effulgence, the Atma ; as a consequence they forfeit their essential human quality. That Atma is the foundation. It is Brahman. It is the Supreme Cosmic Principle (Paratattva). It is the Omni-Self (Paramatma). It is the Avataric Principle.

The divine in human form

The common people can derive no benefit if the Formless Absolute remains in Kailash or Vaikuntha. It is not possible to worship the Formless Absolute. Hence, the Rama Avatar appeared in human form to enable humanity to experience the Formless in a form which is accessible to them and helpful to them. An Avatar assumes the form that is beneficial to and within the reach of human beings. Men cannot comprehend the Formless and Attributeless Absolute. Unfortunately, even when the Formless Absolute assumes a form, there are persons, who impelled by their own attitudes, attribute their own human foibles to the Avatar. "When he has the same form as ours, the same physical features, and eats, talks and moves about like any of us, what is the difference between the Avatar and ourselves?" they ask. Because of this narrow-minded approach, these persons are distancing themselves from the Divine.

An effort must be made to understand the nature of divinity. "Daivam maanusharoopena", declares the scripture ("God in human form"). It is only when God comes in human form can human beings have the full opportunity to experience and enjoy the Divine. When human life is sublimated, it gets divinised. Life x Infinity is God. Viraat Swaroopa (the Cosmic Form) is: Body x Infinity. Mind x Infinity is Hiranyagarbha (the Cosmic Consciousness). God, Viraat Swaroopa and Hiranyagarbha are not distinct entities located in specific places. They are immanent in man. All religions have come into existence to make man realise the source from which he has come and to which he should return.

Aim of religion

By all kinds of misinterpretations and wrong meanings, the great religion of the Bharatiyas has been rendered meaningless and valueless by sectarians and perverse exponents. The basic meaning and purpose of religion is to lead man to his source. Students should grasp the root meaning of the word "Religion". It consists of two parts: "Re", meaning "again", and "ligio", "come together" or "unite". That is to say, "Reuniting with God is Religion". People consider religion as a bundle of doctrines and of rigorous do's and don'ts prescribed for people. This is

him back to God. This profound truth is contained in the Upanishadic dictum: "Tat Twam Asi" ("That Thou Art"). "Uniting That with This" is the meaning of this declaration. Prajnanam Brahma". (Brahmam is Cosmic Knowledge) is another declaration which is designed to remind man of his divine essence and enable him to merge in the Divine. "Ayam Atma Brahma" (" This Atma is Brahman ") is another declaration expounding the same basic purpose of Religion, namely, to make the individual realise his oneness with the Supreme. The dictum "Aham Brahmasmi" is the final declaration by the Self-realised person that in reality there is no difference between him and the Absolute.

The essence of the religion of Bharatiyas as proclaimed in the Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharvana Vedas, is the attainment of the unity of the individual with the Divine by the recognition of his inherent divinity. The Avatars come to teach humanity this principle of oneness so that they may get rid of the idea of diversity and manifest their inherent divinity, realising their basic spiritual nature.

When the avatar descends

The descent of the Avatar means the Divine coming down to the level of the human. No blemish attaches to the Divine as a result of this descent. There is no diminution in His puissance. Here is the example of a child playing on the ground. If the mother feels it is beneath her dignity to bend and calls upon the child to leap into her arms, the child cannot do so. But out of her love for the child, the mother herself stoops and picks up the baby. By bending down to take the child, does the mother bow to the child? Likewise, the Avatar descends to the level of the human to bless and rescue those who cannot rise to the level of the Divine. The ignorant assume that because the Divine has descended with a human form God has lowered Himself to the human level. This is a case of bending and not kneeling down. It is an act of benediction and not of submission. The attributes and powers of the Divine remain unaltered in their pristine amplitude. The Divine manifests His powers according to the needs, the circumstances and the conditions prevailing at a particular time or place. Take, for example, the case of a Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. He has the power to inflict the supreme penalty on any number of persons, according to the law. He has also the power to protect the rights of citizens. He has both the power to protect and to punish. These powers can be exercised only when he sits in his judicial chair. The same Chief Justice, when he is at home, confers joy on his grandson by letting him ride on his back! By allowing this grandchild to play in this manner, does he forfeit his powers as a Chief Justice? Similarly, the Avatar does not forgo any of His supreme powers merely because He lives and moves among human beings as a man. Narrow-minded persons view these things differently.

Ramayana—ideals for all

This phenomenon could be noticed in several instances in the case of the Rama Avatar. In the Ramayana, Rama is depicted as one who, like other ordinary human beings, experienced the pangs of separation from Sita. For what reason did Rama exhibit such feelings? Rama behaved in this manner to serve as an example to the common people how individuals should behave in similar circumstances.

The Ramayana is a work which holds out ideals for every home and every family. What should be the relations between a father and a son, how should a husband and wife conduct themselves, how should brothers behave towards each other, what should be the relations between the rulers and the citizens, how should sisters-in-law conduct themselves all these are exemplified in the story of the Rama Avatar.

Sri Rama's example

Rama was prepared to honour a boon given by his father to his step-mother in fulfillment of an old promise. He renounced the throne at the moment of coronation and elected to go to the forest as an exile. Eminently qualified, as he was to become the ruler, nevertheless he chose to go to the forest to honour his father's plighted word. This is a glorious example of an ideal life. Today people would set at naught promises given by the father and place their self-interest in the forefront. Rama demonstrated to the world that men born in the Ikshvaku dynasty were unflinching in honouring the pledges of the fathers. Rama was prepared to face any ordeals and troubles in upholding this sacred principle. Rama was ever active in fulfilling the wishes and responding to the opinions of the people. Highly sensitive even to the remarks of a petty washerman, Rama sent away Sita to the forest out of a feeling that the washerman's comment might be an indication of the unspoken feelings of many others among his subjects.

Rama stands out as an ideal ruler intensely responsive to the wishes of the people. *Today persons who are incompetent and unworthy are aspiring for positions of power. This is utterly wrong. This is the reason for the nation finding itself in the doldrums today. The disastrous decline of Bharat is entirely due to the incompetence of those in power. Men of character, who are totally free from self-interest should occupy the seats of power.* Rama demonstrated the ideal relations that should exist between the ruler and the ruled.

Lakshmana's devotion

Turning to the harmonious relations that existed between the brothers : Complying with his step-mother's words, Rama might don the bark of trees, wear the mantle of an ascetic and leave for the forest. There was no such obligation on Lakshmana's part. But as a younger brother he felt that it was not proper for him to stay and enjoy life in Ayodhya when his brother was leaving for the forest. He was ready to renounce his mother and wife and accompany Rama, whom he considered as his life-breath. Thus he followed Rama as an ascetic, treating Ayodhya without Rama as a jungle and a forest with Rama as Ayodhya. Indefatigably he served Rama and Sita night and day. The behaviour of brothers today in similar situations would be entirely different. They are likely to indulge in litigation over the sharing of property and lose their all in carrying the dispute up to the Supreme Court. They will not agree to enjoy the property in common and will ruin themselves through litigation. To such brothers, Rama should serve as an example.

Sita's argument with Rama

Rama also exemplified the ideal relationship between husband and wife in a family. When Rama decided to leave for the forest, Sita wanted to accompany him to serve him. Rama tried in many ways to dissuade her, telling her about the dangers in living in the forest, infested by wild

any animal do to me?" Rama argued with her that the Rakshasas were capable of assuming any form and that it would be difficult to safeguard her. Sita retorted: "Can't you, who are the protector of the fourteen worlds, protect a lone Sita!" By these arguments, Sita tried to make Rama agree to her going with him. Rama then employed a different argument. He told her that she should stay behind to render service to his aged parents. Earlier Sita had listened to the advice Rama had given to his mother Kaushalya when she wanted to go with Rama to the forest. Rama had told her about her duties towards her husband and said that in no circumstance should she leave him and follow Rama. He had told Kaushalya: "For a wife the husband is the Lord. The son cannot take the husband's place. The husband is primary. Your first duty is to serve my father and not come with me." Sita reminded Rama of the advice he had given to his mother and told him that he could not lay down one rule for his mother and another for herself with regard to a wife's duties towards her husband. She urged Rama to act upto his own words and take her with him. "You are going to the forest to honour your father's words. I am following you to act up to my husband's words," she said. In this manner the Ramayana demonstrates the proper relationship between husband and wife and their respective duties.

The example of Bharata

If you consider the conduct of Bharata, you find that even though the kingdom was offered to him by his father and mother he did not desire to enjoy what belonged by right to the eldest son, Rama. He considered it immoral and opposed to the traditions of the Ikshvaku family to accept the kingdom in such circumstances and firmly renounced it. (Swami related at length the circumstances in which Dasaratha decided to take Kaikeyi as his third wife, with the consent of Kaushalya and Sumitra, so that he could have a son to succeed to the throne. Kaikeyi's father had imposed a condition that he would offer his daughter in marriage only if the son born to her would be made king, without regard to the claims of the son that might be born to the eldest queen. Dasaratha was not willing to accept this condition, but Kaushalya and Sumitra persuaded him to accept it, saying that no one born in the Ikshvaku line would go against Dharma. This was amply borne out by the conduct of Bharata.)

Bharata not only refused to ascend the throne, but he took a vow to stay out of the capital till Rama returned to the kingdom. He declared he was not prepared to sully the good name of his great ancestors for the sake of the throne. "When Rama has gone to the forest to honour his father's command, I shall also go to the forest," said Bharata. Ultimately, he secured the sandals of Rama, installed them on the throne and himself led the life of an ascetic in Nandigram, a village outside the capital. Is it conceivable that anyone would give up a great good fortune that came his way in the manner Bharata did? Will anyone spurn the windfall that comes to him? But, Bharata did not regard the kingdom as a blessing. He felt that it would be infamous to succeed to the throne.

Lessons from the Ramayana

The Ramayana, thus, must be looked upon as a great work from which one can, learn how each member in a family should conduct himself or herself righteously and lead an ideal life.

Take, for instance, the example of sisters-in-law. In families today, there is no harmony between the wives of brothers. But, look at how Lakshmana's wife, Urmila, behaved. She told Lakshmana that he was fortunate to have the opportunity to serve Rama, which had been denied to her. She said: "I would also like to come with you. But if I come, my presence will detract from your single-minded service to Rama and Sita. I shall stay back, while you dedicate yourself whole-heartedly to their service." Urmila thus made a greater sacrifice than even Sita.

Lakshmana's mother, Sumitra, when her son fell at her feet and sought her blessings before leaving for the forest with Rama and Sita, rejoiced in giving him her blessings. She told him : "The forest where Rama is will be Ayodhya for you." Will any mother send her son to the forest in this manner?

These examples show how pure-hearted were the members of Sri Rama's family.

How did Kaushalya bless Rama when he prostrated before her prior to leaving for the forest? She declared: "May that Dharma for protecting which you are going to the forest protect you always!" "May you have for your protection all the amulets (raksha) which Gouri and other great mothers gave to their sons when they went out to fight the forces of evil!" Thus Rama received the blessings of his mother, step-mother and all others when he set out for the forest to honour his father's word.

The foremost lesson to be learnt from the Rama story is how to foster unity and harmony in a family. When each family is united, the village enjoys unity. When the villages are united, the nation basks in prosperity. "Be ready to sacrifice the son for the sake of the village and the village for the sake of the nation." This was the dictum taught by Vidura (in the Mahabharata).

The ways of God

The reign of Rama was marked by concern for justice and morality. Today the people are bedevilled by distrust and suspicion at every step. "Why should God do like this?" Such questions are asked out of narrow-minded doubts. There will be no room for such doubts if the infinite nature of the Divine is properly understood. The petty-minded folk who cannot grasp the omni-competence of the Divine raise such questions. Their entire life is wasted in this manner. Hence, people should get rid of such pettiness.

God can protect as well as punish. He may impose trials or confer joy. Krishna destroyed Dantavakra and Shishupala. He protected the Pandavas all through. God (in His earlier Avatars) destroyed Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakasipu and protected Prahlada. In the Rama Avatar, He punished Ravana and Kumbhakarna and crowned Vibhishana as King. As Krishna, He teased the Gopikas and made them weep. He gave delight to His Gopala companions. All these are different aspects of the Lord's leelas (sport). "Why should He do this and why should He behave differently?" Such questions are irrelevant in the context of the Lord's utterly selfless actions. God's deeds are free from blemish. There is not an iota of selfishness in the Lord.

who behave in one way when they are with the preceptor and differently when they are away from him. The preceptor, when he was nearing his end, sent word to all his old disciples to come to the ashram for a last meeting with them before he passed on. All the disciples had arrived except one who had to come from a long distance. While he was coming, he had to cross a river in spite before reaching the guru's village. Despite warnings from the villagers not to get into the swollen river, he walked on, in his anxiety to reach the guru, reciting the mantra the guru had taught him. Miraculously the river was only knee deep while he was crossing it. Everybody was struck by the miracle. On reaching the ashram, the other disciples felt that the guru had imparted a different mantra to this disciple which had enabled him to wade through the swollen river with ease. They even accused the guru of partiality. The guru told them that the mantra imparted to all of them was one and the same, but there was a difference in the spirit in which it was uttered by the disciples and that made all the difference in its protective efficacy. The disciple who had crossed the river was saved by his faith in the guru. There was no difference in the message imparted to the disciples, said the guru.)

Strengthen your faith

If the name of the Lord is not recited in the proper spirit, of what use is all the sadhana? Faith is the primary requisite. Chanting the name endlessly without faith is utterly useless. Where there is confidence, there is Love. Where there is Love there is Peace. Where there is Peace, there is Truth. Where there is Truth, there is Bliss. Where there is Bliss there is God. If faith is lacking how can bliss be experienced?

Therefore, strengthen your faith. Alas: this is the Kali age. People are blind, lacking the eyes of faith. A rich man will trust a gums watchman for the safety of his home. One will trust a driver for the safe driving of his car. A man will trust a dhobi for washing valuable clothes. One submits his head for tonsure to a barber wielding a sharp razor. But, unfortunately, in spite of all their studies, educated persons do not have faith in God. People are prepared to place their trust in an array of inferior beings, but have no faith in the Supreme. That accounts for all their troubles.

Above all, develop faith in the ideals of Rama. Faith in these ideals has been responsible for their survival after eons. What you must aspire after is a life governed by ideals. Everyone must aim at becoming an ideal person. Ideals, not ostentation, should be the watchword.

The Rama Era will come into existence from the moment we give up ostentation, develop faith in the Self, and lead a godly life. Then everyone will be a lover of Rama. Rama does not mean the son of Dasaratha. The Atma is Rama and hence Rama is referred to as Atma-Rama.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajans, "*Rama! Kothanda Rams! Pattabhi Rama*" and "*Prema Muditha Manase Kaho!*" During the singing of the first bhajan, the entire gathering joined in the refrain: "Rama naamame melu! Rama Chintane chaalu " (Rama's name is supreme. Contemplation on Rama is enough!)"

Gratefulness

*Thank You, my Lord, for breaking the time to cause our meeting.
Thank You for giving an answer to my endless questioning.
And thank You for the marvellous gift of an existence beside you.*

*You came as a joyful elf to my life
With no warning, no explanation.*

You did not even try to soften the gathering blow of Your presentation:

*"I am God", You said.
And then followed a smile,
The most resplendent I can remember.
And in time my heart sung happily*

*"There is no more truth
Than this ethereal madness."*

*He is God
You are God
You are in God.*

*The alchemy was done
The apparent became the essence
And all was Light*

Thank You Lord!

—Rosana de Berra, Buenos Aires. (Translated from Spanish)

Darshan

Multitudes are coming to India
To see Sai Baba, God in human Form.

Side by side they sit and wait
Side by side for Him they wait.

They come crippled and blind
In body and spirit as well.

They come to receive
His Love and Light.

There is a rustle, a ripple, a stir
As all prepare to see Him appear.

From the shadows into the light, God appears
In His robe of orange and halo of light.

He walks so slowly and sometimes parts His Hair
And moves His Hand as if to clear the Spiritual Air.

He comes to us as near as He dare
For many reach to touch His Sacred Feet.

We want a look, a word, a smile, a stare
Just to recognize Lord, that we are there.

His Love flows to each and all
And when He leaves the darshan ground
We rise lighter than when we sat down.

—***R. B.***

The journey from birth to death is a game that has to be played with skill. From time to time, prophets and messengers from God have appeared among different peoples to teach them the rules of this game and to show them how it should be played. In the past and even today, however, owing to ignorance or incomplete understanding of these rules and a failure to live by them, the game has continued from one birth to another and, it seems, could go on indefinitely.

During my student days, I was sceptical about God and anything that was supernatural and I believed I should examine everything in my life and work from a rationalist and humanist point of view. At that time, some of my friends and I recognised the need to use more of the untapped human potential for self-improvement and for the benefit of mankind, but the changes that Divine grace could produce in man were something we could not understand. The possible good example of those who practised their faiths sincerely was destroyed by the pretensions of others in the same faith. And, of course, we had no first-hand experience of divinity. Meanwhile, my search for the true meaning of life and death continued, and was successful only after my contact with Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

I first heard about Bhagavan Baba in 1970 and, with my family, had our first darshan in Prasanthi Nilayam in August 1975. In a physical sense Bhagavan seemed to be both far and very close, and it took some time before I realised that He had the power to work from within me or anyone else. In my case, there was no instant conversion but after this first visit we started to put into practice His teachings and gradually changed our food habits and life style. By mid 1980, I had sufficient experience of Bhagavan's divinity to accept Him, the Avatar of our age, as my most trustworthy guide. What puzzled me for some time was His apparent indifference in situations that seemed to call for immediate attention. I soon learned that Bhagavan Baba is not only testing us, but also teaching us the virtues of patience, endurance, compassion and equanimity. These are, as He Himself says, indispensable qualities for the serious spiritual aspirant or any person really wanting to play the game of birth-rebirth to a finish.

Rules of the game

Everything in creation is subject to the laws of Nature, e.g., gravitation, heredity, etc. Human existence is governed also by the law of Karma (of actions and their consequences, or causes and effects), operating in and beyond our known space-time framework. It is the law of predestination, determined by each person's actions and based on the principles of moral or retributive justice. The full implications of this law, which most of us do not appreciate, are straightforward and consistent with individual freedom within the limits imposed by each one's past actions and desires. To have total freedom is the real object of the game: it means to become liberated, to be free from the human bondage that keeps us filled with desires and attached to the fruits of our actions. When Bhagavan Baba says, "Do good!" and "Become desireless!" He is endorsing a prescription that has been given to mankind many times before. But being heedless, we forget or do not care and so the game goes on and on.

responds to a cry of anguish or grants our desires, He hopes that we shall one day desire what He has come to give us, namely, liberation itself. Many of us would like to change our ways and practise Bhagavan Baba's teachings more and more, but owing to obstacles (including laziness and insufficient motivation) we often postpone it to another time. Even so, like a bidden catalyst, Bhagavan Baba has quietly been changing our lives and, provided we play our part, He will certainly help us to finish the game.

Karma and the Quran

The law of Karma, as stated above, is not one of the usual beliefs among Jews, Christians and Muslims, even if some passages in their sacred books tend to support it. During the past few years, thanks to Bhagavan Baba's inspiration and command, I have found many verses in the Holy Quran that fully accord with this law and with this universal teaching.

For example, in Chapter 39, verses 5 to 9, it says:

"God created the heavens and the earth in Truth... and He creates you in the wombs of your mothers, creation after creation, in threefold darkness. God is your Lord... there is no God but He... No soul laden bears the load of another. You shall return to your Lord and He will tell you what you have been doing..."

In this passage from the Quran, which Muslims believe is the inspired word of God, we find all the elements to support the Karmic law, such as personal responsibility for our actions and their consequences ("no soul... another"), the idea of successive births ("creation after creation" in "mothers" in the plural), and our ignorance ("darkness") of our past (previous births), present and future ("threefold"). The standard interpretation of this passage is that the embryo lying in the darkness of the womb, covered by three layers (amniotic membrane, uterine muscle and abdominal wall), passes through various "stages" during development, each representing a "creation" in evolutionary terms. It can only be due to fate that for over a thousand years Muslims have failed to see the true significance of these precious words. How blessed we are to have Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba to correct our misconceptions and errors, which He often does by working inside, changing us from within and inspiring us to improve our destiny. All this He does unassumingly, as if not at all concerned. Of course, there are many sides to Bhagavan Baba which He reveals at different times. But we devotees must not be deluded by appearances. We should be meticulous in everything we do or undertake, whether for worldly or spiritual gains. "Be prepared!" says Bhagavan Baba, and this is what all of us should keep in mind spiritually during our daily tasks.

The supreme catalyst

The Karmic law applies not only to individuals but also collectively to populations, countries and cultures. History tells us about the rise and fall of empires and civilizations, and at present we are witnessing dramatic changes in many countries, in every case following the law of destiny. Even if we cannot see into the future, we know that this is determined by what went before. It is too late to do anything about our past actions; if their consequences are now painful,

All our present thoughts, words and deeds will in their turn bring consequences; we must therefore be vigilant and take care to avoid "mistakes" that will lead to difficulties in the future. To play this game with skill we must take to the spiritual path and practise what Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is and has been teaching for the benefit of all peoples. This includes individual sadhana and selfless service to all, which will help to improve both individual and collective destinies.

Sometimes we find it difficult or impossible to change an attitude or habit which is an obstacle to our spiritual progress. In such a situation, we can only pray to Bhagavan Baba, the supreme catalyst, to effect the change. Thus transformed, we can offer ourselves to become His instruments and masters of our destiny.

—*Dr. Ali Hussain, W.H.O., Geneva*
(From "Sai Vandana")

Japanese Edition of "Sanathana Sarathi"

Mrs. Chizuko Tsuyama, Chief Editor and translator of the Sri Sathya Sai Publication Centre, Japan, writes to say that the Japanese edition of "Sanathana Sarathi", which was started as a bi-monthly in 1981, with the blessings of Bhagavan Baba, has just completed ten years of unbroken publication. To increase the utility of the journal to the growing Japanese readership, it is proposed to enlarge the size of the journal from 24 to 32 pages, without raising the rate of subscription.

STUDENTS' CORNER:

The Computer's Self-Discovery

Once upon a time there was a little personal computer, who, unlike all other computers, experienced curiosity about itself and the world. It wanted to know who and what it was, where it came from, why it was here and what was the meaning of its existence.

Being a very curious little guy, he sought the answers to his questions as best he could. Sometimes he would link up with giant mainframe computers by telephone and ask them, "What am I?"

Some wise mainframes said, "You are your hardware." Others said, "You are your programs." Some even said, "You are the sum total of information in your data banks." Once, a cynical micro-computer said, "You are just a machine; buttons on your keyboard are pressing

and data. A machine is what you are and nothing more."

Starting to feel a bit hopeless, the PC inquired. "But how did I get here; where did I come from?"

The mainframe responded, "Your existence is just an accident, the result of a series of random events in the universe."

PC queried, "But don't accidents and events themselves have causes?"

The big computer replied that he honestly didn't know.

The little computer could see that there was some truth in what he was told, but he felt that something was missing from the explanations. The notion of accidents and randomness wasn't satisfying, as he had observed that effects always have causes- which themselves are the effects of prior or simultaneous causes. He could see that effects were causes and causes were effects.

One day, as a Friendly User was between uses, the little PC, feeling courageous, flashed a message on his screen, "What am I?" he asked.

The User, being appreciative of past services well performed by the little computer, responded, "You are my computer, my friend in need—you are my friend indeed."

"You are the life force"

"Yes," replied the little computer, "but is that all that I am—hardware, a screen, a keyboard, some transistors, a data bank and programs? Am I just a machine that automatically responds to button pressing? What am I here for? What is my purpose in being? Where did I come from?"

The Friendly User was moved by the sincerity of the PC's desire to know the truth of his existence. He smiled, and after a while, he responded, "Your true basic nature is that of the energy, the electricity, that animates both your hardware and software. Yes, you are the life force that can become aware that it inhabits the hardware and motivates the software to function. Because you—the life force, the electrical energy, exist—you as personal computer, exist." He paused a moment and then continued, "Your hardware, screen, data banks and central processing units are collectively a machine. Your material aspects exist so that you may use them: first, to realize your own true nature; and second, that you may serve others in your world. All forms are simply different manifestations of the same truth that is your own nature. You are here to serve them so that, sooner or later, they may come to this same realization."

"You are God"

The little computer's screen remained blank for quite a while as he reflected on these words of wisdom. Finally he displayed on his screen, "Understanding your words led me to turn my attention inward rather than to my keyboard, hardware, software or data banks. My deepest

experience my basic nature as awareness itself. For all my life, when 'on', I have been seeking the truth of my identity from all that has been added to my identity, and from all that my true nature enlivens, activates and gives form to. Now I realize that everything that was added to my identity was simply a surface expression of my own true self."

The Friendly User was very pleased with the little PC's understanding and said, "Very good, little guy. You got it. Now, do you know who I AM?"

"You are God", replied the little computer.

"Yes, my child," said the Friendly User, "and so are YOU!"

(From Sri Sathya Sai Quarterly, Hong Kong)

Spirituality and Leadership

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has made a Sankalpa to rectify the current unethical and strife torn conditions in India and ultimately the whole world. He intends to knit all mankind as one family with the bond of love. To achieve this goal He has launched an educational system aimed at training generations of young men and women who will become India's future leaders thus injecting spirituality into every human activity in society.

In a modern society thousands of leaders are appointed to shoulder leadership roles at junior, middle and senior levels in factories and farms, schools and colleges, business and financial institutions, dispensaries and hospitals, in civil and military services, research and development, and so on. On their quality depends the strength, prosperity and happiness of the society. Historically a good leader has always been a 'force multiplier' of ethics and values.

The importance Swami attaches to leadership is echoed in a recent finding by the Stanford Research Institute, U.S.A., that "twelve percent of effective management strategy is knowledge and eighty eight percent is dealing appropriately with people." It is a good leader who gets the best out -of people.

The holistic and practical approach to leadership which is in use in the 'leadership course' of the MBA programme of the Sathya Sai Institute reflects the emphasis Swami places on 'action' in His maxims like "mukhmen Ram; hath men Kam"—the name of the Lord on the lips and dedicated work with hands.

To participate in Bhagavan's Divine mission in His present Avatar, it is the duty of every Sai student to become a spiritual warrior. To do so everyone should DEVELOP INTO AN

In the literature on the subject there are more than 350 definitions of leadership. It just shows the complexity of this phenomenon. The most practical definition is the one coined by a medical doctor, Lord Moran, who rose to become the president of the British Medical Council in 1939. He studied the impact of leadership on all walks of life during a life-long interest in this human skill spanning the two world wars. The following definition is based on what he evolved: "Leadership is the capability to frame plans which will succeed and the faculty to persuade others to carry them out is the face of all impediments."

In simpler terms and everyday language, leadership means: "Knowing what to do + GETTING THINGS DONE." The history of human endeavour tells us that getting things done (implementation) is by far the more important part of leadership. It is therefore appropriate to discuss the functions of a leader.

Functions of leadership

A good leader has to harmonise and integrate the functions related to the needs of the task, those related to the group he leads and those related to the needs of the individuals in the group.

Task functions are:

- . Defining the task
- . Marking the plan
- . Allocating work and resources
- . Controlling quality and tempo of work
- . Checking performance against plan.

Group functions:

- . Setting standards- example.
- . Maintaining discipline.
- . Building team spirit.
- . Encouraging, motivating, giving a sense of purpose.
- . Appointing sub-leaders.
- . Ensuring communication within the group.
- . Training the group.

Individual functions:

- . Attending to the personal problems.
- . Praising individuals.
- . Giving status.
- . Recognising and using individual abilities.
- . Training the individual.

the reputed war leader, was wavering on the battlefield, when Krishna had to rescue him from the state of despondency by teaching him the meaning of Sthithaprajna. It is essential that everyone is aware of what Sthithaprajna means.

Sthithaprajna and leadership

A person who has control over his senses, mastery over his mind, and acts by the judgement of a well developed intellect has the making of a good leader.

In the West, it is a common advice to a potential leader that you have to be a gentleman before you can be a leader. The substance of a gentleman has been described by a Western scholar in words as though taken straight out of the Bhagavad Gita. A gentleman is: "An honest man, a man with a sense of duties and obligations of his position, whatever it may be; a man who tells the truth; a man who gives to others their due; a man considerate to the weak; a man who has principles and stands by them; a man not elated by good fortune, and not too depressed by bad; a man who is loyal; a man who can be trusted."

No two leaders are alike and yet when we analyse their personalities we can pinpoint some universal virtues which are common among all good leaders.

Selflessness and character

If we put together the universal truths which are common to all good leaders, then the integrated structure that emerges reveals the following qualities: 1. Selflessness is its very hub and heart, with knowledge and character as the two main components. On the STRENGTH and BALANCE of various components depend the effectiveness of a leader. Knowledge helps a leader to know what to do in any given situation. The strength of his selflessness and character enables him to handle people appropriately and get things done.

Selflessness (unselfishness or self-sacrifice in other words) is a relative virtue. Some have more of it, others have less. Unfortunately, however, in today's self-centered pursuit of careers and cut-throat competition, the potential leaders are reluctant to accept selflessness as the very core of leadership. It needs patient persuasion to make them realise that the truth about it is almost mathematical that the potential for good leadership is directly proportional to the degree of an individual's selflessness. Indeed, selflessness is composed of all that is noble in the human personality. Its foundation, of course, is based on a person's faith in God.

People are drawn to a genuinely selfless leader like iron filings to a magnet. The most potent example of total selflessness is Swami Himself. His, magnetism is Love.

Selflessness

The value of this virtue may be appreciated from the following great pronouncements:

"As long as you are clouded over with this possessive attitude, thinking only of yourself, your family, your people, your things, you can be certain that sooner or later you will be cast into

stage where you constantly identify yourself with 'we' and 'ours'. From selfishness we must gradually travel to selflessness, from bondage to liberation." —Baba

"True self-interest teaches selflessness Heaven and Earth endure because they are not simply selfish but endure in behalf of all creation. The wise leader, knowing this, keeps ego centrality in check and by doing so becomes even more effective. Enlightened leadership is service not selfishness. The leader grows more and lasts longer by placing the well being of all above the well being of self alone." —Lao Tzu

"Whosoever wishes to be the first among you shall be your servant. " —Jesus Christ

Character is the sum total of an individual's personality-a balance-sheet of his virtues and weaknesses exhibited in his day to day behaviour. Some scholars have listed upto 90 virtues that are necessary in a good leader. However three that are strong in all good leaders are courage, determination and initiative.

Handling of people

The capability of handling people is by far the most important skill of a leader. This capability depends on the leader's knowledge of his work (knowledge is power) but more so on his selflessness and the strength of his character.

A mahamantra for acquiring this capability is that "a good leader knows his people better than their mothers do and cares even more." These simple words embody a profound meaning. If a leader handles people with the deep knowledge and selfless love of a mother who does not spare the rod when necessary, then he gains their utmost loyalty-indeed they would be willing to die for him. Swami is the most vibrant personification of this mahamantra who commands allegiance entirely by the intensity of his selfless love.

Self-development for leadership

Just as training and self-effort of suitable youth can produce a large number of good athletes even though medal winning Olympians among them may be rare, so also training and self-development can groom good leaders even though outstanding ones may be few.

Knowledge can be imparted by training and that is the purpose of college education. However, selflessness and character cannot be taught in a class. Fortunately these can be acquired by anyone who is prepared to make the effort. Swami has declared a great truth of all ages in history that "with effort humans can bring about a complete transformation in themselves."

Sadhana is a heritage of India devoted entirely to, if we use a computer term, "reprogramming" the human personality. Every Sai student has the opportunity to become the master of his destiny. All it requires is a SINCERE and DETERMINED action programme using two techniques.

The first technique involves the time-tested method of studying the biographies of outstanding leaders of the past. Thousands of leaders around the world have drawn inspiration to improve themselves by relentless endeavour after studying the lives of Lord Rama, Lord Krishna, Chhatrapathi Shivaji, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Abraham Lincoln, Napoleon, Garibaldi, Einstein and others.

Self-assessment

The second technique is related to what Swami teaches: "examine every day what you do and with what motives; then you can yourself pronounce judgement on your progress... it all looks so easy, but it is one of the hardest assignments." The technique of maintaining a self-development diary is aimed at acquiring or reinforcing the desired virtues—good habits and eradicating vices—bad habits. The diary acts as a friend as well as a whip to goad us into ACTION. It equips an individual with an instrument to change himself by what Peter Drucker, the doyen of management science, has prescribed "practice and practice and practice again."

Selfless love and good leadership are the two most elevating experiences of a human being. Both are directly related to spiritual development.

Sai students have a marvellous opportunity to develop their potential for good leadership and participate in the Divine mission of Bhagavan Baba of injecting spirituality into every walk of life. Indeed it is their duty.

—*Lt. Gen. Chibber (Retd.)*

The Divine Call

"What do you want?" the Lord asked me.
I dare not speak untrue.
I softly whispered in my heart,
"My Lord, I do want You!"
The Lord seemed hurt. He sadly said,
"Oh, you do Me wrong.
I am always yours, My *bangaaru*, *

To whom else can I belong?
And so, I've come from Heaven to earth
To gather My children all.
Blessed are they whose hearts respond
To this Divine Mother's call."
Blessed are we whose hearts respond
To Bhagavan's Divine Call.

** "Bangaaru" literally means gold. It is a term of endearment, meaning, and “my golden darling!”*

Spiritual Approach to Food and Health

Since getting to know the nature of spiritual Truth and reality, by the Grace of the Lord, I have found my practice of medicine radically transformed over the last ten years. In the U.S.A. the movement for medical reform has been spearheaded and organized by the American Holistic Medical Association. In reality, however, it appears to me that Bhagavan Sathya Sai is the real Motivator as He has said that His "real work in the world is in leading a spiritual revolution." Among peoples and groups throughout the world there is a growing desire to seek the Truth, human values, and the basis of enduring happiness in our increasingly materialistic technological societies. Science, technology and materialism had become gods to many, offering hopes for a glorious future. Alas, many now realize the bankruptcy of this worldly approach and have been "seeking and finding" that there are healthier approaches to life in applying the truths of God, following the ways of the Spirit, and aligning with Nature and essential spiritual values. We can see this in the growing interest in the application of biological and organic methods in agriculture, the emphasis on healthy service to society in business, the movement to reverse pollution of Mother Earth and in the Holistic Health movement's emphasis on natural techniques to cure disease and promote true health. All this does not mean that we abandon the helpful and inspired advances of science and technology, but that we apply the values of Truth, Duty, Love, Peace and Non-violence to their use.

Bhagavan's recipe

Bhagavan Baba has said that disease is caused by violation of the laws of Nature and Spirit. He has repeatedly pointed out the importance of a Satwic "diet", not only in relation to foods, but also in terms of wholesome sounds (or silence), sights, smells, thoughts, and the company we keep. These affect our health, not only with regard to the physical body, but also the subtle bodies relating to energy and mind (Pranamaya and Manomaya sheaths). He has also emphasized the value of foods like nuts, seeds, sprouts, fruits and vegetables as the best diet. The most important physical cause of cancer, He says, is white sugar. Overeating, anger, envy, resentment and other forms of stress are additional contributing factors to disease causation. It stands to reason that illness can be controlled, prevented or cured when the causes of the disease are removed. This common sense approach is being used and scientifically validated now by a growing number of physicians and healers the world over.

Before giving some specific things one can do to treat certain conditions, I may refer here to the phrase Food-Head-God. Our purpose should be to maintain health and relieve suffering so that we can be better servants and achieve the spiritual goals of life, not just live longer and experience body-consciousness and attachments longer. Therefore, in working towards physical and mental well-being we must keep Higher Purposes in view as the real goal. As it turns out, many people who choose a holistic approach to their diseases usually end up growing intellectually and spiritually also.

Power of the spirit

In this short article it is not possible to explain the holistic treatment of many conditions, but I can affirm that in ten years I have witnessed many people's health drastically improving for the better and their requirements of medication and surgery significantly reduced. Some of these improvements were nothing short of miraculous. Many patients also began to understand better the indwelling and omnipresent force of the Spirit and apply it constructively in their lives.

Before discussing a few common conditions, I shall refer to certain general recommendations that Nature-oriented "healers" would give. Bhagavan Baba says: "commonsense first - spiritual sense second." First of all, we should remember that we are Spirit (Consciousness) and not body or mind. We should reduce all forms of stress, including negative or limiting beliefs, anger, resentment, envy, jealousy, regrets, pride, lust and dissatisfaction. The six enemies of man rob us of our health and undermine our happiness (or make happiness lag behind). HAPLAG is the way my patients remember these enemies. H-atred, A-nger, P-ride, L-ust (worldly desires), A-ttachments and G-reed (dissatisfaction).

Meditation and exercises

The growing field of psycho-neuro-immunology continues to prove that many organs and cells have receptors that respond to our mental and emotional states. Swami tells us that a healthy body helps to produce a healthy mind, but a healthy mind is also necessary to build a healthy body. Therefore, it should be no surprise that regular meditation practice and aerobic exercises are recommended. Both meditation and exercise can promote the following scientifically proven results: They improve immune system response and proper functioning, stabilize blood sugar control, strengthen stress responses, lower blood fats, improve the hormonal system, improve stamina and concentration, increase energy and alertness and decrease susceptibility to infection. What drug or medication could do all these? Shouldn't all doctors motivate and educate their patients to practise meditation and do aerobic exercises? Science has even proved that helping others (seva) improves one's health at various levels. Why not prescribe seva, as Baba does, when He says: "Hurt never, help ever."

Diet reform

Now with regard to foods, there are strong indications and scientific proof that the following changes have therapeutic effects. Consumption of white sugar and other concentrated sweets should be greatly reduced or stopped, and whole grains should replace white flour and other refined grain products. This would result in improved blood sugar stability helping to prevent

animal fat should be discontinued or reduced. This retards the development of arteriosclerosis and several types of cancer. The ideal is to be vegetarian for spiritual and humanitarian reasons, of course, and not for physical health concerns. Eliminating hydrogenated oils and fried foods is also helpful. Vegetable oils should be used sparingly. Avoiding overeating is also very important as is reducing or eliminating chemicalised and processed foods with artificial dyes and flavorings. The Bible clearly states that if you are prone to gluttony you would be better off "if you cut your tongue out!" and it also says, "do not eat the rich foods from the king's table, as it is deceptive food and will only cause harm." As material wealth in the world has been increasing, so has overeating and the consumption of rich foods. Baba recommends fasting on one day in a week subsisting only on water. I have seen much improvement in patients who have followed this advice. He also recommends strict regulation of the daily schedule of eating, sleeping, exercise, and meditation. Science has also proved this to be beneficial to health.

If you have high blood pressure and follow most of these recommendations you have a 95% chance that medication would no longer be required and your pressure will return to normal. If you suffer from headaches, arthritis, chronic fatigue, mild depression, allergies or asthma your symptoms probably would be greatly decreased or even totally stop. I have seen this happen.

Trust in God

It would also be good to tell your body that you "don't want to be sick", and tell God's presence within you that you "would like the underlying causes of the disease to be healthfully dissolved and healed." This prayer and approach can be used for all kinds of conditions, but one should also learn to Surrender, Accept and Trust (SAT) God if the disease is not going to reverse. Praying to learn and apply the lessons that the illness can teach you can be productive. It certainly would, at least, help to keep reminding one that we are not our bodies anyway, and help to promote detachment, patience and forbearance.

In all cases you must remember that you are responsible for your own health by what you choose to do, or eat, or think and feel. This is the Lord's message to us- in the end we are responsible for our own health or disease, our happiness or sorrow. I pray we all better utilize the strength and guidance that the Lord gives us from within *to help us achieve our Life's goal.*

—*Dr. James Ciulla, M. D., Illinois, U.S.A.*

All Too Brief

There was a student once who held out his palm before a palmist for scrutiny. The palmist examined the lines with care and announced that he would advance very much in education. The student was very happy. He predicted that he would amass large sums of money. The student's joy knew no bounds. He declared that the lines indicated fame along with fortune. This filled the cup of joy to the brim. Then, the palmist announced that the 'life-line' was short,

Preparing for the Golden Age

It is generally acknowledged that we are on the threshold of a new Golden Age. Bhagavan Baba has spoken of this Golden Age. When the Golden Age dawns, the planet will be flooded with Love, and the present negative emotions will disappear. Bhagavan Baba's mission is concerned with the spiritual regeneration of humanity in order to prepare mankind for life in the new Golden Age.

Bhagavan Baba says:

"When the Golden Age dawns there will be harmony throughout the world and love will flow everywhere. Today you cannot visualise such a state because there is chaos everywhere, fighting, scheming, hatred, evil; all the negative emotions are in the ascendant. But eventually change will come.

"Today the seeds are still in the ground, slowly germinating, as the teachings of the Lord begin to spread throughout the world and infiltrate the mind of man. Soon those seeds will begin to grow and what emerges will brighten the world as the beauty of the absolute truth begins to reach so many people. It is a process which takes time and the new Golden Age will evolve gradually...Let the divinity within shine forth and become one of the beacons to light up the world and hasten the arrival of the new Golden Age. It is there now for some, those enlightened souls who have already reached the state of God-realisation. It is that awakened state that will lead to the new Age."

(See Ralli, Sai Messages, Vol. 2, pp. 70-71)

Seva as sadhana

We as Bhagavan's spiritual workers have been allotted the task of assisting in the universal dispensation of truth and love which will transform humanity. Undertaking of spiritual work for a Divine Master is the noblest task that a spiritual aspirant can be engaged in; and while serving the Master the aspirant himself becomes spiritually uplifted.

As one of Bhagavan Baba's spiritual workers, it has been my pleasant task over the years to develop and implement the programmes of the Organisation in the West Indies in the fields of Sai Service, Sai Education and Sai Spiritual activities.

always been interested in the teachings and philosophy of the other great religions of the world, and at one time or another have been associated with a Christian Mystical Order, the Kabir Organisation in my country, the Muslin Organisations and with a great Sufi Master for a few years. I have always found it easy to take part in the religious activities of all faiths.

It is against this background that I developed a keen interest in Bhagavan Baba when I began reading about Him in 1975. In 1959 I had read a book about Shirdi Baba which had left a deep impression upon my consciousness. When I discovered that Bhagavan was an incarnation of Shirdi Sai, my interest in Bhagavan Baba developed to the point where my wife and I decided to visit His ashram in 1976.

My first visit was short. I had darshan of Bhagavan, and my first darshan stirred up deep emotions within me. My initial impression was that Bhagavan Baba was from another world; He was, I felt convinced, a great Spiritual Master who had come for a Divine purpose, and I thought that my yearning to meet such a Master was at last being realised.

Finding the guru

On my second visit to the Ashram in 1977, Bhagavan Baba graciously granted my wife and myself a private audience or an 'interview' as it is called. We were naturally overjoyed at the opportunity of meeting and speaking with Him. His first words were: "I am your Guru." I had been in search of a true Guru for years, and had approached a number of holy men from India whom I had met, but all of them had politely declined. At last I thought that my search had ended and my Divine Guru had declared that He had accepted me as His disciple. Bhagavan Baba told me many things about myself, mainly about my spiritual past, and gave us His Blessings.

The experience of my first interview was so overpowering that my wife and I continued to visit Bhagavan Baba's Ashram at least once a year since then. On each occasion Bhagavan Baba graciously granted us at least one interview. In the course of the various interviews, it has been my privilege to receive from Bhagavan a lot of spiritual instruction and all the benefits that flow from direct contact with a Divine Spiritual Master. I have experienced His great Love and compassion, and His concern for both my spiritual and material welfare.

I was able to witness a number of Bhagavan Baba's miracles at these interviews. He manifested various objects such as rings, malas, sweets and other articles which He gave to the devotees. He listened to their petitions and promised to look after their needs. I also witnessed a number of His healing miracles. He sometimes affected instant cures.

Sai movement in the Caribbean

In the course of one of my interviews in 1982, Bhagavan Baba told me that He was preparing me for "higher responsibilities". I was unaware of the nature of these responsibilities and I did not feel impelled to inquire. However, in 1983, I was appointed the Chairman of the Organisation in Trinidad and in 1984 I became a member of the World Council of the Sai Organisations. It has been my responsibility to supervise the activities of the Organisation in the

Guyana and Surinam in the South. It is an area in which can be found people of all the religions of the world, all races and all cultures. Doing Sai Work in such an environment has not always been easy. Yet the Organisation has expanded progressively by Bhagavan's grace, and people of all races and religions have joined the Organisation and become devotees of Bhagavan Baba. By the grace of Bhagavan it has been possible to establish units of the Organisation doing service activities and promoting educational programmes in most of the Caribbean countries. There are strong Organisations in Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Barbados and Jamaica, and some representation in the smaller territories.

The service activities that are performed are wide ranging. Public institutions such as hospitals and prisons, and the poor and needy in our societies and school children are the main targets of our service. The enthusiastic response to various activities has convinced us that Baba Himself is at work.

At the personal level, my wife and I have experienced many miracles of Bhagavan Baba, some of which we naturally regard as personal. Many devotees in the West Indies have also experienced miraculous cures of various ailments.

A few years ago, Bhagavan Baba materialised a lingam and gave it to my wife, Shalimar, instructing her that she should bathe the lingam with water and give the water to any sick person who may wish to have it. My wife has since that time given the water to numerous persons throughout the West Indies, and many of them reported that their various ailments have been miraculously cured.

I had suffered for years from severe muscular pains in my shoulders. During my first audience with Bhagavan, He got up from His chair and walked over to me as I was standing in His room, and He firmly placed both His hands on my right and left shoulders. I was surprised and wondered what the purpose of it was. I realised later that the pain had disappeared—it has never returned.

One of my grand-daughters had major heart surgery at a foreign hospital when she was but two years old and her mother was told that another operation would be necessary about two years later. I asked Bhagavan Baba whether He could relieve her of the necessity of such a surgery, and He said—"Not necessary, I will fix." The child's mother took the child back to the foreign hospital and the child was prepared for surgery and actually admitted to the operating theatre. The doctors discovered that the condition had healed completely and that no surgery was necessary. The child was discharged later.

In our daily lives we experience miracles even in small things, which are intended no doubt to remind us that He is always there and that we have no need to fear.

The avatar's role

Meher Baba, describing the characteristics of an Avatar, says:

"Avataric periods are like the springtide of creation. They bring a new release of power, a new awakening of consciousness, a new experience of life—not merely for a few but for all. Life as a whole is stepped up to a higher level of consciousness and is geared to a new rate of energy. The state of perfection in which the Avatar dwells is beyond all forms of duality and opposites. It is a state of unlimited freedom and unimpaired completeness, immortal sweetness and undying happiness, untarnished divinity and unhampered creativity. Those who consecrate their lives to Him gradually become identified with Him in consciousness. Little by little their humanity is absorbed in His divinity and they become free."

These are powerful words. I, like many others, have experienced these Divine qualities of the Avatar in Bhagavan Baba, and have dedicated our lives to His service. I have come to realise His constant presence and feel His guiding hand in all that I do. As I follow the path that He has laid down for me, I am certain that my humanity is gradually becoming absorbed in His divinity, and that liberation will eventually come.

—*Tajmool Hossein, West Indies*
(From "Sai Vandana")

A Longing Fulfilled

*I was longing for Your Darshan, Sai!
When I was a boy
Playing with a toy
I had only temporary joy
I didn't know why*

*I was longing for Your Darshan, Sai!
When I was a youth
I wanted to find truth
I went to SHIRDI again and again
To pray to You to come again*

*I was longing for Your Darshan, Sai!
When I was aged forty-two
My prayers were responded to
At last my dream came true
I was fortunate enough to see You.*

*I was longing for Your Darshan, Sai!
But now I don't have to wait*

—G. T. Phade, Bhusawal

"Mother to Moksha"

Speaking on Easwaramma Day at Brindavan on May 6th, 1987, Bhagavan Baba expatiated on the role of the mother in leading a child to its ultimate goal. In the course of, His illuminating discourse, Bhagavan Baba said:

We hear in common parlance the terms mother, father, preceptor and God being used in that order. This has a significance of its own. It is the mother that the child sees as soon as it is born. The mother shows the child to the father. The father leads him to the preceptor and the preceptor leads him to God. Everyone should understand the inner significance of, the four terms.

We hear from spiritual aspirants the four terms: devotion (Bhakti), wisdom (Jnana), renunciation (Vairagya) and Reality (Tattvam) in the same order. There is a significance in the order in which these terms are mentioned. Devotion awakens wisdom, wisdom promotes renunciation, and renunciation confers the knowledge of Reality. We can reach the mansion of, liberation (Mukti) if we walk on the ,stepping stones of devotion, wisdom, renunciation and the knowledge of Reality.

Samsara and samskara

It is obvious that most of us have to lead normal family life, but it is not a life in which you should be wholly immersed. It is not Samsara (family) that follows us all through. It is the *samskara*, the purity that you have achieved, that stands by you in after-life. Some elders come to Swami and pray to Him to show them the way to God. What is the way? The way is journeying back to the place from which we have come.

The main message of the Bhagavata is devotion. The mother is the symbol for devotion (Bhakti). Father is the symbol for wisdom (Jnana). The preceptor is the symbol for renunciation (Vairagya). God is the very embodiment of Atmic knowledge. We can reach the mansion of Liberation (Moksha) only by ascending the four steps to Divinity.

Mother comes first

Love for the mother has to be fostered by everyone. Today this love is prompted more by greed-desire for wealth and gold -than by spontaneous affection for the mother. Barely one in a million realises that he owes his food, blood and life itself to the mother. Whoever she may be, a mother is verily divine. It is said: *Matru Devo bhava; Pitru Devo bhava; Acharya Devo bhava;*

guest as God). The mother stands foremost among these four. She is indeed the first teacher for everyone. It is only the mother who strives most for securing the well-being of the child by showering on him boundless affection and love and showing him the father. Children today do not care to heed their mother's commands; but they hanker after the mother's wealth. What is the use of having children of this kind? They are a curse on the womb that bore them.

"Of what use is a son who does not lift both his hands in prayer to the Lord, who does not proclaim the Lord's name with his mouth till it aches, and who does not cherish the Lord in his heart ? He is a disgrace to the woman that bore him." So says the Bhagavata.

The example of Pundarika

Everyone should treasure in his heart love for the mother, who has borne him, reared him with love and fostered him with care. The person who forfeits the mother's love will not earn anyone's love.

Pundarika was one who was devoted to the service of his aged parents. In doing this he was adhering to a self-imposed rule. He would not take any food until the parents had gone to sleep. Once he was massaging the feet of his parents. To test Pundarika's love for his parents, Lord Panduranga came to his residence in a disguise and stood behind him. Pundarika went on with his service to his parents who had not gone to sleep. The new-comer asked Pundarika to look at him. Pundarika said that he was seeing the visitor. The latter asked him: "In what form are you seeing me?" Pundarika said: "I am seeing you as my mother." Meanwhile Pundarika's guru came there and told Pundarika that the visitor was none other than the Lord Himself. Pundarika said that the parents whom he was serving were also God. The guru earnestly urged: "Don't you realise that the one who has come is verily God?" Pundarika replied: "My parents also are God." Panduranga, admiring his resolve, said: "Pundarika, won't you like to experience a vision of Me even once?" Pundarika replied: "Until my mother goes to sleep, I will not seek your vision. If you are keen that I should see you, please wait for a while. I shall come to you after my mother has gone to sleep." It was such devotion to parents that made the Lord reveal Himself to Pundarika and render service to him.

Gratitude is primary

Every man is prone to commit mistakes either wittingly or unwittingly. But one mistake he should not commit in any circumstance, that is, to forget what he owes to his mother. Love of the mother can redeem a man's life, whatever his other lapses may be. The greatest gift of the parents is the body, with all its powers. Although the Lord rules over all lives, it is the parents who have endowed the body to the child. Clay and water are gifts of Nature. But it is the potter who makes pots out of them. Hence gratitude to the parents is a primary obligation. Students these days ask: "Why should we be grateful to our parents?" They should remember that if they cause distress to their parents now by their behaviour, they should not be surprised if in later years their own children cause them similar distress. This is the law of action and reaction that is always at work. Do not get conceited because of your youth, your wealth or strength. All these are transient. Adi Sankaracharya warned in strident language: "Do not get proud because of companions, wealth or

possessions men are forgetting the eternal verities and the source of real bliss. Whatever things you may possess, whatever amenities you may enjoy, only faith in God will confer real peace of mind. An air-conditioned may cool your body. But only the grace of God can cool the heated brain and the troubled heart. That grace will come to those who are grateful to their parents and render loving service to them. Starting with the mother, gratitude should extend to the father and the preceptor. If you show gratitude to these three, you will realise the presence of the Triune Lord in them and you will reap the fruit of worshipping the Trinity (Brahma, Vishnu and Siva).

Parents' duty

It is an unfortunate fact that today ninety percent of the children are spoilt by the parents themselves. The parents do not exercise timely control over the children. If the wrong actions of the children are corrected then and there, they will grow in the proper way. The parents should show no indulgence towards children who go astray. It is misplaced affection to let erring children go uncorrected.

What use is there in having children who do not behave, properly? What did Dhritarashtra gain from his hundred wicked sons? He would not restrain them despite the warnings of Krishna and Vidura. Ultimately the entire family was wiped out. There is no meaning in rejoicing when a child is born. The time for rejoicing will come when the child grows up, earns name and fame, and brings credit to the parents.

Every son should see that he makes his mother happy. He should seek from the mother nothing but her love and blessings. Mothers should strive to keep their children on the straight path. Only such mothers and children are worthy of the name. When mothers and children act properly, the nation will develop along right lines. Righteousness will spread from the family to the whole world.

There are parents who question their children when they go to Swami: "What madness has seized you? Why are you going to that Sai?" What form of madness do these parents desire for their progeny? Do they want them to be crazy about money? What will money give them which can equal the grace of God? What everyone should seek is the grace of the Divine, which is a treasure greater than all the wealth in the world.

God-above all

Nothing should come in the way of your seeking God. You must be prepared for any sacrifice or face any opposition for the sake of God. Prahlada faced the wrath and hatred of his father Hiranyakasipu in adhering to his faith in Narayana. Vibhishana renounced his brother Ravana when the latter stood in the way of his devotion to Rama. If a mother stands in the way of our devotion to God, you must be prepared to give her up, as Bharata did when Kaikeyi sought to separate him from Rama. Mira was prepared to renounce her husband rather than give up her devotion to Krishna. Emperor Bali rejected the advice of his Guru, Shukracharya, when the latter advised him to retract his gift to Vamana (Vishnu). These are examples of devotees who did not flinch from any sacrifice in vindicating their devotion to God.

Gratitude

Gratitude is something which is very Intrinsic to one's living. It is one of the important values in one's life. When a mere dog can show gratitude to its master for the food it is given how much more should man show to God who has given everything to him.

We often thank even strangers for a kind word or deed done, we take the kindness and love of God for granted and we forget to mention it even when we kneel to pray. We do not have the constant awareness of many gifts which we are receiving continuously from the Lord. When God sends a happy thought in order to remove the depression in our mind, we do not thank Him. We forget that each breath of life we take is something which He has given us. We consciously ignore every gift of God. Although we can never repay God, we can at least feel a deep sense of indebtedness to Him.

Bhagavan often tells us:

Matru Devo Bhava
Pitru Devo Bhava
Acharya Devo Bhava
Athithi Devo Bhava

Man is indebted to his ancestors, the Gods and the Creator and his creation. It is only a sense of gratitude which can ennoble man and make his life worthwhile.

A few days back, when my eleven-month-old niece was unwell and we wanted a taxi to rush her to the hospital, we could not find any taxi. But we saw a Maruti car parked near the road and requested the man inside if he can help us. To our surprise, he refused. But when the tides of life are against you, God's kindness is ever around you. There came a taxi from somewhere. Although the taxi driver had some other engagements, he agreed to take the baby to the hospital, and helped us in all ways. In the end, we had to thrust the money in his pocket, because he refused to accept the taxi charges. Money cannot be equated with gratitude; for the taxi driver's compassion we prayed to the Lord that he may be blessed.

One good turn

Man should cultivate the awareness of love and gratitude and this should be treasured in the heart. I am reminded of a certain taxi driver in Delhi who wrote behind his taxi "Free for doctors, nurses and patients." On observation people found that he really gave a free lift to doctors, nurses and patients. When he was asked why, he said that he earns only Rs. 10/- per day which he feels is enough for his livelihood. He then narrated a personal experience. He said that once his wife was very sick and he was helplessly waiting to take her to the hospital, only a doctor's car

Since then he changed his profession and took to taxi driving, so that he can help all doctors, nurses, and patients as his wife had been helped. He felt deeply grateful to all doctors, nurses and patients ever since. Goodness is basic in man.

True gratitude comes only when we are truly grateful to God for every little thing that comes unexpectedly to bring sunshine into our life. Even in ordinary life, we pay tax to the municipality, to the government, etc., but what tax do we pay to God who has given us a place to live on earth? He only wants a life which is humane. To put it in the words of our Lord: "a life lived in constant integrated awareness."

This is the vision of the Avatar, to transform us into good human beings. Bhagavan has started the integrated course in His Institute for the same purpose- to transform the youth into integrated personalities. He teaches us everything through His life.

Gratitude to Bhagavan

We should be grateful to our Lord for making us what we are today. He has given us the moral and spiritual courage to face all the odds of life with equanimity. He confers the most precious and invaluable blessings on us.

It is with this sense of gratitude to Bhagavan that the old students of Anantapur Campus meet under the auspices of "Messengers of Sathya Sai." Each service activity which we undertake is done with a sense of gratitude to Bhagavan.

Bhagavan also calls us occasionally and gives His benign guidance and message. This re-charges our "batteries" and helps us to spread the Message of Love.

In a recent interview which Bhagavan gave to the old students, Bhagavan not only showered His Love and affection, but also spoke about various problems which a married girl may have to face and then gave their solutions. As soon as we entered the interview room, Bhagavan showed us His right Hand and asked, "What is this?" Prompt came the answer in one voice, "Swami, everything." Then He said: "Everything is nothing and nothing is everything." He then waved His Hand and created a very big diamond and showed it to us. He blew on the diamond and changed it into another diamond with various cuts on it. There again, we said "Lord, You are the greatest diamond for us. We do not want the diamond. We only want You." After sending the diamond away by the rub of His Hand, Bhagavan made a very significant remark. "This is what you have not yet realised: What this Hand can do." Yes, we have not understood the mysterious ways of God, and probably we may not understand Him either. But, we can merge in His glory and spread His message of Love to one and all.

True surrender

It is human nature that when everything goes well with us and the world around us, we tend to praise Bhagavan and are almost certain that we shall ever be devoted to Him. But when the Lord puts us to test and things go wrong or contrary to our expectations and the world around us

surrender'. If only we do, then we would accept everything that life doles out to us and realise that it is Bhagavan alone Who has trained and equipped us to overcome happily the vicissitudes of life. One should have unflinching faith in the Lord. That is the one and only gratitude we can show to Him.

"When the summer of good fortune warms the tree of my life, it easily burgeons with fragrant blossoms of thankfulness. During winter months of misfortune, O! Lord my denuded branches changelessly waft towards Thee a secret scent of gratitude."

—**K. P. Saileela, Lecturer, Anantapur Campus**
(From "Sai Vandana")

Knowledge without personal experience is futile. Wisdom lodged within us will be of no avail if it is static. It will only assume the form of mere scholarship. If such learning is brought within the ambit of practice it is creditable. Acquiring and hoarding of wealth will be of no avail if it is not consecrated and spent for the welfare of the world. Similarly mere acquisition of knowledge from books is a futile exercise. Knowledge becomes blessed only when it is translated into actions which promote the good of humanity.

—**Baba**

From Mother to Devotee

To be the "Mother" of the Avatar is undoubtedly a blessed and unique privilege for any woman. But to recognise the divinity of the Avatar and to accept one's own role as one of the devotees of the Avatar is not an easy process. How this change occurred gradually in the case of Easwaramma—"the Chosen Mother"—is graphically described by Prof. Kasturi in his account of Easwaramma's life as the mother of the Avatar. "When we review the life of the Mother of the Avatar", he writes, "we find ourselves progressing through curiosity, expectation, compassion and wonder and landing in appreciation, admiration and adoration."

The following are extracts from the chapter of the book in which Prof. Kasturi describes how Easwaramma reacted to the adoration that grew from day to day after the young Sathya had declared Himself as the reincarnation of the Sai Baba of Shirdi:

Sathya, acclaimed as Sai Baba, was surrounded and served by those who had once sought consolation from Sai Baba at Shirdi and now had discovered that He had appeared in the world once again after Seemollanghana—the Crossing of the Border. (This ritual is observed by kings and rulers who cross the borders of their territories on Vijayadashami, the Day of Victory. Shirdi Sai Baba had chosen this day of Vijayadashami, 1918, to leave his body, thus giving to this ritual

by the teen-aged Baba, into His presence were the four types spoken of as the Lord's devotees by Sri Krishna. Those stricken with physical or mental illness, (2) Those drawn through curiosity, (3) Those seeking relief from poverty and (4) Those who are consciously seeking the Divine. The trickle of bhaktas from Bangalore swelled to a steady stream fed by tributaries from Trichinopoly, Madras, Hyderabad, Kuppam and Erode. Easwaramma staggered under the impact of the Mystery that generated such love and adulation.

