

A Christmas to Remember

*Where there is Faith, there is Love
Where there is Love, there is Peace
Where there is Peace, there is Truth
Where there is Truth, there is Bliss
Where there is Bliss, there you find God.*

Thus spoke the Lord in His inspiring address to the foreign and Indian devotees who gathered at Prasanthi Nilayam for a memorable Christmas celebration. Two thousand foreign and as many as ten thousand of Indian devotees filled the spacious Poornachandra Auditorium tastefully decorated on the occasion.

The day began with a candle-light procession of devotees converging in the early hours on the Prasanthi Mandir, from where Bhagavan gave 'Darshan' coming out to the balcony through the silver-door. One of the highlights of the occasion was the felicitation offered to Sri Kasturi on his 86th birthday. Bhagavan himself materialised a bejewelled gold necklace and put round Sri Kasturi's neck amidst deafening applause of the Bhaktas. Sri Kasturi also offered his newly-published autobiography at the Lotus Feet. Dr. J. Hislop, who was called upon to speak on the occasion, was full of reminiscence of his long association with Sri Kasturi and of his experiences he gathered in treading the Sai path. The festivities began with a ceremony and a brief talk, commemorating the Second Anniversary of the Kingdom of Mother Sai, an association of old students from the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. Anantapur Campus.

A delightful programme of tributes, dramatic scenes on nativity, and songs in praise of the Prince of Peace was put across under the direction of Mr. Antonio Craxi and drawn up with coordinated efforts of devotees hailing from different countries of the world. The day's programme ended with a sincere appeal to Bhagavan from devotees of continental countries outside India to choose His own time for a visit to their lands.

(Text of Bhagavan's speech to be published later.)

—A foreign devotee

"Institute Will Build Nation"

"An Institute like this is the builder of the Nation. It is not merely a University. There are scores of universities. They don't build the Nation. But this Institute aims at building the Nation," observed Mr. Nani A. Palkhivala, renowned jurist, former Ambassador to the U. S. A., and member of the Sathya Sal Institute Trust, in his enthralling extempore address to the first Convocation of the Sri Sathya Sal Institute of Higher Learning on November 22. A gathering of over

30,000 persons in the Poornachandra Auditorium and outside listened with rapt attention to the address, which matched the historic occasion in its brilliance and appeal.

Paying a tribute to Bhagavan Baba, Chancellor of the Institute, as 'a great teacher' and "a great organiser without whom an Institute of this kind would have been impossible," Mr. Palkhivala said:

I feel truly honoured to have been given the privilege of delivering the convocation address. Looking around I doubt whether in the history of education any convocation has ever been attended by a gathering so diverse in character, so disciplined in conduct and so numerous.

It is a tribute to the great founder of this Institute who, like Adisankara, is not only a great teacher, but a great organiser without whom an institute of this kind would have been impossible. It is a memorable experiment in the moral and spiritual regeneration of India. It is a great experiment that shall not fail. We propose to have here a centre of discipline and decorum, of decency and dignity, which unfortunately have left other universities far older than this Institute. The standard we wish to maintain, as the Vice-chancellor explained, is equalled by few and surpassed by none either in this country or in any other.

Many of you must have studied the handbook of the Institute. I will commend it for your perusal. It points out one basic thing: the purpose of this Institute is not to turn B.A.'s, M.A.'s and M.Sc.'s as many other universities do, once a year, in fact, twice a year. The objective of the Institute is to turn out men and women for the future of the country.

The Institute has before its Mind the five ideals which Swami has been propagating so memorably and indefatigably for so many years. The five ideals which Swami asks us to keep in the forefront are Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa. These five ideals are the very foundation of the Institute. They confer on it inspiration; they are the criteria for its success and they are the hope for its future progress. It will not be out of place to speak in this convocation a few words about them.

First, Sathya; it is amazing that these five words have no equivalent in the English language. There is not a single word in English or German or French which could give the full concept of the word Sathya. Sathya means much more than the word Truth. It means being true to yourself, it means intellectual integrity. It means to act according to your conscience. These various nuances are not to be found in any foreign language. In our world today truth is in the background, and untruth is on the ascendant. Yet a little thought would convince you that this is but a passing phenomenon.

Truth forever on the scaffold—
Wrong forever on the throne;
Yet, the scaffold gains the future
And, behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God, beneath the shadow,

Keeping watch above His own.

This, is the ideal of Sathya.

Look at the next concept of Dharma. Again, there is no equivalent to it in any foreign language. Dharma is not only right conduct. Dharma is righteousness, nobility, a way of life, a philosophy of life which makes you a worthy citizen of the world. What will the students of this Institute do when they have learnt their lessons? They will learn what I call obedience to the unenforceable. We all keep on the right side of the Indian Penal Code because it is enforceable. You won't commit a theft because you can be convicted. But there are some concepts which are not enforceable by law, which Dharma alone enjoins upon you. It is this Dharma which will make a man go into professions and shun the unwelcome face of capitalism which all the world condemns. It will teach you not to become cynical; for cynicism corrupts and absolute cynicism corrupts absolutely. It will teach you to avoid what you may call fatty degeneration of the conscience. It will enable you to go into commerce without a commercial outlook. As you pass out of the portals of this Institute and go into business and take employment in a commercial enterprise, it will enable you to contribute not only to the gross national product but more, to the gross national happiness. And I venture to say that the alumni of this Institute will cultivate their minds not merely with a view to offering them as a commodity for sale in the market-place, but cultivate their minds to pursue their own highest destiny. This is the great ideal of a truly liberal education. You may go into the fields to do well, but you will stay best to do good. It is amazing how India has survived for centuries without a strong Government, without the type of laws we know. What held the Nation together was this ideal of Dharma. It spread the greatest ideal to which human conduct can aspire.

Next comes Santhi. Santhi is not merely peace. It is equanimity of the mind, serenity of the mind. Santhi plays a great role in an integrated person's life, conduct and behaviour. If you have Santhi you know how to protect yourself in the last hour of your life.

Next is Prema, about which Swami has spoken so eloquently all over the country. Prema is not only love. There is the element of compassion in it; there is another element of understanding in it. I hope the students who study in this Institute shall have learnt that love is the greatest force in the world. There has never been and shall never be a substitute to it. You find it among the poor, even more than among the rich. It is the major nourishing factor in life. It is the great concept of love which holds humanity together. And the ancient Indian ideal that all mankind is one, if ever it can be employed, shall be done only when love is universally accepted as the greatest principle of human conduct and behaviour.

Take the last one, Ahimsa: Dr. Oppenheimer said in one of his writings about Dr. Einstein, perhaps the greatest intellect of the 20th century, that he was a great believer in Ahimsa. And he said he was using the word "Ahimsa" because there was no word equivalent to it. Ahimsa is not merely non-violence. There is far more to it than non-violence. It is identifying yourself with the entire created universe. It is the feeling of oneness with all animate creatures. And Ahimsa is one aspect of love. You cannot love anyone unless you have Ahimsa.

When the students of this Institute have learnt these five ideals which form the quintessence of Swami's teachings, they will have acquired what the ancients called 'Buddhi'. It is that state of mind which not only makes you wise, but also gives you an insight into all created things. A man of buddhi has an insight into all that he finds around himself, all that he finds himself in.

Swami is, if I am not impertinent to say so, very wise in concentrating on education for the regeneration of the nation. There is nothing as an alternative to true education, of the type this Institute has been founded to impart. An institute like this is the builder of the Nation. It is not merely a university. There are w scores of universities. They don't build the nation. But this Institute aims at building the nation. And you have to start at the age in which you find these boys and girls here. The child is the father of man. It is what you learn when you are young that colours your entire life. Whether you become a traitor or a noble citizen all depends on what you have learnt when you are young, I am never tired of quoting poetry.

In ancient shadows and twilight
Where childhood has changed
The earth's great sorrows were born
And its heroes were made.

It is in the lost childhood of Judas that Christ was betrayed. As a young boy he had not learnt the right principles, and when he grew up he did an extraordinary criminal act. This is of tremendous importance in education. An Institute like this is not an academic cafeteria, offering junk food for the mind; it aims at shaping and moulding character. It not only seeks, to sharpen skill, it seeks to heighten values, clarify the vision, purify the thought. Today we have economic recession. But the most dangerous phenomenon is the moral and spiritual recession which has overtaken the country. The roots of disarray are to be found in our minds.

This Institute aims at generating excellence. These young boys and girls cannot do everything, but everything they do, they must excel in. The objective is an Institute of this kind will one day turn out men and women who will be lighters of opinions and movers of peace. A French writer of the 78th century has said, when a new republic is born, it is the leaders who create an institute, but later it is the institute which creates leaders. Today the greatest moral and spiritual leader of India, Sai Baba, has created this Institute. His objective is, if I am right, that this Institute will create leaders.

The moral emphasis which is laid here is never too heavy. You can, never have too heavy an emphasis on the shaping and moulding of character. George Eliot, the famous women novelist, wanted this to be inscribed on her memorial at Westminster Abbey; "The first condition of human goodness is something' to love. Second, something to reverence." And the objective of this Institute is not to teach Physics, Chemistry or Commerce, but how to have something to love, something to reverence. This is the profundity of the true educational concept to which y this Institute is dedicated. H. G. Wells said once, in a moment of despair, that human history is becoming more and more a race between education and catastrophe. You cannot avoid

catastrophe without education. Therefore Jefferson said that if ever a nation expects to remain ignorant and remain free, what it expects never was and never shall be. You cannot retain your freedom as a republic unless you are educated.

The educational ideal to which this Institute is dedicated is different from training. Animals can be trained; only humans can be educated. In order really to have education, what is important on the part of the student is, personal involvement and transformation. Education cannot be given to anyone. It has to be inwardly appropriated. When Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru became the first Prime Minister of India, he wrote a letter of gratitude to his own professor, Harold Laski, of the London School of Economics. 'Today I find myself at the head of my country because of what you taught me.'

Harold Laski wrote back, "I did not teach you anything; you learnt." This Institute will not teach you anything. You are given the opportunity to learn. What will come out of the portals of this Institute are not merely qualified B.Sc.'s and M.Sc.'s, but integrated personalities.

In the days to come when the voice of the Institute shall be widely known and accepted, there will be a great demand for the boys and girls who have come out of this University after an intensive, broad-based programme of five years. And they are bound to be employed by people who are less qualified than them. Andrew Carnegie, the famous millionaire of U.S.A., wrote his own epitaph which he wanted to be inscribed on his own tombstone when he died. That is this: 'Here lies the man who knew how to enlist in his service better men than himself.'

I wish to congratulate the promoters of this Institute on two things: one on having decided to insist on the medium of the English language. I do believe that English is a window on the outside world, and the promoters are absolutely right in insisting on your taking an examination in English before you enter the Institute. Through the English language a whole world is open to you, a whole World of knowledge. The whole world is learning it today. The Russians are learning it, the Chinese are learning it, and the Japanese are learning it. In this country English was better known than anywhere in the world, even perhaps better spoken. Some of our speakers far surpass Englishmen in the art of speaking. You will find that unfortunately this great heritage we had is on the decline. This Institute will reverse the trend and ensure that you can converse with your countrymen from any state of India, or your fellowmen of any country of the world.

The second thing is their choice of the environment, the beautiful rural setting in which the Institute is housed. It is Swamiji's great vision that has kept it away from the impure cities. The cities are all right if you can accept the Impossible, do without the indispensable, and tolerate the unbearable. But otherwise city life is a torture. Here you are in beautiful natural surroundings where you are close to Nature.

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
That all the sages can.

All the impulses of, the vernal wood are available to, you here. I would say to my young friends who take the degrees today; may God grant you in your mature years the fulfilment of the promises of your college days. I am sure you will uphold the ideal of public good as the great ideal to which your life as a citizen has to be dedicated.

There are a number of disciplines taught here, and the interaction between them again is noteworthy; you will never become a good B. Com. unless you know literature, you will never become a good lawyer unless, again, you know literature. In other words, a wide range of knowledge is necessary in order to make you a specialist in your own line.

When I read the handbook of the Institute, it struck me that one of the great Indians from South India, Sri Rajagopalachari, said something as early as 1922, which you will find very true even today. On 24th January, 1922, he had a vision of free India, and he wrote down these words, in his diary, "Elections and their corruption, injustice and the power and tyranny of wealth, and the inefficiency of administration will make a hell of life as soon as freedom is given to us. Men will look regretfully back to the old regime of comparative, justice, and efficient, peaceful, honest administration. The only gain would be, you are saved from the dishonour of subordination. Hope lies only in universal education by which right conduct, fear of God and Love will be developed among the citizens from childhood. It is in succeeding in doing, this that universal happiness lies. Otherwise there will be grinding injustice and tyranny of wealth. What a beautiful world it will be where everybody is just and God-fearing! And here lies the happiness of loving others. There is more practical force for the ultimate consummation of these ideals in India than in any other country." This was Rajaji's vision of Free India. He said, I repeat, 'Hope lies in universal education.' And Swamiji is doing and saying just this. There is a greater hope in India of realising the five ideals than anywhere else. May this Institute continue to replenish our faith in the future of this great country. May this Institute continue to educate and emulate, motivate and stimulate generations of young men and women in the unfolding of the future.

Sai Ram.

THE CHANCELLOR SPEAKS:

Learning of Higher Values

'The chief goal of all human existence is the realisation of Ananda for all mankind and the unity of all men in the world of Love. This is the Higher Learning which this Institute will teach,' declared Bhagavan Baba, Chancellor, the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning in his address on November 22, on the occasion of the inauguration of the magnificent Administrative Building of the Institute at Vidyagiri. Bhagavan said:

*Education today expands exceedingly wide
But, the Atmic glory, its heart, is mostly lost.
Living for all has become too huge a burden,
For the tinsel of pomp fascinates the student world.*

Students! Educators! Patrons and Promoters of Education!

What exactly is education? What have we to learn through the process of education? What is the aim which educators must have in view? What are we gaining through education as devised today? Students have to pay attention to these four aspects first. One's standard of living depends on the way the mind is cultured. Culture does not imply any special transformation. It involves only the sublimation of one's habits and attitudes and their dedication to the Divine path.

Education does not end with mastery of the meanings of words. It means opening wide the doors of the mind; it means cleansing the inner tools of the consciousness, the mind, the ego, the senses, the reason. Unfortunately, education is subserving the restricted purpose of making one fit for securing jobs which earn for him the wherewithal to live! True education must purge one of all traces of selfishness. But, today, what really happens is the elimination of love (Prema) and joy (Ananda) from the educated mind! Instead, the flames of jealousy are fed and fostered. The Divine spark in man is smothered. Modern education negates the virtues of discipline and humility. Science without a sense of values, activity dictated by whim, scholarship without experiential satisfaction, humanity with no involvement with humans, music devoid of sweet melody—these are all dull and dreary. They cannot inspire men to appreciation and observance. Therefore, you should give up selfish desires and welcome the Truth beyond the reach of the mind operating through senses and manifest the Divinity that is your Reality.

Education must award self-confidence, the courage to depend on one's own strength. To-day, one emerges from the process of education with a hardened heart. Education has as its goal the fostering of sympathy with the less fortunate, but the knowledge and skill earned by one are diverted to selfish ends. Einstein explained to a friend why he spent sleepless nights and Gandhi too once gave the same reason to a questioner: 'The hardness which the heart gains in through education!' The friend told Einstein, 'But you are a product of the same educational system.' Einstein retorted, 'I am what I am not because of it but in spite of it!' Education has become a means to gain self-importance and boost one's conceit.

Western education has spread so deep that culture is submerged out of view;
Western education has spread so deep that family bonds are loosened much;
Western education has spread so deep that Aryan wealth is frittered away;
Western education has spread so deep that gaudy speech and dress fascinate all

'Tis considered wrong to talk in the mother's tongue
'Tis considered foolish to tread the ancient path
'Tis considered cheap to honour the Guru now.

We have to be warned of these dangerous developments and prepare a generation of youth which can restore the glory of India in the coming years by enthusiastic and intelligent projects of loving service.

Bharat had unique goals for education in the past. You must relearn them and revive them. Vidya, it was understood, caused splendour to emerge from the heart. Vidya implied dedication for mutual service. Today, education does not impart the virtues of renunciation, selfless love and sympathy. Monetary return should not be the aim. Dependence on others should be avoided. Self-reliance is the most desirable virtue. One should always have the future of one's country in view and mould oneself into an ideal for others.

The pity is, as soon as one secures a degree, he registers his name in the Employment Exchange and thereafter year in and year out, walks up and down that place, wasting his life in despair and distress. Narrow loyalties and limited visions inhibit student minds at the present time.

Wherever students are, silence, serenity and security should prevail, for such an atmosphere alone promotes study. But, what do we find now? What prevails is fear, anxiety and restlessness! Those who come out of our colleges are not at all educated in the real sense of the term. Many behave even worse than their uneducated brethren.

Students should be clear about their life-values, their real Reality and the ideals which should shape their lives. Now, they are engaged more in judging and blaming others. When one has no knowledge of himself and of what is good for him, how can one claim the right to correct or condemn others?

Who is the friend, who the foe?
Who is the Guru, who the pupil?
Who is the poet, whose the cast?
Have you the head to surely know?
If you haven't, do not resent the blame.

Unless, one is aware of one's powers and possibilities, principles and processes, one has no right to point his finger at the evils and excellences of others, or at the condition of his, country or of the society in which he is born and bred.

The end of education is CHARACTER. And, character consists of eagerness to renounce ones selfish greed. Persons without a good character cannot claim to be educated ones. At present, men of character are most needed. Our Organisation has decided to establish such colleges in order to promote the development of character through the educational process. You must know that this is no commercial venture nor is it designed to foster personal reputation. We had to venture on this plan in order to realise and reveal the validity of the ancient ideal, 'Loka Samastha Sukhino Bhavantu' 'May all the worlds be happy'. The chief goal of human existence

is the realisation of Ananda for mankind and the unity of all men in a world of Love. This the higher learning which this Institute will teach.

Service rendered to society is the sure road to prosperity. This is the lesson which it will teach, with the brotherhood of man, as its inspiration. When this Institute succeeds in this effort, it will be an example for other centres too and they too will strive towards the ideal. It will encourage transformations in moral, material, ethical, spiritual and political spheres too. Students who have to resuscitate the glory of the country, who have to protect and develop the country have to recognise and value these high ideals, for, the welfare and wealth of the country are based on their talents and virtues.

A Telugu proverb declares, 'When the daughter-in-law is dark-skinned, the entire clan is dark'. When students are good, the country will be good. As the student, so are the people. Just consider all persons whom we revere today as elders and leaders have been, at one time, students like you. And, you too will replace them later. Make yourself ready therefore by utilising best the chances you have. Your education must make you self-reliant and self-confident.

On one occasion, a follower told Gandhi, "Independent India is your crown." Gandhi commented; "Independence is my crown; but, separation is my Cross." We have to grasp the sadness of that confession. Divisiveness has become the bane of the nation in all fields. The evil of separatism is infecting the entire country and passions are rising sky high. True humanness yearns for unity. Man seeks the *one* in the many, unity in diversity. He should not break the unity into diversity. All limbs and organs have to work in unison in order to ensure health. The nation too is a body and the same rule applies to its various limbs and, parts. The welfare of the nation depends on the welfare of the societies comprising it and the nation's welfare is proportionate to the welfare of its component States. So, we must promote human values at every stage. What is happening today is just birth, growth and death.

Bharat has through countless centuries not only treasured the Vedas, the Puranas and other priceless spiritual teachings, but put them into practice, derived supreme delight in the process and, what is more, shared them with all mankind. Students of today must take a vow to continue the observance of those teachings and to derive the bliss they can confer.

At first, our Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning had only the Vidyagiri Campus College at Puttaparthi and the Anantapur College for Women. Gundu Rao, the Chief Minister of Karnataka, resolutely overcame the obstacles that had to be met and helped in adding the College at Brindavan, Bangalore, to this Institute. This day, the Institute has become the Holy Triveni—Anantapur, the Ganga: Bangalore, the Yamuna; and Puttaparthi, the Saraswati. Ganga is the pure heart, the source of good works (Karma). The Anantapur College has initiated service activities saturated with holy love. The women students visit villages and render various forms of rural service. The Bangalore College students cooperate lovingly in service in order to realise the Divine Atmic reality that is evident in all. The flower (the Anantapur College) emerged first; later, the fruit (the Bangalore College) developed; the fruit has become

ripe and sweet at Prasanthi Nilayam. As a result, degrees which enshrine the sweetness are to be awarded here itself today.

This Trinity (Trimurti), the Three Eyes in the one face (trinetra), the Three Ages of Time (trikala), the Three Worlds in one Cosmos (triloka), the three Prongs of one Sula (trisula), the Three Modes of One Nature (triguna), the Three Leaves in one Bilva (Tridala), are to be adored and symbolically offered today by the students.

The Chief Minister of Karnataka has added to our Ananda. He has ordered the incorporation of our Bangalore College into this Institute and given us such high Ananda today. And, he has come personally to share the celebration and the joy he has himself ensured.

Xth ALL-INDIA CONFERENCE

New Dimension to Sai Seva Activities

The Report presented to Bhagavan Baba on the third day of the Tenth All-India Conference of Sathya Sai Organisations at Prasanthi Nilayam emphasized primarily the spiritual foundation for all the Seva activities of the Sai Organisations. The Conference 'attempted to create an awareness among all the active workers who participated in it, that the only way to achieve Inner Peace is through Seva.' It was also brought home that 'the new phase of the Divine Mission' places more importance now on the quality of the active workers than on quantity.

The Conference took note with satisfaction of all the planning and groundwork that had already been done in the different parts of the country in respect of the objectives prescribed by the International Committee for Bhagavan's 60th Birthday Celebrations. The State Presidents had given assurances in their reports to the Conference that they would achieve the individual targets for their respective States before 23rd November 1985. It was decided to set up a suitable monitoring machinery for evaluating the progress of the several activities from time to time.

The following decisions were taken by the Conference, under the various objectives

Objective (7)—service activities, health & welfare

The adoption of villages for rural uplift work will be carried out in accordance with the guidelines issued by the World Council. The main objective of rural uplift work would be to bring about a spiritual renaissance in the villages. Physical development will be only a means to achieve this goal. The aim is to make each village a model through the process of transformation of the individuals in it.

Every active worker must engage himself or herself in 200 hours of service work annually or 4 hours a week. It is the responsibility of the State Presidents to plan the activities for the active

workers according to their aptitudes and capacities. The formation of task forces in respect of various activities may be taken up by the Presidents.

Objective (2)—spiritual activities

As Namasmarana is “the best, easiest and quickest sadhana to earn God's grace,” it should be done not only at the public Bhajan Centres, but should be made part of the sadhana of every Sai family by conducting Bhajans with family members. All State agreed to increase the number of Bhajan Centres by 50 percent.

The States should plan to bring out additional bulletins in connection with the door-to-door health education programme.

Study Circles: Guidebooks for Groups I and II (rural / industrial workers and intellectuals) are to be prepared soon. All active workers should enroll themselves in Study Circles. (There are at present study circles in 650 centres).

Each State is expected to prepare a plan for translation of Sai literature into the regional language.

Objective (3)—propagation of Sai ideals

Seminars and symposia will be held in various State capitals, major provincial towns and University centres once a year in which scholars, students, pundits, professionals, journalists and writers drawn from different religious backgrounds will be invited to participate. Competitions will be organised in essay writing, elocution, debates and value-oriented short plays on an inter-school and intercollegiate basis in all state capitals during December 1983 and January 1984.

The Sai Colleges will bring out by May 1983 a series of pocket books containing quotations, parables and short stories from Bhagavan's writings.

The International Committee will arrange for a mobile exhibition to go round the States for the promotion of Sai ideals. The States will organise poster and other competitions among school and college students.

Objective (4)—ceiling on desires

The programme of 'Ceiling on Desires' is essentially a spiritual programme for all Sai workers and devotees. Top priority is to be given to this programme in the light of Bhagavan's declaration 'that there could be no spiritual life without limiting desires.' Spiritual diaries will be maintained by devotees during the three-year period to keep a record of the progress on the spiritual path made by each devotee. The savings resulting from curtailing desires are to be used by the devotees for charitable purposes, such as medical and educational activities.

Objective (5)—manila vibhag and bal vikas

All the States have undertaken to start Mahila Vibhag units by the middle of January 1983 wherever Samitis alone exist. To begin with, women members of a devotee's family would be

members of the Mahila Vibhag. Samitis are to be established where only Mahila Vibhag units alone exist. Bhajan teaching and Bhajan centres are to be started in girls' schools, ladies hostels, for women prisoners, in prisons and in social welfare centres at village and district levels. Bhajan training classes should be conducted at district and city levels to train good lead singers and to improve the quality of Bhajan singing.

Under the health education programme, Mahila Vibhag units are expected to concentrate on the special problems of women's health.

Separate Study Circles for Mahilas should be started wherever possible.

Over the next three-year period, the number of Bal Vikas centres should be doubled and their strength should be increased wherever possible. The States have agreed to take up this programme enthusiastically. Young boys and girls who passed the Group III examination are to be given some responsibility in constructive work, before they are absorbed into the Sai Organisation.

Four zonal training institutes for primary teachers will be set up soon.

All the States have agreed to participate in a national Children's Rally to be held in the last week of December 1983 at Prasanthi Nilayam. Floats or tableaux on different themes relating to Human Values are to be prepared by each State for the rally. About 6000 children, in the age group of 9-12 years, are expected to participate in the rally. A Conference of Bal Vikas Gurus will be held at the same time.

The Conference decided to give separate organisational status to Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir, which were hitherto part of the Delhi Samiti.

To enable better communication between the World Council and the various Sai Organisations, it has been decided to bring out a monthly News Letter, in English. This will be sent to all the districts and may be translated into the regional languages, as required.

Valedictory address

In His valedictory address to the Conference, Bhagavan began with a poem in which He expressed the queer behaviour of men, who are unable to display even the kind of disinterested unity which ants are able to show in their activities.