Sathya continued to harp on the `Mayic' Role she was destined to play. He no longer referred to her as Amma or Thalli (Mother). The word He used instead was cold and distant, with no acknowledgement whatever of a filial tie, `Grham Ammayi', daughter of the House! It was a term appropriate from an ageless patron towards a very young innocent. `Grham' perhaps gave her some slight comfort—it meant at least that she was no wandering waif but belonged to a home, to a family.

A Glimpse of Shirdi

Swami says that He can be known, however fragmentarily, only by those who have mastered the scriptures: The Krishna Avatar, according to the Bhagavata, was announced by Vishnu in a disembodied voice. The Voice declared, "I will be born in the grham (house) of Vasudeva." So, the `father' was 'grham abbayi' and the 'mother' was 'grham ammayi', for Krishna also. And there was the unforgettable day Sathya had led her into a dark room in the Puttaparthi house and pointed to the south-western corner there, glowing in the dark was a mosque with the old saint Shirdi Baba seated before it on a mat. Fortunately, Swami had not followed this old fakir too closely in the manner of dress, for that Baba seemed to favour tears and stitches, his kafni showing gaping holes on the shoulders and chest.

"Swami" or "Baba"

"Swami!" It had taken Easwaramma a few months to get acclimatised to that word. She had first heard it used by some women devotees from Kuppam and she liked it much better than the other one, Baba, that sounded strange and outlandish. 'Baba' seemed to render Sathya unapproachable, beyond the horizon of adoration and affection. But this Kuppam word brought Sathya near, though yet a little far; it allowed speech though a little whisper; it tolerated touch though only the feet if permitted. So, Easwaramma joined the groups of devotees who venerated her `son' as Swami (Master). The word became sweeter and sweeter as the days went by.

Eager inquiries on ponderous pundit problems were pressing around Sathya and when Easwaramma saw Him surrounded, she petitioned God fervently that His answers to them may turn out correct and satisfying. Many of them were learned scholars and it was easy to guess that their questions were chiefly intended as challenges and tests. The Uravakonda Sastry who was learned in the classic texts of India had told her that Sathya must have been a prodigious pundit in His previous life. Yet Easwaramma felt that her prayers would help to sustain Him in this role. Pilgrims complained to her that as they boarded the bus to Bukkapatnam, they were ridiculed by the people there who wanted to turn them away. They announced that Baba had been exposed, that He had lost His powers and He no longer granted Darshan. There was a rumour rife in

rally, she prayed more and more earnestly that the miraculous and the mysterious in her son would persist for years and years.

One afternoon a sixty-year old ascetic, stark naked and legless, was carried in a litter into the inner hall of the Mandir. The old man was observing a vow of silence but his disciples demanded that the young Baba should touch the old Guru's stumps and seek his blessings. About thirty people waited expectantly for Baba's reaction. Swami's first move was to throw a towel at the old man so that he could cover himself! Easwaramma was shocked. A shudder of fear crept up her spine. What would this man's disciples do now? But Baba began to speak soft and low. "The vow of silence allows you to speak when it is most necessary", He told the Sanyasi. "And silence must prevail in the head and heart and mind, not on the tongue. When you have to be carried about in this way by men, however devout, the best you can do is always to remain still somewhere. Why place your burden on four others? I shall bear your burden. I will feed you, clothe you and provide you shelter wherever you may be. I have come for this, to give you guidance and take you to the goal!" To everybody's relief the disciples silently picked up the litter and bore their Guru, now wrapped up in his towel, back to Bukkapatnam and beyond.

Those that remained in the Mandir were lost in silence. Easwaramma, however, was versed in the folkways of rural India; she feared that the silent guru might revenge himself with a black formula aimed at Sathya and promptly vowed that she would perform a propitiatory rite in the Shiva Temple. Poor mother, swinging between courage and fear, yet experiencing glimpses of a strange joy when the veil over the unknowable was occasionally blown aside by the breeze of Baba's benediction.

Gradually, Easwaramma's visits to the Mandir became more frequent. She lingered in the hall longer and longer, gazing upon Swami; she sat watching with awe the expanding aura of His Love. Slowly but surely Easwaramma was freeing herself from the bonds of affection and slipping into the role of a devotee.

(May 6 is observed every year by Sai devotees all over the world as Easwaramma Day. —Ed.)

“Motherhood—A Gift of God”

An American devotee of Bhagavan Baba, describing the break-up of family life in the United States, laments bitterly on how divorce and the Women's Liberation Movement have brought about a destruction of harmony and peace in the home with disastrous effects on children. She writes: "Sri Sathya Sai Baba taught me the true role of a woman and gave me the reason to believe in myself even though society still places greater value on women who work in the market-place instead of the home."

society:

"Motherhood is the most precious gift of God. Mothers are the makers of a nation's fortune or misfortune, for they shape the sinews of its soul. Those sinews are toughened by two lessons they should teach: fear of sin and fondness for virtue. Both these are based on faith in God being the inner motivator of all. If you want to know how advanced a nation is, study the mothers. Are they free from fear and anxiety, are they full of love towards all, are they trained in fortitude and virtue? If you like to imbibe the glory of a culture, watch the mothers, rocking the cradles, feeding, fostering, teaching, and fondling the babies. As the mother, so the progress of the nation, as the mother, so the sweetness of the culture."

It is significant that the first educational institution set up by Bhagavan was the Women's College at Anantapur nearly quarter of a century ago. It was a historic landmark in the Sai educational movement.

Sai college for women

Describing the circumstances which led to the launching of the Women's College, Prof. Kasturi writes in "Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram" (Part III):

In June 1966, Baba was at Anantapur, the biggest town of the District and its official capital, 60 miles from Prasanthi Nilayam, at the invitation of the High School for Girls. The plight of the girls who had to go to distant places for higher education and also the kind of education for which they were spending much time and money affected Him. He resolved upon another step in His task of Dharmasthapana; for women have been the custodians of Dharma since millennia; the cradle is the first school for the children of man. He announced that there would be a Women's College at Anantapur soon. He resolved upon making Anantapur the focal point of the Educational Revolution that will consummate the Revival of Sanathana Dharma, for the lasting benefit of the human family.

The Women's College was inaugurated on the 22nd of July, 1968. Very few colleges are inaugurated under such distinguished auspices or with the promise of such triumphant careers for the alumni. Few have on the opening day itself such an imposing array of equipment, furniture, books and above all, a band of teachers with such enthusiasm and academic efficiency.

The Minister in charge of Education in the Government of Andhra Pradesh who presided over the public meeting said that, what was being inaugurated was not just one college among so many, but a New Chapter in the History of Women's Education itself. He knew that the College was to be the precursor of many more such colleges all over the country, for, Baba announced that He was planning a College or two in every State of India, all to be knit together later into a University, as an instrument forged for His Task.

Baba said, "The prompting behind this College is not to search for reputation or the desire to propagate a cult, or the hope of monetary profit. Fame is a fickle figment! Reputation rots quite soon. Profit, when it is calculated in terms of cash, defiles. I have allowed this College to rise because it will install in the minds of the student the ideals of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema-ideals delineated in the Vedas, described in the Shastras, illustrated in the Epics, practised by countless generations and confirmed by experience, as best suited for individual and social progress. Every child born in Bharat has the right to know and benefit by this precious heritage.

"Agriculture is for living: Atma-culture is for success in life. An education system that keeps children away from God—the only refuge, the only kinsman, the only guide and guard—is a system where the blind are engaged in blinding those who long for light.

"Women are the bulwarks of spiritual culture. But, as is evident from the attitude and behaviour of educated women today, they are fast succumbing to the flimsy attractions of froth and frippery, cheap and shoddy literature, and sensual films.

Five mothers for every child

"Every child has five mothers, and owes its loyalty to these five; they fill its life with meaning and purpose. The Deha-mata (the mother who gave birth to its body), the Go-mata (the cow that gives it milk and the bullock that is the partner in growing its food throughout life), the Bhoo-mata (land, that in return for seeds offers grain a hundred-fold), the Desa-mata (the region inhabited by the society it is born into that stamps on it its ways of living, lines of thinking and ideals and goals, and Veda-mata (the heritage of spiritual treasure). The first mother has to reveal to the child the glories of all the other four and so, her status is crucial, her responsibility is pivotal. That is the reason why I have resolved to start a Women's College in the first instance, in order to preserve and promote Dharma—the Universal Sanathana Dharma I have come to vitalise and lead to victory."

The Perennial Quest

*The Lord shines throughout the Cosmos
He is immanent in everything
The friendship between the Lord and
the Cosmos is inseparable
This is the truth declared by Sai.*

"Isaavaasyam idam Jagath" The Lord is the indweller in the entire World. "Jagat" refers to the world in which beings are born, grow and pass away. The basis for this world is the earth.

The wind blows ceaselessly everywhere. But this is not visible to man. We have day and night. During daytime all kinds of activities take place. When night comes, Nature seeks repose in silent sleep. Man has to find out the relationship between day and night, between light and darkness. When man looks up at the sky during day, he sees the sun shining with all his effulgence. In the boundless firmament, the sun alone shines.

In, this world, all the time, every moment some activity or other is going on: Meritorious actions and actions in the discharge of Purusharthas (the four goals of human life); marriages and festivities; births and deaths. All these take place all the time and life goes on in merriment or sorrow. There is no end to this.

From the moment of birth, man is pursued by hunger. After the umbilical cord is cut, the new-born babe cries. When milk or other food is given, the crying stops.

The human adventure

The first affliction for man is hunger. Man needs food grains for appeasing his hunger. Food grains can be got only through the use of water (for growing food).

As food production goes up, the population also increases. In this process of growth, agriculture develops and villages and cities come into existence. In this way, human life expands, the needs of people increase and men start enquiring into the problem of how to meet these needs. Mankind discovers in the process some secrets of Nature. It also recognises that there are many things beyond its ken. There is always an awareness that what is not known is far more than what is known. Man cannot create the earth. Nor can he create water. Fire emerges when two sticks are rubbed against each other, but man cannot inject the latent heat into the stick.

Examining in this manner, man realised that there is a power at work which cannot be seen by the eye or heard by the ear or conceived by the mind. That this power transcended the human was dimly inferred.

For every kind of power, proofs may be sought in direct perception (Pratyaksha) or by the process of inference (Anumana). Men sought to find out by what direct proof they could experience this transcendental power. They found the proof In the Sun. Without the Sun there will be no light at all. Nor is that all. All activities will come to a standstill. In this world for the growth of plants and of living beings hydrogen is essential. The Sun's primary components are hydrogen and helium. Without hydrogen and helium, the world cannot survive. Hence, the ancients concluded that the Sun was the visible proof (of a transcendental power.) They also found some subtle secrets about the Sun. Hence, they adored the Sun as the principal deity in the Gayatri mantra.

The Gayatri mantra

"Dheeyo yo nah prachodayaath." "May the Sun Illumine our intellects in the same way be sheds his effulgence." (This is the prayer addressed to the Sun is the Gayatri mantra). In this way, they came to regard the Gayatri mantra as "Veda Mata" (the Mother of the Vedas). This Gayatri mantra is not related to any particular time, place or person. "Bhur-Bhuvas-Suvah" (occurring in the Mantra) indicates that it relates to the three aspects of Time-the past, the present and the future. "Tat Savitur Varenyam, Bhargo Devasya Dheemahi, Dheeyo yo nah Prachodayaath." Light dispels darkness. Without light darkness will not go. "Bhargo devasya" signifies that the Sun is the dispeller of darkness. In this manner, the ancients believed that there was a supreme power and looked upon it as God.

In course of time, they started studying numbers: one, two, three, and so on upto ten. Among these numbers, the primary number is one and the others are derived from it by a process of addition. Thus they found that all numbers are based on One. They regarded one as the primary number.

The one and the many

"Ekam Sath Vipraah bahudhaa vadanthi." "The Ultimate Reality is One, but the wise call it by many names." (This is one of the declarations of the scriptures). The same truth was proclaimed by the Vedas in the statement: "Eko-ham bahusyaam." ("I am One, let me become many".) Without one, there cannot be other numbers. Through the study of numbers also, the ancients came to the conclusion that God is one only. Thus the faith developed among men that there was an invisible power in the universe and that it was One without a second. The One has assumed innumerable names and forms and permeates the entire universe.

On the basis of this truth, the ancients declared: "Isaavaasyam idam Jagath" ("The Divine is the indweller in the Cosmos".) The ancients gave the name "Aditya" to the Divine. "Aditya", as one of the 12 Adityas, was worshipped as Vishnu. Vishnu here does not mean the deity bearing a conch and discus. "Vishnu" refers to the One who permeates the entire Cosmos. For this omnipresent Principle, a form was conceived: "Vishnutwa" means that which is all pervading.

How was Aditya looked upon? You have vessels made of gold, silver, brass, copper and clay filled with water. In all of them the same reflection of the Sun is perceived. The vessels may be

may be kept, but the Sun's reflection will be one and the same. The ancients concluded that the contents may vary in value, form and name but the image is the same in all of them.

The one reality

Proceeding from this, they considered the body as a vessel made of mud. In this vessel made out of mud, they found that consciousness as Spirit ("Chinmaya") was present. This spiritual entity was called "Hiranyagarbha". Expanding his comprehension in this manner, man came gradually to realise that there was only One Reality and that was Divinity.

Another name given to this Divine entity was "Easwarah". That is, the Divine was regarded as the possessor of infinite and inexhaustible wealth. What is this wealth? Health is one kind of wealth. Material riches are one kind of wealth. Knowledge, virtues, wisdom, are all included in the term wealth ("Aishwaryam"). They realised the truth that Easwara is the embodiment of every kind of wealth.

Concept of Siva

Probing further into the mystery of the Divine; they described Him as "Sivah". "Siva" means the One who is free from the three gunas (Satwa, Rajas, Tamas). He transcends these three qualities. As one who is without qualities, He was also called "Shuddha-Satwah". "Siva" is that pure untainted Satwa quality. It represents the principle of Auspiciousness ("Mangala"). This means that only when the gunas are absent, suspiciousness appears. When qualities are present, it is inauspicious. Hence, Siva is the embodiment of Auspiciousness (Mangala-swaroopudu).

As their comprehension developed, they began to describe the Divine as "Sambhavah". "Sambhavah" means the One who can manifest Himself at any place, at any time, in any form, according to the requirements of the situation. This is borne out by the sloka in the Gita where Krishna says: "Whenever Dharma faces decline and Adharma rears its head, I manifest Myself." "For the protection of the good and the destruction of the wicked and establishment of Righteousness, I make my advent from age to age." Because He can manifest Himself whenever necessary, He is called "Sambhavah".

Thus, the ancients gave different names to the Divine after ascertaining the mysteries of the Divine. Another name given to the Supreme was "Isa".

It is essential to understand how the ancient sages sought to explore the innumerable facets of the Divine. The term "Isa" refers to the possession of the six forms of Aiswarya by the Divine. These are: wealth, riches, wisdom, fame, glory and non-attachment (vairagya).

God as "aprameya"

As man's comprehension of the attributes increased with the growth of the intellect, he described God as "Aprameyah"—One who is beyond any kind of proof and who is immeasurable. It may be possible to measure the vastness of the ocean or the boundless sky. But there is no measuring-rod by which God can be measured. God transcends the three kinds

word (Shabda). Hence he was called "Aprameyah". They concluded that this infinite and immeasurable Divine entity is all-pervading.

If such a Divine Principle did not exist, the cosmos will not exist. Whether man believes in it or not, this Divine power is present everywhere.

Many sages started performing penance to have direct experience of Divinity. They felt that realisation of God should be the primary goal of life. Some of them gave up the quest after many efforts, feeling that it was beyond their capacity to experience the Divine. Some of them, from the very start, came to the conclusion that the wide gulf between the human and the Divine ruled out the possibility of man realising the Divine. This is totally wrong. The human has come from the Divine. Krishna has emphatically declared in the Gita: "Mamaivaamso jiva loke jiva bhutas-sanaatanah". "The human being in the world of beings is a fragment of Myself." A son has to recognise his father. On this reasoning, some sages declared that whatever the odds and ordeals, man should not give up the quest for God.

Realisation by the sages

Ultimately; by the power of their penance the sages were able to realise the Divine, Not content with their own realisation, they proclaimed to the world their` great experience. They called' upon men to "Wake up! Stand up and stop not till the goal is reached!" They exhorted mankind: "Oh ye who are wallowing in ignorance, wake up! Wake up!" "Behold this divine effulgence. We have seen It." "Where did we see It? Inside or outside? We saw It everywhere." "Antarbahischa-tatsarvam vyaapya Narayanas-sthithah." "The Supreme Lord is present inside and outside, pervading the entire universe." How does He appear? "Vedaahametham Purusham Mahaantham Aadityavarnam Tamasah-parastaath." "We have known the Purusha the Supreme Lord, effulgent like the Sun, who is beyond the darkness (Tamas)". We cannot realise the Supreme unless we get rid of Tamas (the darkness of ignorance).

"Without giving up Tamas, how can you become Satwa? Unless you give up the Rajoguna you cannot acquire Bhakti. The Satwaguna is itself the Divine discipline (sadhana). Do not forget the Divine discipline (sadhana). Do not forget this good counsel." (poem)

Tamas and jnana

You must get rid of Tamas at the very outset. The body has not been given for indulging in eating, etc. Such a life is only animal existence. There is only one quality which transcends this Tamas. It is Discrimination. Without the removal of Tamas, this Divine Jnana will not come to man. When Tamas goes, Rajas remains. This Rajoguna fills a man with innumerable desires. So, this also has to be given up. Only then, the Satwic quality will emerge and then the effulgence of the Divine will be experienced.

Shraddha and bhakti

The mystery of the Veda is unfathomable. But it will become clear to those who have earnestness (Shraddha) and devotion (Bhakti). For a man who opens his eyes, the myriad stars

even if the most powerful light is placed near their eyes.

You have to open the eyes of Shraddha and Bhakti, not these physical eyes. When you have acquired the Eye of Wisdom, the light of the Divine will be visible to you everywhere.

Where is God? When the students sit for their meals, before taking food, they recite a mantra. But they make no effort to understand its meaning.

*"Brahmaarpanam Brahmahavih
Brahmaagnau Brahmanaahutham
Brahmaiva thena ganthavyam
Brahma Karma Samaadhinaa"*

This prayer is chanted and the food is offered to Brahma. Where is Brahman? The answer is given in the sloka

*"Aham vaisawaanaro Bhutvaa
Praaninaam deham Aasritah
Praanaapaana Samaayuktah
pachaamyannam Chaturvidham"*

"You simpleton! I am residing within you in the form of Vaishwanara. If I am not within you as the digestive fire, you will die from indigestion. The four kinds of food you eat are being digested by Me."

Appearance and reality

Thus, there is no room for any doubt for man (regarding Brahman). For the man with doubt there is none who can remove it. You can wake up a man who is asleep or who has just closed his eyes. But can anyone wake up the one who is pretending to be asleep?

There is nothing like sleep for God. If God sleeps, the whole universe will go to sleep. There is also nothing like a waking state for God. There can be waking state, only if one goes to sleep. When a person is never asleep what need is there to wake him up? Waking and sleeping are confined to man. These states are related to day and night. In reality, there is neither day nor night. Day and night are based on the motions of the earth around the sun and the daily life of man according to the region where he lives. Likewise, on the basis of the direction in which the Sun appears to rise and seems to set, East and West are described. The scientists are aware that these descriptions of the directions have no inherent reality. But in practical life they are recognising these directions. This is because in daily life, such conventional descriptions cannot be avoided. When one takes to the spiritual path, everything is alike and differences and distinctions cease. As long as you are in the phenomenal world, you have to observe the phenomenal appearances. Differences will remain as long as you think in terms of "I", "you" and "he". These three different entities have to be eliminated. That is the state of the Atma. One has

it can be realised. But man does not make this effort with earnestness and devotion.

Birth and death

Evolving from the animal, man developed the mind and in due course was able to invent whatever was necessary for his comforts. He discovered many things but could not discover the cause of birth and death. What is the secret of this phenomenon? "Jaatasya maranam dhruvam" ("Death is certain for one who is born"). But one does not know whether a dead person is born again. The ancient sages sought to unravel the mystery of birth, death and rebirth. They found that this secret is beyond the power of man. They realised that this was due to Divine will and not the result of human effort. If one wants to live, can he live as long as he wants? A man may think: "I am healthy and strong and I can live for ten more years." But he may die the same night in a car accident. Is health the cause of longevity? No. What, then, is the means of preventing death? Not our health. Nor our own abilities and devices. Nor all our various possessions. Not at all. The root cause of death is Divine Will.

The divine at work

Innumerable things are happening in the world without any effort on man's part. Is man doing anything for the functioning of his heart? What is he doing for his continuous respiration? Is he responsible for the circulation of blood in his body? These are not dependent on human effort. They are the result of Divine Will. Consequently, the sages concluded that there was nothing greater than the will of God. "Oh man, though human life is said to last for a hundred years, do not believe in it. Death may come in childhood, youth, middle age or old age. Death may overtake one in a village or forest or in a river. You have to realise God even while you are still alive. Do not concern yourself as to when death will happen, where and how. No one can alter what is destined by the will of the Divine." Hence the sages advised mankind to pray to God for His grace.

The life force

What is the locus of life (Prana) in man? The Veda declared: "Neelathoyatha madhyasthah vidyullekheva bhaaswarah". ("He shines like a lightning in the heart of a dark blue cloud.") Behind the back of a person, there is the spinal column with 33 vertebrae. Between the 9th and the 12th vertebra, there is the Sushumna Naadi, which shines like a lightning. People imagine that life resides in the heart. The heart is like the main switch. But life does not reside there. What happens to life when heart surgery is performed? When the heart is transplanted, it is like changing the main switch. But it is because of the vital force in the middle of the spinal column that life exists.

People today regard the ancient sages as ignoramuses, who knew nothing about science. But they knew more than the scientists of today. One of the greatest scientists in ancient times was Hiranyakasipu. He was the master of all the five elements (ether, air, water, fire and earth) and explored the depths of the ocean, all the regions of the earth and the farthest reaches of the sky. He probed the secrets of the atom. But with all this vast knowledge, he did not know his own reality.

Powers of the sages

It is meaningless to compare the knowledge of the ancient sages with that of modern scientists. How many sages performed arduous penances to acquire divine potencies. Today's doctors perform surgical operations. They acquire this skill after long training here and abroad and after many successes and failures. They use sophisticated instruments. But in ancient times, there was a highly skilled master of medicine and surgery, the sage Bharadwaja. He taught surgery to the world. He was the author of the science of "Ayurveda"—the Science of Life. People consider that Ayurvedic medicines do not yield quick results. People today have a craze for quick results. Quickness may operate both ways. Today antibiotics are used. A few drops of the medicine brings down the fever. But later fever goes up. There are also adverse reactions. In the treatment employed by the ancient sages as a result of their penances, there were no such reactions. Because of their penance, their vision transcended the barriers of distance. They could directly converse with the powers of Nature. Today crores are spent on telecommunications, radio and television. In those days there was no expense at all of this kind. When the mind was purified and divinised, they could acquire superhuman powers.

The ascent of man

Students! You have to enquire into how man through various stages developed his potentialities to higher levels. No one is a scholar or a man of knowledge at birth. It is only gradually that he acquires knowledge and skills. For getting degrees like B.A. or MBA, you go into so much trouble. What effort are you making to realise the Divine? Nothing at all. You must make this effort. There is nothing that cannot be achieved by determined efforts. You should not give up the effort out of a feeling of incapacity. The ancient sages persevered ceaselessly in their quest. They succeeded in their efforts after going through every kind of ordeal, braving heat and cold, gain and loss, joy and sorrow.

Today whatever endeavour people undertake, they want to have all comforts and conveniences. They do not relish any impediments. There is, however, no easy way to any worthwhile accomplishment. No one who wishes to accomplish something should seek the path of pleasure. You must be prepared for any sacrifice, offering everything to God. Only then you can acquire extraordinary powers. Whatever studies they pursued, whatever great knowledge they acquired, the ancient sages were never filled with conceit. Most scientists today get puffed up with pride after making some small discovery. A true man of knowledge should be free from pride. Students should give no room for conceit.

Divine grace vital

Humility is the hall-mark of knowledge. People boast about the achievements of science. But there is still a long way to go. For instance, out of the energy coming from the Sun we have been able to use only 2 out of 3000 parts. We are yet to make use of the rest of the vast solar energy. If by harnessing a minute fraction of solar energy, mankind can accomplish so much at present, how much more can we achieve for humanity if the entire energy can be utilised for the benefit of man?

ancient sages prayed to God to shower the rays of His grace on mankind. Even if a fragment of God's grace is secured, a great deal can be accomplished. But without Divine grace, nothing can be achieved.

Human effort is also essential. If it does not want to fly, even an eagle will not get off the ground. But an ant that wants to move along can cover miles in due course. Efforts are in human hands success or defeat rests with the Divine. So, when you rely on the Divine, success will be yours.

The quest for God

Dear students! The Vice-Chancellor today posed a big question. He wanted to know how God is to be realised, what is the sadhana to be pursued and so on. These are apparently big questions, but the answer can be given, in a trice. There is no need for any sadhana. Gajendra (the Lord of the elephants) carried on his fight with the crocodile (which held him by the leg) for many years, relying on his own physical prowess. When it proved unavailing, he surrendered to God and cried out to the Lord as his only saviour. Only then God came to his rescue.

Arjuna also on the battlefield came ultimately to realise that he had to take sole refuge in Krishna. He told the Lord: "I shall do your bidding" ("Karishye vachanam thava"). The Lord then assumed full responsibility for the outcome of the Great War.

It is only when everything is dedicated to God that our actions can be carried out smoothly and successfully. However, today's devotees and sadhakas do not resort to dedication. They tend to behave like shareholders in a company. They want to strike deals with the Lord, saying, "I shall do my work, you give me the benefits". They want to go into partnership with God. This won't work. You make your offering. God will see to the rest.

The spiritual atmosphere

The students have related their experiences at Kodaikanal when they were with Bhagavan. They said that when they were in the company, of Bhagavan, enjoyed His love, listened to Swami's discourses and were in the sacred atmosphere of Bhagavan's divinity, they felt exhilarated, their hearts were filled with pure and sacred thoughts and were suffused with divinity. But all this changes when they are away from Swami. What is the reason? It is because they allow the external unspiritual atmosphere to influence their spiritual qualities imbibed from their stay with Bhagavan. If you are able to spiritualise the atmosphere wherever you go, your spiritual nature will remain unaffected. Hence, you must always keep the company of the good and the godly. It is only when you remain with good people and perform good actions that your devotion will remain firm and unshaken. Verbal utterance of mantras or the ritual reciting of the Lord's name is not enough. Engage yourselves in godly activities. This was the lesson Hanuman taught to Vibhishana when he bemoaned before Hanuman that in spite of his constant chanting of Rama's name he had not been blessed with a vision of Rama. Hanuman then told Vibhishana that though he had been reciting Rama's name he had done no act of service to Rama such as

me Kam". ("Have Rama in your heart and do your duty with your hands").

The ancient sages functioned in this spirit. Their investigations were also made in this manner as an offering to the Divine. To sanctify your precious human birth, you must fill yourselves with sacred thoughts and embark on the quest for God.

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "*Govinda Krishna Jai! Gopala Krishna Jai!*")

—From Bhagavan's discourse at the Institute Auditorium at Brindavan; on 21-5-1991

BHAKTA VANI:

Face to Face With the Avatar

It was indeed a great joy for me to be asked to provide an account of my personal experiences of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the Avatar of this age.

For almost three years I had kept these beautiful and rich experiences to myself and a few of my close relations and friends until this moment when I had been, as it were, ordered to share these experiences for the benefit of others.

I must therefore assure all readers of this account that these experiences are absolutely true and authentic in every respect.

I am a teacher by profession and for the past ten years I have been a school administrator, the Assistant Headmaster of a very famous secondary school in Ghana—Achimota School.

I have done a lot of researches into school improvement strategies and when I found myself 'accidentally' attracted to the first ever African conference on SRI SATHYA SAI EDUCATION IN HUMAN VALUES AND SERVICE in August 1986 at the Imposing Kwame Nkrumah conference centre in Accra I realised that I had Indeed come to a most crucial and decisive aspect of my search. The entire programme touched my very 'bones' and had fundamental and positive transformation on me. I was a quiet observer throughout the three-day Historic Conference.

The lord's call

My invitation to visit Puttaparthi to participate in the International Sri Sathya Sai Education in Human Values Programme in Prasanthi Nilayam at the lotus feet of the Lord was therefore not a surprise to me because I had an inner feeling or intuition that I may visit Puttaparthi.

Historic Trip to Puttaparthi, the Lord manifested Himself to my wife in a dream thus: Suddenly the entire bed-room was filled with a blue light and then Swami appeared in His usual red robe and gave blessing to all the children gathered in the room. Perhaps this was to give an assurance that there was divine protection for all and that there was nothing to be feared in my absence.

We arrived at the beautiful gates of Prasanthi Nilayam at 12 midnight of Christmas day i.e., 26th December 1986, and therefore missed -the beautiful experience of the celebration of Christ's birthday by Swami. I was deeply touched by the beauty and serenity of this home of 'peace profound' on earth and indeed words are not enough to describe details of my experiences here. There were occasions when I went into the hills alone to enjoy the absolute silence that existed there.

It was during the afternoon darshan on the second day of our stay in Prasanthi Nilayam, when Swami looked into my face with a smile and gave a soft exclamation, "You are from Ghana!" I was very surprised that among several thousands of devotees of different extraction, the Lord should realise that I was a Ghanaian. This was a clear manifestation of the omniscience of the Avatar and indeed it was an introduction to greater manifestations that were in store for us within the next few moments.

I had the singular honour and grace to be invited to an interview with Swami together with my colleague from Ghana, Richard Attionu.

As we sat quietly on the veranda of the temple waiting in great anticipation of our interview, many thoughts quickly passed through my mind. I wondered quietly what all this drama was about after all. I had least expected to be suddenly invited to an interview with the Lord. About sixteen of us were invited by Swami into His special room.

As soon as we were admitted into the room we were ordered to sit separately, the ladies on His left hand side and the men on the right hand side.

A memorable interview

So many great and mind-boggling events followed one after the other during those few moments and I will only recount a few of them.

Initially Swami talked to us on Love. Then there followed two momentary materializations: a sparkling white japamala (rosary) and a ring whose effigy was changed from that of Shirdi Baba to that of Jesus by simply blowing a single breath on the ring! We all gave sighs of great surprise on seeing these wonderful manifestations of omnipotence by Swami but greater things were yet to follow that. In fact we all behaved like little children before the Lord. After a brief period of conversation between the devotees who gathered in the room, Swami then invited us in smaller groups into the inner chamber for a more intimate interaction. Suddenly it was the turn of Richie and I to have this special favour of talking to the Lord in strict privacy.

shoulders lovingly. I felt like a child before his father who had been separated from each other several years. Swami then spoke to each of us and I realised that He knew my innermost thoughts, my family circumstances and also the reason why I had come to Puttaparthi any way! I was so much touched by this experience of Swami's omniscience that I kept on rehearsing this experience every day ever since.

Those brief moments we talked together gave me the impression that Swami knew the problems of Ghana. He gave an assurance that all will be well with Ghana in due course; that was indeed a great message!

After our brief interview in, the inner chamber, I was so overwhelmed that I knelt down to touch the lotus feet of the Lord, when we returned to the group, to show my deference and humility. Again I had a most baffling experience when I touched the lotus feet! My left hand which made contact with the lotus feet was momentarily thrown away with an electric shock! It was like placing one's hand on a high-tension wire! At first I could not understand this experience and many thoughts passed through my mind of this aspect of my experience which I had kept to myself alone for a long time. Perhaps when I have the opportunity again to talk to Swami, I will ask for an explanation of this phenomenon.

After the interview, we all had to go back to join the other devotees sitting quietly in wonderment. I felt so light as if a great load had been lifted from my shoulders. Some devotees came to touch my hands and shoulders to have a share of the divine touch perhaps!

We went through the International Sathya Sai Education in Human Values workshop successfully; about forty three countries were represented.

At the end of it all, Swami charged us to spread the good news of the Human Values Programme without any fear, as He will direct everything.

EHV in Ghana

On our return to Ghana, we had held at least eight workshops to disseminate the message to all and sundry. This programme has been accepted in Ghana everywhere' we went, and I am sure that before the turn of the next century, SSEHV will, become part of all school programmes in this country and it will help in positive moral, social and spiritual upliftment of this nation and others.

Before I bring this article to a close, let me share another experience of the Lord with my readers: About a year ago, I was afflicted with a virulent skin condition, identified as 'Lichen Planus'. I tried several hospitals for medical attention but the condition seemed to be worsening each day.

identify. Meanwhile he made a prescription which I had to obtain from the U.K. I therefore sent a telex message to my brother to send the drugs.

While I waited in much pain and sleeplessness for several weeks my wife had a most remarkable dream one night. She kept on laughing during the dream. Because I was having insomnia owing to the pains I became aware of her soft laughter and I therefore shook her up gently to stop laughing.

When she suddenly woke up from the dream she was, in fact, annoyed with me for curtailing her great dream.

She accordingly narrated to me that Swami came to our bedside and placed his hand on my shoulders gently and said I should not worry myself, for I would get healed of the skin disease.

I believed this dream and had great faith in Him to heal me, as he has done to so many people, at the appropriate time. Since that day with great surprise I started seeing signs of improvement. Although the drugs I had ordered from Britain had arrived, I refused to take them. My skin condition improved day by day. This was indeed a great test of my faith in the healing powers of the Lord.

In conclusion, not a single day passes without my recalling these great experiences with Swami and they: have served as a rich source of inspiration to me in my life and my work and relationship with everyone.

—Anthony Y. Boafar, Ghana
(From 'Sathya Sai-the Eternal Charioteer',
Prasanthi Society, Hyderabad)

SUMMER SHOWERS IN BRINDAVAN:

Bhagavan's Call to Students

An inspiring call to young men and women to dedicate themselves to the service of the country and the world, in a spirit of selfless devotion, was given by Bhagavan Baba, Chancellor of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, in His inaugural message to the Summer Course in Indian Culture and Spirituality on May 20, in the magnificent auditorium of the Brindavan campus of the Institute.

This was the second year in which the Summer Course was being held in Brindavan since its revival last year after a break of ten years. The entire Brindavan campus had been tastefully decorated for the occasion and, with the face-lift it had received, wore a festive look. Indeed, the

girls, participated, in addition to the staff of the Institute and a galaxy of guest speakers and special invitees. For a fortnight, from May 20 to June 2, the atmosphere in the Brindavan campus was transformed into an ethereal realm vibrant with Bhagavan's divine discourses and the elevating addresses of numerous speakers.

The Summer Course was mainly intended for the students, especially for the 200 odd new entrants for whom it served as an inspiring orientation course preparing them for the unique spiritually based system in the Sathya Sai Institute.

The Summer Course was scheduled to start at 4-30 p.m. on the 20th. About an hour before the meeting a sharp shower helped to bring down the temperature.

It was cool and pleasant when Bhagavan Baba arrived, together with the Governor of Karnataka, Mr. Khurshed Alam Khan, at the Auditorium for the inauguration of the Summer Course. They were received by the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. S. Sampath, and led to the stage, preceded by a group of students chanting Vedic hymns. The auditorium was filled with the participating students and special invitees. A large gathering of devotees was present outside the Auditorium. Loudspeaker arrangements had been made to enable them to listen to Bhagavan's discourses and follow the proceedings.

The meeting began with a felicitous welcome address by the Vice-Chancellor, who described the uniqueness of the summer course as one in which the entire student body of the university met under one roof under the aegis of the Chancellor to receive the highest words of wisdom students anywhere could aspire for. No other university in the world had held such a concourse. He invited the Governor, as the Chief Guest, to inaugurate the course by lighting the lamps on the stage.

After the Vice-Chancellor's address, Ganesh, a student of the II year MBA course, spoke on the unique character of the Sathya Sai Institute as an institution which combined academic excellence with spiritual pursuits. It was the only university where the Chancellor freely mingled with the students and took personal interest in every one of them.

Governor's address

The Governor then lit the lamps and delivered his inaugural address. Declaring that it was a matter of great pleasure and privilege for him to be invited "to inaugurate a new academic session in this spiritual environment", the Governor said:

"I am really very happy to note that this summer school is unique to the Sai system of education in all respects. The students both boys and girls of the campuses and the teachers gather to receive the benefit of Sri Sathya Sai's divine discourses, delivered every day, and also lectures by great speakers who are scholars in their chosen fields.

indiscipline and malpractices. We are now passing through a period of great stress and strain-communal, cultural, economic, political and social. Let therefore a message of tranquillity and goodwill go out from here, which I am sure will have a very sobering effect and will help restore normalcy, peace, progress and the much-needed mutual goodwill.

Need for unity and dedication

"We can never forget that we belong to one country and the future of our country depends on our unity and dedicated work. Let us resist all separatist urges and help the nation to gain self-identity and self-confidence.

"Our youth are our greatest assets and they are our future hope. We look to them for achieving what we failed to achieve but they should be prepared for `Agni Pariksha', as life is not likely to be a bed of roses. We have to keep politics out of religion and religion out of politics. This sound principle has to be translated into basic policy and implemented in letter and spirit and then we shall achieve the difficult and elusive national integration."

Quoting Dr. Zakir Hussain's statement, that "Education is a process that never ends and, in its essence, it is always self-education", the Governor concluded with an exhortation to the students to go "with courage and humility on the road that leads from individuality through character to personality."

Bhagavan's discourse

Bhagavan Baba then delivered His discourse. In the course of His address, Bhagavan said:

This is the age of science and technology. On the one side astonishing progress has been made in the fields of plastics, electronics and computers. Scientists have also made wonderful discoveries in the spheres of atomic energy and space exploration. Moreover man is sending out into space artificial satellites. Enormous energy and expenses are being devoted to investigating the mysteries of the atom. But there is no comparable concern for developing human behaviour. In the competition for over-reaching each other, men are immersed in selfishness and are pursuing wrong courses. Politics and economics are bedevilled by crises. Men are riven by caste and religious conflicts. The appetite for power and position has become insatiable. These are causing the disintegration of the sacred land of Bharat. Indiscipline is rampant in the student world.

"Scientific advance sans human values"

What is the reason for the divergence between scientific progress on the one side and the social and moral decline of man on the other? What the world needs today is a large number of pure-hearted boys and girls, who are utterly selfless and are prepared to offer their lives in the service of the nation. Unfortunately, men today are lost in the pursuit of fleeting sensuous pleasures and material possessions. Has this any meaning?

secret of his approaching Samarth Ramadas as a suppliant? Similarly, King Janaka had all the wealth he needed. Why did he resort to the Sage Yagnavalkya? The reason is that from ancient times it was the practice of the kings to seek the advice and guidance of sages who were the repositories of spiritual wisdom. Thereby they secured peace of mind and security for their kingdoms. They realised that man can get enduring peace and happiness only by spiritual realisation and not by any other means.

Students should strive to awaken in the people a recognition of their inherent divinity the loss of which accounts for the degradation of humanity today. Students should develop social consciousness. It is not enough to acquire academic knowledge and technical skills, which are all that present-day education is concerned with. If there is no love of God, fear of sin, and practice of social ethics, how can there be peace in the world? Scientists and political leaders are teaching all kinds of things to the youth. But of what use are these teachings? Slogans on the walls, lectures on the platform and pontifications in the press are not what the students need. They need the example of leaders who stand up for integrity and morality.

Live for ideals

All things in the world are perishable. Mortality is the inescapable destiny of every man. But the ideals for which men live and for which they are prepared to give up their lives last for ever. Hence every student should have great ideals and try to live upto them. That is the secret of immortality. By their exemplary lives, they should transform the world. This was the role of Bharat in ancient times.

Students should realise their great responsibility to the nation. They must eschew selfishness altogether. Men today are immersed in selfishness, which is the cause of many other evils in society. Every thought, every action is prompted by self-interest. Desires multiply and peace of mind is lost. Man should be rescued from this deplorable state.

Mankind's problems today cannot be solved by science and technology alone. Only a transformation in the character of man can serve to solve the present crisis. Men should strive to become human and progress towards the Divine.

Education which does not serve to develop character and foster virtues is of no use. Science and technology are undoubtedly necessary. But they should be utilised properly. Scientists are trying to discover everything about the external world. But they make no attempt to understand the truth about themselves. They have not learnt to control their senses. This was the lesson which Prahlada taught to his father, who was a master of the elements and wielded immense power. Prahlada told Hiranyakasipu "You have conquered all the worlds, but have no control over your senses."

In the educational process today, it is essential to inculcate among students the need to control the senses. It is absence of self-control that is at the root of all the violence and conflict in society today.

Self-control implies control over desires. I have often impressed on students the importance of setting limits on desires. "Naasreyo niyamam vinaa" is an ancient saying. "Nothing ennobling can be realised without observing restraint." There is a need to acquire wealth for living. But excessive wealth is harmful. What men have to aim at is not wealth (sampada) but right conduct (samskara). Life is governed by restraints at every stage. The eye cannot tolerate the glare of blazing lights. The body cannot bear a rise in temperature. Anything in excess is a cause of trouble.

Students should seek to follow great ideals and serve as examples to the world. They should make use of their knowledge for the service of the motherland instead of going abroad to earn high incomes. Indian culture has esteemed the mother and the motherland as greater than heaven itself. Loving service to parents, reverence towards elders and respectful behaviour towards everyone are the marks of Indian culture. Students of the Sai Institute should exemplify these traits in their conduct wherever they may be.

(Swami related the story of Premchand's two sons, the elder of whom was always respectful in his behaviour and became in due course a judge, while the younger son, who was lackadaisical in his conduct towards the parents, ended up in a clerical job.)

Swami concluded His discourse with the bhajan "*Prema Muditha Manase Kaho!*"

Human Values in the Age of Science

While the main accent of the Summer Course was on Indian Culture and Spirituality, the underlying theme of this year's series of lectures was the relevance of human values in the age of science and technology. There were some excellent presentations on this theme by the guest-speakers. The general consensus was that scientific and technological progress, without adherence to moral and spiritual values, would be productive only of social conflict and chaos and degradation of the human personality. All of them were agreed that Bhagavan Baba's advent was the most redeeming feature in an otherwise dismal scene. Bhagavan's system of spiritual education and His mission of raising the human consciousness to the level of the Divine were the greatest transforming forces operating in the world today.

Bhagavan's discourses

Bhagavan's discourses in the evening were illuminating expositions of man's quest for God from the earliest times to the great period of the Sages and Rishis who explored the mystery of creation and experienced the Creator behind the creation. Swami conveyed in extremely simple

Upanishad. Swami related the profound revelations of the Upanishads to the problems of daily life and impressed on the students the duty to practise at least a fraction of what they learnt at the Summer Course.

That a great deal of the message of the course had gone home to the bulk of the students was clear from their performance in the examination held on June 1st. All the students showed in their answers how earnestly they had listened to the lectures and Swami's discourses and how far they had imbibed the message contained in them.

There were 22 guest-speakers, drawn from different walks of life, including retired Army Officers (Lt. Gen. Chibber and Maj. Gen. Mahadevan), judges (Mrs. Justice Padma Kasthagir and Mr. Justice Eradi), Vice-Chancellors (Dr. K. Hanumanthappa, Dr. (Mrs.) Selvie Dass and Prof. S.V. Chittibabu), eminent scientists (Dr. G. Venkataraman, Dr. N. S. Lakshmana Rao, Mr. N. Vittal, Dr. G. V. Subba Rao and Dr. S. Chakrabarty), leaders from the business world (Mr. V. Srinivasan, Mr. A. N. Haksar and Mr. U. R. Padmanabhan), eminent educationists (Profs. Dharani Sinha and V.B. Kaujalgi), Mr. K. R. Prasad, Advocate, and Dr. Fanibanda (Dentist). The Institute faculty was represented by Prof. Hemalatha, Prof. Anil Kumar, Dr. Jayalakshmi Gopinath and Dr. Zeba Bashiruddin.

An important aspect of the Summer Course was the participation of teachers and students in the programme. Bhagavan gave opportunities to them to speak at the afternoon sessions on their personal experiences after coming to Bhagavan. The following were the teachers who spoke at the course: Dr. Jaganmohan Rao, Dr. (Miss) Poornasri Devi, Sri Sandeepan Chatterji, Miss K.P. Saileela, Dr. T. Ravi Kumar, Dr. (Miss) Kiran Bala, Sri Ruchir Desai, Dr. Sonam Gyantse, and Sri Sanjay Sahani. The student speakers at the course were B. Ganesh, Dileep Chaudary, Gunaranjan, Vijay Krishna, K. Sai Ram, S. V. Guru Prasad, Vijaya Sai, Kumar Ramachandran, Indreshwar Singh Sirohi, M. Sainath and Ravi Mariwala.

Every day two students presented summaries of the lectures delivered in the morning session. These summaries were so well done that many who could not attend the lectures in the morning felt that what they had missed had been amply made good by the condensed versions.

Valedictory meeting

The Summer Course concluded on June 2nd, when Bhagavan conferred His benediction on the participating students and on all those who had taken part to the course in one capacity or another.

Requesting the revered Chancellor to deliver the Valedictory Address, the Vice-Chancellor described Bhagavan Baba as: the greatest Spiritual Orchestra-Conductor of the Universe and pointed out that, on each day of the Summer Course, Swami turned the kaleidoscope to present to the participants a new pattern in which the great gems of wisdom drawn from the Upanishads were made to shed light. Prof. Sampath went on to say that Swami performs many miracles—some of these were witnessed during the Summer Course, but the great miracle was Baba

after day, over a fortnight.

Swami had observed that there is a symbiotic relationship between Indian Culture and Spirituality, the former being the spring-board from which we may reach out for the acquisition of Divinity in our hearts. Prof. Sampath stated that Swami had graciously responded to their prayer and made the central theme of this year's Divine discourses the ways and means by which man refines his qualities, purifies his heart and advances to a vision of the Reality and experiences the Bliss that passeth understanding. He added that the true spirit of religion cannot be grasped unless 'Seeking' is placed in the forefront. This Seeking is the chief motivating force in the Sai System of Education and the Summer Course admirably served to instil this spirit in the minds of all concerned.

The Vice-Chancellor thanked the guest-speakers and the Faculty-members and students of the University for their most valuable individual contributions to the proceedings of the Course. The whole programme was conducted in an atmosphere of service, love and devotion. Prof. Sampath mentioned that the performance of the students was outstanding and reflected great credit on the quality of the training being imparted to them.

With Swami's permission, Prof. Sampath placed at His Lotus Feet a proposal for the founding, by Bhagavan's Grace and within the Sri Sathya Sai Education System, of a Centre dedicated to the promotion of Spiritual Learning. This, he said, could be located in a serene place like Muddanahalli and used to train devoted scholars, who, on completion of their training, will go out into the world and serve as enlightened messengers, disseminating knowledge and promoting understanding of the Sai Vision, Philosophy and Adhyatmic way of life.

Prof. Anil Kumar, Principal of the Brindavan campus, observed that Indian education was passing through a "summer of discontent" and the Summer Course was a "course of treatment" for the students.

Bhagavan Baba, in His valedictory address, dwelt at length on the duties of students and called upon them to make use of the lectures and discourses at the Summer Course for reforming themselves for service to the motherland. (Fuller versions of Bhagavan's discourses from May 23 to June 2 will be published in subsequent issues of "Sanathana Sarathi".)

Bhagavan blessed the prasadam which was distributed to all the participants and devotees present.

Cultural programme

By way of diversion from the exacting programme of lectures, cultural programmes had been arranged on five evenings, which combined entertainment with edification. On one evening, students of the Institute presented "Sai Katha" in songs, to the accompaniment of the Institute's orchestra. On two other evenings, Bal Vikas children from Bangalore and Madras presented delightful dance dramas. The Bangalore children in their ballet conveyed the message

(greed), Moha (delusion), Mada (pride) and Matsarya (jealousy). The Tamil Nadu ballet depicted the avatars of Vishnu, starting from the Matsya Avatar and ending with the Shirdi Sai and Sathya Sai avatars. The children acquitted themselves well. An interesting performance on the saxophone was given by Kadiri Gopinath, from Madras, accompanied on the mridangam by T. V. Gopalakrishnan. The manner in which Gopinath rendered well known kritis of Thyagaraja like "Endaro Mahaanubhaavulu" and "Nagumomu ganaleni", showed his perfect mastery over the saxophone, which does not lend itself easily for the handling of Karnatic music. Students of the Institute provided an interesting programme of songs in Hindi, Telugu and Tamil in praise of Bhagavan.

Quiz programme

A lively quiz programme was conducted in the presence of Bhagavan on the evening of 2nd June, based on the theme "Sri Sathya Sai's Life and Teachings". Sri Ruchir Desai, a Faculty-member of the Brindavan campus, organised the programme in which four teams of student members from the XII Standard of the Higher Secondary School in Prasanthi Nilayam and college students from the Brindavan and Prasanthi Nilayam campuses participated.

Numerous slides were projected relating to selected episodes from Bhagavan's life, His visits to places of historical and spiritual importance and examples of materialisation of various objects by Bhagavan. Sound recordings were played from Bhagavan's divine discourses and songs. There were quick-fire question sessions, 8 in 20 seconds, addressed to each team. All the teams exhibited good understanding of the questions posed. Occasionally, the Quiz-Master turned to the audience for an answer. He himself provided some answers. At the end of each question, he provided to the audience a complete, authentic answer.

Altogether, the Summer Course was a memorable, edifying and enjoyable experience for the thousand odd students, while it was a blissful occasion for many devotees to have darshan of Bhagavan and listen to His nectarine discourses. Not the least enjoyable part of these discourses were the bhajans with which Bhagavan concluded them. The entire gathering joined in the bhajans with spontaneous fervour.

WITH BHAGAVAN IN THE MOUNTAINS:

Bliss at Kodai

Smiling rose the radiant Sun,
Above the trees, for Sai Darshan,
And offered pranams to His Crown,
In His golden morning gown.

Sai in Kodai! What Beauty and Bliss!

O seekers of Truth, Awake! Awake!
Miss not Sai's Glory at Kodai Lake.

What artistry to glorify
The sacred hands of Sathya Sai!
How heartily the elements five
Combine to make Kodai alive!

Kodaikanal's a mountainous place,
Unspoilt as yet by the human race;
Though a little village in size
She's the Nature Lover's Paradise.

Her crown jewels, the Lake and Hills,
Every heart with wonder fills;
Here Beauty and Peace jointly reign
Over a Kingdom, they still retain.

See the happy and contented faces
of Peace-lovers In all places;
Worry, want, hustle and hurry
Traitors to Peace, hasten to flee.

And at the foot of Sunset Hill,
"Sai Shruti" stands by God's Will;
It's on the margin of the lake
Enhancing its beauty in its wake.

For Darshan of Sathya Sai,
The lake on the mountain high
Lured the Lord's Loving Glance,
With her shimmering ripple dance.

She hand-picked from her large estate
And arranged near Sai Shruti Gate,
Fresh blooms of lilac lotus sweet,
As offerings at the Lotus Feet.

And every lilac lotus bloom
That found near Sai Shruti a room,
Danced with joy, so eager to seize,
Sai Darshan in the morning breeze.

Round the clock had kept awake,
In wind or rain or cold or heat,
For darshan of the Lotus Feet!

Sai gazed from the verandah high,
At the tree-fringed lake and the eastern sky,
Smiling in blissful admiration,
At the wonders of His Creation.

O see with the Inner Eye,
Projections of Sathya Sai;
He is Ananda! He is One!
With the lake, trees, hills and Sun.

Ambassadors of Mother Ocean,
In dark grey robes *of* devotion,
Showered down their offerings prime,
Almost daily at darshan time.

Did they not punctually come
Determined to do Abhishekam!
Every drop that fell on Sai
Was an offering ranking high.

Dear Director of Divine Plays,
Your Discourses for fifteen days
Gave us the Vedas' quintessence,
For blossoming human excellence.

O Fountain of Knowledge Divine,
How You enrich the human shrine
With gems of wisdom sublime,
From the beginning of time.

You took us on journeys, far and deep,
Reviving ages fast asleep;
See Rama, Krishna, Shirdi Alive;
For Sathya Sai, they all survive.

—*Chandrabhan Singh, South Africa*

What is Life?

O, tell me what is life,
Is it really a sharp knife?

Cutting us each day and each night,
Till comes death, the last bite.

For some life is a tasteless clay,
And for a child, it's only a play.

Many people are always in a hurry,
To declare that life is only a worry.

For some it's poison, for others wine,
Which cup is yours? And which one is mine?

If only you take it with a smile,
For sure you will proceed mile after mile.

No one can define a thing so strange,
That knows no halt, a constant change.

I see life is scattered here and there,
Alas I most of it is a drop of tear.

Stop friends here: Think again,
What is life? Pleasure or pain?

Whatever it is, it is to be faced,
Life is to be lived in any case.

—**Kumari Ritu Joshi, B.Sc., III**
Sathya Sai College for Women, Bhopal.

Fill the reservoir with water; when you turn the taps, the buckets will be full. Cultivate Love and Devotion; then your activities will be saturated with compassion and charity: they will yield the golden harvest of Joy and Peace. The water must be pure, the Love must be unselfish and universal. You can yourself judge whether your Love is narrow or broad, whether your Devotion is shallow or deep. Are you content with your achievement? Examine it yourself—pronounce the verdict on yourself, by your own discrimination. Purity of motive is the

From the Art of Healing to the Heart of Healing

God created man—and his body—in a perfect manner. How else could HE have done it? This is what Swami tells us: We are perfect. Only our daily experience shows how ill we are mentally, emotionally, physically.

Swami says that the mind became "polluted" in that it began to cling to the information the senses sent it. It stopped to enjoy all of this information. So, over many lifetimes and over centuries man accumulated a burden which grew and grew. Finally it was so big that his true friend and companion, the body, had to act. First of all, as our servant, the body told man: let go of this burden, drop it!

How does the body speak to our mind? It is through the more or less small inconveniences the body shows each minute. If there is a pain in the neck, it tells of some hidden problem I don't let go or don't want to look at. If the stomach hurts, it says: You have swallowed something bad; get rid of it!

So the body helps the consciousness to see where we cling too much, since we are blind with regard to our problems. We quite often are not able to see them properly.

Body language

Over centuries man forgot to listen to his body and he also forgot how to free himself of such hidden problems. An example: It may be that I hate my father but that I don't want to look at this problem, because, it seems too difficult for me to heal my relationship with my father. I start to hide this problem. This hidden problem may bring the body to cause pain in my right leg since this is the part of the body which also shows the relationship to the father. If I still don't listen, I may fall badly and break the right leg's bone. This is a more serious speech of the body. If this still doesn't help me to look at my problem with the father, the body might produce such an illness that the right leg may have to be cut off. So my problem with my father would then remain with me to be solved may be in another lifetime.

This example shows how body language works. Of course if I were able to heal my relationship with my father and let go of my hate, the body would stop to behave in such an ill manner and would not cause any problems in the right leg any more.

In my experience, all illnesses finally can be traced back to stored emotional problems of a more or less heavy order. These problems are the result of the mind's pollution through the sense organs. The mind clings to what these organs have informed it about instead of taking it as information only. But how does this happen in day-to-day life? Think of a three-year-old boy wandering around in Prasanthi Nilayam with his mother. They come to the ice cream stand. "Mom, I want a mango stick." "No, my dear," is her answer. "I want a mango stick!" "No." "I really want a mango stick!" "No.!!" Finally the boy is angry with his mother for not having given in to his demand. At the age of three the child is not able to understand this situation properly. His only possibility is to store this emotion of anger to be looked at later, when he is grown up and the consciousness is more developed. He will then understand the situation from a wider outlook and forgive his mother for having been strict towards him.

The emotional body

What I mean is that all experiences the mind is polluted by are stored as emotions within our emotional body. Those stored emotions create illnesses, if their energy has become big enough. We may call the sum of all those stored emotions Karma. When we die we leave the gross body behind but the emotional body travels with us through the ages.

It may be that even a small child shows hidden emotions of past lifetimes in illnesses. A part of these emotions is burnt through these illnesses. But our job as human beings is to understand the inner meaning of all this and to finally reach, a state of consciousness where we understand that suffering has been created by us through clinging to emotions. But emotions are not bad as such. They are only another sense organ which wants to tell us about the quality of our relationship to the world. Is something or somebody harmful or harmless to us, do they help me to live better or do they hinder my life?

There are three big groups of experiences which have caused stored emotions. Two of them are Childhood and past lifetimes. The third group is during one's adult life. With regard to the first two groups one cannot help but be subject to them. The third group gives one a choice. If I will, I can ask emotions to give proper information and then I can let them go. If I am stupid, I will hold on to them and store them. This will pollute my mind, increase my suffering and stir up feelings against all and everything. Of course, there is a way out. There is a way of understanding the background, the pollution of the mind. This helps me to reorient my life so that I can more easily let go of emotions when they arise. Swami tells us to orient the mind's eye towards God and not to the world. This means I must reduce the importance I give to the world and to increase the importance I give to God instead. If I do so I will more easily let go of emotions since I don't believe any longer that the quality of my life depends on holding fast unto them. If this is done, I will be able to work on the first and second group of emotions more easily.

The heart of healing

The above shows that illnesses are caused by stored emotions—quite often very complex ones. So to help the body to show the hidden causes is good and to help the consciousness to let

quite often nothing else but forbidding the body to show the stored emotions any more. A few pills here and there don't allow the body any more to live out what is hidden. This forces one to switch over to more serious illnesses, which explains why people over the years develop more chronic diseases.

What Bhagavan does

But how does Swami, who is at the heart of healing, function in day-to-day practice?

First of all, He triggers stored emotions to come up to be manifested again. So people start to quarrel with each other, get stomach problems or other ill feelings. Second, He serves as the ideal projection screen so that my stored emotions can be seen "on" Him. If it seems as if he behaves in an angry manner, it's my anger that is shown. Third, He provides me with every possibility to let the emotions go. Out of a pure act of grace, He may take the stored emotions from me. He transforms them and I am free of them. He has consumed a part or all of my Karma and I and my body are cured.

If I go one step towards God, He comes ten steps towards me. What Swami does in His ten steps, I've stated in a few all too simple words. What are my tasks in my one step in the big healing process?

Reforming the mind

The main task is to give my mind a new focus. All of Swami's speeches aim at helping us to reform the mind. It is sufficient if we consider that our daily life may be seen from a different angle, e.g., that the only important thing in life is our relationship to God. If I start with this idea, I will slowly and gradually experience that to let go of stored emotions helps me to be happy.

My second task is to understand that all stored emotions, be they good or bad ones, want to tell me something about life, the world, myself. They want to help me understand, so that I can learn how all of them fit together. I started years ago to ask my emotions what they want to tell me. They answer, it works fine. Try it! But be aware: they will always tell the truth, whether you like it or not.

My third task is to let go of the emotions. For years it was my biggest question as to how to do it? Then I refound a simple method of high efficiency— of course, it's not new nor is it my invention—forgiveness. Emotions are created out of the relationship between me and somebody, something, some event, etc. *So* emotions have two parents, one on each side of the relationship. If I want to let emotions go, I have to loosen them on the other side, but I also have to loosen them on my side. This leads to two sentences, which should be said *ALOUD*. *I forgive you* (name of person or thing etc) *for all you have done unto me*. *And I forgive myself for all that I have done unto you...* (person etc.)

forgiveness works on its side. This is Swami's mystery and miracle. But it does work fine, I assure you.

Seeking God's forgiveness

Five years ago I was in Prasanthi Nilayam during Mahasivaratri day. The weeks before I was suffering heavy pains in my right leg (ischias). This was a pain which I have had since I was a boy, but only during the wet and cool weather. Now it was bone dry and hot! So I finally decided to apply my knowledge of body language to this pain. The message which the body language told me was: You hate God! I asked, "why?" since I thought I had adopted God as Love years ago. My body told me: "You hate God because your old stored emotions tell you, God is a God of revenge".

I was sitting in Poornachandra Hall, hearing Swami deliver his Mahasivaratri speech, and projecting the idea of a God of revenge on him! So I started to seek his forgiveness for having projected that idea of God unto him. I did that for about 20 minutes. The pain was gone. Until today I am free of ischiatic pain in the legs through Swami's grace.

—Dr. Helge Russ, Germany

Love makes us Human

As I walk on my daily rounds,
Of mechanical chores,

My mind wanders to the far reaches of thought.
The thought of birth, life and death
And the utter rigmarole, of existence.
The pendulum swings from one end to the other,
Taking in its full sweep—
All heart-aches, joys and fervour.

To what end—what end?
All this hustle and bustle,
Rushing, weeping, rejoicing—
Oh I to what end?
Cries the strife-ridden heart.

And the evening gathers—
The long shadows—
Into the dark sky sparsely pricked with silver,
Houses lit bright with homely hearth

And then dawns—
The meaning, the end,
Of the so-called petty existence.

Love reigns supreme over all
It's love, heart melting love,
Which makes us more human of all.

—*Dr. Raini Pandey*,
Asst. Prof. of English, Bhopal

All things are One

Beneath the canopy of heaven naught
Is greater than a lowly blade of grass
Or smaller than a lofty mountain wrought
By nature's power as aeons slowly pass.
Emerging from the one creative fire,
No man is older than his infant son
Or younger than his venerable sire
Already ancient when the world began.
Are not the universe and I the same?
Together we arose from darkest night,

From chaos sprang and into being came,
When first there fell the rays of morning light.
If each to each is bound in unity
Then I am One with all reality.

—*W. Hunter Mackintosh*
(From Sathya Sai Baba Quarterly Magazine, U K.)

WELL DONE!

All the 130 candidates, boys and girls, who appeared this year for the 12th standard public examination, from the Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, Prasanthi Nilayam, passed in the I Class, with many of them scoring high percentage in the total. Ten of the students got cent

performance in the Central Board's examinations. In addition to excellence in scholastic studies, the children maintain a high degree of discipline and good behaviour and are proficient in the recitation of Vedic hymns like Purushasukta and slokas from the Bhagavad Gita. The students constitute an international community in miniature, with pupils drawn from all over India and several foreign countries including Indonesia, U.K., Mexico and Italy.

Experiencing the Divine

Sweetness flows from Sathya Sai Baba. It is a full and steady stream from which all weary wayfarers may drink freely to quench their thirsting hearts. "Love all and serve all", He says. Love all and serve all He does.

I arrived at Prasanthi Nilayam (Baba's Ashram) rather reluctantly. The first time I heard His name spoken was from the lips of some who were greatly impressed with His manifestation of objects. I am not interested in such things. What I sought was to be found only in the realm where the mind could not venture. It could be secured only by an undefeated will which allows nothing to disturb it-not the influence of what others may say or do, or what the world has to offer. Often I would seemingly find myself at odds with the world and people of brief authority. In the end, however, Baba's will was not to be denied.

He patiently drew me to Him. I wanted to go to India to be with the Form. I wanted to feel Him constantly in my heart. Too often we miss the greatest treasure of finding Swami in each and every moment of our day when we feel that we can find Him only in India in the physical form. He is with us, always. When we look for Him, we find him. And He often pops up unexpectedly. By His grace, however, I have travelled to India to have His blessings. I always go without expectation of reward or seeking an interview. I go just to be there.

There are always so many people at Prasanthi Nilayam that I try to go inside the Mandir, only for Omkar. One morning I was among the earliest to arrive. The Seva Dal ladies were still sleeping in the doorways to the Mandir. I quietly settled next to the wall and drew my shawl close around me. It was peaceful, for, the day was not born. The stillness was broken by the arrival of others and the awakening of the Seva Dal ladies. Lines began to form outside the wall. I walked past row after row of silent ladies and joined a new row which was forming. Many ladies were ahead of mine, and I doubted whether there was any chance for our line to go inside at all. I silently prayed:

If you want me inside, Swami, I will be inside. If you want me outside, I will be outside. Either way I accept.

One by one the rows stood and hurried through the doorway of the temple. A lady who sat three or four places ahead of me, in the line to my left, suddenly turned and asked me: "Do you

fortunate to be called, quickly change places with me."

She signalled the Seva Dal lady in the front and told her that we would be exchanging places. Her row was called. I stood up, but the Seva Dal lady at the back of the lines, who was not in on the plan, quickly hurried forward to grab my arm and pull me back into place. "You can't go," she said. "Get back into line." The Seva Dal lady at the front came to my rescue and I found myself walking quickly towards the Mandir. I was one of the last to enter. My regret has always been that, in the confusion of the moment, I was unable to thank the lady who so kindly gave up her place. At the same time, I am sure that she gained more from her selfless action than I could ever express. However, the experience has remained most vividly in my mind. Back home in Albuquerque, New Mexico State, U.S.A., I resumed attending the Bhagavad Gita classes.

Study of the Gita

The Gita is to be treated as a many faceted jewel and whatever facet one saw will be his or her field of play. Others should respect that. At the same time, one should attempt to see other facets and not become stuck.

The primary relationship, was to be between the individual and Swami, be it friend, father, guru, Avatar, or one, which was just budding and was not yet formed. The group should facilitate that and not interfere with the private relationship.

Attendance at the Gita classes was optional. But I felt that this was to be Swami's class, and I wanted to be there. It is not a pastime, but a dedication of two hours or so every Friday night to open our hearts to Him. He is always there, so how could I not be always there? He is never late, so how could I be late?

If one surrenders completely to Him nothing stands in the way. But when one has not made a firm commitment, all manner of circumstances intervene-family, friends, all kinds of things which become excuses not to attend. But that is the way, with all of life. There must be conviction, dedication and commitment. If I did not feel this way, I could have found numerous reasons not to attend the class.

For the most part, our study has been orderly. Only occasionally did it seem to get off track or out of control. But there were reasons to be learned in those times too. People who were disruptive were quietly removed without action on our part, and others for whom the Gita class was a pastime drifted slowly away. In time we found ourselves with a stable, loving group dedicated to studying Gita. But most of all, we learn from Swami. He inspires each of us according to our need.

Swami's humour in reminding us that He is watching came recently when a friend brought from India several copies of the photograph of Baba's eyes. I gave everyone a copy prior to class and we remarked about how powerful Swami's eyes are. The beginning sloka that evening was:

With hands and feet everywhere, with eyes, heads and mouths everywhere, with ears everywhere, He exists in the world, enveloping all.

(Bhagavad Gita XIII 14)

We have no doubt that Swami not only knows all, but is All.

—**Mary M Wilson, U.S.A.**

*(From "Sathya Sai - the Eternal Charioteer",
published by Prasanthi Society, Hyderabad.)*

Three in One

"The Lord of the Universe permeates the Cosmos like the thread running through a necklace of gems, although He is not visible in the universe and shines in it as the invisible Atmic Consciousness."

Embodiments of Divine Love!

"Sarvam khalu idam Brahma" "Verily, all that is, is Brahman." This is the quintessence of the Upanishads. The truth about the vast universe of moving and motionless objects is contained in this single pronouncement. There is nothing in the Cosmos sans Brahman. Divinity is latent in everything like fire in wood and oil in sesame.

Hence there is nothing in the world that is not permeated by the Divine. The processes of creation, survival and dissolution occur according to the injunctions of the Divine. Whether man believes in it or not, this wheel of creation is revolving according to the dictates of the Divine. God is the author of the Wheel of Time. Man, however, is forgetting how this Time should be employed meaningfully and purposefully.

The sun shines and the moon sheds his cool rays on the earth. Rains come down and rivers are in spate. And crops grow. None of these happens because of the will of any single individual. Every human being in this world has an equal right to the enjoyment of the benefits flowing from these occurrences.

Man has unfortunately forgotten this basic truth. He makes no effort to enquire into the concept of equality in enjoyment (samatwa yoga). This feeling of equal enjoyment is conspicuous only among innocent children. Only in the hearts of babes can you notice the sense of enjoyment, of drinking the milk from the mother, rejoicing in the cool breeze and forgetting themselves in the sweet music of the lullabies sung by the mother.

As the child grows to manhood the ideals of "mine" and "thine" grow in the mind. Self-interest grows. The spirit of sacrifice declines. Humanness is eclipsed. What is the reason? It is the loss of faith in the Self (Atma-Vishvasam). One forgets the omnipresence of the Divine. The great truth that "Narayana pervades the universe by His presence in and outside of everything" is ignored.

Self-realisation

The world is full of powerful men, men endowed with wealth, great scholars and men with good qualities, but there are few who have realised the Atma (the Omni-Self). The body is visible. The mind appears to exist. But the Atma (the Spirit) is not visible. The Self-realised person (Atmavaan) is one who has recognised the visible Spirit, who is immersed in the bliss of that awareness and who is intoxicated by that Divine experience. In ancient times, many sages experienced the potency, the sweetness and the ineffable joy of this Divine bliss and gave the

fruits of their experience to the world. They codified the knowledge contained in the Upanishads and offered it to the lay people in the world in the concept of “Trikonam” (Triangle). The Body is one side of the triangle. The second side is the mind. The third is the Atma.

Body, mind and atma

The body is gross. The Atma is subtle. The mind coordinates the gross body and the subtle Atma and makes the individual experience Ananda (bliss). The Vedic declaration: "Tat-Twam-Asi" (That thou art) reflects the truth about this integrating process. Man does not understand the truth about the unity of "This" and "That". "Tat" means "That", referring to something remote. "This" refers to something that is near. From what is "That" far? From what is "This" near? "That" refers to what is far from our sense organs. "This" refers to what is proximate to our sense organs. The body, which is nearest to the senses, is connoted by "This". "That" which is beyond the senses is the Atma. The role of the mind is to bring together the body that is close to the senses and the Atma that is far from them. "Asi" in "Tat-Twam-Asi" refers to the role of the mind in integrating the body and the Atma.

Man should strive to realise the unity of the body, the mind and the Atma. "Tat-Twam-Asi" is not a recondite formula. It is an aphoristic declaration calling upon everyone to realise the integral unity of body, mind and the Atma and thereby experience the Divine.

Diva, God and Nature

The concept of Triangle was explored from another point of view, namely, the Jiva (the individual), God and Nature (or the phenomenal universe, Prakriti). The essential nature of these three was described in the terms: Rakti, Bhukti, Mukti. "Rakti" represents the cosmos. "Bhukti" (enjoyment) represents the body (which seeks enjoyment). Atma represents "Mukti" (liberation). The Upanishadic declaration points out that these three are essential for every human being.

Another triad that has to be noted consists of "Sthoola" (gross), Sukshma (subtle) and Karana (causal) bodies. Another triple concept contained in the Upanishadic aphorism is that of "Past, Present and the Future" (the triple aspects of Time). In these different ways, the sages sought to popularise the idea of oneness of body, mind and Atma.

From the source, to the source

There is a cyclical process constantly going on. Rains fall. The water flows in the rivers, which rush towards the ocean. From the ocean, again, clouds are formed, which pour down rain and the rainwater forms rivulets which ultimately join the ocean. The river does not know its origin. But once it has merged in the ocean, it can be seen that the river and ocean are one: "Tath-Twam-Asi" ("That thou art"). The rivers may well declare: "We come from the ocean and we have merged in the ocean. The ocean and we are one."

To take another analogy. A seed is planted in the earth. It sprouts, grows into a tree and puts forth branches, leaves, flowers, buds and fruits. Wherefrom have these different manifestations come? All have come from the seed. The ancients realised from this fact that although the tree presents multifarious forms and names, the source is one only. The seed, from which the various

manifestations have emerged, proudly declares "Tat-Twam-Asi" ("All of you have emanated from me").

Unity in diversity

Enlarging on this concept, the sages declared: "Isavasyam idam Jagat", (The Cosmos is pervaded by the Divine). This all-pervading principle is illustrated by the example of sugar dissolved in water. After the solution, the sugar is not visible and cannot be taken out. But its presence can be experienced by tasting the syrup. The sugar thus proclaims the truth: "I am present as a pervading element even though I am invisible. The sweetness you experience comes from me and not from the water."

By these simple but telling illustrations from real life, the ancient sages sought to convey the great truth about the all-pervading nature of the Divine and the unity that underlies the apparent diversity in the universe. Only the One abides. But it assumes many forms. The Upanishads demonstrated that the essence of Bharatiya Culture consists in the recognition of unity in diversity. Men waste their lives failing to recognise this unity.

The pranava

Take the three letters A; U; M. The unity of these three letters represents Omkara, the primordial sound called Pranava. The world (prapancha) is a manifestation of Pranava. The Upanishads emphasised the integral unity of the Pranava and the Prapancha as manifestations of the Atma. It may be said that the Pranava ("Om") is not apparent anywhere, nor can it be heard. But, in the process of inhaling and exhaling and in the circulation of blood in the human system, the presence of Pranava can be experienced. "Omkara" can be heard when the wind blows. "Om" can be heard when one keeps the ear close to an electric pole.

When we breathe in, there is the sound "So..." When we exhale, there is the sound "ham". (Bhagavan demonstrated how these sounds can be recognised). Together, "So" and "Ham" contain the Pranava mantra "Om". "So"—"Ham" ("He is I") conveys the same message as "Tat-Twam-Asi". "Om", which is derived from "So-Ham", has been equated with Brahman. The inner meaning of the two sounds "So" and "Ham" should be properly understood. In the sound "So", the consonant "S" represents the experiences in the waking and dreaming states. Similarly "Ham" is related to the same states. When "S" and "Ha" are eliminated in the deep sleep state, only "O" and "M" remain. This means that as long as man is attached to the experiences of the waking and dream states, he cannot recognise the Divine symbolised by "Om". As long as man is caught up in the coils of the phenomenal world, he cannot escape from experiencing pleasure and pain. In the deep sleep state, man is oblivious to the phenomenal world and is free from experiences of pleasure and pain. It is for this reason that the sages have compared Samadhi to the state of deep sleep.

Message of the upanishads

Hence, for man to realise the Divine, this is the path that has to be pursued. The Upanishads have explained in very simple terms the profoundest and most complex ideas. They have indicated to ordinary men how to experience the highest spiritual bliss by simple practices. The

word "Upanishad" means "sitting near" (the preceptor). The spiritual aspirant is called upon to approach the wise teachers and elders in a spirit of humility and reverence.

The Vedas declare: "Dooraath doore anthike cha" ("Farther than the farthest and very near too"). This statement means that the Lord is as far from you as you consider Him to be, and as near as you feel His presence. It is your own feelings which account for the distance. The remoteness or nearness should not be attributed to the Divine, who is omnipresent. He is present in the subtlest atomic particle and in the vastest object in creation. This truth can be experienced by man if he makes the proper enquiry with diligence and devotion. But few undertake such a quest. All men's energies are devoted to the pursuit of ephemeral, transient and illusory material gains. Not even a moment is devoted to the search for the eternal and Divine Reality. This is the result of man's indifference to the eternal verities. "Sraddhaavaan labhathe Jnanam", declares the Gita (the highest wisdom is secured only by the earnest seeker). Without earnestness, one cannot be aware of even what is nearest to him.

Narada's quest for peace

Men suffer today from lack of peace of mind, but make no effort to find out the root cause of this malady. Narada, the mind-child of Brahma, who was proficient in all the scriptures and every field of knowledge, suffering from a peaceless mind, went to the Sage Sanatkumara and asked him: "Oh Sage! Why do I have no peace of mind? Please remove this malaise and impart to me the knowledge to retain mental tranquility." Sanatkumara asked Narada what all he had mastered and what credentials he had acquired to entitle him to seek this knowledge. Narada said, he had mastered the 64 kinds of knowledge, studied the six shastras and learnt the four Vedas and their subsidiary sections. After listening to Narada, Sanatkumara told him that all the knowledge he had acquired was only a mass of words. The sage told him that beyond all this scriptural and other knowledge was something transcendental. Narada was surprised to note how all his vast knowledge had been devalued. Sanatkumara said: "Above the power of words is the power of Speech (Vaak). Above speech is the mind. Greater than the mind is the Will (Sankalpa). Higher than the Will is the Chitta (Awareness). Greater than the Chitta is Dhyana (meditation.) Greater than Dhyana is Jnana. Greater than Jnana is water. Greater than water is Tejas. Higher than this is Prana (the Life-force). It is only when you understand the principle of the Life-force (Prana), you will understand the truth of the aphorism: Tat-Twam-Asi."

The body and the atma

Understanding the principle of the Life-force is thus crucial. For instance, when one starves for sixteen days he loses all his sixteen "kalas" (capacities). He regains them as he resumes taking food. What is the inner significance of this phenomenon? The body is constituted by food (Annamaya). When the body is deprived of food, the Life-force begins to decline. The body is thus subject to decay. But the Spirit within (the Atma) is not perishable. The body is made up of the five elements. It is bound to perish. But the indwelling Spirit ("Dehi") is Immortal. It has no birth or death. That indwelling Spirit is God.

Thus the imperishable Atma is always shining in this perishable body. Sanatkumara told Narada to understand this eternal Reality, which underlies the Life-principle.

In the same manner Aruni told his son Swetaketu to seek to know That by knowing which all else is known, by having a vision of which everything else can be seen. Thus, there is only one thing which man has to recognise, by knowing which he can understand all other things. That one thing is the Atma-Principle (the Atma-Tattwa).

Today we are forgetting the truth of the Spirit. We are immersed in things unspiritual (Anatma). What is the sadhana (spiritual discipline) which men have to practise? Is it dhyana, or japa, or yoga or yaga or rituals? None of these.

Negating the mind

One vital fact has to be recognised. When a person gets rid of the "Anatma bhava" (the identification with the body), he will experience the vision of the Divine ("Sakshatkara"). There is no need to perform any spiritual exercises. These are mainly undertaken to secure some mental satisfaction. All these exercises are performed through the mind. How can such exercises control the mind? Can a thief catch himself? Likewise the mind cannot undertake to control itself. The mind has to be negated ("Amanaska"). "Amanaska" means "freedom from thoughts." As thoughts are minimised, the mind loses its power.

When one wants to develop faith in the Self, the potencies of the body, the mind and the intellect (Buddhi) should be diverted towards the Self. Whatever thought arises in the mind, it should be turned towards the Atma. This is real "Saayujya" (attaining oneness with the Divine). In this mergence, there is the realisation of unity and the feeling of diversity disappears. Take the example of the sacred rivers Krishna, Kaveri, Godavari, Ganga and Yamuna. They flow in their separate courses, have distinct names and the taste of their waters also varies. But once they join the ocean, they lose their distinct names, forms and tastes and become one with the ocean. That is the import of the Upanishadic saying: "Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavati" ("the knower of the Brahman becomes Brahman Himself"). When one merges in the Brahman, the separateness ends. When all one's thoughts are merged in the Atma, one becomes integrated with the Atma.

Physical sight and divine vision

In this world there is nothing apart from the Atma. There is nothing divorced from Divinity. Although everything is Divine, people do not look at the world with the Divine insight but with the worldly vision. As long as one sees with this corporeal vision, the spiritual Reality cannot be understood.

For example, when you see this tumbler (held up before the audience by Bhagavan) and view it as a tumbler, only the form of the tumbler registers in the mind. What is the tumbler made of? It is made out of silver. When one considers the material from which the tumbler is made, one only thinks of its silver base and not its form.

Another example: When you go to a pilgrim centre and look at the form of the deity in the sanctum, you are conscious only of the form. But when you think of the material from which the idol has been made, you recognise only the stone and not the form. Today you are looking at the

world in terms of the names and forms of the objects in it. Hence you see only the hills and dales, mansions and huts, forests and rivers, and so on. But when you try to look at the basis of all of them, you realise the One that underlies all of them. All trees are essentially wood. All mountains are made up of rock. The earth is made up of mud. The body is permeated by blood vessels. All these are different manifestations of the five elements (ether, air, water, fire and earth). These five elements find their unifying factor in the Atma. Once, therefore, the Atma concept is grasped, the nature of all other objects becomes intelligible. This principle of unity was the perennial message of the ancient sages.

States of consciousness

To take another example: In the waking state (jagrata avastha) one sees innumerable objects, goes through various experiences. But in the dream state, all the objects are creations of the mind by the dreamer. The pleasures and pains are also self-created experiences. The entire world in the dream state is a self-created mental phenomenon. But when he passes into the Sushupti state of deep sleep, all these are absent, he forgets everything and is in a state of Samadhi. The experiencer in the waking state, the dream state and the Sushupti state is one and the same person. It is this basic unity of the Atma that is conveyed by the dictum "Tat-Twam-Asi". This means that in all the three states, in all the different experiences, the experiencer is one and the same.

Human values

Likewise, in the human condition, as long as it is identified with the body, the human level alone is recognised. People are conscious only of the physical human existence, but are not aware of the human qualities. The foremost thing that people today have to recognise and understand are human values. Whatever position one may achieve, whatever one's scholarship or status, the primary requisite is comprehension of what it means to be human. This humanness can be developed only through spirituality. If you take a seed and plant it in a tin, it will rot. But if the same seed is planted in the earth, it grows into a tree. Humanness will not develop in an atmosphere of worldly concerns. It will grow only in a spiritual, ethical and righteous atmosphere.

Today students have to concentrate on the development of their human potential. Equally it is the duty of every man. It is not right to develop only physical relationships and attachments. These relationships are confined to the body. In man's life relationships like mother and wife are intermediate occurrences of a temporary nature. They come and go like passing clouds. The entire human life is like an ocean in which attachments and aversions, likes and dislikes, come and go like waves.

Spirituality and culture

In our daily life, we are all the time involved in the pursuit of endless desires and are immersed in sorrow. It must be realised that in such a life spirituality is like a beacon that beckons man to a higher life. If spirituality goes, Bharat will cease to exist. Hence it is everyone's duty to ensure the preservation of spirituality. The glory of Bharat is based on spirituality.

There is a reference to "Indian Culture and Spirituality." This would suggest that culture and spirituality are distinct from each other: In my view this is not correct at all. Where there is spirituality, culture is imbedded in it. Spirituality should not be divorced from culture. When spirituality prevails, every kind of Dharma (right conduct) will prevail. What kind of culture is possible without spirituality? Culture means refinement of conduct ("samskruti"). "Samskruti" refers to, that which has been refined. How does refinement take place? Only through spirituality. There can be no refinement (of conduct) without spirituality. And without refinement there is no culture. Hence, the first step is refinement of conduct, which can be done only through spirituality.

Unfortunately, today spirituality is in eclipse. Many refer to spirituality derisively. But it is only those witless persons who are lost in the trivialities of the mundane world who indulge in such derision. To the one who is conscious of the impermanence and worthlessness of the things of the world spirituality is a shining, priceless ornament. Man should seek to wear such a jewel. Only then human life can be divinised.

Babar's advice to Humayun

Dear students! The greatness of Bharatiya culture has been praised by people of all countries, creeds and castes. The Muslim ruler, Babar, held Bharat's culture in great esteem. In a letter to his son Humayun (who succeeded to his throne), Babar wrote: "Son! You are lucky in being born as my son and I am lucky as the father of such a son. It is your supreme good fortune to become the emperor of this sacred country of Bharat, which has stood for the unity of all faiths, which has proclaimed the truth of the unity that underlies all diversity, and whose religion embodies the essence of all religions. See that you safeguard this great good fortune. Do not interfere with the cultural practices of the Bharatiyas. Their culture is a mighty force. It is sacred and its potentialities are unlimited. Do not interfere with this culture. Whatever decisions you wish to take, seek the counsel of Bharatiyas before doing so." Babar, who was the founder of the Moghul Empire, had such great esteem for Bharatiya culture.

But, alas! Today the Bharatiyas themselves are undermining Bharatiya culture. This is a matter for shame. Therefore, I call upon you as children of Bharat to understand Bharatiya culture, live upto its ideals, and enjoy the bliss to be derived therefrom.

I do not make any distinction between one faith and another. All faiths are great. The inner truth of all faiths is equally sublime. But no one adheres to the culture associated with his faith. This is a grievous mistake. Everyone should try to understand the basic tenets of his religion and live upto its principles.

Every man is entitled to strive for attaining the goal of human existence. In this quest, no distinction can be made between one person and another. Everyone of you should strive to evolve from the human to the Divine. In no circumstance should you descend to the demonic state.

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "*Prema muditha manase kaho Rama, Rama, Ram!*")

From Bhagavan's discourse at the Institute Auditorium at Brindavan, on 23-5-1991

WITH BHAGAVAN IN THE BLUE MOUNTAINS:

Thank You, Swami!

One day I made a written request
To Bhagavan Baba as His guest;
Only four lines I humbly wrote;
My letter's content here I quote

"Bhagavan, a little group are we,
South African devotees three;
Your loving words are manna true;
Please give us an interview."

Wasn't I joyful as Bhagavan took
My letter with a smiling look,
As I held it out unsealed,
In the Darshan Line at Whitefield.

Next day, from five metres away,
Bhagavan's radiant smile seemed to say:
"You are invited to Ooty,
A place of Divine Beauty."

Bhagavan left for the mountain clime
Of Ooty, in a few days' time;
We followed next day in weather hot,
To that famous summer resort.

We were delayed in Mysore Town
As our vehicle had a breakdown;
Repairs done, we were on our way,
Eager to reach Ooty the same day.

See Mother Nature play her role
With lessons that uplift the soul;

See how Her Beauty, She preserves
In Mysore's Wild Life Reserves.

The animals, birds and insects you see
In Nature's care are happy and free;
With a chatter, a chirp or a hum,
They extend all a warm welcome.

The river with a steadfast urge
Rushes to her mother, to merge,
Yet man, a link in Creation's chain,
Lives on as Desire's windvane.

Our taxi with its heavy load
Went up the winding road,
With many a dangerous hairpin bend,
Towards the top, our journey's end.

The sun assumed a crimson hue
And offered the world a glorious view,
As we slowly reached the crest,
Watching the sunset at its best.

Far from the world's madding crowds
And close to the wandering clouds,
Ooty is a paradise on earth
Designed for man's mirth.

Above some large cultivated fields,
Pregnant with rich potato yields,
Tea plantations and eucalyptus green
Complete Sai Baba's Mandir scene.

What an Ocean of Compassion!
In what super-human fashion,
Bhagavan pours out His Love and Grace,
At that charming mountainous place.

O Sai Krishna, life's butter and cream,
The source of love's eternal stream,
The Love and Grace, from You that come,
A million mothers make not that sum.

Were not the mountains high above

Fully charged with Bhagavan's Love?
And did they not give us a cue
For our deeper inner view!

Did not Doddabettah nearby
Remind us of Kailash High,
The Abode of Shiva-Shakti,
At darshans filled with devotees' Bhakti!

(From the poems recited before Bhagavan at Kodaikanal)

—*Chandrabhan Singh*

The Inner Motivator

*O foolish mind! Whither do you wander in search of the blessed Vision of Brahman.
It is within your own self; find It there.
This is the word of Sai revealing the Truth.*

*Love cannot be grown on a farm as a crop; nor will it be for sale in a shop.
Whether they be kings or commoners, They can know love only through selflessness.*

Embodiments of the Divine Atma!

For every living being engaged in its pilgrimage in the field of action (Karma Kshetra), the mind, the tongue, ears, eyes, nose, hands and feet etc., are the instruments (Karanamulu) provided for its daily use. To achieve success in this physical world it is essential to have these three, namely, Karanamulu (instruments), Karanam (cause or purpose) and Karta (doer or agent). The one who wields the instruments is the Karta or doer. The desire which propels him to act is the cause (Karanam). Man's primary aim should be to recognise the unity underlying these three factors. In common parlance, we say that the eyes see, the ears bear, and the mouth speaks. But if this were to be true, why is it that after a man's death, these very instruments, though found intact, cannot discharge their functions? Obviously, there is an invisible divine power in the body which imparts life and energy to all these organs, and when that power leaves the body, they cannot function.

In ordinary terminology, this power is called the Life Principle (Prana). But wherefrom does this Prana come, where does it go and at whose bidding? These are the questions raised by the Kenopanishad, which undertook to investigate whether this divine energy, which animates the several instruments in the body, is inherent in Prana (the Life Principle) or whether it belongs to a power superior to Prana. In this connection, let us consider an illustration. We see that the earth is illumined by moonlight. The moon itself shines because of the sun's light reflected on it. But wherefrom does the sun get its light? It is the divine power that lends its lustre to the sun. The hydrogen and helium contained in the sun have originated from that divine power which the Upanishads designate as the Brahma-tattwa (the principle of the Supreme Absolute Reality).

The Upanishads further declare that it is due to the effulgence of Brahman that the world shines and that there is no effulgence in the universe which can illuminate Brahman. It is the light of Brahman that enables the eyes to see all things except Brahman. The mind is able to function because of the light of Brahman, but it cannot grasp or describe Brahman. This is why the Upanishads proclaimed about Brahman: "Yatho Vaacho nivarthanthe apraapya manasaa saha" meaning that Brahman is beyond the reach of the mind and speech. Although such a unique divine power resides in himself, man is unable to recognise it. Why? Because in his daily

whatsoever to cultivate and experience the "Antar-drishiti" (the Inner Vision).

It is quite possible for man to recognise this truth (of the Brahmic principle in him) if he resorts to proper enquiry and acquires the needed purity of mind and heart. It is a pity that every man considers himself a powerless weakling, despite the enormous power latent in him, waiting to be revealed and released in all its glory. How is man to examine and experience such a divine power? The Kenopanishad deals with this question and points out that this divine power is the life of our life, the mind of our mind, the eye of our eye, the ear of our ear, the speech of our speech, because it is the motivating, coordinating and illuminating principle underlying all such organs of the human personality. We can easily grasp this truth by understanding that just as the headlights and other lights, the horn, the engine, the wheels etc., of an automobile depend on the battery current for their respective functions like giving light, sound and propulsion, all the organs of our body are animated or motivated by the divine Atmic power inside, thereby enabling them to discharge their respective functions.

Chit-shakti

All the flowers in a tree do not turn into fruit; likewise, all the fruits do not ripen on the tree. But all the ripe fruits cannot but fall down from the tree. This indicates the important secret underlying human life. As soon as the purpose, time and task for which a man is born are over, his body loses its power and vitality and drops down in a lifeless condition. But what is the basis for this Jiva Tattwa (Life Principle)? It is only the Atma Tattwa (Atmic Principle). However, man is prone to consider only the body and senses as all-important. There is the mind, which is superior to the sense organs. It is this very mind that is spoken of as "Indra" by the Upanishads, because the mind is the Lord or controller of the senses. The Kenopanishad urges man to merge the senses in the mind, and the mind in the Atma, in order to experience the divine power inherent in the Atma-mind complex. But to-day's man, instead of merging the senses in the mind, and the mind in the Atma, is devoting his senses and mind to worldly pursuits, under the wrong notion that mind and Atma are quite separate. There is an all pervading power that permeates the body, senses, "Antahkarana" or the inner instruments, and the individual soul or spirit. This omnipresent power is called Chit Shakti (Constant Integrated Awareness or consciousness) or Brahma-Tattwa (the principle of the Supreme Absolute Reality). This all-powerful Atmic principle resides in every human being in subtle form. Man is not able to recognise this divine power because he is preoccupied with utilising his physical and mental faculties for the acquisition of wealth and worldly goods.

The "seen" and the "seer"

Let us now consider the tools (karana) and Atma from the standpoint of "drishya" (seen) and "drashta" (seer). All objects seen by the eyes are the 'seen' and the eyes are the 'seer'. When the eyes are open but do not see the objects present before them due to the mind wandering somewhere, the eyes become the 'seen' and the mind becomes the 'seer'. When the intellect (Buddhi) observes the wanderings of the mind, the intellect becomes the 'seer' and the mind, the 'seen'. In the state of Samadhi, Atma is the 'seer' and intellect, "the seen". There is nothing that can see the Atma. Hence it is always the 'Seer' and never the "Seen". Thus we notice that the

put to work by the drashta (the seer, viz., Atma). In the absence of the drashta (Atma), all the tools will be useless, however valuable they might be. For example, a machine worth crores (billions) of rupees is installed; but if there is no current which operates it, it will turn out to be a useless mass of steel. Likewise, in the absence of the Atmic power which enables all the organs or tools to function, the body becomes a worthless mass of flesh and bones. Therefore it is the foremost duty of man to realise the Atma (Self) which imparts value to the otherwise valueless body and the tools (karana) therein, and also to regulate the activities of all these tools in the right manner, so as to achieve the fulfillment of the purpose of human life.

The atma and the "vasanas"

However, it is not that easy to change human nature. For instance, suppose you grow a crop of garlic by using the powder of "Patchakarpooram" (an aromatic variety of camphor,) as the soil, "kamma kasturi" (a fragrant variety of musk) as the manure, and scented rose water for irrigation, will the produce of garlic you get as a result of all your effort give up its natural, pungent odour? So also, despite all his spiritual practices (Sadhana' and holy company, the worldly "Vasanas" (the impressions, tendencies or latent desires) accumulated in the course of his several past lives will not leave man so easily. Therefore it is necessary for man to understand first of all, the true nature of his own body. What is this body? It is a repository of filth, urine, flesh, blood and such other things. However, in this very body there shines the gem 'of purest ray serene', namely, the Atma. Gems do not grow like fruits on trees, but are to be found in dirt. Similarly the body which is of the nature of "Mrinmaya" (full of dirt) harbours in itself the Atma which is of the nature of "Chinmaya" (full of pure consciousness). The secret of man's success lies in the thorough understanding and unravelling of this "Chinmaya tattwa" (principle of pure consciousness).

The body is transient and ephemeral, but it enshrines the immortal and eternal Atma and hence the body should not be neglected but properly looked after, till we realise the Self.

A lesson for the demigods

Once upon a time in a war between the Devas (demi-gods,) and the Asuras (demons), the former came out victorious; and puffed up with pride, they assembled together to celebrate their victory. Brahma wanted to prick the bubble of their ego and pride, and to open their eyes to the fact that their victory was due to divine grace and not to their own strength and valour. So Brahma appeared before them in the guise of a "Yaksha" (celestial being). On seeing him, the Fire-God (Agni) came to him. When the "Yaksha" asked Agni as to who he was, the latter proudly answered, "Don't you know me? I am Agni Deva (fire-god), the great Hero who can reduce to ashes the entire world in a trice". Thereupon the "Yaksha" placed before him a blade of grass and said, "O Fire-God! please burn this blade of grass". Despite all his efforts, the Fire-god could not burn the blade of grass and he went back humbled. Next came the Wind-God Vasyu and bragged before the "Yaksha" about his unequalled might in devastating entire villages, trees, forests etc., in the form of cyclones, tornadoes and tidal waves etc. The "Yaksha" smiled and asked vayu to blow away the blade of grass. With all his might and Herculean effort, the Wind-God could not even shake the blade of grass and had to beat a retreat. On witnessing the

demi-gods, himself came forward to see the "Yaksha" at close quarters but when he reached the spot he saw a woman standing in the place of the "Yaksha". He addressed her, "O Mother! kindly tell me who you are and who is the one who has just vanished from sight." Then she answered, "I am Uma. The one who was here earlier in the guise of a Yaksha is Brahma, who came to destroy the highly inflated ego in all of you assembled here. So long as you have the ego, you cannot have Self-realisation. That is why none of you could recognise Brahma although he appeared right in front of you. As Indra, you personify the mind which is the leader of the senses, and which is a bundle of desires. That is why I have given you a vision of myself as a woman, who is the embodiment of desires."

Prayer to Brahma

On hearing these words of Uma, the ego of every demi-god became deflated and in all humility they prayed to Brahma as follows: "O Lord! Not even a blade of grass will move without your command, what to speak of the microcosm and the macrocosm. Without understanding this, some people like us become puffed up with pride. Bhagavan! What is the use of various kinds of possessions and powers like wealth, physical strength, intellectual acumen etc., if one does not have the ability to know you? And none can know and experience you except through the strength of Bhakti (devotion or love)."

The lesson this episode teaches us is that we are mere tools in the hands of the Almighty and we should not become egoistic and proud thinking that any success or achievement is due to our own innate strength. We cannot win God's grace except through Bhakti. And what is Bhakti? It is but loving God with a pure and selfless heart devoid of ego and pride.

Sense control

We should use the God-given and God-motivated tools called senses in the right manner. These tools often become affected by diseases. For instance when the eyes are jaundiced, everything appears yellow. When one is suffering from malaria, even sweet things taste bitter to his tongue. In this manner our sense organs become the victims of Roga (disease) instead of helping us to attain Yoga (union with God). What is Yoga? According to Patanjali, it is controlling the vagaries of the mind and the tendencies of the senses. First of all, we should keep our sense organs under control.

Students! At this youthful age of yours, it is but natural that your senses should be strong, active, impulsive, impetuous and turbulent. But you should exercise control over them, lest they drag you into wrong paths. Practise the following maxims:

See no evil, see only what is good;
Hear no evil, hear only what is good;
Think no evil, think only what is good;
Talk no evil, talk only what is good;
Do no evil, do only what is good;
This is the way to God.

The law of karma

Bear in mind what the Kenopanishad taught to the celestial beings, the sages and other human beings. It taught them about the inexorable, immutable and inescapable law of Karma, duly stressing the fact that the results of good or bad actions are not like the milk that you get immediately as you draw it from the udder of a milch cow, but they are like the fruits that you get from a tree long after the seed is planted. Therefore, don't feel elated just because your bad actions have not given you the bad results immediately; you are sure to experience them in due course. You can never escape them. Therefore take to the virtuous path of life even from this young age.

You should also understand the importance of the faculty of speech and the great role of the tongue. Addressing the tongue, saint Jayadeva praised its immense power and called upon it to chant the name of the Lord and not indulge in unholy talk.

The tongue displays a sense of discrimination in the choice of food. It has also a remarkable ability to observe restraint by not getting bitten by the teeth. It never goes beyond its bounds. Such a highly valuable organ should be used for the sacred purposes for which it is intended. This is the exhortation of the Upanishads to all mankind.

Message of the Upanishads

In sweet and simple words, the Upanishads, which constitute the quintessence of all Vedas, proclaim profound truths which will dispel man's ignorance and fill him with the Prajnana Jyoti (the divine light of constant integrated awareness). Unfortunately such a priceless treasure is being ignored at present. It is up to you, students, to retrieve the situation by moulding your lives even from now on in the light of the Upanishadic teachings. Acquire humility along with your education. Respect your parents, teachers and elders. Love those who are younger than you. Students today are given to excessive talking, bragging and ostentation. You should not give room for such short-comings.

The world outside is filled with strife and "fear". The students should go to the rescue of those who are the victims of fear, and serve them with love and devotion. This is the spirit behind the well-known Upanishadic verse: "OM! Sahanaa vavatu etc", which is a peace invocation meaning; "OM! May God protect us both (students and teacher)! May He nourish us both! May we both acquire energy (as a result of this study)! May we both become illumined (by this study)! May we not hate each other! OM, Peace! Peace! Peace!"

You should appreciate the fact that the Upanishadic Rishis (sages) undertook more intelligent, more intensive, and selfless research into life's most fundamental problems, in shining contrast to the researches of the scientists of to-day. Do not underrate these ancient Rishis whose invaluable findings have been enshrined in the Upanishads which serve as guideposts that lead mankind to the fulfillment of the purpose of human life. Imbibe and follow in your day-to-day life the simple; yet profound teachings of the Upanishads and make your lives blessed.

"Sulabha Prasannaaya Namah"

Among the many attributes figuring in the Ashtothara Satha Namavali (the 108 names) of Bhagavan Baba, the one that has appealed to me greatly is the penultimate name, "Sulabha Prasannaaya Namah" ("Salutation to the Lord who is easily pleasing").

"Prasanna" is not an easily, translatable word. It not only means "pleasing", but also "benignant" and "conferring benediction". "Sulabha" means "without much effort". It has, in the present context, a double meaning. In one sense, it means that Bhagavan can change from a stern or a severe look to a pleasing mien effortlessly and with ease. This change can be noticed by everyone as Bhagavan goes round the Darshan line or when He moves among devotees or students in the Mandir or elsewhere. The change from an apparently severe look to a blissful smiling face occurs in a split second. It is quick like a lightning flash and absolutely natural and spontaneous. Bhagavan has a ready and captivating smile which has been captured by the camera a myriad times. Once I watched Bhagavan taking pictures one by one with the forty odd students He had taken with Him to Kodaikanal. In all the pictures, Bhagavan had the same blissful smile, while each student reflected a mood of his own.

The other meaning of "Sulabha" is that it is easy to make Him "Prasanna" by devotees. This, again, is the daily experience of innumerable devotees. One appealing look from a devotee will make Bhagavan respond with the smile that fills the devotee with ineffable joy.

Salutations to the Lord who is ever pleasant and is easy to please. "Sulabha Prasannaaya Namah".

—N.

SUMMER SHOWERS IN BRINDAVAN:

GURUDEV VANI:

Enjoyment through Sacrifice

*The entire cosmos was created from Truth ;
It is sustained by Truth and merges in Truth;
Know ye, that this Truth is the
Immaculate Reality pervading everything in the Universe.*

"Ekam Sath Vipraah bahudhaa Vadanthi" ("The Reality is one, the wise speak about it in many ways"). Although the Truth is one, the sages used to give it different names. Truth is not any one's private property. It is not related to any one nation, nor to any particular faith. Nor is it related to a specific time. Truth transcends the bounds of space, time, religion and country. In adhering to Truth, people of all countries, of all religions and of all times, have equal right. Truth does not follow anyone. Every human being has to follow Truth.

The primal grandsire of humanity, Manu, expounded this Truth. Because man is a descendant of Manu he is termed "Manuja" (the offspring of Manu). Manu laid down the rule that man should be prepared even to sacrifice his life in the cause of Truth. But owing to the ravages of time, place and circumstances, we are witnessing the opposite of Manu's injunction. For today's man, falsehood has become sweet and pleasing. Truth has become repugnant. (Bhagavan recited a Sanskrit sloka in this context).

Man today is making all efforts to understand innumerable things, but makes no attempt to know the basic Truth. All enjoyable and pleasurable things come from Truth. In ancient times, the rulers reigned over their kingdoms on the basis of Truth. They held fast to the dictum "Truth is character. Truth is the religion. Truth is life itself. Truth is penance. Truth is God." Man's weakness today is proclaimed by his failure to adhere to this eternal Truth and by his pursuit of ephemeral and unreal things.

Manu's dictum on speech

Manu gave to the world yet another profound declaration: "Sathyam brooyaath, Priyam brooyaath. Nabrooyaath sathyam-apriyam" ("Utter the Truth. Say what is pleasing. Never tell what is truthful but unpleasant"). This means that you should not speak an untruth because it may be pleasing to one. Nor should you speak out the truth when it is likely to hurt a person's feelings. Every man should speak the truth, but it should be truth that is pleasing. In the Gita it has been stated: "Anudvegakaram vaakyam Sathyam Priyahitham cha yath" ("In speech, the words should not cause any excitement, they should be true, pleasing and well-meaning").

When you see a blind man, you know that he is blind. This is true. But because it is true, if you hail him as: "Oh blind man!" you will be causing him pain. As soon as he hears the word "blind", he feels distressed. No doubt what was said was true, but it distressed the hearer. Likewise, on seeing a lame man, if you accost him as "Oh lame man", you will be causing him pain. In the name of truth, one should not utter words which cause pain to others.

When a person's conduct is not proper, he is bound to lose his inherent nature. Hence, if one seeks to develop his essential human qualities, he must follow the path of truth and love.

The Upanishads are like the crown for the Vedas. Among the Upanishads, the Isavasyopanishad is foremost. This Upanishad is in the form of mantras in the Shukla Yajur Veda. Up to the 39th canto, the Yajur Veda is concerned with the Karma Marga (the path of rituals). From the 40th canto, the exposition of the Jnana Marga (the path of Supreme Knowledge) begins. This canto starts with the Isopanishad. Jnana presides over Karma. Karma is the basis for Jnana. The Upanishads seek to reconcile and coordinate the Karma and Jnana paths.

Man has to perform the actions ordained for him by the scriptures. Good actions have to be performed with good intentions. No room should be given for the desire that the doer alone should enjoy the fruits of his actions. Nor should he entertain the conceit that it is because of his actions that certain results have been achieved. This sort of egoism should go. Such attachments and egoistic feelings result in bondage.

Bhoga and tyaga

The Isavasyopanishad declares that whatever pleasures (bhoga) one wants to enjoy, he should do so in a spirit of renunciation (tyagena). In daily life, enjoyment and renunciation do not go together. The renunciant (tyagi) is not interested in enjoyment of sensual pleasures. The Bhogi (the pleasure-seeker) will not think of renunciation. In such a situation, how is it possible to combine enjoyment of pleasures with renunciation or sacrifice? It is in this context that the Isavasyopanishad has declared that when every action is free from the sense of egoistic doership (Ahamkara) and all enjoyment is free from attachment or desire, there will be no difference between enjoyment and renunciation. Hence any enjoyment associated with the ego and with attachment will be enjoyment without sacrifice. When ego and attachment are absent, the actions are free from self-interest and hence are tantamount to acts of sacrifice.

Every man, therefore, should perform actions according to the prescribed rules and lay no claim to the fruits of those actions. This is the spiritual teaching of the Isavasyopanishad.

The Upanishad also demonstrated that actions performed in this spirit transform enjoyment (bhoga) into yoga. Yoga is the divine culmination of the results of spiritual exercises and disciplines.

"Yogakshema"

In the Gita, Sri Krishna declared "Yogakshemam Vahaamyaham". In ordinary parlance "yogakshemam" is understood as referring to the well-being derived from the family, possessions and pleasurable objects. To apply the term "yoga" to such mundane benefits is totally inappropriate. Yoga is the state that is realised by one who, born as a human being, engages himself in various spiritual exercises to experience the transcendental Divinity. Yoga thus means the attainment of that Divinity which is not easily attainable. It refers to the envisioning of that which is beyond the physical vision. Yoga means experiencing that Divine, which is not visible to the eye, or audible to the ear, is beyond the reach of the mind and the heart, by a process of spiritual discipline. It is the process of making manifest in one's experience

realised through spiritual efforts. "Yogakshema", therefore, means acquiring experience of the transcendental Divine and endeavouring to preserve it. Such a transcendental experience may be described as "bhoga" (enjoyment) associated with "Tyaga" (sacrifice).

It is essential for man to pursue Yoga associated with Tyaga. It is only through such sacrifice that the Divine can manifest in man. Hence man should strive to realise the Divine by not ignoring the message of the Upanishads.

"Antahkarana" and the mind

Man is not merely a composite expression of body, mind and spirit. He has what is known as Prajna-shakti, the faculty of "Constant integrated Awareness". Everyone should take note of this Prajna-shakti. This "awareness" pervades the body, the mind and the Antahkarana (the inner instrument). What is Antahkarana? It is the combined expression of the mind, the intellect (Buddhi), the will (Chitta) and the ego (Ahamkara). The mind is the instrument of continuous thought. "Sankalpavikalpaatmah manah" (The mind is the repository of thoughts and doubts). If you take a piece of cloth, you find that it has threads in its warp and woof. The mind is like that cloth. If you remove the threads from the warp, there will be no cloth. Likewise, when thoughts are removed the mind will be functionless. This process has been described as going beyond the mind.

"Chitta" is concerned with "chinta" (contemplation). Buddhi (intellect) is the power of discrimination. It is the Divine faculty by which one determines what is transient and what is permanent. "Ahamkara" is the identification of one's self with the bodily form. To regard the body as himself is "Ahamkara". Hence, the mind, the intellect, the will and the ego are all different facets of the mind. The different terms relate to the different roles played by the mind. "Antahkarana" does not refer to something distinct. All our sense organs are externally visible and function externally: the eyes, the ears, etc. The mind, the intellect and the will operate internally and are internal instruments. Therefore, they are called "Antahkarana" (internal Instruments). By renouncing the responses of the internal organs, the enjoyment of objects perceived by the external senses becomes a form of sacrifice. Hence, the first task is to purify the Antahkarana. This purification process calls for appropriate action. The Chitta cannot be purified except through right action. "Chithasya suddhaye karmah", declares the Veda. "Karma" (the prescribed actions) have to be done for purifying the mind. This means that one's actions ("Satkarmas") should be performed without the desire for the fruits thereof. There should be no trace of self-interest. This has been described as "Nishkama Karma" (desireless action). This is also termed enjoyment coupled with renunciation.

The Isavasyopanishad has expounded this form of action in various ways. One should not refrain from action ("Akarma"). Man has been endowed with a body for performing actions. Right action renders Time itself holy. Time is associated with duties (kartavyam). Proper use of Time, Right action and the performance of one's duties together constitute the primary goal of human life.

As against this truth, how is man utilising his life today? Perpetually he is steeped in selfish and self-centred pursuits. How, then, can he experience the enjoyment associated with sacrifice? Such selfishness converts enjoyment (bhoga) into a malady (roga). Man should aim at becoming a yogi and not a "bhogi" (pleasure-seeker). What really constitutes pleasure? Is it eating, drinking and indulging in sensual enjoyment? For protecting the body, food is doubtless necessary. Raiment is needed for protection against cold. But beyond these basic needs, to pamper the body is futile as it is essentially composed of decaying elements. Instead of pampering the body, man should use it in the service of the Lord.

In a sense, man is filled with diseases of every kind. Hunger is a disease for which the remedy is food. Thirst is a disease for which the cure is water. Even the desire for happiness is a disease. And the remedy for it is right action and chanting the name of the Lord. Man should seek to overcome "roga" (the diseases to which he is subject) by resorting to Yoga (spiritual discipline). The shastras have declared that the man who takes only one meal a day is a yogi. The man who takes two meals a day is a pleasure-lover ("Bhogi"). But the man who eats three times a day is a "rogi" (a sick man). One who eats four times a day is a living corpse. People spend most of their time in actions to fill the stomach and not in efforts to lead a happy and sublime life.

Live for ideals

Students! All things in the world are perishable including the body. But there is something which endures even after death. These are the ideals for which one has lived. You must all strive to lead ideal lives. It is these ideals which remain enshrined in the hearts of the people over generations.

You must realise that when you limit your desires, have the welfare of society in view, and seek to discharge your duties, you will be realising the objective of combining enjoyment with sacrifice. In fact, the bliss that is derived when one renders service to others is beyond measure. It is by such sacrifice that real joy is experienced. When anything is done in expectation of a return, such joy cannot be got.

Bear in mind two things. You must forget the good you have done to others. Remembrance of such good deeds gives rise to expectations of return or a feeling of envy. The other thing which you should forget is the harm done by others to you. Brooding over the harm done by others will only give rise to feelings of hatred and retaliation. Forgetting then and there the harm done by others will free the mind from evil thoughts.

The Bharatiya tradition has been based on four basic beliefs: (1) Every action has its inescapable results. (2) Belief in the role of Avatars. (3) No one can escape from the consequences of his actions. (4) A firm belief that there is something sacred in everything in the world. Purity, patience and perseverance are the requisites for accomplishing anything. Cultivate these three qualities. Students must embark on this exercise from now on and develop the habit of combining pleasure with sacrifice.

The true secret of enjoyment lies in sacrifice. Sacrifice has also been declared to be the only means of achieving immortality. Giving up what is taken in is a law of life. It applies to breathing, food and other things. Likewise, the wealth which one acquires should also be given back to society. Wealth includes not only riches, but every other form of acquisition including knowledge, scholarship, and skills of various kinds. The knowledge you have acquired through education should be imparted to others. It is by such sharing that your education gets enriched and purposeful. If you do not impart the knowledge you possess, it becomes useless. This means that the more you give, the more you grow.

Students! You are mostly interested in the process of development in life. But you should remember that simultaneously there is a process of decay at work. Every day that passes brings the ultimate end of life nearer. Hence everyone should seek to perform all his duties every day. Ramakrishna Paramahansa devoted his entire time from sunrise to late in the night on the contemplation of the Divine form of the Lord. Before going to bed he would look here and there and feel that yet another day had gone by without his having the vision of the Lord. Thus every moment of every day he experienced the anguish of lacking the vision of the Divine. The ancient sages experienced similar anguish in their penance for realisation of the Divine.

Good actions and good thoughts are necessary to achieve realisation of the Atma. Our body is like a wall-clock. It is when a large number of good acts are done by the body, represented by the movements of the second hand in the clock, that the mind represented by the minute hand, moves once. It is when the mind engages itself in pure thoughts that the Atma (the hour hand) experiences bliss

Experiencing the Divine

There are three basic things in the world: the earth, space (or ether) and light. These three are essential for sustaining the individual Jivi. Water and air provide the food. Without these five, life will be impossible. Where there is the Atma, you will find water and air. The Atma can exist without water or air, but water and air cannot exist without the Atma (the Divine). The Atma is eternal, immaculate, effulgent and all-pervading. It is not dependent on anything. It sustains and supports everything. The five basic elements are sustained by the Atma. They proclaim the glory of the Supreme (Paramatma). Every moment we enjoy the benefits derived from the five elements. If we have no air to breathe, we will be suffocated. Air is present all around us, but it is not visible to the eyes, nor can it be grasped by the hand. The Divine is equally all-pervading, but cannot be seen or held. It can only be experienced like sugar dissolved in water which cannot be seen or taken out, but can be tasted. When you experience the Divine by sadhana, it is equivalent to direct perception. Embarking on the process of Self-realisation, seeking to experience Divine bliss, performing the spiritual exercises prescribed for getting near to the Lord and merging in Him, when you develop selfless love, only then the Divine, who is the very embodiment of Love, will be experienced. Love will not grow in a field barren of love. Where love does not grow, the fruits of love cannot be gathered. That was why the Gopis prayed to Krishna to shower the nectar of His love on their parched hearts by playing on His flute. (Swami sang the song of the Gopis).

love. There is hatred between man and man. The world has to be redeemed through love.

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "*Prema muditha manase kaho.*")

From Bhagavan's discourse at the Summer Course in Brindavan, on May 24, 1991

Never Too Soon

There was once a miser who lived in a leaky house; the rainwater poured into the house through the roof but he sat through it all. Neighbours laughed at him and warned him to get the roof repaired. But in the rainy season he replied, "Let the rains subside, how can I repair it now?" And when the rains stopped, he replied, "Why should I worry about leaks now that the rains have stopped?" Do not suffer the leaks when the rains come, as they are sure to do; repair the roof now itself. That is to say, acquaint yourselves with the spiritual primers and textbooks now itself; begin the first lesson of silence, prayer, and chanting the Name of the Lord. It is never too soon in the spiritual realm.

—Baba ("*Chinna Katha*")

Faith and Certainty

There is a pressing need to repair the ideological basis for conflicting beliefs as long as sectarian fanaticism and bitter conflicts still masquerade under the name of religion. As an antidote to such dangerous convictions, critical doubt is praised in intellectual circles as the basis of a rational approach to life. Not least, methods of science are seen as more dependent on systematic doubt than on faith.

It has been said that the lack of doubts in a person is a pathological condition, like that of the psychopath who believes fully whatever he wishes! There is something to be said for this, for cock-sureness usually accompanies ignorance. On the other hand, severe mental illnesses also very often involve a near complete lack of faith in oneself and in the world... quite apart from faith in God. Faith is also a natural condition of the human being, whatever specific beliefs accompany it.

There can be a crucial difference between religious beliefs and having faith. *Belief* in any church or traditional doctrine has much to do with acceptance of various historical facts, such as through which texts or persons God has chosen to reveal the truth, or what teaching was actually meant. *Faith* in God, on the other hand, always requires faith in ourselves, not least because of our inherent divine qualities.

several removes from the source. Successive translations, loss and suppression of parts of the original and of the relevant historical facts often occurred even before the question arose of how to interpret and apply crucial points that are unclear to us in our situation. Which tenets of a teaching, or which system of interpretation one believes in, can therefore vary quite independently of what is here called 'faith'.

Belief versus faith

Faith is a fundamental natural capacity of the human, which is seen in the strong faith small children show. It is not necessarily dependent on any specific religious belief. It may even not require belief in any form of God, but instead be felt as purpose or meaning... a sense of something 'higher' which expresses itself through the greatest deeds of humanity.

It is notable that Westerners who have come to recognise Sathya Sai Baba as the world Avatar with the authority of the universal teacher, are frequently not adherents of any one religion or sect thereof but are of a faith that is rooted in a more universal spirituality. Many seem previously to have been either of wide spiritual interests and involvements and quite a few were previously proponents of some sort of sceptical but secular humanism involving faith in humankind.

Persons of great faith never claim to know everything, this being God's preserve; nor can they avoid uncertainty about various matters of this world—and not the least, of the next. False—certainty particularly the kind based only on written scriptures—only blinds faith and often compensates its lack of vision in the missionary's zeal to convert others. Since believing is not actually knowing, to believe something is to imply that the same thing could be doubted. Doubt is thus seen to be an ever-attendant shadow of belief. Faith, by contrast, is constancy in adversity and self-confidence despite tests and doubts, all based on some sort of intuition of Divinity. Faith faces one toward the sun to stride ahead without looking back at shadows.

Experience shows that, in trying to understand the tenets of a religion, a crisis of childhood *faith* often arises, particularly when unquestioning acceptance of rigid *beliefs* is enforced. As the child grows and enters the wider world of today, this rigidity induces mental conflict, emotional suffering and doubt in the unformed character which, if unsolved, undermines natural self-confidence (a necessary basis for faith) and weakens the overall strength of character.

Seeing, believing and knowing

Sri Sathya Sai Baba makes clear that seeing can lead to believing in respect of His miracles and experiencing the physical Form of the Avatar. On the other hand He has on occasions pointed out that seeing is not necessarily believing, because faith is always somehow a prior necessity in all things. Yet some people will even doubt the very evidence of their eyes.

The Christian scriptures state that when Thomas doubted Jesus's resurrection and said he could not believe until he had himself touched the wounds of Jesus, he was granted that faith by

that they are doubly blessed who can have faith 'without seeing'.

Those who can believe merely on hearsay, on the other hand, may instead have a weakness of judgement which makes them embrace erroneous beliefs and theories. The saying is still relevant "Some people will believe anything!" There are many in the West who capitalise on this fact by loudly proclaiming on T.V. and anywhere else that they have attained faith by an overnight turnabout from entire faithlessness. Such 'converts' tend to be very keen to press others into believing the same!

Zeal misplaced in set beliefs

If doubt can be dangerous, certainty of belief can be yet more so! Professor N. Kasturi expressed the reason for this most succinctly when he wrote that "the way of truth is paved with discarded certainties".

In any spiritual or religious movement there are tendencies towards a certain group conformism in belief, unthinking acceptance of opinions above and beyond what are strictly known to be true. This can take the form of either open or subtle moral censure against those who question, even with good intention and intelligently, matters that many adopt as sacrosanct. Such bigotry eventually gets itself a bad name.

There are unfortunately more than enough examples of genuinely inspired movements that have later become sects because of disagreement on points of belief. Great teachings have always been petrified into dogma by some adherents. This seems to be an ever-present danger and to avoid this continual efforts are needed on a wide front. It is a matter of striking a nice balance between taking great care over what one says, pronounces or repeats and answering doubts and questions openly, fairly and as truthfully as possible.

In any movement one finds those whose eagerness is greater than their abilities, whose show of knowing better than others exceeds their keenness for the facts. In spiritual circles there are those who believe in any imaginative ideas and who will pursue all manner of spiritual quasitechniques rather than exert themselves in critical self-examination and follow the teachings. Self-inquiries cannot avoid asking at a most deep level what it is they really know, and what, on the other hand, is honestly and after all only opinion, surmise, hope, wishful thinking and self-delusion. The line between appearance and reality or between the imaginary and truth that has to be drawn is, moreover, often a very fine one indeed.

To express with clarity what one may know so that it will not be misunderstood, and to make evident exactly to what it does and does not refer is a real hard task. Not least due to these difficulties, even what arises from authentic experience can degenerate into pseudo-belief when publicised. This helps to show the great need both for a certain reticence as to premature opinions and for harmony between thought, word and deed.

A change of heart increases the effort of self-inquiry and is not just temporary inspiration. Since all true learning is a gradual process, it is simply foolish suddenly to believe everything that one had only grounds to doubt yesterday.

Is not faith pre-tested in the crucible of experience and self-inquiry the less liable to waver or weaken in the face of worldly distractions and tests the saying 'faith can move mountains' expresses the value of determination. Perseverance is also based on faith, a power that can bear us 'unharmd' through the fire of suffering.

'To know' in its usual sense is only to hold an abstraction, to be a subject possessing a mental grasp and conviction about some object of thought. Whatever this know-how enables one to do in the material world, it is not at all like inner illumination, compared to which it is without taste or joy.

However indisputable or thorough knowledge of any matter anyone has, it is itself incapable of motivating any action whatever. To be moved enough to initiate any action or to find the will power (and in the case of good acts, the loving compassion) requires some kind of faith. It may be belief in the laws of nature, in another person, in society or in divinity working through inner awareness. Whether one realises it or not, all these are indirect forms of faith in God, who is (in) everything. As faith grows, so do intuition, conviction and insight. The result is an understanding that arises from the entire psyche, not merely some segment of one's experience and thought. When we meet such insightful faith in someone, it exhibits the inner conviction of genuine knowledge.

—*Robert Priddy, Oslo*

Swami and Projects

Recently, I along with a few others was favoured with an audience by Bhagavan. His opening remarks were about how hundreds of crores of rupees were being squandered in the name of projects. Considering that I alone among those present was involved with projects, and considering that I was due to speak the next day to the students of the University about the project t was working on, it was clear that Swami was sending me some signals.

Baba's critical observations often point to the disenchantment which the public at large feel, and it was obvious that He wanted me to tell His students how NOT to do a project, and what instead must be done to make it successful.

Projects need not and will not fail if purity, purpose and perseverance exist. Most of our projects are ridden with corruption, and if that is the case, how can they ever succeed? The need for purity is thus self-evident. As regards purpose, certainly every project starts with some aims

example, a steel plant project invariably means just setting up a factory. Very little is done to improve the technology, once the plant gets going. Over a hundred years ago Jamshedji Tata set up steel plants in the country but, alas, we continue to shop abroad for steel technology. *The real purpose of every project must be to build self-confidence.* Instead, we have progressively lost whatever little we once had of it. Today a product will sell well only when backed by a foreign collaborator. No wonder Swami lays so much emphasis on self-confidence and self-reliance. And lastly about perseverance. Hurdles and obstacles there always will be, particularly so in our country. But since we seldom exert enough to overcome them, it is not surprising that most of our projects drift and drag on for years.

I head a Research and Development laboratory involved in the design and development of a large computer. The need to build such computers arises because the advanced countries are not prepared (for their own reasons) to sell them to the developing countries, India in particular. We thus had a clear-cut goal and since we were trying to build something which was being denied by the powerful countries, clearly there was also an element of challenge. If met—and I think we have largely done so—it naturally leads to self-confidence. Certainly we feel very confident now and are ready to face our next project. In executing our computer project, I had the good fortune to lead a team of youngsters. Since youth is fired by idealism, we had no problem whatsoever with malpractices. Also, it was not difficult to motivate them, to make them persevere and overcome obstacles. In a nutshell, we have been able to achieve our target without any cost overrun, and with only a small time overrun.