Swami said that 'Unity is essential for the growth of the family, the village and nation. Division is the cause of disaster. Unity is the cause of progress.' 'Sangho Shakti Kaliyugou' (Co-operation is the source of power in Kali Yuga). Comparing society to the human body, Bhagavan pointed out "that if the organs of the body did not co-operate with each other, the body itself would be in danger. The different wings of the Sathya Sai Organisation are like the five Pandavas. They should act in unison like the Pandava brothers. The Sai organisations

should, adhere to the following four qualities: Samathaa, (Equality): Samagrathaa (Equal-mindedness): Sama-aikyathaa (Unity) and Saubhrathruthwa ,(Brotherhood).

For every Sai Sevaks, Tyaga (Sacrifice) and Daya (Compassion) should be like the two eyes. The heart filled with compassion is the temple of God. They should always seek to serve the poor and the distressed. They should not fritter away their time on useless debates over the meaning of statements like: "Jagat Mithya; Brahma Sathyam". "Ask yourself whether you are Sathyam." Then the world is Sathyam. Concentrate on your own purification and good actions. God is nearer than your father or mother. Wherever you may be, God is in every being.

Sai workers must be prepared to face all troubles in carrying out their responsibilities. They should not bother about power or position. In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad a Rishis says that when God wants to destroy a person, He places him in a position of power. Sai devotees should develop real brotherliness and friendship among themselves. They should be willing to learn from each other. If friends do not correct each other, friendship has no meaning. Heart-to-heart love is true friendship.

Swami concluded His discourse with an appeal to the Sai workers to implement the decisions taken at the Conference with sincerity and enthusiasm. He urged them not to depend upon the Government for everything but to derive their strength from the people. "LIGHT A LAMP IN EVERY HOME," concluded Bhagavan.

Sai Family News

Birthday celebrations abroad

Sai Centres in Belgium and Netherlands jointly organised a programme of Bhajans and discourses on 27th November 1982, in connection with the Birthday Week of Bhagavan Baba. The celebrations were held in a chapel at Brasschaat near Antwerp. The programme included Omkara, Suprabhatam, Nagarsankirtan, Gayatri Japam, meditation, a film show, discourses and bhajans. Mrs. Witteveen Marsha, Chairman, Sai Centre in Holland, read Bhagavan's discourse from the 'Sanathana Sarathi'. Prof. Thorbjorn Meyer from Denmark, Chairman of the Coordinating Committee for Europe, Group I, spoke on Bhagavan's Mission. He said, "The main object of the Lord's organisation is to awaken in man the awareness of divinity inherent in him." He indicated that the coming years would be important in many ways. Much was going to happen in the next three years.

Dr. Ali Hussein, a staunch devotee from Geneva, delivered an inspiring address on the 'Sai Era and Human Values'. Mr. M. Krishnamoorthy, from the London Sai Centre, described some of the miracles of the Avatar and said Bhagavan has come to establish Sanathana Dharma for the redemption of the whole of mankind. Mr. Courtois (Belgium) stressed the need to build up a new

society based on spirituality. Dr. Meganck showed some slides on 'Aura' and explained their significance.

Meetings of devotees were held during the Birthday Week at Utrecht and Brussels.

Mauritius

A two-day programme of Bhajans, devotional dances, discourses, plays and recitation of devotional songs was organised by the Quatre Bornes Sathya Sai Centre in Mauritius on November 22 and 23. The functions were well-attended and among those who addressed the meetings were Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, ex-Prime Minister, Mr. H. Boodhoo, Acting Prime Minister, and Mr. N. Deerpalsingh, Minister for Agriculture. The St. Paul Nilkant Mandali staged a play on 'Sai Baba'.

Training camp for bal vikas gurus, Kalimpong

A three-day training camp for 222 Bal Vikas Gurus, hailing from Nepal, Sikkim and the districts in North Bengal, was held at Sri Sathya Sai Nilayam, Kalimpong, Darjeeling district, during October 16-19. The camp was particularly useful for participants from Dharan, Nepal, who felt that it was their first experience of a 'Dharmic Sadhana Sibir'. They felt inspired to spread Bhagavan's educational programme in Nepal. Fifty trainees, who had come from Sikkim, were highly appreciative of the training they had received. On the last day a cultural programme was presented by children from the Bal Vikas Centres in Kalimpong, which included 'Sai Katha' in Nepali and plays on religious themes.

Free Eye Camps

Nazirhat (West Bengal): Despite the initial apathy of the educated and affluent sections of the public, the Sathya Sai Samitis in Cooch Behar district organised a free eye camp at Nazirhat (on the border of Bangla Desh), which came to the Sai fold under extraordinary circumstances. Villages from the surrounding areas supplied milk, rice, dal and fruits for the patients. Students rendered voluntary service at the Camp from October 9 to 15. Ninety four operations were done and free spectacles were given to all the patients. Local women brought food and agreed to stay with the women patients at night. Members of local clubs cooperated with the Seva Dal in running the Camp. (F.A.C., Cooch Behar)

Eye camp at Sibsagar: (Assam)

With the help of Dr. Charu Sarma, of the Assam Medical College, Dibrugarh, and his colleagues, the Sathya Sai Save Samiti of Sibsagar (Assam) conducted an eye operation camp in the Krishna Behari Tea Estate from November 6 to 14. While many patients were treated for eye diseases, 67 persons were operated upon. Along with the eye camp, a training camp for Save Dal members from Dibrugarh, Golaghat, Govindpur tea estate and Lakhimpur was conducted to instruct them in the programme of health and medical care and other service activities.

At the present time, when we see all over the country confusion, fear and anxiety, each one must contribute his share of cool, calm Love to suppress the anger and fury. No

Governmental authority can suppress it as effectively and as quickly as you can by love and brotherliness. The world can be saved only by the power of the Atma inherent in every one; this has to be tapped by individual Sadhana, and by the Grace of God which can be won only through Love, Purity and Service. If these two are absent, Pralaya is certain; it is inevitable.

—Baba

Sutra Vahini

4

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

The word Atha, with which the very first Sutra begins, means 'thereafter' and, after the inquiry into its implications, it has been found that it involves the acquisition of these four attainments —Viveka, Vairagya, the Six Virtues and the Yearning for Liberation.

The next word too is Athah, the 'tha' being soft, instead of being stressed as in the first word. Athah means "for this reason". The inquiry has therefore to be made: "for which reason"? For the reason that neither the examination of the texts of the Sastras, nor the performance of rites and rituals, nor through the study of material objects, nor by the process of learning from the example of other men, can the awareness of the Supreme, the Brahman, be secured. Because objects and individuals, rites and activities are transitory. They suffer from decay and destruction. They can at best help the cleansing of the mind, that is all. Karma cannot liberate one from the basic ignorance, or award the awareness of the reality as Brahman. One has to be conscious of this limitation, in order to win the right of inquiry into the mystery of the Brahman the source and core of the Cosmos.

This, the very first Sutra stresses on one lesson: He who devotes his life to earn the knowledge of the Atma that is his self, Must possess holy virtues, and they must mould his conduct and contacts sacrosanct. For, no knowledge can be higher than virtuous character. Character is power, really speaking. For the person who has dedicated his years to the acquisition of higher learning, every text on spiritual progress, advises that a good character is an indispensable qualification. Every religion emphasises the same need, not as a special creedal condition, but as the basis of spiritual life and conduct itself. Those who lead lives on these lines can never come to harm. They will be endowed with sacred merit.

Virtues are the most effective means for purifying the inner consciousness of man, at all levels. For, they prompt the person to discover what to do and how to do. Only those who have earned good destiny can claim their excellence in discrimination. And, adherence to this determination is the raft which can take man across the ocean of flux and fear, the Bhava Sagara. The man of virtues has a place in the region of the liberated. Whatever the residual activity a person has perforce to engage himself in, the impact of that activity will not impinge on him, provided he is a man of virtue. He can merge in Brahman, the embodiment of Supreme Bliss.

A person might have performed a variety of Vedic rites and sacrifices; he might even be expounding the contents of a variety of sacred scriptures he has mastered; he might be a Brahmin well versed in the Vedas; he might be a person endowed with prosperity, owning vast wealth and heaps of grain; he might teach the Vedas and their complementary disciplines with due exposition of meaning; but, if such people have no moral character, they have no place where Brahman is taught or learnt. This is the lesson this Sutra conveys.

For, the stage of equanimity so essential for spiritual progress can be gained only when the intellect is cleansed of the blot of deluding attachments and involvements. Devoid of that serenity, the intellect or Buddhi cannot proceed on the trail of Brahman. Why? The term Virtue is only another name for the 'intelligence' that follows the promptings of the Atma, the Self which is our Reality. Only he who has such virtue can win the awareness of the Atma, the Truth. And, once that awareness is gained he can no more be caught in delusion or desire; they, cannot touch him any longer.

Desire and bondage to the objects desired and the plans to secure them are the attributes of the individualised selves, not of the Self or Atma resident in the body. The sense of me and mine, and the emotions of lust and anger originate in the body-mind complex. Only when this complex is conquered and outgrown can true virtue emanate and manifest.

The sense of 'doer' and 'enjoyer', of 'agentship' might appear to affect the Atma but they are not part of the genuine nature of the Atma. Things get mirrored and produce images but the mirror is not tarnished or even affected thereby. It remains as clear as it was. So, too, the man of virtue might be subjected to some, contaminating activities due to the backlog of acts in previous lives, but they cannot mar or obstruct his present nature of activities. The Jivi or Individual has as his genuine, basic attributes: purity, serenity and joy. He is ebullient with these qualities.

A bird in flight in the depths of the sky needs two wings; a person moving on the earth below needs two legs to carry him forward; an aspirant eager to attain the Mansion of Moksha, the Abode of Freedom, needs Renunciation and wisdom, renunciation of worldly desires and, wisdom to become aware of the Atma. When a bird has but one wing, it cannot rise up into the sky, can it? In the same manner, if man has only renunciation or wisdom, he cannot attain the Supreme Self, Brahman. The sense of 'mine' is the bond of deluding attachment. How long can one cling to what he fondles as 'mine'? Some day, he has to give up all he has and leave, alone and empty handed. This is the inescapable destiny.

One has to give up such assumed relationships and artificial attachments through rigorous analysis of their nature and give them up as quickly as possible. This is what the world teaches as the lesson of renunciation. Attachment breeds fear and egotism. Only the unwise would yield to such worldly fancies. The wise can never bow to the blandishments of objective desire. All is momentary, momentary. All is transient, transient. So, they seek to identify the everlasting Truth; and adhere to the immortal virtues that the Atma represents. These are the real men of virtue, the candidates worthy to attain Brahman.

(To be continued)

Men must observe the dharma laid down for them and must be allotted the status they have to be given; women must be allotted the status allowed for them. Both are the children of God, no doubt; but; discipline demands that men and women must be allotted the spheres that are conducive to dharmic life. Insist on discipline during student life, only good can come out of this strictness. Let boys and girls grow as disciplined self-restrained citizens; that is a greater contribution to the country than a number of well-read but ill-disciplined persons, who will plunge society into confusion.

—Baba

CHANCELLOR SPEAKS:

The Purpose of Education

This day the sons and daughters of Bharat ought to preserve and promote the priceless treasure of Bharatiya Culture—Sublime, Divine, with pure and dedicated hearts, through teaching and learning sacred paths and arts.

*The holy lessons the Vedas teach
Do fade when master and pupil
Do twist and torture eternal truth
And, seeking riches, distort holy aims.*

Embodiments of Love!

When pupils completed mastery of all branches of knowledge at the Gurukuls in Ancient India, they were exhorted, on the day they left the sacred precincts of the hermitage, by the loving preceptor who showered blessings on them, to observe certain ideals and adhere to certain practices and attitudes in life. The convocation address, delivered on the occasion of conferring degrees to those who have passed the examinations and who are venturing into the world beyond, is but a poor counterpart of that benediction and that encouraging counsel.

The message communicated then was most elevating and was worthy of practical application in daily life and each axiom was nectarine in content. Every advice was, clothed in inspiration. The tone and tonic effect of the message has become erased in the womb of Time and reduced to a forgotten dream. While the immortal words of the Shiksha Valli (the section on education) of the Taittiriya Upanishad are being repeated for their benefit, the pupils of those days were thrilled and transformed by them. The response of the students of today to the same message will only be a mixture of strangeness and surprise. But that same message can serve as a beacon-light to guide present day students, who are tossed about on endless waves of worry and anxiety caused

by inordinate desire and vain pursuit of tantalising goals. The characteristic result of the modern educational process is the bloating of conceit into the size of a pumpkin when only a mustard seed size of learning has been acquired! And, the students aspire for unlimited rewards. As the proverb says, they pay for an onion and demand a melon as extra. The bond between jobs, degrees has to be cut asunder. Education should foster moral and spiritual excellence. Students should cultivate the intelligence needed to cleanse the mind, to stand on one's own feet and to render service to fellowmen. Napoleon used to tell his people, "Be clear. The rest will follow." Minds clear and strong can achieve the hardest tasks with ease.

Students in the past practised "simple living and high thinking" but today, they, are engaged in "High, living and low thinking". High living urges them to earn and amass money, which is subject to devaluation and diminution. But the wealth of knowledge and character is free of both these. "Fire cannot burn, nor rulers confiscate. Floods cannot dampen nor thieves decamp with it," as the saying goes. Kith and Kin can lay no claim on it. Share this special wealth with others; it does not become less; it grows with each gift. Accumulate wealth and you will be bled dry by sycophants pretending to be friends.

Atheism is growing wildly among students these days. They forget and ignore even elementary human qualities as a result of the cursory and perfunctory study of natural, physical and spiritual sciences. Scientists declare, "seeing is believing." But, can the eye be trusted? Can the mind, delight, sorrow, the soul be seen by the eye in order to induce belief? Experience is believing, not seeing. The Milky Way, according to scientists, has billions of clusters of stars. How few have seen them! Yet; how many believe in them! Has each person who believes, seen them? So, too, a few have experienced God after arduous processes of denials and assertions and many take their words as genuine and valid truth. The seers of God proclaim what they have visualised, and when people put their faith in it. It is condemned as blind faith as if belief of people in the number of star clusters in the Milky Way as proclaimed by those who have seen them is not blind! Have faith in the Divine and one can experience the Divine. Have faith in oneself and one can have faith in the Divine.

Scientists announce that the cosmos is composed of atoms. Spiritual seers announce that God is the minutest of atoms and the vastest among the vast. Seawater yields salt crystals. Similarly, the all-pervading Divinity crystallises as Avatars. The crystal is a build-up of many atoms; the Avatar principle is the buildup of many divine attributes. The two sciences—physical and spiritual—can never clash; one complements the other, for the sciences related to nature have bounds which they cannot cross. They can study only the created; the Creator is the special field of study for religion. One is a scientist; the other is a saint. The saint probes the root; the scientist peers into the tree above ground.

One cannot succeed in spiritual search unless one has attained a pure, untainted consciousness or Chitta. This is possible when one becomes aware of one's reality, God. No attempt is made to impart this knowledge to the tender minds of youths. Men are more value than all the precious wealth of the world. For, every human body is the temple of God the Almighty! The individual has to be strengthened and sanctified so that the country or mankind can prosper. Knowledge

without action is useless, why action without knowledge is foolishness! Education must be brightened by means of discrimination and spiritualisation. In stead, the educational process fosters merely greed for selfish aggrandizement, without using one's attainments for social service and beneficial sharing.

The touchstone for virtue in a person is his keenness to give up, to sacrifice, to develop detachment. I exhort students on many occasions to associate with good and godly people only so that the precious aspect of divinity in them can manifest. Many of them are humble and subdued and disciplined as long as they are in hostel and college, but once they enter the outer world, they resume the routine and ruin themselves. This should not happen. Once Truth is accepted as an article of faith, one should sacrifice one's entire life to its practice. Or else, man degrades himself below the level of birds and beasts.

“Speak the truth. Follow Dharma. Treat thy mother as God. Treat thy father as God. Treat thy teacher as God. Treat thy guest as God.” These were the duties mahout for the pupils. The baby is borne and bred by the mother, the child is fostered and fed by the father, the boy is directed and divinised by the Guru, and the adult is afforded the chance to serve and sacrifice for the guest. Man is moulded and made to shine and spread light, by these four—mother, father, teacher and guest. Students might fail to revere the guest or adore the teacher as God. But, it will be a great pity if they fall into the sin of dishonouring the father and the mother.

Students learn effective means to smother the anxiety, the tears, the cruelties and the lies that afflict the world today.

Revive the ancient ideals of learning and of high living in the awareness of divinity. Shine forth in the splendour of eternal truth, in the practice of time-tested values and in ways of holy living adjusted to the times. Be ready too renounce that which leads you as precious. Be heroes for adventure. The world needs today youths full of universal love, enthusiasm to serve, and disciplined emotions.

When we survey the career of this country we can discover clearly why this great country has come to the preterit pass. There was no lack of powerful rulers in the past; there was no lack of skilled administration and brave generals. There were many scientists and learned pundits and profound teachers. But, there was one defect which ruined the land, want of unity. There was no spirit of accommodation and social friendship. We may have vast resources but we have some wrong traits which weaken us. We cling to trivialities and mechanical acts and thoughts. We pay no attention to the divine exhortation and instruction that inhalation and exhalation of breath, kills moment by moment. "Soham" "Soham" 21,600 times a day! 'That is myself' 'I am That' 'I am God'. Teachers have to discharge this responsibility. Since the students are the roots of a prosperous nation, the basis for a strong structure, they have to be moulded into citizens we have to depend upon in the future. Students must develop extensive interests. They must visualise wide horizon.

Be grateful to the Institute that is fastening you. The Sai that is loving you as the mother, protecting you like the father, counselling you as the Guru saving you like God should ever be in your memory. Live, wherever your future lay, in accordance to the ideals you have imbibed here. Do not fall into the temptations of imitating wild and vulgar fashions in dress, dimensions and thinking.

The educational institutions must endeavour to produce students with integrity, character and self-confidence. Cultivation of knowledge is secondary. We can assure that colleges of Kamsa or Hiranyakasipu might have produced knowledgeable pupils but would not have produced a Prahlada or Krishna! Maintain purity of speech, of sight, of learning and of action. Awarding a university degree on a person of low character and vicious habits can be condemned as sin, for the degree has to be justified to the recipient by his exemplarily noble living.

I am speaking to you in this strain.

Students I for your own good, for your happiness, for making your lives meaningful, not because I dislike you, each of you has a living mother though you may not be aware of the depth of that love. Know that Sai Love is the Love of a thousand mothers. Naturally you will find it impossible to gauge the intensity of my Love. And understand this. If you place yourselves outside that Love, you place yourselves outside the love of all mankind. Mine is Love that is pure, free, selfless and unconditional. It is a great good fortune to receive such love.

Do not barter away this priceless human embodiment of the divine for a handful of trash. Gold can never make a man genuinely human nor can diamonds achieve that goal. It has to be reached through your own sincerity and tireless effort.

AL-NUR: THE LIGHT

(A Sufi view that perceives God as Light—on seeing Baba standing as Veda Purusha on 27-10-1982.)

Ocean of Light; Thou eternally Beautiful
All ablaze
In Red Robed Majesty
Spinning the spheres with mystic fingers of radiance.
Thus You must have stood,
O Lord, the embodiment of selfless actions,
On the first day of Creation
With a smile of Love on Your lips,
The beaded sweat sparkling, star-like,
In the silk soft darkness of Your hair.
Thus You might have viewed
As You do the crowds this day
Your own work: a galaxy of luminous world upon world,
A mighty, heaving ocean of sparks,
Ever-changing, ever-bright,
Rippled in a million forms and countless choirs.
Each age has sung its hymns
At Your shrines of light
And left at Your altar a Veda, a Bible, a Quran.
Or, are they the Words
You whispered to Your lovers
As they bent to Kiss Your lovely Feet?
O resplendent Divine Beloved,
Thus You will stand, perhaps,
On the brink of the final hour,
All a-glow
In a Robe of deepening twilight
And draw with starry fingers of Light
The Creation to the silence of Your Feet,
Sweetly murmuring to Yourself,
“All is Mine, and returns to Me at last.” 3

—Mrs. Zeba Bashiruddin

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1. In Islamic Sufi tradition God has ninety-nine attributes and al-Nur (the Light) is one of them
 2. Rg. Veda I-4: 9
 3. Quranic statement that all belongs to God (Allah) and finally returns to him.

Call for Unity in Seva Organisations

On the auspicious day of 'Kanum Pongal', January 16, when Bhagavan Baba arrived at 'Sundaram' at 11 a.m. to the immense delight of devotees, He was welcomed with Vedic mantras and Nadaswaram music.

Bhagavan hoisted the 'Prasanthi Flag' and inaugurated the newly constructed Mandapam, 'Santhi Vedika', the exquisitely sculptured structure, which serves as a platform for the open air auditorium in the quadrangle at 'Sundaram'.

In the evening, there was bhajan in the "Santhi Vedika" auditorium, followed by devotional music by Srimati Vani Jayaram and party in the presence of Bhagavan.

The next day, Bhagavan paid a visit to a nearby slum area which has been adopted by the Madras Samiti for all round improvement by the provision of educational, health, sanitary and other essential needs of the residents. Bhagavan inaugurated the coaching classes to be conducted by volunteers of the Samiti for the slum children studying in various schools. Bhagavan presented notebooks and pencils to the children, besides distributing sweets. He exhorted the slum-dwellers to give up the drink habit which spelt ruin for themselves and their families.

In the evening, Bhagavan addressed a huge public meeting at Abbotsbury, where thousands of devotees filled not only the two big halls but also the quadrangle outside. Mr. Justice K. B. N. Singh, Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, extending a prayerful welcome to Bhagavan, spoke on the great mission of Bhagavan to divinise the whole of mankind.

Bhagavan, in his discourse, appealed to the people to remember the glorious and rich heritage of our country, which is based on the Vedas and which has given birth to many great Sages, Yogis and Avatars. He stressed the need to view the outside world as a manifestation of Divinity and see the oneness or unity in diversity. Our sages and scriptures have emphasised the need to eschew desire, anger and conceit and to have control over the senses. The spiritual path has been prescribed for this. But man, lured by transient pleasures, chases wealth, power etc. and ultimately lands himself in bewildering problems.

Man should see God everywhere and in everything as He permeates the entire universe. There is no meaning in saying that one is in search of God! One should direct the search inward and experience the presence of the Divine within.

On the 18th, there was Bhajan at Abbotsbury. Bhagavan witnessed a rally of Bal Vikas children. Later He paid a visit to the Sai Baba Temple at Guindy where a large gathering of devotees had Bhagavan's Darshan. In the evening at 'Sundaram' there was a programme of devotional music by Sirgazhi Govindarajan and party.

On the 19th, there was a special assembly of all the members of Sai Seva Organisations, Madras, and District and State office-bearers from the whole of Tamil Nadu at Abbotsbury.

Bhagavan blessed them with a special discourse. He stressed the importance of unity among the various wings of the organisations and exhorted them to do 'Seva' as a sacred and divine work dedicating themselves to it with heart and soul. He warned against even the slightest trace of ego and selfish motive in the rendering of service to the needy and the under-privileged people: Their concentration should be on villages and slum areas and they should aim at transformation of the individuals so that the entire village becomes better and purer. Purity of heart and unity of thought, word and deed should be the guiding principle. He added that by reducing their wants and curbing their desires they could avoid wastage of money, food, time and energy. They should avoid pompous and ostentatious display in the Bhajan sessions and other meetings arranged by them and save the money for helping the poor and the needy. Bhagavan distributed mementos and stethoscopes to the doctors who are doing service in the Free Medical Centres at Abbotsbury, Kilpauk and Anna Nagar.

In the evening, Bhagavan visited Perambur and inaugurated a Trade Union College started by the Southern Railway Employees' Sangha. The college is intended to impart training to the Railway Trade Union leaders and wards of Railway Employees in technical education, vocational training, etc. and also impart education in character-building and human values. Bhagavan donated a sum of Rupees One lakh for construction of a shed for housing a workshop.

Bhagavan was taken in procession in an open jeep. He gave Darshan to thousands of devotees including railway workers' families, the General Managers of the Integral Coach Factory and Southern Railway and other high-ranking officers and Trade Union leaders.

At the public meeting, Mr. T. V. Anandan, President of the SRES and former M. P., described the educational and other programmes undertaken by the Sai organisations under the inspiration of Bhagavan. He confessed that it was because of the grace of Bhagavan that he was able to attain great heights in the Trade Union Movement.

Bhagavan, in His discourse, expressed His satisfaction that in the Union's Training College character building formed part of the curriculum.

On January 20, Bhagavan paid a visit to a village in the adjoining Chingleput District, Mannivakkam, which has been 'adopted' by the Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Chingleput District. Bhagavan inspected the medical relief and Bal Vikas centres and laid the foundation stone for a building to house the free medical relief centre. He later addressed a public meeting in a special rostrum erected near the Manniswaran Temple. The discourse was an elevating and blissful experience for the villagers.

In the evening, there was bhajan followed by devotional music by Mrs. P. Sushila, Mr. Jayachandran and Sitar recital by Mr. Janardhan, a disciple of Pt. Ravishankar.

Bhagavan left early in the morning on the 21st for Bombay, after blessing the large number of devotees who had gathered at 'Sundaram' despite the chilly weather of a winter morning.

—From our correspondent

This is the bedrock on which you can build the mansion of happiness, this recognition of the Divine, that motivates you from within. You claim to be devotees, with hearts full of love and devotion; you roll rosaries over your fingers, and loll the Name over your tongues; you indulge in breathing exercises or contortional feats, but, unless you revere all and worship all in the abandon of selfless Love, you only insult the unique tradition of this land. Passion, agitation, and anxiety—these degrade human nature. They are born out of hatred, malice or envy, which Love alone can counteract. When you have here the very Embodiment of Love, as your dearest Treasure, why welcome into your hearts the waves of hatred, faction, fear and doubt? Why turn them into volcanoes of cruelty and wickedness, when they can smile as green valleys of fragrant flowers!

—Baba

"The Lord is My Shepherd"

This is the true story of how we discovered Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

My wife, eleven children and myself are Roman Catholics by faith. We are God fearing people and do not relish denouncing any other religions.