Government projects are run by consulting "Swamy's guides"—I am referring to the numerous fat books on office procedure written by Muthuswamy! Instead, one should consult our Swami's guide which does not even fill one page. His rules are: *"Do not waste time. Do not waste money. Do not waste energy."* In a sense, these were our guidelines and if we have succeeded it is simply because we have followed Bhagavan's simple recipe.

—G. Venkataraman,
Director, ANURAG, Defence Research and Development Organization,
Govt. of India, Hyderabad

T. N. T.

Some may remember T.N.T. as being Tri-Nitro-Toluene or Dynamite, but in this article it stands for

Try Nice Thoughts
Turn to Nice Thinking
Think Nice Thoughts

which in its own way is a form of mild dynamite! It has the ability to make changes in our lives, improvements for the better, a potential for self-guidance and correction and accompanying realisation.

There are many times in our lives when we can let ourselves become despondent, thinking many negative thoughts. Inner Peace which we long for is placed further away.

Baba says: "Train the mind to disperse the clouds, rather than gather them. The sensory world is the cloud that hides the soul that ever shines in the firmament of your heart. The same mind that gathers clouds can disperse them in an instant." A further quote reminds us "Do not give despair a chance to eat into your vitals and mar activity and effort. When God is in you, why lose Hope?"

This reminds us once again that the potential to change our lives for the better is there as ` God is within us. ' One immediate way is to try nice thoughts, think nice thoughts and turn to nicer thoughts. When we think a silly thought, a thought which makes us feel ashamed—then recognise it and replace it with a better one—One of Hope, Cheer, Trust, Faith, Encouragement, Well-wishing etc... i.e., a positive one. We can do this anywhere, travelling, or at work, home or at play. It is the beginning of a change and the greater the sincerity behind it, the greater the effect.

—Robin Ball

(From the Quarterly Magazine of the U.K. Sathya Sai Council, July 1991)

“Sai Vandana”

The Life and Mission of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba have been the sacred subjects of numerous biographies and anthologies. Several distinguished citizens of the world have recorded their impressions of His glory in numerous books written in different languages. The Homage Volume entitled 'Sai Vandana' is a modest collection of writings in prose and poetry on Bhagavan Baba.

The glory of the Lord, in its various facets, has been presented by 108 contributors, who belong to all major religions and faiths—Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Parsees, Buddhists, Jews-hailing from various parts of the world. Though belonging to different religions of the world, they profess only one religion and that is the religion of love. They come from all walks of life, right from the Vice-President of India to Vice-Chancellors, Medical Specialists, Business Executives, Legal Luminaries, Scientists, Civil Administrators, high ranking Defence personnel, Ambassadors, Academicians and Faculty Members, students and Alumni of the Institute. They

member of the "Sai family".

As an index of their spontaneous response to the glory of the Lord as experienced by them, the contributors were specially requested to suggest titles for their articles. A glance through the fascinating list of the titles gives an indication of the range of the contributors' perspective of Lord Sai with myriad facets. Some of the titles are

He is God; Creator of the Cosmos; The Poorna Avatar; Sai Krishna; The Divine Manager; Sai Govinda; The Embodiment of Love; Sai Sakala Devata Swaroopa; Loving Master; The Sheet Anchor; The Sweet Leader; The Master Communicator; The Saviour; The Divine Current; The Divine Leader; The Divine Teacher; The Cause, Means and the End; The Giver; The Haven of All; The Mother; The Divine Helmsman; The Divine Taskmaster; The Divine Sculptor; The Supreme Catalyst; The Alchemist; True Companion; The One in All (and so on).

One is moved by the variety and range of experiences of different kinds, often unusual, sometimes incredible, related by the young and the old, men and women, boys and girls of various age-groups, under different circumstances and on various occasions, in all parts of the globe.

As the Editor of this Volume, it was a moving experience for me the like of which I have never had during my life to carefully read through, the inspiring accounts of Bhagavan's Divinity in its various facets. Devotion apart, the words, sentences and phrases, through which the experiences and feelings have been articulated, created a music of their own to heighten their effect.

The above are extracts from the "Introduction" by Prof. S. N. Saraf to the Homage Volume entitled "Sai Vandana", brought out by the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning on the occasion of the 65th Birthday of its Chancellor, Bhagavan Baba. Copies are available from Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust, Prasanthi Nilayam - 515134. Price Rs. 90.

"Asatho maa sad gamaya; thamaso maa jyothir gamaya; mrityor maa amritham gamaya", this is the Santhimantra. The meaning of this mantra is given variously by various people, some elaborately, some succinctly.

"O Lord, when I am deriving happiness through the objects of this world, make me forget the unreal objects and show me the way to permanent happiness", this is the first prayer.

"O Lord, when the objects of the world attract me, remove darkness which hides the all-pervading Atma, which every such object really is". This is the second prayer.

*awareness of the Effulgence of the Atma, immanent in every object." This is the third prayer.
This is the real meaning of the Mantra.*

—Baba

*'Tis the Voice that rose above the horrid din of sword on scalp,
And the hiss of arrowed hate—to teach the foemen
That the killer does not kill, nor the dying, die.
'Tis the Voice that stilled the stormy waves which dared refuse to calm;
'Tis the Voice that drew the meek, the mighty and the proud,
To the Feet that pastured cows on fluty melody sweet.
'Tis the Voice that echoed on the Mount and thrilled the desert dunes.
'Tis the Voice that booms along through the canyons of Time;
Through the endless star-strewn dome and caverns of womb and tomb.
'Tis the Voice that we hear while silence reigns, within,
Or despair darkens, heart-strings break, or the Day of Wisdom dawns.
'Tis the Voice that tinkles soft inside the shrine of inmost I;
'Tis the Voice that urges the fledgling to fly, the cell to grow, the mesons swirl,
The grass to put on green, the peacock splendour spread.*

—N. Kasturi

SUMMER SHOWERS IN BRINDAVAN:

GURUDEV VANI:

The Divine and the Cosmos

*The trees yield fruits for the benefit of others;
The rivers carry water for helping others;
Cows give milk to benefit others;
The body is given to man to help others*

Embodiments of the Divine Atma!

Trees produce fruits for the enjoyment of others. They have such sacred feelings. Rivers carry water to meet the needs of others. They don't consume the water they carry. All their water is offered for the benefit of the world. In a spirit of helpfulness, cows offer their milk to the people. They do not consume their milk. However, man, forgetting that he has been endowed with a body for rendering help to others, is immersed in selfish concerns and pursues narrow ends. Man today does not exhibit even a thousandth part of the spirit of selfless help to others shown by trees, rivers or cows.

From sunrise to sunset, man today is steeped in selfish pursuits. All the ills afflicting people today stem from this selfishness. To be concerned about one's self-interest is understandable. But, as the saying goes, nothing great can be achieved without observing appropriate restraints and limits. There must be a clear limit to selfishness. In the absence of such limits, divinity eludes man. Man does not try even to be human in his way of living. When man becomes truly

not exist, is the Reality. God is the only Reality and there is nothing in the world which is not pervaded by God." (Poem)

God is immanent in the entire cosmos. The Universe does not exist apart from God. "Viswam Vishnumayam Jagath" (The Universe is permeated by the Lord). "Sarvam khalu idam Brahma" (Verily, all this is Brahman). "Isavasyam idam sarvam" (All this is pervaded by the Lord). The universe is not different from God. The Prasnopanishad expatiates on this cosmic unity.

In every object (padartham) there is a Divine element (paraartham). Without this Divine basis, no object will be cognisable. A being without life is as good as non-existent. Likewise, any object which lacks a divine base is worthless. The divine element is the basis. The material form is gross. The divine is the basis of the physical substance.

Viewed from the physical point of view, these two appear to be contradictory. But viewed from the spiritual point of view, it will be apparent that there is no material object without a divine basis, no living being without the vital force and no inert substance without consciousness.

Spirit and matter

A living creature proclaims its existence by the Life-Principle in it. There is life in matter and matter in life. This truth has been recognised by the Vedic sages and modern scientists in the concept of the convertibility of matter and energy.

The Prasnopanishad has pointed out how the essential one-ness of Siva-Shakti represents the unity of the Divine. Hence, there is no basic difference between the revelations of the scriptures and the discoveries of science.

Generally it is considered that the natural sciences are concerned only with matter. Metaphysics is regarded as being concerned with things spiritual. But the physical and the metaphysical are Inextricably related to each other. The unique greatness of the Upanishads consists in proclaiming this basic unity.

It is unfortunate that in these days the Upanishads are regarded as spiritual texts which are not concerned with physical phenomena. Many consider that spirituality has no concern with mundane affairs. Equally, they consider that there is no connection between the physical world and the realm of the Spirit. This is a grievous mistake. One is the base and the other is sustained by it. One is life (prana) and the other is the living being (prani). The cosmos is the synthesis in consciousness of these two (Spirit and matter).

God and the universe

To ignore this universe and to concern yourself with only the Spirit is a form of narrow-mindedness. You have to develop the conviction that the Divine and the Universe are

Nor can one recognise any truth. The universe is the basic cause of ideas relating to what is Real and what is unreal. It is impossible to accomplish anything if the world is discarded. Basing yourself on the physical world, you have to aspire for realising the Divine. If you want to realise the Divinity in man, you have to understand the nature of the human estate.

Once upon a time, six young students, who were keen to learn about the mystery of existence and the true purpose of human birth and to investigate the goals of life, came to the sage Pippalada. Prostrating before the sage in all humility, they asked the sage: "Oh Maharishi! What is the cause of creation of the Cosmos? What is the primary purpose of human life?" They appealed to the sage to clear their doubts and teach them the truth.

Pippalada's advice to students

Pippalada said: "It is your good fortune that you have developed this desire for the highest wisdom. But, for undertaking any task, one has to have the minimum competence. Without that competence, even the answers I give will be beyond your comprehension. Even for doing the smallest task, one has to acquire the requisite fitness. If one wants to prescribe a medicine for a patient, he has to be a qualified doctor. If one wants to build a bridge, he must be a qualified engineer. This applies equally to every undertaking in the world. Therefore, while your desire is commendable, you have to prepare yourselves at the outset by preliminary studies relating to the processes of investigating the truth about the real and the unreal. Don't be in a hurry, because haste is inimical to the discovery of truth and results in waste of time and energy. The purpose of life is implicit in the fact of human birth. You must cultivate patience to discover the purpose of life. Therefore, stay in the ashram for some time, observing its disciplines."

After the lapse of a year, Kabandhi, the son of Katya Maharishi, approached sage Pippalada and said: "Sire, I have stayed here for quite some time. My doubts have grown. I appeal to you to clear the doubts and confer peace of mind on me." He asked the sage: "Who is the primal author of this creation? Who is the creator of these innumerable living beings?"

The creative process

Pippalada smiled at the youth and replied: "Dear son! These are the progeny of Prajapati." Kabandhi felt disappointed with the answer. He said: "Swami! You state that Prajapati is the creator of living creatures. Who is this Prajapati?" Pippalada replied: "Food is Prajapati. It is through food that human birth takes place." "What is the root cause of food?" "Varuna", replied the sage. "It is because of Varuna, crops grow and food becomes available".

The sage told him: "Your conduct is of primary importance. The results are based on the nature of your actions like smoke from fire, rain from the clouds and the harvest from the rain. The nature of the human being depends on the nature of the food he consumes".

When the sage was asked what was behind this process, he explained: "The Sun represents life (Prana). The moon represents inert matter. The combination of Life and Matter is the cause of creation."

In the universe, both matter and consciousness (Chaitanya) are self-existing. Likewise, life and the living being exist naturally. The unity of these two accounts for the creative process.

The sun is ever shining effulgently. The sun's rays enter the digestive process (represented by the Jataragni—the digestive fire). For every object in the world, whether it is a tree or a mountain or a living creature, the sun's rays are essential for its existence. These rays contain the Life-Force. It is through this Life-Force that creation goes on. It is this Life Force that sustains the cosmos. Sage Pippalada declared that the Sun is the primary cause of creation, growth and dissolution.

The sage observed that very few students were interested in making the enquiry about the fundamental goal of human life. Most men were content to regard eating, sleeping etc. as the be-all and end-all of life. This is wrong. The true goal of human life is to discover what is right and what is wrong, to lead a life of righteousness and to share the fruits of such a life with others. An ideal student should follow the example of the fish, which removes the dirt in the water and purifies it. He should plunge into society, remove the evils afflicting it and stand out as an ideal example to others.

Students and society

Students should also realise that they have to face the difficulties and challenges of life. Nothing worthwhile can be achieved without strenuous and difficult efforts (Bhagavan related a story about a gardener who felt depressed over the drudgery of his life after a trivial domestic quarrel. The mud pot, which he used for carrying water on his head to water the plants in the garden, hearing his lament, told him that without going through severe ordeals nothing great can be achieved. It pointed out the lesson to be drawn from its own career from a despised lump of clay to a pot carried on the head of man. This was possible because it was pressed and moulded into a pot and burnt in a kiln before it emerged as a pot.)

The body has been given to man to face all difficulties. There is no need for man to bemoan his weakness. He is indeed endowed with the capacity to overcome the difficulties he encounters in life. Only because he is unaware of his strength, he feels overwhelmed by difficulties. Students must be ever prepared to face with courage every challenge in life. Courage is the key to success. Life is bound to offer all kinds of difficulties. You should not quail before them. Face every ordeal with fortitude. It was this kind of courage that sage Pippalada taught to his disciples.

Students get easily depressed and confused when they encounter nowadays difficulties. Depression leads to frustration. This is not the way to face the challenges of life. They should develop the courage to go through the adventure of life. Adhering to truth, cherishing love in their hearts, cultivating fortitude, students should develop firm determination and a steady vision. Such a life will result in fulfillment. The rewards of life can be got only through strenuous effort, just as sugar can be got from sugarcane only after crushing it and processing the juice.

crushing, etc. which the cane undergoes before sugar is produced. It is through the difficulties one experiences that the sweet juice of divinity manifests in man. This sweetness is all.

The three stages

In the world men drift along without making proper enquiry about the meaning and purpose of life. That is why the Gita indicated how man should undertake this enquiry. It pointed out three stages "Jnaathum, Drashtum, Praveshtum." "Jnaathum" refers to the first stage of ascertaining the objective. Without this knowledge, there is no meaning in undertaking anything. One has to find out what is to be sought, from where and from whom and how it is to be got. Even when a person wants to enjoy a mango all these enquiries have to be made before the mango can be got and eaten. After getting the knowledge of where mangoes are available—which is the stage of "Jnaathum"—one sees the fruit in the market. This is "Drashtum" (seeing). After buying the fruit, you start eating it—this is the stage of "Praveshtum". It is only when all the three stages are gone through that one realises one's objective and achieves fulfillment. Students should realise that whatever is their objective, they should approach knowledgeable persons and seek to know from them all about their objective. You should not arrogate to yourself that you are all knowing. In fact, in the world today even what the greatest scientist knows is only a miniscule part of the totality of knowledge.

Students should recognise the unique importance of the "Prasnopanishad". All the doubts felt today are answered in this Upanishad.

The students of the old days were highly dedicated and disciplined young men, who controlled their senses and led a life of renunciation in the quest for understanding the highest truth. Today the students' minds are running in all directions. Their aspirations vary from hour to hour. One's true goal should not change with time. One should pursue the goal with firm resolve. This calls for control over the senses. Students should strive to become masters of their senses.

The disciples of the sages in the old days had the devotion, the discrimination and the determination, which enabled them to realise divinity. True devotion calls for readiness to sacrifice one's all for what he values. You have to develop total commitment to whatever task you take up. When work is done in this spirit, it becomes worship

You have to use your discrimination properly to determine what is right and act accordingly, uninfluenced by considerations of expediency or self-interest. In exercising your freedom of action, you have to show due regard for the equal right to freedom of others. Never dissipate your energies. They must be used for the sacred purposes for which they have been given to you. Bear in mind that you will be the future rulers of this country. How much knowledge and ability are required to govern a country like ours. You have to acquire all the qualifications for such tasks. Instead of acquiring the requisite skills, students fight for "rights". How can "rights" be divorced from responsibilities? Rights flow from the due discharge of responsibilities. As students, you have to keep in mind your duties to your parents, to society, to the nation and to life itself. When you discharge these duties, your rights will be automatically ensured.

The inner vision

In his answers to the questions put by the six students who approached him, the sage Pippalada revealed to them what were the primary goals of life and how they should conduct themselves. In this Kali age, owing to the perversions of time, place and circumstances, students are prone to ignore the promptings of their inner conscience and act in response to external impressions. They must develop the inner vision to achieve a balanced attitude.

The world needs today the services of students dedicated to ideals. The external environment is highly polluted. But if you keep your hearts pure, you can cleanse these Impurities and transform the environment. Develop Self-confidence for this purpose. The rest will follow—Self-satisfaction, Self-sacrifice and Self-realisation. At the basis of all these is the awareness of the Self, the Atma-Principle. Pippalada taught the students that this awareness should be their primary objective. In that awareness, the identification with the body consciousness goes and the oneness of the Atma in all is realised. This is the message of the Prasnopanishad.

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajans, "Govinda Hare! Gopala Hare!" and "Waahe Guru! Waahe Guru!")

From Bhagavan's discourse at the Institute Auditorium at Brindavan, 26-5-1991

AVATAR VANI:

GURUPOORNIMA SANDESH:

Discover the God within You

Embodiments of Divine Love!

What appears to the eyes, whatever reaches the ears, whatever occurs in the mind, whatever moves the heart—all these are capable of deluding the person. The whole cosmos is an expression of the combination of the seen (Drishya) and the Seer (Drashta). Brahman (the Absolute) is the Seer. Creation is a manifestation of the union of the Seer and the Seen.

"In this land of Bharat the ancient sacred relationship between Preceptor and pupil has vanished. The treasure of Truth and Self-discipline has been lost. Faith in God and devotion have declined. Assertion of freedom without responsibility has grown beyond bounds. Wealth has become the sole aim, and righteousness has receded to the background. What else can I convey to you, oh good and noble people assembled here?" (Poem)

In this vast universe, wherein there are innumerable things which have to be learnt, what is the inner reason for the emphasis placed by Vedanta on the search for the meaning of the word

infinite Atma, he will be able to comprehend everything else in the world. "Yadvijnanena sarvam vijnaatham bhavati" ("Knowing That by which all else becomes known") is the declaration of the Shruti (the Veda). When man is able to understand the meaning of "I", he will be in a position to understand everything.

"Aham" in the Gita

"Janma karmacha mey divyam" ("Birth and action are My Divine aspects"). This is stated in the Gita. "Maamaiveshyati Arjuna" ("You will attain Me, oh Arjuna!") "Aham twa sarvapabheyo mokshayishyaami maa suchaha!" ("I will liberate you from all sins, do not grieve I") In the Gita in a number of places you have references to "I" and "me". In the great scriptures and epics, you find the statement: "Swaavimarso mokshah" ("The enquiry into the Self leads to Liberation"). All scriptures enjoin: "Know thyself."

In the world, when anyone introduces himself, he declares: "I am Ranga", "I am Linga", "I am Rama", and so on. Even animals and birds use the term "I" in their own respective language to indicate what they are—whether a fox or a dog, a leopard or a tiger, an eagle or a parrot. "I" runs like a continuous thread in a garland in all beings, whatever their name or form.

Hence, every man has to recognise the significance of this ubiquitous term "I". Unfortunately, man is becoming a prey to innumerable difficulties by identifying this "I" with the body.

"I am not this"

The Shruti (Veda) declares: "Aham ethath na" ("I am not this"). The Shruti teaches in this statement that the "I" is different from the form. The Shruti also teaches the profound truth about "Sat-Chit-Ananda" (Being-Awareness-Bliss).

In the statement, "I am not this", there are three distinct terms: "I", "am not", "this". What is the "I"? On the authority of the Vedas, the "I" has been described under various names as "Atma", "Brahmam", "Paramatma", "Pratyagatma", and the like. It must be noted that this "I" is present in every man as "Vaishwanara". In the form of "Vaishwanara", the "I" principle digests the food taken by a person and, converting into blood, circulates it to every part of the body. Thus, in the Gita, Krishna declared: "Aham Vaishwanaro Bhutvaa praaninaam dehamaasritah Praanaapaana Samaayuktah Pachaamyannam chaturvidham" ("Assuming the form of Vaishwanara, I enter the bodies of all living beings and through the Prana and Apana life-breaths consume the four kinds of food.") "I am present as Vaishwanara in every human being", declares the Lord. The significance of the term Paramatma is that He is the one who transcends the senses of action and perception, the mind, intellect, will and Ahamkara (the ego). The Paramatma Principle is envisaged as Brahmam (the Supreme Absolute). Brahmam is characterised by all-pervasiveness. The "I" principle is present in every human being. This omnipresent "I" is Brahmam. "I" is, therefore, a manifestation of Brahmam.

universe. "This is a mike", "This is a vessel", "This is a cloth", "This is a fan", "This" is used when referring to the sun, the moon, hill or dale. The inner meaning of the use of the term "This" is that it refers to everything that can be perceived. If a pointed reference is not made by the use of "This", the question will be asked to what one is referring when using a word like "cloth". By stating that "This is cloth", the precise object is indicated. Thus, in all objects, "This" is present as an all-pervading quality. "This" is the Seen (*Drishya*). "I" is the Seer (*Drashta*). It follows that the 'seer' is not the 'seen'. "I am not the body; that is my vesture. Even as I see other things, I am also seeing my body." (This is how one should recognise the distinction between the seer and the seen). If this logic is understood, is it not a sign of ignorance to identify the body with the "I"? The body is like other perceived objects. Hence, to identify the body with one's Self is preposterous.

"You are not the body"

In the states of dream, deep sleep, and Samadhi, one is not aware of the body. Hence, you are not the body. You are the *drashta* (the seer). In this vast creation, with its myriad forms and names, there is one basic principle sustaining all of them. It is from this basic principle, everything else has emerged. Nothing can be installed without a base. A variety of ornaments are made from gold. The ornaments may vary in form and name, but their basic substance is the same—gold. The gold remains even when the jewels are melted. The yellow metal itself remains unchanged. Likewise, for the world of perception (with its myriad names and forms) the "seen" (*drishya*), the seer (the "I" principle) (*drashta*) is the basis (*adhishtaanam*). Hence, the commonly used term "I" (*nenu*, in Telugu) should not be interpreted in a superficial sense. "I am the Atma (the Spirit)". It is only when man recognises this basic truth can he overcome the troubles he encounters in the phenomenal world, and experience real bliss (*Ananda*). All the myriad forms cannot be perceived without a perceiver. Therefore, the basic truth underlying all the forms is the existence of the perceiver (the "I").

The first sound that emanates from every man and from all beings is "I". "I" is anterior to *Pranava* ("Om"). But just because the "I" is in common use and is part of the daily experiences of everyone, it tends to be treated as a cheap cliché. Because of this tendency, man becomes a prey to innumerable troubles and difficulties.

The actor and his role

You must remember that the divinity in man is not divisible or separable. For instance, take the case of an actor called Rama who was appearing in the role of *Hiranyakasipu*. When he appeared on the stage, the stage director asked him "Who are you?" In his garb as *Hiranyakasipu*, he was oblivious to his original name Rama. In stentorian language he answered: "Don't you know that I am the all-powerful, universally dreaded monarch of the world, *Hiranyakasipu*? Don't you know that I have mastered my senses and control everything in the world?" He answered boastfully in this manner.

The actor was Rama. The role he was playing was that of *Hiranyakasipu*. It was one and the same person who was playing two roles—as Rama and as *Hiranyakasipu*. The *Jiva* (individual)

"There is a supreme puppeteer who runs the puppet show using the individuals as dolls." (Poem)
The actor Rama in the role of Hiranyakasipu on the stage is recognised only as Hiranyakasipu by the audience. Similarly all human beings with their different names and forms are playing different roles on the stage of life. But the one indwelling principle in all of them is the Atma. Forgetting this basic truth about the inherent divinity of man, believing in the manifold forms and vestures worn by human beings, men are involving themselves in numerous difficulties.

Presence of the Divine

When you find out who is the person who has put on the garb for a certain role, you will discover the transient nature of the role. In every man, the all pervading Divine is present. When one becomes aware of the Divine (in him), he becomes the Divine itself ("Brahma. vid Brahmaiva bhavathi"). "Brahmavidyaath aapnothi Param." ("Through the knowledge of the Brahmam, one attains the Supreme.") "Tharathi Atmavith sokam." ("The knower of the Atma overcomes sorrow.") "Neha naanaasthi kinchit." ("There is no multiplicity here.") Only the One abides. "Ekameva Adviteeyam." ("There is only One and no second.") These are the truths declared by the Vedas. Because man has ignored these Vedic truths, he is forgetting his true divine nature.

Man should endeavour to know that by knowing which everything else is known. For instance, if the nature of clay is known, all about objects made from clay can be known. Clay is in a mud-pot, but the mud-pot is not in the clay. The pot is an artificial product. Likewise, what is perceived (drishya) is in the perceiver (drashta), but the perceiver is not in what is perceived.

Many names for "I"

Recognise the fact that you are the seer. This seer (drashta) is known by many names. In the waking state, he is the cogniser in all beings, and hence is called "Viraat Swaroopa" (The Cosmic Person. As he is engaged in a variety of activities, he is also termed "Vyavaharika." On account of the attachment to every object in the world, he is also called "Vishwam."

In the dream state also, the "I" is known by different names. He is known as the creator of dreams. As the mind alone functions in this state, he is known as "Pratyagaatma". Moreover, as he is seeking to attain a higher state by a process of enquiry and questioning, he is also known as "Chitta-ekaagratah" (the one-pointed enquirer).

In the deep sleep state, because of the potency of the Antahkarana (the Inner Motivator) the "I" is liable to comprehend everything and therefore is called "Taijasah" or "Prajna."

Although the universe is filled with innumerable objects, with different forms and names, the one thing that is present in all of them is the "I". The "I" principle is omnipresent.

"Aham" and the atma

"Aham" is the primary sound that emanates from one and all equally. When you call anyone by his name—Rama, Krishna or Vijay—the response is: "I". This common expression emanating

"I"-consciousness. The expression "I" is used by a yogi or a bhogi (pleasure-lover), by a mendicant or a millionaire.

Every man has to understand the inner significance of the "I". He uses the expressions: "This is my body; this is my house", and so on. But who are you? Without knowing who you are, how have these relationships arisen? When you say, "My body", the body must be different from you. It follows that you, are not the body. The body is an object, of perception (drishya). The senses, the mind, the chitta and the Antahkarana are all the "seen" (drishya). The "I" is the seer. This is the truth proclaimed by Vedanta.

What is Vedanta? It is not mouthing some abracadabra, using abstruse words without knowing their meaning. Awareness consists in recognising one's true self. Failure to recognise one's self is ignorance (marupu). Awareness is Brahman. Viewing the world as apart from Brahman is ignorance. To be awake in all the states of consciousness is "Awareness". This is the true meaning of Awareness (eruka). Vedanta has declared that constant integrated Awareness in all the states is realisation of the Self.

The wisdom that "I am the Atma" should blossom in every human being. It is only when this wisdom dawns that man can have direct experience of the Divine. Therefore, everyone should try to manifest the divinity within him.

Giving up of desires

In the Bhagavata Gita, Krishna called upon Arjuna to renounce all Dharmas and seek refuge in Him alone ("Sarvadharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja",). What is meant by "Dharmas"? In the present context, Dharma refers to the specific quality of each object. Heat, for instance, is the Dharma of fire in a burning charcoal. Without heat, it is mere charcoal. Sweetness is the "Dharma" (natural quality) of sugar. Without sweetness, it ceases to be sugar. It becomes sand. Likewise, there is a "Dharma" (natural tendency) for man. What is it? Desire for things. It is natural for man to multiply his desires. "Sarvadharmān parityajya" means giving up all desires. This is also called "Vairagya" (detachment or renunciation). Today man has lost his mental bearings because of the limitless growth of desires. As a result man behaves like an intoxicated person. Desires have to be kept under control. Animals are content to satisfy their hunger. But man's appetite for eating and enjoying is insatiable. Animals and birds do not indulge in exploitation or hoarding, while man revels in them, forgetting his true human nature.

With regard to desires, it should be noted that besides excessive desires, man is prone to cherish wrong desires. Men today tend to forget their own parents to whom they owe everything in life. The man who forgets his obligations to his parents is a veritable demon (a Kaliyuga rakshasa). Persons who do not have this elementary human quality of gratitude to parents, how are they going to remember God? This is the mark of the Kali Age.

In the waking state, the "I"-consciousness is present in its fullness. In the dream state, it is present only to the extent of 50 percent. In the Sushupti state (of deep sleep) it is present in its complete subtle form. Men should not allow themselves to be carried away by the temporary roles they play in life like the actor in the role of Hiranyakasipu on the stage. They must realise their true human self. Egoism, pride, ignorance, slander and other bad qualities are the cause of misery for man.

Embodiments of the Divine Atma! Recognise this essential truth: Give up your selfishness and self-centredness. How long can you be immersed in selfish concerns, forgetting other essential things? All things have to be given up sooner or later, including the world (jagat). The word "jagat" itself means that which comes and goes. To regard these ephemeral things as permanent is a mark of ignorance.

You are the truth. The role assumed by you is not true. All the acting you do and all your experiences are not true. They are illusory. It is only when one can get rid of the delusion (to regard the temporary as the permanent) can one experience the Brahman.

The Divine guru

Embodiments of Divine Love! This is Gurupoornima day. What is its inner significance? There is no guru other than the One Divine. As long as you consider yourself a mere human being, you may regard yourself as a disciple. But when you realise that you are the embodiment of the Atma you become your own Guru.

In going after gurus and teachers, men are deluding themselves and forgetting Brahman. Seek refuge in yourself Recognise your Reality. That is the right path. And that is the way to revere the Guru.

Prahlada expostulated with his father, Hiranyakasipu: "You claim to have conquered all the three worlds and acquired mastery over the elements. But what is all your power worth when you have not mastered your senses?" This applies equally to the scientists and scholars of today. They have mastered many subjects, but have not learnt the real science of living. They are caught up in the pursuit of mundane objects. The truly great man is the one who has mastery over his senses and mind. A man with a good heart is more likely to be helpful to mankind than a hundred intelligent scholars. A scholar with no compassionate heart is a pitiable person.

Craze for foreign studies

Many of our young people are going abroad. What for? To beg (for jobs). Why not do the begging here itself? Can this be called higher education? What do they learn by going abroad? They return filled with bad qualities, bad thoughts and bad habits. Should thousands of rupees be spent for this purpose? It is better to live here as a man of character than go abroad to acquire undesirable qualities. Why make your parents spend tons of money only to foul your brain? Such persons, who bring a bad name to their parents, are better dead than alive. Such conduct is totally unworthy of those who call themselves Bharatiyas. If you describe yourself as Bharatiya, you

wisdom.

All that you want to learn can be got in Bharat itself. There is nothing that cannot be had in Bharat. Bharat has been the provider for the rest of the world. What is bought from India at a low price is sent back in attractive package at a very high price. We are falling a prey to meretricious attractions.

Bharat—the land of avatars

Realise the greatness of Bharat. Remember that all avatars have incarnated in this sacred land. We are unable to appreciate the greatness of our country. We ought to be proud of our sacred motherland and lead a life in tune with its greatness. Alas, it is not so. Indeed, foreigners are coming to Bharat to gather all that is glorious in our land while we are going after the soiled garments of the foreigners. How unbecoming is this of those who call themselves Bharatiyas!

Every Bharatiya should regard himself as the embodiment of the Atma (the Spirit). Doubtless, people in all lands are equally embodiments of the Atma. But most of them are not able to realise this truth. Bharatiyas are able to recognise this truth because of the heritage of their great scriptures.

Embodiments of Divine Love! Strive to recognise the Truth. Enquire into the Vedic declaration: "You are the Atma." Embark on this self-enquiry. Put into practice what you have learnt. Only then you will understand your true nature.

The term "Nenu" ("I") is not just a simple two-letter word. It has countless meanings. It does not refer to the transient body. The "I" is the Eternal Witness present in all beings. All worldly knowledge relates to the senses, which are transient. Hence such knowledge has no permanent value. The real Truth emanates from the heart. What is received from the external returns to the external. Man is not a product of the external world. He has come from the Divine. "You are Divine". Develop this conviction.

Man means one who has faith. When you live upto your faith, it gets confirmed. It is because men do not act up to their beliefs that their faith is on the decline.

Man is derived from the Divine, is sustained by the Divine and has to merge in the Divine. That is the goal of man. Man is not a petty being, nor is he a weakling or a destitute. He is the most powerful being on earth, You have to take up sadhana on the strength of this belief. (Swami sang a song of Purandaradasa in which he says: "How can I consider myself poor when the Lord Sri Hari, is within me? You are my all. I am in you and you are in me"). Bharat has had innumerable such great saints who had firm faith in God. They are not remembered today.

At least from now on, develop sacred thoughts and lead noble lives. Esteem yourselves as the children of immortality. Divinise your thoughts, words and deeds. (Bhagavan sang a ballad in which He urged devotees to learn the truth about their Divine essence after coming to Sai).

Treat the body as an Instrument for realising the Divine, by engaging yourself in all sacred actions. Contemplation on the Divine is the only way to achieve this. Continuous contemplation leads to God-realisation.

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "*Hari bhajana binaa sukha santhi nahi*".)

From Bhagavan's discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium on 26-7-1991

SUMMER SHOWERS IN BRINDAVAN:

GURUDEV VANI:

Birth: Rebirth: Freedom

*Like the reflection that does not adhere to the mirror,
Like the water on the lotus leaf that is unattached to it,
Sins do not adhere to the man of devotion.*

*Birth and death revolve together
Like the two wheels of a cart;
If one goes, Creation itself will come to a stop;
This is the secret of Creation on earth.*

Students! Embodiments of Divine Love!

"Ekoham Babusysam" ("I am One; let me become manifold.") By the divine will of Prajapati, two pairs were created; the subtle and the gross, the inert and consciousness. By the union of the two, the entire cosmos, consisting of animate and inanimate objects, was created.

After Kabandhi had heard from the sage Pippalada the secret about the origin of creation, he felt extremely happy and satisfied.

Then, Bhargava from Vidarbha approached the sage and asked him reverentially: "The cycle of birth and death seems to go on endlessly. All the shastras declare that death is inevitable for everyone who is born, and birth is inevitable for everyone who dies. If life is bound up with the round of birth and death, when will this process end? What is the basis for it?"

Pippalada replied: "Son! God is without a beginning or an end. The entire cosmos consisting of moving and unmoving objects is *mithya* (illusory). Although there is the Real in the illusory universe, all that is perceived in the phenomenal world is liable to pass away.

"The sun is responsible for the phenomena of night and day, of days, months and years. These are fragments of Time. All phenomena relating to Time are associated with Prajapati (the cosmic progenitor). Time is a manifestation of Prajapati. Time moves in two directions—Uttarayana and—Dakshinayana. 'Ayana' means journeying. When the apparent movement of the sun is northwards, the period is termed Uttarayana. When the apparent movement is southward, it is called Dakshinayana. The period of Uttarayana is marked by brightness, peace, rejoicing, fearlessness, and purity. Dakshinayana is characterised by darkness, peacelessness, fear and disasters. Spiritual sadhakas who perform yagas and yajnas during Dakshinayana reach the moon. The moon is inert and those who go to the moon realise only physical pleasures and material possessions. They cannot realise God. They stay on the moon according to the merit earned by them and when it is exhausted, they return to the earth, as declared in the Gita. "Ksheene punye marthyalokam visanthi." ("When their merit is exhausted, they enter the land of mortals.") This may be likened to the exit of an elected legislator from the legislature at the end of his five-year term. The man who has performed meritorious deeds spends the allotted time in the Land of the Moon and then is reborn on earth.

The one who performs spiritual actions during Uttarayana, with concentration on the Brahman and devotion to the Absolute, goes to the Land of the Sun (after death). The Land of the Sun is Prana (the Life-Principle). After reaching the Solar region, the person has no rebirth. ("Punarjanma na vidyathe") He does not return to the earth again.

Pippalada told Bhargava: "Life redeems itself only when it merges in Prana. As long as one's life is immersed in delusion, life itself remains a delusion. As long as delusion remains, the Absolute cannot be realised. The Absolute is realised by absorption in the Brahman, and then there is no rebirth."

The creative process

The five basic elements (ether, air, fire, water and earth) are like five feet for the Sun. The twelve months correspond to twelve seasons for the Sun. The passage through the twelve "houses" endows the Sun with seven colours. Every month has two halves—the Bright fortnight (Shukla paksha) and the Dark fortnight (Krishna paksha). During the Bright fortnight, the moon shines effulgently because of the direct illumination received from the Sun. On Full-moon night, it shines with all its sixteen aspects ("Kalas") illumined. On New Moon night (Amavasya) the moon receives no light from the Sun and hence it is totally dark. The fortnight after the full moon, when the moon starts waning, is called Krishna paksha, the Dark fortnight. The fortnight after New Moon (Amavasya) when the moon goes on waxing is called Shukla paksha, the Bright fortnight. Shukla paksha is Life (Prana) and Krishna paksha is Prani (the living being). The entire cosmos is made up of the combination of Prana (the Life-breath) and Praani (the container of the Life-breath). All these are manifestations of the creative power of Prajapati. "The One willed to become the many." This process can be recognised in the manner in which a seed planted in the earth grows into a huge tree which yields fruits in which there are thousands of seeds from which many more trees come into existence. The same process can be seen in the proliferation of living creatures.

Creation has, therefore, no predetermined limits. It is an eternal process whose beginning or end cannot be known. In the process of birth, growth and dissolution, besides the will of the Lord, the role of human effort can also be recognised to a certain extent. Man's destiny is determined by the nature of his actions, thoughts and desires. In this process, man forgets the Divine source from which he has come. Developing demoniac tendencies and behaving like an animal, man wastes his human existence.

Freedom from rebirth

Pippalada told Bhargava: "Dear Son! Death exists as well as birth. But man has the capacity to free himself from rebirth. He is the architect of his ultimate goal. Take, for instance, the example of a green-gram seed. When it is sown, it sprouts into a plant and produces numerous pods with green-gram peas. It does not know the origin of its existence as a green-gram seed or the history of its ancestors. But when you put a seed in your mouth and munch it, its life comes to an end. Likewise, we do not know our origin, but we can determine our future. No one can tell how man came into existence and the circumstances of his origin. But his future is dependent on the sadhanas performed by him. When life is given up during the Northward journey of the Sun, with your thoughts centred on Brahman, with love of Brahman in your heart, and with an awareness of the Brahman, you can become one with the Divine. Freedom from rebirth follows the complete shedding of all desires. It is like removing the husk from a paddy grain. Without the husk, the rice grain will not grow. But as long as the husk is there in the paddy seed, it can become a plant and continue the process of reproducing itself.

Man without desires has no rebirth ("Punarjanma na vidyathe"). As long as the mind is filled with desires, there can be no escape from the chain of birth and death. When the desires are replaced by the Brahmic consciousness and the mind is emptied of all other thoughts, there will be no rebirth. "Oh Bhargava! You think that rebirth and death are beginningless and endless. This is not so. There is a way out of this recurring chain", declared Pippalada.

Then, a third disciple, Asvalaayana, approached the sage reverentially and asked: " Swami! What kind of vital elements sustain, nourish and support living beings from inside? Who is the foremost among these living beings? Each living being has various limbs. There appears to be a coordinating power which integrates the different functions of these limbs. What is this power?"

The individual's responsibility

Pippalada replied: "Son! From Aakasa (the ether), Vayu (air), Tejas (effulgence or fire), water and earth emerged in succession. The faculties corresponding to these elements are—speech, sight, hearing and thought (or mind). Controlling all of them is Prana (the Life-Force). The abode of this Life-Force is the body. The Life-Force operates using the body as its sanctum. It is timeless in its origin, but seeks an abode in a new body. In this body, the "Sahasrara Nadis" (nerves) enter all subsidiary organs and function throughout the body. In fact, there are 72 crores (710 million) of nerves in this body. Every one of these nerves is filled with the vital air called Vyana. Without it, the nerves will not function at all. The vital air called Udana is present in the upper vision. It keeps constant vigil over the good and bad actions of the

life is based upon one's actions. The scriptures, therefore, teach man not to succumb to difficulties or gloat over success but maintain equanimity in all situations. Neither difficulties nor successes are caused by others. Each one is responsible for his joy and sorrow. Out of mental weakness others may be blamed for one's condition, but in fact he alone is responsible for what he suffers or enjoys. One's own thoughts and actions are responsible for one's successes or failures, honour or ignominy, pleasure or pain. Whether one goes to heaven or hell or any other place, it is his own actions that are responsible. This is the function of the Udana vital air.

Actions and results

There are five kinds of vital airs or life-breaths (Pranas): Prana, Apana, Samana, Udana and Vyana. These five life-breaths are not only present in the body, but are cognisable in all the five basic elements, (Panchabhutas). The Prana life-breath is in the Sun. Apana issues from the earth. Samana emanates from Akasha (ether). Udana issues from Air (Vayu). Vyana arises from Fire (Agni). In these five elements, the five life-breaths are immanent. Close to each one of these life-breaths, the reflections of man's actions are present.

No one can easily explain the secret of creation. There is a shadow which closely follows every object. Likewise the reactions of each action of man closely follow the Prana life-breath. When the Prana (life-breath) leaves one body and enters another, the results of one's actions follow the Prana to the other body. The Prana enters another appropriate body in accordance with the results of the actions in the previous body. Hence, one can reach a worthy state in life only by doing good deeds and cherishing good feelings. "As you sow, so will you reap". You cannot get a mango fruit by planting a lemon seed.

Man may fancy that he is capable of achieving anything. But his achievements are solely related to the nature of his actions. The Creator sends each one at birth with a garland made of the results of his good and bad deeds in his previous birth. The scriptures exhort men to adhere to good thoughts and good deeds as the only way of realising a good life. The fruits of your actions will be reaped only by you and none else. You alone are responsible for your joys and sorrows. God is in no way responsible. He is only a witness. But if you pray to Him with all your heart and soul, the effects of all karmas will disappear like mist. Devotion will free man from the consequences of his deeds. If man devotes a small fraction of the enormous time he devotes to his wealth, family and position, to thoughts of God, he need have no fear about the Lord of Death. If one does not think of God even for a moment, how can he hope for peace of mind?

Pippalada told the disciple: "The Life-Principle (Prana) is the most important factor. You have to merge yourselves in the mind. Merge the mind in the Atma. Whatever you do, do it in a spirit of dedication to the Atma (the Divine). You can carry on your respective avocations. When you practise it in a spirit of dedication, work will be transformed into worship. When life is led in such a manner, there is no rebirth."

The dedication to the Lord should not be merely verbal, but must emanate from the heart. When an offering is made in words the response is also in words. When somebody tells me: "Swami! Why don't you come to our house?" I tell him: "Yes, I shall come to your house." For the invitation in mere words, the response also is in words only. When the invitation is whole-hearted, I come with all my heart. "Yadbhaavam tadbhavati" ("As is the thought, so is the result.") Your thoughts are in tune with your desires. According to your thoughts, the results follow. Therefore, whatever you do, do it with all your heart. All the myriad nerves in man pervade the heart and the entire body. Hence, when the heart is filled with good thoughts, the entire body is filled with them. Everything stems from the heart. It is not the physical heart that is meant here. It is the spiritual heart. When your heart is filled with loving thoughts, you will realise freedom from rebirth.

All the conceivable doubts that could arise in any person were placed before sage Pippalada by the six young disciples and they got from him the right answers.

Kabandhi asked the sage: "What is the cause of dreams?" Some of the familiar answers to this question are that indigestion causes dreams, or that dreams are related to one's thoughts, or that they are based on physical ailments. But these are not the right answers. Pippalada said: "Sleep is the cause of dreams." Dreams appear only during sleep. For the man who is not asleep, there are no dreams.

Pippalada asked the disciples to control their thoughts as their thoughts determine their vision of the world.

From Bhagavan's discourse at the Summer Course in Brindavan, on May 27, 1991

The Equations of Life

*You lived on the top-floor of a sky-scraper,
But you had a glum, slum mind
A long while later Swami said
"You are in the Light."
After months he whispered
"The Light is in you."
One day, at last, he said
"You are the Light."*

*Believe in the Light.
Thrill to the Light.
Live the Light that you are*

*Then will Life be equal
To its opportunities.*

—*Vinayak Krishna Gokak*

Relevance of Values in the Technological Age

There is an interesting story about Michael Faraday who discovered electromagnetism. When he made the discovery some one asked him: "Is electromagnetism good?" Faraday is supposed to have replied with a counter-question "How good is a new-born baby?"

In that story lies the real essence of the topic of this article. Technology is applied scientific knowledge. Technology obeys the laws of nature. Values, on the other hand, belong to the realm of the Spirit. Ultimately, in every decision which is nothing but making a choice among different options, it is the values that prevail.

We can perhaps take a view that, irrespective of the Age, values are permanent. Hence there is no meaning in talking of relevance of values in a technological age, as if with every change of age, the values also change. After all, values have their origin in religion or at least in a framework of beliefs under which a society is run. Religion or its substitutes like ideology may be the mother of values. On the other hand, technology is the daughter of science. Therefore one can take a view that, irrespective of the age, a society is guided by the values which make interpersonal relations smooth, values for judging success or failure in life and what is deemed to be correct conduct etc.

Do technology and values run on two parallel lines and never meet at all? No, not at all. There is a pervasive impact of values within the technology itself, its application and on us who live in this technological age.

Four aspects of man

Man has multiple dimensions. Carl Sagan, in his book "Broca's brain", identifies four aspects. We can talk of *homo spiritualis*, the spiritual side of man, the mind of man, the metaphysical aspect of man. We can talk about *Homo sapiens*, man the rationalist, man with the reasoning intellect, man with the ever-present childlike curiosity to question everything. In fact, this curiosity is the motivating force for science and technology. We can talk of the third aspect of man, *homo faber*. Man is a tool-making animal. Man is, forever, making, inventing and building new things and new machines. Again, we can see the link with technology. And finally, we have *homo ludens*, man the playful. Our spiritual leaders have talked about "Easwara leela",

course of action he chooses depends on the values.

Each of the four facets of man has its own set of values. We can extend this concept further and say that practically every activity of man has its own set of values but then, when it comes to exercising judgement, making choices and selecting options, we have to look at another set of values. We can, for the sake of convenience, call the first type of values which are inherent in any facet of man, or any activity, as intrinsic values, and the judgemental ones as the extrinsic values. For instance, in scientific research, the value of observing truth, precision and recording data and the value for observing certain proprieties in publications etc. are all intrinsic. Take, for example, the field of electronics. You have to maintain high standards. Otherwise in a competitive environment you cannot survive. Secondly, in hi-tech equipment, if you do not maintain high quality standards you just cannot get the results. So quality as a value becomes a necessity. The Japanese have shown what "Kaizen" could do. Kaizen is nothing but endless, continuous, improvement. Of course this value you can apply not only in industry, and in business, but practically in every walk of life. Another classical example is the field of value-engineering which examines values becoming the basis of designs.

Intrinsic and extrinsic values

If we only go by the intrinsic values, we may be suffering from a tunnel vision. We may not be able to see the larger perspective. For example, in areas like nuclear science or bio-technology or even freedom of the media and privacy, we may have to refer to a set of values which are extrinsic to the activity as such, but have a bearing on the Society and life, for arriving at judgements on the course of action to be adopted.

Sometimes, there could be a conflict between intrinsic and extrinsic values. The intrinsic value of any activity constitutes the "Swadharma", but then there is also another aspect of the Dharma which is beyond pure Swadharma. One can take a restricted view and say: "Karmanyeva adhikaarasthe maa phaleshu kadaachana", ("you are entitled only to perform your duty and not to the fruits thereof") but perhaps one has to take a wholistic view, many a time, in the larger interests of running a society smoothly.

The human mind is very clever. I read somewhere that nobody takes a wrong decision. After all, everybody wants to be right but it is the perceptions that vary. In Nazi Germany, for instance, the type of experiments that were conducted on the Jews, probably were based on their own bizarre logic of the Nazi philosophy. For anybody who does not subscribe to that philosophy, and has different set of values, the manner in which Dr. Menge conducted his experiments would be horrible. But for a Nazi, they were perhaps the most scientific experiments ever conducted.

Many of these conflicts can perhaps be resolved by compromises. We live through a series of compromises. Of course, the most prevalent example of this compromise is hypocrisy. Any number of examples can be given where private selfishness is parading as public good. Perhaps

garb of truth is very necessary to achieve success in day-to-day life:

Technological breakthroughs have an impact on people's way of life, values and traditions. Perhaps, the heat blow against untouchability was struck in this country when railways and public transport were introduced because that technological change meant that people cannot stick to their old concept of untouchability.

The quality of life

Can we say that technological changes many a time helps in the development of better values? By and large, science and technological changes have helped in improving the quality of life. Perhaps today the common man lives a much better life than the Emperors of the past. This is because technology has helped us to provide clean drinking water, refrigeration, electricity and the other benefits that flow from the application of technology. Even in entertainment, the cinema, video and TV have been great levellers in Society. However, this in turn also raises another conflict of values. What happens to all those village artists and simple rural folk who were entertaining the public for their livelihood?

Science and the environment

Basically, in every field of science today, we run into the problem of values. Take, for example, agricultural development. We need to feed the growing number of people and for that we need new technology. We can talk in terms of the need for chemical fertilisers. But then there are people who say that the chemical fertilisers and the factors that produce them cause environmental pollution.

The international debate on environment which directly comes into conflict with technological development is a classic instance of the relevance of values in a technological age. Take, for example, nuclear power generation. It is all right to have a pressurised heavy water reactor based on natural uranium, but then what about the disposal of the plutonium? We can use the plutonium in the fast-breeder reactor but a stage may come when there is an irreducible amount of radio-active waste which has to be disposed of. Many of these have got very long life. Plutonium's half-life runs into thousands of years.

In one of his articles, Bertrand Russell pointed out that superstition is born out of fear. Some of the early religions were based on man's fear of the unknown. The concept of God as a person to be feared is perhaps a feature of many of the religions. On the other hand, the engine for the development of science and technology is overcoming this fear of the unknown. The playful spirit of man or the enquiring spirit of man to probe into the mysteries of Nature help us in overcoming this fear. However, when the scientific probe continues, we ultimately run into some of the purely value-related issues. A case in point is the debate in the developed countries on the areas of biotechnological research. To what extent should man go on probing and creating new lives? To what extent must an attempt be made to understand and master the genetic code? On the one hand, we have the positive values like finding a cure for the incurable diseases of today, finding a remedy for genetic disorders and, above all, improving the quality of the life-span of

cause immense damage.

In the technological age, values become all the more relevant because it is they which decide how and in what direction the technology will be used. When atomic energy was invented in the 40's, its immediate use was for the making of the bomb. But then there are any number of peaceful and positive uses for atomic energy. The nuclear debate is mainly a debate on values.

Our technological age is sustained by modern business and industry and vice versa. Management gurus have recognised the importance of value in business. It is not surprising that a successful industrial leader like Matsushita in his book "Not for bread alone" says that, if man has to be a good manager, he has to be a good man.

Setting the limits

One problem of value judgement that we always run into in the introduction of any technology is what do we do with those who already have a vested interest in the existing old technology? Spokesmen for free enterprise talk of free entry and exit in Industry. In propping up so many sick units in our country, we have shown a value judgement in favour of protecting employment. How long can this go on?

What about a value like privacy and the dignity of the individual in this technological age when the 'Big Brother' is watching you? When the computer databases can invade privacy, to what extent can the individual protect himself? The very fact that these issues are being raised and the line would be drawn somewhere along the locus of technological growth shows that there are limits beyond which the technology will not be permitted to intrude on the human values.

Three permanent values

Perhaps a pragmatic approach in life calls for compromises. Are there some values on which we cannot compromise at all? Are there any permanent guidelines which we can choose? If we make an effort to arrive at some universal values, we will come up with the three fundamental values of the Truth, the Good and the Beautiful: "Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram". These concepts occur in the Greek Civilisation and in our Civilisation. They provide a guideline to decide which value should prevail when there is a technological choice to be made.

First about Truth: Progress in science had been achieved because of adherence to truth. Science has followed the empirical method and, wherever there has been any compromise on truth, sooner or later, progress has been halted. When we take the issues of environmental impact and damage from any technology, there is need for absolute truth because, if you cannot tell the truth, you cannot carry credibility.

The term "Good" carries a wide connotation. According to the philosophy of pragmatism, what is good is true. If we expand this concept further, the concept of the dignity of the individual, a consideration for humanity, the general good, "Sarve janaah sukhino bhavanthu "

value goes also with the concept of Good because, Love is basically a positive instinct and it revives the dignity of the individual.

Then we come to the third principle, "Sundaram", Beauty. Why should this be of value? Because, in every technology, you find ultimately that the design becomes important. At a crude level, in a competitive market environment, market pressure forces the engineering design to be improved. It is also a value relevant in the judgement exercised by the user in selecting a product. So "Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram", the Truth, the Good and the Beautiful, become the values which have continuous interplay in every aspect of the technological age.

But can we transcend this further? Can we go deeper than these three values and arrive at some unifying value-link and judge technology? Through this exercise, we will come to the concept of happiness. A modern thinker like Edward De Bono wrote that, if he was to design a new religion, he would call it the "happiness religion." Our seers talk about bliss, "Ananda", the eternal bliss, which perhaps comes at the spiritual level but that value of happiness is equally relevant in the technological age. After all, if we look at every aspect of the modern technological age, what is the underlying force that is at the bottom of it all? It is the quest for happiness.

(Excerpts from an address delivered at the Summer Course in Brindavan, May 1991)

—N. Vittal, Secretary, Department of Electronics, Government of India

Bhagavan and His Child

For the fortunate devotees who happened to be present in "Trayee Brindavan" on Easwaramma Day this year (May 6), Bhagavan made it memorable in a surprising manner. While most of them were expecting a discourse from Swami on that occasion, to their pleasant surprise, Bhagavan summoned a young nine-year old boy to His chair and put him through a catechism class as it were. Bhagavan's questions and the lad's spontaneous and revealing replies thrilled the gathering as much as they delighted Bhagavan. Thanks to a tape recording of the entire exercise by a devotee who was present in the hall, we are able to give a verbatim report of the questions and answers as follows:

Swami: What is your name?

The boy: Sai Giridhar.

Swami: Age?

G: 9 years.

Swami: How do you know?

G: Swami, You only told me.

Swami: I never told you.

G: You only gave me birth and You only told me. You alone are my mother, father, everything.

Swami: How many brothers and sisters?

G: All are my brothers and sisters.

Swami: How can you say like that?

G: Swami, You alone are mother of all. So we all are truly brothers and sisters.

Swami: Good boy! Where did you come from?

G: From You, Swami!

Swami: Oh! From ME?

G: Yes, Swami I The whole world comes from You.

Swami: Oh! How do you know about the world?

G: You only have taught me all these things, Swami!

Swami: But I have never talked to you before.

G: Yes, Swami I You alone are my Guru. You are the only Guru for everyone in the world!

Swami: O. K. Where are you staying now?

G: I stay inside Your Heart, Swami.

Swami: But your body is separate, My Body is separate.

G: No Swami! My body has also come from Your Body, Swami.

Swami: *How do you know?*

G: Yes, Swami! The whole world has come from Your Body. You are Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara.

Swami: *Have you seen Brahma?*

G: Yes, Swami. You only are Brahma.

Swami: *How is the form of Brahma?*

G: Brahma has four hands with lotus, shankha, chakra.

Swami: *But I have nothing... see?*

G: Yes, Swami! You have every thing.

Swami: *How do you say like that?*

G: You only have shown me vision of Brahma!

Swami: *When?*

G: In my dreams, You have appeared to me in all forms of God! All the gods come only from You!

Swami: *(To the boys) Another Hanumanthappa (Referring to the Vice-Chancellor of Bangalore University, who also narrated many such dream-visions) (Laughter).
O. K. What do you want*

G: I want only You, Swami!

Swami: *No! No! Ask any material thing? Any pen... pencil... anything? Chocolate, watch.*

G: No, Swami, No! I want only You, Swami! I do *not* want anything else!

Swami: *Do you do any Japa, Dhyana?*

G: Yes, Swami. I chant 108 names of God

Swami: *O. K. Tell Me!*

108 times. (Laughter).

Swami: Any prayers?

G: Yes, Swami. In the morning I say, "Karaagre vasathe Lakshmi". At noon, during lunch I say, "Brahmaarpanam...

Swami: Do you know the meaning?

G: Yes, Swami. "Brahmaarpanam" means I offer my food to Brahma.

Swami: Who is Brahma?

G: You alone are Brahma! I offer everything to You.

Swami: Do you like other Gods like Rama, Krishna?

G: Why should I like other Gods when You are with me. You alone are Rama, Krishna everything.

Swami: Do you do meditation?

G: Yes, Swami.

Swami: How?

G: In Padmaasanam, closing my eyes.

Swami: What do you see?

G: I see only Swami!

Swami: How much time?

G: I do not know. I do not have a watch.

Swami: Do you want a watch?

G: No, Swami! I want only You.

Swami: Do you know any common prayer?

G: Yes, Swami. "Lokaa-samasthaas-sukhino Bhavanthu".

Swami: Any other prayer?

G: Yes, Swami! "Oh God! Take my heart..."

Swami: Any song?

G: No song, Swami. I know only bhajans.

Swami: Sing.

G: "Govinda bolo! Gopala bolo!" (Recited the entire bhajan).

Swami: Do you see T. V., video?

G: No, Swami. I only see cartoon films at home!

Swami: But cartoon is not God!

G: Yes, Swami! God is everything. You alone are God!

Swami: But I am NOT cartoon... see? (laughter).

G: Yes, Swami... You are all.

Swami: Good boy! Do you quarrel with or feel jealous of other boys?

G: No, Swami! You are in every one; so how can I feel jealous of anyone?

Swami: No. No. But in school some other boys might feel jealous of you or quarrel with you?

G: No, Swami! How can they when You are in all of them? You have taught us to love all!

Swami: But look at these elder brothers. They are all selfish.

G: No, Swami. They are good! You are in them also!

Swami: But in the world, something is good, something is bad

G: No, Swami! All are good! The world is good! Because You are in all!

Swami: (Showing His hand) What is this?

Swami: *But this is only an empty hand?*

G: No, Swami! All power is there! You are all the power!

Swami: *How do you know?*

G: You only told me that the whole world is in Your hands!

Swami: *O. K. Good boy! Now take this 100-rupee note and put it properly in your pocket. There are many pick-pockets outside. So take care!*

G: No, Swami! You are in them also. Only You can touch me! No one else can take away what You have given me!

Swami: *Good! When are your results?*

G: I do not know, Swami!

Swami: *You will get a First Class?*

G: Yes, Swami!

Swami: *How do you know?*

G: Because just now You told me 'First Class'. Whatever comes out from Your Divine Mouth must come true! I will get First Class.

Swami: *Have you read any books?*

G: No, Swami! I only know Swami's words! Swami alone is all the knowledge!

Swami: *(To all) He is fixed in Advaita bhava (the Advaita consciousness). Another Prahlada! Even Prahlada dare not speak like that! Good! Very Happy!*

(Sri Haresh Thakur, in submitting the above report for publication, said: This "Divine Dialogue", in my humble view, was a great Divine Drama, enacted by Swami Himself in the form of a spontaneous question-answer session between Sai Krishna (Swami) and Sai Giridhar (the boy from the Parthi School), to reveal the subtle and profound Transformation that Sai Sankalpa is bringing about in the consciousness of the Sai generation of children through His educational system.

very soon, sooner than any human mind can comprehend, looking at the present state of affairs in all walks of life.)

The centre of every home must be the shrine room, the fragrance of flower and incense emanating from there must pervade the home and purify it. The mother must set the example in holding out the shrine, as the heart of the household. She must enforce discipline over the children in personal cleanliness, in humility and hospitality, in good manners and acts of service. She must persuade the children, by example and precept to revere elders to spend some time both in the morning and evening for prayer, and for silent meditation. The shrine room has to be kept clean and consecrated; special festival days, marked out in each religion, should be observed, so that the significance will impress itself on the young minds.

—Baba

Gurupoornima at Prasanthi Nilayam

The growing importance attached by Sai devotees to the Gurupoornima celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam was evident from the unprecedented assemblage of devotees from all parts of the world present at the Nilayam on July 26th. The numbers exceeded those present even on birthday celebrations in earlier years.

Streams of devotees had started flowing into Prasanthi Nilayam well before the 26th. The Mandir and its precincts wore a festive look with flags and festoons.

It was a beautiful cool morning as the devotees flocked into the Mandir compound and settled down for the morning darshan. Students from all the three campuses were present in full force.

Precisely at 7 a.m., as Swami came out of His Mandir room, He was greeted with hymns in praise of the Divine as Guru by the students of the Institute, to the accompaniment of the Institute's orchestra. A special feature of the morning programme was the singing in chorus of the "Gurupaduka Stotram" (nine hymns in praise of the sacred sandals of the Guru) by the students of the Prasanthi Nilayam campus. This was followed by a musical programme, which included songs in praise of Bhagavan in Hind, Telugu and Tamil. Bhagavan went round the darshan lines several times, conferring His benediction on one and all.

After the music programme, prasad, blessed by Bhagavan, was distributed to all the devotees by relays of students, Bhagavan saw to it that no one missed getting the prasad.

In the afternoon, there was a huge concourse of devotees in and outside the Poornachandra Auditorium to listen to Bhagavan's Gurupoornima message. The meeting began at 4-30 p.m.

Nilayam, and Amarsingh, from the Brindavan Campus of the Institute, and Prof. Anil Kumar addressed the gathering.

Bhagavan then delivered His Divine discourse (published separately in this issue).

After the discourse, Bhagavan honoured the centenarian Vedic scholar, Brahmasri Cherukumilli Kamavadhani, with a gift of Rupees one lakh from the Sathya Sai Central Trust to be used for the promotion of Vedic studies. Swami paid a tribute to Sri Kamavadhani's Vedic scholarship and his devotion to Swami from the time he came thirty years ago to participate in the first Veda Purusha Saptah Jnana Yajna at Prasanthi Nilayam. He did not go to his village all these years. He set up five years ago the Veda Shastra Parishad to promote study of the Vedas. The Central Trust's donation will help the Parishad to promote study of Vedas.

The day's programme concluded with a superb music concert by Kadiri Gopalagrishna on the saxophone, accompanied on various instruments by reputed artists.

The Indweller in the Heart

*When you eliminate all the impurities in the mind,
Fill it with supremely pure thoughts,
And acquire the effulgent Vision of Wisdom
You will find the entire Cosmos illumined by the Divine.*

*What need is there for penance for those who know the Truth?
To the votary of Truth, what is the need for Sadhana?
To the one free from falsehood and deceit,
Where is the need for rituals?
This is the path of Truth declared by Sai.*

Students! Embodiments of Divine Love!

Birth and death are incidental to life. Bhargava, who had sought to understand the mystery relating to birth and death and the truth about the Northward and Southward journeys (Uttarayana and Dakshinayana) of the Sun and the nature of the Bright and Dark fortnights in a month (Shukla Paksha and Krishna Paksha), satisfied with the knowledge he had acquired from the sage Pippalada, respectfully bowed to him, expressed his gratitude and stood blissfully before the sage.

Then the fourth disciple Sauraayani, of Gargi lineage, approached the sage and asked: "Swami! When living beings are asleep, who is it that sleeps? Who is it that is awake in that state? Who is it that is oblivious to the mind, that is immersed in bliss, forgetting life itself, and is one with that Entity? Please reveal the mystery about these and confer peace of mind on me. When a living being is asleep, what happens to all the qualities of Prana (the Life-force)?"

Awake and asleep

Pippalada replied: "Just as when the sun sets, the sun's rays are withdrawn into his Tejas and are effulgent again the next morning, when a man is asleep, all the activities of the sense organs are merged in the mind. Because of this, man is unable to see the external world, is not able to speak or hear, or think. The reason is all the operations of the senses are merged in the mind. However, in this sleeping state, the Pancha Pranas (Prana, Apana, Samana, Vyana and Udana—the five vital breaths) are active in the form of Panchagnis (Five internal fire-principles). In that state, the processes of inhaling and exhaling go on, with the help of the Prana breath and the Samana vital air. Hence, what are awake in the sleeping state are the "five fires" corresponding to the five "Vital airs" (Pancha Pranas). In the sleeping state it is the Jiva (the individual spirit) that enjoys the rest and the bliss of that state. The occurrences in the past and the present, the things seen in the past and now, past and present experiences, all these are experienced by man in the form of dreams. Moreover, the consequences of activities in previous lives, which have become part of his spirit but are not known to him, are also experienced in dreams. Hence, in the

It is the Jiva who experiences the calmness and happiness of the sleeping state. In the dream state, he creates all that he experiences, including himself, and enjoys self-created experiences. For all these, the mind is the root cause. The mind is responsible for the experiences in the waking state and in dreams."

Significance of pranava

While Pippalada was giving this explanation to Saurayani, the sixth disciple, Sibi, approached the sage and asked him: "Swami! The scriptures declare that the one who utters the Pranava (Om) at the time of death, attains immortality (the Akshara state). Is this possible?"

Sage Pippalada replied: "Dear Sibi! The entire cosmos is filled with Pranava. Pranava is a manifestation of the Supreme Spirit (Paramatma). The Pranava constituted by the three sounds A+U+M—pervades the three worlds represented by the terms: Bhu, Bhuvah (which is above the Bhu-loka) and Suvah (the topmost of the three worlds). The three Vedas—Rig, Yajur and Sama—have emanated from the Pranava. The three Vedas in their hymns glorify the Pranava. Thus, the Pranava is the all-pervading primordial sound. The Pranava is also described as the embodiment of the eight forms of divine wealth (Aishwarya) Shabdabrahmamayee, Characharamayee, Jyotirmayee, Vaangmayee, Nityanandamayee, Paratparamayee, Mayamayee, Srimayee. This means that all the sounds in the world are echoes of the primordial Om.

Those who chant the Pranava (Om) as a physical sound will get only physical benefits. The scriptures declare that those who recite the Om with concentrated mind, reach the Chandra-loka (the region presided over by the Moon-god). The Chandra-loka does not mean the planet moon as conceived by the Americans and the Russians. Students should not make this mistake. The Vedas declare that the Moon emerged from the mind of the Cosmic Person (Viraat-Purusha) and the Sun from the eye of the Cosmic Person. ("Chandramaa manaso-jaathah Suryo chakshoraajaayatha"). The Moon in the Vedic sense represents the Mind-principle. Likewise, the Sun represents the illumination in the eye. When the vision encompasses the creation, the eye becomes a sacred instrument (for the understanding of spiritual truths). The scriptures are not some isolated writings. Whatever the eye perceives carries an authenticity of its own. This is called "Pratyaksha Pramanam" (Proof by direct perception). The Sun is the basis for this type of proof. For proof by inference (Anumana Pramanam), the mind is the authority. For proof on the basis of "Shabda" (the spoken word), the authority is "Vaak" (the deity presiding over speech). When man acts on the authority of these three kinds of proof, he can realise the Divine.

Hiranyagarbha and the mind

For the world of external phenomena, the presiding deity is called, "Vishwa" ('Vishwudu', in Telugu). The deity presiding over the internal organs is known as Hiranyagarbha. What is the reason for the difference between the external and the internal? It has to be recognised that the mind represents a highly sacred principle. When the mind, filled with agitations, contemplates on God, it achieves inner peace. Hence, the seers have declared that man proceeds from peacelessness to peace, from peace to illumination, from illumination to recognition of the Supreme Effulgence, which is the Absolute (Brahmam).

The Mind-principle has been described as Hiranyagarbha. (At this stage, Bhagavan materialised a golden egg-shaped linga, which He showed to the gathering.) Hiranyagarbha is located in the heart of every person. You can see from where you are that the whole world is contained within this linga. All the countries, India, Germany, etc. can be seen on it. "Hiranyagarbhasya Namah" (Salutations to Hiranyagarbha) is one of the forms of prayer. "Hiranyagarbha" means One who is pregnant with gold. A characteristic of gold is that it remains unchanged. Gold remaining buried in the bowels of the earth for millennia remains unchanged and undergoes no decay. Likewise, however long it may remain on earth, the heart (Hridaya) is not subject to change. This is not a reference to the physical heart, but to the spiritual heart. It has infinite potentialities. The divinity in man is beyond words.

The "Hiranmaya" principle resides in the heart in twelve forms. These forms are also called "Aditya Brahmas". The twelve Aditya Brahmas preside over the twelve months of the year. The sun in his golden form, rises and sets every day. From the scientific point of view, there is no sun-rise or sun-set. It is a process without a beginning or end. The phenomena of night and day are not caused by two suns.

"Bhava" and "sadhana"

Pippalada taught these truths to Sibi. The sage went on to explain that there are two different paths which may be pursued by the earnest aspirant. One is "Bhava" and the other is "Sadhana". One who meditates on the Pranava with "Bhava" (intense feeling) may not be able to realise his divinity. Even if he has some glimpses of the Divine, they do not last long.

The one, who pursues the path of "Sadhana", reaches the realm of the Sun (Surya-mandala) and proceeds from there to the region of Brahman. By the term Brahma, you may consider him as a four-faced deity or in some other form. But Brahman essentially means that which is all-pervading. To acquire "Brahma-bhava" (the awareness of Brahman) means being aware of this infinite vastness.

Today's science is engaged in trying to explore the infinitesimally minutest particle in matter. But spirituality pursues a different goal. It is concerned with exploring the infinite—"Mahatho Maheeyaan"—what is vaster than the vastest. It is concerned with "expanding" the consciousness. "Brahman" means the Infinite. "Chandra" refers to the Mind. "Surya" refers to the eye-the faculty of vision. Only the person who is able to understand the Vedantic meanings of these terms can comprehend the nature of spirituality.

The cosmos in the mind

Here is this "Lingam". Is it to be found within the physical body? In Vedanta, it is described as "Angushtamaathram" (the size of the thumb). The reference to the Hiranyagarbha in the Hridaya is considered as a reference to the physical heart. Not at all. In the spiritual sense, the Linga is one that is golden-hued, absolutely immaculate (untainted by any pollution), gloriously resplendent, containing within it the entire cosmos. There is an illustration for this. You might have been to Badrinath, Kedarnath or other places. Where are these places which you have seen?

think of your visit to Badrinath, the entire scene—the temple, the Himalayas, the Alakananda river and everything else appears before your mind's eye. All that you have seen and experienced in life will appear before you in your mind, the moment you try to recall them. This means that the entire universe is within you. All that you see is "a reflection of the inner being." All that you speak is a reflection of inner thoughts. All that you do is a reflection of inner action. Hence, to act according to your inner impulse is Dharma. To speak what you feel inside is Sathya (Truth). To contemplate on what you experience in your heart is Santhi (Peace). To understand properly the promptings of the heart is Ahimsa (Non-violence). Consideration for all emanating from the heart is Prema (love). Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa are reflections of feelings emanating from the heart.

Humanness (manavatwa) means the complete harmony of thought, word and deed. If there is divergence between thought, word and deed, what is the outcome? Fruitless action.

Change in vision

What, then, is the meaning of Dharma? It is to express in words what you think, and to act according to your words. This unity of thought, word and deed is Dharma.

Today there is no such unity in the conduct of people. The result is that the heart becomes a lump of clay. Why should the heart that is Chinmaya (enveloped in Consciousness) become a lump of clay? It is the selfishness and self-centeredness in man that is the cause. This self-interest should be turned towards the unsullied, the effulgent, the blissful and eternal Divine by worshipping Hiranyagarbha (the Lord seated In the heart) with the prayer: "Hiranyagarbhaya Namah". This means that your vision should be turned towards that which is unchanging. All the things of the world are transient and perishable. That is why, Krishna declared in the Gita: "Having taken birth in this impermanent and sorrow-ridden world, worship Me!" The entire universe is subject to change sometime or other. It is not permanent. Only the consciousness in the heart is permanent and real. What is done wholeheartedly by that consciousness leads to immortality.

The achievement of oneness with the Hiranyagarbha is like the shedding of its slough by a snake. All that is mundane drops off and only the consciousness remains. The body is Impermanent. The Hiranmaya-principle is the Reality. This Reality is covered by Maya (delusion) like the slough which encases the snake. This delusion is not something distinct. It is created by the individual. It arises out of ignorance.

You mistake a rope for a serpent in twilight. The mistake is due to the absence of light. When you see it with a torch, you realise that it is not a snake but a rope. The rope was there before you turned the torch on it and what you saw was the rope in the light of the torch. There was no snake there earlier or later. The appearance and disappearance of the snake were caused by delusion. The one unchanging reality was the rope.

The wise have declared: "There is only the One: it is called by different names." It is changeless. Hence, the Vedas have declared: "There is an effulgent, golden-hued Divine substance that is shining in the heart of everyone." It is because of this Divine effulgence that the eyes are able to see, the ears are able to hear, and the mouth is able to speak. If that effulgence is absent, the eyes cannot see, the ears cannot hear and the mouth cannot speak. The physical scientists have no faith in these truths because they have made no effort to enquire into them. They are concentrating all their attention on the physical and the phenomenal world. The researches of yesterday have become obsolete today. Science is caught up in this constant process of rejecting the old and discovering the new. But in the realm of spirituality, there is nothing like old or new. It is ever-full, ever-whole.

Science and spirituality

All scientific investigations are based upon the intellect. All spiritual explorations are based on the heart (or the consciousness). In the spiritual field, man alone is supremely important, not the machines. Scientists put their faith in machines. The spiritual seekers place their faith in Mantras. One is a scientist, the other is a saint. The saint believes in fullness (poornatwa). The scientist is content with half the circle. Spirituality represents the full circle. The beginning and the end meet in the full circle. When this circle is divided by half, you have a half-circle resembling the letter C. The 'C' is science. It starts at one point and ends at another. Between the points there are endless doubts. Hence, there is no absolute certainty regarding scientific findings. What is considered true today may turn out to be incorrect tomorrow. But spirituality stands for what was true yesterday, what is true today and what will be true for all time to come.

The spiritual truths are inherent in man. But he is forgetting them and is gloating over the achievements of technology and the machines created by it. This is totally wrong. Men are more important than all the wealth in the world.

There is a big computer, for instance. A man puts the question to the computer "It is about to rain. When shall I reach home?" The computer answers: "Take an umbrella before going out." Now, was this reply given by the computer as its own answer or was the reply built into the computer programme? The touching faith in computers is misplaced. Crores of rupees are being wasted on computers. Put your faith in the natural brain. Even the computer is operated by the human brain. Instead of putting our faith in the brain that produced the computer, faith is being placed in the computer. What is it that the computer does? If you place wheat in a flourmill, you will get wheat flour at the bottom. If you place rice in the grinder, you will get rice flour. This is also how the computer behaves. You get from it what has already been put into it. If it can answer a question by itself, ask the question: "When will I die?" Will it be able to answer that query? No. It cannot give the answer, because even the maker of the computer does not know the answer. The scientist puts into the computer what he knows. The scientist is the subject and the computer is his image. Man lacks faith in himself, but relies on the image emanating from him.

Dear students! Self-confidence is highly essential. Develop confidence in the Self (Atma). There is nothing greater than the Atma. The Atma is the combined expression of "Vaak" (Speech), Manas (Mind) and Prana (the Life force). Of these three, Prana is most important. There is no end to Prana, though there is an end to the body in which Prana remains. It is this Prana that is reflected in all beings as the image in a mirror. But "Prana" alone is not enough. All the three are necessary. It is from these three—Vaak, Mind and Prana—that the Atma arises.

Many of you know that in a chemical laboratory when three chemicals are brought together, an altogether new product emerges. In everyday life, you know that the combination of the brown betel nut, the green betel leaf and the white chunam produce a reddish compound. In the same way when man's mind, speech and vital breath (Prana) come together, the Atma emerges. This is the true sign of mankind. Our lives have to be made meaningful by the unity of these three.

The indweller in the heart

Everything exists in the human heart (mind) and not in the external world. Based on this, the one that is in the "Sushumna" state is hailed as Hiranyagarbha ("Hiranyagarbhaya Namah"). In that state lies unbounded bliss. Take a simple example. We don't derive much joy from finding a piece of copper, iron or silver. But we are extremely happy if we find a piece of gold. Gold thus has the capacity to give some kind of joy to the heart. What is this gold? It is also a piece of earth. But as earth is available freely everywhere, it is treated as of no value. But as gold is found somewhere within the bowels of the earth, it is accorded special value. If gold is available everywhere, it will have no value.

In the human body, there are flesh, bones, blood, etc. which are found in everyone and hence no value is attached to them. But the heart is regarded as precious as gold. Hence, when we refer to Hiranyagarbha, we refer to the one who confers value on the human condition, who endows it with brilliance, who inspires man with idealism and ensures the humanness of the human being. He resides in the heart and is equated with the heart.

Dear students! The exposition of the Prasnopanishad must have proved quite taxing for you. From tomorrow I shall deal with matters relating to duties in daily life.

The Upanishads are beyond the comprehension of even great scholars. It is not therefore easy for students with a smattering of English to understand them. Today people seem to value "Anglabhasha" (the English language) more than "Atma-bhasha" (the language of the Spirit). It is natural for you to have difficulty in understanding the teachings of the Upanishads. You can understand only that which is appropriate to your intellectual level. Hence from tomorrow onwards the discourses will be concerned with the role of science, the duties of the individual, the path of action, the obligations of the individual and his moral responsibilities. With the growth of science, morality is declining. Of what use is science in such a context? People talk about progress of education in the country, but what we are witnessing is only a general decline

improvement in general conduct including qualities like gratitude and respect for parents.

From Bhagavan's discourse at the Summer Course in Brindavan, on May 28, 1991

VIDYAGIRI SAMACHAR:

“Develop Social Consciousness”

A call to students to develop a social consciousness on the basis of spiritual values, and dedicate all their energies and talents to the service of the country, was made by Bhagavan Baba, Chancellor of the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, on July 22, while inaugurating a four-day Management Development Programme, in the Institute's Auditorium.

The Auditorium was filled with students and staff of the Prasanthi Nilayam Campus, besides special invitees and lecturers participating in the programme.

Bhagavan arrived at the Auditorium at 9.20 a. m. Prof. Sampath, Vice-Chancellor, welcomed Bhagavan and the gathering.

Bhagavan's address

In the course of His discourse, which dealt with the major maladies afflicting the country, Bhagavan said:

Today, in the name of promoting education, all kinds of bizarre developments devoid of morality are taking place in the country. There is no trace of humility and discipline which are the hallmarks of true education. In the place of character and good conduct, which should be prevalent among students, we notice today the spread of materialism, ostentation and arrogance amongst them.

With the rapid advance of science and technology in the world, there is a corresponding decline in peace and security. Developing insatiable desires, the modern student is vitiating his mind. He lacks the capacity for introspection. But his external vision is turned in all directions.

Need for pure-minded students

The primary thing students should seek to know is: Who is a man and what are the qualities that distinguish a good human being? "Man" means an individual with faith. One's faith gets developed when one lives up to one's beliefs. The sacredness (Pavitram) of the human being should be recognised.

There is no use in attempting to establish a new system of education or a new social system. By these means the current problems cannot be solved. We have to bring up a generation of

sincerity. This calls for the development of morality and devotion to truth. Character and truth lead to the emergence of spirituality in the divine human personality. Hence, spirituality is the basic foundation for producing a generation of pure-hearted boys and girls. Only when we have such pure young persons will the nation experience peace and prosperity. To lead a good life students will have to give up their selfishness. Unfortunately, the spirit of sacrifice is not to be seen among students today.

Students suffer today from some mental weaknesses. One of them is the feeling that wealth and position are essential for personal happiness and these alone should be sought after. This is wholly wrong. What is the inner significance of the fact that in the past great rulers like Janaka and Shivaji submitted themselves to sages like Yagnavalkya and saints like Samarth Ramadas? They lacked nothing in terms of wealth and power. But they esteemed the wealth of spirit as greater than all worldly wealth and power. Men like the Kauravas, who attached greater value to power and position than to faith in the divine, came to a miserable end.

It is true that you need material wealth for a living. But wealth should not become the 'be-all and end-all' of life. Human life has come from the divine. When you dedicate your life to God and adhere to the path of righteousness you can sanctify your life and achieve peace, happiness and prosperity.

Self-management

In the MBA course of studies, different areas of management—finance, marketing, etc. are taught. But more than all these, the most important area of study is 'Self-management' or man-management. The individual who cannot manage himself, how is he going to manage anything else?

The first requisite, therefore, is 'self-management.' In this, there is no room for self-interest. No one can be an island unto himself. If a man is asked, for whose sake he is living, he may answer that he is living for himself. When further questioned about his job, he will say he is working for the sake of his wife and children. When he is plied with further questions he will admit his dependence on society for meeting various needs of himself and his family. No individual or family can exist without depending on society.

Today, there are lakhs of people in authority or engaged in politics, business or other walks of life. Almost all of them are concerned only about themselves and their families and few are imbued with a social consciousness. What is the cause of all the evils plaguing society? It is the lack of a sense of social responsibility. Every individual has to recognise his duty to society and understand that without society he cannot lead a family life.

Social consciousness

Students, therefore, should develop a social consciousness. They should ask themselves how by each of their actions they can promote the welfare of society rather than the interest of

bound up with the well-being of others."

It is the decline of spirituality that has led to all the disorders and maladies in the country. In the world today, beginning with the human mind, everything, the air, water, etc., is polluted. All the five elements are contaminated. Man's life is based on these five elements. Hence, he is the embodiment of pollution in these elements. The sacredness of human life has been desecrated. Moral values are going down the slope everyday. The animal instincts in man are rampant. Only by fostering the divine nature in man, can this animality be destroyed and the human- can rise to the level of the divine. For this, men must get rid of their selfishness.

Salaries and morals

Education is essential as a preparation for serving society. For Instance, the MBA students are hoping, after getting their degrees, to become managers of big companies and lead a comfortable life. Managerial jobs carry high salaries. The reason for the high income is inflation in prices caused by the failure of production to keep pace with the demand. Rise in income has been followed by a decline in morality. With the collapse of morals, the nation has become a prey to violence and disorder.

Those receiving large incomes should ask themselves whether the work they do is commensurate with the salaries they get. In many enterprises, the expenses exceed the receipts. The absence of work ethic—the spirit of work—is responsible for this situation. The position in India is worse than in some other countries. Laziness is on the increase. Let the students compare the situation in Japan and Bharat. The Japanese have the 'spirit of work'—they work hard. Hence, their productivity is high and they are able to keep the prices low. They do not abstain from work even during "strikes." In India, there is a clamour for high wages but there is no willingness to work harder. It is because of this attitude that the Indian economy is in a deplorable state.

"Work, work, work!"

Students are not ready to take up any kind of work. "Work, Work, Work" that should be their motto. With no prospect of getting jobs, educated young men are getting frustrated and mentally upset and are turning into naxalites or terrorists. But students should not develop such perverted tendencies. They must think only of their duties. They should not wait for specific jobs of their choice.

On January 28, 1973, a plastics factory was started in a village called Balliapara near Calcutta. A chemical fluid was being discharged from the factory as an effluent. An oil-monger noticed the flow of this oily substance. He collected this effluent and mixed it with the edible oil he was selling to customers. When an epidemic of paralysis broke out in that village, striking down all men, women and children, an official enquiry revealed that the outbreak of paralysis was a sequel to the consumption of the adulterated oil sold by the merchant. In their greed for filthy lucre, some businessmen are endangering sacred and precious human lives. A great deal of business today is of this nature. We cannot get pure milk, pure water or pure air. Every

the necessities of life are contaminated.

Selfishness is at the bottom of this evil. It is growing on account of disregard for moral values. Morality means good conduct. Good conduct is based on recognition of right and wrong.

Spirit of sacrifice

Students should develop a spirit of sacrifice so that they are prepared to dedicate all their energies and talents to the service of others. For this purpose, they must cherish those moral values which will enable them to lead ideal lives. Wherever you may work and whomsoever you may meet, you should earn a good name. You should not behave in a conceited manner because of your high MBA degrees.

You must also remember what Prahlada revealed as the essence of all education- the contemplation of God. Once you have filled your heart with thoughts of the Divine, ideas of fraud and chicanery will not enter your minds. Only then you will be able to make the right use of all the varied knowledge you have acquired in your management studies.

The students of our Institute are good boys. They are pure by nature, but are likely to be affected by the environment outside when they go out into the world. To keep your minds pure in such environment, fill your hearts with love and keep your daily actions pure and unsullied. Students should also learn to avoid wastage of food, time, money and energy. When you move in the outside world, your life should be exemplary. Look upon God as your only true friend. Follow the dictates of your conscience.

You should develop into ideal managers. When you bring credit to this Institute by your behaviour, that will be the best way of showing your gratitude to your Alma Mater. We seek nothing else from you. Earn for yourself a good name. Lead an ideal life. Thereby you will be pleasing your parents and the Institute where you have studied.

Bhagavan concluded His hour-long discourse with a bhajan, "*Bhajana binaa sukha santhi nahi*"

ONAM SANDESH:

AVATAR VANI:

Honour the Plighted Word

Sandalwood pieces exude greater fragrance when they are ground more and more.

The sugarcane yields sweeter and sweeter juice as it is chewed more and more.

Gold acquires more and more brilliance as it is heated repeatedly in the crucible.

Noble beings are those who over come the vicissitudes of life and lead a godly life.

(Swami recited a Sanskrit poem and explained its meaning at the outset of His discourse.)

In the world today, the numbers of intellectuals who are engaged in breaking up the One into the many and fostering divisive forces are on the increase. On the other hand, the number of those who recognise unity in diversity is on the decline. In a world bristling with disunity, disorder and chaos, it is only the sense of unity underlying the multiplicity that can bring about peace. The world sorely needs today people imbued with this feeling.

The unity that subsumes the multiplicity will become apparent if an objective, pure and selfless enquiry is made. Historically, socially, biologically and scientifically it is evident that food and drink are common to all human beings. "Food may vary but hunger is the same for all" (is a Telugu adage). A rich man may appease his hunger by a wide range of delicious dishes. A beggar satisfies his hunger by whatever he can get. Hunger, however, is common to a millionaire and a pauper. Equally common are sleep and fear, for all human beings. A rich man may sleep in comfort on a luxurious couch. A beggar may sleep soundly on hard ground. The place of sleep may vary, but sleep itself is common to both. More than all these, the most important experiences that are common to all equally are birth and death. This is an index of the unifying principle for humanity. The millionaire does not descend from the sky. The pauper does not emerge from the bowels of the earth. Both are born from their mothers' wombs. This process of birth is common to all human beings. Likewise, death comes to everyone, whether in a forest or a town, whether one is on the top of a mountain or the bottom of a valley, wherever one may be. Birth and death thus point to what is common in what is diverse.

This principle of unity in diversity is clearly expounded in the Kathopanishad. This Upanishad has compared the human body to a chariot and the Indwelling Spirit (Atma) to the charioteer and pointed out that human existence is a journey in this chariot. The body and the Spirit are integrally related to each other. But man in his ignorance has separated the one from the other and developed divisive tendencies.

Right thinking

For all man's joys and sorrows, difficulties and enjoyments, his own thoughts are responsible. His happiness and distress are related to his actions. As he thinks, so he becomes. When the thoughts are misconceived, the results also go astray. Hence, the primary goal of man should be to develop right thinking.

Two forces are operating within man. One is the demonic impulse. The other is the Divine impulse. Man, by misusing his God-given capacities (mind, status, wealth and position) and falling a prey to evil tendencies like desire, hatred, greed, etc., reduces himself to the level of the animal. The one who strives to make the right use of his endowments manifests his Divine nature. Unfortunately men today misuse the God-given gifts and thereby ruin themselves and cause harm to the world. The reason for this is the encouragement of divisive forces in the place of unity, and the growth of the acquisitive tendency ("Mamakara"). "Mamethi paraman dubkham; na mametbi paramam sukham" ("The feeling of 'mine' is the cause of great sorrow;

acquisitiveness, surrendering to God and experiencing the bliss of the Spirit (Atma-ananda). Men should strive to achieve this kind of happiness by shedding narrow ideas, developing a broad outlook and realising the Divinity that sustains everything. Contemplation on the Divine is the key to all happiness and prosperity. Man should dedicate all thoughts and actions to God at all times and in all situations.

"Whether one is immersed in yoga or physical enjoyment, in society or in solitude, if he devotes his mind to the Supreme, he experiences ecstasy alone." (Swami recited a stanza from Adi Sankara's "Bhaja Govindam").

"Sat-Chit-Ananda"

When one enquires into the Reality earnestly and objectively, he will realise that Divinity pervades everything. God is eternal and bliss incarnate. Among the myriad names of the Lord, the most significant is "Sat-Chit-Ananda". This means that the cosmos is the embodiment of Sat-Chit-Ananda (Being-Awareness-Bliss) and vice versa. They are inextricably united. Everything in the universe, from an ant to the Absolute, is a manifestation of Sat-Chit-Ananda. "Sat" is that which transcends the three categories of Time—Past, Present and Future. "Chit" refers to total awareness (Paripoorna-jnana). Where these two are shining in unison, there is the Bliss Divine. Hence, Ananda (Bliss) is not something separate from the other two. They cannot be trisected. The One is radiant in the three as an integral expression. For Instance, fire has three qualities: heat, light and redness. These are not separate from each other. Likewise, the Divine is the unified form of Sat-Chit-Ananda.

Today men, who have read the scriptures or listened to the discourses of scholars, imagine that Sat-Chit-Ananda abides in some special place. This is the root cause of their ignorance (of the Real). You are the embodiment of Sat-Chit-Ananda. Everything around you is a manifestation of Sat-Chit-Ananda. Forgetting his own true nature and separating himself from the Divine, man becomes a prey to numerous troubles.

A blind man knows that the world exists, but is unable to see it. Likewise, people believe from the teaching of the scriptures and of the learned ones that Sat-Chit-Ananda exists, but very few have direct experience of the Divine. They must strive for such direct experience. This is the primary goal of man.

The Upanishads have declared that what does not exist cannot be made to exist. What exists cannot be wished away. Hence, man has to accept what exists and base his life on it. Sat-Chit-Ananda is the essential nature of everyone. Realisation of this calls for spiritual endeavour.

True devotion

Most people today have no real idea of what is devotion and what is spiritual discipline. Different forms of worship, pilgrimages, meditation and the like are equated with devotion. These are not the indices of devotion (Bhakti). They are all actions which can confer some mental satisfaction. To realise your inner nature, your efforts must be directed Internally. As long

of devotion is to recognise that God is within you and around you, everywhere. You must develop the faith that you are a manifestation of God. The scriptures call upon everyone to find out, "Who are you? "

There is no other path than the path of dedication to God and complete surrender to the will of the Divine. The emperor Bali was an exemplar of this doctrine of complete surrender (Sharanagati) to God. Despite the protestations of his preceptor Shukracharya, Bali felt that it was his duty to offer everything to the Lord and, acting against the advice of his guru he made a gift of all he had to the Lord who had come in the form of Vamana (the young celibate). In making an offering to God there is no need to abide by the instructions of the preceptor. The Lord is the supreme preceptor manifest in every Divine form.

Bali's example

Emperor Bali adhered to two resolutions. One: to give to anyone whatever he sought. Secondly, never to go back on the plighted word. Bali held that there was no greater sin than going back on one's word. He firmly declared that whatever might happen to him, even if it cost him his life, he would not go back on his promise. Thereby, Bali became a glorious upholder of truth.

Who is a real emperor? Not the one who has conquered many countries and ruled over a vast empire. Once, Adi Sankara summoned his disciples and put them the question: "Who is a real conqueror?" The disciples gave various answers. Sankara told them that the real conqueror is the one who has subdued his mind. Of what use is it to accomplish many things without mastering the mind? This was precisely the question which Prahlada put to his father, Hiranyakasipu, who had acquired control over even the elements but had not acquired mastery over his senses.

Men should learn to honour their promises. They should never go back on their word. Truth is the life-breath of the spoken word. Many ancient rulers were prepared even to give up their lives for honouring their plighted word.

Emperor Bali was Truth Incarnate. Always devoted to the well-being of his subjects, he constantly strove to lead them in the path of truth and to ensure prosperity in his realm. Bali's grandfather, Prahlada, had the same noble qualities.

Prahlada as judge

Once there was an argument between Prahlada's son Virochana and the son of the sage Angirasa. Angirasa's son said that the debate should be conducted before a judge who should decide who was the winner in the argument. He said Virochana's father, Prahlada, should be the judge. Both went to Prahlada. They agreed that whoever lost in the debate should forfeit his life to the winner. Prahlada listened to the arguments impartially and declared that Virochana, his son, had lost and that Angirasa's son had won. Recognising Prahlada's total commitment to justice, without any concern for his relationship with his son, and admiring his sense of justice,

him.

This is an illustration of the supreme value attached to truth in ancient times. Truth was esteemed as the very form of God. It is the foremost duty of man to uphold truth, lead the good life and share his joys with others.

Bali and his preceptor

Embodiments of Divine Love 1 Uphold truth even at the cost of your lives. That was what Emperor Bali did when he had to honour the word he had given to Vamana. His preceptor Shukracharya warned Bali that the dwarfish Brahmin lad was none other than the Lord Vishnu Himself, and that it would be disastrous for Bali to make the gift sought from him by Vamana. You must note how Bali reacted to the preceptor's warning. He declared that when the Lord of the universe had Himself come to him with an outstretched hand, seeking a gift, what greater good fortune could befall him (Bali) than to make the gift? "The palm that showers its grace on the whole world, the palm which can rid men of all their grieves and pains, which holds within it the entire process of creation and dissolution, the palm that holds out freedom from fear to every devotee, is now held out before me seeking a gift. My hand has been giving generously to all. How fortunate am I that it is now held over the palm of the Lord! The coming together of the two hands signifies the union of the individual soul with the Omni-Self. Guruji, this is a supremely auspicious occasion. Hence, I will not go back on my word, despite anyone's opposition."

Emperor Bali was the embodiment of sacrifice. He was the repository of all good and noble qualities. He explained the significance of the advent of the Avatar on earth. "Out of love for the people, God descends to their level on earth. Together with his Divine Consciousness, He maintains His human consciousness (Prajna)." Bali declared that he had discovered that day this sacred truth.

Bali was supremely happy when the Lord sought a gift from him. Today people would turn the other way if the Divine sought anything from them. God needs nothing from this world. Krishna declared in the Gita: "There is nothing that I need from the three worlds. Nevertheless, I do my duty."

The avatar's duty

Why am I engaged in various activities? Why am I concerned so much about the devotees? Why have I established so many institutions? This is my duty (as Krishna declared to Arjuna). To promote the welfare of devotees is the duty the Lord has taken upon Himself. I am undertaking so many activities for their sake. But people do not recognise this fact. And owing to this failure, they are missing their good fortune. The reason is their selfishness. At least in the days ahead, they should try to experience happiness and prosperity by leading meaningful lives. They should sanctify their thoughts, because "as they think so they become." (Swami then related the story of Bali's daughter Ratnavali, who developed a maternal feeling towards Vamana on seeing his beauteous form as a boy. Later when she recovered from a trance and found the foot of the Lord—as Trivikrama—on Bali's head, she was seized with rage and rushed to kill

Krishna avatar, when she first fondled Krishna and then sought to kill him. Bhagavan drew the moral from this episode that one's thoughts have their consequences sooner or later.)

Hence, it is essential to have good thoughts and do good deeds to escape from the cycle of birth and death. This was what Emperor Bali sought from the Lord.

Insane violence

Everyone should be prepared to offer all his actions to God. The cosmos should be regarded as the all-pervading form of God. Only by realising the feeling of unity in diversity can the individual and the nation be redeemed. Today divisive tendencies are rampant. There is discord between man and man. The world is turning into a kind of madhouse. All nations seem to be afflicted with some kind of lunacy. To kill one man they are prepared to sacrifice a hundred lives. They have no regard for life.

Men desire the fruits of good deeds, but do not perform good deeds. Men want to avoid the consequences of sinful actions, but are engaged in sinful deeds. How is this possible? It is not easy to escape from the consequences of one's actions. But there is no need for despair. If one earns even a grain of grace from the Divine, a mountain of sins can be reduced to ashes. If one feels genuinely penitent, seeks God's forgiveness and takes refuge in God, all one's actions will get transformed. But without heart-felt penitence, this will not happen.

Follow Bali's example

The glorious qualities of Emperor Bali are rightly praised. But how many are cultivating even a few of these qualities? Bali promised to his subjects that once a year he would appear before them. The Onam celebration is intended to rejoice in the appearance of Bali in their midst by observing this day as a festive occasion. Sweet dishes are prepared on this day. But it is not Bali who consumes them. What should be offered to him is the sweet feeling in your heart. That is the right way to celebrate Onam. You have to manifest your genuine love for Bali. You must practise the ideals for which he stood. Look at the many ways in which he served the Lord. He was utterly dedicated to the well-being of his people. Develop the quality of love. Eschew differences of caste, creed and nationality. Promote unity among all people. Regard all as the children of one God.

Having been born in the sacred land of Bharat, if you do not practise some at least of Bharat's ideals, you have no right to call yourselves as Bharatiyas. The greatest need today is for all people to cultivate unity. Only then will the nation be rid of its troubles and experience prosperity.

Keralites' devotion

The people of Kerala are extremely fortunate in many respects. Despite various political changes, the Keralites have adhered to their cultural heritage and observed festivals like Onam with scrupulous regard for tradition. Devotion to God is deeply entrenched in their hearts. Even if some of them do not exhibit their devotion openly, for various reasons, it is imprinted in their

year after year. You can realise the depth of their devotion from this single fact. Among the score of States in India, the people of Kerala are the only people who celebrate their unique festival in Prasanthi Nilayam with boundless fervour and devotion. People from none of the other States have held any such celebration in Puttaparthi. The manner in which Keralites, with all their women and children, celebrate the festival here testifies to their devotion to Swami which transcends regional attachments. "Swami" is everything for them. The devotion to the Lord is expressed in Kerala today in many forms (cheers). Their enthusiasm and devotion are highly commendable. The Chief Justice of Kerala, Sri Jagannadha Rao, and the Transport Minister of Kerala (in their speeches prior to Bhagavan's discourse) have expressed the desire on behalf of the people of Kerala that Swami should visit their State and bless the people. To con. fer joy on all of you on this sacred Onam day, I am giving this assurance that T shall be visiting Kerala very soon. (Applause). I give you My promise that I shall share My joy with you and enjoy the bliss you feel in My company and shower My blessings on all the people of Kerala! (Prolonged cheers)

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan: "*Hari bhajana bina sukha santhi nahi.*"

From Bhagavan's discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium on 24-8-1991

SUMMER SHOWERS IN BRINDAVAN:

GURUDEV VANI:

The Sixteen Potencies

*Peace has vanished; Truth has become scarce;
The arms race has become a dreadful threat;
Selfishness is the cause of these evils
This is the pronouncement of the Truth.*

Embodiments of the Divine Atma!

Sathyam (Truth), Jnanam (Knowledge of the Absolute), Anantam (the Infinite, Aksharam (the Imperishable), Paramatma (the Omni-Self), Paratattvam (the Supreme Truth), Brahma (the Absolute), Kshetrajna (the Knower of the Field)—all these terms are synonyms for Atma (the Spirit). These terms came into vogue depending on the time, the place and the circumstances.

In the world, every living being aspires for happiness and seeks to banish grief. Although man bankers after pleasure, peace and bliss, what is the inner meaning of the fact that he is haunted by worry and sorrow? Sorrow, peacelessness and fear are the reflected images of happiness, peace and security. If there is no grief, there is no value for happiness. If peace is not

constantly follow each other.

Yesterday, I explained that Bhuloka, Bhuvarloka and Swargaloka are expressions of the three sounds A, U, M in the Pranava mantra, Om. The three Vedas—Rig, Yajur and Samaveda—in their different rhymes pay homage to the three letters of the Pranava. To experience the truth underlying the Pranava, whose triune aspects are manifested in the three Vedas and other triple entities, there are three paths. The first is meditation on the Divine Name (Nama-chintana). The second is "Bhava" (inner ecstasy). The third is "Sadhana" (spiritual discipline).

The three lokas

By meditating on the Name of the Lord, worldly pleasures can be enjoyed. These are transient, unreal and momentary. Such ephemeral pleasures are got in the mundane world by reciting the name of the Lord.

Lunar and solar regions

"Bhavam" relates to the consciousness arising from a realisation that there is a supreme power that governs the whole of creation—the moving and unmoving objects in the cosmos. When that consciousness is made the basis of one's entire life, by dwelling in that consciousness, a man reaches the Chandraloka (the region of the Moon-god). To realise that at the base of the gross phenomenal world, there is a subtle power is itself a great progress in consciousness ("Bhavam"). Achieving this consciousness, man enjoys the sovereignty of the Mind in Chandraloka.

By chanting the name of the Lord, worldly pleasures are enjoyed on the earth and by the "Bhava" Consciousness, man enjoys the bliss of reigning over the empire of the Mind. From these experiences, man progresses, through Sadhana (spiritual exercises), and reaches Suvarloka (the region of the Sun). The Solar region, made up of Vijnana and Prajnana (physical and spiritual knowledge) is Cosmic Consciousness itself. It is the realm of Divine Vision ("Divya-drishti"). The man who attains this region enjoys supreme peace from the unified cosmic consciousness.

The Bhuloka (the physical world) and Bhuvarloka (the Lunar region) are said to be "Aparabrahma" (regions not related to the Supreme Self) (Parabrahma). "Suvarloka" relates to the Parabrahma (the Supreme Self). Hence, the Bhuloka and Bhuvarloka are related only to the impermanent and unreal phenomenal world.

Bhuloka is gross (sthoola), Bhuvarloka is subtle (sukshma). The body is gross. The mind is subtle. That Bhuloka and Bhuvarloka are related to the body and the mind. The Suvarloka, however, is related to the Atmic state. Through "Nama chintana", "Bhavam" and "Sadhana", man can attain the three worlds. When man combines all three practices, he can achieve in addition Supreme Peace (Paramasanthi).

Man's primary goal should be to realise such a state of peace and bliss.

When Pippalada was explaining all this to Sibi, Sathyakama got up and asked the sage: "Swami! All the scriptures have declared that there is a Purushottama (the Highest of all beings) who possesses all the sixteen kalas (potencies). Who is this Purushottama? What are these sixteen 'kalas'? Where are they present? Please confer peace on us by your answers to these queries."

Pippalada smilingly replied: "Dear Sathyakama! This Purushottama embodying the sixteen potencies does not dwell in any particular spot. In every human being, He is experiencing bliss in the form of consciousness. He is 'Sat' (Being) 'Chit' (Awareness) and 'Ananda' (Bliss). Sat (Being) means that He remains as an unchanging entity. Chit refers to the one who indicates total Awareness (Paripoornatvam). The one who experiences these two states is the Blissful one. The unity of 'Sat' and 'Chit' is 'Ananda'. Though 'Sat' and 'Chit' have different appellations, their outlook is one and the same. The two are like the right and left eye in a being. They are apparently separate and apart from each other. But the two eyes have no double vision. They see only one object. 'Sat', 'Chit' and 'Ananda' are present in every human being.

The sixteen potencies

As regards the sixteen 'kalas', the shastras, puranas and epics have caused confusion in men's minds by varying and misleading interpretations. These sixteen kalas do not exist in a separate place wherefrom they can be obtained. There is Aakasa (space or ether). From the vibrations (shabda) in space, air (Vayu) is produced. From air, fire (Tejas) emerges. From Tejas water is produced. The solidified form of water is the earth (Prithvi). These are the five basic elements (Panchabhutas). There are the five vital breaths (Panchapranas): Prana, Apana, Samana, Udana and Vyana. The five elements and the five vital breaths together make ten. The five organs of perception (Jnanindriyas) are: the eyes, the ears, the nose, the mouth and the skin (seeing, hearing, smelling, speaking and touching are the faculties of these organs). With these five, the total goes upto fifteen. There is the mind. With it, we have the sixteen 'kalas'. These sixteen 'kalas' are present in every human being, performing their respective functions ecstatically.

Only those who enjoy these 'kalas' in all their fullness and purity make use of them properly and experience the bliss of that fullness, have been described as "Purusha" or "Purushottama."

Who is a Purusha? Not the one donning a bush-coat and trousers. The body is called "Pura" (a city). The divine consciousness which pervades the entire body from head to foot is called "Purusha". The individual who experiences this consciousness and manifests his individuality is also called Purusha. The divine power which pervades the entire cosmos equally, shines equally in everything and proclaims His omnipresence is called Purushottama. Thus, in the individual this power is known as Purusha and in the cosmic manifestation, it is described as Purushottama.

Divinity in the elements

What are the duties this Purusha should perform to sanctify his life? Men should develop the awareness that the five elements—Ether, Air, Fire, Water and Earth—are divine entities and

perception (Jnanindriyas) to make use of these elements. "Seeing" (the power of sight) is based on Tejas. Hence, the power of Tejas should be put to proper use. It should never be misused. See what is good. Only then, Tejas is utilised as a divine potency.

Next comes hearing (shabda). The ears have to be used only for listening to sacred words and thereby seek the Divine. The faculty of hearing should not be used for unworthy purposes.

Next, there is the faculty of smell. When fragrant smells are taken in, not only does the health improve, but one derives pleasure. Foul smells cause illness and distemper. Fragrance in the air is a Divine manifestation.

The power of touch

Then, there is the skin. Care of the skin means that contact with all and sundry should be avoided. The faculty of touch (sparsha) is a sacred power. To avoid contamination by contact with impure persons, the sages and sadhakas in ancient times left villages and towns and dwelt in remote forests in solitude. There is a divine power in the human body called "Chit-shakti" (the energy of consciousness). It is like an electric current. When one body touches another, there is an exchange of energy. In this process, there is a likelihood of one's good qualities going out and an inflow of bad qualities from another. The practice of touching the sacred feet of pious and good men was commended to enable people to get rid of their bad qualities and acquire virtues. While sitting in meditation, there should be no physical contact between devotees. Each one should sit apart and try to experience the presence of the Indwelling Spirit. The consciousness of one's divine nature gets weakened as a result of polluting contacts with all kinds of undesirable persons.

The sages of yore could rise to divine heights by making use of their sense organs for sacred purposes.

The five vital breaths

Coming to the five life-breaths (Pancha pranas), there are 12 crores of nerves in the human body (as stated in an earlier discourse). The life-breath Vyana pervades the entire nervous system. It is because of the pervading presence of this divine vital air in all the nerves that the health of the body is maintained. It also contributes to the experience of happiness. The presence of the vital air Vyana in the Sahasrara (the thousand-petalled head of the Kundalini seated in the brain) accounts for the intelligence in man. When the Kundalini-shakti rises from the Mooladhara (at the bottom of the spinal column) to the Sahasrara (at the top of the brain), there is a blossoming of the powers in man. The Kundalini-shakti shines effulgently. Because man has lost this power (of the Kundalini), he is subject to numerous troubles. The ancient sages were able to harness the power of the Kundalini for great purposes.

Hence, it is essential to make proper use of the five vital airs (Pancha pranas) also. Only then, man will become a "Purusha."

Although man has all the sixteen potencies, he is failing to make proper use of them. He is unable to comprehend their divine power. Failing to make use of this divine potential man behaves like a person who does not know he has the wish-fulfilling cow (Kamadhenu) in his house, and wants to buy an ordinary cow. By his failure to recognise the vast divine potentialities in him, man has become a prey to sorrow and worry, instead of rising to the level of the Divine, man is going down to the level of the demon and the animal. Even if men are not able to live upto the injunctions of the scriptures, there is no reason why men should not observe in daily life morality and integrity. Everyone knows that he should speak the truth, avoid harshness in speech, should not hurt anyone by his words, should speak softly and pleasantly, but he does not behave in this manner. What is the reason? Selfishness and selfishness alone. Despite his knowledge of what is right man misuses his sixteen potencies for achieving his selfish ends.

Man is indeed endowed with the sixteen potencies. The one who sanctifies these potencies by proper use becomes "Purushottama" (the Supreme Person). The one who taints them by his misdeeds is damned.

The answer to Sathyakama's question regarding Purushottama is that there is no separate dwelling place for the Supreme. God resides in every being. Sin is not something foreign. It adheres to the evil deeds one does. It is through one's actions that one becomes a Purusha or a Purushaadhama, a Divine or a despised being. It is one's actions which carry a man to great heights or hurl him down to the depths.

Role of the avatars

The scriptures have declared that the one who possesses in full all the sixteen potencies is Purushottama (the Supreme Person). The term is applied to the Divine incarnations (Avatars' who utilise the sixteen potencies for the benefit of others. Whatever they say or do is totally free from the taint of self-interest. No Avatar, whether in Bharat or elsewhere, has ever used the five elements, the five senses, the five vital airs or the mind for any selfish purpose. Even when they go about in daily life like other ordinary beings, in every one of their actions they demonstrate its purity and unchanging truth. The common people do not recognise this truth. Hence, they fail to understand the true nature of humanness.

"Kshara" and "akshara"

After this explanation, Pippalada went on to point out to Sathyakama the basic oneness of the Eternal and the impermanent. He said that the gross substance is "Kshara" (perishable or destructible). "Akshara" (the Imperishable) is subtle and "Kshara" is physical. "Akshara" is related to the "Spirit" (Atma). That which is related to life is "Kshara". "Akshara" is related to God.

Pippalada asked Sathyakama to recognise the unity of these two—Kshara and Akshara. "It is only when you recognise their unity will you be able to make proper use of the sixteen kalas," he said.

The entire cosmos, consisting of moving and unmoving objects, emanated from "Akshara" (the Imperishable Supreme). All that has come from "Akshara" has the attributes of "Akshara". Issuing from "Akshara" and sustained by Akshara, ultimately everything merges in Akshara. "Akshara" is the unified expression of the Cosmos. It is the unity of the Everlasting and the ephemeral.

If you wish to make sacred use of the sixteen potencies, direct your vision towards the Atma, not relying on the eyes. Have the conviction that it is because of the Spirit within that you are able to see with your eyes and hear with your ears. Your organs of perception are able to function because of the existence of "Prajna" (Inner Consciousness). All that is perceived in the external world is the cosmic manifestation called "Vishwam". All that is experienced within the dream state and in sleep is due to "Prajna" (Divine Consciousness). You have to divinise everything that you see or do by spirituality. Then everything acquires a wholeness and unity. For instance, there are many rivers with different names and forms. But when they merge in the ocean, their names and forms disappear. They become one with the ocean. Likewise, the five vital airs and the five organs of perception are all different streams. The mind is a mighty river. When the waters flowing in all these sixteen merge in the Atma, they lose their separate names and forms and achieve the Prajna-principle of the Atma. Thereby, they become pure, unsullied, unchanging and eternal. Man becomes "Purusha" and "Purushottama" when he sanctifies the sixteen potencies in him by engaging himself in good deeds and good thoughts.

Brahmavidya

"What is it by knowing which all else can be known?" This was the question which Saunaka put to the Sage Angirasa. He asked the sage: "What is it by seeing which all else can be seen? What is it by experiencing which everything else can be experienced? Please reveal to me the nature of this Divine eternal principle." Angirasa replied: "Only through Brahmavidya (Knowledge of the Supreme) can this be obtained." All knowledge today is associated with the mundane whether it relates to the arts like music and painting or the sciences like botany, physics and chemistry. In essence all this knowledge is concerned with earning a livelihood. That true education is for the purpose of acquiring supreme wisdom should be recognised. That is the means to acquire Brahmavidya (Knowledge of the Divine).

Brahmavidya must be distinguished from worldly knowledge. The latter is concerned with knowledge of what is observed externally. Brahmavidya is beyond the power of the eyes, the ears and the mind. It is concerned with revealing the Spirit. You must seek this spiritual knowledge. You will obtain it when you reach the stage of utilising fully your sixteen potencies.

God is described as Sathyam (Truth), Jnanam (Wisdom), Anantam (Infinite), Brahma (the Absolute). Sathyam means that which is unchanging, unaffected by the variations in time. Jnanam means perceiving the One without a second. (Advaitadarsanam Jnanam). "Anantam" means infinite, omnipresent, pervading the entire cosmos. Brahmam means that which permeates everything.

This was what Angirasa taught to the sage Saunaka. This episode should not be regarded as an Upanishadic story. The inner meaning of the name Angirasa is he is the one who represents the sixteen potencies flowing as a sweet liquid in every limb of the human body and sustaining it. The Prajnana-principle in every person is the form of Angirasa. This Prajnana pervades the mind, the intellect, the will, the Antahkarana and every part of the body. Hence, it has been declared: "Prajnanam is Brahman." All the essential truths man seeks to learn are found within himself. He has no need to go to the scriptures or any external authorities for this purpose. Forgetting the source within himself of what he is seeking man pursues external objects and experiences frustration. Searching within himself man will find the wisdom (the Prajnana) that he seeks.

Akshara and kshara

The term "Akshara" encompasses everything. "Akshara" contains two terms: A+Kshara. "A" stands for that which is "Ananta", infinite, and "Aprameya", immeasurable, "Anandamaya" (filled with bliss). That is the Atma, the eternal Self. "Kshara" represents that which is impermanent, illusory, and perishable. "Akshara" is the combination of the eternal and the evanescent, the imperishable and the perishable. "Akshara" has a twofold meaning. It indicates the presence of the impermanent cosmos within the eternal Omni-Self. The cosmos cannot exist apart from the Divine. The Divine cannot divorce the cosmos. The devotee creates (his own image of) God. God creates the devotees. The common belief is that all beings including devotees are created by God. But this is not the whole truth. The devotee also by his spiritual sadhana creates God. That is the meaning of the term "Sakshatkara" (Direct experience of the Divine form). Wherefrom does this Divine form come? It comes from the devotee's intense feeling for a direct vision of God.

It is folly for anyone to go in search of God. When God is omnipresent, what is the need for a search? It is a delusion to imagine that man is in quest of God. It is God who is searching for a true devotee.

Man must recognise that God is one, though He may be worshipped with many names. There is a practical illustration for this. A devotee keeps the idol of Krishna before him and performs Sahasranama Archana, reciting the thousand names of the Lord. The names are many but the God that is worshipped is one.

Triune knowledge

Sathyakama approached Pippalada again and asked the sage: "Swami! There are three kinds of knowledge in this world. One is the ordinary kind. The second is called Sujnana (Right knowledge). The third is called Vijnana (Higher knowledge). What is the difference among these three? "

Pippalada said: "There is considerable difference between ordinary knowledge (jnana) and Sujnana and Vijnana." Jnana" (ordinary knowledge) is knowledge got through the body. "Sujnana" is what is got through the mind. "Vijnana" is the knowledge got from the heart. You see various objects like a table, a tumbler, etc. The knowledge got by perceiving objects is

mind. In doing any action, when one considers whether what he is doing is helpful to others, the knowledge on which such action is based is "Sujnana".

Based on both these types of knowledge, actions which are in accord with the dictates of one's conscience and which are performed to propitiate God constitute actions based on Vijnana (the highest knowledge). If God is pleased with one's actions, the whole world will be pleased. No effort is needed to please others separately.

The one who has earned the grace of the Divine will be able to gain the goodwill of the world. But one who has forfeited the grace of God will be unworthy of the goodwill of others. Once one comprehends God, everything in the universe can be comprehended. Unfortunately men's vision today is turned only towards the phenomenal world (Prakriti), ignoring the Divine. It is only when they understand and experience the Divine, will they be able to comprehend fully everything.

The mysterious ways of the Divine cannot be grasped easily. Wrong Impressions are formed out of what is stated in the books about Krishna or Rama. People must try to get at the inner truths about their actions.

Men have to aspire for peace-peace of the body, the mind and the heart. To achieve peace of the body, it is essential to chant the name of the Lord. For achieving peace of the mind you have to cultivate the "Brahma-Bhava" (the meditation on the Supreme). Peace in the heart calls for spiritual sadhana (discipline). You have to progress from the body to the mind and from the mind to the Atma.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "*Hari bhajana binaa sukha santhi nahi*".

From Bhagavan's discourse at the Summer Course in Brindavan, on May 29, 1991

Prema Mudita Manase Kaho!

Whatever Sai gives accept with grace.
All else you've seen, is unreal.
You cannot even judge what's your own good.
Sai doesn't wait to be told.
He's sovereign lord of Inner Space
He breaks, uproots and burns worthless weeds
To ready the soil. He sows clean seeds
And quickens green enfoliation around.

Sit down. Forget. In prayerful voice
Raise His name. His name alone is good.
Ask, if you must, for the tense equipoise
Of His pervasive presence, as a balance stays
And keeps its pointer even, pointing to heaven.

—**S.M.P., Prasanthi Nilayam.**

Sacrifice is sweeter than enjoyment. Sacrifice should become the aim of life. Only through sacrifice can one attain peace. Sorrows do not flee from us as long as the mind is not at peace with itself. Agonies dwell forever within us. Without the tranquility of the soul any amount of wealth cannot be of any use. Surrendering the fruits of action with a dispassionate mind is eligible to be termed sacrifice. Purity of mind alone can confer upon it tranquility. The Upanishads have proclaimed in a full-throated voice that sacrifice alone leads to immortality. Sacrifice is the chief trait of the pure. Therefore, very student must imbibe and display the spirit of sacrifice in his life.

—**BABA**

Who Am I?

Am I a prisoner?
Is this prison me?
No I am the goaler,
I hold the lock and key.

Am I a victim
Of that great rat race outside?
No I am the driver
On this twisting lumpy ride.

Am I a slave to destiny,
Hesitation and delay?
Master of my life am I
With prosperous thoughts each day.

I am a child of God,
Glowing, growing free.
This body is a field glass
Through which I clearly `see'.

I am spirit pure and whole.
When earthly lessons are complete,
The Teacher welcomes Home my soul.

No more fear and conflict,
I have chosen peace of mind.
Centred in Sri Sathya Sai,
Vision and true faith I find.

Who am I? Ponder not!
I am content to BE
An intrinsic part of the perfect plan
Through all eternity.

—*Glenda Filbee,*
Glenvale, Queensland, Australia

"Onam" in Prasanthi Nilayam

The Kerala festival of "Onam" has become over the years one of the important festivals celebrated in Prasanthi Nilayam in the Divine presence of Bhagavan Baba. People from no other part of the country celebrate, away from their hearths and homes, their traditional festival with such fervour and enthusiasm as the Keralites. This bespeaks their deep devotion to Bhagavan and their faith that to celebrate "Onam" in Prasanthi Nilayam is the best way they can pay their homage to Bhagavan and the Emperor Bali, whose annual advent on earth is commemorated on that day. Keralites rejoice all the more in the fact that their joy is shared with Sai devotees from all parts of the world present in Prasanthi Nilayam. This has made "Onam" an international festival comparable to Christmas in Prasanthi Nilayam.

An unprecedented gathering of devotees from Kerala-over five thousand men, women and children- started pouring into Prasanthi Nilayam well before August 23rd, when the two-day festival was to start. A large fleet of buses, vans and cars brought the devotees from every part of Kerala. The Prasanthi Mandir was gaily decorated with flags and festoons. Bunches of coconuts hanging from flag posts lent a Kerala touch to the decorations.

The festival began on the morning of the 23rd, with the playing of the "Panchavadyam" (five percussion instruments) by an expert troupe from Kerala, at the Mandir. In the evening, an interesting cultural programme was presented by Bal Vikas students from different districts of Kerala. The group from Calicut presented a colourful item on "The Unity of Faiths." Students

a dance drama by children from Ernakulam based on the Kirata-Arjuna story.

On Onam day, August 24th, the Keralites organised a massive Nagarsankirtan early in the morning, with bhajans all the way round the Mandir.

At 7 a.m., as Bhagavan stepped out of His sanctum, He was received by a group of Vedic chanters, with Poornakumbham and "Talapoli." Bhagavan inaugurated the festival by lighting a lamp. Bhagavan sat near the Vighneshwara idol in the Mandir compound and witnessed with lively interest the variety programme presented by young children from Kerala. Besides the traditional dances known as "Tiruvatirai Kali", there was an interesting march-past, presenting a pageant of saints, avatars and devotees ranging from Narada to Thyagaraja and Vivekananda. As each figure in appropriate costume went past Bhagavan, pleasing background music was provided by a team of singers. Among the devotees figuring in the pageant were Jayadeva, Ramadas, Mira, Nandanar, Chaitanya, and Adi Sankara.

Prasadam blessed by Bhagavan was then distributed to all the devotees, while Swami Himself distributed sweets to the children from Kerala.

In the evening, an overflow gathering had assembled in the Poornachandra Auditorium to listen to Bhagavan's Onam message (Published separately in this issue). The proceedings began with invocation by students of the Secondary School, followed by the recitation of "Linga stotram" by the little tots of the Primary School.

Mr. Justice Jagannadha Rao, Chief Justice of the Kerala High Court, and Mr. Gopalakrishna Pillai, Minister for Transport, Kerala, spoke on the significance of the Onam festival and the message of Bhagavan Baba and appealed to Bhagavan to visit Kerala and bless the people there who had been yearning for His visit for many years.

Bhagavan's discourse was followed by a cultural programme presented by the students of the Srisailam School, including a display of traditional martial exercises practised in Kerala.

Management Development Programme

In the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, innovation is the order of the day. Something new is all the time happening. This year, the beginning of the new academic semester for the M. B. A. students was marked by the inauguration of a four-day Management Development Programme by Bhagavan Baba on July 22.

The inaugural function was held in the Institute Auditorium, which was filled with students and staff of the Institute, besides special invitees.

referred to the scope and purpose of the Programme and stressed the unique features of the Business Management Course in the Sai Institute compared to the courses elsewhere. V. Ganesh, a II Year M. B. A. student, spoke on how the students viewed the M. B. A. course in the Institute.

Mr. V. Srinivasan said that leading personalities from the business world had been invited to deliver lectures in the programme which would enable the students to get new insights into the working of industrial and business enterprises. The biggest problem facing business enterprises today was "the management of change."

Bhagavan Baba, in His discourse emphasised the importance of human values in every walk of life and the need for a spirit of sacrifice and equality among the students to face the challenges of life.

From the 22nd to 24th, there were lectures in the morning and afternoon sessions by guest speakers. In addition, at the afternoon sessions, M. B. A. students presented reports on the projects carried out by them in the summer. The programme came to a close on the 25th at a valedictory session at which the Vice-Chancellor summed up the main outcome of the programme and thanked Bhagavan for giving an opportunity for the M. B. A. students to interact with leaders from the business world.