In 1974 a close friend of ours spoke to us about Sai Baba. We listened with respect to our good friend. Our friend invited us to attend one of his group's services. After doing so, we realised that nothing was wrong in what we had seen and had heard.

From 1974 to 1980, we did not attend Church. God did not descend upon us in wrath and strike us instead. We experienced great joy and witnessed many miracles in our daily life.

At the time of the birth of our eleventh child in 1978, our Doctors gave up hope for both mother, and child. My wife's faith in Sai Baba did not diminish and she used the Holy Ash, and after a little while a child was born, physically and mentally sound. Both mother and child were in best of health.

In 1980 during October a friend of ours, Mr. Krish Ramlugan, went to India to visit Sai Baba. We gave our friend letters which were handed over to Him. All our problems, mentioned in those letters were answered by Sathya Sai Baba. During November 1980 my wife dreamt that she was talking to Sai Baba and Sai Baba told her, Tell your husband to come and see me. When my wife told me this dream, I laughed, because I knew my financial state, and above all; I cannot leave my family for more than nine hours per day. I thought about this dream and told my wife that I was due for leave in December and that I would like to see Sai Baba. My wife immediately agreed. On 14/12/80, I left for India and was well-looked after by Baba all throughout the journey. I spent ten days at Prasanthi Nilayam and I had never seen anything like this in all my life. It was Xmas and there was a crowd of 30,000 people of all races and religions, from all over the world—Chinese, Jews, Italians, Scientists and Highly Educated people. There is absolute

silence when people set their eyes on Sai Baba. Sai Baba moves with serene grace and gives you the most loving smile, which not even your wife, mother, or father can give.

I was very fortunate to have both general and a private interview with Sai Baba. I witnessed how Sai Baba materialised Holy Ash in full view of all people. I witnessed how Sai. Baba materialised objects for those who needed them. Sai Baba told me that I had a good wife and children and that he was pleased with them.

Sai Baba gave us the greatest Christmas. We prepared the Holy ground by candle light in the early hours of the morning, singing carols. I had seen many other miracles but the greatest miracle of all is the transformation of bad people in to good people but no conversion from one religion to another.

—Everett Joseph Jackson, South Africa

Chitravati's Lament

Why has Sai abandoned me?
It's decades since I touched His Lotus Feet
O, those soft and holy Feet!
Is He angry, my friends? Some mistake I made?
I just can't remember when or how!
Will you, dear friends, plead for me?

My heart aches when I brood o'er the past,
He came on foot with devotees young and old,
I could hear His laughter, even from afar.
"Choose any place on Chitravati sands!"
His mirthful, blissful, vibrant voice.
He would sing Bhajans as He alone can!

He would pile up a heap of my beautiful sand
Dig into the mound with His fingers, deep!
And behold! Splendorous icons—
Dattatreya, Ram, Lakshmi, Shyam!
On Vaikuntha Ekadasi, nectar Divine.
My sands He would turn into the Holy Gita.

How blessed I felt, when my barren sands
His touch Divine could transmute into gold!
The only Alchemist the World has ever seen!

How long could I bear this separation?

I wept so much my tears flowed in spate.
I surged beyond my bounds and banks
In desperation I rolled as far as the Nilayam gates
To touch and feel the Lotus Feet!

"*Amma, Bangaroo*, go back, my child!"
How sweet and kind and compassionate!
My Lord! He let me touch His sweet little Feet!
"Play the game; don't break your bounds!"
He blessed me with Darshan, Sparshan, Sambhashan!"
But, that was long, so long ago!
When will He come again, dear friends?

—**M. V. N. Murthy**

The Voice of God

*Heaven does not lie up above;
Here it is in the world of men.
When men lead the good life
The world itself becomes Paradise.*

Embodiments of love!

The Vedas are known as the voice of the Rishis. The Rishis intuitively perceive the truth. They can see the past, the present and the future. They are free from attachments. It is because of such high-souled seers that the voice of God was revealed to the world. This revelation demonstrates the truth about the divine. Although it consists of the four Vedas, they have been divided into seven Samhitas. Among these, three are important—Rk, Sama and Atharvana. Samhita means a collection of mantras. Among these, three types of branches have arisen. These are the Brahmanas, Aranyakas and the Upanishads.

The Brahmanas embody the science of Reality in the form of mantras. The mantras are related to Yagnas and Yagas. The primary purpose of the Brahmanas is to teach the rules relating to Yagnas and describe their performance. Among the Brahmanas the better known are the Aithareya Brahmana, the Taitiriy Brahmana, the Shathapatha Brahmana and the Sathyamsaha Brahmana. There is a close connection between the Brahmanas and the Samhitas. The Brahmanas are intended to enable people to realise their desires by reciting mantras relating to God and thereby securing God's grace. They are concerned with worldly and otherworldly objectives and are not devoted to the realisation of Brahman. All human desires are concerned with the world and are associated with desires and hatreds.

Next come the Aranyakas. Although these contain primarily the mantras from the Brahmanas, they contain also poetic and prose passages. As these mantras were intended to be studied by

those who gave up family life and entered on the Vanaprastha Ashrams and lived in forests, they came to be known as 'Aranyakas'. In ancient times, Rishis used to live in the forests and devoted themselves to the continuous recitation of mantras relating to God. Hence, these mantras came to be known as Aranyakas. The Aithareya and Taitiriya Upanishads belong to the Aranyaka group.

The third group consists of the Upanishads. The full life of a human being is indicated by one conforming to the four Purusharthas—Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. Education is of two kinds—one is worldly knowledge (apara vidya) and the other Knowledge of the Eternal (Pare Vidya). The Rig, Yajur and Sama Vedas relate to the Apara vidya. These Vedas are helpful for the understanding of the four Purusharthas. The Vedas may help one to understand the divine nature of the Brahman, but they cannot lead one to the Brahman.

In the realisation of the divine, there are four stages—saalokyam (seeing the divine), saarupyam (enjoying the form of the divine), saamipyam (nearness to the divine) and saayujyam (merging in the divine). When one reaches the stage of nearness (Saamipyam), the stage of merging (saayujyam) is not far off. Just as the Ganga, when it reaches the sea, will not turn back, similarly one who has experienced nearness to God will not turn back. The four Vedas enable one to approach the divine, but it is the Upanishads that enable one to achieve oneness with the divine. The Upanishads embody the experiences and ecstatic realisations of Rishis who perceived the Reality and enjoyed it. The Upanishads also lay down the manner in which they should be recited. It is only when they are recited with due regard to the sound and the meter will they yield the desired results.

There are eight ways of reciting the Upanishadic mantras—Jata, Ghana, Male, Shikha, Rekha, Dhwaja, Danda and Radhwa. Of these Jata and Danda are the most important. The others are variations of these two. The Jata method of recitation is essential for the performance of the seven Paaka-yagnas, the seven Havis-yagnas and the seven Soma-yagnas. The 21 yagnas are associated with the 5 karmandriyas, the 6 jnanindriyas, the 5 tanmatras, the 5 Pranas and the principle of the Ego. Consequently every Yagna is related to one Indriya.

The Brahmanas, the Aranyakas and the Upanishads are aids for the control of the senses. Although different deities are mentioned in the mantras, it is the one Supreme that is invoked under different names for different purposes. When the Divine is invoked for giving rain, the name of Indra is called; Varuna is invoked for another purpose. When the 'Mruthyunjaya Mantra' is recited, it is not for conquering death (as it is commonly believed), but for avoiding unnatural or premature death.

It should be noted that every Veda is intended to enable man to make his daily life holy and good. Although human life transient, the allotted span must be used for sacred purposes and to realise the Divine. The Vedas have the power to enable man to transmute his life and make it sublime. Whether consciously or otherwise, from morning till night, man carries out the duties laid down by the Vedas. Every act is governed by the dictates of the Vedas, but it is only when these acts are done with an understanding of their purpose will their true character be known. Similarly, every Yagna is intended to propitiate the Divine. In Yagna, ghee is offered to the fire. To obtain ghee, you have to secure milk, which can only be provided by a cow. The word "Go" in Sanskrit refers not only to the cow, but also to the Vedas. It also refers to the earth. It also

refers to the region of the heart. The ancient Rishis demonstrated that the "Go" which is represented by the Vedas is the same as the 'Go' represented in the physical world as the cow. The Yajurveda has enjoined protection of the cow as a supreme duty, as it is an animal which lives on Satwic food and has virtuous qualities. The inner significance of Vedic mantras should be understood by every Bharatiya. Having been born in the land of the Vedas, to fail to understand the meaning and significance of the Vedas will mean lowering ourselves in the estimation of foreigners. Our whole life is bound up with the Vedas. We must regard every day in our life as a Yagna. Every word that we utter must become a mantra.

—*Bhagavan's Discourse, 22-10-82*

Sutra Vahini

5

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

"Janmaadyasya Yathah: "That from which the birth etc. of This."

One has to know That as Brahman, the source of the origination, maintenance and disintegration (Srishti, Sthithi and Pralaya) of this perceptible Cosmos. Brahman is the entity from whom this Jagat (this apparently concrete ever-changing product of the tendency of the mind to visualise) has originated. This is maintained as an organisation in spite of the ever-present flux, by Brahman. This ultimately subsides or merges in Brahman Itself. Should there not be One who designs and decides on some sort of control and regulation of this Jagat? Underlying the three phases of Jagat mentioned above, one can cognise not only interpenetrating order and All-comprehensive Wisdom but also basic Ajnana or Misunderstanding. Asya (of this) —of this visible Universe (the composite of the Five Elements, Prapancha), Birth etc. (Janmaadi) —Origination, Maintenance and Disintegration—from whom (yathah), that is Brahman.

We can know a great deal about the nature of the Cosmos. But, the instrument of knowledge we possess is the human eye, is it not? Physical sciences have discovered much, but all that has been discovered by the human mind, is it not? They describe and analyse things as they are. However, how long do they exist as now? They are subject to modification each moment. But, in spite of the inescapable change that affects all things, one is aware of a truth or fact that is not affected in the least. That unchanging Principle is the basis on which the three phases are manifested. That Principle is Brahman, the Eternal Base, the Unmoving, the One, the Sathya, Truth.

One may hesitate to accept this fact and be involved in doubt since the basic Brahman is not perceived and what are actually perceived are the Forms, with Names attached, which are in perpetual change. Consider what happens when a person sees at night the dry stump of a tree; he is afraid it is a ghost or a bizarre human being. It is neither, though it is perceived as either. The reason for this misperception is 'darkness'. Darkness imposes on something another thing that is not there. In the same manner, on account of the darkness spread through Maya or Incorrect Perception, the Primal Cause, Brahman is veiled and rendered unnoticeable and the Cosmos is

imposed on It, as a perceptible reality. This deceptive vision is corrected by the awakened consciousness (Jnana) and transmuted into the Vision of Universal Love (Prema). The Cosmos of which the Earth is a part and with which we are embroiled has as its basic cause, as the stump for the ghost, Brahman Itself.

Some others declare as the cause for the origin of the Cosmos (Prapancha), such factors as Innate Nature (Swabhava), Order, Accident, and Time etc. But neither any one of these nor all of them together can be the Cause. For, they are all inert, incapable of will or initiative. Even individual selves are bound by the manacles of joy-grief, growth-decay and birth-death. Each of these alleged origins is dependent and contingent. So, they cannot be accepted as the Cause, or the Origin of Prapancha or Jagat.

This Sutra, *Janmaadyasya yathah*, is intended to lead us to the discovery of the genuine Basis for all that 'is', and 'was' and 'will be'. It announces the Mahat Tatwa, the Supreme Principle which is the Cause for the Being turning into Becoming and the Orderly Behaviour of the Universe. Physics can probe into matter and explain how it is formed; but, it cannot probe and discover why it is so formed. Surely, for each effect or happening, there should be a Cause. Neither the atom nor the self nor the absence of these can be reckoned as that Cause. The Sat, the Being, must be beyond both Subject and Object, Cogniser and the Cognised. But, when we have to delineate the Sat or Brahman, it becomes necessary to use words in current usage, such as Creator, Lord, Providence, God, and also as Brahman.

When the inquiry into cause and effect is made from the point of view of the Cosmos, we reach the conclusion that God is the Cause, and the Cosmos or Jagat is the effect. When the distinction between subject and object is transcended we become aware that it is all Pure Consciousness or Brahman, and that this is both the primary as well as the subsidiary factor. That is to say, it is the Maya, or Primordial Nescience, that invokes both Brahman, Jagat and the mergence in Brahman. It is Maya that causes the delusion that one originates from the other.

There are others who contend that the Two—Maya and Brahman—are the Twin Causes of the Cosmos. Still others assert that Maya is solely responsible.

(To be continued)

Three in One

Talk, brave talk, has grown so wild
Work, brave work, has dried and died;
Living is burdened with hollow pomp.
This is the way the student's learning goes.

Embodiments of the Divine Atma,

The world today is caught up in political stratagems and atheistic anarchy. Respect for Truth has declined. Mankind is sick, afflicted with wickedness and hatred. The most effective cure for this illness is spiritual sadhana and progress, which restores the genuine virtues of humanity. Man can be truly human only when he understands himself and others, realises the bond that binds him with society and works with others for the good of all.

The word Stri (woman) indicates that she is a composite of the three modes, the three facets of nature: Satwic (serene), Rajasic (active) and Tamasic (inert, quiescent), for it has the three sounds of **sa ra** and **ta**. As a consequence of the Satwic component, woman has fortitude, equanimity, rectitude, goodness and godliness. The Rajasic component has endowed her with courage, adventurousness and willfulness. The Tamasic nature in her resulted in modesty and hesitancy. Of these three, the Satwic is the predominant feature in her. But, it is being suppressed by contrary influences and the Rajasic has been encouraged to prevail. A woman earns renown from what she does; man earns renown from what he desires from doing! Based on what they do, women acquire name and fame. That is the reason why their names are mentioned even before the names of their spouses, in the epics, Puranas and scriptural texts—*Sita*-Rama, *Lakshmi*-Narayana, *Parvati*-Parameshwara etc.

You are all here as students of this College. How can any study be worthy, if it does not confer good knowledge and prompt one to do good work? An education that helps you merely to keep alive is no education at all. The wheels of the chariot of life by which it runs smooth are good knowledge and good deeds. This alone is true spirituality—virtue and humanitarian deeds. Charity is spiritual; good behaviour is spiritual; keeping away from evil is spiritual.

This day, science has overwhelmed the world. The power of the atom has overshadowed the entire world. Marvels unseen, unheard and unknown to man in previous centuries are astounding mankind one after the other. But, contemporaneously with them, fanaticism based on the language one speaks, the region in which one is born and narrow loyalties to social and economic isms are spreading fast. Imagine! In the 5000 years of human history, fifteen thousand wars have soaked its pages in blood. That is the measure of the brutality inherent in man.

Man feels that riches are paramount, but what he fancies as wealth are but material, momentary, trivial things. Character, virtue, brotherhood, charity—these are the real riches. The company of the good is the wealth most worthy. Wisdom is the most precious wealth. The educated person must live with this conviction. Search for riches can never confer contentment and peace of mind.

Each one yearns for lasting joy but does not stop to discover from where it can be got. It is not available anywhere outside him. Of course, searching in the outer world, he might hit upon many objects and experiences which mislead him, for he does not hit upon himself! When he sees his Self, he does not notice the objective world. When he pays attention to the outer world, he cannot notice his inner Self.

The purpose of existence is not fulfilled by getting born, managing to grow and quitting through death. To become aware of its significance, Vidya is needed, that is to say, the Higher Learning. This Vidya cannot be out-dated. It can never desert us.

This Institute of Higher Learning has been established with high ideals before it. You must be aware of this purpose and prove that you stand by them. The nation can progress only when the students progress in every field, students must strive to become ideal leaders and guides. You, the students of today, are the experts on which the nation will rely, the citizens who will shape its Destiny. When you grow straight and strong, every department of public and governmental activity will become efficient and beneficent. When education degenerates, all activities start rotting. So, the educational process and system must be allotted a sacred role. But, at present, they involve high expense and low income. Women after spending years in school and college marry and shut themselves in. Of course, it is good they enter married life and establish ideal homes. But, that does not utilise all that they have studied so meticulously, at such cost.

Education should not end with the winning of a degree or diploma. That is no real evidence of one's learning. Learning is not as mechanical as all that. It must inspire the most inert individuals too. It has no place for pride, pomp or jealousy. It shares its illumination with all. The magnet activates the inert piece of iron. Vidya or the higher learning that you acquire here should move all into higher levels of activity and thought. It must confer intuitive light. It must delight the parents, render fellowmen happy and make one's own life an example. Know that you are all engaged in studies here for achieving this goal.

Einstein, the great philosopher and scientist, met a famous poet once and wanted to know from him the secret of his popularity and fame. He led Einstein into his library and drew his attention to the Bhagavad-Gita, the Rg Veda, the Brahma Sutra, the Upanishads and commentaries of Sankara and confessed that they had granted him the wisdom that shone in his poetry. But, many scientists still deny spiritual values and are immersed in mere materialism, holding fast to the belief that 'Experience is Truth; seeing is believing.'

People have faith in the results given by scientists of the calculation of planetary distances and sizes. But, they hesitate when confronted with conclusions arrived at by investigators into the inner space, into the inner regions of the Spirit, those who have seen and shown, experienced and enjoyed the Truths they proclaim. It is unreasonable willfulness that makes people stick to the beliefs they have accepted as unchallengeable. As the statement goes, 'The subterranean fire can be grasped in the palm; the sky can be contacted as a concrete entity; but, one can never refine the mind of an obtuse obstinate person.' For, one can awaken a person who sleeps; one can make a person who is not asleep to rise and move; but, one can never awaken a fellow who pretends to be asleep. Willfully avoiding the illumination of knowledge is a sin against spirituality. Our students must welcome light at all times, from all quarters.

This attitude should not be dropped as you leave the Institute. Some people drop even human qualities when they step out of the College, after finishing their studies. Of what avail is all the teaching they received? And the expense? If only all that money was deposited in a bank, they could have lived on the interest. Instead, what has been achieved is, 'an empty head and an empty purse when he came from the holy place'. What does the world gain from such failures?

One must take up work that is of some use to the world. Move into the villages and help to keep them clean. Instruct the women of the village in the basic principles of child-health,

child-care and child-training. When health fails, people become despondent and even desperate. When health prevails, vitality pervades both mind and body. By the process of loving service, you can become the promoters of such joy. Do not consider any act of service as demeaning. Sweeping the streets, for example, is not below your dignity. Do you not sweep the floor of your home? Do you not wash off your dirt? When you undertake such tasks, the villagers will also gladly share in them. Why be ashamed to be good? Ridicule that may be cast on you has been the reward of many saints. It will soon fade away.

Muhammad taught unity of mankind and of God. And he was driven out of Mecca by those who could not appreciate his teachings. Jesus proclaimed the 'Brotherhood of man and Fatherhood of God' and he was crucified. Harishchandra stuck to Truth and had to give up his queen and the young prince. But, the names of all three resound in reverence in the hearts of millions. So, boldly face ridicule and plunge into selfless, intelligent service.

This institution is the Ganga of Seva. Yamuna, the Bangalore Campus of this Institute, joins it. It was founded some years later. And both take in Saraswati, the Prasanthi Nilayam Vidyagiri Campus. I am now proceeding to Yamuna and later, I am reaching Saraswati. The teachers and students of these campuses have to live harmoniously and cordially, sharing and caring together in loving co-operation. I am confident you will all act thus and I bless you for success in this holy endeavour.

—Bhagavan's discourse on 1-12-82, at Anantapur Campus of the Institute of Higher Learning

Bhagavan in Bombay

"Life without character is house without a Lamp"

The elite of Bombay got the benefit of witnessing the presence and listening to the divine discourse of Bhagavan Baba when He participated as a "guest of honour" at a regional conference of lions Clubs held on the lawns of the Cricket Club of India, Bombay, on January 22.

Over two thousand members, drawn from different walks of life, turned up, many with their families, and heard Baba's hour-long discourse on what life has come to be and what it ought to be. Bhagavan's discourse in Telugu was rendered into English by Sri Sudarsan, a young lecturer of the Sathya Sal College, Bangalore.

Baba's visit to Bombay this time added a new dimension to the efforts of the Sal Organisation, marking the second phase of His mission, as it was described, breathing new life into the decaying system of education in the country and giving it a healthy turn. He laid the foundation stone for a Zonal Training Centre for Primary Teachers in the Sal system of education in human values. The building for the centre in the Dharmakshetra complex will be ready by May and the

first batch of trainees will move in by June. The centre will serve the needs of trainees drawn from Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.

The only public meeting addressed by Baba during the present visit drew an enormous number of people. Even the remodelled Dharmakshetra auditorium, with increased accommodation, proved inadequate. A large number of people, mainly drawn from the slummy neighbourhood, perched themselves on the elevated piece of land adjacent to the auditorium, cheering Baba whenever He referred to the need for avoiding waste and spending the money thus saved on meeting the needs of the weaker sections of the community instead.

At the regional Conference of the Lions Clubs, where many members were having their first experience of Bhagavan, Baba described how mindless man had become, having lost all sense of values, in this land of ours where Sathya and Dharma had ranked as the highest ideals. He told them that without transforming the individual the world cannot be transformed.

The points He drove home were: For the individual to improve, he should first look into himself, to realise his own nature. Pursuit of mere wealth is the cause of all distress. The richest man is not the happiest man. Man should understand the need to be contented. Wealth may give you comfort, not peace. There should be a 'ceiling on desires'.

The present system of education has not taught the younger generation humility or developed their ethical standards. It has become mechanical. A great effort is needed towards character building. Life without character is like a house without a lamp.

Bhagavan Baba complimented the Lions on their good work in the field of welfare activity. He advised them to open their doors to the youth of the country. He gave away awards to heads of many clubs for their commendable welfare work.

Though Baba had addressed large gatherings at Dharmakshetra in all his visits, the one on January 23 this year was a memorable experience. All the space provided for devotees was filled to overflowing. 'Golden Day' in the history of Dharmakshetra was how Sri Indulal Shah, Chairman of the World Council of Sathya Sai Organisations, described it to the public gathering, while welcoming Baba. Earlier in the day, Baba had laid the foundation stone for the Zonal Training Centre for Primary Teachers, marking the second phase in the divine mission. Within a short span of two years the new system of education evolved by Baba—education in human values—had become popular in India and even outside, particularly Sri Lanka and Malaysia. Sri Shah recalled that since independence, four education commissions had tried to reform the system but had not succeeded. It is here that the Divine Mission had taken up where others had failed.

Before starting His discourse, Baba distributed many awards to winners in competitions held during the year. He released a book, "Guidelines to Healthy Living—Health Education Door-to-Door", compiled by Dr. Keki M. Mistry, a member of the Coordinating Committee in charge of Health and Hygiene. The essay competition held for the city college students proved a great success with a large number of entries. The Ramnarain Ruia College won the rolling shier, its student, Miss Vijayalaxmi Kamath coming first in the test. The Principal of the winning

college, Mr. K. N. Valsangkar, himself went up the stage and received the shield from Baba. The second and third prizes went to Miss Jasmine Tate of J. J. College of Architecture and Miss Shanaz Tate of Jai Hind College. A rotating shield was also given to Sai Organisation's units for proficiency in organising Bal Vikas classes and for their commendable performance.

The theme of Baba's discourse at Dharmakshetra was the need for inner awakening in man's quest for peace and happiness. Man, instead, turned to the external world in this quest. A *Bhakta* need not go in search of Bhagavan, as Bhagavan Himself is always in search of true *Bhaktas*.

Baba told the organisers that they need not waste money on expensive garlands and on flowers for decorations. Cut down wasteful expenses and devote the money for the good of those who need help, urged Bhagavan.

Bal Vikas children entertained the gathering with a playlet entitled 'Ceiling on desires'.

The laying of the foundation stone for the primary teachers' training centre also marked the beginning of the expansion of the technical school, at present housed in Dharmakshetra, in more spacious premises nearby. Land both for the training establishment and the technical school has been made available by the Government of Maharashtra.

Baba earlier opened an exhibition on 'Science and spirituality' got up by the students of the Sathya Sai Vidya Mandir. He also inaugurated a day-long dental camp and eye camp in the main hall of Dharmakshetra. The medical centre at Dharmakshetra will now provide facilities for dental and eye care on a permanent basis. It has already a homeopathic section.

Baba spent some time with members of three study circle groups for industrial workers, college students and spiritual seekers respectively.

Presenting them to Swami, Mr. K. R. Rao, in charge of this activity, informed Him of the questions and doubts raised at study circle meetings.

Among the callers at Dharmakshetra was the well-known film star from Pakistan, Mr. Mohammed Ali.

Advice to Sai workers

Baba gave a rousing talk to a gathering of active workers of the Bombay Samiti, complimenting them for their good work, as a "model" set-up. He was happy to hear from the chairman of the Samiti, Dr. Brahmanand Mavin Kurve, that plans for the expansion of the organisational activity were well underway. With nearly a thousand workers, it should not be difficult for the city organisation to achieve its target, he said.

Baba urged them to uphold the high ideals of the Sai organisation in their work, take in their stride the criticism sometimes heard from people outside the organisation, and do all their work as an offering to the Divine. He wanted them all to remember that man is but an instrument in the hands of God.

During his stay in the city, Baba received a group of 200 men and women from slum areas where adult education classes are being conducted and blessed them.

A large number of people tested at the eye camp were found in need of spectacles. These were secured in time for Baba

to give them away. He, however, wished to satisfy Himself that they got the right glasses. Even as He gave a pair to one of them He asked him to wear it, raised three fingers and said, 'Now count them.

—V. N. B.

State Presidents and Conveners

From the March issue of Sanathana Sarathi, it is proposed to carry reports of the varied activities of State Samitis in the implementation of the decisions taken at the 10th All India Conference. Presidents and Conveners of State Samitis are requested to send regular reports of service and other activities so as to reach the Editor by the first of every month.

—Ed.