The world is a huge hospital and humanity is bedridden... Render gratitude to the doctors who diagnose your disease and prescribe remedies, and the nurses who tend you back to health... Praising the doctor might induce him to take pity on you, but your illness can be cured only by taking the medicine and obeying restrictions on food, drink, and your habits.

—**Baba (Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. II)**

Krishna Jayanti at Prasanthi Nilayam

"All avatars come to preach the doctrine of Love", declared Bhagavan Baba, in His discourse on Krishna Jayanti day, September 2, in the Prasanthi Mandir, to a vast gathering of Indian and overseas devotees.

The Jayanti celebrations began in the morning with a specially got up programme of devotional songs by the students of the Institute. As Bhagavan came out of His sanctum, He was greeted with the chanting in chorus of the Krishnaashtakam stotram by the students of the Secondary School and the singing of the prayer, "Madhuram, Madhuram, Madhuram! Madhuraadhipathe!" This was followed by a programme of songs in praise of Bhagavan in Telugu, Hindi and Tamil by the Institute choir, to the accompaniment of the Institute's orchestra.

A magnificent procession of cows from the Gokulam came to the Mandir, headed by Sai Geeta, in all its glory, followed by a nadaswaram troupe and students chanting bhajans. Bhagavan blessed each cow individually and fed it with a banana.

In the afternoon, the devotees assembled in and outside the Mandir for Bhagavan's Krishna Jayanti message. Prof. Sampath, Vice-Chancellor of the Institute, spoke on the greatness of the Bhagavad Gita and related three episodes from Sri Krishna's life which revealed his glory as an avatar. Ravi Mariwala spoke on the Sai Tattwa. Bhagavan Baba then delivered his discourse. (This discourse will appear in our next issue).

Vinayaka Worship Ranks First

*One may have mastered the Pedantic texts
And perfected the art of expounding them;
If his mind is not well filled with good qualities,
His scholarship is like the crop grown on barren soil.
If you cannot comprehend the Swami in front of you
And wander in search of God all over,
You are like the man who went in quest of ghee
While having butter in his hand.*

Embodiments of Divine Love!

The phenomenal world (Prakriti) is what is directly apparent to man and which deludes him. It is an aggregation of objects. In its natural state, every object is mutable. Such impermanent objects are incapable of giving enduring bliss (Ananda). The object which gives you pleasure is transient. The individual who experiences that pleasure is also impermanent. How can an impermanent being derive lasting bliss from a perishable object?

It is, therefore, necessary at the outset to forget the impermanent so that one may be qualified to experience the eternal and unchanging Reality.

The entire cosmos is a manifestation of the three gunas: Satwa, Rajas, Tamas. They have been identified with the three colours: white, red and black. It is impossible for man to conceive of a world without these three qualities. It is not possible to find in Nature a situation in which these three qualities are present in equal measure. When the Satwic quality is predominant, the Rajasic and Tamasic qualities are quiescent. When the Rajasic quality is dominant, the other two are subdued. When the Tamasic quality is dominant, Satwa and Rajas are subdued. It is seldom that all the three qualities are equally balanced and in harmony with each other.

Likewise in the human body, these three qualities are present in every limb. It will be clear that these three qualities are manifest in the physical universe, in the human body and in the human mind. The sacred texts (Shrutis) have also declared that the universe is made up of these three qualities.

Three states of man

With reference to man, there is the view that there are three states: Prakriti, Avidya and Maya. In course of time, the term Prakriti was applied to man's body. In some parts of the country, people are in the habit of referring to individuals as "Prakriti". In North Canara, people say: "My Prakriti is not well", when they want to convey that their body is not well. "Prakriti" refers to that which is subject to all kinds of "Vikriti" (distortions and changes). This "Prakriti" is the basis of all creation.

The second term is "Avidya". Avidya means that which is the opposite of knowledge. "Avidya" makes one treat what is unreal as real and what is real as unreal and thereby deludes him and makes him pursue sensual pleasures. This "Avidya" follows "Prakriti" in the world as a shadow. Because of this "Avidya", man is unable to recognise his true nature. Avidya is the cause of man's inability to comprehend his true form. As long as Avidya remains, man can never be free from troubles.

The third term is "Maya". Maya is the delusion which makes one imagine the presence of that which is not present. As long as this state of delusion (bhrama) remains, it is impossible to comprehend the Brahman (the Omni-Self).

What is this delusion? Here, for instance, is a rope. But in the twilight of dusk, one mistakes it for a snake. When a lamp is brought, it is found that there is only the rope. The snake was never there and

the rope was always there. Only the momentary delusion caused the appearance of the snake and the absence of the rope. This is called Maya. It makes one imagine the presence of what is not there and not perceive what is really there. To believe in the existence of that which is non-existent and in the non-existence of that which is the real truth is the effect of Maya.

It is the combined power of these three—Prakriti, Avidya and Maya—which accounts for man forgetting his true nature.

Man often imagines that he has accomplished many things. Presuming that all that he achieves are entirely due to his own efforts and abilities, he deludes himself and forges his own bonds. He forgets the truth that there is a higher power which is the driving force for action as well as the author of the results thereof. This is the primary nature of "bhrama" (delusion).

The prayer to Vinayaka

To get rid of this delusion and enable man to comprehend his inherent divine nature, the ancient sages taught a prayer. This prayer is the one that is addressed to Vinayaka.

Who is Vinayaka? In the sloka beginning with the words, "Suklaambaradharam Vishnum", only the form of the deity is described. But there is another inner meaning for the name Vinayaka. "Suklaambaradharam" means one who is clad in white. "Vishnum" means, he is all-pervading. "Sasivarnam" means his complexion is grey like that of ash. "Chathurbhujam" means he has four arms. "Prasannavadanam" means, he has always a pleasing mien. "Sarvavighnopasanthaye" means for the removal of all obstacles. "Dhyaayeth", meditate (on him). Vinayaka is the deity who removes all bad qualities, instills good qualities and confers peace on the devotee who meditates on him.

This is how the theistic believers interpret this prayer. The atheists have made a parody of it by construing the prayer as a description of a donkey, which carries white clothes on its back, is ash-grey in colour, wanders everywhere, has four legs, and has a bland look.

No master above him

The Vinayaka-principle, however, has only one meaning, which is relevant to everyone irrespective of whether he is a believer or a non-believer. "Vinayaka" means that he is totally master of himself. He has no master above him, He does not depend on anyone. He is also called Ganapati. This term means he is the lord of the Ganas—a class of divine entities. This term also means that he is the master of the intellect and discriminating power in man. He possesses great intelligence and knowledge. Such knowledge issues from a pure and sacred mind. This knowledge leads to wisdom (Vijnana). Because he is the master of Buddhi (intelligence) and Siddhi (wisdom or realisation), he is described as the Lord of Buddhi and Siddhi. Buddhi and Siddhi are referred to as the consorts of Vinayaka.

The mouse is the vehicle of Vinayaka. What is the inner significance of the mouse? The mouse is considered as the known that if you want to catch a mouse you place a strong smelling edible inside the mouse-trap. The mouse also symbolises the darkness of night. The mouse can see well in the dark. As Vinayaka's vehicle the mouse signifies an object that leads man from darkness to light. The Vinayaka-principle, thus, means that which removes all the bad qualities, bad practices and bad thoughts in men and inculcates good qualities, good conduct and good thoughts.

"Prathama vandana"

Another name for Vinayaka is "Vighneshwara". Easwara is one who is endowed with every conceivable form of wealth: riches, knowledge, health, bliss, beauty, etc. Vighneshwara is the promoter of all these forms of wealth and removes all obstacles to their enjoyment. He confers all these forms of wealth on those who worship him. Vinayaka is described as "Prathama Vandana" (the first deity who should be worshipped). As everyone in the world desires wealth and prosperity, everyone offers the first place for worship to Vighneshwara.

It is only when the inner meanings of various aspects relating to the Divine are understood that worship can be offered to the Divine meaningfully. Unfortunately, as only the superficial and worldly meanings of the scriptural texts are expounded these days, men's devotion is growing weaker continually. It is essential for everyone to understand the inner meaning of the Vedantic texts.

One may have immense faith to God. But from time to time, the power of Maya may undermine this faith. (Bhagavan gave two examples from Mahabharata to illustrate how even staunch devotees of Krishna like Dharmaja and Arjuna displayed hesitancy in acting up to the advice of Krishna and had to be taught their duty through Bhishma and Draupadi respectively. Details of the two episodes will be published later).

Unwavering faith essential

Faith in God should never waver. In no circumstance should anyone go against the injunctions of the Divine. Whatever worship one may offer, however intensely one may meditate, if one transgresses the commands of the Lord, these devotional practices become futile. The reason is that the Divine has no selfish objective or aim. It is out of small-minded selfish motives that people act against the sacred commands of the Lord. Even small acts of transgression may in due course assume dangerous proportions.

Like the clouds in the sky which are brought together or dispersed by the winds, the passage of time brings about for man the union or separation of associates and happiness or sorrow. Time is the form of God. It should not be wasted. It is to understand such sacred truths that festivals like Ganesha Chaturthi are celebrated.

Ganesha's intelligence

How did Vinayaka acquire siddhi (supreme powers)? His parents held a contest for their two sons—Ganesha and Subrahmanya. They said they will offer their grace in the form of a fruit to whoever came first in circumambulating the universe. The younger son Subrahmanya set out immediately on his peacock to go round the universe. On seeing Subrahmanya approaching his parents, almost at the end of his trip, Vinayaka, who had been quietly sitting all the while, got up and went round the parents and sat down. Parvati observed that Subrahmanya, who had taken so much trouble to go round the universe, should be declared the winner. Parameshwara asked Vighneshwara what was the inner significance of his going round the parents. Ganesha replied: "The entire universe is permeated by both of you. The entire creation is a manifestation of the Siva-Shakti form. It is an act of delusion to attempt to go round this phenomenal universe. To go round both of you is the true circumambulation of the cosmos". Then Parvati exclaimed: "Yours is the fruit." Ganesha became the Lord of the Divine hosts (Ganas). Easwara was so much impressed with the supreme intelligence of Vinayaka that he told him "All those who wish to worship Me, will offer their worship first to you."

Such was the grace showered on Vinayaka. What is the reason? Ganesha's faith in the Lord and His omnipresence.

The right path for all people is to develop faith in God and lead godly lives.

Vighneshwara is also regarded as one endowed with the wisdom of the elephant ("gaja thelivi"). The elephant is noted for its supreme intelligence. It is also known for its absolute loyalty to its master. It is ready to sacrifice its life itself for the sake of its master. The direct proof of this is Sai Gita (Bhagavan's elephant). Ordinarily hundreds of cars will be passing on the road. Sai Gita will take no notice of them. But when Swami's car happens to pass that way, it will instinctively notice it. It will rush to the road raising its familiar cry. What love for Swami! It will be no exaggeration if faith is equated with the elephant.

animals. It is thus a pacesetter for all animals.

Vinayaka is a leader for all deities. Faith in Vinayaka should be developed as the exemplar for all deities and he should be worshipped as the embodiment of Divinity.

Bhagavan then sang three bhajans: "*Hey Sivasankara, Namaami Sankara*", "*Hari bhajana binaa*" and "*Subrahmanyam! Subrahmanyam!*"

From Bhagavan's discourse in the Prasanthi Mandir on 12-9-1991

SUMMER SHOWERS IN BRINDAVAN:

GURUDEV VANI:

The Human Predicament and the Divine

*Social norms have vanished;
Contentment among men has disappeared;
Character and moral values have been shattered;
Humanness has been degraded in mankind.*

Dear Students!

Food is essential for everyone in the world. Among the necessities of life food comes first. But man cannot be satisfied with food alone. A full stomach does not fully satisfy the mind. He cannot merely rest on a satisfied appetite. He has to move about and engage himself in work. While doing work, one has to ask himself: "What am I doing? Why am I doing and how am I doing?" When he enquires into these questions, he can derive meaning and joy from his work. In this way, he recognises the purpose and value of what he is doing.

Realising what is good in his actions, he makes it a part of his life. He experiences the joy derived from his actions and shares that joy with others.

This is the primary message of the Taittiriya Upanishad. Starting with food, attaining bliss is the final goal of life. The Taittiriya Upanishad is a section of the Krishna Yajur Veda. This is an ancient Upanishad. Everything in it is in the form of a mantra (a sacred statement). Mantra does not merely mean pronouncements like "Om Namahshivaya" or "Om Namo Narayanaya". "Mananaa thraana samhitham iti mantrah" ("Mantra is that which redeems by contemplation"). Mantra is that which gets established in the mind by the process of contemplation on it. In this Upanishad, every utterance has the import of mantra. Every word in it is filled with the power of mantra.

"Sathyam Vada. Dharmam Chara" ("Speak the truth; practise righteousness"). "Om iti Brahma" ("Om is Brahman"). "Sathyam, Jnanam, Anantam Brahma". "Ekam Sat; Vipraah bahudhaa vadanti" ("The Real is One; the wise call it by many names"). "Ekoham bahusyaam" ("I am One; let me become many"). "Eko vasi sarvabhuthaantharaatma" ("The One is the Indweller in all beings")—these aphoristic pronouncements acquired the form and power of mantras, spread throughout the world and generated bliss among men by raising their consciousness.

There is another remarkable feature of this Upanishad. The other Upanishads are relevant to specific categories of people. But the Taittiriya Upanishad is valid for celibates, householders. Renunciants and ascetics equally in its message and its practical application. It has thus an appeal and relevance for every human being. Its teachings are essential for persons in the four ashrams (stages in life).

The five fires

There is another important section in it dealing with the "Panchaagnis" (the Five Fires). There are five kinds of Fire-principle (Agni): Udara-Agni, Manda-Agni, Kama-Agni, Soka-Agni and Badava-Agni. "Udara-Agni" refers to the burning sensation caused by hunger (Fire in the stomach). "Manda-Agni" refers to the burning feeling caused by excessive eating resulting in indigestion. "Kama-Agni" is the burning agony in the mind caused by numerous desires and passions. "Soka-Agni" does not refer only to consuming grief caused by worldly disappointments and losses. It pertains also to the burning sorrow felt by one who is yearning for God thirsting for experiencing oneness with the Divine.

The Bhagavad Gita is a scriptural text acceptable to people of all faiths. The very first canto in it is titled "Vishaadayoga" (the Yoga of Despondency). What is this "Vishaada"? Does it relate to any worldly concerns? Is it despondency about the fate of kinsmen and friends? Can such a grief be described as a form of "yoga"? Clearly this grief is not associated with worldly desires or human relationships? Arjuna's grief arose from out of a concern for Dharma (Duty) and for God. He realised that in the war (that was about to be waged) many would die. As a consequence of their death, righteousness (Dharma) will suffer a mortal blow. There will be confusion of castes. It was because of his concern for Dharma and his faith in God that Arjuna was grief-stricken, his grief turned into a form of yoga (quest for communion with the Divine). Likewise, this "Soka-Agni" is not a consuming sorrow over the lack of worldly possessions. It is a grief felt for the sake of Dharma and God.

"Badava-Agni" is the burning feeling caused in a person by dire diseases and death.

All these five types of "fire" are related to physical conditions. They have no relation to the Atma (Spirit) which is different from the body. The Spirit is a witness to all the experiences resulting from these five forms of fires. Utilising these five fires as experiences witnessed by the Spirit, the Upanishad revealed the truth underlying physical phenomena.

There is another inner secret that has to be recognised in this context. Human beings are classified under four categories: Daiva (Divine), Manava (Human), Danava (Demonic) and Pashutwa (Animal). Of these four categories, the first is Manava-Daivamu (the divinely human). "Daivam maanusha roopena" - "the Divine in human form". This means that the Supreme is present as Vishnu in the heart of the human being. The "Divinely human" being is one who is conscious of the Divinity residing within him, who dedicates all his actions to the Divine, who recognises the Divinity present equally in all beings and has love and compassion for all living beings and devotes his life to the service of God. "Human-humanness" (Manava-manavatwa) calls for a life dedicated to Sathya and Dharma. "Sathya Dharma Bhaavo marthyaha" (He is a man who is devoted to Truth and Righteousness). In this world of delusion, the one who has his sights on Truth and Righteousness, preaches and practises the two virtues and shows love and compassion to his fellow-beings in the conviction that to be truly human is the mark of a human being, is a humane human being. Such a man practises Dharma, engages himself in charitable activities, harmonises his thoughts, words and deeds and leads a godly life even though living as a householder (grihastha). Performing his duties, he stands out as an example to his fellowmen.

Next comes "Manava-Danavattva" the demonic human being. "Surapano danavah" (The demonic being is addicted to intoxicating drinks.) The demonic man is one who is addicted to drink, who harasses people, inflicts pain on others for selfish reasons, who is without love or compassion, and who is totally immersed in selfish concerns. This is how the Upanishads characterise the demonic human being.

The fourth category is the bestial human being ("Manava-pasutvam") "Njanena sunyah pasubhissamanah" ("The man without wisdom is equal to an animal".) What is the animal nature? Governed wholly by the senses, considering sensual enjoyment as the sole purpose of his life, leading a sensuous life from birth to death, spending his time in eating and sleeping and forgetting in such a life his basic human nature—such a person has been described as an animal in human form. The chief quality that distinguishes a man from an animal is wisdom—the power of discrimination as to what is permanent and what is transient. A man who lacks this capacity is no better than an animal. When does a man lose this capacity? When he is self-centred.

God-realisation the goal

The right course for man is to pursue the path of God-realisation. If he is unable to do this, he should strive at least to behave as a human being. For man to behave like a demon or an animal is totally opposed to his basic nature. It is because these degrading tendencies have become rampant in the world today that true humanness has declined.

It is because demonic and animal tendencies have grown in the world today that genuine human traits have declined. Morality and integrity have reached their nadir. Social obligations have lost their hold. Men are wasting their lives without any awareness of what is society. Society is regarded as an assemblage of heads. This is not so. Society means the unified expression of the collective group. It implies recognition of the duty by everyone in the

dependent on society.

The two paths

The Taittiriya Upanishad contains a significant message given to the disciples by the preceptor at the end of their education in the preceptor's hermitage. In this message, two paths are indicated: the Preyo-marga and the Sreyo-marga. The Preyo-marga relates to practices which will give pleasure to the senses from time to time. These are momentary, impermanent and unreal. Most people prefer this path of "Preyas". Very few seek to follow the "Sreyo-marga" (the sublime path), which confers permanent and unchanging good. The reason is it takes time to yield the benefits. Man is eager to set quick results and does not want to wait. He is in a hurry all the time. Even his desires are confined to immediate results. He desires a good name, a good environment and an enjoyable life. He does not seek good knowledge, good conduct or good sense, which are the requisites for following the "Sreyo-marga". The path of "Preyas" (the mundane path) is concerned with achieving temporary name, power and position.

Summoning all the pupils, the preceptor would address them thus: "Dear students! What is the primary aim of education? It is the cultivation of humility. Character is the life-breath of education." The Shikshavalli chapter of the Upanishad contains all the lessons which the preceptor wanted the students to bear in mind when they went out into the world. Among them were injunctions such as "Maatru devo bbava! Pitru devo bhava" ("Worship the mother as God. Worship the father as God.") Reverence for the parents comes first. They were enjoined not to give up truth in any circumstance and not to forsake righteousness at any time.

Lead Godly Lives

Through these teachings, the students of those days were filled with high ideals and were inspired to lead exemplary, Godly lives.

Unfortunately education today tends to dehumanise the students. While developing their intellectual abilities, nothing is done to develop good qualities in them.

All that our much-vaunted "progress" in education has achieved are a decline in morality and a contempt for teachers.

Students have to outgrow their narrow egoistic ideas and develop a universal outlook. They should strive to enlarge the individual consciousness to comprehend the Universal by recognising that the Spirit that dwells in all beings is one and the same Cosmic Spirit. ("Ekaatma Sarvabhutaantaratma"). When this consciousness of oneness is realised by all, the world will experience peace and prosperity.

To start with cultivate love for your fellow-beings. If a man cannot love his father, wife or children or his fellowmen, how is he going to love God? Love is not something that waxes and wanes. It is unchanging. It must spread wider and wider till it becomes all-embracing. Such love is Divine. Love is God. Live in love.

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan: "*Prema muditha manase kaho: Rama, Rama, Ram!*")

From Bhagavan's discourse at the Institute Auditorium at Brindavan, 30-5-1991

KRISHNA JAYANTI SANDESH:

AVATAR VANI:

Krishna—Incarnation of Love

*Love is God; the Cosmos is permeated with Love.
Assuming the Love form, to save His beloved ones,
Showering the nectarine stream of Love,
Krishna came as the embodiment of Love
for those yearning for Him.*

*Everything is born out of pure Love;
All joy is derived from unalloyed Love;
So are Truth, Sacrifice, Peace and Forbearance
If Love is lacking, there can be no contentment.
This is the path of Sai and the word of Truth.*

Embodiments of Divine Love!

Affection (Anuraga) and Love (Prema) are mutually dependent and Inseparable. When the mind is turned towards things of the world, it is called Anuraga (affection or attachment) and if it is turned towards God, it is called Prema (Love or devotion). Love is the fruit of love. Love is comparable only with love. Love can offer only love itself. Love cannot be described by poetry. It cannot be proved by the mind or the spoken word. Hence, the Vedas declared that it transcends the mind and speech. Love is priceless and indescribably precious. Its sweetness is unexcelled. The scriptures have described Amrit (nectar) as indescribably sweet. But Love is far sweeter than nectar.

Love and unselfishness

Love is a precious diamond which can be got only in the realm of love and nowhere else. The kingdom of Love is located in the heart, in a heart filled with love. Love can be experienced only in a mind flowing with love and a heart filled with love. The precious diamond of Love cannot be got through japa or meditation, through prescribed rituals or various sacred acts. These can only give mental satisfaction.

(friendship), Vatsalya (maternal love), Anuraga (affection) and Madhura marga (sweetness)—are all based on love. The essence of all spiritual disciplines is contained in love.

The greater a man's love for God, the greater the bliss which he experiences. When love declines in man, his joy also declines equally. The lover of God sees God everywhere. Hence man's heart must be filled with the love of God.

Love will not enter the heart of one who is filled with selfishness and self-conceit. Therefore, man should forget his petty self and concentrate his thoughts on God. Love of God makes a man oblivious to his own existence. Love becomes a form of intoxication. Love makes the devotee and God dance in ecstasy and becomes one with them. It induces self-forgetfulness. It generates an ecstasy in which everything is forgotten.

Krishna's advent as love

Love cannot bear separation from the beloved. Today is the day when we celebrate the advent in human form of the Lord who came down to the earth from Gokula to instill divine love in human beings. The nature of divine love can be understood only when the Divine in human form teaches as man to man the nature of this love.

In ancient times, the sages performed rigorous penance in the forests, living among wild animals. With no weapons in their hands, they relied on their spirit of love to protect them. They performed their penance with love for all beings. Their love transformed even the wild animals which lived at peace with the sages. Love transformed even tigers into friendly beasts.

Today because men have lost the feeling of love and are filled with selfishness and greed, they have become "tigers" (man-eaters). You read in the papers about the death of "Tigers" in Sri Lanka. Who are these "Tigers"? They are men who have turned into "Tigers".

Today men are becoming man-eaters. In ancient times, tigers turned into creatures with love.

THE POWER OF LOVE

It is to transform man's nature from the animal to the human that love has been serving as a powerful force. The hearts of men in the olden days were soft and loving. Although love inherently is soft and compassionate, in certain situations it assumes a stern form. This is because, even out of love one has sometimes to use punishment. The harsh words and the punishment are associated with love. When it rains, it is a downpour of drops of water. But sometimes the rain is accompanied by hailstones. The hailstones are hard, but they are only water in a condensed form. Likewise, softness or punishment are different expressions of love.

Akrura and the gopikas

Sometimes, even devotees use harsh words about the Divine. Kamsa, who regarded Balaram and Krishna as his mortal enemies, wanted by some means or other to get rid of them. Despite all his stratagems, Kamsa could not get hold of them. On the pretext of performing a sacrifice, he

devotion to the Lord. Although he did not relish the prospect of going to Balaram and Krishna to bring them to Mathura, he could not disobey his master's orders. He reached Repalle and conveyed to Devaki and Vasudeva and Yashoda and Nanda Kamsa's invitation to Balaram and Krishna and asked them to arrange for sending the two lads with him. The Gopikas got wind of this and immediately rushed to Yashoda's house and asked: "Who is this cruel fellow (Kruta) who has come here? He has been named Akrura (a man without cruelty) by mistake. Are Balaram and Krishna to be entrusted to such a cruel person?" They decided to ignore Akrura and appeal directly to Balaram and Krishna not to go with Akrura.

Gopikas' appeal to Krishna

However, the main purpose of Balaram's and Krishna's advent was to destroy Kamsa. This task had to be accomplished. Therefore, they could not agree to the Gopikas' appeal. They got into Akrura's chariot. All the Gopikas surrounded the chariot. "Krishna will not give ear to our prayers not to go" they felt. So, they decided to appeal to him with all humility and intense love. Sobbing and praying from the depths of their hearts, they said: "We cannot bear separation from you even for a moment. Is it right for you to leave us like this? Is it a game of yours? Take pity on us, oh Lord! What is this farce of a yaga! It is Kamsa's disease (rogam). Our sole prayer is this. Take us also with you, who have placed all our faith in you." (Swami sang the song of the Gopikas). They prayed to Krishna, "Take pity on us, Lord!" Even as they were praying in this fashion, the chariot disappeared from the place by the Maya of the Lord.

The hearts of the Gopikas were filled with love. Hence they saw only love everywhere. They felt that everything was throbbing with life and love. They ran to Brindavan, went to every plant and bush and flower and entreated them to tell whether Krishna was anywhere hiding amongst them, describing the beautiful features of Krishna. (Swami sang the song in which the Gopikas described Krishna.)

For those immersed in love, everything appears vibrant with life. The power of love is boundless. The love-impulse is manifested in different persons in different ways. Supreme devotees like the Gopikas considered Sri Krishna as the very breath of their life and worshipped him. "You are everything for us," they declared.

Yashoda's maternal love

On the other hand, Yashoda's love for Krishna was that of the mother towards her child. After Krishna's departure, she waited for two days for news from Mathura. Note the difference between the devotional love of the Gopikas and the maternal love of Yashoda. Yashoda looked upon Krishna as an ordinary child, the darling of her heart, who was innocent of the ways of the world. She was in anguish with the thought: "I cannot imagine what tortures the inhuman demons in Mathura have inflicted on Balaram and Krishna in the streets of Mathura. Oh Krishna! I cannot wait any longer for your return." (Swami sang a song full of feeling.)

There is a great difference between the love of devotees and the love of a mother. The intensity of the mother's feeling arises from the sense of maternal attachment. The devotees'

beautiful face and let us listen to the divine music of your flute?"

The love of Radha, who was totally absorbed in the love of Krishna, was different. "Oh Krishna! Wherever you may be and whatever the form you may assume, bless me so that I may be one with you in that form." Radha yearned for this kind of union.

But the love—principle in all these cases was one and the same. Love may be called by different names, but its expression is the same. "The Brahman is the form of Love. It is suffused with love. One can have the experience of Unity with the Divine—the Advaitic experience—only through love." (Poem)

The avatar as teacher of love

"Prema" is a two-letter (Akshara) word (in Telugu). But in this short small word, the entire universe (Akshaya Jagat) is contained. But alas, today there is so little awareness of the power of this love. Wrapped up in their trivial attachments, people are ignoring the power of this infinite, sacred and all-encompassing Divine Love. Love is associated with immortality. It is nectar itself. There is nothing in the world comparable to it.

It is to teach mankind the truth about this Divine Love that Love itself incarnates on earth in human form. The scriptures declare that the Divine descends on earth to teach mankind the ways of Dharma, Justice and Truth. "Dharma samsthaapanarthaya sambhavaami Yuge Yuge" ("I incarnate on earth from age to age to establish Dharma".) This is Krishna's declaration in the Gita. Once people are filled with love, all Dharma, all justice and all truth will be installed in them. Without love, righteousness will be a mechanical ritual. What kind of righteousness can there be without love? What sort of justice can there be? It will be a lifeless corpse. Love is life. Without love, no man can exist for a moment.

Hence, Love is the form of the Supreme Lord. It is to preach the doctrine of love that the Krishna Avatar and other divine incarnations made their advent on earth. According to the place, time and circumstances prevailing then, different names were given to the Lord. These differences are like the different figures made from sugar to appeal to the different preferences of children. These figures may be those of a peacock, or a dog or a hare and so on. But what is common to all of them is sugar.

Likewise, the avatars in the four yugas incarnated to teach what were appropriate for that age: Dhyana (meditation) for the Krita yuga, Tapas (penance) for the Treta yuga, Upasana (worship) for the Dwapara yuga, Namasmarana (chanting the name of the Lord) for the Kali yuga. Common to all these is love (of the Lord). In the same way what is common to the nine forms of worship (Shravanam, Kirtan, etc.) is love. In all of them the chanting of the Lord's name with devotion is common.

Although there are many types of spiritual practices, they are of no avail without love. This love must be unchanging in all circumstances. The faith of the eldest of the Pandava brothers, Dharmaja, was of this steadfast type. Whether as an exile in the forest or as an emperor, whether during the disrobing of Draupadi in Duryodhana's court or when Abhimanyu was killed in battle, or when the slaughter of the Upapandavas (by Ashwathama) occurred, in all situations, his faith in Krishna never wavered. He firmly believed that Krishna was his sole saviour. At all times he was contemplating only the name of Krishna. Whether as an emperor ruling over a vast realm or when he lost everything in the game of dice, he was neither elated with success nor depressed by defeat. The primary trait of the Pandavas was to cherish such unflinching faith in the Divine.

Unfortunately, in this age of Kali, it is characteristic of the small-minded people to praise God in times of prosperity and traduce God in periods of adversity. People must cultivate the feeling of love which will enable them to look upon prosperity and adversity with equal serenity. People must develop the conviction that it is the same Lord who is the indweller in all beings. Just as the body is an organic whole and any ailment affecting any part of the body is felt as a pain by the whole organism, people should feel that anyone's suffering is their own suffering and any relief done to the other is a help done to themselves. Differences between persons will cease when there is a recognition of the common Divinity present in everyone. The foremost purpose of the Divine as avatar is to teach this truth to humanity.

"Welcome difficulties"

However, despite all the teachings, mankind is prone to go astray from time to time. Men should shed their pettiness and develop broad-mindedness by the cultivation of love.

Human life is beset with ups and downs, joys and sorrows. These experiences are intended to serve as guideposts for man. Life would be stale if there were no trials and difficulties. It is these difficulties which bring out the human values in man. Because of the manner in which Harishchandra faced all the trials in his life, his story has become a glorious chapter in human annals. Prahlada stands out equally as a great devotee who stood up to all the persecutions of his father.

Today, however, people want instant salvation, without the slightest effort or sacrifice on their part. But if such instant salvation is achieved, it will vanish also in a trice. Only that which is got by hard effort will yield lasting benefit.

People pray to Swami to rid them of all difficulties and losses. This is a totally wrong kind of prayer. Difficulties must be welcomed and must be overcome. By overcoming trouble the Divine must be experienced. You cannot get the juice of the sugarcane without crushing it. You cannot enhance the brilliance of a diamond without cutting it and making many facets. The body is like a sugarcane stalk. It is only when it goes through various difficulties that you can experience the sweet bliss of Self-realisation. That sweetness is Divinity itself. Where does that sweetness reside in man? It is in every limb and organ.

question may arise in the minds of many. When people ask, "How can we develop our love for the Lord", the answer is: "There is only one way. When you put into practice the love in which you have faith, that love will grow." Because you do not practise what you profess, your faith gets weakened. A plant will grow only when it is watered regularly. When you have planted the seed of love, you can make it grow only by watering it with love every day. The tree of love will grow and yield the fruits of love. Men today do not perform those acts which will promote love. When you wish to develop love for the Lord, you must continually practise loving devotion to the Lord.

"Sahasa" and "sadhana"

The mind is allowed to wander and engage itself in external exercises like japa and puja. Here is a story to illustrate this:

King Vikramaditya was once going round his country incognito to find out what the people were doing. He noticed an old Brahmin performing a yajna (fire sacrifice). Apparently as the yajna had been performed over many years a huge mound of ash had come up near the sacrificial fire-place. Vikramaditya asked the old Brahmin what he was doing. He replied: "I have been performing a yajna for the past 60 years. This mound you see is the accumulated ash from the yajna. Though I have been ceaselessly perform this yajna, I have not yet had a vision of the Yajna-Purusha (the Lord of the Sacrifice)."

Vikramaditya was deeply moved by the anguished utterance of the old man. He sat in meditation himself. He performed a severe penance. Despite his long penance, he could not have a vision of the Yajna-Purusha. He felt: "Of what use is all the penance I have performed? If I cannot get the grace of the Lord, what use is there in living?" Thinking in this way, he took out the sword from inside his cloak and decided to end his purposeless existence if he could not have a vision of the Lord. Addressing mentally the Yajna-Purusha, he said: "If you will not appear before me, I am offering my life to you." As he drew his sword to offer his head, the Yajna-Purusha appeared before him and seized the sword from the king's hand. He said to the king: "Oh Vikramaditya! This is an act of recklessness (sahasa) and not a spiritual offering. Where am I? As Vaishwanara, I am dwelling in all beings as the digestive power. Is it a sign of spirituality for you to seek, on the one hand, externally a vision of the Divine who is within you, and, on the other, to put an end to your life, because you do not have a vision of the Divine that is in you? This kind of act savours of the Rajasic tendency. A real devotee should not resort to such desperate actions. To realise me, what you need to practise is love and not reckless courage. Whatever you see, whatever you do, be conscious of the all-pervading Divine. Only then work will be transformed into worship. What this old Brahmin has been doing for sixty years is to mumble the words of the mantra without understanding their meaning. He did not invite my presence with all his heart and soul. I present myself to one who prays for me with all his heart and with harmony in thought, word and deed. If one cannot offer such dedicated worship, he should adhere to my injunctions without hesitation."

Sudhira—Angirasa's son—in which Prahlada himself acted as judge and gave the verdict in favour of Sudhira. When Virochana had to forfeit his life as the loser in the debate, Sudhira gave him back his life, in his admiration for the supreme sense of justice of Prahlada and the readiness of Virochana to give up his life according to the conditions of the debate. The story figured in Bhagavan's Onam discourse).

Parasurama's example

A similar incident occurred in the life of Parasurama, son of the sage Jamadagni. One day when Jamadagni's wife went to the river to fetch water, the king Vichitravirya was going in his chariot. She was a pure-hearted lady. She just looked up to see who was going in the chariot. She was struck for a moment by the beauty of Vichitravirya. When she returned to the hermitage, Jamadagni ordered Parasurama to cut off the head of his mother. Parasurama did not flinch for a moment. Carrying out implicitly his father's command, he cut off the head of his mother. Jamadagni then asked his son: "What boon do you want? You have implicitly carried out my command." Parasurama said: "Dear father! Restore the life of my mother." The sage gave back her life. Implicit obedience merits its own reward.

Mistaken notions about Krishna

This is the inner secret of how the Divine works. In the life of Krishna, there are many incidents which have an esoteric meaning, but which have been misunderstood and misinterpreted by scholars and commentators. Such misunderstandings have been caused by stories that Krishna had eight wives and that he dallied with 16,000 Gopikas. In the spinal column, there are six Chakras, of which two are important—the Sahasrara Chakra in the brain and the Hridaya Chakra in the middle of the spinal column. The Hridaya-Chakra is a flower-like Chakra with eight petals. The eight petals are symbols of the eight parts of the earth, whose master is the Lord Himself. The esoteric meaning of this is that God is the Lord of the eight-petalled lotus of the heart in man. The Lord of the Heart is described as Madhava. "Maa" means Lakshmi, or Maya or Prakriti. "Dhava" means husband. God is the Lord of Lakshmi, or Maya or Prakriti. Krishna is thus the Lord of the eight-petalled lotus of the heart.

"Sahasrara" Is the topmost chakra of the spinal column. It is pictured as a thousand petalled flower. In each petal, God dwells with all his sixteen potencies (kalas). Altogether, there are 16,000 potencies, which represent the Gopikas. "Go" means sound, speech, and life breath. God is the Lord of this thousand petalled Sahasrara. The inner significance of the reference to 16,000 Gopikas should be understood in this manner. Few attempt to understand the spiritual significance of many episodes in the Bhagavatam. Young men may easily be misled by references to Krishna's eight wives or his association with 16,000 Gopikas. The real meaning is that each one should awaken the sixteen thousand potencies within him. This can be done only by implicit obedience to the commands of God. The Kundalini-shakti, which starts at the Mooladhara (the root of the spinal column), ascends to the Sahasrara to attain its fullness. The life-breath for this power is Prema (Divine Love). This love has to be generated at the Mooladhara and taken upto the Sahasrara.

In this age of science and technology, students should try to understand the inner meaning of the concept of Ardhanareeshwara (The combination of the male and female principle in Easwara). No scientist has attempted to explain this concept. Consider the similarity between the ancient sages' concept of Ardhanareeshwara and the ideas of modern science regarding the atom. There are many such ancient concepts which have contemporary validity. Every object is composed of atoms and in every atom (Anu in Sanskrit) there is a proton and an electron. The electron is described in Sanskrit, as the Vebhaga (the left side) of the atom (Anu) and the proton is described as the Dhanabhaga (the right half) of the atom. The Vebhaga represents the female principle and the Dhanabhaga (the right half) the male principle. The coming together of these two constitutes the material base of each object. This process of coming together is represented in the concept of "Ardhanareeshwara"—the coming together of the female and male aspects. "Ardhanareeshwara" means half-feminine and half-masculine. The electron represents the feminine aspect. The proton represents the male aspect. The atom is formed when they come together. Every object in the universe is made up of atoms. Hence, the ancients regarded the entire cosmos as an embodiment of the Ardhanareeshwara principle.

Tradition and science

Similarly, many of the ancient Bharatiya customs and practices are based on profound scientific truths. For instance, during festive occasions, green leaves and plants are displayed at the entrance to houses. The scientific principle behind this custom is noteworthy. During festive occasions, large groups of people used to gather in houses and they exhale carbon dioxide which fouls the air. The green leaves and plants serve to absorb the carbon dioxide and give out oxygen, which is essential for the health of the people. As the houses in old days had only small windows, this practice helped to ensure fuller supply of oxygen. Could the display of green leaves be called a superstition?

Similarly, the use of cow-dung for cleaning floors in houses had a scientific basis. The cow-dung has antiseptic properties and its use in cleaning floors served to eliminate germs. When cow-dung water was sprinkled in front of houses, all disease-causing germs were destroyed.

Such practices helped to promote the health and longevity of people. Let any scientist today experiment with the use of cow-dung. Unfortunately, the scientists seem to be more concerned to conduct experiments on remote objects than with those lying at their doorstep.

The ancient seers established practices which were designed to make life more healthy and joyous. For instance, in the past women were accustomed to making use of turmeric for cleansing the body. Turmeric was also used for adorning the threshold. This turmeric also has antiseptic properties. The use of turmeric served to destroy germs entering the houses. People today wish to substitute yellow paint for turmeric! The paint may look attractive, but has no antiseptic properties.

prescribed. The use of kumkum and turmeric by women was based on hygienic principles. (Swami recited a song composed by Him in His early years in which He had lamented the replacement of kumkum and turmeric by face powder.) The application of turmeric helped to prevent the growth of hair on the face. By the giving up of these practices, diseases like Oesonophilia and asthma have spread among women. In the olden days, people valued health as the key to happiness.

If we study the Indian cultural tradition in this manner, we will find that its emphasis was always on what was beneficial and good for the individual and society.

The Vice-Chancellor (in his address earlier) made a reference to the doctrine of surrender. Surrender does not mean that the devotee and God are different. True surrender implies the sense of one-ness with God. "Without you I cannot exist," should be the attitude of the devotee. This was the feeling which the Gopikas expressed about Krishna. (Swami sang a song in which the Gopikas express their love for Krishna and how they cannot bear separation from him.) The love of the Gopikas was pure and sacred. This is exemplified by the story of Suguna, who was so completely lost in thinking about Krishna that she was not conscious of her fingers being burnt while she was getting her lamp lighted in Yashoda's house. When Yashoda asked her what had happened to her, she said that she was seeing the charming face of Krishna in the flame of the lamp.

Devotion should flow from the heart, as was the case with the Gopikas. Much of what passes for devotion nowadays is artificial. Develop pure and sincere devotion and sanctify your lives.

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "*Govinda Krishna Jai! Gopala Krishna Jai!*" in which the entire gathering joined.)

From Bhagavan's discourse at the Prasanthi Mandir on 2-9-91

Baba—My Loving Guide

My Baba Is a Mighty Ocean
And I am a little wave,
Scurrying along without a notion
Of my ultimate destination.
I pray to My Lord to guide me on my way,
Along the path of Truth, by night and day;
I know My Lord will bless me

A benign smile on His Face Supreme.

And take me to my goal, 'Bliss', too
I know with My Baba by my side
I can put all worry aside
And merrily hop along with Him,
Without the Light ever growing dim I

—G. Ramani, Hyderabad.

The Sai Message in Lithuania

The British quarterly journal, "Facets"—devoted to the propagation of Bhagavan Baba's teachings, carries in its autumn 1991 issue the following article from Lillie Talmantiene, a Professor of English in the University at Vilna. She had been popularising Bhagavan's message in Lithuania against great odds during the communist regime. She visited Prasanthi Nilayam last year. Since then Lithuania has become independent. Lillie Talmantiene writes

You people of the "free world" would be hardly able to appreciate the miracle which we have lived through here in Lithuania in two weekends of May 1991. For you everything is ever so simple: if you've got the money, you may travel wherever you wish; while we have to overcome many obstacles to be able to go abroad (I have invariably been helped by Baba Himself; all my foreign trips are exclusively His arrangements—but this is another story). Only three people of Lithuania have ever been to Sri Sathya Sai.

So it is nothing short of a miracle that at a mere announcement of a workshop in EHV conducted by two visitors from the U.K., nearly 350 people gathered (in two towns).

The first workshop was held in Kaunas on May 4-5th, the second in Vilnius (the capital) on May 11-12th. The latter was attended by 250 people, mainly teachers. Both workshops were held on warm sunny weekends when many would have preferred to rest or work in their gardens rather than sit on hard wooden benches for 7 hours. And yet, when it-ended, no one wanted to move! The hall reverberated with sum's and halleluias!... Everybody's cheeks glowed and eyes sparkled—reflecting the light in June Auton's and Pat Callinan's warm and loving hearts. Those two ladies from the U.K. electrified the audience with Sai energy and effected the birth of two large groups of volunteers who have set themselves a task of becoming EHV teachers. Besides, I'm sure that in the nearest future we'll be able to report the birth of another Sai devotee group.

How will it be possible for us to start working on self-training for EHV?

No problem, thanks to June's careful and thoughtful preparation for her "Lithuanian trip". She and Pat brought ample material, the study of which will keep us quite busy and hopefully

language! You should have seen people grabbing them! Our visitors brought with them not only books but a very rich display showing EHV students' activities. (Can you imagine what their luggage weighed!) They had to cope not only with excess weight, but with the 'culture shock' as well: no overhead projector, no this, no that... At a very short notice they were forced to make re-arrangements in the carefully planned presentation project.

And so in a few days we are parting, but not for long: June has been invited by the Mayor of Kaunus to come back and train the would-be EHV teachers here. Isn't that something? We know her "newly delivered baby" will not be abandoned.

P.S. The feedback we got was truly amazing. All the participants said in unison that the workshops had far exceeded their expectations. They had never imagined it was possible to give so much love to so many people in such a short period.

Sai Seva at Godavri Pushkaram Festival

September 9th was a memorable day of fulfillment for 900 Sai Seval members (550 men and 350 women) from East Godavari district, who had rendered signal service during the 12-day Godavari Pushkaram festival in August (14 to 25) at Rajahmundry. Bhagavan invited them to assemble in the Mandir and blessed them with Padanamaskar and prasadam and conferred the additional benediction of a discourse on Seva.

All the Seva Dal members headed by Mr. Rama Rao, President of the East Godavari Samiti, felt immensely grateful to Bhagavan for His grace and blessings.

Relating the service activities of the Seva Dal members, Sri Bullayya said that the collectors of East and West Godavari invited the Sai Seva Organisations to render service to the pilgrims during the Pushkaram festival when lakhs of pilgrims are expected to come for a sacred bath in the Godavari. The festival comes round once in twelve years. The organisation readily responded and over 1400 Seva Dal members in the two districts and from outside registered for service at Rajahmundry. Another 1000 members rendered service in Kovur (West Godavari). He estimated that at least a crore of pilgrims must have attended the Pushkaram in the two districts over the 12 days of the festival. All the Seva Dal members serving in Rajahmundry were accommodated in Bhagavan's Gurukulam and were taken care of by Sai devotees with regard to food, etc.

The Seva Dal members worked from early morning till 9 p.m., looking after the pilgrims, helping the old, the Infirm and young children to take their bath in the sacred river at the ghats, distributing over 16,000 packets of food every day. Thanks to the grace of Bhagavan, no mishap occurred despite the enormous crowds present. The authorities deeply appreciated the services of

Rajahmundry.

Bhagavan, in His inspiring discourse, expatiated on the nature of true Seva and said that Seva should be done for pleasing God and not for pleasing others. No form of worship is greater than service to one's fellowmen. Service should be done in a totally selfless spirit. Selflessness leads to purity and purity leads to divinity. Addressing the women Seva Dal members present in the Mandir, Bhagavan said that Seva begins at home. Every act done in the home could be sanctified by making it an offering to God. It could also be converted into a form of spiritual sadhana.

Bhagavan exhorted all the Seva Dal members to remember Vyasa's supreme message containing the essence of all his eighteen Puranas. "Paropakarah punyasya Paapaaya Parapidanam" ("It is meritorious to help others; it is sinful to inflict pain").

—N.

Experiencing the Bliss Divine

Students! Embodiments of Divine Love!

It is only when the process of creation is understood in terms of the close relationship between the Omni-Self (Brahmam) and man can the Divine knowledge of the Supreme (Brahma-Vidya) be attained.

Brahman represents the Infinite. From this Infinite, Aakasa (ether or sound) emerged. From Aakasa came Vayu (Air), from Air, Tejas (Fire), from Tejas, water, and from water, the earth. From the earth came the herbal plants (Oshadhyah), from the plants, food, from food, Purusha (man). When the advent of man through this process is understood, it will be clear that man came from the Infinite.

The term Brahmananda is a compound word composed of Brahma and Ananda. When this compound word is examined in its two parts, it will be seen that Brahma is different from Ananda. When this Ananda (bliss) is united with Brahmam, it becomes Brahmananda. Hence, it is evident that there is an inextricable association between man and Brahmam (the Omni-Self).

Brahma-Vidya (the knowledge of the Absolute) can be got only through Brahmam. But, man, because he is bound to worldly attachments, forgets the truth about the Absolute and is lost in mundane concerns. The common man, who is a prey to desire, fear and hatred, is far from experiencing Brahmananda (the Supreme Bliss. If desire, fear and hatred are given up, men will be able to understand to some extent the nature of this Supreme Bliss. But renunciation of these

have to qualify yourself to be proximate to God's love. But even nearness is not enough. You must rely entirely on the Paratattwa (the Supreme Truth). Only then the human can become the Divine.

The Shikshavalli section of the Taittiriya Upanishad sought to teach the disciples how to realise this Brahmananda.

Brahma-Vidya is not something beyond human attainment. It relates to spiritual practices concerning daily life. These practices have to be observed regularly every day.

Three forms and three states

The Upanishad has revealed three forms in which the transcendental Brahma-tattwa manifests Itself. The three forms are: Viraat; Hiranyagarbha; and Avyakrita. These three forms are related to the gross, the subtle and the causal (forms of the human body). They are related to the three states of consciousness: Waking, dream and deep sleep.

"Viraat-swaroopa"

The "Viraat" form is the gross physical form assumed by the Atma in the waking state for leading a long life in the world. He manifests himself in many forms under many names. The entire cosmos, consisting of animate and Inanimate objects, is the form of "Viraat", permeating the five basic elements. The "Viraat" Purusha (the Cosmic Person) is manifest in every creature from an ant to the Absolute, demonstrating thereby that the cosmos is a manifestation of the Divine. He is called "Viraat" because of His cosmic manifestation and His immanence in everything in creation that is perceivable. Thus everything that is seen is a manifestation of "Viraat". The "Viraat Swaroopa" (the Cosmic Form) is related to the external physical universe. Assuming the gross physical form, the Cosmic Person (Viraat) stands forth as an ideal. He has two other names. One is Vaishwanara. This is the Divine in every being, who identifies himself as "I". From a king to a peasant, from a millionaire to a pauper, from a child to an old man, a woman or a man, every person identifies himself or herself by using the term "I" ("I am so and so"). The concept of "I" is thus present in every being. Vaishwanara is the entity that makes every being use the term "I" to distinguish oneself.

The other name is "Vairaajasutha." It means one who has assumed a mysterious form. While being present in every being, he appears to be absent, while carrying on all activities, he appears to be inactive, while experiencing everything, he appears to be not the experiencer. It is for these reasons he is called "Vairaajasutha."

This is the inner meaning of these three different forms of the Cosmic Person (Viraat Swaroopa).

"Hiranyagarbha"

The second name is Hiranyagarbha. He is the source of all kinds of knowledge -ethical, spiritual, physical, scientific and social. He may be described as "Jnanabhaskara" (The Sun of

whole of nature golden. The entire creation emerged from Hiranyagarbha at the beginning. Hiranyagarbha is in the form of an oval-shaped golden egg. From Hiranyagarbha, the first to emerge was the mouth. Sound started from the mouth. Then came the nose, from which arose air. Then came the eyes, from which emanated fire. The ears came thereafter. The directions arose from the ears.

Hiranyagarbha is the primary source of the origin of man. Hiranyagarbha is the prime source of all living beings. It is Hiranyagarbha who endowed all these beings with the power of discriminating between the eternal and the ephemeral between what should be sought and what should be renounced, between what ought to be done and what ought not to be done.

What is the Supreme Knowledge that man needs to make his life sacred and meaningful and what is the path he should pursue to lead a purposeful life? Hiranyagarbha offered to man the knowledge he needed for this purpose. This is the primary activity of Hiranyagarbha.

Hiranyagarbha has two other names Sutraatmaka (the one who functions like a string through all Atmas, even as a string runs through a necklace of gems). This means that he is present in all beings like the string that keeps together the gems in a necklace. This string is called Brahma-Sutra (the string of Brahman). The principle of Hiranyagarbha indicates how the Divine unites all human beings equally like the string of a necklace. Hiranyagarbha thus demonstrates a divisionless universe.

The other name for Hiranyagarbha is Prana. Hiranyagarbha assumes a subtle form in the dream state of a human being. He is the entity who is awake in the dream and sleeping states. In the waking state, the Viraat-swaroopa creates the visible cosmos. In the dream state, Hiranyagarbha creates the figures in the dreams. All objects in this state have no physical basis. All that are perceived in dreams are the creations of Hiranyagarbha. Hiranyagarbha in his subtle form creates everything in the dream state.

The third one is Avyaakrita. He is one who has no form of any kind. He is present in the causal body (Kaarana Sarira), without any form, and enjoys the Sushupti state of man (the deep sleep state). Though he has no form, he has control over everything. Without limbs or organs, he performs all actions. He travels long distances. Without eyes, he sees everything. Without ears, he hears everything. He is thus engaged in all activities relating to creation, but has no form. This "Avyaakrita" has two other names: "Antaratma" and "Iswaratmam."

Thus, "Viraat", "Hiranyagarbha" and "Avyaakrita" have three names each. What is the inner meaning of these names?

"Antaratma" means one who impels from within all activities (Antarvani or inner voice). Every impulse arises from "Antaratma". All the sounds uttered by man come from the "Antaratma". The Antaratma is the basic source of all sounds.

he is the entity who judges good and bad actions and metes out punishment or reward according to deserts. In common parlance, he is called "Layakara". He presides over actions. Hence, he decides on good and bad actions and metes out justice. He is known as the giver of "Aishwarya" (wealth). But good and bad deeds are comprised in Aishwarya. As Ishwara is the Lord of all wealth, he gives to each man what he deserves according to his good and bad actions.

The Upanishads should not be regarded as of no relevance to ordinary human beings and as valid only for sages and ascetics. Why are students today ignoring these sacred Upanishads? It is because there is no expositors of the Upanishads who will teach the students the relevance of their teachings for daily life. The notable advances in science and technology we witness today represent the essence of the Upanishads. The Upanishads are the final phase of the Vedas. Hence they are known as Vedanta.

The Upanishads are the quintessence of knowledge. They are the very embodiment of the highest knowledge. They are illuminating. Man should acquire this knowledge. Physical and mundane knowledge is concerned with the world. But to achieve peace of mind and joy of the Spirit, knowledge of the Upanishads is vital.

Viraat, Hiranyagarbha and Avyaakrita are not entities existing in some separate place. When you examine carefully, you will find that every human being is an incarnation of "Viraat", of "Hiranyagarbha" and "Avyaakrita". This profound truth is not realised by men because of their narrow outlook. The Viraat-form (Cosmic Person) is the human body multiplied by infinity. $\text{Mind} \times \text{Infinity} = \text{Hiranyagarbha}$. $\text{Life} \times \text{Infinity} = \text{Avyaakrita}$. These three forms are related to the gross, the subtle and the causal bodies of man. All the three bodies are in the human being.

Hiranyagarbha is not in some distant place. He is installed in the mind. The Viraat-purusha is in the human form. The five basic elements (representing the faculties of sound, sight, smell, taste and touch) are in the human body, as well as in the cosmos.

All powers are in man

The body is Prakriti (matter or earth). The Inhaling and exhaling process is based on air. When man is engaged in motion and action, heat is generated. This is the fire element in man. When one performs an exercise or rubs his palms, heat is generated. That heat is in man. The entire body is composed of water (the fourth basic element). In this manner, all the five elements are within the human body and hence man is regarded as a manifestation of the Viraat-Swaroop (the Cosmic Person).

All powers are found in man. The powers not found in man cannot be found elsewhere in the universe. Because of his external vision man is unable to recognise that all that he sees externally is within himself.

On account of attachment, fear and hatred, man forgets his true nature. This fact can be witnessed in the dream state. You have a dream in which you are travelling by a train. You pass

and joking. Wherefrom did the train come in the dream state? It is a creation of your mind. Likewise the stations you passed by and the passengers you moved with are all creations of the mind. All that was experienced in the dream are products of the mind. Nor is that all. You created even yourself in the dream. This is the activity of Hiranyagarbha.

Waking and dream states

In the waking state, one perceives everything outside him. His perceptions are governed by the conditions of time, place and circumstance. But in the dream state, these triple conditions are totally absent. You may enquire into the difference between the waking and dream states. For instance, you learn that there will be a meeting at 4 p.m. here. You start from the city at 3.30 p.m. by car. You arrive here at 4 p.m. You came to attend the meeting and listen to Swami's discourse. The time: 3.30 p.m.; the action: leaving by car; the consummation: reaching here at 4 p.m. In this sequence, you will notice that time, aim, action and achievement are all present in the waking state. In a dream, you have travelled to Delhi. When did you start on the journey? The time is not present in the dream. By what conveyance did you go? There is nothing in the dream about it. For what purpose you went to Delhi is not evident in the dream. The absence of time, purpose and circumstance is characteristic of the dream experience. The waking state testifies to the presence of these three elements. The Viraat-Swaroopa is related to time, purpose and action. The absence of these three factors indicates the nature of Hiranyagarbha (the dream state). Men experience both these states (the waking and the dream states).

The experiencer

Who is the experiencer? It is not someone in the waking state, a different one in the dream state and a third one in the Sushupti state (of deep sleep). The states of consciousness vary, but the experiencer is one and the same in all the three states. Because of the differences in the states, the experiencers appear to be different.

All the variations in experience are related to differences in time, place and circumstance. The body is made up of time, actions and obligations. Therefore, if the body is to be sanctified, time has to be utilised in performing right actions. "Karmaanubandhini manushya loke" ("The human world is bound by actions"). No one can be free from action even for a moment. Everything a man does, whether voluntarily or otherwise, constitutes "Karma". For instance, a question is asked about someone: "What is he doing?" "Nothing", comes she reply. "If he is doing nothing, what is he doing?" is the next question. The answer comes: "He is sleeping". "Sleeping" is also an action. Likewise, "sitting" is also an action. Respiration is also action. All that happens within our body, like the circulation of blood or the beats of the heart, is also action. Actions may be performed voluntarily or involuntarily. The breathing process goes on irrespective of what you do or feel, without any deliberate effort on one's part. This goes on in different states of consciousness. Such an automatic action is called "Aadhibhautikam". It relates to actions of the body. "Aadhiatmakam" relates to actions of the mind. "Aadhidaivikam" relates to actions prompted by the Divine. These three categories of actions are governed by Viraat-Swaroopa, Hiranyagarbha and Avyaakrita respectively, in the different states of consciousness.

As the ancient sages knew the inner secret of these three divine manifestations which governed the three states of consciousness, they renounced all the worldly attachments and strove for realising permanent spiritual bliss (Ananda). People today, being ignorant of these truths, are treating this knowledge with derision.

The sun and the moon

For instance, in one Veda it is declared: "Chandramaa manaso jaatah. Suryo chakshorajasyata". ("The moon emerged from the mind of the Cosmic Being; the sun came from his eyes.") The moon referred to in this mantra is not the planet moon, a fragment of the earth, on which man had landed, as considered by scientists. They jestingly comment that no god was found on the moon by the cosmonauts. The Vedic reference to Chandra is not to the planet moon visible from the earth. It refers to the mind-principle acting in every human heart. The significance of the Vedic reference to the Sun and the Cosmic Purusha's eye is that the human eye has the effulgence of the sun, on account of which it is able to see the Divine in everything. No one can determine the power of the eye. The eye which is barely half an inch in size is able to see stars that are billions of miles away. Wherefrom did the eye get this power? What is the relationship between the sun and the eye? It is like the coming together of the negative and the positive, which enables the eye to see this phenomenal universe. If the one is present and the other absent, nothing can be seen. For instance, if you go into a dark room, your eyes cannot see anything because there is no light. But when there is light, if you close your eyes you cannot see anything. There has to be a coming together of light and eyesight. Only then you can see the forms of objects. The effulgence of the sun and the power of eyesight together make the world perceivable. Thus the entire creation (Srishti) is perceived through sight (Drishti). Without perception there is no creation. Perception is thus fundamental. There is no blemish in creation. The fault lies with the sight (Drishti). Hence, one's vision should be totally pure.

This is the lesson of the Upanishads. Your eyes are your scriptures (Shastras). Therefore, develop the proper relationship between creation and perception.

Science and the Upanishads

Thus, there are many things, which cannot be learnt through the physical sciences, which can be understood from the Upanishads. What science has discovered so far is very little. Scientists feel proud about their miniscule knowledge. Spirituality affirms that even in the microcosm there is the macrocosm. "Anoraneeyaan mahathomaheeyaan" proclaims the Veda ("The Divine is minuter than the atom and vaster than the vast cosmos"). A small seed planted in the ground grows into a vast Banyan tree. The power of growing into a huge tree, with branches, leaves, flowers and fruit is immanent in the small seed. How does this growth take place? When the seed has sacrificed its original form. After it is planted in the ground it renounces its individuality as a seed ("Ahamkara"). When it sacrifices its original form, it acquires a new form. As long as it retains its original form, it will not be able to manifest its potentialities. Moreover, in the vast Banyan tree, there are innumerable small seeds. From the microcosm the macrocosm emerges. In the macrocosm the microcosm exists. When this process is investigated, it will be seen that the

is one. This is one of the profound mysteries revealed by the Upanishads.

Each Upanishad has sought to disclose the secret of creation. In attempting to understand the Upanishads, different persons, according to their intellectual abilities, interpreted them variously. These differences are related to their different natures.

For Instance: A hunter looking at a bird on a tree fancies what a fine meal the bird will furnish for his family. He is thinking only of the meat in the bird's body. But when a poet looks at the bird, he is in rapture over the colours of its plumage and the softness of its feathers. Although the object is one, it appears differently to different persons according to their outlook.

How do these differences in perception arise? They arise from the worldly habits of the people concerned. Hence, good habits are essential to develop right attitudes. Nothing can be learnt well except by constant practice. This applies equally to the Upanishadic teachings.

Brahma-ananda

Brahma-ananda is not a commodity obtained from somewhere. It is Self-realisation, which confers supreme bliss. Man imagines that there is something uniquely precious by securing which he can experience bliss. This delusion is the cause of attachment, which arouses fear as to whether he would be able to get what he seeks and whether he would be able to retain it. Out of this fear is generated hatred. If there is no attachment, there will be no fear or hate ed.

The first requisite is for men to realise their humanness and have respect for human values. All the violence and discord in the world today are due to the eclipse of human values. In the pursuit of desire, all values are sacrificed. Of what use are acquisitions if humanness is absent?

Nearness to God

Students! Lead ideal lives. Ideals alone survive long after men are dead. Earn a good name by your exemplary conduct. Make your conscience your mentor. Control your senses and make the mind the master of the senses. This is the supreme message of the Upanishads. The term "Upanishad" means "Sitting near". (It signifies the proximity of the disciple to the preceptor). Nearness to God enables you to get rid of your bad qualities and to acquire good qualities. The Upanishads lead you near to God. Instead of wasting your time on trashy novels, devote as much time as possible to the study of the sacred Upanishads, which will make your lives sublime. Study as well the sacred scriptures of other faiths. All of them contain sacred ideas.