The Jewel in the Iron Safe

*Good thoughts, good words, good deeds
Listening good, seeing good, being good,
These confer good health on human folk.*

*This body is an iron box of paltry worth
But, as in an iron box are kept jewels and gems*

*Note! in this paltry box is kept the Atma Divine,
This is the Truth the Word of Sai.*

Health is the greatest blessing. Without it, man cannot do even the lightest work. Health is an indispensable requisite for progress in material, moral, political, economic, artistic and spiritual fields of life.

Food habits are of primary importance when health has to be secured and maintained. When these are not regulated, health suffers. 'No restraint, no success' is the axiom. Restraint, controls, limits have to be observed at every step. One should restrain the wild adventuresome-ness of the tongue. Among the eight million four hundred thousand species of living beings, all except humans live on food as provided by Mother Nature. Man alone strives to make such food more palatable, more attractive to the senses of sight, touch and smell by boiling, frying and freezing and mixing, grinding and soaking. The consequence of this greed is ill-health and debility. One

should realise that food materials, as offered by nature, are really more beneficial. When heat is applied, they lose the vitality yielding components and cannot confer strength and efficiency. The person ages fast and loses the sprightliness of youth. Catering to the cravings of the tongue and swallowing heavy foods three or four times a day can only add to the heap. Regular and limited intakes alone can enable a person to discharge one's duties.

A restless mind is another important source of ill-health. Man is constantly afflicted with some source of worry or other. He is never free from anxiety. Why? Because he is identifying himself with the body. How did he acquire this body? Through his past activities and deeds. What were they caused by? By the twin pulls of love and hate. How did they originate? They were born out of the entanglement in duality, in the opposites. And, why does he get snared by them? Ignorance of the Truth, the ONE.

You must know that each one is a pilgrim and each life is but a stage in the journey towards the City of Liberation. This body is but a rest-house, in which we stay for a short time, during the pilgrimage. The mind, Manas, is the caretaker, the watchman in the choultry where we rest. We are not to treat him as if he is master or owner. But, we ought to take care that the house we are privileged to occupy is not damaged or polluted. We have to take good care of it and its furnishings, and treat the watchman politely.

The pilgrim is either helped or handicapped by the antics of the mind. The mind has as its warp and woof, desire, or thirst for some thing or other, getting some gain or avoiding some loss. Desire arises from attachment, often the consequence of delusion. Desire distorts and denigrates the mind. It keeps the mind incessantly agitated. No sheet of water can be calm when stones are dropping on it and if there is a perpetual shower of desires, the mind too will be pitifully restless. The Ananda which emanates from the Atma in man has, in fact, to be stored, with the help of the Buddhi as channel, in the reservoir, the Mind. That is its genuine function. But, if the reservoir has many cracks and crevices, namely the senses, the Ananda will be frittered away, and the reservoir will be rendered dry. When the hunger of the senses is sought to be appeased, the mind becomes vacillating and wayward. The mind is the master of the senses. That is its legitimate role. The senses are the servants, When the master serves the servants, he loses, his self-respect and falls in the esteem of all. In the Ramayana story, the Queen yields to the selfish wiles of her maid and as a consequence, her lord King Dasaratha lost his life, Rama who was as her very life-breath was exiled into the forest, her son disowned her and drew on herself the condemnation of the Kingdom of Ayodhya. The story is an allegory. Dasaratha is the human body with the five senses of perception and the five senses of action—the ten chariots or dasa-ratha. He wedded the Queen, the Mind, and the mind yielded to the servant and caused the downfall.

The one effective way to conquer all sources of physical and mental disease and debility is awareness of one's Atmic Reality. That will bring about an upsurge of Love and Light, for when one recognises that he is the Atma, he cognises the same Atma in all, he shares the joy and grief of all, he partakes of the strength and weakness of all. When one yearns for the happiness and prosperity of all mankind, one is blessed with the wisdom and strength to mark out the way and lead men towards it. In every one, the person sees his God. Every act of his will be as pure, as sincere and as sacred as an offering to God.

Health does not depend on medicine. Good words, good manners, good sight, good thoughts—these are essential. What can even powerful or costly medicines do if one is ill with bad thoughts and bad feelings? On the other hand, virtuous living, beneficial thoughts, elevating ideals and righteous conduct can confer not only health, but what is even more precious, Atmananda, the Ecstatic Awareness of the Reality Itself.

—Discourse on the Annual Day of the Sri Sathya Sai Hospital, Prasanthi Nilayam, 20-11-82

AVATAR VANI:

Vedic Axioms

One should yearn not for the prolongation of life but for the purification of life. A few moments as Hamsa, the Celestial Swan, are far more precious than many years as the crow. In order to sublimate the low yearnings of man, to lead him along the path of holiness and to hold before him the glorious destiny of his one-ness with the Cosmic Consciousness, the identity of the Jive (the Individual) and the Dave (the Universal), the Vedas have laid down many lessons, in profound axioms summarising realisable Truths. Each Veda has one central axiom or Mahavakya or Mahamantra around which it revolves.

PRAJNANAM BRAHMA is the Holy Axiom of the Rg Veda. Prajnanam means consciousness, Awareness. This is present and active, in all things, at all places, all the time. It energises the physical, material and spiritual realms, the lower, middle and higher regions and the human, sub-human and super-human beings. The three periods of Time, the nether, spatial and heavenly worlds, and the three modes of being—equanimity, activity and passivity (Satwa, Rajas and Tamas)—are all pervaded and permeated by Prajnanam or Consciousness or Chaitanya, the quality of Chit.

AHAM BRAHMASMI is the Holy Axiom of the Yajur Veda. It is a component of three words—Aham, Brahma, and Asmi. Aham implies a total, a composite Personality. Man is subjected to countless evaluations, conclusions and resolutions, called 'Sankalpa'. The very first Sankalpa that nestles in the mind of man is Aham or I-ness. Other ideas or thoughts leading to action can enter the mind only after Aham has struck root. Earlier than that event, no acceptance or rejection, no Sankalpa can find a place.

The I-ness persists in the gross body of the waking stage, the subtle body of the dream stage and the causal body of the deep sleep stage. It persists through all three states. The One that responds in all three is the I, the Aham. I is the universal response, whether I ask who is Gokak or who is Sudarshan or who is Chakravarti. From every one, the answer arises, I, I, I. I is in every one, the core of all.

Next, we have the expression Brahma Asmi, (1) Brahma am. This truth can be made clear by an example. To curdle milk and get curds for use, we add a small quantity of curd itself to the milk. Then, all the milk turns into curds. Wherefrom did we get the curd, initially? From milk

which was similarly treated. The years of life are the milk: the Divine Principle. Brahman is the curd, which, when it is welcome to pervade life, converts them into a Divine Saga. This is what the Upanishads mean when they declare that he who knows Brahman becomes Brahman (Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavati). Asmi is the process of mixing, the consummation of adding, the merging, the union. When it happens, Ahem becomes Brahman. When human-ness is permeated by God-ness, man becomes God.

For, what is it that takes place subsequently? The milk that has been curdled is churned by inquiry and inner probe and the soft sweet fragrant butter, Ananda, emanates. This Ananda or Bliss can be gained only through and from the Divine. Hence it is proclaimed that Ananda is the core of all the Vedas, the fruit of all the Sastras, the goal of all the scriptures in all the tongues. One must have faith in this truth, or else, he will miss the fruit. I am also stressing the need for faith, very often. For, where there is Faith, there is Love. Where there is Love, there is Peace. Where there is Peace, there is Truth. Where there is Truth, there is Bliss. And, where there is Bliss there is God.

People, nowadays, have weakened their faith and even lost it; yet, they clamour for Ananda. Ananda cannot be procured from any shop or ordered from any Company. Many enquire, 'How do you develop faith? What are the reasons for faith?' One cannot define or demarcate the reasons; faith arises in the heart, through imperceptible conviction. One has faith in son and father, husband and wife, but one cannot explain why? It does not grow in the mind or as a result of external causes.

The I or Ego should not be moulded or enclosed in an 'ism'; then, it becomes harmful as egoism. If the I is limited to the body and labelled on the form, it is pernicious, it brings about pride and selfishness. If it is identified with the Atman or Self, it is sanctified and leads to the mergence with the Absolute, the Brahman. Do not take the temporary, trivial body which is like a bubble as the Aham. For, what exactly is such an I? You use the words 'I' and "mine" from morning till night and repeat My home, My body, My life, My senses, My, My, My without delving into the I that owns these. When you are in deep sleep, you don't feel I, or think of the I, or worry about any My. Where does it go to, then? When the I leaves you even during the few hours of sleep, how can it be with you during the permanent sleep from which you do not wake? *Sleep* is a short death; death is a lasting sleep. Consider the attachments that develop between the one and the other. Then, you can arrive at the truth, Aham Brahmasmi.

TAT TWAM ASI is the holy axiom of the Sama Veda—That Thou Art. Tat or That was in existence before creation and is in existence subsequently too. It is the Principle of Total Consciousness, the Totality of Being and Becoming, encompassing and transcending the physical, mental and spiritual reaches, "beyond the horizon of expression and imagination" (Yatho Vaacho Nivarthante, apraapya manasaa saha). The Cosmos did not originate from God; It is God. There is nothing 'Other'; 'there is no Second.'

Some people ask, "Have you seen God?" Reply, "I have." When they ask, "Where is He? Show Him to us." If He is in one specific place, you can point your finger in that direction and say "He is there". But, this microphone before me is God; this garland on this table is God; this handkerchief is God. There is nothing in the Universe higher than God, different from God,

distinct from God. He is the 'Tat', or "That". It is the omnipresent eternal Awareness, Chaitanya. It is referred to as Tat or That, since we now imagine it to be distant, far from us. Far from where? Yes. Far from your body, your senses, your mind, your reasoning faculty which are all equipped only with limited capabilities. But, once your intuitive consciousness is aroused, the 'far' is "close". The Vedas announce It to be 'dooraaath doore, antike cha' (farther than the far, also closer than the closest). 'Twam' "Thou" is the body—sense-mind-reason complex. This too is That, as confirmed by the verb, asi, art. When you are engaged in reading the prayers of a book, what exactly is happening? The hand is holding, the eyes are seeing, reason is judging, and the mind is reacting to the flood of feeling. 'Thou' is the composite of hand and eye, reason and mind. "Thou" is the mould, the form, the Aakara. "That" is the core, the genuineness, the Swabhava. To realise the identity of the two, one has to resort to the sadhana of meditation. Meditation is the process of sublimating concentration (which concerns itself with the realm of the senses) into contemplation (which concerns itself with the realm of the mind and reason) until real meditation (which concerns itself with the realm unreachable by logic or thought or even imagination). This axiom is enshrined in the Sama Veda, whose hymns are musical and have to be sung as part of holy rites. Music is an excellent medium for harmonising Thou and That, the Human with the Divine. Of course, the song has to emerge from Prema or Selfless Love, not from greed for fame or profit. When rain pours, the sheet of water brings together earth and sky. So too, the shower of Love-lit song can bring Thou and That together. Asi or Art can be consummated.

AYAM ATMA BRAHMA is the Holy Axiom of the Atharva Veda, the Fourth among the Vedas. It means, "This Atma is Brahman." It implies that the Individual Self is the untarnished, unaffected Witness of the activities of the Body-Mind Complex. The Lamp illumines the area around It. One person falsifies accounts so that he can escape paying tax; another writes the Name of Rama as a Sadhana; another person takes advantage of the light to lay his hands on articles to steal. The Lamp is the Witness. The Atma too shines within the cave of the heart. One should engage oneself in sacred activity, with the inspiration of that illumination. Many people who come to me ask, "Swami! We are striving to control the mind but it runs about like a maddened dog. How am I to succeed?" Therein lies a wrong step. The mind is beyond contact, for it is attached to the senses. Control the senses; let them not draw you into the objective world. By this means, the mind can be made an instrument of illumination and not of delusion. The truth will then dawn; This Atma is Brahman. The splendour of this Awareness will drive away the darkness of ignorance. There can be no Tamas (ignorance) where there is Jyoti (light). The Atma or Self is Jyothi; self-luminous.

The Gayatri Mantra helps to uproot nescience by invoking the splendour of the Sun to illumine the Buddhi or the Intellect, the Faculty of Thought. That splendour will reveal the identity of Ayam Atma, of this self (individualized), with Brahman or the Cosmic Overself.

—From Discourse on New Year Day at the Institute of Higher Learning, Prasanthi Nilayam

Do not aspire to be a servant of God, working for wages; you reduce yourself to that level, if you ask for this and that from Him in return for the praise that you offer or the sacrifice you undergo. Even if you do not ask, if the bargaining attitude is in your mind; or, if you feel

disappointed that God did not give you desirable objects in return for all the trouble you took to please Him, do not calculate profit; do not count on returns; do not plan for the consequence; do, since you have to do, since it is your duty. That is real Puja. Dedicate the deed as consequence to Him. Then you become His own, not, a cooly, demanding wages. That is the highest level a Bhakta can reach through sadhana. That is the reason why Nishkama karma is so highly extolled in the Gita by Krishna.

—Baba

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE:

"Everyone is a Son Of God"

*He who is known as Allah by Muslims,
As Jevovah by Christian aspirants,
As the Lotus-eyed Lord by the worshippers of Vishnu,
As Sambhu, by those who revere Siva,*

*Howsoever He is worshipped, He gladly responds
Grants the grace of fame and fortune,
And showers happiness and joy. He Is the One,
The Supreme Self. Know Him as Param-Atma*

Embodiments of Love,

Nature confers, like heat and cold, joy and grief. In one season, cold is most welcome as a source of comfort. Another season, warmth is equally welcomed. Both give comfort to man when he needs it. Hence both heat and cold have to be welcomed by man. Both contribute to man's comfort and contentment. Time, space and circumstance decide their use and their value. This attitude of accepting the inescapable fact is what is proclaimed and praised as serenity, equanimity, Samatwam, in the Gita. The Gita says: "Samatwam Yogam uchyate". (Equanimity, equal-mindedness, steadiness, is known as Yoga).

The Gita also declares, "Yogah Karmasu Kousalam", "Yoga is the quality of excellence that has to characterise every act". Happiness and misery, success and failure, obstacles and obstruction, defaming and denigration, praise and criticism, are intertwined; they can never be experienced singly. But man is elated by gain and depressed by loss. When praised, he is elated; when blamed, he droops. But man has to keep in mind that these are only phenomena like heat and cold.

That is the prescription for mental peace and social serenity. Consider the reality of things—mountain peaks are only heaps of rocks; the ground on which we dwell is only a mound of soil; the body we carry about with us is but flesh and bone, composites of the five main elements—space, air, fire, water and earth. New forms and names are assigned to distinct patterns of the same forces and things which demonstrate distinct characteristics. Over millennia, Bharat has been proclaiming and propagating this holistic spiritual truth and the consequential outlook of renunciation and serenity. "Through renunciation alone can you attain immortality," declare the Vedas! This truth must be implanted in the mind by discriminating reason. That is why Sri Krishna says, "I am discrimination in the human being." That is the distinct feature of man.

In the Bhagavata Purana it is said each living being has to journey back to the source from where it sprang. Real joy is available only there. A man may travel on business through many lands and stay in several towns in great comfort, but he does get rest and peace only when he reaches home. The earthly career is but a stage in his long journey, where he has camped for a

while. The camp is not to be confused with the home, but many do and refuse to remember the home. All that concerns the Atma is delight; all that concerns the self is misery. This is the Upanishadic declaration. Man loses himself in fights and factions, greed and gain, and ignores the source, the substance which He is.

The trouble starts with his habit of fixing his thoughts on some thing or person. The thought becomes a thorn, a theme, a trap and finally an enslaving desire. When the desire meets with obstacles, anger wells up and emotions are aroused, which might even overwhelm the human-ness of the individual. The person loses the capacity to distinguish between right and wrong and slides into sin itself.

How can the mind that leads us along the path of desire, anger, passion, prejudice and sin be kept under control? The senses which tempt and tarnish the mind have first to be monitored and mastered. Cultivate the style of speech uncontaminated by falsehood, the bodily activity unpolluted by violence, and the mental process unsullied by attachment or hatred. Also, direct the senses along the path towards God. The mind robs you of the precious treasure of spiritual wealth. Be ever watchful of its machinations.

In the Bible, it is said that God seeks His own. Ponder over this. God is everywhere at all times. He need not be sought anywhere, any time. But, God has to seek those who seek Him and struggle to become aware of Him. Whom does God seek? He looks for a sincere, genuine, selfless, steady devotee. Besides, He seeks an ideal son who can be held before mankind as an example and an inspiration. Such persons have become extremely rare nowadays. They style themselves devotees but they weep and wail, when they ought to be really exulting; they exult when they have every reason to weep and wail! So, the Lord says,

I am searching, I am searching still searching,
I searched in the past, I search and search now
For the man knowing and observing his Dharma true.

Christ announced Himself as the Messenger of God. He identified His body as having been given to Him for alleviating human misery and serving the helpless and the homeless. He denied the demands of the flesh and devoted His skills and strength to relieve agony and pain. Then, when the consciousness rose to the level of the mind, He became aware that He was the Son of God. He strove hard to discover the distinction between Appearance and Reality, between Truth and Mental Image, and He became aware of the higher level of consciousness which transcends the vagaries of the mind. From that peak of intelligence, He became aware that "I and My Father are one." And both are one single manifestation of the Divine Essence, the Holy Spirit.

The birthday of every great person is celebrated by those who adore and follow him. This day being the birthday of Jesus is a holiday when offices and factories do not work. It is not sanctified as a holy day. People attend the church and join the rituals but return home to revel, drink and dance. The Cross is forgotten when the Christmas season is on. The day must be

dedicated to the purification of one's passions and emotions through meditation on the virtues and values that Jesus held forth.

Today, man runs after desires; he does not pursue ideals. He yearns for long life, not for a life lived in God. He does not recognise or follow the footprints of the great. Man has reduced himself to the position of a servant of the household who has no means of knowing where the master has treasured his most precious gems. If he is the master, he ought to know. But having failed to rise to that status, he is unaware of the treasure he can command. Each one has to examine for himself whether he is clinging to trinkets or conserving gems. A lamp kept on a mound illumines the area; if kept in a pit, it is as if it were not. A virtue that is practised is a lamp that shines for all; good thoughts and good deeds have a way of influencing others. The gems of wisdom, the light of intuitive experience should not be kept away from fellow-men. They have to be shared, even at the cost of one's life. That was the lesson Jesus taught and symbolised.

Derision and denunciation follow the footsteps of the great in all ages. They haunt them like the shadow which cannot be avoided. His own disciples turned against Jesus, even those who adored him and hung on his words. They did evil to him who did them good. But, Jesus wished well for those who insulted and injured him. This is a lesson badly needed today. No one should count the harm inflicted on him and plan revenge. He must on the other hand return love for hatred, fraternity for enmity. To behave otherwise is a sign of weakness, of want of courage, of lack of faith in human goodness. Jesus won in this holy struggle. On this day, we must cultivate in ourselves that conviction and that courage.

Far more beneficial than honouring the great is the practice of loving them. Praise, glorification and eulogy raise them on to an unreachable pedestal. Love binds one heart to another. Gratitude for the inspiration and instruction received must bind the hearts in love. The celebration of Christmas should not conclude with some carols, tableaux and made-up trees and Santa Claus. It must be soaked in the resolution to practise at least a few of the lessons Jesus taught us. The very first need is faith in God and in our own Divine Nature.

Where there is faith, there is love,
Where there is love, there is peace,
Where there is peace, there is Truth,
Where there is Truth, there is Bliss,
Where there is Bliss, there is God.

The yearning for Bliss is the best proof of our holy nature. Man is Bliss; he seeks Bliss; Bliss is Blessedness for him. Since God is Bliss, happiness is union with God. Nothing else can award that joy, which is unaffected by whatever happens or does not happen. The heart of Jesus was pure and calm. Hence, it is honoured as sacred. We must make our hearts sacred so that either we merge in Jesus or Jesus merges in us. When we merge, it is called Bhakti; to have Jesus awakened in us is the path of Jnana. Jesus was a Messenger of God; but note this also: all of you are messengers of God. Jesus was not the only Son of God; you are all His children. Jesus and His Father are one. You and God are also one and you can be aware of it.

Today, people from many lands have gathered at Prasanthi Nilayam. Having come from such long distances, undergone so much troubles on the way, and stayed here, you have to take with you from here at least a few sublime, sustaining lessons for spiritual progress. Instead of going round India, as tourists do, and collecting impressions of places as thus and thus, imbibe the sacred and the holy and transform your lives on more worthwhile lines.

You must pay attention to one slight fact. Indians are not eager to identify and benefit from the lessons of their divine culture! Right under the lamp that is lit there is bound to be a patch of darkness. If one spends all the twenty four hours in an air-conditioned room, he cannot appreciate or evaluate its blessing. But if he has to walk through the hot sun for an hour, he will surely be grateful and gratified. There are thousands in this Nilayam who keep on exclaiming, "Swami! Swami!" but who have not recognised the immense boon they have secured.

When a baby gulps down the first morsel of cooked rice that is ceremonially placed in its mouth, every one is happy; the parents are pleased and the child is admired. When the child grows and consumes plates of rice, no one expresses wonder, pride or admiration. Why? The person is the same, the thing eaten is the same. The eating has become routine, repetitive, mechanical, a kind of compulsive habit.

You too, like every one else, are with God, in God. But, you are not aware of that fortune. You are struck with strange wonder and joy when you see God during meditation; you are overcome with ecstasy. You have been looking at me for such a long time now here in front of you. Yet, believe me, when you go back to your rooms and when I give you Darshan even for a second while you sit for Dhyana, you are beside yourself with joy: "O! Swami gave me Darshan!" The fact is that it is only something beyond the natural, above the ordinary, that arouses interest. So, one must overcome his failing. Spiritual joy, wonder, appreciation, the Darshan of God must become the life, the natural breath of life, the very *raison d'etre* of existence in the body. This is what Jesus taught by precept and example to mankind, the Atmic principle which is the eternal source of Bliss.

Embodiments of Love! Whatever activity you may be engaged in, wherever you may be, however you may fare, be convinced that you are ever in God, that all is Divine, that all acts are offerings to the glory of God and thus make your lives full and fruitful.

—*Christmas Day, Prasanthi Nilayam 25-1-82*

Darshan

Sitting on the sand
I wait
patiently.

God will come
clothed in the colours of morning
flame of the sunrise
blue of the day-rise
dark of the cloud-rise—

And in the evening also
at sunset
I return.
Love is incarnate
sweeping towards me in a gold tide of blessing
hands raised in silence
fingers extended—
peace of the moonrise.

—*Michael Warren, Toronto*

Kingdom of Mother Sai

The varied types of social service rendered by members of the Kingdom of Mother Sai—the association of past students of the Sathya Sai College for Women at Anantapur—were commended by Bhagavan Baba on the occasion of the celebration of its second anniversary in the Poornachandra Auditorium on December 25, 1982.

Kumari Saileela, President of the Kingdom of Mother Sai, in her report, mentioned that feeding of the poor every month was a regular activity of the Kingdom of Mother Sai. About 200-400 persons were fed. The Kingdom members regularly visited the General Hospital at Anantapur and supplied the poor patients with fruits and garments. Clothes for new-born babies were stitched by the members and distributed in the hospital. Medical relief was given to villagers in nearby areas. After a survey of villages around Puttaparthi, schools in two villages lacking in tables, chairs, blackboards and slates were provided with them. Clothes were given to 400 children. The electrification of one village has been taken up.

Members of the Kingdom have been learning the Braille code in order to transcribe books in Braille for the use of the blind. Over a dozen volumes of Sai literature have been transcribed by an American devotee, Mrs. Mac Laughlin, with the help of the Kingdom members. Mrs. Mac Laughlin has donated to the Kingdom of Mother Sai two Braille duplicators, which were placed before Bhagavan and blessed by Him.

The Kingdom of Mother Sai conducted a four-day medical camp at Prasanthi Nilayam, which was inaugurated by Bhagavan on December 20. Over 3000 patients attended the camp. 31 eye

operations were conducted, besides obstetric and gynaecological operations. Doctors from Vizag, Ooty, Whitefield, Prasanthi Nilayam and Sri Lanka rendered service at the camp.

Bhagavan, in the course of His discourse on the significance of Christmas, referred to the work of the Kingdom of Mother Sai and said that sincerity and dedication should characterise every kind of service. Swami spoke on the special responsibilities of educated women.

AVATAR VANI:

Significance of Yajnas

*Thought, word and deed, when man keeps as one,
He is acclaimed on earth as truly great,
Wedded to Truth, the presence of God is gained,
Liars, like pebbles, abound; true men, like diamonds, are rare.*

Embodiments of Love! The presence of God, the vision of the Absolute, is not a state to be attained or newly achieved. God or the Absolute is the very nature of the Self. The individual is the indivisible God. Even when enmeshed in this world of conflict and confrontation, the Self is God, in reality. Deluding himself as the body in which he lives and attaching himself to the charm and challenge of Nature, he imposes self-hood on himself and suffers from that limitation. The raindrops clear and pure from the clouds, but on earth the water is rendered turbid and polluted by its contact with the ground. That does not affect its real nature. The water that rose as cloud and fell as rain is clear and pure. The salt of the sea is discarded in the sea itself. All the rivers of all the continents end in the sea; they lose, on merging with the sea from which they started their long journey, their forms and their taste or characteristic qualities.

Similarly, the selves that have assumed human forms and that are designated by separate names, emerge from the same source and merge in the Universal form which they particularised. In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna declares, "Mamaiva amso jivaloke, jivabhuthaah sanaathana", "The multiplicity of individual selves has happened from a part of Me'. They may appear different but their reality is the ONE. The Vedas, therefore, accost all selves as "children of Immortality," "amruthasya puthraah". They remind every living being of its being the undying Divine.

A millionaire may take on the role of a down-and-out in a play and act the part remarkably well on the stage, but that impersonation does not make him a down-and-out. Even while on the stage, he knows that he is a millionaire, pretending to be poor. He will indeed be a fool if he forgets his reality. The individual self is the role; the reality is God.

Every role and action has a method, a mode, a way. The engineer, for example, works according to certain norms, certain principles and processes. These have to be decided upon with reference to the nature of the sub-soil, the type of foundation, the height of the-structure etc. A

painter has to calculate the area, the base, the background, the culture etc. If they do not pay attention to these, the structure won't be strong, the picture won't be liked. The same holds good for the Yajna (sacrificial rite) that was inaugurated this morning. First, the fire-altar, where offerings are poured into the sacred fire. It has to be made to measure, as laid down in the ancient past. If the prescribed rules are broken or by-passed, the result promised cannot be secured. The fire that is lit in the altar has according to the texts which recommended the Yajna, to be churned out of the hard wood which was used this morning. After it is lit, tongues of flame have to be raised in order to receive the articles that are offered to the deities that are invoked by the sacred incantations.

There are three fires, lit in correctly prepared sacrificial pits—the Dakshina Agni, Gaarhapatya Agni and the Aahavaniya Agni. The question may arise, what need is there to distinguish three types of fire, when fire is only one in reality. But, consider this illustration. We light a fire to, cook the meal. The fire softens and makes the food palatable and digestible. The fire that reduces the human corpse on the pyre into ashes is another. Though it is as much fire as the fire in the kitchen, no one bakes a roti over it in order to make it eatable. It is treated as profane and unholy. As distinct from these two, consider this ritual fire. This fire is venerated as the central deity of the Vedic Yajna, as Vishnu Himself, the sustenance and support of the worlds. We prostrate before this fire, an act of adoration we refuse to the fire that cooks or the fire that consumes the body; neither do we offer oblations in the kitchen fire nor do we utter invocatory hymns and formulae. We do that only for this ritual Fire.

This fire is like the post box of the Department of Posts and Telegraphs. When you drop your letter, duly stamped and addressed, into that box, the department ensures that it will be carried over to the person whose address it bears. You cannot accomplish the same assignment—communicating with the addressee—if you drop the letter into an identical box hung on your own wall, or your own initiative, to fulfill your will

That box cannot serve the purpose. The purpose of contacting the Supreme Consciousness in its various manifestations, named deities, can be realised only when the altar is laid down as prescribed. When the fire is evoked as recommended and when oblations are offered with the correct recitation of propitiatory formulae.

The Gaarhapatya fire is the fire in the household—lit in the oven for cooking or boiling, in the fire-place for warming or in lamps for providing light or on sticks of incense. Aahavaniya fire is the ritual fire kept alive in the household of the higher castes wherein is invoked the guardian deities of health, harmony and prosperity, with preliminary recitals of Pranava (OM). Then, there is the Dakshina Agni, the Southern Fire lit ceremonially on occasions of need for use in rites for the dead. Since the God of Death, Yama, is the Deity of the Southern Region, this fire is called Dakshina or Southern. This is the reason why people are warned not to sleep with their heads towards the South, the direction of decay and disintegration. Of these three, the Aahavaniya is, as can be seen, holy and adorable.

The Yajur Veda deals with Yajna or Ritual Adoration of fire, as the medium of

communication with the Gods. It has two recensions—Shukla (Bright) and Krishna (Dark), associated with Aditya (Sun) and Brahma (the creator). Yajur Veda has as subsidiary many complementary bodies of lessons on special skills. Archery (Dhanur Vidya) is one such, with its four compartments: Release, Retraction, Replacement and Ritualistic Potency (Muktaka, Amuktaka, Mukta-Amuktaka and Mantra Muktaka). Arrows on which Brahma, Agni, Vishnu and other Gods with their Divine Energies were invoked were used against the foes. These subsidiary sections of the Vedas have mostly been lost and so knowledge of such skills has become inaccessible.

The Veda mentions many specific items that are to be used as offerings to Gods, conveyable through the emissary, fire. They are milk, curds, ghee, grains, the juice of the plant named Soma and what is designated as 'Vapa', a term wrongly taken as meaning the diaphragm of a lamb or other sacrificial animal. It is necessary to clarify the real meaning and significance of offering the 'Vapa'. The 'Vapa' of a young lamb is preferable, it is said. The mind, the heart of the human child is pure, tender, unsoiled by greed or pride. And the lamb is much more so. The Vedic texts describe such a heart as nirgunam (serene), niranjanam (unattached), niketanam (abode of good), sanathanam (eternal), nitya (stable), shuddha (unblemished), buddha (alert), mukta (free), nishchala (unaffected), nirmala (pure). Offering the 'Vapa' of the lamb means, therefore, dedicating one's heart, after rendering it soft and sweet, and not casting into the flames the diaphragm of a slaughtered kid!

For the Vedas invite us to realise that everything—living and non-living—every quality and characteristic of everything, is only an aspect of the one Atma, the Source and Substance of all. The Aham or the Ego is an appearance on the Atma as the foam on the edge of the wave, which is but the ocean itself. The Atma can well be devoid of Ego, but the Ego cannot exist without the Atma as the reality underneath. However, man validates the Ego (Aham), giving it a form (Aakaram) full of attributes and so, it gets polluted as Egoism! (Ahamkaram). When the Ego is free from the status of 'ism', it is a facet or factor of the Atma. Attributes, modes, Gunas drag it into the tangle of dualities and so, it gets malefic and sheds its positive, purifying role. The oblation that is done here in the sacred fire is symbolic of the evil adhering to the Ego, the animal urges that still animate it.

The 'ism' or mould in which the Ego has hardened tantalises man and blinds him to the Truth. Sankaracharya has described the harm it inflicts and prescribes the recitation of the name of God to defuse the consequence. The pure ego will then merge and lose its identity in the Atma, which has no birth and no death. These Yajnas serve one purpose more than all else—the cleansing of all levels of consciousness, Chitta Shuddhi, for they involve renunciation, invocation of Divinity and ascetic practices. This achievement alone cannot ensure Liberation (Moksha). That can be won only by the awareness of the Reality leading to discarding (Kshya) of attachment (Moha) to the unreal. But, this ultimate objective is seldom kept in view. Vedic rites were gone through in order to win the boon of sorrow-free worldly life and blissful heavenly sojourn, and only as a stage in realising the freedom from birth and death, and merging in the Truth.

With a cleansed mind, one has to pursue the inquiry into the Reality, until no trace of fascination for the unreal persists. Yajna involves renunciation. It means 'giving up'. What is it that we have to give up? Riches? That is quite easy. The home? That too is not difficult. Giving up one's wife and children, one's lands and houses and removing oneself into the forest? That too has been done by many. But, though one's body and mind are in the recesses of the jungle, the wife and children, the lands and houses might still occupy the thoughts and emotions of the person who has come away. What have to be given up, therefore, are one's evil tendencies, harmful thoughts, selfish feelings and longing for sensual pleasures. One has to get rid of envy, of the love for parading oneself. When these have been renounced, hearth and home cannot harm us.

The Vedas desire man to give up the animalist ego, and its complement, anger. The evils of envy, pride and spite belong to the same brood. These are all 'bestial' though human in appearance. They declare that Love, Tolerance, Compassion, Non-attachment, and Adherence to Truth are the genuine human traits.

Jesus Christ said, 'Ask, it shall be given; Call, it will be answered Knock, it shall be opened.' But, are we asking, calling and knocking? Yes. We are asking, we are calling, we are knocking at the door. But, whom are we asking? Whom are we calling? At whose door are we knocking? We are not asking for everlasting bliss; we ask only for short-lived material pleasures. So, we do not get all that we ask for. What is the reason? Has He no compassion? The child is sick but it asks for many varieties of sweets which the mother refuses to give. Does it mean that she hates the child? Or, is she hardhearted? Has she lost her affection? The refusal is itself a sign of compassion. For, each person is an invalid, suffering from recurrent birth and death. Granting whatever is asked can only lengthen the suffering. Hence arises the with-holding and the denial. And, you too do not ask for the indispensable! You do not pray for the peace that knows no break. If you do, the boon will be granted.

Of course, you do call. But, do you call on God, or on some one ungodly? God will respond when the call arises from the heart. Your call is fouled by greed, by hatred against others, by the desire for vengeance, by the hiss of envy and intolerance. I know you knock at the door. But, at which door? Keeping the door of your own heart closed, how can your clamour succeed in getting other door opened? Knock at the door of your own heart, God, the resident, will come into view. Prahlada had the faith that God resides in every heart and everywhere. So, when a pillar in the palace was knocked at, the Lord manifested therefrom. Believe that He resides in you and turn your eyes inward.

You complain that God is merciless, hard to please, etc., only because you do not wish to give Him what you ought to or ask from Him what He would gladly give. Tender hearts, holy thoughts, loving speech—these can invoke the Divine Atma to manifest into awareness. For, these personify Sathya, embody God as Sathya or the Truth of Truths.

Sat-th-ya are the three syllables of Sathya. Seth means, the Sun, Surya. 'Thya' means the glory, the splendour. The Sathya—the glory of the Sun—nourishes and ripens the grain, which is man's

food. Food sustains the vitality, the vital breath. Therefore, Sathya has to be adored and propitiated. The Home or offering of oblations in this ceremonially lit and ceremonially fed fire is the symbolic adoration of the Truth of Truths, the Sathya.

Philosophy is interpreted as the search for Truth. But, Truth is not something to be sought for. You have only to be aware of it, to experience it, to be it. Without it, Philosophy is but full-loss-ophy! These Yajnas which encourage you to sublimate your emotions are all designed to direct you towards the goal.

Truth is totality, the One which integrates and includes the many. The sages of yore were not satisfied with one facet of the Truth or one view, not of one god but of That where all streams merge. As Bairagi Sastry told you now that is the Keshava, whom adoration addressed to all Gods reaches. "Serve deva namaskaarah Kesavam prathigachathi". One house cannot become a village, nor one individual, a society, nor one tree, a forest! To be conscious of the totality, one has to fill oneself with the sublime grandeur of the forest, not squat under a single tree. This is the inner purpose which led aspirants and seekers after Truth to the core of the Himalayan forests. Keeping away from the din of the populace was only an excuse. In the sylvan hermitage, the prayer resonant with Yajur Veda, 'Let all be of one mind, of one heart, towards one goal, sustained by one strength' rose more meaningfully and more effectively. The present socialist ideal of the unity of mankind is a Vedic concept; in fact, the Vedic ideal was even wider and more comprehensive. 'Let all the worlds be happy and prosperous', 'The world is one family', the Vedas proclaimed.

It is wrongly assumed that the Vedas had only one section of the population, one caste, one race, one community in view. This is the result of misreading and mistaken inference. They are concerned, it was said, only with Brahmins and with the Pundits among them. This too is a wrong conclusion. Every Vedic ritual had as its goal the prosperity and peace of the world. The Vedas yearn to establish the welfare of the three worlds—the nether regions, the earth and heaven. It is a pity that a narrow outlook is foisted by short sighted people on such profound texts. The Vedas do not allow scope for distinctions on the basis of caste or creed. They assert, 'I shall save whoever keeps me in memory'. "I shall be beside whoever is beside me." "Whoever adores me in whatever form and through whichever name, I shall manifest myself before them with that form, bearing that name."

Oblations are offered in this sacred fire to the One, but the One is invoked through many names: 'OM! Prostrations to Rudra! OM! Prostrations to Aditya! OM! Prostrations to Varuna' etc. The Rishis or sages had each a favourite form and name and, as a result, the one Lord acquired many names. Many among you perform the worship named, "The hundred thousand" (Lakshaarchana) or "The Weeklong" (Saptaham). What is done then is repeating the names a hundred thousand times, or for full seven days and nights. A flower is placed before the picture or idol, with the pronunciation of a name—Madhava, Keshava, Narayana etc. The idol is the same throughout. When we name Him, Madhava, we are conscious that He is also Keshava and Narayana, and we derive delight from that Knowledge.

Each hymn of the Vedas is called a Rk, which means 'praise'. And the word Veda is derived from the root, Vid, 'to know'. And what exactly should we strive to know? We must know the One, which has no second, no another, no other. So, every word, every statement in the Vedas, every mantra or *rk* in them, connotes only the One, though out of insufficient or wrong understanding people mistake the lesson and ascribe the words to indicate the Many.

It is essential that the true import be grasped by all. Since the opportunities to learn it have declined, mistaken interpretations gain currency. In the course of this week-long Vedic Yajna, we shall delve into the deeper significance of the Vedic teachings.

—*Bhagavan's Discourse on the first day of the Vedapurusha Saptah Yajna, 21.10.82*

When Kama and Krodha are rising in hot flames from the heart, how can the cool rays of Santhi, Sathya, Ahimsa and Prema emanate therefrom? This human birth is a rare chance! Use it for spreading joy, not grief. Of course, it is natural for man to resent, to grow angry. But you should not allow anger free and furious scope. The raging floods in the Godavari have to be restrained by bonds, anicuts and dams so that the water may reach the sea without scouring the fields on either bank. You must set limits to your own anger and hate, and honour those limits.

—Baba

Sutra Vahini

6

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Some others assert that the Universe is a manifestation of Vishnu and that It has its being in Vishnu Himself. They declare that the emergence, subsistence and merging of the Universe are all caused by Vishnu.

Of course, nothing in the Universe can be made without a maker. What, then, must be the nature of the maker of the Cosmos? He must have limitless power, unbounded glory, and perfect omniscience. It is not possible for every one to visualise such a phenomenon, though it is the very fulfillment of the purpose of each one's life! It can, however, be conceived and confirmed by two characteristics: one, called Tatastha, and the other, Swaroopa. Tatastha is the temporary time-bound indication. It cannot confer a correct picture or view. It can only reveal signs and glimpses, off and on. Swaroopa means the very reality in its fullness. This is the result of the illumination of intuitive wisdom. It reveals the immanent and the transcendent, the limitless source of All.

Every entity, article, or thing in the Universe has five qualities: asti, bhaati, priyam, roopam, namam. Asti means 'Is'. So, Is-ness is the feature of all that is. Bhaati means 'shining', luminescence. The thing that is known to us is capable of being known to us because it shines; it

has the power to enter our consciousness. Then, we have the word, Priyam. Everything is capable of being used or benefited from and therefore becomes dear, attractive; fondness is the meaning of Priyam. The two other features, Roopam and Namam, Form and Name, are casual and not inherent. They do change and can be modified. All things seem to undergo some transformation or other and often assume again the original form. They are apparent alterations of the basic entities, which have the first three features always. Name and form are super impositions on the basic reality of 'Is-ness', 'Illumination' and 'Joy'. The Divine is the base, the Divine will is the superstructure. The beads are many but the inter-connecting, integrating string of the rosary is one. So, too, for the entire world of living beings, God, the permanent, omnipresent, Parabrahma, the Supreme Divine consciousness, is the base. 'Soham', 'He is 'I', 'I am that', all these axioms indicate that even those which differentiate themselves under names and forms are in fact God Himself. This is the reason why it is proclaimed in the Vedas, 'He who knows Brahman becomes Brahman Himself'. This awareness is the awareness of the Reality.

The bubble born of water floats in it and bursts on it to become one with it. All the visible objective worlds are like the bubbles emanating from the vast ocean of Divinity, Brahman. They are on the waters and are sustained by water. How else can they arise and exist? Finally, they merge and disappear in water itself. For their origination, subsistence and mergence, they depend on water only. Water is one, bubbles are plentiful. Water is real, bubbles are appearances. Water is the basis; bubbles are delusive forms of the same imposed on it.

One is struck with wonder at this wonderful manifestation. But, in the ancient eras of Time and in the far corners of space, from the inert unconscious tangle of Nature, the mystery of life emerged and proliferated into men and god-men. This is a fact known to all and cognisable by all. But, can the low be posited as the cause of the high? The low can only be the cause of the low. We can say that the inert can at best be the cause of the mind, which also is part of the body complex, but only the Divine will can be the cause of all creation, having the five features already mentioned. How else the complex mind arose and got established no one can describe.

The theory is that all events in the Universe follow certain laws and norms. It is not always self-evident but physics is tending to prove that it is quite feasible. The very first Sutra indicates the Universal Supreme called Brahman. This second Sutra describes the same Brahman in another form, through another facet. The first lays down the Truth, Wisdom and Freedom (Sathyam, Jnanam and Swatantra). The second Sutra lays down the creative aspect of Brahman, and declares that the aspect cannot be limited to this particular cosmos.

Each has its own Dharma or Innate specialty or individuality or lone characteristic. This rule applies equally to blades of grass and the stars. The Cosmos is not one continuous flux. It is progressing persistently towards achieving a totality and unity. This progress may cause changes in the qualities and circumstances. Man too can transform himself through self-effort and discrimination from his present status to a more holy and beneficial status. The moral forces permeating the cosmos will certainly promote our achievement. But, man is too immersed in the all-pervasive delusion to take advantage of these and elevate himself. He is not aware of the path

of peace and harmony in the world. He is not able to hold on to the good and avoid the bad. He cannot establish himself firmly in the Dharmic Path.

(To be continued)

AVATAR VANI:

The Daily Prayer

*Without giving up sloth, how can Truth be known?
Without giving up passion, can devotion take root?
Be serene and calm, in stress and storm,
That is the Satwic Road to win the Lord, the Truth.*

The mind is a wonder; its antics are even more surprising. It has no distinct form or shape, It assumes the shape or form of the thing it is involved in. Wandering from wish to wish, flitting from one desire to another, is its nature. So, it is the cause of loss and grief, of elation and depression. Its effects are both positive and negative.

It is worthwhile for man to know the characteristics of the mind and the ways to master it for one's ultimate benefit. The mind is prone to gather experiences and store them in the memory. It does not know the art of giving up. Nothing is cast away by the mind. As a consequence, grief, anxiety and misery continue simmering in it. If only the mind can be taught Tyaga (renunciation), one can become a Yogi (spiritually serene person).

The clock, to all appearances, keeps on ticking away continuously. But this is really not the case. It is not continuous, for there is, one can notice, a short pause between one tick and the next. That is the interval of rest. But, the mind does not have even this short interval between one thought and the next. And in the continuous succession of thoughts, there is no order or relationship. This adds to the confusion and concern. This is the main source of ill-health in man. We are at present planning and preparing for physical rest and recreation and we know that even machines need hours of rest! But, we have neglected the duty of ensuring rest for the mind. Dhyana is the name for the period of rest we provide for the busy and wayward mind.

The heart is engaged, like the ticking of the clock, in beats—but, a new pulse of energy is generated between one beat and another. It makes for the flow, regardless of the past or the future moments. It is a constant flux towards a goal.

The swimmer on the river has to push aside the waters in front to the sides and to kick the waters to the back so that he can move forward straight and fast. Forcing the water back is the act that takes him forward. That is to say, do not attach importance to it. Throw it back, give it up, renounce; that alone can help you to progress, even an inch. Instead, man collects and stores,

accumulates and takes pride in what he holds firm, regardless of the preciousness of the human trait of renunciation. So, we sink in material possessions, victories and vagaries. We do not float or swim across the temptations.

We must try to discover and learn the means of progress. A poet sang, "Can canines conceive of colourful poetry? Or, donkeys know of the taste of the parched grains that we load on them? Or, a blind man admire the charm of the full moon?" We may well ask, how can a man sunk in relative knowledge become aware of the Absolute, Atma? But there is no reason for despair, or for condemning ourselves as mean and low. For, when small men take big decisions, they earn encouragement from the great. When the tiny squirrel decided to share in building the passage across the sea, did it not receive the blessings of Lord Rama? The squirrel knew that its help could only be infinitesimal, but the feeling of dedication which prompted it won the grace of God.

Men, however, generally do not sublimate small Sadhana through high purpose. They engage in Bhajan, Puja and Dhyana but these are but physical exercises! The mind does not elevate them into sincerity. The heart does not pour forth or vibrate in them. So, they remain at the human level. They do not rise to the Divine. "Can the lake be filled when there is only a sprinkle of rain? Can thirst be relieved, when saliva gets in? Can the belly be full, if breathing is held tight? Can live cinders be secured by the burning of blades of grass?" asks the poet. Logs have to be burned if charcoal is needed: only sheets of rain can fill a lake to the brim; a glass of cold water alone can cure a person of thirst, nothing less. The heart has to be offered in full. Devotion has to fill and overflow the heart. Look at the lotus; its roots are in under-water slush. It grows through water and floats on it. But, it does not get tarnished by slush or wetted by water! The wonder is, it cannot survive without slush and water, but it rises up to the air and the sun, nevertheless! Our life has its roots in the Atma and it grows through the agitated waves of living. It can never uproot itself from its Atmic source.

Man has, through the ages, sought liberation, struggled for freedom from bondage. But, he has no correct apprehension of what he has to liberate himself from, what the bondage is from which he has to be freed. Many are not even aware that they are imprisoned and are bound. So, they do not even try to free themselves. Is the family, the wife and children, the prison? Are riches, properties and possessions the bonds? Are attractions and aversions the bonds that curb him? No. No one of these binds him. The tightest bond that limits his feelings and deeds is his ignorance of who he really is.

Until one is aware of the Atma, one is certain to be tossed from grief to grief, with intervals of joy. The grief has three sources and so, it has three characteristics: grief caused by the unreality of the apparent, grief caused by want of knowledge or wrong apprehension on account of the limitations of our instruments of perception and inference or on account of the mystery of the Divine phenomenon that subsists in everything, and the grief caused by the death, disintegration or dissolution of things which we held to be real! When one is established in the awareness of the truth of the Jivi (the self), the Jagat (the creation) and God (the Creator), he need have no grief or fear any more.

Let us consider Jagat, the visible cosmos around us, which we can cognise. The things we experience in dreams disappear when we wake. The things we see when awake are also short-lived. During sleep, we are not aware of the world at all. Though the body is in the bedroom, we dream, and the dream is direct and dramatic, that we are busy shopping in Mount Road, Madras! So, the waking, dreaming and sleeping stages are all only relatively real, deludingly real. When you come towards the hostel at dusk singing Bhajans, the boy in the front row shouts in fear, "Snake! Snake!" seeing a piece of rope on the road. Every one halts, for, at the word 'Snake' fear overtakes all. Fear made them step back. But, was it a snake? A boy looked at it with a lit torch, and found that it was a piece of rope. That very moment, the snake disappeared, carrying with it fear from everyone! Ignorance caused it, knowledge removed it. When the torch lights up the world, it is seen to be really God, Vishnu, the Divine Body, sacred substance, Sat-Chit-Ananda. The Asat or Unreal is realised as Sat or Real.

The process of living is the swinging of a pendulum from smile to tear. Childhood is too tender and innocent; youth is too full of folly and faults, middle age is muddled with problems and possible remedies; old age is spent in regret over past failings and falterings. When can man taste some little sincere joy? Nature is the vesture of God. It images the Supreme. It shines through the machinations of the mind. The inner core of each living thing is God. Joys and sorrows are the results of the mind's involvement in the transient and the trivial. Like the Sun, divine grace falls. The Sun is not tarnished by anything harmful which it falls upon. The Self too is unaffected by the effects of the mind pursuing the senses wherever they lead it. When one becomes aware that the Self is God, there can be no fear of death haunting him. The building may collapse, but the basis is safe. When does man die? Every moment he dies; every moment, he is born. When the next tick does not happen, it is death. When it beats again, one is born anew: Faith is life; absence of faith is death. Only the body dies; the Atma is beyond birth and death. Aware of this, one is soaked in Ananda. Give up what has to be cast away, know what has to be known and attain what has to be attained, then, Ananda becomes your unruffled nature. So give up the idea of the world being valid; know the reality of the Self and attain the Source, the Brahman.

This is the significance of the Upanishadic Prayer, which you use every day before the lessons start at the Institute

Asatho maa sath gamaya
(Lead me from the Unreal to the Real)
Thamaso maa Jyothir gamaya
(Lead me from darkness to light)
Mrthyor maa amrtham gamaya
(Lead me from death to Immortality)

This is a prayer asking to be led from the Jagat, which is constantly being built and rebuilt, resolved and dissolved, into the Divine whose Being undergoes no change. The darkness symbolises the ignorance which induces identification with the body-senses-mind-reason complex. The light reveals the Divine core, over which all the rest is superimposed by the fog of

faulty vision. Death affects only the body-mind complex. When we are led into the light, we become aware that we are the undying Atma, and so we become immortal.

The human heart is an ocean, whose depth none can gauge nor can anyone limit its horizon. The ocean has countless pearls and precious corals but it has also sharks and crocodiles. One has to explore continuously and boldly for the gems and pearls of good thoughts and feelings, and cultivate them more and more.

There are two obstacles which prevent man in this valuable effort. The first is the tendency to compare yourselves with others. This is very wrong. No two things or no two men are identical. Even identical twins grow in distinct ways of life. No one of the millions of leaves on a tree is exactly the same as another. Botanists are aware of this feature. Billions of human beings are on the earth, but which is the press which has given each of them a novel imprint? This is the glory of God. Millions of boxes are manufactured by a company; all are identical; all can be locked and opened by the same set of keys. Man is created by God, each with his distinct nature, quality, potentiality and destiny. How, then, can any one compare himself with another and either exult or despair? We say he is tall and feel dejected because we are short. We are proud that we are better than others. All this is very silly when we come to think of it.

Secondly, we are in the habit of justifying our faults, rationalising our errors and avoiding the responsibility of facing them squarely and correcting them. These two attitudes thicken man's ignorance and breed further failings. Every one has God as the source. No one is higher or lower. We are all kin, through God from whom we have come. Parents and other physical kith and kin are those whose impact we feel on the way. But, the Source and the Goal are God and God only.

"Keeping the child on her hip, the mother reamed in search of the child, which she thought had wandered far. She was peering into the face of every child to discover whether it was hers. Poor unripe fruit! Incompletely wise"; laments the poet. One can ripen only when the Divine in us is developed, after its discovery. Live in God, with God, live on God and for God. Drink God, eat God, see God, reach God. God is the Truth, the substance, the Heart of Man. 'I am the occupant of your heart', says Krishna. Every cell in the human body is God, though under a microscope you cannot find Him. You are now recording my speech in the cassette. But can you see my voice or words now on the cassette? No. When you play it back, you can hear the words. So too, the body is the tape, the voice of God is immanent. Equip it with faith and tune it with Love. Then, you can imbibe my voice and words. A pure heart, a cleansed mind, a God-filled consciousness will help you to listen to the voice of the God within you.