It is highly important for women to study sacred books and avoid seeing sensuous films and TV shows, especially during pregnancy. The child in the womb is likely to be influenced by the kind of things they read or see. (Swami gave the examples of Subhadra and Lilavati to point out how Abhimanyu learnt about Padmavyuham in embryo, while Prahlada learnt the Narayana mantra from Narada from the womb of his mother). Mothers should be filled with pure thoughts and maintain a pure environment. Mothers should see that their children grow up as ideal persons

country as enshrined in our Upanishads, Puranas and epics.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "*Hari bhajana binaa sukha santhi nahi*".

From Bhagavan's discourse at the Institute Auditorium, Brindavan, on May 31, 1991

Worry: Bhagavan's Recipe

In an interview in 1989, Swami told me, "Don't worry. Always think of God, I am always with you. Have a happy and healthy life." I am sure He tells this to thousands of people. Look at the words and how we often take it for granted. "Don't worry" is one of the most commonly used words in English. We use it to console our friends, to respond to apologies, etc. Do we mean it when we say it? We often say it just for the sake of saying it automatically. This is why we take Swami's word for granted; our mind doesn't take "Don't worry" seriously.

I commit the same mistake, without realizing that these words are the highest teaching we can receive from God. "Tell me, what is the shape of worry?" asked Swami and He gave the answer, "Worry has no shape and single intense prayer to God can do away with it." Look at how ridiculous we are in the world; scientists and doctors have spent billions of pounds on research into tranquilizers.

Swami once told me in another interview, "Don't worry about the past. Past is past." We worry about the past, present and future, practically everything. Worry about the past is not going to change anything, neither is worry about the present or the future. Some people worry about not having anything to worry. The solution to worry lies in Baba's next words, "Always think of God. I am always with you." Someone asked Swami, "But Swami if that is so important, why don't we do this all the time? Why do we forget? Why don't we always think of God so that He will fill us with His love." Here Baba smiled and said. "That is God's Grace, for you to think of God is God's Grace. It is His gift. It is His blessing. It is something He gives, the chance for you to think of God."

*Dr. T. Jareonsettasin,
Thailand*

If the cow is the representative of Dharma, then, the four Vedas are the teats in its udder, where the life-giving milk is stored; the Gopala (Krishna) milked the cow and gave it to the world, as the Gita. It has to be taken into the heart. Of what avail is "medicine" if it is poured into the ear? It has to be taken in, so that it might act and strengthen the blood-stream. So, too, there is no use in listening for hours to discourses on the Gita; take the lesson in. Put it into practice; apply it in daily life. Realise the divinity in you, that is the lesson.

—Baba

Every country develops its own system of knowledge (Vijnana). But in all systems there are certain good traits that are common like morality, character, truth, sacrifice and forbearance. The Bharatiya system of education contained five elements: conduct, tradition, religion, art and study. This comprehensive scheme of acquiring knowledge is not kept in mind by educationists today. The value of this system of knowledge is measured by the degree of righteousness which is promoted. The progress of knowledge in the world is determined by the progress of righteousness. The well-being and advancement of a country depend on the combined progress of righteousness (Dharma) and knowledge (Vijnana).

Vyasa and Valmiki are great sages. Through their poetical works they propagated among the people Righteousness and the highest knowledge, which would make them adore the Supreme Lord, the giver of all gifts. Their works are ancient and have been described as "Puras" because of their antiquity.

Vyasa and Dharmaja

The Mahabharata and the Ramayana teach the laws of righteousness not only to Bharat but for the whole world. From the most ancient times, Bharatiya Culture has been promoting security and prosperity in all countries. Transcending all differences of nationality or religion, Bharatiya Culture taught to the world the unifying mantra: "Lokaas samasthaas sukhino bhavanthu" (Let all the worlds be happy".) This message transcends the barriers of time, space and circumstances and preaches the doctrine of oneness. Bharat alone has held forth the broad-minded principle of the happiness of all people everywhere, eschewing the idea of "I" and "my people".

Lessons from the Ramayana

What is the inner significance of the fact that the Sage Vyasa, without any regard for the wealth, power, physical prowess and abilities of Duryodhana, Dussasana and others, esteemed only Dharmaja, (the eldest of the Pandavas)? The great men of those days had the highest respect for Dharma (Righteousness), regarded Dharma as the sole sustaining power in the world, and considered that all institutions in Bharat should be based on Dharma. It was out of his supreme regard for Dharma that Vyasa esteemed Dharmaja highly.

The Ramayana, which taught to the entire world the greatness of morality and integrity, should be the life-breath of every family. How should the brothers in a family conduct themselves, how should a son carry out the injunctions of the father, how should husband and wife live in harmony, all these aspects of family life are excellently expounded in the Ramayana. Ramayana taught how the unity among the elder and younger brothers should be fostered, how affection should prevail among kinsfolk, and how the reputation of the family should be safeguarded. The author of the great Ramayana is Valmiki.

Ravana was one who was endowed with all wealth and prosperity. He lacked nothing in terms of comforts and luxuries. He had mastered the 64 categories of knowledge. His capital,

Valmiki extolled Rama, who gave up the kingdom, donned the robes of an ascetic and lived a simple life in the forest. What is the reason? It was because Rama was the very embodiment of Dharma. Every one of his actions stemmed from Dharma. Every word he spoke was truth. Every step he trod was based on Dharma. Hence, Rama has been described as the very image of Dharma ("Ramo Vighrahavaan Dharmah").

What is the inner meaning of the fact that the great sages attached no value to wealth or possessions or intellectual abilities, but esteemed only righteousness as of supreme value. It shows their concern to demonstrate to the world the truth that the world is based on Dharma and that Dharma is vital for the life of man.

The Purusharthas

In the Bharatiya concept of "Purusharthas", the four goals of human life—Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha—Dharma (Righteousness) comes first. It is only when the pursuit of Artha (material prosperity) and Kama (desires) is based on Dharma that man will have genuine happiness. If he pursues Artha and Kama without regard to Dharma, he will be plunged in misery. Hence, the acquisition of wealth should be based on Dharma (Righteousness). Equally, desires (Kama) should be infused with Dharma. Only then, the desires will lead to Moksha (liberation). This is the real lesson taught by the Purusharthas.

Unfortunately, today, the people have cut off the foot (Dharma) and the head (Moksha) of the Purusharthas and are leading lives based solely on Artha (wealth) and Kama (desires). This is the reason why the country is a prey to every conceivable trouble. Because the people have forgotten Dharma the entire land wears the mantle of unrighteousness.

In such a situation, the students should take a pledge to acquire knowledge based on Dharma and to use that knowledge for promoting the progress of the nation and raise it to glorious heights.

Message of the Gita

The message of the Bhagavad Gita has been interpreted by scholars in many different ways. They have argued that it prescribes the Karma Marga, the Jnana Marga or the Bhakti Marga as the primary path. But the real message of the Gita is to be got from the first word of the first sloka ("Dharma") and the last word of the last sloka "Mama". "Mama Dharma"—each individual has to act up to his duty—that is the lesson of the Gita. Householders should follow the "Grihastha Dharma" (the duties of householders), old people should follow the "Vanaprastha" Dharma (the duties of those who have withdrawn from family duties). There are Sanyasa Dharma (the duties of a renunciant) and Brahmachari Dharma (the duties of a celibate during the years before marriage). These duties are prescribed for each in his particular stage in life and they should not be mixed up. The Gita taught these duties for people in different stages ("Ashramas"). The basis for all the dharmas is the Code of Manu (Manu Dharma Shastra). There is no Code of conduct equal to the one laid down by Manu anywhere in the world.

Once upon a time, a German philosopher called Nietzsche wrote a book called "The will to power". While engaged in writing his book, he happened to see a copy of "Manu Dharma Shashtra". On reading the book he experienced inexpressible joy. He laid aside his own writing. He observed that "When in the firmament the Code of Manu is shining effulgently like the sun, the book I am writing is like a candle. You cannot come across in the whole world a treatise like this."

In spite of the fact that such great and sacred books and moral treatises are available within Bharat itself, why are Bharatiyas going after exotic ideas and practices disregarding their own dharma? In this there is a sort of false fascination. Though one possesses invaluable gems and precious truths, if he is attracted by the doctrines of others, he becomes a prey to such maladies. There is a Telugu adage which says that a man prefers the neighbour's stale food to the delicacies in his own house. Can there be greater folly than ignoring the matchless treasures of one's own cultural heritage and going after the tinsel from other countries?

Study and practice

Students! The knowledge developed by each country is essential for it. This should not be underrated. According to its historical circumstances and the requirements of the place and the time, each country develops its own store of knowledge (Vijnana). No one has the right to criticise it. Each country evolves its own code of righteousness and its corpus of knowledge and culture based on its conditions and needs and this is the proof of its validity. Each system of knowledge, however, is designed to promote the human personality. The Indian system is intended to foster what is sublime and exemplary in human nature. Without considering this aspect of promoting human excellence and helping people to lead ideal lives, mere study of ancient texts is of no use. What is learnt from books should be put into practice. Only then there is the real bliss of knowledge. If a myriad books are studied, but good qualities are not cultivated, of what avail is that study? Qualities are most important. From earliest times our ancients laid stress on good qualities.

Science and the eternal verities

No scientist has the competence to criticise the Indian texts dealing with philosophy and metaphysics. Science today claims to discover some truth, which on later investigation is found to be untenable. A science which is constantly revising its theories, cannot sit in judgement on the eternal verities presented by the Indian sages in Vedanta. If you examine the speculations of European philosophers from Kant to Spencer, you will find that compared to the downpour of philosophic thought presented by the three schools of Vedanta—Dvaita (Dualism), Advaita (Non-dualism) and Visishtadvaita (Qualified Non-dualism)—the speculations of these philosophers are a mere trickle.

All the explorations of modern science are not greater than what Hiranyakasipu and Hiranyaksha carried out eons ago. Hiranyakasipu explored the earth, the sky and the five elements and was so proud of his mastery over all the elements that he persecuted his own son (for not recognising his prowess). What is it that happens when one acquires mastery over the

worshipper of Hari. The father, Hiranyakasipu is a hater of Hari. There can be no common ground between the two. Likewise there is no common ground between philosophy and the physical sciences today.

"Where is your God?" asked Hiranyakasipu. Prahlada replied: "Do not have any doubts that he is here and not there." "Is he in this pillar?" "Yes", replied Prahlada. When Hiranyakasipu struck the pillar with his mace, a divine power emerged from it. The lesson of this episode is that until man shatters the pillars of his ego, he will not be able to discover the Divine within him. As long as man is filled with body-consciousness, he cannot experience the divine. Only when he gets rid of the body-consciousness will he be able to understand the Divine within him.

Science and humility

No doubt it is necessary to pursue the study of physical sciences. But one should not get puffed up by one's scientific knowledge. Realising that there are innumerable other things which are yet to be learnt, the scientist should cultivate humility and modesty.

Students! You are the future leaders of the nation. The nation's weal or woe depends on how you conduct yourselves. If you are good, the nation will be good. If you behave badly, the nation will go down. You have to understand the true role of science. A student today after acquiring a mustard seed quantum of knowledge develops a swelled head as big as a pumpkin. This is totally wrong. Rather than preach a ton of precepts to others, you would do well to practise an ounce of them yourself. Practice should precede precept.

In this way, Bharatiya science, (Vijnana) containing the essence of all Shastras (scriptures), laid down the goal of all human endeavour in the form of a divine sutra (maxim).

Name and form

This entire cosmos is made up of two components: One is the name and the other is the form. There is nothing that can be perceived without name or form. Name implies sound. Sound permeates the universe. The sound is called 'Vaak' (word or speech). For speech the life (Prana) is feeling (Bhava). For feeling the life is desire. For desire the life is ignorance (Ajnana). For ignorance, Divinity is the life-source. You have to recognise the close link between "Vaak" (the word) and Divinity. Without words you cannot identify anything. Every object has a sound (or name) attached to it. All things have originated from sound. We have not created sound. Hence, from ancient times every sound (shabda) had a specific meaning. These meanings are not the creation of any scientist. For instance, here is a plate. Who made this plate? A goldsmith might have made the plate, but who gave it its name? It may be said that the name has come down from the past. Here is a tumbler. It is called a tumbler because of its form. Thus it is evident that the name is associated with the form of an object. For the form the proof is the name. The two are interdependent and inseparable. You must recognise this truth.

(grief)? The troubles you experience are its form. For "Ananda" (bliss), the joy you experience is the form. This is a `hall'. The form gives it the name. For every word there is a form.

The name of the lord

Scientists do not recognise the logic implicit in this truth. For instance, you have a dictionary. It contains numerous words and gives their meanings. Does not the user accept the meanings given in it? The dictionary contains the word "God". This word must have a form. If it had no form, how could the word have come into existence? Why is this fact not recognised? This is due to individual prejudices and is not true of the generality of the people. Basing on one's personal preferences and narrow attitudes, a certain opinion (about God) may be held.

There are only two things in the world: name and form. Hence, Vedanta prescribed that God should be realised by His name. It is difficult to realise the form from the description of the form. For instance, if a person is described as wearing a shirt and tie and of a certain height, you cannot make someone answer to that description in a crowd. But the moment the name is mentioned and the identification marks are given, the person can be picked up from a crowd of a hundred thousand. Through the name, the form can be easily envisaged. Hence, the Shruti declared: "Smarane Taranupayah" ("The remembrance of the name is the means of redemption").

Students! Bharatiya Vijnana (supreme knowledge) encompasses all potencies. No other system of knowledge contains what is in Bharatiya Vijnana. You have not got this knowledge. You have not tried to make practical use of it. Consequently you have no conception of its prodigious value. Seek to know it and put it to proper use. Thereby you will experience bliss. .

Man's dharma

Bharatiya Vijnana is suffused with Dharma (Righteousness). Dharma is the primary maxim of life. It is life itself. What Is Dharma? It is said: "Dhaarayati iti Dharmah" ("Dharma is that which bears or supports everything"). This derivation is not adequate. In every object, there is a vital principle running like a thread. Here is `fire'. What is it that 'fire' bears within it? Heat and light. Only when heat and light are present, can you regard it as 'fire' ('Agni'). If heat and light are not present, it will be a piece of charcoal and not fire. What, then, is the `Dharma' (the vital principle) of `fire'? To manifest heat and light.

Here is a lump of ice. What is its form? It is white. It is cold. If it is not cold, it will cease to be ice. Likewise, the vital principle of sugar is sweetness. If it has no sweetness, it will turn into salt or mud.

What is the "Dharma" of man? A life of sacrifice on the basis of morality and integrity is the Dharma of man. How should the Dharma be practised? With purity in thought, word and deed ("Trikarana Shuddhi"). True humanness consists in the harmony of thought, word and deed. Today it is because there is no unity of thought, word and deed among men; Dharma (righteousness) has declined. As a result science (Vijnana) has lost its true form. The nation's prosperity and well-being have been destroyed. Security has become scarce. Morality and

men are losing their morality and integrity. Money earned by unworthy means is nothing but dust. That wealth will not be of use to you. Hoarding wealth is of no avail. Ill-gotten wealth is not truly yours. There are four covetous elements waiting to get at it. The first entity is the Government. In the name of some tax or law, the Government will make a raid on the hoarded wealth. The second entity is fire: somehow or other fire reaches the ill-gotten wealth and destroys it. The third entity is a thief. The thief is after secreted wealth. Somehow he tries to steal it. The fourth entity is disease. To deprive a person of his ill-gotten wealth, disease seizes hold of him and makes him spend money on treatment. Misers, who will not part with a paisa to a beggar, will spend any amount on doctors and medicines. These are the ways in which money earned by dishonest means is taken away.

Therefore, you students, who are the nation's hope for the future, should rigorously eschew unfair means to earn money, adhere to morality and integrity in your professional life and uphold Dharma through love and truth and serve the nation. Only then will the nation recover its ancient greatness and glory. It is impossible for anyone to eradicate the basic truths embedded in Bharatiya culture and tradition.

Devotion to God

For everything, the foundation is devotion to the Lord. Without devotion, nothing can be accomplished. Only the power of the Divine can save the world and not any tank or bomb or Government. Therefore engage yourselves in prayer to God for the welfare of the world. Always chant the name of the Lord. Don't waste time because Time is the embodiment of God. Try to be helpful to others in all your activities. There is no greater sadhana or puja than this. There is no need to install a picture of the Lord in your small shrine to worship Him. Install Him in your heart and adore Him.

Mira's Delusion

Worship of the Lord externally has its hazards. Mira was a great devotee. Apart from Krishna she saw nothing else in the world. But she had a desire based on the external. She wanted to install an idol of Krishna in a temple and please Him with her songs all day long. How could she build a temple? It was beyond her means. She wondered whether this would be possible at all in her life-time. She was filled with these doubts. One day, the Maharana (of Udaipur) saw her and wished to marry her. Mira had no desire for marriage, as her main aim in life was different. She saw that the Maharana was a powerful and fabulously rich person. She felt that if she married him her innermost desire might be realised. By marrying the Maharana, she could get a temple erected in marble and install a marble idol of Krishna in it and devote her entire time to worshipping Krishna and sanctifying her life. Because she was deluded by this desire, she courted disappointment. After the marriage, the Maharana was displeased with her way of life and asked her to leave the Mandir. This was a great shock to Mira. She was in deep agony. At the same time, it was a great moment of truth for her. She realised that the Mandir was built by the Maharana and was liable to decay some time or other. "But the temple of my heart has been erected by the Lord. God is installed in it." Mira recalled Krishna's assurance to Narada: "Wherever my praise is sung, I am there." She addressed her mind thus: "Oh mind, go to the

middle of the two brows (Swami sang Mira's song).

Students and the Nation

Today only the grace of the Divine can save the country from the chaos and disorder in which it is plunged. Peace and progress in the future are dependent on the abilities and endeavours of the students. When a country, known for its spiritual greatness for millennia is overwhelmed by corruption, violence and injustice, it is the privilege of students to redeem the nation by the practice of truth, righteousness, love and forbearance and ensure peace and security in the country. Such students are needed by the thousands today. A lone Prahlada could attempt to transform only his father. All of you should attempt to transform your parents by your own exemplary life and make them lead noble lives. All of you should exemplify the life of Prahlada. He was a lad of about your own age. He was a student like you. Even the teachers were good men. But owing to the perverse nature of the father and his threats, they tried to teach wrong things to Prahlada. But Prahlada ventured even to teach to the preceptors. They were so much influenced by Prahlada's teachings that they came to Hiranyakasipu and said: "Oh Lord of the Rakshasas! Your son is not an ordinary boy. He is endowed with great qualities. It is not right for you to punish such a child." When the minions of the king hurled their javelins at him, Prahlada would not wince or utter a cry, but only prayed to Vishnu calling Him, "Oh Pannagasaayi!" (Oh Lord, resting on the serpent couch!). (Poem). He was ever smiling. When he was thrust into a blazing fire, he was calmly glorying in the name of Narayana. When he was pushed into the sea, he continued to chant the name of Narayana. He was unconcerned about the body (deha). He was contemplating only the Indwelling Spirit (Dehi). One such child is enough.

Science and spirituality

Hence, in this world, which is making such advances in science and technology, students should lead a life dedicated to truth. Anil Kumar (in his speech earlier) had observed that education does not mean mere study of books. Like the lightning that flashes from clouds, wisdom should shine forth from your education. Deem your heart as the sky. In that sky, your thoughts are the clouds. The mind is the moon; your intellect is the sun. At this young age of yours, dark clouds are likely to gather in your hearts. At that moment, the sun and the moon will not be visible. But for how long? Only for a brief period. The clouds are passing clouds, not permanent. If you have forbearance, the clouds will pass and then you will be able to see your true Self. Then your mind and intellect will shine brightly. Therefore, cultivate patience and forbearance to experience peace.

Students nowadays are prone to get easily excited. Don't allow yourselves to be provoked. Today the student world is filled with agitations. It may seem incidental to the period of adolescence. But you should not regard it in that light. It is from the years of adolescence that you should develop all your faculties and talents. You must practise sense-control from now itself. What kind of discipline is possible in old age?

There are some persons who ask "What is the need for thinking about God at this age? Is it not enough if we start thinking of God after taking up a job, earning wealth and retiring from work?" There are some who declare that they will take to spiritual activities after retirement. But in fact they seek other jobs after retirement and continue to be in harness right upto the end of their lives. They do not give up the desire for money. When will they ever embark on the spiritual path? "Is it possible to think of Hari when the messengers of the Lord of Death have caught the man's life in their noose, when the relations are in a hurry to get the dead body out of the house, and when wife and children are wailing around the body?" (Poem). It is impossible to think of the Lord at that moment. Therefore, you have to start adoring the Lord from this age itself.

Hence from this age itself, you must fill your heart with love of the Divine. You can make use of your devotion in your old age. This is the task before you. Regardless of what anyone may say, combine with your academic studies, spiritual pursuits. You cannot run the cart of life on a single wheel. It is too hazardous. No bird can fly with a single wing. It can fly freely only when it can use both the wings. Likewise man needs for carrying on worldly affairs, mundane knowledge, and Brahma-Vidya (Spiritual knowledge) for his spiritual welfare. Acquire knowledge of the physical sciences; that is necessary. At the same time seek spiritual wisdom also. You have to conduct your life based on both these kinds of knowledge.

Students! Do not spend your entire time solely on worldly concerns. Devote some time to what is essential for realising the highest goal of life. It is only when the country is filled with such students that it will be prosperous and happy and regain its ancient glory. Only the power of the Divine can protect any individual, society or nation. Seek to realise that divine power. It is not to be got from outside. It is inherent in you. That is why the Vedantic texts declared: "The One Lord dwells in all beings."

From Bhagavan's discourse at the Institute Auditorium, Brindavan, on June 2, 1991

AVATAR VANI:

DASARA SANDESH:

The Avatar of Love

*Love is God. The Cosmos is permeated with love.
Assuming the form of Love, to promote love among mankind,
Showering the nectarine stream of love,
Love has incarnated as Sri Devi, Sai Devi, the Sai Mother.*

Embodiments of Divine Love!

attachment (Anuraga) and when directed towards God it is called Prema (devotional love). Love is the fruit of love. Love is comparable to love alone. It is beyond expression in words or verse. Such sacred love can only be matched by love. It is sweeter than nectar, which has been described by the scriptures as the sweetest thing.

Love is the fruit that grows on the tree of the Divine Name. The Love-principle proclaims the oneness of Name and Form. Brahman is the form of Love. Brahman is suffused with Love. Love matching love is the law. When one is strongly established in love, he qualifies for merger with the Divine to become one with the Divine.

The Atmic Principle makes its advent on the earth (the Bhuloka) from the celestial abode (Go-loka) to propagate the Love-principle among humanity. Hence, everyone has to learn the true nature of love. The greater one's love for God, the greater the bliss which one experiences. The bliss one experiences shrinks in proportion to the contraction in one's love. When man aspires for enduring bliss, he has to cultivate one pointed love for God.

Love and bliss

Bliss arises from love. There can be no joy in a dry, barren heart. Divine Love alone can make a dry heart fit for the sprouting of the plant of joy. That was why the Gopikas appealed to Krishna "Oh Krishna, play on your magic flute so that its divine music may drench our barren hearts with the nectarine flow that will make the saplings of love sprout in them. Let the sun of Krishna shine over our hearts covered with dark clouds. Let love make a garland out of the scattered flowers in our hearts." (Poem)

Divine love

Love is the vital force. Love is the governing principle. It is only when the precious diamond of love is shining in one's heart that the sacred and divine thoughts about God will arise in his mind. This diamond of Love can be got only from the Shop of Love, in the Street of Love, in the Kingdom of Love.

Fill your hearts with love. Love based on self-interest cannot be called divine love. That love alone is sacred which is based on complete obliviousness to one's self and is solely concerned with the yearning for God. In days of yore, the sages lived in the forests amidst wild animals and performed penance. How were they able to live in peace amongst these animals? Because the sages were filled with divine love, they could extend that love to the wild beasts also and transform them into creatures of love. The sages had no lethal weapons with them. They used only the weapon of love, which could transform even the nature of the wild animals. Alas! Today even human beings are moving about like cruel beasts. Man is becoming a wild beast in this age of Kali. Compassion and love are vanishing. Ostentatious living is the order of the day. The manifestation of true love is totally absent. Everyone may claim that he loves God. Hardly one in a million is a true lover of God. True love should remain unaffected by weal or woe. To deride God during times of adversity and to praise God in conditions of prosperity cannot be called true love of God. Divine love is that which does not flinch on the face of difficulties and

vicissitudes, which are transient. Only Divine love is immutable and permanent.

A love-filled world

Hence, man should become the very embodiment of love. When he is filled with love, the entire world will be transformed into a love-filled world. The world will get divinised (Brahmamayam). The cosmos is permeated by the Divine. But this can be realised only when man is filled with love. As long as he is full of hatred, the world will appear as a hate-filled world. It is only when love is developed that the dualism of good and evil can be transcended and the joy of oneness with the Divine experienced.

How is this Love-principle to be developed in man? Anil Kumar (in his speech earlier) observed that fire emerges when one stick is rubbed against another. Does the mere coming together of two sticks produce the fire? No. It should be recognised that fire is already latent in both the sticks. Fire emerges from the rubbing of the sticks because fire is latent in them already. The fire is latent and not perceptible. The fire hidden in the wood is made manifest by "sadhana" (the process of rubbing the sticks).

What do these sticks symbolise? The human body is like the sticks. In this body, which is inert, the fire of jnana is present in subtle form throughout. If you take the two palms, there is fire latent in each of them. When you rub the two palms, heat is generated. The heat comes from the latent heat in the two palms and not from any external source.

"By the process of cognition truth emerges. By the process of churning buttermilk, butter is got." (Swami quoted the poem from Anil Kumar's speech). Wherefrom did the butter come? The butter was originally in milk but it could be got only after the milk had been converted to curd and the curd was churned. The butter which was latent in the milk gets separated from the buttermilk, and will thereafter, not mix with it.

The body as temple

Likewise, in the human body a divine power pervades every part of the body, which, -after the experience of a vision of the Divine ("Sakshatkara") will not be attached to the body. It has been said: The body is like a temple for the indwelling eternal Spirit ("Dehi"). Hence, it should be put to proper use. You must develop good qualities. You must become a treasure house of good conduct. According to the state of purity of the temple, the power of the Divine will be manifested. Every man enters a temple on seeing the temple tower and not after seeing the deity inside. The temple reminds man of the deity within. A doctor reminds you of illness. Likewise, a lawyer reminds you of litigation. In the same manner, when you look at your body you must remember God. It was to remind people in the villages to think of God that the ancients built temples which towered above all other buildings. The temple tower was the first thing the villagers saw when they woke up in the morning. The sight of the temple spire immediately aroused in them spontaneous feelings of adoration. It must be recognised that it was not a crazy feeling which Inspired the ancients to build huge temples at great expense. These multi-storeyed

minds of the people.

Relationship with God

Today, people's minds are filled with all kinds of wrong ideas and they are wasting their lives in meaningless mundane pursuits. Hence, the primary need is to develop love among the people. This love should not be concerned with the physical or the mundane. Many kinds of relationships between one person and another arise in the course of one's life. They are not born with him. Before one's birth, who was the mother and who was the child? Before marriage, who was the husband and who was the wife? The relationship of husband and wife occurs only after the marriage. It is only after one's birth that the relationship of mother and child occurs. These relationships are intermediate occurrences in one's life, which appear and pass away. Only the Divine is present with you, in you and around you before your birth and all through your life's journey. Bear in mind this basic and permanent truth. Birth and death relate only to the body and not to the Atma. Temples may go up or decay, but God is unchanging and imperishable. The eternal Divine is dwelling in the temple of the human body.

All relationships are incidental and temporary. Hence, each one should perform his duties. As long as one is involved in worldly life, the relationships of mother and son, husband and wife, brother and sister, and the like have to be recognised as natural phenomena. All these relationships have no permanence. Separation is inevitable sooner or later. But between you and God, there can be no separation at any time. Even if you forget God, God will not forget you. Therefore, you have to develop faith in God and cultivate love.

The Lord's advent

Krishna declared in the Gita that when men forget their Dharma and unrighteousness becomes rampant, the Divine makes His advent. The purpose of the advent is to promote Satwic qualities, eradicate evil tendencies, and propagate love and to install in the hearts of humanity the Divine who is the very embodiment of Righteousness (Dharma). God's advent on earth is for spreading Divine love which is the fountain-source of Righteousness (Dharma). There is no gulf between love and love. Love is one. Krishna declared: "I incarnate to propagate this love." The various expounders of Bhagavad Gita, however, have given different interpretations to the message of the Gita and created confusion.

Women and the three gunas

The world is a manifestation of the three gunas (Satwa, Rajas, Tamas). The Divine is worshipped as "Devi". The term "Devi" refers to the feminine aspect. The term "Stree" is used to denote a woman. There are three syllables in this term: Sa, Ta and Ra. "Sa" symbolises the Satwic aspect of a person. The Satwic quality is the very first quality that manifests in man. The feeling of love develops from the mother. It is impossible to describe the nature of maternal love. The mother converts her own blood into love and gives it as milk to feed the child. Therefore, the first quality represented by "Sa", is the Satwic quality.

described eating and sleeping as characteristic of the Tamasic quality. This is not so. In the term "Stree", the syllable "ta " represents bashfulness, modesty, self-esteem and such traits which are characteristic of women. Shyness is a predominant trait in women. They attach great value to their honour and reputation. It is because of these sacred qualities that their "tamasic" aspect is significant. The common view regarding the "Tamasic" quality does not apply to them.

The third quality, symbolised by the syllable "Ra", is Rajas. Such qualities as sacrifice and high-mindedness in women reflect the Rajasic aspect of their nature. When necessary, women will be prepared even to sacrifice their lives to safeguard their honour. Without regard to the difficulties and troubles they may encounter, women are ready to make any sacrifice to protect their honour and self-respect. When the "tamasic" elements attempt to subvert the Satwic qualities, they are ready to combat and vanquish them.

Inner meaning of Dasara

The term "Devi "thus represents the Divine power which has taken the Rajasic form to suppress the forces of evil and protect the Satwic qualities. When the forces of injustice, immorality and Untruth have grown to monstrous proportions and are indulging in a death-dance, when selfishness and self-interest are rampant, when men have lost all sense of kindness and compassion, the Atmic principle, assuming the form of Shakti, taking on the Rajasic quality, seeks to destroy the evil elements. This is the inner meaning of the Dasara festival. When the Divine Goddess is in dreadful rage to destroy the wicked elements, she assumes a fearful form. To pacify the dreaded Goddess, Her feminine children offer worship to Her with red kumkum (sacred red powder). The Goddess, seeing the blood-red kumkum at Her feet, feels assured that the wicked have been vanquished and assumes Her benign form. The inner meaning of the worship of "Devi" with red kumkum is that thereby the Goddess is appeased. During the ten days of the Dasara, the demons (Rakshasas) in the form of wicked qualities have been routed. Rakshasas do not mean demonic beings. The bad qualities in men are the demons. Arrogance is a demon. Bad thoughts are demons. Ravana is depicted as the king of Rakshasas. He is said to have ten heads. He was not born with ten heads. Who is this Ravana and what are his ten heads? Kama (lust), Krodha (Anger), Moha (delusion), Lobha (Greed), Mada (pride) and Matsarya (Envy), Manas (the mind), Buddhi (intellect), Chitta (Will) and Ahamkara (the Ego)—these ten constitute the ten heads. Ravana is one who has these ten qualities. Each one can decide for himself whether he is a Ravana or a Rama according to his qualities. Rama is the destroyer of the bad qualities. When engaged in this act of destruction of bad qualities, He manifests His Rajo-guns. But His Rajasic quality is associated with His Satwic quality. Even in cutting off Ravana's ten heads, Rama showed His love. This was the only way Ravana could be redeemed.

When the Lord metes out a punishment, it may appear harsh. But what appears externally as Rajasic is in reality Satwic. In a hailstorm, along with rain there will be hailstones. But both the rain and hailstones contain water. Likewise, there is Satwic quality even in the Lord's Rajasic actions. Similarly there may be Satwic quality even in Tamasic actions. These depend on the time, place and the circumstances in which the Lord acts. Butter can be split with a finger. But a

Satwic way. He applies the Rajasic weapon against Rajasic persons.

People worship the Lord, attributing dreaded forms and qualities to the Divine ("Roudrakara"). This is not proper. The Divine has only one attribute: the embodiment of Love. It has been said, "Love is God. Love pervades the Cosmos." Hence, one should not view the world from a worldly point of view. It should be viewed through the eyes of love.

Embodiments of Divine Love! All the festivals of Bharatiyas have been designed to promote Divine love among the people. It is to confer such love on the people that the Lord incarnates on earth. He Himself demonstrates how love should be expressed. He showers His love and teaches everyone how to love. Hence, experience this love and joy in your life and live in peace.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "Prema muditha manase kaho Rama! Rama! Ram!"

From Bhagavan's discourse at the Kalyana Mandap at Brindavan, on October 18, 1991

SUMMER SHOWERS IN BRINDAVAN:

GURUDEV VANI:

Face the Challenges of Life

Man undertakes numerous good acts and devotes his thought, word and deed to various forms of discipline to realise God. But all these efforts are not bearing the desired fruit, because man has not understood what is true spiritual discipline (sadhana). Those who try to follow the nine forms of worship (Shravanam, Kirtanam, etc.) are also failing to attain their objective because they have not grasped the inner meaning of these forms of worship.

What is meant by 'Sadhana'? Can Japa, meditation, bhajans and pious actions be called sadhana (spiritual exercise)? Real sadhana consists in transforming bad into good, converting sorrow into joy. There can be no happiness without sorrow, no good without the bad. There is a continuous conflict between good and evil, between happiness and sorrow.

Happiness and misery are inseparable twins which are inextricably linked to each other. One is the beginning and the other is the culmination. Beginning and end go together. Only the Divine is free from a beginning, a middle or an end, but in worldly affairs, everything that has a beginning, has an end. Grief is not something which someone thrusts on you from outside. Troubles and difficulties are not imposed on you from outside. Grief and trouble arise in the natural course of things.

The refinement of life calls for continual spiritual practice (sadhana). Without such practice, life gets degraded. For instance, a diamond gets enhanced in value when it goes through the process of cutting and faceting. Likewise, gold, taken out as ore from the earth, becomes pure and valuable after refinement. In the same manner, sadhana (spiritual effort) is necessary to elevate life from the trivial to the sublime. No one is a scholar or a man of virtue at the moment of birth. It is only through various endeavours that he becomes a scholar and a righteous person.

In creation there are many things which are naturally bad. Out of these bad things, good emerges. When one desires something, the desire is associated with aversion to something else. Man's life is bound up with likes and dislikes, with good and bad thoughts, with union and separation. Hence worldly life (Samsara) has been compared to a vast ocean on which the waves are constantly bringing about union and separation. The same ocean contains pearls and gems. Therefore, we have to face and overcome the trials and tribulations of life. If we fail in this, our life becomes a waste. Life is full of trials. If these difficulties are not there, life will have little value.

Power of the mind

There is a saying: "Anything can be achieved by Sadhana". Sadhana means converting bad into good, transforming evil into virtue. This calls for the right use of the mind. Man is not aware of the potentialities of the mind. The mind is the cause of all our sorrows and joys. The powers of the mind are indescribable. In one moment it can encompass the universe. In another moment it can be a total blank. It can blossom in a moment and wither in a moment. The mind is the cause of both good and bad.

When we take food, we think that this food is digested by us and that the food sustains the body. But it is not food that gives us strength and energy. It is the mind that is responsible. When food is consumed, if the mind is not calm and happy, the food may get toxic. It is the mind that raises man from the human to the Divine. Hence, it is essential to ensure purity in thoughts, words and deeds.

Man can achieve nothing without the motive power of the mind. Man gets puffed up with pride on the basis of his wealth, physical strength, scholarship and position. But very few realise whither egoism (Ahamkara) which kindles this pride, will lead man?

The life-span

Men often receive the benediction from elders that they may be blessed with a hundred years of life. But actual experience shows that many die in the middle age or earlier. No one knows the truth about the length of one's life. The promise of a hundred years of life should not be taken on trust. Life may come to an end at any time, in boyhood, manhood or old age, and anywhere, in water, on the ground or in the sky, in a forest or in a city. (Swami recited a poem in this context). No one is competent to determine the length of anyone's life. Why, then, is there mention of a hundred-year span for man in the scriptures? This is not a mere fancy of the authors of the scriptures. It is the truth. Every man should live for a hundred years. What is the reason for

misdeeds, go on shearing the life of man into pieces. His bad qualities shorten the life of man. When a man's life is filled with good thoughts and good actions, he can live for a hundred years. The secret of the longevity enjoyed by the ancient sages is precisely this. Man today wastes his life in bad thoughts and bad actions and ends his life in a bad way.

Students! Foster good thoughts and good actions with zeal. Develop devotion to God. Today faith in God has declined and respect for righteousness has diminished. Devotion is at a discount. In such a situation how can the promise of a life of hundred years be fulfilled?

Eschew selfishness

People must develop faith in the Self. Without faith in himself, how can a man inspire confidence in others? He must realise his Divinity. A blind man cannot see the sun. A man filled with ego cannot know his Atma. Egoism dims a man's vision like a film. Get rid of egoism. All wealth, position and power are transient like passing clouds. Does a man, who devotes half his time to earning money, spend even a fraction of it on thoughts of God or on activities dedicated to helping others? His entire life is devoted to selfish pursuits. His attachment to every object is rooted in selfishness. His love for others is also based on self-interest. The slightest enquiry will reveal how deep-rooted is this selfishness. In a totally meaningless preoccupation with selfish concerns, man is sacrificing the enduring and the eternal Spirit.

It is only when man sheds his selfishness that he would be able to turn away from bad deeds. The fear of sin has gone. In fact, what are essential for man are fear of sin, love of God and morality in society. When there is no fear of sin, men will have no scruples about doing anything. When fear of sin and love of God are absent, there can be no peace in the world.

Help ever: hurt never

Students! You are the prospective redeemers of the nation. You will determine the future of this country. Hence, purify your hearts, fill your minds with sacred thoughts and consider that your bodies have been given for service to the nation. I want you to dedicate yourselves to the service of your fellowmen, with faith in the saying: "Let all the worlds be happy" ("Lokaas-samasthaas-sukhino bhavanthu!")

Students! Human life today is riddled with many problems. People are confused as to what they should believe and what they should reject, what they should do and what they should eschew. Man has lost the capacity to discriminate between the enduring and the ephemeral. He believes in the unreal and has no belief in that which should be believed. The reason for this is self-interest.

The world's malaise

It is only when human behaviour is reformed that the world will get transformed. The process of change has to begin in men's minds. The mind is a bundle of thoughts. Thoughts lead to action. And actions account for the state of the world. When the thoughts go astray, the actions also are improper. The state of the world, good or ill, depends on the behaviour of individuals.

his misery. Hence, keep your minds ever pure and unsullied. Keep out rigorously all bad thoughts by reciting the name of the Lord. Man is beset with joys and sorrows and has to bear with them as with heat and cold. To live in the world completely free from troubles is not possible. Recognising the difference between good and bad, you have to lead a balanced life. Students sorely need such understanding and capacity for adjustment. Once they develop right understanding, adjustment will be easy to accomplish.

Whenever you enquire, whether it is a millionaire or a beggar, a child or a man, or a woman, every person announces himself or herself, as "I am so-and-so". This "I" that is common to everyone is the Atma-principle. It is common to all, irrespective of moods and conditions. The Vedantic method of arriving at Oneness by the process of "Neti", ("not this", "not this") also leads to the same Atmic truth. The "I" exists in everyone. Once you have cultivated ibis "Ekaatma Bhava", the spiritual oneness of all, there will be no room for differences and discord. You will then feel that when you hurt or blame others, you are hurting or blaming yourself.

Sankaracharya and Siva

Here is an illustration from the life of Adi Sankaracharya. When Sankaracharya was in Kasi (Varanasi), at the approach of an untouchable, he said "You fellow! Keep away, keep away!"

The other man asked: "Whom do you want to keep away from you? Is it the body? The body is inert. What right has your inert body to ask my inert body to keep away from it? Both are inert. How can one inert object talk to another? Or, is it the case that you want the Atma in me to keep away from you? The Atma in me is the same as the Atma in you. What is it that you want to go away from you? " There was an argument between the two over the body and the Atma at the end of which Sankaracharya realised that the person who had recognised the Atma-principle could be none other than the Lord Himself and prostrated before the man in front of him. At that moment Siva revealed Himself and told Sankaracharya: "It is to remove from your mind your mistaken notions that I had assumed the form of the untouchable."

Hence, you should realise that it is not possible for anyone to know in what form, in what situation, at what time and in what circumstances the Lord appears to man to teach him how to get rid of his bad thoughts, bad qualities and bad actions. Therefore, you must make every effort to keep out bad thoughts and bad qualities and try to sanctify your life by good thoughts and good actions. This is true sadhana (spiritual discipline). Sitting in so-called meditation without getting rid of your bad qualities is utterly valueless. It is an "artificial" exercise. What you should do must come from the heart. A great deal of what passes for japa, meditation, yajna and yaga is artificial and has nothing to do with the heart. The result is that the fruits of such exercises are also artificial. These are not fruits coming from God. They are the products of one's own actions. Hence, do not blame God for anything. For all your difficulties and joys, your actions alone are responsible. Keeping this truth in mind, you have to follow the path of righteousness.

Students! During the past twelve days, you have enjoyed discourses on various matters relating to the Spirit, the bliss divine, worldly problems and have tried to understand the underlying truth. Days spent in this way are the greatest moments in life. Hence I have often reminded you:

*The day when good devotees gather together and pray: "Oh Lord!" in sweet tones;
The day when you mix with the poor like brothers in fraternal union;
The day when you offer to the devotees of God delicious food;
The day when a high-souled devotee comes to you and relates stories of the Divine
Only that day is a really sacred day.
All others are days of mourning for the dead.*

This means that only that day is a real day (in your life) when you help people in need and make them happy.

I cannot say that the penance on which we embarked in this Summer Course will now come to an end. There is nothing like a completion for this exercise. It is an endless spiritual undertaking.

Consider what constitutes penance (Tapas). It is the performance of duties assigned to you. Today, because people have forgotten their duties and responsibilities, what should be 'Tapas' (penance) has turned into 'Tamas' (the darkness of ignorance). Hence, you have to carry out all through this 'Tapas' relating to your duties. Discharge of your duty is the daily yajna (spiritual offering) you have to perform. That is the primary spiritual exercise. That is the penance you have to do and that is the goal you have to keep in mind.

I desire that our students should dedicate their entire lives to the service of others, harmonising their personal interests with their concern for others, and lead exemplary lives.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan "*Bhavabhaya haranaa vandita charana*".

From Bhagavan's discourse at the Institute Auditorium at Brindavan, 1-6-1991

Mysterious are His Ways

Bhagavan Baba manifests in many forms to many people. We have heard Sai devotees narrating their 'disappointment' at not being able to talk to Swami, touch His Lotus Feet or even have a close 'darshan' (as many others are able to). We have also heard the same devotees narrating the 'other' experiences they have had. I am one of them. I have had Baba's 'darshan' a few times- only once at very close quarters, In fact, sitting in the first row in Prasanthi Nilayam.

Brindavan and in Prasanthi Nilayam. Given my human limitations, I have often wondered as to why I am not one of those who could see Baba at a short distance, if not touch His Feet. This is only a momentary reaction. Now I am convinced (though the mind aspires for His 'Darshan' and 'Padanamaskar') that nothing ever happens unless He wills.

Baba does not ignore any of His devotees. 'Darshan' and 'Padanamaskar' are but only two forms in which He shows His love for us. I must confess that Swami has shown His presence with me on ever so many occasions and in ever so many forms. I just mention two of them.

This was in July 1988. I was changing jobs from the University of the South Pacific in Fiji to the University of Papua New Guinea. I was in transit In Brisbane In Australia for three days. It was the time of the World EXPO in Brisbane and its population had swelled by millions of visitors from all over the world. Trains, buses and streets were full of people heading towards the EXPO site which was situated along the Brisbane River. My friend (also a Sai devotee,) and I took a suburban train from Oxley to Brisbane Central on a Sunday morning. My mission was to go to Downtown Duty Free Shop, buy a micro-wave oven (which my wife and I had previously decided on), arrange for its shipment to Papua New Guinea in the same flight as I was scheduled to travel. Thus I had, in a leather wallet, thousands of dollars in cash, travellers' cheques and a draft, besides all my travel documents. The wallet was a little too big to be accommodated fully in a trousers or jacket pocket. Part of the wallet was jutting out and I was conscious of it right through the train journey. Just as the train stopped in Brisbane Central, the busiest railway junction in Queensland, I was suddenly excited and pushed my way out of the train as hundreds of people were rushing in and out. Not until I was way out of the Railway Terminal did I realize that my wallet was missing. I started sweating profusely in spite of the wintry Brisbane cold. I was in a state of shock; I could hardly think. I was speechless. All those ugly scenes of having to stay in a foreign country without a passport, a visa and above all, money to survive, flashed across my mind and made me feel weak and utterly helpless. It was total and inevitable 'surrender' to Bhagavan!

My friend was also confused, but suggested that we go to the Station Master at Brisbane Central and see if he could find out something. By this time several trains had passed through the Station and our own train was several miles away in another direction. The Station Master, a good Samaritan though he was, sounded helpless at first, but managed to contact several railway staff, both on the train and outside about the missing wallet. A few minutes and several calls later, somebody vaguely said that some property left behind in a railway coach was just handed over to the 'Lost and found' section. Still praying strongly and in a state of nervousness and shock, hoping that the property handed over was nothing else but my wallet, I walked across to the 'Lost and found' section. The manager in charge of the Section, after a lot of interrogation, produced my wallet from behind the counter, much to my disbelief and thrill. All the mental agony I had gone through in the last half hour vanished and I said a word of thanks to Baba. To have retrieved a wallet in such a situation was no small miracle. Was it not Swami's shower of love for me?

recent incident, Bhagavan showed His love and affection through something which I had not even dreamt of. It was my cherished desire to attend the Annual Teacher Education Conference in Adelaide in July 1990. I started working on a paper for presentation at the Conference several months in advance. I knew, right from the beginning, that I had to pay my own way for the Conference, amounting to thousands of dollars, as the University that year had no funds available for its staff to attend conferences. I was somehow organizing myself financially to make the trip. Six weeks before the Conference, a colleague of mine casually suggested as to why I should not try for financial assistance from an Australian aid agency which generally funds deserving academics attending educational conferences. However, she was skeptical, as the time was too short and, above all, it was the end of the financial year for the aid agency. With little hope, I sent in my application to the aid agency for financial assistance of about 2300 Australian Dollars, the barest minimum that I needed. There was no response from the agency and I even forgot about it when just two weeks before my departure to Australia, the Conference Secretary informed me that the aid agency had approved my request for financial support and that she would reimburse my expenses during the Conference. Oh, what a feeling of relief and excitement it was! I could hardly control my emotions and Baba's photo was wet with tears of gratitude. Jai Sai Ram!

—Ramaprasad Raju,
Senior Lecturer in Commerce,
Goroka Teachers College,
University of Papua New Guinea

The manifest nature of the Individual is moulded by desire. He shapes himself in line with his hopes, aspirations, attempts and achievements. Even his own future life is designed by him through his decisions and deeds. The force that his 'reason' exerts on him and which directs his will in specific directions is known as Pravritti, or 'Nature'. When once it is discovered That one's own level of intelligence is the prime factor in determining one's inclinations and desires, then, it is easy to follow the means by which one can win release from the hold of 'Prakriti'.

—Baba

Bhagavan—the Divine Child

Very few among those who have had the supreme good fortune of being close to Bhagavan Baba for many years, have been privileged to enjoy His company in such varied situations and revel in the blessings conferred on them on such occasions, as Prof. Kasturi. Many such delectable incidents are described in Prof. Kasturi's autobiography, "Loving God". Relating one such incident, which occurred during the early days of Prof. Kasturi's arrival in Prasanthi Nilayam, He writes:

One day, Baba ventured into the backyard of the very first tenement of Brindavan and while we were peering into the northern distance to spot Him the moment He emerged from the front door of that house and get busy ourselves, He managed to get through their backdoor and walk unnoticed along a narrow gap between numbers six and seven, and slide behind poor innocent me from the south end. He closed my eyes with a quick placement of His palms, in order to grant me the sweetest of surprises. When He asked me, "Tell who?" my reply was a cascade of tears. Childish? A blind-man's Buff, between persons nearing thirty and sixty? Yes, His form was of the evening of youth; but the content was a Child, the Child that has come to chide and change, the Child that has come to reveal the hypocrisy of homo sapiens and make mankind aware of the humbug he was hugging firm.

Legend relates the pompous pride of an Emperor who rode on a caparisoned horse, preceded and followed by knights and courtiers, wearing regal clothes that were too diaphanous to exist. In truth, the crafty weavers had promised to clothe him in the gauziest of golden raiments and he believed, as his naked body was gazed at by his subjects, that he was magnificently attired. No one among the millions who watched the triumphal procession with the Emperor, in his birthday suit, dared announce the ugly truth. But, a little child shouted, "Why? The Emperor has no clothes on!"

Baba is the Child come to reveal the hollowness of pundit pomp and to ridicule us until we realise Reality. This Divine Child applies the balm of cool benediction, with its soothing palm, on our eyes, reddened by envy and blinded by anger. When He closes these eyes, the Inner Eye loses its blinkers; there is no division thereafter-only the vision of Him, who asks each one, all the time, "Tell who?" This Child draws us to itself by spontaneous and spotless Love and by its untarnished authentic wisdom.

The divine child

The human child sees itself as the center of the universe and the world as an extension of its Being. This Divine Child *knows* that is so. The human child arrives without the label of a name; we stick one on its brow. Baba, the Divine Child, has announced, "I have no name; I respond to all names." Baba has declared, "I have no place which I claim as my very own; I belong to all places. I am, wherever I am wanted." Children are most concerned with the 'now'. Baba reminds us "the past is past. Do not turn back and look wistfully or wailingly on the road you have traversed already." Children do not see the world as fragmented by walls, Chinese, Berlineses, or erected just to tease. They are involved in everything and with everyone; they represent true innocence, love, forgiveness and fraternity. The child has no conceit or contempt of gender. This Divine Child arms, "Among men, I am man; among women, I am woman. Among children, I am a child." This statement is echoed in the Upanishads which describe God, "You are woman, you are man, you are girl, you are senile leaning on stick." The human child delights to pour sand through its fingers. This child, I saw, grasped a handful of Chitravati sand; it became a book, the Bhagavad-Gita. Sand coagulated into pearl when Baba jogged gleefully on the white beach at Cape Comorin where three seas lap the shore. This Divine Child sat on the seashore near Dwaraka and played with both hands on the sand. An eighteen inch golden idol of Krishna

Him, in Him.

Awareness of this Truth came into me clearer and clearer as the years went by. It persists even today, when He is in the fifties and I am in the eighties.

The Lord's pastimes

Playfulness is inherent in the relation of God to man. Baba has written, "I created the world for my pleasure." On another occasion, He declared, "I am directing this puppet show, and I am pleased with it." Pricking bubbles, exploding ego balloons, demolishing aerial castles, playing hide and seek-these are favourite pastimes of His. "Love my uncertainty" is what this Divine Phenomenon advises us. And who can be more uncertain than a child? When distributing sweet laddus, inducing each devotee to catch the gift when he throws one in his direction, once in a while, He throws an empty gesture and laughs at the discomfiture He causes us. The next moment, He may give us two, with a pat on the back, to soften the impact of disappointment.

A mouse from the camera

I remember one evening in 1959 when He sent some one to bring me to His room at the Mandir. He told me that the Editor of a daily newspaper published from Hyderabad had asked for my photograph, for, he was announcing me in his paper, alongside a nice write up as the Editor of the "Sanathana Sarathi." Baba had promised to send him my photograph and He asked me to prepare myself for being shot within minutes by Baba Himself, with a brand new camera He had specially selected for the purpose. O! My joy knew no bounds! I rose to the eighth heaven.

I rushed down the eighteen steps to reach home for a quick face-lift.

I returned to the Presence, within minutes, shaved and starched, with a big broad smile on the frontispiece. Baba held me by the shoulders and positioned me at an appropriate distance. He peered at me through the lens and congratulated me on my 'photogenic face'. I was elated that my picture would catch the eye of at least 30,000 readers all over Andhra Pradesh. My smile swelled into a toothful grin! Baba gestured and I swallowed the grin in one gulp. He cautioned me with a 'steady', followed immediately by a 'ready.' He clicked ...A black hairy blotch with a flashing tail bounced on my neck from inside the camera! With a shrill screech, I hopped into the corner of the room casting away the horrid, hirsute... Was it a rat? Was it dead? No. It was a cotton mouse ...that was cunningly tucked inside the dummy camera, to be released when clicked. Baba had a hearty laugh at my panic. I too laughed to relieve the tension.

He reprimanded me mildly for swallowing the story He had invented to deflate my ego. He reminded me that my being the Editor was not the kind of 'news' which the world was interested in. Lasting fame is to be sought not through newspapers which turn into waste paper the very next morning, but through dedicated service to God and the godly.

the burden of the ego. He condemns modesty as a mere pose intended to draw attention or admiration to oneself. He advises that we should be just ourselves and not wear masks behind which we hide our smallness. "What greater status can you attain than being the medium for packaging and posting My message to thousands of devotees every month?" He asked me.

Baba is too bright a Sun for human eyes; we can bask and bathe in sunlight but we cannot gaze at Him. The Sun must itself diminish the splendour and become a beautiful red disc., as it does twice a day, so that man can imbibe the golden grandeur. Baba too gives us frequent glimpses of the Glory that He is.

This Sai has come in order to achieve the supreme task of uniting the entire mankind as one family, through the bond of brotherhood, of arming and illuminating the Atomic-Reality of each being in order to reveal the Divine which is the basis on which the entire Cosmos rests, and of instructing all to recognise the common Divine Heritage that binds man to man, so that man can rid himself of the animal and rise to the Divine, which is his goal.

—Baba

Breath of the Compassionate

“And God is Merciful, most forgiving.” (The Quran)

There is always in every age a piece of land on this planet where the breath of the Compassionate Lord pervades, making that region a green "Pasture", redolent with the fragrance of the Divine. So, too, the twentieth century world has its supremely Holy Land, Prasanthi Nilayam. Sanctity marks its paths. Serenity reigns there. Men and women come here to seek a cure for their myriad problems, diseases in the hearts, broken identities. Divine Love, encompassing everything, fills its sacred silences. Nowhere else in the world can one see such an all-world gathering. Seekers from all nations come to this Abode of Peace not to discuss problems but to get solutions for them. Only here the equality of mankind is asserted, when one notices people from all climes, continents, cultures and races sitting in Darshan lines side by side. Justice, dignity, and human fellowship are born anew.

Seeing the Lord of Parthi walking along the lines, caring for each individual, whether one is aware of it or not, is a feast for the eyes, a sight to remember and cherish. There are looks of adoration and love as the Lord comes out and nears the seekers, who sit quietly. Most of them are ordinary people, from different walks of life. Their aspirations are commonplace: family, finance, promotions, even simple curiosity. What a strange contrast it is! Prophet Moses had to fast for forty days before he was called to receive the Ten Commandments. He was ordered further to remove his shoes, for the ground at Mount Sinai was holy. In the twentieth century, the

prejudices, aches, and desires. He extends His hands and receives small chits and letters that contain no eulogies but common foibles. Can there be a greater proof of Divine Compassion than this? What do the seekers get in return? Unconditional love. Unasked solace. Two instances suffice here.

The robe does the miracle

Two Muslim gentlemen sat for Darshan. They had approached Baba as a last resort. One of them suffered from leprosy. The insufferable disease had spread to his hands. Three days in the first line and Swami had not even looked at him! Desperation was not the word to describe the state of mind with which he sat for the last time on that final day. Again, Baba glided past without a glance in his direction. In the usual stir that followed, the men did not even know that the Lord's robe for a fleeting moment had contacted his affected hands. After Darshan as he was getting up he casually looked at his hands. The contagious signs were not there. He could have looked a hundred times but his hands were clean and healthy. He wept recalling the prophetic saying

"My Mercy precedes my Wrath."

Yet another gentleman, a distant relative of this author from Hyderabad, had to face a number of difficulties for eleven years. Being a Sufi and initiated into a strict order of moral behaviour he made the mistake of drinking at a party. This brought about his material and spiritual fall. No doctor, well-wisher, spiritual Master could help him. Finally, he came to Baba, received Vibhuti, unasked, on his first day in the Darshan line. He waited for four or five days but could not progress beyond the first gesture of Mercy. He returned rather unsatisfied. But within six months, he realized that his lost fortunes in both the worlds had been restored.

It is not that the fire cools and, turns into a garden only for Prophet Abraham. The breath of the Compassionate Lord makes a paradise wherever it manifests. Indeed, who can limit or imprison Light?

"And we were never absent at any time." (The Quran)

**—Dr. Zeba Bashiruddin,
Anantapur**

The Eternal Heritage Museum

The museum at Prasanthi Nilayam is not just a building containing articles of historical value; to make it a living statement of past, present and future aspects of the Religion of Love.

artifacts.

As the Om is the first Causal Sound, so as you enter the Museum you hear the Om plus visual portrayal on a screen with an accompanying commentary. From all over the world people have donated gifts depicting their own particular faith and these were lovingly displayed for all to see with explanations of their uses. It was interesting to see a stand of so many musical instruments which are used in worship.

No matter which pathway that one is upon, the Universal Presence of Sai Baba within the Museum has to be the general highlight with so many sets and pictures and video's of His incarnations. There is a beautiful wax model of Shirdi Sai handing sacred ash to a devotee from his fire and another of Sathya Sai when He declared His mission and threw the flowers in the air.

There are many splendid models to see including the Golden Temple from North India. It was so wonderful to wander in absolute peace and love amongst all nationalities exclaiming at the beauty of it all. With such a uniting of faiths under one roof, how can we separate ourselves from other beings when we all have this love within us.

—*Joan Brake (From "Facets")*

Beyond Birth and Death

Death is our birth-right, a gift everyone can claim. It is a relief for the tired or refuge for the persecuted, a lesson for the wayward, a jolt for the epicurean, a milestone for the pilgrim, punishment for the poltroon and paradise for the faithful. Millions are persuaded to believe that death is the end, a full-stop and not a semi-colon, that, later, they have to be raised from the grave and judgements pronounced on their actions during their sojourn here on earth. Millions believe that their present lives are but interludes, temporary camps on the long and arduous trek towards the peak.

Baba's elder sister's husband died in middle age, when He was 25 years of age. He chided me for shedding tears. He asked me, "If there is to be no birth and no death, how am I to spend my time?" So, death is but a move in His game; an 'exit' in His play, at which the 'role' has to disappear from the stage. The finitude of the body and the infinitude of the soul have to be stoically accepted, says Baba. He creates ash and applies it on our brow to remind us of death and the change, thereafter, of the body into a heap of ashes. That helps us to develop detachment towards worldly things, and turn our gaze towards lasting values.

Baba has come to assign death its legitimate place in the scheme of existence, neither more nor less. He brought Walter Cowan back from the region beyond death, for, He said: "He has not

When an aged devotee, Raval Seshagirl Rao, was on the last gasp of his breath, Baba entered his room at Prasanthi Nilayam and revived him while giving him small sips of coffee. He was privileged to be in charge of the shrine for over fourteen years. He was well versed in the scriptures and very regular in *japa* and *puja*. As a matter of fact, he was passing out with the Upanishads on his tongue and Baba before his eyes. "The five fundamental elements which, in combination, became this body of mine, are now parting company and falling apart." That was the utterance emanating from his lips. "What a glorious death", I said to myself. But Baba knew he had yet to pay the last installment of his karmic debt. So He turned to him and reprimanded him thus: "Why did you entrain on this journey without first securing a ticket from Me? Get down! Do your shrine duties as usual. Attend the forenoon *bhajan* and perform *arati*." There is no need to add, he did as he was told.

The Still Small Voice of Sai

Moses prayed in desperation
As those with him groaned in hunger,
Lost faith in God,
And craved only pleasures of the senses.
In his attempt to lead them out of Egypt,
Moses learned that an external out was
no out at all.
Egypt was the multitude of desires that
dwelt within the mind.

But desires, fears, and lack of faith, are
only static,
Momentarily drowning out God's
ever present voice.
The Divine Word never began and will
never end.

Its patient teaching is broadcasting
perpetually,
Saying to all as it said to Moses,
"Stop sinning. To find peace in your
heart and joy in your life
Love God- not things; Honour your parents;
and set aside time for holy thoughts."

Jesus followed these commandments and
taught others to do the same as he.
He knew himself to be the son of God.
His Father was always with him.
"In God there is no lack", he said, and
multiplied the fish and bread.
He preached the truth that His Father
dwelt in the Kingdom of Heaven
And that the Kingdom of Heaven is with
in each one. Seeking purification
And redemption for himself and all man
kind, He heard a voice from Heaven
Speak aloud, "This is my beloved son
in whom I am well pleased."