—Discourse at Sathya Sai Hostel, Prasanthi Nilayam 8-1-1983

SHIVARATRI MESSAGE:

The Ever—Auspicious Lord

*The Manifest Form of Om, the One who has come to teach,
The One who churns for butter, the hearts and minds of men,
The Friend, the charmer, the liberator from blinding bondage,
The Comforter of those who clamour and pray, the Destroyer of currents that drag,
The Consoler of torn hearts, like the moon so cool,
The Derider of Pride, the Healer, curing birth and death,
The Lotus-eyed, the Negator of Time, Himself the process and the play of Time,
The Thief who steals for Himself the pure minds of the good,
Beauty embodied, the child of Devaki, Vaasudeva, Son of Vasudev,
The glory of the Yadu race, is here, with you, beside you.*

Embodiments of Love!

The man who is unable to imbibe true wisdom, which broadens the mind, and to explore the inner truth about life, cannot promote the welfare of the world. The well-being of the world depends on the well-being of society and the latter depends on the welfare of individuals. All these are mutually interdependent. They are integrally related to one another. Hence the need for individuals in society to be truthful in thought, word and deed. The spiritual principle clearly warns those who mouth slogans of peace but indulge in acts inimical to peace. Human life can be truly understood only in the context of harmony and co-operation. For this to be realised, one must engage oneself in service to society. Such service is rooted in spiritual faith.

Man today is exploring outer space, but does not know the truth about himself. Those who cannot know their own true nature cannot accomplish much. They cannot perceive the Real. And without perceiving the Real, they cannot realise Bliss (Ananda).

There is nothing that man cannot achieve, but before attempting anything he must recognise his powers, role and Purpose in life. As long as he is bound by ignorance of his true nature, he cannot escape from sorrow.

The cosmos, as has been said before, is a manifestation of the will of the Divine. To realise the Divine, however, it is not necessary to explore creation (Prakriti). Everything in the universe is subject to change, impermanence and disappearance. How, then, does it acquire such importance and value? This is because of the Jivis (the human beings) without whom the universe will be valueless. Here is a small example. In cities like Madras, Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta there are millions of people. In these cities land costs hundreds of rupees per square metre. But, for the same price one can buy many acres of land in a jungle. Why is land so costly in cities? It is because of the density of population in them. In a forest, remote from human aggregations, land has little value.

Man is the most valuable being in the Universe. He is also the creator of all values. The gold-bearing ore that is mined from the earth acquires value after it has been extracted and

refined by human effort. Likewise, the rough diamond that is got from a mine becomes extremely valuable after it is cut and shaped by man.

Immersed in worldly concerns and looking upon material things as the source of happiness, men become victims of unhappiness. The material world can only produce sorrow. Man must turn away from the material to the Divine. Involvement with the mundane should yield place to the quest for Self-realisation.

Life is like a tangled skein of yarn. The more you try to unravel it, the more tangled it becomes. Life is like a tank infested with crocodiles. It is difficult to cross it avoiding the crocodiles. But it has to be done. Life is like a block of ice that is continually melting away. Before it melts completely, the truth has to be realised. People believe that man is controlled by the nine planets (navagrahas). But he is in fact the creature of two evil planets, Attachment (Raga) and Hatred (Dwesa).

Life is a short play on the stage. This body is like a bubble. The mind is always fickle. In the Gita, Arjuna confesses to Krishna that the mind, which is constantly vacillating, is difficult to control. Nevertheless, man has to concentrate on his true destination. What is this destination, the goal and the aim of life? The Bhagavata and the Bhagavad Gita have made this clear. Our destination is the source from which we came. As long as the individual is caught up in the phenomenal world (Prakriti), his mind will be unsteady and vacillating.

As long as there is life in the body it is Sivam (sacred). Once life goes out, it is nothing. The Vedic axiom, 'So-ham' ("He is I") is demonstrated by the inhaling done during breathing. When you inhale and say "So" (He) you are taking in Divinity. When you exhale and utter "Aham", you are giving up the 'I'. "Soham" proclaims the identity of the individual and the Divine. ('I am He'.) This identity will not be understood as long as one is caught up in the tentacles of the material world.

This is the truth about God. If one asks, 'Where is that God?' the answer is given in the 18th canto of the Bhagavad Gita in Stanza 61. Krishna has declared there: 'Iswaras-sarvabhuthaanaam hridde Arjuna tishtathi' (The Lord resides in the heart region of all beings.) We study the Gita. We adore it. There is daily recitation, but no practical application in daily life. The one who realises his identity with the Divine will not cause hurt to any one. Service to the public is true worship of God. The power of the divine permeates everything. Our journey is from the individual to the Universal—from 'Swam' (mine) to 'So-ham' (Oneness with God), from 'I' to 'we',

The effulgent sun can be seen only with his own light. Similarly, only by the grace of the Divine can one obtain a vision of the Divine. No skill, intellectual effort or scholarship is required to experience the Divine. Just as clouds may obscure the sun, the clouds of egoism, attachment and hatred prevent one from seeing the Divine. Prayer and Sadhana are the means by which these clouds are dispersed. Sadhana (spiritual discipline) is the royal road to reach the Divine. The human make-up is a mixture of good and bad traits. One in whom the good traits

predominate, tends to see only the good in others. One who has few good qualities tends to see only the faults in others. Those who have equal-mindedness see the good and bad qualities impartially. It is necessary therefore to cultivate good qualities.

Whether one does good or bad acts, there is no escape from their consequences. Knowing this, our ancients always sought what was good and auspicious. This is the meaning of the worship of Siva. When we speak of Shivaratri, we refer to the night that is associated with Siva, that is, an auspicious night. Sivam means that which is auspicious. The Siva principle is totally free from anything that is inauspicious or unholy in any circumstance. When incarnations like Rama and Krishna appear in human bodies, they have some inauspicious associations related to their bodies. Although they incarnate for the purpose of saving the world, protecting the devotees and uplifting humanity, they have to shed their bodies sometime or other. Hence, in the names of such avatars, the honorific 'Sri' is prefixed to indicate the sacredness of their advent. But for Siva no such appellation is needed because Siva transcends corporeal limitations. Unlike Sri Rama or Sri Krishna there is no "Sri Siva" or 'Sri Sankara'. Siva or Sankara is always auspicious. The realisation of oneness with Siva means the attainment of immortality.

'Chandrama manaso Jaathah.' says the Purusha Sukta. The mind arose from the moon. The moon has sixteen digits. Likewise the mind has sixteen digits. On Shivaratri night, fifteen of the moon's sixteen digits are invisible, and only one digit can be seen. The mind also is in the same state. If during Shivaratri one meditates on God, one can achieve nearness to the Divine. Supreme sacredness of Shivaratri consists in realising oneness with the Divine through meditation on God.

What you deny is the Reality; only the Divine exists. The world is the unreal. Forgetting the Real, men are lost in the pursuit of the transient. The world must be viewed as the reflected image of the Divine. All acts must be done as an offering to the Divine.

True devotees of God should not attach any importance to differences of religion, caste or sect. These are merely differences in name and form. Realising that the sacred Siva principle is present in everyone, the devotee should not look down upon anyone or cause harm to others. Dr. Chenna Reddy spoke about the greatness of the name 'Saamba Sadaasiva'. Saa+Amba+Sadaasiva represent the union of the Universal Mother and the Universal Father, who are eternally auspicious. Saambasiva is the embodiment of the Siva-Shakti union. The world may change, but the Siva principle is unchanging. The same union of the Universal Mother and Father is represented by the name and form of 'Sai Baba'.

—*Bhagavan's Discourse at Poornachandra Auditorium on 11-2-1983*

The Three Levels

The Love of God, evident as Grace, is the greatest achievement of man. This is referred to as Bhakti. The practice of Bhakti needs, as every other laudable adventure, a mind free from lust,

anger, envy, greed, pride and false attachment. A room that is dark becomes the resort of scorpions, snakes and other pests. A heart that has no illumination derived from the Atmic reality will be infested by the vices mentioned above. Not being aware of the Atma is the source of darkness, the thickest of ignorances. The thought of God, the contemplation of God, the grace of God—these alone can confer the purity we need. Some one praised a young man profusely but added that he had only two tiny defects. So, he was chosen as the groom for the wedding and after the ceremony was duly accomplished, it was discovered that the two defects were; (1) he does not know anything and (2) he does not heed anyone's advice. Most people suffer from this predicament. There is no independent thinking; there is no desire to learn. For, they are reluctant to put into practice what they learn as good and honourable.

Creation is another name for the projection of the Divine Will. Man's main purpose in life is to exemplify and stand witness to this Will. What the Divine Will has endowed us with has to be devoted and dedicated to the same Will. Whatever you do, do as an offering to Him; then, it will reach Him for certain.

At the present time, people hanker after quick material profits and not after Divine Grace and simple sincere lives. If God resides at one place or can be discovered at one spot, He can be realised and reached. But, He is everywhere at the same time. So, instead of man seeking God, what is happening is God is seeking men, who are ready to reach Him and renounce their egoistic impulses in order to do His Will.

Knowledge progresses from doubt and discovery. Yesterday's doubt is today's knowledge. And today's knowledge becomes tomorrow's wisdom. Discover unity in multiplicity and know that it is Divinity. At the base of things, in the lowest level, is Matter. Humanity is the higher, the upper, and Divinity is the highest, the uppermost level. Humans must dread the descent into the material level.

Life must be heightened and lightened by self-sacrifice. How can a cup full of water take on milk? The water has to be poured out. When the cup of the heart is full of evil, no virtue can be stored therein. You need not renounce action; you can renounce the idea of aggrandizement or ownership when the action results in victory or defeat. Limit your greed, your superfluous desires and try to be simple in dress, speech and behaviour with others. When a man was offered free all the land he could walk around from sunrise to sun set, the poor fellow walked so fast and so long that he died before he could reach the starting point. That is the fate of the greedy. Students are haunted today by a host of desires. Confine your desires to those that promote your studies and make you more helpful and self-reliant. Be enthusiastic to do good, to be godly. Ignore the evil that others do to you and forget the good that you do to them. Be good, do good, see good.

—Bhagavan's address to students at Brindavan, 30-12-82

The Lord's Response

The Bhagavata and similar works contain countless stories of how God responds to the prayers of devotees. They also speak of how tears of *Bhakti* can bind *Bhagavan* and draw him close to the *Bhakta*. Here is a personal experience of how Sai responds to devotion.

Since 1962 I benefited greatly from reading Aditya Hridayam (the hymns addressed to Surya, the Sun-god.) Subsequently a couple of others also derived solace and comfort from it. In 1981, I developed a strong desire to bring out Aditya Hridayam in English so that those who could read no other (Indian) language might benefit from the English version. By early 1982 I had prepared a simple manuscript. The idea was to dedicate the booklet to Bhagavan Baba. The first 1500 printed copies were to be presented to Him.

The basic manuscript prepared by me had the following contents: a short introduction, the 31 Sanskrit slokas and three experiences of devotees. I gave this manuscript to Prof. A. N. Rao of Singapore for editing and correcting. Inspired by Bhagavan, the Professor added several more pages providing an expanded introduction, meaning for the slokas and details about the significance of the prayer. The Professor also supervised the printing of the book.

As planned, I collected the 1500 copies of the book on October 30 and landed at Madras that night. My father was also with me. On the morning of 31st, my father and I left for Bangalore and from there we went with a few friends to Puttaparthi. We were at the Mandir in the Darshan line by the evening.

Swami slowly came along the verandah of the Mandir. As usual, the verandah was full of the college and school students. Swami took a few minutes to arrive at the end of the verandah and after getting doyen from the verandah. He stopped and started looking at the crowd sitting in the various lines on the eastern side of the quadrangle. I was sitting on the southern side in the second row. I started wondering and worrying which way He would go, and then began to weep. I was weeping and saying the following in a very low tone: "Come. Oh Lord of mine, Sai, come. I am here. I have brought the books. Come." He turned towards me, looked at me, smiled and came straight towards me. I gave Him two letters and a copy of the book. While He was looking at it, I took *Padanamaskar* and asked Him to whom the 1500 copies should be delivered. He told me to deliver them to Sri Kutumba Rao. He then moved along the lines of devotees.

After a few minutes, I was still enjoying the bliss conferred by the Lord. My father and my friends were still lost in the contemplation of what they had witnessed. To Him, it was His nature. To me, it was yet another instance of a peep into His glory and divinity.

—*Bhanoji Rao, Jakarta*

Gandhi said, 'My India is the India of villages'. The freedom that has been won and the prosperity that is looked forward to can be ensured only when the villagers are free and

prosperous. And this depends in its turn on the freedom and prosperity of each family in the village. Now, there is no unity, no mutual co-operation, no love between the four or five brothers in, the family; everyone is at cross purposes with the rest How then can the village enjoy freedom and peace and prosperity? And what to speak of the country when the condition of its villages is so bad? Every person seeks positions of authority, without trying to deserve the authority by means of the qualifications necessary to use it in the right way. Of course if a person has good intentions and full capabilities and the vision of the Divine, he can well seek authority and discharge it well. But, we seldom see any one thinking of one's duty; everywhere people are after the acquisition of positions of authority.

—Baba

AVATAR VANI

Ceiling on Desires

The varied implications of the programme of 'Ceiling on desires', decided on at the Tenth All-India Conference of Sathya Sai Organisations, were explained by Bhagavan Baba in His discourse to members of the Tamil Nadu Sathya Sai Organisations at Abbotsbury on January 19. Bhagavan said:

Members appear to be confused about the true meaning of this programme. There are four components in the term 'Ceiling on desires'. They are, respectively, curb on excessive talk, curb on excessive desires and expenditure, control of consumption of food, check on waste of energy. Man needs some essential commodities for his sustenance and he should not aspire for more. We can learn a lesson in this respect from Nature. Only if air is available in sufficient quantity will it be comfortable and good. If it is excessive and there is a gale you will feel uncomfortable. When you are thirsty, you can consume only a limited quantity of water. You can't consume the entire water of the Ganges! We take only as much as is needed for the sustenance of the body.

Doctors know that the body temperature is normally 98.4°. If this goes up to 99° they say fever has set in due to some disorder in the body. We inhale and exhale at a normal rate. If there is a slight increase or decrease in the rate it indicates disorder in the body. Changes in the pulse rate or blood pressure also indicate disorder. So you find that if you cross the limits even to a little extent it is dangerous or harmful to the body. There is a limit for everything to function in a normal way. When your eyes happen to see a flash of lightning or a flashlight while taking photographs, they automatically close because they can't withstand such high illumination. Eardrums also cannot tolerate hearing beyond a certain volume and we close our ears or keep cotton inside the ears. From these we see that our life is a *limited company*!

Similarly our desires also should be limited. Women are usually desirous of adding to their wardrobe any number of saris when they go to a shop or an exhibition. You should have a reasonable number of saris, but not a huge collection for pomp or show. Misuse of money is a

great evil. Even men will have to do their own bit in controlling the expenditure on unwanted and unnecessary things. Money is Daiva-swaroopam (embodiment of divinity). When you talk of wealth you should be careful to avoid avaricious accumulation and extravagant expenditure. Even in the preparation of food, you should be careful in avoiding wastage. We are only doing a disservice by consuming more food than what is necessary for the body. Thirdly you should be careful about "time", which is the yardstick of life. Seconds become hours, hours become years, years make Yugas and so on. You should not waste this most valuable 'time'. Time lost in wasteful pursuits can't be got back by any means. All our activities should be planned for utilising the available time to maximum advantage.

So, we should not waste food, money, time and energy. Even in purchase of garlands, you need not waste money. What God wants is the flower of your heart that is filled with humility and devotion. Eight types of flowers can be offered to God, viz., (1) Ahimsa (Non-violence), (2) Indriya Nigraha (control of senses), (3) Sarva bhootha Daya (compassion towards all beings), (4) Sathyam (Truth), (5) Dhyanam (Meditation), (6) Santhi (Peace), (7) Vinaya (Humility), (8) Devotion (Bhakti).

I feel very much concerned about the excessive money that is spent by the Trust and Samiti on the expensive huge garlands offered to me on every occasion and also the use of flowers for decorating the path. No doubt you are doing this as an expression of your Ananda. But I won't call this Bhakti, though you may not own this. We should realise our defects and rectify them. You may show your affection by just handing over one flower and spend the money wasted on garlands for helping the poor people in distress. People may think that Baba will not like it if flower paths are not provided and huge garlands are not offered. You must understand that God appreciates only your motive and not the external things. By indulging in such exhibitionism, you will only spoil the name of the organisation. As a member of Sathya Sai Organisation you should have no sense of ego or pride. As I have often said you should have your "Hands in society and heads in the forest." This should be your guiding principle. What little you do you must do with a good and pure heart.

In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna has referred to "Patram, Phalam, Pushpam, Toyam", that is, leaf, fruit, flower or water that can be offered to God. I am pleased with any of these provided it is offered with sincere devotion. What is "patram"? It is not the 'leaf' that you see around you. The inner meaning is that your body itself is the leaf. Flower is not in the one in the plants but it is the flower of your heart, "Hridaya Pushpam". 'Phalam' is not the ordinary fruit but "Manophalam", the fruit of your mind. "Toyam" means water but what is referred to here is not the water from the river or tap. It refers to the tears of joy welling up within you from a sincere and prayerful heart.

Moreover you should not only practise yourself but teach others also about this ceiling on desires. Though Narayana is in everyone, the one in the poor people is referred to as "Daridra Narayana". When this Narayana begs for food, you refuse to give him food while you offer food to another person who is already well fed. You place before God's pictures a lot of food of rich variety as "Naivedyam" or offering. You do this because you know you know well that this is

coming back to you. So, here too it is "Swartham", self-interest and not "Tyagam" (sacrifice). The immortality (amritatwa) or (Moksha) liberation will come out of (Tyagam) sacrifice.

We have Seva Dal, Bhajan Mandalis, and other Wings. It is a good sign that more and more youngsters are coming forward to join the Seva Dal and take part in service activities. The participation of youth is necessary for the welfare of the world. We should rejoice when they turn over a new leaf in their life. There is a commonplace saying that you should not rejoice and distribute sweets etc. when a child is born, but you should do so only when the son grows up and earns a good name as a "Satputra". You can't please me just by joining as, a member of the organisation: I shall wait for the day when you turn over a new leaf and transform yourselves into better individuals. You should become 'Guna-seelas' (persons of sterling character and good qualities).

It is the code of conduct which is responsible for the organisation moving forward growing from strength to strength. The office-bearers should exercise maximum care to see that the code of conduct is adhered to and guide others also in the right path. When a cook in a house works with integrity -the master on his own will entrusts him with the keys of the house. Similarly, God also will appreciate only men with integrity. The desire to please God should be the fundamental motive.

Brahmopadesam by Bhagavan

"Unique", "Heavenly", Unforgettable", "thrilling"—these were some of the epithets used by parents and devotees who were present at the mass Upanayanam ceremony for 680 boys performed by Bhagavan in the Poornachandra Auditorium on March 17.

Never had such a ceremony taken place anywhere in India on such a scale and in an atmosphere surcharged with holiness. Parents, who had come from all parts of India and from foreign countries as far apart as Canada and Indonesia, were keen that their children should be initiated in the Gayatri mantra by Bhagavan Himself in the sacred atmosphere of Prasanthi Nilayam. In response to their prayers, Bhagavan had intended to perform the Upanayanam ceremony for about 555 boys, but by March 15th, the applicants for the initiation exceeded 900. Bhagavan, yielding to the Importunities of earnest devotees, raised the number to 680.

Bhagavan was the inspirer and guide at every stage of the ceremony. On March 16, Bhagavan personally presented to each of the 680 vatus (initiates) who had assembled in the Mandir, the sacred yellow 'Deeksha' clothes (Dhoti and upper cloth) which they were to wear for the next day's Upanayanam ceremony.

On the morning of the 17th all the vatus assembled in the Mandir and went in a procession to the Poornachandra Hall, preceded by the chanting of Vedic hymns and Nadaswaram music. They

carried the Brahmachari dandas (sticks) given to them by Bhagavan. The sight of these young vatus—most of them aged 10 to 20 and coming from Sai Educational Institutions—marching in procession in their bright yellow robes suggested that here was a potential army of "Soldiers of the Spirit" getting ready to fulfill Bhagavan's divine mission.

When they came to the Poornachandra Hall, the stage was set for the morning's ceremony. Before Bhagavan arrived, all the vatus had been seated in long rows, with their parents or relatives beside them. While the priests were reciting the Punyaha Vachanam mantras, Bhagavan went round the hall, distributing individually the Yagnopavitam (the sacred thread) to each of the boys. After this arduous exercise, the ceremony of putting on the sacred thread was gone through, with the chief purohit reciting the relevant mantras from the dais, which were repeated by the vatus.

Then came the vital part of the day's ceremony—the imparting of the Gayatri mantra (known as Brahmopadesam) to the vatus as the prerequisite for their entry into the life of a Brahmachari and for their study of scriptures under a guru. Bhagavan gave the Brahmopadesam Himself, reciting the words of the Gayatri mantra, which the vatus repeated after Him. It was a solemn occasion for everybody concerned. The parents and the vatus felt that they had been immeasurably blessed by the Grace of Bhagavan in receiving the Brahmopadesam from the Avatar Himself.

The Chief Purohit then recited the Sandhya Vandana mantras, which the Brahmacharis would have to utter when they performed the Sandhya Vandanam thrice a day.

Bhagavan graciously went round the hall twice again, once to see that the Yagnopavitams were properly worn and again to bless the vatus and the parents individually. It was a blissful experience for all of them, as Bhagavan showered sacred rice grains (akshada) on all of them and blessed them.

Returning to the stage after these strenuous rounds, which must have involved walking up and down the long rows of vatus at least thirty times, Bhagavan delivered His divine discourse on the supreme significance of the Gayatri mantra. (The text of the discourse is published separately.)

Bhagavan had arranged for a feast for all the participants in the morning's function in the canteen.

In the evening, there was another meeting at the Poornachandra Auditorium at which Prof. Gokak and Bhagavan spoke.

Bhagavan's sublime discourse on various aspects of Dharma was the crowning event in a day of memorable experiences for the thousands who had gathered in Prasanthi Nilayam

—V. K. N.

AVATAR VANI:

For All Mankind

*With a few virtues only but with scholarship vast
What good can one do? What honour can one gain?
With ten acres of land on which no crop can grow
What can one gain? 'Tis enough, if one has a fertile patch.*

Embodiments of Love,

The Rg Veda, the first among the four, has come down to us in exactly the same way that it was recited in the past. It is a far-spreading tree, with many branches. Of the 25 that once existed, only two are now available. But, these have been preserved intact by means of an elaborate system of memorisation, by which while one set of pupils recite seriatim, another does so back and forth, a third with alternate syllables omitted etc. The techniques have distinct names like Jade, Mala, Sikha, Danda, Ratha, Dhawaja, Ghana, etc.

The reality in man is laid down as Prana, Vital Energy, in the Rg Veda. But, this is inconsistent with the view also found therein that the Atma which is embodied in man and all living beings is eternal universal Consciousness having no attributes or characteristics or modes. The Rg Veda speaks of three bonds that encumber man—*Adhyatmic*, where Atma means the person and Adhyatmic bond refers to the ill-nesses and diseases that affect the person, physically and mentally, Adibhoutic bonds bring about pain and suffering through involvement with other living beings, especially poisonous insects, snakes, scorpions, wild animals, etc., Adidaivic bonds cause terror and loss by what can be called 'acts of God', against which man is helpless, such as floods and drought, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, avalanches, thunderbolts and meteors. The Rg Veda prescribes means to overcome or modify the consequences of these calamities, by achieving progress in physical, mental and spiritual fields of activity.

The Rg Veda is primarily concerned with Karma and is part of the Karma Kanda, the Path of Works, to attain the Absolute. There are three stages in the soul's journey to its source, Karma, Dharma and Brahma.

Karma is the sincere discharge of one's duty, as laid down in the scriptures and as beneficial to our standard and status. Through Karma done for some benefit in view, man progresses towards Karma with no benefit in view, so that he does it as a rightful obligation, undeterred by defeat or unaffected by success. He does Karma, regulated by Dharma. Then, his consciousness is purified and elevated and can help him to become aware of his Reality as the Self which includes all, Brahman.

Without bud and bloom, no fruit does emerge,
Without tiny fruit, maybe trite and tender,
No taste of sweetness can grow and gratify.

The flower is Karma, the tender fruit is Dharma and the taste which gratifies is Brahman. The bud blossoms through devotion and the fruit emerges into virtue and ripens by the acquisition of the awareness of One. The three are inevitable ingredients. To give you a familiar example, the coconut chutney you make at home has four ingredients: salt, chillies, tamarind and the kernel of the nut. To procure all these—clean and pure—in the required quantities is Karma, the Path of Works. To put them together and press them into a paste is also Karma, part of the Path. Then, you put a little on the tongue to discover whether it tastes aright, as the genuine chutney should. Has it all the Dharma of a chutney? This is the Path of Dharma. When you find that a sprinkle of salt would make it authentic, you add it, at this stage. Or, if it is more, you mix with it some more saltless paste, until it is just right. And, you derive delight, as a reward. That is the stage of joy, of contentment, the end of desire, Brahman.

Being born, brought up and grown in age is Karma; we realise that to live for oneself is not the way to happiness. We take to the path of Dharma or virtue, sacrifice, service. But we discover that involvement with problems does not give lasting joy. So, we turn towards the everlasting Source of Peace, Harmony and Delight—Brahman, God.

The Vedas teach not only Karma (rites, rituals, vows, sanctifying observances) but also Dharma. In fact, it is said that the Vedas are the roots which feed Dharma and hold it fast—'Vedoktha Dharma moolam'. Since Dharma is the sustainer of the entire world and Law regulates the Cosmos, Vedas have universal validity. There are latent as well as patent forces that urge every particle or wave in the Cosmos. When they are operating in coordination, all is well. But when they are unbalanced and operate without equilibrium, disorder and disaster are caused. For example, the sun, the moon, the earth, the fire, air, water, all these have to maintain a balance in order that order reigns. When the environment is disturbed or distorted, danger is imminent. Water is contaminated, man suffers physical and mental illnesses thereby. Science and technology boast of their achievements in conquering the five elements—space, air, fire, water and land. They are dealing with them as if they are playthings amenable to their whims. They do not deal with them as means for the peace and prosperity on the earth, for all its inhabitants. Their attempts to analyse and take advantage of the five elements are resulting in fatal pollutions and natural disasters like droughts and even earthquakes. The five elements have to be adored and treated reverentially, as the Rg Veda directs. Worship them in humility. Then, they would reward you with plentiful power. Today, that reverence has disappeared in the greed for exploitation.

Things that confer joy can also confer grief, when their real nature is not understood. The counsel of the wise calms our mind and enthuses our hearts. But, sometimes, it may disturb the mind and depress the heart, when we feel it is denying or discouraging our pet plans and pleasures. But, the quality of the counsel is, on both occasions, wisdom. For example, showers of rain are comforting and therefore, quite welcome. But, the drops, sometimes, turn into hailstones and hit hard causing pain. They too are the same material, welcome in another form. Within minutes, the stones run as water on the ground, and become desirable gifts.

Peace is inherent in man. When ego becomes egoism, the Aham becomes Ahamkara by enfolding itself in a form. 'I'—pure and simple—maintained pure and simple is still 'being'; it

'becomes' when the I identifies itself with something other, I am a man, I am a monk, I am a student. The I has become an 'ism'; has put on a form, a vesture, which it is loath to give up, the akar which has rendered it Aham-kar, egoist! When you are in bed, asleep, dreaming and wandering through varied escapades and experiences, what has happened to the body which you had fostered as you yourself? And while in deep sleep, where have all the levels of consciousness taken refuge? Sleep is a short death: death is a long sleep. You, the 'I' in you, endow the inert material vehicle called body with Consciousness. You are the Cosmic Consciousness, God, temporarily in the role of 'I'. The body-mind-complex is the instrument to be utilised for that role. Use it for furthering God's purpose, executing God's will. This is the message of Rg Veda.

Another mistaken idea some people entertain is that they can kill themselves by suicide or Atma-hatya. So, they plan to punish and destroy the body which is inert and incapable of initiative. The mind has to be punished, for the despair which overwhelms the will to live is caused by the erratic mind, not the body. Delve into the vagaries of the mind, learn to direct it along straight paths and emerge as the victor over despair.

The hymns of the Rg Veda have been used down the ages to sanctify widely different events and experiences of man, spiritual and apparently secular. The distinction is artificial, for all of life has to be spiritualised. When the boy is initiated into Vedic studies or the recitation of the Gayatri and other mantras, when some one has to be blessed on some happy occasion, when a wedding has to be ceremoniously performed with the invocation of God, and when the body is buried or burnt after the soul has left the Rg Vedic hymns are chanted. They have great potency and arouse beneficial thoughts on reciters and listeners.

The seers who saw the hymns of the Veda, chanted and communicated them were 403 in number. Vasishta is the foremost of them, with 104 hymns which he visualised. There is a story about the sage Bharadwaja who sought to visualise all that has to be known through the Vedic Voice of God. He prayed to the Lord of Heaven, Indra, to give him longer and longer leases of life but Indra, after obliging him more than once, laughed at his tenacity and said, pointing to a huge mountain range facing him, 'All that you have mastered so far is but three handfuls of sand, from these peaks. How can you ever master the Veda fluffy?' But, the sage did not wince. He said, 'I shall bear the burden gladly'. Burden in Sanskrit is Bhaara and bear is Bhara. So, he was known as Bharadwaja, Vamadeva and Agastya are the other seers of note, whose visions helped the origination of 56 and 27 hymns or Suktas. Vishwamitra has contributed another 56.

Vishwamitra was able to hand down the potent Gayatri Mantra to posterity. His name means 'Friend for All' "Well-wisher for the world." It was the Gayatri that entitled him to earn that name. Rg Veda is entirely the product of the insight of such sages. Every name you use for God, every illustration we imagine of His Glory, are in the Rg Veda. Rama, Krishna, Sai, Easwara are all the very essence of the glory it describes, though you may not recognise the sources. Mantra means "words that save those who meditate on them." So, whatever is uttered with such intention becomes holy, charged with love for fellow-men, for the world, for the elements.

Rg Veda teaches the lesson of serenity. Praise is like rosewater scent; when it is sprinkled on you, suffer it but don't drink it—that is to say, accept it and thrive on it. Blame is like a medicine. Examine yourselves whether you have the illness and if you have, accept the blame and benefit by it. Serenity is a divine virtue. All the Vedas are intent on helping man to become aware of Divinity, in him and all around him. Picture for yourselves the peace that seers gained by that awareness, and yearn to learn the lessons the Vedas treasure, for all mankind irrespective of caste, creed, race or nationality.

—*Dasara Discourse 20-10-82*

Grace and Gayatri

How serene the Light bloomed on Thy face
As you walked between the rows,
Arm outstretched
Like the Biblical Parable
Of the farmer sowing seeds.
You cast the rice from Thy delicate Hand
On the ploughed and prepared soil below:
Thy chosen children for the upadesha ceremony.
What Love in Thy eyes!
What peace and timeless Beauty!
Then watering the crop with the amrita
Of Thy Divine Loving Touch
You danced between the rows—
To Tandava-quick drumbeat you stepped
With such rhythm and agility
Dipping and moving along
Dipping and moving along

Dipping and moving along
Laying the sacred threads
Over heads, over shoulders, under arms
—On and on You danced
Until my heart was in a dizzy trance
Of delight watching Thee.

The work complete—or better to say—
The Play complete (for I could see how
the pleasure of it was captured in Thy
luminous expression)—
You stopped to drink

And gave my heart relief
That you took a moment's break
Before Thy golden—soft voice
Broke like the first dawn in Time
Whisper—singing thrice
The timeless Gayatri.

—*From a devotee*

Sai Family News

SIKKIM: A three-day training camp for nearly 250 Sathya Sal Seva Dal volunteers hailing from different parts of Sikkim, was held at Palzer indoor stadium, Gangtok, during Feb. 25 to 27. The programme included lessons in crowd control, fire fighting, first aid, Yoga and bhajans, besides lectures on topics like Unity of faiths, Burden of the Badge, Karma Yoga, and service activities.

The tiny Himalayan State reverberated for three continuous days with early morning Nagarsankirtans, in which the volunteers and other devotees participated despite the chill winter mornings.

The local Superintendent of Police, Mr. M. Basnet, who is an ardent devotee of Bhagavan, gave an instructive talk on crowd control and mob psychology. Mr. V. K. Pandey, Editor of Nepali Sanathana Sarathi, spoke on the message of Buddhism and described some of the miracles of Bhagavan Baba.

On the last day of the Camp, Smt. Bhandari, wife of Mr. N. B. Bhandari, Chief Minister of Sikkim, dwelt on the message of unity propagated by Bhagavan and said: 'Our Sikkim will be million times sanctified and purified if the Avatar walks on our soil. We must pray earnestly and sincerely for His visit.'

There was a Yoga demonstration by Mr. D. P. Moktan, from the Kalimpong Samithi who had attended Bhagavan's Summer Course in 1973. Other lecturers were K. Pradhan, R. B. Tamang, Miss N. Pradhan and Miss J. Diyali.

SRI LANKA: During November and December 1982, the Sathya Sai Seva Samiti, Colombo, organised a blood donation Campaign, a free medical camp (December 4), supply of milk to children in slum areas and Narayana Seva for 600 deaf and blind children (using rice collected from devotees) and survey of a village adopted for purposes of development. Sixty one devotees came forward to donate blood on November 13, which was observed also as Akhanda Bhajan day. The medical camp was conducted in Velipeena village, 45 miles from Colombo. In all 361 patients were treated including 171 children.

WEST BENGAL: The Sathya Sai Organisation, West Bengal, has formed a cooperative society to run a printing press for the publication of the Bengali edition of 'Sanathana Sarathi' and to publish Sai literature in Bengali. The press was inaugurated on January 14.

The Cooch Behar district Samiti has started a centre for vocational training in cycle repairing.

The Calcutta and Howrah Samitis organised eye operation camps, at which altogether 150 patients were treated.

The West Bengal State Publications Committee participated in the Book Fair organised by the West Bengal Book Sellers' and Publishers' Guild during February, 1983. The Committee's attractive pavilion, displaying Sai Literature, drew large numbers of visitors. Sales of books averaged Rs. 1200 a day.

Two camps for training primary school teachers in imparting education in human values were held in January and February. The West Bengal Samiti has decided to adopt 300 villages under the village adoption scheme. The Calcutta Unit alone has decided to adopt 30 villages. Development work has already started in 22 villages.

TAMIL NADU: Health Screening Camp: Within a month of Bhagavan's visit to Sai Gram I-the slum which was 'adopted' by the Madras Samiti for improvement along Sai lines-a health screening camp was organised on February 20 at "Sundaram" for the benefit of the slum residents-men, women and children. A team of 15 doctors, including Eye, E.N.T. and Pediatrics specialists, carried out a comprehensive check-up of 320 persons who came to the camp. All of them were provided with free tonics and vitamin tablets. All the children were given de-worming treatment. Many of them were suffering from vitamin A deficiency. Arrangements have been made for follow-up treatment in special cases. Seventy five volunteers and Seva Dal members made use of a Health Education exhibition to explain various aspects of health and hygiene.

"Human Values" In New-York School

Of all the philosophical statements on education, Baba's theme, 'Education is the building of character', has been my inspiration. I knew that I had to emphasise this ideal in my classroom, in an American public school, for without this all other teaching would be in vain.

With Baba's Grace, the path has been cleared and the work has advanced from my own room to the whole school and, hopefully, very soon will expand to other schools and the entire system.

We started by reading stories, myths and fables (including Chinna Katha stories) and discussing their messages. With the help of the parents we held a "Love is..." poster contest for all grades and followed this up with small discussion groups of teachers, parents, and students on

how to get along much better. We also began to give service to the Senior Citizens' Center in our community.

From there, teachers began to hold a formal meeting concerning the teaching of human values (I used a great number of ideas from the Human Values books received from Prasanthi Nilayam). This year we formed a committee and drew up a monthly packet of stories, activities, and projects for the teachers to guide them in teaching human values. Each month a different value is being discussed and the children's work is being displayed in the halls and in the classrooms of the school. We are dealing with such themes as optimism, giving kindness, peace, freedom, courage, responsibility, and love.

As I walk through the school, I feel Baba's presence. In some way I know that the character of the students is indeed being reformed.

—*B. (Woodside, New York)*

STUDENT'S CORNER:

Sai—the Veda Purusha

I wish to invoke the blessings of Bhagavan Baba, whose benign benison is the source of inspiration for this article.

On the Poornahuti day of 1982 Dasara I was among the few students, in a procession, who had the privilege of heralding Bhagavan's arrival with the recitation of the Vedas. As we were chanting and walking along, I was looking at Bhagavan and my mind flashed back to 1970. It was then that I was blessed by Him with admission to His Vedapathashala. In those days Bhagavan used to run a Veda school for young boys in Prasanthi Nilayam, admission to which was granted only by Bhagavan.

When I joined the Vedapathashala, the very first lesson in the Vedas was taught to us by Bhagavan Himself. It went thus:

Gurur Brahma, Gurur Vishnu
Gurur devo Maheshwarah,
Gurussaakshaat Parabrahma
Tasmai Sri Gurave namah.

It was October when Bhagavan granted me admission to the Vedapathashala. In those days it was customary for Vedapathashala students to chant the 'Purusha Suktam' and 'Narayana Suktam' in front of Bhagavan, as the children of the Primary school do nowadays.

It was the Poornahuti day and my parents were scheduled to leave Parthi on the next day. Being a kid of 8 years, one can imagine how sad and lost I was feeling, especially when it was

the first time that I was being separated from my parents. As I was chanting the Purusha Suktam, Swami walked up to me very graciously and keeping His hand on my head, He spoke in Telugu, the gist of which is: 'You are worried that your parents are leaving tomorrow. There is no need to worry. I will take care of you forever. I will be with you, around you and in you, now and forever.'

The effect of that parental affection from Baba was such that my reply was only eyes filled with droplets of water which were due to a sense of affection and belonging to Bhagavan.

True to His word. He has been with me and taking care of me all these years. I pray to Him to continue to shower His benign benediction on me in the years to come.

Baba is a Phenomenon which defies the greatest of scientists. He does not transgress the rules of the material world, but he transcends them. Baba is Incredible, Inscrutable, Inexplicable, Incomprehensible, Un-understandable, Magnificent and Magnanimous.

Baba is the very embodiment of the Vedas. In order to re-establish the fast-vanishing Sanathana Dharma based on the Vedas, He started the 'Veda Purusha Saptah Jnana Yajna' during Dasara every year. In the evenings of these auspicious days, the members of the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha, comprising our country's great Vedic scholars, explain the Vedas to the common people who otherwise would not have got a chance to hear the Vedas explained in such simple and lucid style.

To crown it all, every evening Bhagavan delivers his Divine Discourse. His Discourses are simple and easily understandable by the layman, but are pregnant with meaning. Bhagavan talks about complex concepts in the Vedas in such simple, down-to-earth terms that even an ordinary person with no knowledge of Sanskrit grasps the meaning. Even the Vedic scholars realize that the examples and the explanations that Bhagavan gives reveal His complete knowledge and mastery of the Vedas.

Here I have a point to make. Baba had meagre schooling. He had not even completed His 10th class. But, the authority and the fluency with which He explains the most complicated concepts is just beyond anybody's comprehension. He does not refer to any books. Some people who had doubts about the authenticity of Bhagavan's discourses, approached one of the Vedic scholars, who was a recognized authority on the Vedas, and asked him about the correctness of Bhagavan's interpretations. That scholar confirmed that whatever Bhagavan said was in perfect accord with what is said in the Vedas.

Baba is the VEDA PURUSHA himself. Here I would like to recall an instance which occurred a decade ago.

It was the experience of a devotee, who came to Parthi for Dasara. He attended the Yagna with the utmost devotion and on the Poornahuti day he was seated in the front row of the auditorium where the Yajna was being conducted. Swami entered the auditorium and to the surprise of this

devotee, walked straight to Him and ordered him to go to the other end of the auditorium. The devotee was taken aback. He wondered whether this was the reward for his doing Puja and observing austerities. With tears in his eyes, he obeyed Bhagavan and went to the other end of the auditorium. He could hardly get a glimpse of the proceedings from that position.

The final offering was about to be given and Bhagavan stood up to accept it. Lo and Behold! the devotee saw Bhagavan as the Veda Purusha. He was not a 5'4" figure but a magnificent twenty-foot tall form of Narayana.

Blessed was the devotee, for his prayers had been answered.

The Student's prayer: Bhagavan is the Chancellor of our Institute of Higher Learning. Speaking on the day of the Inauguration of the Institute Dr. Gokak, the Vice-chancellor of the Institute, said that "Our Institute is blessed in a way that it has as its Chancellor Bhagavan Baba who is the Chancellor of the Universe itself."

As the students of the Institute, let us pray to Bhagavan to grant us not only secular education but also spiritual education that will enable us to understand His glory.

At this point I would like to place a prayer at His Lotus Feet.

O! Sai Mother

Thy ways are unique,
Thy creation is unique,
Thy Glory is unique,
Thou art unique.

Thy Love is unbounded and Immaculate,
For Thou art the Love Divine;

Thy majesty is unmatched,
For Thou art the embodiment of Divine
Majesty;

Thy wisdom is far beyond our perception,
For Thou art the wisdom supreme;

Thy forbearance is unparalleled,
For Thou art the Mother Divine,

Thy will is final;
For Thou art the Supreme.

O! Sai Mother!

Take us in to Thy fold so that we may

Forever bask in Thy Divine grace.
Blessed are we to be born in the great
land of Bharat.

More blessed are we to be born as the
contemporaries of Our beloved
Bhagavan.

Most blessed are we to be chosen by
Him as His Instruments.
Let us not fritter away this chance for
'the opportunity knocks at the door
but once,' in one's life.

Let us be worthy students of Sri
Sathya Sai Institute of Higher
Learning
And worthy citizens of the Kingdom
of Sathya Sai.

Let this be our lofty ambition.

*—S. Radhakrishna, IIIrd B Sc.,
Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Brindavan Campus*

[The editor invites contributions from students of the Institute which are genuine expressions of their experiences and ideas]

Service and Sadhana

Living in this land of Bharat with its rich rewarding culture but yet not absorbing its broad all-inclusive insight, not delving into the secrets of its survival and freshness, how can any one achieve progress and ensure the peace and prosperity of the world? Uttering the voice of peace while shattering by deeds all hopes of establishing it can only be termed as deceiving oneself. World progress is not an abstract ideal; it means series of concrete achievements in the community of nations, the diversity of societies and the entities of individuals. Each of these has to march forward to the same goal, in concord and with cooperative effort.

In spite of the amazing victories that man has won over the forces of nature, man has yet to win peace and joy, for himself and his fellowmen. For, these can be gained only by the mastery of the inner impulses and the sublimation of the inner emotions.

Lions have as their motto, "Together, we serve better." This togetherness inspires mutual help and service. It must inspire those who serve and those who are served and bring both into the bond of Love.

The path of Love and Service is not smooth: It abounds in struggle and disappointments. Life itself is a pendulum between sighs and smiles. But, every obstacle is an invitation to your intelligence. "Life is a challenge; meet it! Life is a dream; realise it."

Mankind is terrified by a crowd of problems at the present time—scientific, technological, economic, moral. These cannot be solved by material means alone. Mental transformation too must happen. The ideals laid down by the seers who moulded our cultural tradition have to be honoured and practised. They hold before the eyes the means to fulfil the years of life, not through the multiplication of material comforts, but through serenity and simplicity. Bigger mansions, swell cars, rare luxuries are eagerly sought after. Man is no more the master; he is the slave of the habits, the pleasures, the riches he runs after. He counts the number of years he has grown; he forgets that each year, his life-period is being shortened. Erudition sans humility, expertise sans discrimination, work sans wisdom, life sans love, music sans melody can never receive honour in the community.

When virtues are few and studies are huge
What is the gain, what is their worth?
When desert land one has acres ten,
What is the gain? What their worth?
A patch is a treasure if fertile it be.

Character is the measure of man. Character insists on keeping vice and wickedness at a distance. It reminds man of obligations and responsibilities, of the high ideals and goal of human life. Life not sanctified by character is a home without lamps, a coin that is counterfeit.

Many a time, the game ends even before one recognises the Master. So, while life is on, one should devote it for some sacred activity—the most sacred being Service or Seva. It ensures fellowship and kinship among all men. It discloses the unity inherent in all the divinity.

In India, people have clubbed together in the name of Seva or service as Lions Club, Rotary Club, Cosmopolitan Club etc. Their ideals are really sacred and the projects too are commendable. They revere all men as a single family. Many worthy persons perform devoted service as members of these Clubs. It is indeed a fortunate chance for them, for there can be no good work, higher than this.

They say, 'Money makes many things' but it is more correct to say 'Money makes many wrongs'. Not all, of course, are ruined by affluence. They can help such organisations to do more and better service. They can supply medicines to those who render health service to the poor. They can visit slums and offer help in various ways to the dwellers. These are all laudable. But, collecting money and paying others to do the service is not enough; we must assess what services we ourselves are offering directly. And, we must not be content—the doctors, lawyers, the rich, the educated—with spurts of service, done, off and on. It must be a continuous process, according to a settled timetable, undertaken every week. Doctors must proceed to slums and villages and help the dwellers. There is urgent need for this type of save. Lawyers must take up the cases in which wrongs are committed on the poor through their ignorance and plead on their behalf for justice. They could devote time for at least two or three such cases per week. Their pleadings on behalf of the poor should not be cursory and casual. They must be as earnest and as effective as the rest.

Embodiments of Love! Members of the Lions Club have high ideals and are urged by sacred feelings. They have frequent meetings in order that they can come close, to each other. Some Clubs meet in five star hotels and spend huge sums. At home, we can feel happy with a full meal on five rupees but in hotels, even fifty rupees won't suffice. We lose forty five rupees each, whenever we have a meeting. The amount gained by discontinuing this practice can be spent on helping the poor. Our aim should be the work, the practical solution and not publicity only. Even from our personal point of view, we should so manage our affairs that money is not wasted.

What is most important at this juncture is the consideration of the problems facing Bharat. These problems require the promotion of Prema and Save, Love and Service. Love is self-lessness, while Self is Lovelessness!

I wish the citizens of Bombay stand shoulder to shoulder with you and ensure the success of all your efforts on their behalf. They must cooperate with all their hearts, all their resources and with all their skills. We waste heaps of money but we do not feel they are best utilised in service projects such as you have planned.

This day is really a day of joy. I am happy I am amidst persons dedicated to service. It is essential that members of such Clubs pay attention to our spiritual advancement also, for that ensures our attainment of the goal of Life. The worldly and the spiritual are like the two wings of a bird, the two wheels of the vehicle, equally essential and equally important. By means of spiritual sadhana, earn spiritual wealth share it with those whom you serve.

—Bhagavan's address to regional conference of Lions International, Bombay. 23-1-83

Sutra Vahini

7

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Janmaadyasya Yatah

“That” from which the birth etc. of “This”. THAT from which has emanated the manifest Cosmos, with its moving and unmoving entities, “That” which prompts promotes and fosters their progress, ‘That’ in which, ultimately, they merge—know THAT as Brahman.

The Taittiriya Upanishad announces: ‘Yatho vaa imaani bhoothaani jaayanthe, yena jaathaani jeevanthi, yath prayanthi yabhi samvisanthi, thad vijijnaasaswa THAD Brahmethi’. From which all manifestations originate, by which they grow and into which they dissolve—that is Brahman. Among the Advaitins or Monists who posit Brahman thus, there are vast differences and deep conflicts of opinion as regards the Causation of the Cosmos. Some hold that Brahman is the Cause while others assert that it is caused by Maya or the play of delusion. Others ascribe it to the operation of both Brahman and Maya. A few others declare that it originated from Vishnu, and that it merges in Vishnu. It is protected by Vishnu alone. Some declare that the statement about Brahman is only indicative, a clue to realise the principle behind the Cosmos, a Tatastha Lakshana, so to say. Brahman has endless facets and faculties and causing Creation, preserving the Created and subsuming it into Itself are clues to glimpse It.

There are others who believe that the Mind is the cause of Creation since matter and all the five elements are mere structures projected by the Mind and that the Mind itself is a transmutation of the inert Prakriti or Nature. The working of the Mind defies explanation. There is a Supreme Consciousness and It has caused this Creation. These are all guesses or theories framed through their intellectual sharpness by various thinkers.

Scientists have investigated in their own ways and reached diverse conclusions. They explain that Time has been the Cause of the origin of the Cosmos and Time sustains and subsumes it through integration and disintegration. So, it is all the effect of Time which controls it. A few ascribe the entire process to the inner nature of things and its urge towards unfolding. Each thing manifested its genuine nature in its own manner, and time. For example, a mango seed when planted results in a mango tree only. From the womb of a tiger, only a tiger cub can emerge, not a baby goat. Thus, we find that from very ancient times, varieties of contending theories have been propounded on the origin of Creation. Nevertheless, every one has failed to define and declare what exactly is the Cause.

The Cosmos is a magnificent wonder, a source of continuous amazement. It cannot but impress one as a supreme marvel, whoever he may be. When an object has to be made, we know, we need one who has the skill and the intelligence, the Shakti, the power. Without a maker nothing can be made. Therefore how do these objects that are visible to us—the sun, the moon, the stars, the constellations, their brilliance, movements—move and behave as they do without a Designer, a Maker, a Master? Can these yield to any ordinary power? No. Intelligent people can easily infer, observing the objects designed and made having such mighty capabilities, how immeasurable must be the Power of the Maker Himself.

Look at the marvellous variety in Creation. No one thing is the same as another; no one person resembles another. This can only be the Leela or sport of the Phenomenon with limitless glory: God. Anyone can understand that no lesser power could be the source. On the basis of the mystery that inheres in Creation one can easily infer the Almighty Power that has created it. Those who are incapable of unravelling the mystery of the Created can never unravel the nature of the Creator.

Creation or the Cosmos is the manifestation of the Will latent in Brahman. All this is God's Sankalpa, Will or Plan. The theorists who frame and propagate the other explanations mentioned above are only wasting their time; arguments and counter-arguments are mere barren exercises. Or they can be pronounced as exhibitions of the scholarship of pundits, or as intellectual gymnastics of the learned. They cannot satisfy the yearnings of those whose minds are pure and whose consciousness is clarified. Everything is caused by the Divine Will—this is the firm belief of theists. Each one decides this problem from his own level of awareness; the Sutras mention these varied points of view and consider the validity. Birds that fly reach heights proportionate to the power with which they can use their wings. So too, these thinkers gave their explanations on the Creation, continuance and collapse of the Cosmos on the basis of the faith and the intelligence they had.

But, all that any one can depend upon as evidence or proof in this inquiry is, at best, only indicative characteristics or *tatastha lakshanas*. These characteristics cannot take us far. The genuine characteristics, *Swaroop Lakshanas*, alone can reveal the Truth. They are *Sathyam*, *Jnanam*, *Anantam*, Truth, Wisdom, Unlimitedness. The genuine nature of Brahman is Truth, the

Eternal IS. It is the Universal Consciousness, Jnanam. It is Everlasting, beyond Time and Space. And, these are immanent in every entity, living or non-living, in the Universe.

Indicative proofs are temporary signs by which one can identify some other thing or person one desires to know. For example, when the moon is just a little arc in the sky and one desires to see it, a person indicates it with his finger pointed towards it. Or, when one desires to look at a particular star, a person says, "There, just above that branch of this tree." The moon is faraway, and the star is much farther. At the moment when, one expresses his yearning, it could be seen just above the branch, but that is only a temporary location. Soon, the location changes. The finger can no longer be correct, for the star or moon moves across the sky.