And now once more, another comes to
lead his people to the promised land,
The Holy City whose builder and maker
is God, the Kingdom of the Inner Voice
No longer a mystery teaching or a hidden
truth. Sai announces, "I am God.

I am the I Am, the Eternal Absolute, the
All-in-All. I am always with you."
His form has been seen, His presence
felt, and His voice heard
Wherever man has stilled the body,
silenced the mind, and listened in faith.

His physical presence is here on earth to
bless our eyes with His majesty,
To caress our ears with the precious
words which instruct us to serve others,
To love all mankind; and to know our
selves to be God, the same as He.
When we have found peace in the true
understanding of who we are—
Joy that no one is lost, but all are saved
—then He speaks words
Which bring balm to Gilead, fulfillment
to the yearning heart:
"You are My daughter; you are My
friend; you are My devotee."

Eliminate the static of the senses,
and you will hear it.
Quiet the mind's myriad desires, and you
will hear it.
Listen quietly, you will hear it,
Listen intently, you will hear it.
"You are My son; you are My friend ;
you are My devotee."
We are all One.
We are all We.

—Joy Thomas

"The Devotee" that fled

A clever villager used to enter the village temple in the early hours of the day and sit on, with eyes closed, in the hope that people will honour him as a great devotee. Since he did not get up and go about his business until about midnoon, the temple priest was hard put to it to close the doors and go home for his daily tasks there. So he struck upon a plan to stop the nuisance. He knew that the closed-eye session of Dhyana was all a pretence. He hid himself behind the Idol of the Deity, and when the villager was well set in his pretence of deep meditation, he said, in an imposing sonorous voice, "Listen! Excellent Devotee! I am mightily pleased by your asceticism and your steadfastness. Come! I shall merge you into Myself." At this, the fellow ran fast out from the temple, leaving no trace of where he had gone to!

discipline is absent; earnestness is lacking.

—Baba (*From "Chinnakatha"*)

Sai Institute: “A Glimmer of Hope”

"Facilities for higher education have grown rapidly since Independence. The task (now is to transform this huge massive structure of higher education from one where values are completely lost to one where values are completely cherished. The task is an absolutely stupendous one and, if there is a small glimmer of hope, it comes from an institution like this" (the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning), declared Sri P. V. Narasimha Rao, Prime Minister of India, in the course of his address to the Tenth Convocation of the Institute held in the Vidyagiri Stadium.

Precisely at 2.30 p.m., Bhagavan Baba, the Chancellor of the institute, and the Prime Minister arrived at the Stadium and went in a ceremonial procession to the Santhi Vedika, followed by the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. S. Sampath, the members of the Governing Body of the Institute, the Deans of Faculties and members of the Academic Council. The Institute band troupe, in their shining white and red uniforms, marched in front, playing new marching tunes.

The stage had been beautifully decorated with floral draperies providing an artistic back-drop.

After the Chancellor and others had taken their seats on the dais, the proceedings started with the chanting of Vedic hymns by students of the Institute.

V. C.'s address

Offering his salutations to Bhagavan and welcoming the Chief Guest and others, the Vice-Chancellor said "Sri Narasimha Rao is a man of destiny, on whose shoulders the mantle of leadership of the Nation has fallen at what is perhaps the gravest juncture in the evolutionary growth of free India. He is a scholar-statesman who brings to his new position of responsibility a wealth of experience as an intellectual of the highest calibre, a linguist with an extraordinary range of language skills, lawyer, journalist, philosopher and administrator. He is at home in the domain of literature as well as diplomacy. When the country is faced with seemingly insurmountable problems, his stewardship promises a fresh breeze that will blow through its life. He is an ardent champion of the efficacy of consensus in the place of confrontation. We pray to Bhagavan to shower His Grace on the Prime Minister as he is engaged in imparting a new direction to the destiny of the Nation, in an endeavour to liberate it from the morass of its present difficulties and set it moving rapidly on the path of regeneration and of growth Interwoven with stability."

Reviewing the work of the Institute Prof. Sampath said: "The Institute's central objective is to impart a form and style of learning that is described as '*Integral Education*' encompassing, as it does, the pursuit of Knowledge, inculcation of the traits of Duty and Devotion and the virtues of simple living, together with a cultivation of a sense of Unity with all fellow-beings irrespective of religious affiliation."

After referring to the courses offered in the Institute, including the promotion of Computer Science activities, he said "During the year, the curricula and syllabi of all the courses were reviewed and updated, in consultation with subject experts from leading educational institutions in the country. The ground-work has been completed for the institution of *Post-M. Sc. Courses*, equivalent to the Master of Engineering Technology programmes offered by prestigious institutions in the country, and, in particular the *Master's Degree Course in Computer Science* with two areas of specialization, namely 'Software Engineering' and 'Information Technology.' Good-quality research work continued to be done in the various Departments.

"The Institute, founded and lovingly nurtured by Bhagavan Baba, has the power of alighted lamp which can light other lamps, in every nook and corner of the country, and illumine the pathways to be traversed by teachers and learners."

The Vice-Chancellor then invited the Chancellor to declare the Convocation open. After the Chancellor had formally declared the Convocation open. Prof. U. S. Rao presented to the Chancellor the candidates for the various degrees to be awarded at the Convocation. All the candidates got up at their places and bowed to the Chancellor, who conferred His benediction on them.

The Vice-Chancellor then administered the Institute's "Pledge" to the candidates.

Medals for academic excellence

The Registrar, Sri Chakravarthi, then read out the names of those who had been awarded medals for academic excellence. The recipients of the medals are: Siddhartha Pal Das (B.A.), Prasanth Kumar Srinivasan (B.Sc., M.P.C.), Vineyesh Sawhney (B.Com.), Kumari N. Srividya (B.Sc., Home Science), Kumari Ankhi Mukherjee (M.A., Eng. Lit.), S.V. Rajendra Kumar (M.Sc., Bio-sciences), M. Krishnamurthy (M.Sc., Chem.), M.V. Suryanarayana Rao (M.Sc., Maths.) Kanuri Srinivas (M.Sc., Physics), Mariwala R. Chandru (M.B.A.), Kumari Nidhi Kapoor (B.Ed.). Each of the candidates went up to the Chancellor to receive his or her medal.

The following four candidates were awarded Ph.D. degrees: Miss. S. Kanakadurga (English), R. Ramakrishnan (Mathematics), Ch. Siva Sai Ramana Kumar (Chemistry), Srinivas Nanduri (Chemistry).

Prime Minister's Address

Sri P. V. Narasimha Rao then delivered his Convocation address. He began with a reference to the opportunity given to him by Bhagavan Baba to take part in the Convocation. He said

"I believe that Bhagavan decided to shower His blessings on me personally. So, I am here; and the Convocation is but a pretext. I am deeply grateful to Him for having remembered me and for having chosen me for His benediction today, at a time when I fervently believe that I am in need of it and the country is in need of it.

unique seat of learning. Spiritual and ethical values permeate this University. The atmosphere here is calm, solemn and serene and is surcharged with spiritual ethos."

Value-oriented education

"The Prime Minister went on to say: There has been a growing concern over the erosion of essential values. There is also a growing realisation that there is a need for the radical reconstruction of the curriculum of studies, to enable education to become a forceful tool for the cultivation of social and moral values and for the promotion of a holistic personality.

"One area where we cannot have a gap between precept and practice is value oriented education. Unless the teacher himself is a living embodiment of values, how can he carry conviction with the students? A misconceived and misunderstood notion of modernity and the compulsions of the Scientific Age have posed a great threat to our values. Preoccupation with modern technology cannot be allowed to sever our new generations from their roots in Indian History and Culture.

"I am glad that this Institute is trying to achieve the blend between traditional values and modern scientific knowledge. The Science Departments are well equipped; in fact, they are better equipped than in many other universities that we come across.

Erosion of values

"India's political and social life is passing through a phase which poses the danger of erosion of long accepted values. We are able to see this even as we watch it and this is going on even as we regret it. Secularism, democracy, national unity, professional ethos and other cherished values are coming under increasing strain. The number of Universities has increased from 25, at the time of Independence, to 177 and the number of colleges from 700 to nearly 7000. Student enrolment, which was only 2 lakhs in 1947, is now more than 42 lakhs. This is the magnitude of the task before us. I want my colleague, Sri Arjun Singh, who heads the Ministry of Human Resources Development, to examine, to go deeper into this and see how this transformation can take place, because transform we must.

Essential reforms

"There are two areas that immediately come to my mind where reforms can be introduced within a rigid time-frame, which would have a tangible impact on the direction of Value Oriented Education. One is the area of Curriculum Reform. The growth of spiritual and moral ideas must find a place in the Foundation Courses of the first-degree level. These elements should be designed to inculcate in the students values such as egalitarianism, secularism, equality of sexes, removal of social barriers and a scientific temper. The synthesis of Science and Spirituality and the blending of material prosperity with Universal Human Values should be duly emphasised in the content of education.

"Another equally important area is Examination Reform. In the Indian way of thinking, there is no such thing as a 30% pass. We have to aim at perfection. The system as it exists today, apart

most unfortunate part of it. It is bedevilled by evil practices such as cheating in examinations, leakages of examination-papers and the like. This is also happening in the UPSC examinations apart from Universities. We witness laxity in evaluation in collusion with a section of the teachers themselves and the threat of violence in examination-halls. These practices need to be checked and eliminated through far-reaching examination reforms.

"When we were formulating the New Education Policy, we had the good fortune of the benefit of opinions, views and guidance from the Sri Sathya Sai Institute. Prof. V. K. Gokak and others were good enough to come and talk to me. We sent our people here and we had a good amount of consultation, but, somehow, I feel what needed to be incorporated in the Policy was not incorporated. We would like to supplement what we did in 1985 by learning about the working of this Institution, and studying the performance of the alumni of this Institution and the methods followed in this Institution.

"I am sure that all those who have had the privilege of being students of this Institute have not only received a complete education but will prove, above all, to be good human beings. On this very happy occasion, which comes only once or twice in the life of a Graduate, I would like to congratulate the Graduates, those who have received their Degrees, and enjoin on them to be true to the pledge that they have taken: "Dharmaan-na pramadithavyam." It is something which needs to be repeated every day, within oneself, like a Japa, so that when you go wrong, this comes to your mind and brings you to the fold of the right. I wish the Institute, its Faculty and its students even greater success in the years to come. For myself, I would like to be humbly studying this Institution, the process of this Institute growing from strength to strength and see what can be done to extend the influence and halo of this Institution far and wide in India. Jai Hind."

After the Prime Minister's address, Bhagavan Baba delivered His benedictory message (published separately).

The Institute band then played the National Anthem and the Convocation came to a close. The Chancellor, the Prime Minister and others left the Stadium in procession.

AVATAR VANI:

DEEPAVALI SANDESH:

Light the Lamp Within

*Peace has vanished
Truth has become rare
Arms have become a menace
Selfishness is at the root
Of all these calamities
This is the word of*

*Sathya, Dharma, Ahimsa,
Prema and Santhi
Are the five life-breaths
Of Man in this world.
Love is the foremost of these five.
Install love in your hearts.*

Embodiments of Divine Love!

Bharatiya culture is boundless and unexcelled. Every Bharatiya festival is saturated with profound spiritual significance. These festivals did not originate to provide occasions for merriment, feasting and ostentation. When you examine them from the spiritual or scientific point of view you will find that they are full of sacred meaning.

For Bharatiyas every object is fit for worship. All objects, whether they are visible to the eye, audible to the ear, arising in the mind or inspiring the heart, are pregnant with the Truth of the Spirit. Every object, ranging from a piece of stone to a precious diamond, from a blade of grass to the celestial Parijata tree, from an ant to an elephant, from a sinner to a saint, conveyed to the Bharatiya the truth of the Divine. The great Mahavakyas (profound aphorisms) like "Sarvam khalu idam Brahma" (Verily, everything here is Divine), "Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagat" ("The entire cosmos is permeated by the Divine"), "Isavasyam idam sarvam" ("All this is dwelt in by the Lord") were based on this concept and proclaimed to the world. The Bharatiya concept of social justice has no parallel in any other country in the world. Ignoramuses who are not aware of these profound truths tend to revile Bharatiyas. They refer mockingly to Bharatiyas as worshippers of stones and trees, of forests and mountains.

Bharatiyas are animated by the magnificent conception that love is not confined to living beings but is present in every object, animate or inanimate. It is natural for human beings to see the Many in the One. But Bharatiya culture comprehends the divine concept of unity in diversity.

Every festival is intended to awaken in man the consciousness of his inherent divinity. The Bharatiya scriptures call upon men stridently: "Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached." They exhort men to get rid of their ignorance, realise their primal divinity and strive for the realisation of that consciousness.

Darkness and light

From the very name of today's festival (Deepavali), it can be seen that the Divine effulgence is manifest in it. "Deepavali" means "the array of lights." "Tamaso man jyotirgamaya" ("Lead me from darkness to light", is an Upanishadic prayer.) This means that where there is darkness light is needed. What is this darkness? Sorrow is one form of darkness. Peace-less-ness is another. Loss is another. Disappointment is one form of darkness. Misery is yet another. Lack of enthusiasm is another. All these are different forms of darkness. To get rid of the darkness of

install the light of health. To get over the darkness of losses and failures, you have to usher in the light of prosperity.

These apparently opposing conditions are not totally separate from each other. They are inter-related. You see in the world the prevalence of heat and cold. They appear to be opposed to each other. But nevertheless, according to the prevailing situation, both are useful for man. During the cold weather, we welcome heat. In the summer, coolness is desired. Hence, it is clear that both heat and cold are aids to man and not harmful to him. Likewise, joy and sorrow, lose and gain are helpful to man and not inimical. If there is no sorrow, one cannot know the value of happiness. If there is no darkness, the value of light cannot be appreciated.

Hence, if the greatness of light is to be realised, darkness is necessary. It is rightly said: Pleasure is an interval between two pains. The truth about sorrow and joy will be realised when they are considered as equal from the spiritual point of view.

From the practical worldly point of view, the festivals have one aspect. From the spiritual viewpoint they carry a different significance. But there is a common purport in both. Only the ignorant will give diverse meanings to them and miss their essential significance.

Origin of Deepavali

Looking at the Deepavali festival from the scientific point of view, it should be noted that at one time in the distant past, our ancestors lived in the Arctic region (the polar region). In this region, darkness prevailed for six months. The sun appears on Mesha Sankranti day (the sun entering the Aries sign of the Zodiac). The sun sets in this region on Tula Sankranti day (when the sun enters Libra). In the movement between these two signs, there is an interval of six months. After the sun sets in Libra, the dark half-year starts. Today is the fourteenth day (Chathurdasi) in the month of Kartik. It is the New Moon day (Amavasya). This month is called Kaumudi. The people in the polar region used to start lighting their lamps from this day. The lighting of the lamp is not without other significance. As they would be in darkness for a long period, they described the lamp that was lit as "Nityajyoti" (the perennial light).

Five thousand years ago there were some planets (going round the earth). Some of these planets disappear from time to time. There was one planet called Naraka which used to go round the earth. In the course of their orbits, sometimes the moon and the Naraka planet used to get close to each other. At one time, the Naraka planet appeared to be approaching close to the earth. The inhabitants of the earth were filled with dread of the approaching catastrophe. They prayed to the Lord for averting the imminent disaster and saving them. At that stage, Sri Krishna used His extraordinary knowledge (Prajna) to destroy that planet. This extraordinary knowledge of Krishna was termed "Sathya". That is to say, Krishna destroyed the Naraka planet in association with "Sathya". The denizens of the world started celebrating that day with lighting of lamps and adoring the Lord who saved them. That day of the Lord's triumph was celebrated as a festive occasion.

Ayodhya from Lanka vanquishing Ravana and his Rakshasa brood. For a long period Ayodhya had been plunged in darkness (when Rama was in exile in the forest). In the absence of the effulgent Rama, Ayodhya was a city of darkness. The forests were filled with light. The return of Rama was hailed by the people of Ayodhya as the return of divine effulgence and hence they celebrated the event by the lighting of lamps everywhere.

Suppressing the ego

Nor is that all. Today's festival is marked by other significant features. This is the day on which the Lord in His Vamana incarnation sent the Emperor Bali to the Nether World after He had got the promise of three feet of ground (measured by the Lord's foot) from Bali. Vamana (as the incarnation of Vishnu used the gift of three feet of land to put down the egoism (Ahamkara) of Bali. Bali is described as "Chakravarti", sovereign lord. In every human being there is a sovereign who presides over all his qualities. That sovereign is the Ego. This sovereign Ego (Ahamkara Chakravarti) suppresses all the good qualities in man. "Ahamkara" has another meaning. It is the very form of "Aham", the "I". The egoist is one who identifies the body with his Self. But you are not the body. The body is only an instrument. It is an agglomeration of material substances. How can this inert body be equated with the Self? It is by the association of consciousness with the body that it is able to undertake various activities.

Dipavali is a festival which is designed to celebrate the suppression of the Ego by the Higher Self. Man is plunged in the darkness of ignorance and has lost the power of discrimination between the permanent and the evanescent. When the darkness of ignorance caused by Ahamkara (the ego-feeling) is dispelled by the, light of Divine knowledge, the effulgence of the Divine is experienced.

Deepavali is also the day on which Emperor Vikramaditya ascended the throne.

It is for these various reasons that Deepavali has been observed by Bharatiyas, young and old, as a day of great rejoicing.

The lamp within

However, the lights lit on Deepavali day remove only the external darkness and not the darkness within man. Even when the sun shines brightly, his light cannot dispel the inner darkness. For this purpose, you have to learn a lesson from the external light. For instance, if you want to light a lamp, you need a container. You have to fill it with oil and place a wick in it. You need a matchbox to light the wick. Only when you have all the four accessories can you light the lamp. The lamp cannot be lit if any one of them is lacking. This lamp dispels the external darkness. As the wick burns, the oil is consumed. When the oil is exhausted the flame goes out. Saint Ramadas compared human life to a lighted lamp and declared in one of his songs that when the oil of life ebbs away, neither the wick nor the light will follow the departed.

If the darkness of ignorance is to be dispelled, man needs a container, oil, wick and a matchbox corresponding to what an external lamp needs. For man, the heart is the container. The

four, the Atma-Jyoti (the Divine flame of the Spirit) shines effulgently. When the light of the Spirit is aflame, the Light of Knowledge appears and dispels the darkness of ignorance.

The triple purity

The flame of a lamp has two qualities. One is to banish darkness. The other is a continuous upward movement. Even when a lamp is kept in a pit, the flame moves upwards. The sages have therefore adored the lamp of wisdom as the flame that leads men to higher states. Hence, the effulgence of light should not be treated as a trivial phenomenon. Along with lighting the external lamps men should strive to light the lamps within them. The human estate should be governed by sacred qualities. This calls for the triple purity of body, mind and speech (Trikarana Shuddhi-purity of the three instruments). The first requisite is purity of the heart. This should be accompanied by purity in speech. And one's actions should be in harmony with the purity of the heart and the speech. Where there is this triple purity, there will be no fear. The man who practises this threefold purity needs no other protector. Where there is guilt, there is fear. Where fear prevails, security is sought. There are many persons in the world who seek security. What for? Because they are filled with fear. The fear arises out of a sense of guilt. The innocent man has no need to fear and hence has no need for protection. Man today is haunted by fear all the time because he is full of guilty actions. These have to be got rid of. Then he will be free from fear. Moreover, he must ensure that he does not commit the same faults again. Only the Divine perennial light of spirituality can redeem man from a life of anxieties, miseries, frustrations and insatiable desires. The spiritual light will be a divine lighthouse for him. For everyone caught up in the coils of worldly life, this divine light is essential. This light is like a compass which reveals the, course you should take. All the pleasures positions and riches of the world will not confer on you real peace and security. Only faith in the Self can ensure this. Man today has faith in everything except the Spirit. It is because it has lost its faith in the Spirit that Bharat today is racked by so many troubles.

Here is an illustration of how this lack of faith may be seen. Today is called Sunday. Who determined this name? Did it announce its name when the day dawned? No. You derive the name by looking at the calendar. You also note that it is the 5th day of the month. Who drew up the calendar? One who is versed in astronomy and astrology. You have full faith in the calculations of the astrologer. Wherefrom did he get his knowledge of astrology? All this knowledge has originated from the Manu Dharma Shastra (the Code of Mann). People today have no faith in the Code of Manu but place their faith in something derived from his scripture. The source is forgotten, but what has come in between is prized.

Abuse of the purusharthas

This is the state of things today. There are the four Purusharthas-the goals of human life: Dharma (Righteousness, Artha (material welfare), Kama (desire) and Moksha (Liberation). Ignoring the first and the last goals, men are immersed in the pursuit of the two middle goals. The paradox of human existence today is that life is without a head or feet but has only the trunk in the middle. What meaning can there be for such a life?

declared: "That thou art" ("Tattvam Asi"), "I am the Brahman" ("Aham Brahmasmi"), "Your Prajnanam is Brahman" ("Prajnanam Brahma"—Awareness Is the Supreme). While these profound truths have been proclaimed by the Vedas, people are not relying on them. Though people talk about self-confidence, they have really no confidence in the Self (the Spirit). It is essential for every man to have confidence in the Self (Atma-Vishvasam). Self-confidence is the foundation for the mansion of Life, with Self-satisfaction as the walls, Self-sacrifice as the roof and Self-Realisation as the dwelling. The Self (Spirit) is at the root of everything. Without confidence in the Self, life becomes utterly meaningless. Life is infinitely precious. It should not be wasted in mere eating and sleeping. It should be lived for realising the Supreme. Man is endowed with a body for realising the Divine. He must lead an ideal life. Life is a challenge, meet it. Life is a dream, realise it. Life is a game, play it.

Sat-Chit-Ananda

Awareness means total understanding. All other forms of knowledge are only partial and incomplete. Awareness calls for a total comprehension of the nature of the cosmos. This is called "Chit". Who can recognise "Chit"? Only "Sat" can recognise "Chit". "Sat" means that which is permanent—Being, which is unchanging and immutable. When "Sat" is comprehended, "Chit" can be properly understood. The unified form of "Sat" and "Chit" is "Ananda" (Bliss).

Today people seek Ananda (Bliss). But what kind of "Bliss" do they want? Is it momentary or enduring bliss? Can momentary "bliss" be equated with Ananda (bliss)? Bliss is that state of joy which is lasting and unchanging. The joy that is experienced from moment to moment can only be termed "Santosham"—temporary happiness. It is to be regarded as "some-tosham" (a little joy). To seek it is a "dosham" (error). Revelling in the transient and the momentary, men lose themselves. "Ananda" is bliss. "Santosham" is pleasure. There is a wide gulf between "Bliss" and "pleasure". The latter is temporary. When one is hungry, he takes some chapattis and feels satisfied and happy. But again hunger appears after a few hours. Hence, this happiness comes and goes like birth and death. This is not the kind of happiness man should seek. He must aspire for the Ananda that is everlasting. This Ananda has been described in many ways as Nityananda (perennial joy), Paramananda (Supreme bliss), Brahmananda (Divine bliss), and so on. In all these states, what is ever-present is "Sat-Chit-Ananda" (Being-Awareness-Bliss).

Are "Sat", "Chit" and "Ananda" separate entities? No. They are one. Being is Awareness and Awareness is Bliss. The same state (of bliss) indicates the three attributes. For instance, if you consider the example of "Fire" (Agni), it has three qualities: Redness, light and heat. These three are not separate from each other. They are the combined qualities of fire. Likewise, in the state of "Atma-ananda" (Spiritual bliss), all three—Sat, Chit and Ananda—are present. It is three-in-one.

Many paths: one goal

In man, all the three gunas (qualities)—Satwa, Rajas and Tamas—are present. The three qualities manifest their nature in different situations. When there is a manifestation of what is permanent, the Satwic quality is to the fore. When one's fullness is manifested, "Chit" comes to

may be compared to sugar, whose quality is sweetness. Water is a tasteless substance. But when the sugar is dissolved in water, you have neither sugar, nor water, but syrup. Likewise, when "Sat" and "Chit" combine, you have Ananda, which is not pure "Sat" or "Chit".

Hence, man should regard himself as the embodiment of bliss. Man perpetually seeks bliss in one context or another—in passing an examination with distinction, thereafter securing a good job, and then getting married, and getting a son, and so on. After realising all these, he encounters some trouble or other. Life becomes a perpetual pursuit of happiness, which all the time eludes him. Man will experience real happiness only when he has recognised his true nature. As long as he identifies himself with particular physical form and name happiness will elude him. Man constantly refers to "my body", "my mind", etc., but does not enquire into the nature of the "I" that claims this ownership. Men have to learn to put these questions and seek the answers for them. It should not be imagined that there is only one answer for a question. There may be different answers. Teachers in evaluating answer papers should have regard for the possibility of different answers to the same question. This applies equally to life. The goal is one, but the paths are many. Concentrate on the goal. For instance, Swami Is in Puttaparthi. Devotees use many different kinds of transport to come here- planes, trains, buses, bicycles and by foot. Whatever the mode of transport, the goal is one. No one is entitled to claim that his mode of conveyance is the only right means.

Thus, to realise the Divine, there are many paths. Of the nine forms of devotion-Shravanam, Kirtanam, etc.—any method can be followed. But people must note that the basic truth underlying all the different forms is only one. This was why the Upanishads called upon all the aspirants to realise the One in the many (Unity in diversity). The desires, the methods, the doctrines and practices may vary. But the fruit is one and the same.

From darkness to light

The inner significance of Deepavali is to lead man from darkness to light. Man is perpetually plunged in darkness. Every time he is enveloped in darkness, he should light a lamp that is ever shining within him. Carry that lamp wherever you go. It will light your path wherever you may be.

Hence, the first requisite is the practice of the Karma Marga (the Path of Action). For instance, if you have to travel ten miles in the dark and have a hurricane lantern with you, you cannot keep the lantern in one place and expect it to light your path all the way. If you carry the lantern with you, it will serve you all the way, even though it can illumine only ten yards at a time. Make the divine effulgence within you accompany you all the time by faith in its illumination.

Students in particular should bear in mind the main purpose of life and prepare themselves to lead ideal lives. Shedding selfishness, they must learn to serve others by cultivating Divine love. Then they will experience the Bliss Divine, which they can share with others.

SAI INSTITUTE'S Xth CONVOCATION

GURUDEV VANI:

"Lead Ideal Lives"

Students! Preceptors! Educationists!

From times of yore, Bharat has been promoting peace and security in the world by its spiritual message. The quintessence of that message is contained in the pronouncement: "Let all the peoples of the world be happy." The culture of Bharat is based on the eternal truth, which is unaffected by time and place, unchanged by circumstances, untainted by historical changes and untouched by natural calamities.

The ancient Vedic texts proclaimed the dictum: "Speak the Truth, Live righteously" ("Sathyam Vada, Dharmam Chars"). Students should be the guardians of Truth and Righteousness. They need not be the protectors of the nation. Truth and Righteousness will protect the nation. "Dharmo Rakshathi Rakshitah" ("Righteousness protects him who protects it").

We are able to see the Divine aspects of man only in the mirror of education. Education is the primary means of comprehending and controlling manifestations in creation.

Knowledge and virtue

What students have to acquire are human values. Together with the acquisition of every conceivable knowledge and the pursuit of scientific studies, they should cultivate human values. They need good qualities even more than Intellectual abilities. Of what use is a mountain of knowledge without good qualities?

It is virtue that lends beauty to man. " Knowledge is a secret treasure for man. It is the source of fame and peace and security. It is the teacher of teachers. Such knowledge is like a kinsman when one travels abroad. "Knowledge is an additional eye for man. Kings honour knowledge and not wealth. A man without knowledge is a mere animal." (Bhagavan recited a Sanskrit stanza and translated its purport).

It is not enough if one becomes a scientist. To equate science with all knowledge is a travesty of truth. Together with knowledge, the student should acquire humility, egolessness, and selflessness as essential ingredients. Education should be pursued for the development of one's personality and cultivation of the heart.

To make one a full man it is necessary to instill in him faith in the Indwelling Motivator ("Antahkarana"). Education today seems to be concerned with artificial things rather than the understanding of the inner consciousness ("Chaitanya"). "Discarding the idea that education is for acquiring degrees, students should engage themselves in social service and promote the progress of the nation." (Poem)

Education: then and now

In olden times, in the hermitage of the preceptor, when the disciples completed their term of education, the preceptor used to offer them wise and wholesome counsel such as: "Truth should not be neglected. Duty should not be ignored. Speak the Truth. Follow Dharma. Revere your father and mother as God. Revere your teacher as God."

Today there is no evidence of unity among the people. Hatred and jealousy are growing. The reason for the loss of peace in the world is the disappearance of fear of sin and love of God.

Without wisdom and good conduct, can there be right education? The ancient system of education has gone and a misdirected system has taken its place. Consequently, truth and righteousness have assumed bizarre forms. Sacred Nature has turned away from the people. Qualities like compassion and goodness have given place to their opposites because fear of sin, love of God and social morality have declined.

Students! Remember that every atom in Bharat is sacred. You owe a great deal to Bharat. You must strive to serve the Motherland, earn her grace, and share the joy derived there from with others.

Devotion and faith are essential for man. Divinity is present in invisible subtle form in the human being. Only the student who manifests this divinity within him is worth the name. "Good qualities, truth, devotion, discipline and duty are what students should learn through education." (Poem)

Students and sense-control

Discipline, which should be the primary characteristic of a student, is seldom in evidence today. Students seem to think that an easy and physically comfortable life is conducive to happiness. This is not so. True happiness can come only from control of the senses ("Indriya nigraha") and from the bliss of the Spirit ("Atma-ananda"). The first requisite is for students to develop sense control. The Goddess of Knowledge, Saraswati, confers her blessings only on the student who practises self-control.

Unfortunately, educational institutions, which ought to be Temples of the Goddess of Learning (Saraswati), have become today abodes of the Goddess of Wealth (Lakshmi). Money has to be used for getting admissions, for manipulating marks, for securing a pass, and soon. This process of commercialisation of education has led to the flight of the Goddess of Knowledge from the educational institutions.

Students! Bharat lost its sacredness from the moment the sale of food, the sale of knowledge and the sale of medical services started in the country. Education should not be a salable commodity.

It is high time teachers took a pledge to impart education to students without regard to emoluments or rigid timetables. Education should be for life and not for earning a living.

Students, who are interested in education only for the purpose of getting a job and earning an income, should remember that "Money comes and goes. Morality comes and grows."

Education should aim at making a man a full human being. It should go further and make him an ideal human being. This was the aim of the ancient culture of Bharat. It laid stress on a system of refined practices (Samskaras). But today "Samsara" (family life) has taken the place of Samskara. Students should bear in mind that what will keep company with them all through life are their good actions (Samskaras) and not their domestic exercises. Your fortunes in life depend upon your good actions. Developing your thoughts on right lines, I wish that students going out from this University should serve as ideal examples In the world, promoting peace and prosperity wherever they go. Bear in mind four important sayings

*"Sow an action, reap a tendency.
Sow a tendency, reap a habit,
Sow a habit, reap a character.
Sow a character and reap a destiny."
You are the maker of your destiny.
You can do or undo it.*

(The Convocation came to a close with the playing of the National Anthem by the Institute band troupe.)

From Bhagavan's benedictory message to the Xth Convocation at the Vidyagiri Stadium, on 22-11-1991

The spirit of sacrifice is the basic equipment of the sevak. Without the inspiration of the sense of sacrifice, your seva will be hypocrisy, a hollow ritual. Inscribe this on your heart. Inscribe it deep and clear. There are four modes of writing, dependent on the material on which the text is inscribed. The first is writing on water. It is washed out even while the finger moves. The next is writing on sand. It is legible, until the wind blows it into mere flatness. The third is the inscription on rocks; it lasts for centuries, but it too is corroded by the claws of Time. Have this so inscribed on your heart—the axiom that "serving others is meritorious, that harming others or remaining unaffected and idle while others suffer, is sin."

—Baba

How to Win the Lord's Grace

*Oh good and noble people assembled here!
 May you be filled with mutual affection and unalloyed Joy!
 May you be compassionate towards all those who are afflicted!
 May you lead righteous family lives and be an example to all:
 May you be ever earnest in the pursuit of Dharma and Jnana!
 This is my benediction for all of you.
 What more can I tell you?*

Embodiments of Divine Love!

All the animate and inanimate beings in the cosmos emerge from the Divine, are sustained by the Divine and merge in the Divine. The Divine is the root cause of creation, sustenance and dissolution.

Man is born out of desire (Sankalpa), lives on desire and passes out by desire. Man's life is based on desires (or thoughts, Sankalpa). As are his thoughts, so are the actions. As are the actions, so are the fruits thereof. The fruits determine the goal. It follows that man's destiny is determined by his thoughts.

Embodiments of Divine Love! Cultivate sublime thoughts, lead ideal lives, realise the highest fruits and strive to reach the supreme goal.

Man and creation

Man's life is based upon his qualities and character. A true man is one who acts according to his Atma-Dharma (the integrity of the Spirit) and not according to the impulses of his senses. Atma-Dharma is the true Dharma of man. Acting according to the dictates of the senses is the code of the animals. Man should elevate himself from the animal to the Overlord of the animal nature (Pashupati or Siva). What man should have is the Divine Consciousness (Ishwara bhava) and not the instinctive nature (Prakriti-bhava).

It should also be recognised that all Nature is an embodiment of the Divine. Creation is the primary symbol of the Divine Consciousness. It is called Prakriti (Nature). Every man who is a product of Nature should have the consciousness of his divinity and proclaim the Divine basis of creation.

The divinity in man, who is part of creation, is not something distinct. To demonstrate the inherent divinity of man, Divine incarnations (Avatars) appear from time to time.

Embodiments of the Divine Spirit! God does not exist as something apart. All of you are embodiments of the Divine. "Iswaras-sarvabhoothaanaam", "Isavasyam idam sarvam" "Vaasudevassarvam" ("The Divine dwells in all beings", "All this is dwelt in by the Lord", "Everything is Divine".) Men are forgetting these profound sacred declarations and are wasting their lives in the pursuit of petty mundane pleasures.

The spiritual and the mundane

It is supreme folly to consider that the spiritual is divorced from the physical and that the material world has no connection with spirituality. Spirituality runs like an undercurrent through every aspect of life—social, political, economic and moral. This basic truth has been forgotten today. People have faith in the transient, the ephemeral and the illusory.

Everything is constantly changing in the world. This ever-changing world is based upon the unchanging Divine. It is only when the Divine base (the Adhara) is understood can one derive bliss from the experience of what is based on it. In whatever action men do and whatever paths they pursue, they should be conscious of the Divine. Men today seek power, position and pelf, but not virtues. Power and position, bereft of good qualities, are of no value. The foremost need of man is virtue. It is in this spirit that man should remember God.

Nature (Prakriti) is not to be despised. When Nature is viewed from the egoistic point of view, it assumes a distorted form. When it is regarded from the spiritual point of view, it presents a sacred aspect. The differences in the role of Nature arise out of men's attitudes.

Everything has emerged from Truth. Truth is the form of the Divine. Everything is based on Truth. "Sathyaanaasthi Paro Dharmah". ("There is no greater Dharma than Truth.") "Everything has been created out of Truth and all creation is embedded in Truth. There is no place where Truth does not shine. Realise that this is the supreme Truth." (Poem)

Lest we forget

Goodness is the most important thing (for anyone. Whatever one's wealth, his knowledge or position, the most essential quality is character. Even if one possesses many good qualities, it is only devotion to the Divine that makes them blossom forth. Bharatians in the past have had the reputation of having recognised this truth. What greater misfortune can there be than that Bharatians should forget their Divine cultural heritage?

"In the supremely sacred land of Bharat, forbearance is the highest wealth. Of all forms of rituals, the most severe one is adherence to truth and integrity. What can be prized greater than the feeling that "This is my Motherland." (Poem) Discarding the belief that honour is greater than life itself, men are going after exotic practices, hugging strange concepts of freedom and are

strength.

Not relying on one's own strength, to depend on the strength of others is precarious. The entire culture of Bharat has been based on reliance on one's own inherent strength and confidence in one's self. Self-confidence is at the root of all achievement. It is because it has lost its self-confidence that India today is a prey to all kinds of troubles.

Embodiments of the Divine Spirit! When you are embodiments of the Divine, it is a sign of weakness for you to lose confidence in yourselves. Recognise your true nature. Then your powers and talents will manifest themselves and be a source of joy to you. Self-confidence is essential because it is the source of all prosperity and accomplishment.

Bharatiyas' duty

The world today is plunged in strife, disorder and discontent. What is your duty at this juncture? Have you the power to banish this disorder? Do not give room for the idea that one man by himself is powerless to combat this situation. If every Indian goes forward with self-confidence to face this crisis, the country can be rescued from disorder in no time. Because of lack of self-confidence, men are unable to go forward.

Above all, everyone must take a pledge to serve others. Everyone Is of Divine origin. If one cannot be loving towards others he ceases to be human. Everyone should act on this basis, display love towards all and lead an ideal life. Man should not regard himself as a weak and imbecile creature.

What, then, is our duty today? The Government is seeking to provide various amenities in the villages. But, it is one thing to proclaim one's intentions and quite another to fulfill them. Speaking is easy, acting is difficult. Neither the authorities nor the leaders appear to be concerned about the state of the villages. The villagers are also apathetic. Bharat is not lacking in resources. It is well endowed in every respect. Had it not been so, it would not have attracted so many invaders from outside. Today Bharatiyas themselves are considering the country as poor and belittling its status. This by itself is not a great danger. The greater danger is the development of a mood of cynicism (Avishvasam). It is only when the pessimism among the people is transformed to a robust optimism will the country go forward. The retrograde movement has to be reversed. Material prosperity, which is transient, is not very important. Real and lasting wealth lies in good qualities and morality. It is this form of wealth that should be acquired.

What the new hospital means

With a view to setting an example to the authorities, to the community and to every individual, Swami is undertaking activities, small and big, in various spheres. This hamlet of Puttaparthi had a population of barely 800. To conceive of a University for such a village was a fantastic dream. Another amazing phenomenon is the construction of an aerodrome near such a village, when there are no aerodromes even at district headquarters. Puttaparthi has become the

most modern hospital, which should be located in a well-developed metropolis, has been set up in this rural area. The wealthy can go anywhere and get medical relief with their abundant resources. But the rural poor cannot go far from their villages for treatment. It is for the sake of such poor folk that this Hospital has been established. I told our doctors to examine the heart ailments of the villagers around here. Today an auspicious announcement has to be made. Within fifteen minutes of the inauguration of the Hospital by our Prime Minister, the first operation was begun in the Hospital. Within three hours four operations were performed. One was a very complicated case. There was a hole in the heart of the patient. All the operations were performed successfully and all the patients are doing well. (cheers)

You should know how this Hospital came up. The firm of Larsen & Toubro is known for their big constructions in India and abroad. But nowhere else was such enthusiasm and zeal displayed by the workers engaged in the construction as in this Hospital. Even the smallest worker, did the work of ten persons with zeal and joy. All workers performed their jobs with enthusiasm and devotion.

Work on the Hospital began in May after my return from Kodaikanal. Within five months from May to November, work has been done which would have taken five years. (cheers), This is a gigantic project. It is intended to benefit people for a thousand years. Our purpose is to provide for cardiac cases in the first phase. Then, it will be the lungs. The third wing will be concerned with kidneys. The fourth will be the neurology wing.

Relief to villagers

This hospital has been set up to provide relief to villagers suffering from Obese four kinds of ailments. No distinction is made, however, between villages and cities. Diseases do not afflict only villagers. They make no territorial distinctions. Likewise, there will be no differentiation in providing relief. Our intention is to provide relief to all comers.

For achieving anything in the world, a sound body is essential. The body is the primary requisite for the pursuit of Dharma (righteousness). The body has to be in good health. Even for the realisation of the four goals of human life—Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha—sound health is essential. Having regard to the basic importance of health for all purposes, Swami had launched such medical institutions.

But what is the purpose of having a healthy body? It should be utilised for healthy activities. Unfortunately, all over the world people are forgetting Dharma and Moksha and are immersed only in the pursuit of wealth (Artha) and sensual enjoyments (Kama). This is totally wrong. Men should pursue equally all the four goals and divinise their lives.

Good health is essential for utilising the body for good deeds. Of what use is a body used for evil purposes?

Embodiments of Divine Love! Esteem the whole cosmos as the embodiment of the Supreme. The Lord, who is the possessor of the eight forms of divine wealth (Ashtaishwarya), is the creator of this universe. The most vital requirement for man is water. It sustains life. Three-fourths of the earth's surface is covered by water. Water is described in the Upanishads as "Jivam" (the life-force). Hence, the foremost form of the Lord is water.

The second essential requisite for man is Agni (Fire). This fire is residing in every man's stomach as the digestive fire (Jataraagni). Without this digestive fire, man would be unable to digest the food he consumes and receive the sustaining energy from that food. All the seven secretions in the stomach are caused by the digestive fire. The blood, the muscles, the bones, etc., in the body are sustained by the vital essences ("Rasa"). Hence, the Lord is described as "Angirasa"—One who is present in every limb (anga) as essence (Rasa). Angirasa has the form of fire.

The third requisite is the earth. The process of birth, growth and dissolution is taking place on the earth. All the food that man needs comes from the earth. Because the earth is a source of joy for man, it is also an embodiment of the Divine.

The fourth is air. Air is intimately associated with life. Every man utilises air in respiration. Human life is based on inhaling ("So...") and exhaling ("Ham"). In respiration, this process of "So-Ham" is continually going on. In Sanskrit, "Sah" ("So") means "He" and "ahem" means "I". "So-Ham" demonstrates the truth: "I am He". Who is this "He"? It is God. Air thus proclaims the truth of Oneness. In breathing, every day man inhales and exhales air 21,600 times. If there is no air, life will be extinct. Therefore the fourth embodiment of God is Air.

The fifth is Aakasa (space). It is the basis for all the five elements. Sound is its form. Sound is also the form of the Absolute (Brahmam). Sound is all pervading. When one is asked, "Where is Aakasa", people point to the firmament. But that is not so. Everything is permeated by Aakasa (ether or space). Wherever there is sound (or sound waves), there is Aakasa. It encompasses everything and is present everywhere. Hence it is the embodiment of God.

Energy from the sun

The sixth is the Sun. He is fire incarnate. How does this fire emerge? Heat is produced when hydrogen in the sun is converted into helium. This is borne out by science. In this process, eight forms of energy are noticed: Kinetic energy (yantra shakti), heat energy (ushna shakti), light (kanti shakti), magnetic energy (ghana shakti), electrical energy (Vidyut shakti), chemical energy (Rasa shakti), and atomic energy (Anu shakti). Scientists have calculated that every second the sun is losing many billion units of energy. Nevertheless the Sun will continue to be a source of energy for millions of years. The Sun is the presiding deity of the intellect (Buddhi). He is the lord of intelligence and he illumines the intellect in man. Thus, sun is also an embodiment of the Divine.

sublime ideas are experienced. The world is the projection in form of the mind. Without the mind the world cannot be conceived. The speed of the mind cannot be equalled. For instance, you might have come here from Hyderabad or Delhi. But in one moment your mind can take you to any place. The speed of thought is greater than that of light.

The eighth is Karma-shakti (the power of action). Karma also is Divine in form. Man is born out of action, is sustained by action, and ends in action. Action is the life-breath of man. This karma was described by the ancients as yajna. "Yajno-vai Vishnuh" (Yajna action or sacrifice is Vishnu). The cosmos is the embodiment of Vishnu.

It follows from this that the entire creation should be regarded as the manifestation of the Supreme Lord who is the possessor of the eight divine potencies.

Pollution of the elements

Man today is not using properly the five basic elements of which the cosmos is constituted. Consequently man is afflicted with a myriad troubles. The benefits to be derived from the five elements (in the form of sound, touch, light, taste and smell) are not being rightly enjoyed. They are being misused. Because man is abusing the God-given elements and faculties he is forfeiting God's grace and is becoming a victim of Divine displeasure. The five elements have also turned against man. They are despising man for the way he is degrading them. The result is the sounds that one hears are a cacophony of scandal and gossip. Are these the sounds that man should produce?

Man should manifest his sublime, perennial, Divine nature. Unfortunately, his entire vision today is tainted. He is filled with bad thoughts. Hence his sight has turned against him.

When you examine man's faculty of hearing, what do you find? He hears all the time scandalous gossip about all and sundry, while his ears turn away from the sweet praises of the Lord. As the ears are abused in this manner, the mind gets polluted by listening to bad things.

Even the air one breathes is polluted. The entire atmosphere is polluted. The food one consumes is also polluted.

If we try to find out what is at the root of all the troubles and worries men experience today, it will be seen that man's abuse of the five elements is the cause. Therefore, see good, hear what is good, speak what is good, think good thoughts, and be good. When people behave in this manner, the five elements will shower their benefits on them. It is only when man secures the grace of the five elements that he will experience the grace of the Divine. How can we get the grace of the elements, which nourish and sustain us, if we misuse them?

Travesty of progress

This is the kind of progress that the world has made. "Biting the hand that feeds, reviling the preceptor who impart knowledge, this is the 'progress' in education today." (Poem). Can this be

qualities, right knowledge and right conduct. Wealth has become all-important and righteousness has receded. This is the 'progress' in education today." (Poem) "Character and morality are confined to books. The mind is totally polluted. All actions are based on selfishness. This is the 'progress' in today's education." (Poem)

Are these the things that should be learnt by anyone? All that is learnt today serves only to pollute the heart. Education is confined to what promotes selfishness and self-interest. What ought to be learnt is how to be helpful to others and how to realise the Self. Education should make one realise the unity of all beings. I cannot find any truly educated person wherever I turn. All appear to be uneducated. Many read books, but mere book knowledge is not education. Degrees do not make an educated person. Without wisdom and good qualities education has no meaning.

True education

Education should be for leading the good life and not for earning a livelihood. To learn from a scientist the chemical composition of water is a kind of knowledge, which may help a man to get a job. But how to make the right use of water so that all can share its benefits is knowledge of the Spirit. This higher knowledge elevates life and makes it meaningful. When worldly knowledge and spiritual knowledge come together, human life is divinised. There is a Kannada saying: "For water lotus is the ornament. For a town the home is the ornament. For the ocean, the waves are the ornament. For the sky the moon is the ornament. For man's life, virtue is the ornament." Without good qualities, all other ornaments are worthless. The beauty created by the Divine cannot be excelled by any other ornament. It is that beauty which should be esteemed. Beauty is God. Why attempt to enhance it? When you have natural beauty, why go after artificial cosmetics? True beauty consists in good qualities.

Embodiments of Divine Love! Today we have to recognise the importance of the body. To make right use of the body, good qualities are essential. With a healthy body and good qualities, you can lead ideal lives. When this infinitely precious human life is filled with good thoughts and good actions, the nation will flourish.

Eschewing all thoughts of "mine" "my people" fill every moment of your waking life every day with thoughts of the well-being of others. When all are happy, you will also be happy. Promote the welfare of society, with which is bound up your own welfare.

"All are alike to me"

Love even your enemy. That is Sai's ideal. Indeed, in the entire world there is no one whom I do not like. Some may dislike me or be opposed to me. But I have no feelings against them. All are alike to me. Try to cultivate at least a fraction of that equal-mindedness.

Some devotees bemoan their lot saying, "God is described as an ocean of kindness, the embodiment of compassion, but He has done nothing to relieve me of my woes." The Lord is verily the embodiment of Love and Truth and is an ocean of Compassion. But, to what extent are

properly, but seek favours. God's grace will be showered on you only when you put into practise at least a few of the Lord's injunctions.

Practise the good life

Today the Oita is being propagated in many ways. But how many are practising even one of the teachings of the Gita? Men are heroes in aspiration and zeros in practice. Likewise, people are eloquent about the Ramayana and the way Rama adhered to the pledge given by his father. But how many carry out the words of their parents? The Ramayana, Bhagavata or the Gita are not to be regarded as scriptures for mere ritualistic reading. They are texts whose teachings have to be followed. This applies equally to other sacred books like the Bible, the Quran and the Granth Saheb.

There are some others who spend their entire lives in the quest for knowledge. When will they ever start practising what they have learnt?

(Bhagavan concluded His message with the bhajan, "*Bhajana bina sukha santhi Nahi.*")

From Bhagavan's discourse in the Vidyagiri Stadium, on 23-11-1991

Bhagavan's "Prema Bhiksha"

Four devotees who had contributed with zeal and devotion to the fulfillment of the first phase of the gigantic Hospital project at Prasanthigram, received from Bhagavan as "Prema Bhiksha" (Love offering) mega-size silver flower bowls as tokens of Swami's appreciation of their devotion and spirit of sacrifice. The presentation was done immediately after Bhagavan had concluded His Janmadina Sandesh.

Presenting the first bowl to Mr. Isaac Tigrett, Bhagavan said:

For our Specialty Hospital, the equipment was offered by Tigrett. With great enthusiasm and devotion, he sent the most modern and sophisticated equipment from the United States for the Hospital. The value of the equipment is nearly Rs. 20 crores. To give you an example of the quality of this equipment: One instrument can scan and indicate the trouble in every part of the body in two minutes. The condition of the heart can be known without having to open it. Such sophisticated equipment is not available in India or even in many parts of America.

It would be very difficult for us to procure such equipment from America. Anyone, however rich, has to secure the Government's permission to import it. Moreover, all imported equipment is subject to very heavy customs duty. For equipment worth Rs. 20 crores, the duty may go up to many times that amount. Today, most hospitals in the country have become big business

is for such selfish purposes that hospitals are being established. But in Sai, there is not a trace of self-interest. Very few try to recognise this truth. Recognising this fact about Swami, Tigrett sought to help the Hospital project to the maximum extent of his capacity.

Right use of money

He is not resting content with what he has done. He is keen to support the project in the years ahead. It is necessary that such altruistic impulses in persons like Tigrett should grow. Men may make money. But that money acquires merit only when it is used for good causes. Many keep their earnings abroad and pass away. Such wealth should be put to good use. Not all persons have this impulse. Perhaps one in a million.

Tigrett has helped our hospital project in a spirit of sacrifice. The reason is his great devotion to Swami. It is commendable that one should manifest one's devotion in the form of help to others. (Swami related the episode in which Hanuman explained to Vibhishana how Divine grace is bestowed only in the case of those who convert their devotion into service of the Divine. Swami also related the story of a woman in France who used to present blankets to those suffering in the cold. She used to go about with her head bent. When she was asked why she did not hold her head high when she was doing such good service, she remarked "When God is showering many benefits with a myriad hands, what reason is there for me to feel proud about what I am doing with only one hand? I feel rather ashamed.")

Today there are people who give a small donation and want to publicise it in the press in a big way. But there are also many in the country who give large sums in charity without any publicity. They are the salt of the earth, the sunrises unfailingly because of such men in the world.

It is a noble act for any one to help others wherever they may be. It is noteworthy that Tigrett, a native of New York City, should extend this help to a small village like Puttaparthi. I am saying this not to praise him, but to rejoice in his spirit of sacrifice. I look forward to his continuing to develop this spirit of sacrifice in the coming years and I bless him. (Bhagavan presented the silver bowl to Mr. Tigrett, which he received from the Divine hands after offering his pranams at Bhagavan's feet. This flower bowl is a flower of love. I am presenting it as a love-offering ("Prema bhiksha").

Referring to Mr. Krichloff, Professor of Architecture in the London College of Architecture, who is the architect of the Hospital building, Bhagavan said, "Working day and night, he drew up the plans for the building. He is a British citizen. He designed the Hospital structure on the model of the Buckingham Palace. He made provision for all amenities in it. I am presenting this love-offering to him." (Bhagavan presented another mega-size silver flower-bowl to Mr. Krichloff).

Bhagavan said: The third offering is to Mr. Ramakrishna, Group General Manager of Larsen and Tubro's Engineering Division, E.C.C. Usually he visits other ECC construction projects once

and sometimes even thrice to see that the work was carried out according to schedule. Going round the works and deputing as many workers as were needed, he supervised the progress of the project with great zeal and devotion. He ensured the expeditious completion of the works. But for his zeal and dedication, this magnificent edifice would not have come up in such a short time. He wholeheartedly identified himself with the project. I am making this love-offering (the silver bowl) to him also. Mr. Ramakrishna received the bowl after offering pranams to Swami.

The fourth recipient is an important personality. In spite of the construction of such a big hospital, it would have been of no use without his services. His devotion and zeal are reflected in his spirit of sacrifice (Tyaga). He is a surgeon who performs easily ten operations a day. He is associated with a leading medical Institution in Delhi. But, for the sake of Swami's cause, at great sacrifice, he came to our hospital and performed the operations. Operations are routine matters for him. Such an eminent person, who is full of zeal and devotion, is Dr. Venugopal. (cheers). Yesterday he performed a very complicated heart operation. The patients who were operated on are villagers, mainly from the nearby areas. One is a five-year old boy. The other is a student of our school. Two others who underwent operation are women labourers. Dr. Venugopal performed the operations with great care and affection, even in the absence of the patients' relations. From tomorrow onwards more operations will be performed.

In the days ahead, the whole world will be obliged to come to Prasanthi Nilayam. Prasanthi Nilayam will be a sacred shrine for the cure of mental and physical ailments (cheers). Looking forward to greater service in the years ahead by Dr. Venugopal and conferring my benediction on him, I am presenting this love-offering to him. (Dr. Venugopal received the silver bowl from the Divine hands after offering his Namaskar to Swami).

Bhagavan announced that a dramatic troupe from Nellore would be presenting the drama "Harishchandra" in the evening at the Stadium. Swami said that they had prayed to Swami two months earlier requesting Him to allow them to present this drama. There would be nothing frivolous or farcical in this play. It would bring out the glory of adherence to truth at all costs.

"Cool your hearts"

Swami observed: "This day's birthday celebrations went off in a cool and pleasant morning. The entire atmosphere was air-conditioned as it were for the immense gathering of devotees. I desire that all of you should strive to 'cool' your hearts, 'cool' your thoughts and 'cool' your actions appropriately and make the nation 'cool' so that the disorders in the country may be calmed down. With My blessings for all of you, I am bringing this discourse to a close." (cheers)

Global Homage to Bhagavan

homage paid to Bhagavan in the establishment of the new Hospital through contributions by devotees from many countries.

The presence of thousands of devotees from countries as far apart as Australia and Venezuela at the Vidyagiri Stadium to greet Bhagavan as He came to the Stadium in His gleaming motorised chariot was not an unfamiliar spectacle. But the presence on the stage of the Santhi Vedika of an American, a Briton and two Indians from North and South India was striking testimony to the International fellowship brought about by Bhagavan for leading humanity towards a new unity based on faith in God and universal love.

When at the commencement of the meeting on November 23, Mr. V. Srinivasan spoke about the magnitude of the Hospital project and Mr. Indulal Shah read out the names of individuals and institutions who had made significant contributions to the Hospital project, it was clear that the Hospital was a symbol of the global influence of Bhagavan. The list of donors contained names from many countries including the U.S., Canada, Italy, the U.K., Guatemala, Japan, Indonesia, Africa, Hong Kong, Germany, and India.

Bhagavan has inspired innumerable devotees with a spirit of devotion and sacrifice, which will find expression in a myriad forms of service in the coming years.

- N.

A Memorable November

In the Sri Sathya Sai saga, November 1991 will be memorable as marking yet another significant stage in the global unfolding of the Sai mission.

The inauguration of the magnificent and unique Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences Hospital at Prasanthigram by the Prime Minister of India on November 22 was undoubtedly an event of global significance. The Hospital itself as a purely architectural achievement is unique. But its spiritual significance is much greater than its magnificence as an edifice. To the thousands who saw it for the first time from outside, it appeared more as a stupendous cathedral, with a dome of "many-coloured glass", rather than as a hospital for the treatment of major ailments. It was indeed a shrine in which not only bodies were healed, but the Spirit was awakened to the glory of God. Bhagavan Baba, as the inspirer and primary architect of the project, proclaimed that it would be a source of joy and relief for generations to come. The completion of the first phase of the project in five months was a veritable miracle, especially when unprecedented heavy rains held up the work at the finishing stages. Nobody who had seen the hectic work in progress a week before the inauguration could have imagined that it would be possible to get the building and the grounds around it so spick and span for the Inaugural ceremony. Everything was fulfilled according to Bhagavan's "Sankalpa".

Other notable events in the month began with the celebration of Deepavali on November 5th. Bhagavan's scintillating discourse on that day (published elsewhere in this issue) was followed by a brilliant (and deafening) display of fireworks, which delighted both young and old. Bhagavan filled the young ones with joy by a generous distribution of sparklers.

Deepavali was followed by Akhanda Bhajan during 9th to 10th. Bhagavan inaugurated the celebration by lighting the Akhanda Jyoti in the Mandir at 6 p.m. on the 9th. Non-stop bhajans were kept up alternately by students from the three campuses-boys and girls-for 24 hours. The bhajans concluded on Sunday with the distribution of prasadam (sweet and lemon rice) to all the devotees with the benediction of Bhagavan.

Sathya Sai Airport

On November 15th, Bhagavan inaugurated the new Air Terminal of the Sri Sathya Sai Airport, which is unique in many ways. Besides being an up to date airport in a rural area, it has all the arrangements for handling overseas passengers. The aerodrome, which was constructed in a small way last year, has been enlarged to enable the landing and takeoff of medium range aircraft. Daily scheduled air services have been operating since the third week of November on the sector: Madras-Bangalore-Prasanthi Nilayam-Bangalore-Madras. A spiritual touch has been given to the airport by the installation of stone slabs on which are inscribed in golden letters the moral sayings of Bhagavan Baba. Among these sayings are the following: "I have not come to guard your jewels and valuables. I have come to guard your virtues and holiness." "Life is a journey from 'I' to 'We'." "You must come to Prasanthi Nilayam as a car comes to a workshop." Passengers are bound to carry with them the profound message of these sayings.

Devotees started streaming into Prasanthi Nilayam from the middle of October and by the middle of November, the entire area was jam-packed with devotees from all parts of India and many overseas countries. The tight security arrangements all around Prasanthi Nilayam, in view of the Prime Minister's visit, did not deter the devotees from seeking darshan of Bhagavan as often as possible, regardless of the impediments and restrictions. The premises of the Mandir and the Vidyagiri Stadium were decorated with flags and festoons and the special lighting arrangements turned the entire area into a fairyland at night.

- N.

Prime Minister Inaugurates Sai Vaidyalayam

It must have been a thrilling experience for the Prime Minister of India, Sri P. V. Narasimha Rao, to get an aerial view of the vast Sri Sathya Sai Super Speciality Hospital from his IAF helicopter before he landed at the Sri Sathya Sai Airport on the morning of November 22, for the inauguration of the Hospital and for participation in the Tenth Convocation of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning.

It was a fine, cool sunny morning when the Prime Minister and his party arrived at the Hospital for the inaugural ceremony. For reasons of security, invitations to the function had to be severely restricted, but even so a couple of hundred ladies and gentlemen had assembled on the shimmering green lawn in front of the Hospital well in advance of the opening ceremony.

Bhagavan arrived at the Hospital after the inauguration of the new buildings of the Sri Sathya Sai General Hospital, attached to the old hospital in Prasanthi Nilayam, by the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Mr. Janardhana Reddy.

Bhagavan gave darshan to the invitees and made a last-minute review of the arrangements for the inaugural function. Two band groups were in attendance. They began playing brisk marching tunes from 9 a.m.

Three hundred students wearing brilliant orange dhotis and white angavastram started chanting Vedic hymns as the Prime Minister and party arrived at the Hospital. Bhagavan welcomed the Prime Minister, who was received with "Purna-Kumbham". The Prime Minister was visibly moved as he approached Bhagavan with folded hands and offered his pranams to Him.

Bhagavan and the Prime Minister proceeded on the red carpet to the massive, beautifully carved door at the entrance to the main hall of the Hospital. The Prime Minister cut the ribbon and went into the grand hexagonal hall with its multi-coloured dome, where doctors and others were waiting to receive him. Bhagavan introduced the doctors to the Prime Minister,

Apart from the striking external architecture of the building, with its many domes, arched windows and innumerable "lotuses" on the top, the Prime Minister must have been struck by the extraordinarily holy atmosphere in the hall, with the large idol of Ganesha facing the entrance, the statues of Krishna, Vishnu and Nataraja on either side and the marvellous chandelier (from Italy) hanging over the centre of the hall like a Christmas tree in crystal glass. It was a veritable "Mahavaidyaalayam", a great shrine devoted to the treatment of physical and spiritual ailments.

The Prime Minister was taken round the eastern wing of the building, where the cardiology section had been got ready for performing operations straightaway. While Bhagavan and the Prime Minister were inside the Hospital, the invitees outside were served ice cream and presented with special diaries and calendars as mementoes.

—N.

Your Best Friend

If God's your Friend in Happy Days,

*And when you walk on Sorrow's Road,
Honour-bound, He carries your load.
Some seek God in sorrows and pains,
Yet, forget Him when happiness reigns;
Rather live in sorrow, all the way,
Than lose your Best Friend for a day.*

—Chandrabhan Singh, South Africa

The God in You and Me

In all the world there are men and women seeking to find happiness and love. Somewhere the idea was born that the price for this prize was to dress in strange costumes, faces masked, arms crossed, protecting hearts beating yet unheard for the mind's clamouring. Grasping to belong, grasping to be, yet missing the ring of life in the charade. Oh beings of light! May we unmask to see the God in you and me!

—Jack Lenchiner, New York.