The genuine characteristics, the Swaroopa Lakshana, never undergoes change. It abides in all. The form may suffer change; the name may change. Times may change; the space occupied might alter. But the core of Truth, the Swaroopa Lakshana, will not change. That core is denoted as Asti, Bhaati and Priyam in Vedanta Texts. The thing is, Asti. It exists. Existence is the unchanging truth. It may change its form and name, in time and space but the *isness* is genuine. It makes itself known as existing, through the native characteristic of Prakash or luminosity or capacity to attract our awareness and confer knowledge—Bhaati. We can know it, because it has Bhaati; all things we know have this innate characteristic. Each thing has the characteristic of Priyam also—likeability, capacity to invoke attachment and love, as a result of usability.

The above three are together the nature of God. On these three as the basis, forms are constructed by the mind and names for the forms follow. But, the forms and names undergo modification. They are therefore designated as Maya—relative realities, temporary superimpositions on the basic Truth. Paramatma, the One Omniself is the basis on which everything with form and name is imposed. The appearance of name and form on the Real is due to the operation of the Maya principle.

Name and Form which are structures raised by the mind on the basis of Brahman are to be considered as indicative proofs for the Truth on which they arise and disappear. Brahman can be known only when the basic characteristics are known Swaroopa jnanam. Once Brahman is known, the awareness makes the person, who is aware, Brahman Itself. "Brahma vid Brahmaiva bhavati" This is the assurance given by Shruti, the Vedas. In truth, the basis as well as the entities resting on it, the appearance and the Real are both Divine, caused by Brahman. So, if this is established in one's knowledge by inquiry, Brahmajijnasa, life fulfils itself.

Sathyam, Jnanam, Anantam—this is the tripod on which Brahman rests. Awareness of Brahman is awareness of Truth; knowledge of Brahman is the knowledge; it is unlimited, endless. From Brahma emanated Aakasa (space; the sky); from Aakasa emanated Vayu (Air); from Vayu, Agni (Fire); from Agni, Jalam (Water); from Jalam, Prithvi (Earth). From the earth grew life-giving plants (Oushadha); from Oushadha, Anna (food) and from Anna, Purusha (persons, humans). The process of Projection is happening in this series. Brahma, the first, Purusha, the last. So, the Purusha and Brahma are closely related.

(To be continued)

BHAGAVAN'S UPADESHAM:

The Gayatri Path to God

*Out of action arises the bondage of Delusion
From Delusion grows a perverted mind
Mental perversion leads to perverse deeds
Such deeds again result in rebirth.*

Young embodiments of the Divine!

The grand mansion of Hindu thought has been raised on the four walls of Karma, Janma, Dharma and Brahman. These four are interdependent. No one can escape the consequences of one's action, whether good or bad. No action goes in vain. Karma is the primary cause of one's birth.

*The Jivi is born in Karma,
He grows through Karma,
He ceases in Karma,
Karma is the divine arbiter;
Karma is the cause
Of happiness and misery.*

It has been well said that “The body indeed, is the basis for the pursuit of Dharma, (Sareeramaadyam khalu Dharmasaadhanam). It is by the pursuit of Dharma that Brahman is realised. The Gita has declared that whenever Dharma declines the advent of the Avatar occurs. This implies that the object of human existence is to uphold Dharma. As creation is a projection of the Divine will, the aim of every human being should be to live in harmony with that will. One's life should be dedicated not for promoting one's selfish interests or to serve the interests of other fellow-beings but in the service of the Divine. Whatever is done to anyone, if it is done as an offering to the Divine, it will reach the Divine. Man should consecrate every action by regarding it as an offering to the Divine. THE SECOND BIRTH

From the moment of issuing from the mother's womb, one is involved in action. This natural state is common to all and may be described as Sudratnam (the state of the Sudra, that is, one who is not subject to any regimen). After one receives the Gayatri initiation, he is born again (he becomes a Dwija, the twice-born), The Gayatri is described as 'Chhandasaam maathah'—the mother of all the Vedas. One meaning of Gayatri is that it is a mantra which protects or fosters the 'Gayas' or Jivis.

You must note that today you have all got a second birth by receiving the Gayatri mantra. By observing the disciplines of the Brahmachari stage, you will qualify yourselves for the study of the Vedas. When one begins to study the Vedas he is known as 'Vipra'. This is a third birth, as it were. At this stage, by the study and understanding of the Vedas and living up to their precepts, one gets the opportunity to understand Brahman. Once the Brahman principle is understood, one merges in Brahman. It is only when there is awareness of Brahman can one claim to be a real Brahmin. It is not birth alone, but the realisation of Brahman which confers real Brahminhood (Brahmanatwa) on a person.

The Gayatri mantra has to be recited three times a day—in the morning at sunrise, at noon, and at sunset. These are called "Sandhya Kaalam"—the time of coming together of night and day, of morning and evening, and of day and night. Time, like man, has three qualities Satwa, Rajas and Tamas. The day is divided into three parts. The four hours between 4 and 8 a.m. In the morning and between 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. in the evening have the Satwa quality. The eight hours between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. are Rajasic. The eight hours between 8 p.m. and 4 a.m. which are mainly used for sleep, are Tamasic. The eight hours of the day (from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.) are employed by all beings, including animals and birds, in the discharge of their day-to-day duties and are regarded as Rajasic. When the four Satwic hours of the morning (4 a.m. to 8 a.m.) are used for engaging oneself in good actions like worship, virtuous deeds, keeping good company, one is sure to raise himself from the human to the divine level. It is during the Satwic period (from 4 a.m. to 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.) the Gayatri mantra should be recited. This mantra is the embodiment of all deities. It is not related to any particular sect, caste or idol or institution. It is said to embody nine colours: (1) Om; (2) Bhuh; (3) Bhuvah; (4) Suvah; (5) Tat; (6) Savitur; (7) Varenayam; (8) Bhargo; (9) Devasya. "Dheemahi" is related to the meditative aspect. "Dheeyo yo nah prachodayaath" relates to the aspect of prayer. The mantra as a whole thus contains three aspects—descriptive, meditational and prayer.

Unity and Diversity

On the basis of differences in behaviour the Antahkarana (conscience) has been accorded four names. When it is concerned with thoughts, it is called Manas (Mind). When it is restless and wavering it is called "Chittam". When it is concerned with enquiry and understanding, it is called "Buddhi". When it is associated with the sense of "mine" (possessiveness) it is called "Ahamkara" (egoism). Why are four different names and attributes given to one and the same agency (the Antahkarana)? The mind is preoccupied with distinctions and differences. The Buddhi is concerned with oneness. The Buddhi reveals the Unity that underlies the diversity. All our efforts must be directed towards discovering the Unity that underlies the diversity rather than seeking to divide the One into the Many.

The Gayatri mantra is a sacred mantra which demonstrates the unity that underlies manifoldness in creation. It is through the recognition of this unity that we can understand the multiplicity. Clay is one and the same thing, though pots of different shapes and sizes can be made from it. Gold is one, though gold ornaments can be multifarious. The Atma is one, though the embodied forms in which it resides may be many. Whatever the colour of the cow, the milk is white always.

There is no object in the world which does not have a form and a name. The Cosmos is made up of things with forms and names. While the forms are subject to constant change, the names remain unchanged. The form may change and even completely disappear, but the name remains. Once we know the name, we can recognise what or whom it represents. In a large gathering, it will not be easy to trace a person merely from the description of his features. But when his name is called, he immediately responds and can be identified. Likewise, through the name of the Lord, the form of the Lord can be visualised.

Five Faces—Three Deities

Gayatri is described as having five faces. The first is "Om". The second is "Bhurbhuvasuvah". The third is "Thathsavithur Varenyam". The fourth is "Bhargo Devasya Dheemahi". The fifth is: "Dheeyo yo nah prachodayaath". Gayatri represents in these five faces the five Pranas (life forces). Gayatri is the protector of the five Pranas in man. "Gayantham thraayatthe iti Gayatri", Because it protects the one who recites it, it is called Gayatri. When Gayatri acts as protector of the life-forces, she is known as Savitri. Savitri is known in the Puranic story as the devoted wife who brought back to life her husband, Sathyavan. Savitri is the presiding deity of the five Pranas. She protects those who lead a life of Truth. This is the inner meaning. When one's intelligence and intuition are developed by the recitation of the mantra, the activating deity is Gayatri. When the life-forces are protected, the guardian deity is called Savitri. When one's speech is protected, the deity is called Saraswati. Because of the protective roles of Savitri, Saraswati and Gayatri, in relation to life, speech and the intellect, Gayatri is described as 'Sarvadevata-swarupini'—the embodiment of all goddesses.

It is essential to recite the Gayatri mantra at least three times during morning, noon and evening. This will serve to reduce the effects of the wrong acts one does every day. It is like buying goods for cash, instead of getting them on credit. There is no accumulation of Karmic debt, as each day's Karma is atoned for that day itself by reciting the Gayatri.

The plea that one cannot find time for reciting the Gayatri thrice a day is specious and untenable. People waste so much of their time in worthless activities that they can easily find a few moments for reciting the Gayatri when they wake up from bed and before they go to sleep, if only they have the will. The Gayatri can be recited even when one is taking his bath. It will mean also offering ablutions to the goddess. At noon if the Gayatri is recited before taking one's meal, the food will get sanctified and become an offering to the deity.

Redemptive Power

The Brahmacharis should realise the redemptive power of the Gayatri mantra. Through the Brahmopadesam, the young boys have had a second birth. It is only when they have achieved the purposes of this second birth will they be qualified to enter on the sacred third stage of 'vipratwam', which leads to the realisation of Brahman.

“One who is aware of Brahman; becomes one with Brahman” is the Vedic saying. To recognise the Brahman principle, one has to understand one's own true nature. There is a story to illustrate how one can see whether he is qualified to realise Brahman. An unmarried girl acquires the right to a half-share in a man's property after she is married to him and he ties the mangala-sutra (the marriage thread) round her neck. It is this sacred thread that confers the right on her. Likewise, one remains remote from God as long as one has not acquired the thread of “surrender to the Divine” (Sharanagati tattwa). The moment one wears the Sutra of Sharanagati, one acquires the right to a half-share in the energy and authority of the Divine. We must strive earnestly to pursue the path of submission to the Divine Will and offering everything to the Divine. The attitude of surrender will grow in us as we recite regularly the Gayatri mantra. This is the reason why boys are initiated into the mantra at an early age. There is also another reason for this early initiation. Boys, who have been indolent or dull before getting the Brahmopadesam have been able to develop their intelligence and be more diligent in their studies after they have received the Gayatri mantra. This is a matter of proven experience. Like sunrise after the night, the Gayatri mantra dispels the darkness of ignorance. “Dheeyo yo nah prachodayaath”. The rays of the Gayatri mantra illumine the mind and intelligence and promote knowledge, wisdom and discrimination.

I bless the young vats so that from today they may recite the Gayatri regularly, lead exemplary lives and grow into good, god-fearing, educated and enlightened citizens of Bharat.

—*Poornachandra Auditorium, 17-3-83*

'Character—not degrees'

Bhagavan blessed the Decennial Celebrations of the NMKRV College for Women at Jayanagar, Bangalore, on 17th February 1983, by lighting a lamp. He addressed the large number of students, teachers and parents who had assembled in the spacious college premises.

Speaking in Kannada, Bhagavan said that selfishness was the motivation for all human activity and that students also studied keeping in view the personal benefits they expected to derive from their education. But, real happiness comes only when. Selfishness is burnt in the fire of true knowledge.

He said that He was not opposed to freedom for women, but it should be within reasonable limits. Too much talk is bad for women.

Education, He said, must soften the heart. Otherwise it is no education. It is not degrees, but character which endows education with value. Bhagavan's discourse was punctuated with poems, parables and humorous anecdotes.

Sai Family News

NEPAL: Members of the Siddhartha Nagar (Bhairahwa) Sathya Sai Baba Centre, which was started in September 1973, in this holy birthplace of Buddha, had a welcome opportunity to render service at a free eye medical camp organised by the Nepal Red Cross Society of Rupandehi district in February 1983. Out of 750 patients examined, 75 were operated upon for Keratitis and others were given appropriate treatment. Prof. Kulmani Deokota spoke on Bhagavan Baba's message of love and sacrifice. The medical aid was rendered by Dr. Chetraj Pant and his team of doctors from Khatmandu.

ROME: The Sathya Sai Baba Centre in the Italian capital holds a public session of readings and film shows on the last Sunday of every month, besides a Study Circle every week. Members and others come from all parts of the City and from towns outside Rome. The birthday of Bhagavan was celebrated in November as a 3-day festival. About 700 people took part in the celebrations. People came from Sardinia, Tuscany, Compagna, etc. Father Anthony Elenjittam spoke on the teachings and doctrines of Swami. Professor Barnardi, teacher of Astrophysics in the University of Rome, and Professor Servadio Emilio attended and took active part. A seminar on 'Human Values at School' was held before Christmas. Many teachers of elementary and high schools attended and evinced keen interest in the curriculum and methods of instruction laid down by Swami.

Art and Life

Nature has ever been the source of mystery for me. Man has always seen the markings and remarkings going on in nature and wondered. And probably from the beginning has tried to imitate her in her various moods. Songs from the birds, dances from animals, and paintings as well as sculpture from the ever-changing seasons, hills, trees, and fellow-men have filled man's imagination. Trying to imitate all these man developed skills in Art.

Art also springs from man's desire for self-expression. He wants to communicate and to express himself. For this simple reason, all poetry, music, dance, painting, architecture and many other means haven't proved enough. Therefore over the ages man has gone on changing the form and character of these media, with changes in the levels of his experience. But the essential fact that the soul of man wants to present its experiences through art forms remains the same.

In Art the inner beauty and harmony expresses itself in the outer form. Art forms can inspire. When a worshipper attains the most complete Samadhi, the artist is most completely identified with his subject. The image represents the body as a symbol of spirit. In the evolution of man, it is the right evolution of his emotional life that gives him spiritual insights. In this case Art and Architecture can be the expressions of deep emotional experiences leading to a stage where the subject and object are unified. This in spiritual language is the cream of Sadhana The Upanishads say that life is born out of joy and finally merges with joy (Ananda).

One day I went to the Nataraja Temple at Chidambaram. I entered the temple. The huge Gopurams beckoned me; the rhythmic clang of the temple bells regulated my footsteps in harmony with the rhythm; the incantation of Vedic hymns elevated my spirit; the air carrying the melodies of devotional nectar soothed my heart; the symbolic images enchanted me and sent me into raptures.

Clouds gathered in the sky, followed by lightning and thunder. It began to rain as though the agitated Ganga was let loose from the matted hair of Nataraja. The water drops touched the earth, triggering the strings of an invisible veena. The leaves of the trees rustled in the gale and showered flowers on the Lord of Dances.

I was in a state of ecstasy. The world ceased to exist for me. I closed my eyes. Lo and behold! There stood Lord Nataraja, performing the cosmic dance—the 'Tandava'. I stood before Him with folded hands. He placed his foot on my head to destroy the demon of ego in me. I was electrified, elevated, blissful. I identified myself as the cosmic dancer and began to dance in extreme delight!

When I opened my eyes, the ochre-robed Lord, who is the very personification of love, whose very posture symbolised tranquility, stood before me. He had descended from the skies to the horizon—the sole witness for the Dance of life and death. I offered my salutations to Him in reverence. He smiled and blessed me and disappeared in the western horizon, leaving me in the darkness of illusion once again!

—K. Vinayak, II Inter. Prasanthi Nilayam

"Awareness of Divinity"

The Sai family is an ever-growing one. What are the duties of its members? How can they exemplify in their lives Bhagavan Baba's message? Mr. Thorbjorn Meyer, Chairman of the Coordinating Committee, Sathya Sai Organisation, Europe Group I, addressing members from North European Sai Centres on Bhagavan's birthday (November, 1982). devoted his talk to this theme.

The coming years, Mr. Thorbjorn said, are important in many ways. Much is going to happen as the Sai mission gains its full momentum. In His mission the SAI family is His instrument. We are His tools and the SAI centre is His workshop. He wants us to realize that SAI and we are one. This is the challenge He is putting before us.

We all know that the real Sri Sathya Sai Baba center is in our own heart. There we don't really want a democracy solving all problems by means of compromises, but rather enlightened

despotism. A parable describing the situation of the individual devotee could be Sai Baba's interview-room in Prasanthi Nilayam and His chair. If He sits in the chair and you at His feet, then everything is as it should be. All is fine. *The enlightened one* is the Sovereign. But if the tiny little ego with its ignorance and limitations occupies the throne, the result is utter chaos.

By virtue of my work in the Sai-organization I have been consulted by many people who found themselves in conflict with the world. Insecurity and doubts pestered their lives. They doubted the Avatar's Reality, they doubted themselves, they doubted everything and all. The farther away they were from their own reality, their own Divinity, the more disastrous were the conflicts. As within, so without, the present statue of affairs in the world is a mere reflection of the state of affairs with regard to man's inner awareness.

This is why the main object of the Lord's organisation is to "Awaken in man the awareness of the divinity inherent in Him" by propagating, through practice and examples, the basic principles of Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Love and Non-Violence—Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa.

We, the Sai-family, are His tools. He wants us to take up this challenge and as one in deed and name move the Sai-movement. A movement is only a movement when someone moves it. The only way is to practise His teachings in every moment of our lives. To be examples. As He does, we should make our life our message. And we should work together not only as brothers and sisters, but as One.

The Lord's teaching is simple and beautiful, but hard to practise. Can we work as One? Can we really be examples to others? Is it not a prerequisite that we all speak the language of the heart, meaning that we all express Sathya the inner truth? Who amongst us can claim that he or she always succeeds in this difficult discipline? That He always sits on the throne, so that there always is total harmony between our thought, speech and action?

This is why it is not always so easy to be a member of the SAI-family. The Divine Master sharpens His tools. This is also why time and again He says to us "There should be no differences among devotees in SAI-Organisations. There should be no scramble for power or position. What matters is the purity, intensity and sincerity of the devotion and the spirit of selfless sacrifice."

Focus on cooperation

We must regard our membership, our work in the center, as a Sadhana in itself. A spiritual discipline. This is also so when Swami has asked us to work together in a group of countries. It is not by mere chance that He has put the Scandinavian countries, Belgium and The Netherlands in one group. We are all small countries. We have all achieved a high standard of living. We have all fought through the centuries to maintain our national integrity. We all feel a certain pride for what we have achieved in the relative world. However, religion and spirituality has suffered. The inner awareness has diminished, conflicts in the individual and society are growing. Our cooperation in Europe Group One is between countries with many similarities. There are many

needy, but the poverty is spiritual. The way I understand Swamiji is that we should focus on close cooperation. He calls it the Cooperating Committee of Europe Group One. We should not form national groups or sub-committees, other than as an integral part of sub-committees for the whole group, which is to be regarded as our closest family. We should cooperate and not just operate.

Also this has much bearing on our ability to live His message. To work as one. To realise that duty is God and work is worship.

Oneness is based on each one of us practising his personal Sadhana and remembering not to point fingers at others, but on the contrary by constant introspection sharpening his discrimination with a view to improving one's own actions. Because it is only through our actions that we can express harmony and identity with our own inner truth. This is in fact Dharma by which one can elevate oneself and attain a greater self-confidence.

The self-confidence grows when you find that the ego is lessening and that it more and more often becomes possible to practise unity in thought, word and deed. By remembering the final goal: 'To become one with Him, to realize Swami as the sovereign in one's own heart.' In reality it is a question of: "Who am I?"—or maybe even more precisely put, a question of being able to discriminate between the actual "I" and the illusory "I", to be able to place Him in the center and the tiny ego, which we are used to call "I" at His feet in the circumference.

For every time one of us succeeds in this solitary internal Adventure, he will help the others by his example, and gradually we become able to stabilize ourselves in the awareness of him as our centre. Also outside the SAI-family in our many relations in society. In this way the SAI centre—your SAI centre—will always be right where you are. And isn't this the goal for all of us?

During one of the discourses, which was arranged for foreigners in Prasanthi Nilayam last summer, Dr. Murthy told about a small incident, when he was reprimanded by the Divine. Dr. Murthy was sitting outside Swamiji's door waiting for Darshan. Next to him was a foreign guest about whom Dr. Murthy had heard that he was to leave later on the same day. Dr. Murthy wanted to show hospitality and friendliness and leaned towards the foreign guest saying some friendly remarks, like how the stay had been, when he planned to come again etc. Soon after, the door opened and Divinity in the delicate form of Swamiji appeared, went right over to Dr. Murthy, shook the head and said: "Talk, talk, —a bad habit".

But isn't speech our only means of communication? How else are we to show our fellow human beings our Love? No! The language of the heart is the only one. When you want Darshan of Divinity your attention must be one-pointed

Do we need all this socialising and talk? Is that why we gather in His name? Doesn't it lead us head over heels right into all the traps? The ego-traps! Pointing fingers instead of introspection. Outer worship which we feel as pressure instead of inner devotion which we feel as Love. To

become one is to realise that basically we are all divine and to focus on this unity and not on the multitude. The different faiths, the different opinions, the different attitudes can and may exist side by side as long as they don't extinguish the flame of unity. We must always remember this. Whenever we feel tempted to superimpose our opinion on somebody else, when we want to win a discussion, instead of realising that both opinions may be right, it is a sign of danger. Then we should ask: 'Who am I? The ego or the Divine? Who is sitting on the throne right now?'

The inner view

We must become servants in order to be leaders. 'We -must make our own heart "Prasanthi Nilayam," 'The Abode of The Highest Peace', make it His interview-room, where He is the centre and we are sitting at His Lotus feet. As Swamiji says it, when we are there in Puttaparthi: "It is not the interview that is important but the inner view.' There should never be fear, when we assemble. Fear belongs to the ego. The ego proves itself in the outer world, often at the cost of others, 'Talk, talk, —a bad habit! " while Love is unselfish, seeks the inner world, the inner truth, Sathya, and uses the language of the heart.

As I see it, this is the challenge we face, when we are going to work together, all the centres in Europe Group One. There are enormous possibilities in this cooperation, because the right, one-pointed spirit in the group is so much more than the sum of what each of us has achieved. We may therefore bring about results in the course of months or weeks that one devotee could never achieve during a whole life-time. What one center cannot achieve, we can achieve together. Let us utilize this opportunity and pray for His Grace.

But the attitude is decisive. If two or more persons come together with a view to getting, then no-one gets anything, but if everybody wants to give, then everybody will get. As Swamiji puts it: "The ego wants to get and forget. Love wants to give and forgive."

The real purpose of a Satsang—and whenever the SAI-family assembles it is a Satsang—is in fact to enable us to discriminate between the two states of consciousness: either the one where the puny "I" places itself on the throne and tries to prove its own importance, or the other state where Divinity occupies its rightful place and is our centre.

To take up this challenge means that each of us all the time must be preoccupied with our own solitary internal adventure, our inner view, and practise our spiritual discipline, at the same time showing all those around us understanding and tolerance. I think it is important to us all to contemplate over this, when we shall cooperate in the SAI-family. When we clear the mind and clarify the intellect we will find that more and more often we will be able to be His instrument, His tool. —And what does it mean to be His instrument? Deep within you are Him, Tat Twam Asi—You are Him—and his center is your center.

I would like to close by quoting Bhagavan Baba's own words about His birthday. He says: "The day when you resolve to practise My advice; to follow my directives, to translate My message into acts of service, and to engage in spiritual discipline—that day is My birthday for

you. The 23rd of November which you now honor as the day on which I was born, is only like any other day, even if you celebrate it in a routine, ritual fashion. Adore man: the adoration reaches Me. Neglect man; you neglect Me. Of what avail is it to worship the Lord and to suppress man, His counterpart on earth? Love for God must be manifested as Love for man, and Love must express itself as service.”

I desire to tell the units of this organisation that very soon they will witness the realisation of all their ideals. But when success is achieved, as a reaction, carping and denigration will also increase. When the well grows deeper, the mound beside it will grow higher. That is quite natural. Some people pay attention to the depth of the well; others watch the height of the mound.

Ball Games and Life

All is grist to the Divine mill. Any trivial incident, any small episode provides Bhagavan with an occasion for drawing a moral or adorning a tale. Recently, a day after watching various ball games on the Sports Day of the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Bhagavan delivered a discourse drawing parallels between the games in the field and the great game of life.

Bhagavan began His discourse with a reproof of the way Indian parents instilled fear in little children instead of developing courage and fearlessness in them.

Fear, Bhagavan said, has a mysterious influence on man. Once, when the population of a village was decimated by cholera, a monk reached the place to console and help the survivors. As he entered the grief-stricken place, he met a charming lady, her face glittering with smiles, coming out of the village. He wondered how the village could have women who could be happy amidst death, deprivation and distress. He accosted her and asked her who she was. She replied that she was the Cholera Goddess. The monk replied, 'Mother! You have killed the entire population of the village. How can the place thrive again?' She said, 'I killed only ten. The rest died of fear.' Fear destroys initiative, encourages laziness and smothers the spirit of adventure.

Of course, one must be afraid to commit sin, but not to do good. And, what is the sin one must avoid? Injustice is sin; injuring the person who has done you good is sin; repaying kindness with unkindness is sin. Falsehood is sin. But out of fear you should not shrink from meritorious deeds. Look at the people of America, Russia, China and Japan. They go up into empty space and manage to live for months therein, engaged in experiments and gathering rare experiences. They dive into the depths of the ocean and discover the metals and minerals that lie there. They penetrate thick jungles and explore the area for valuable resources. They have no fear of the inherent dangers involved in these adventures.

How can we cultivate courage? When you take part in a game, you have to rough it out and brave hits and cuts as part of the play. Indians have many virtues many commendable habits and much precious 'knowledge but for want of courageous determination, many are unable to rise to the spiritual height which is theirs of right.

You may wonder how sports can have any spiritual significance. They have a great deal of it. Take football, basketball, volley ball and throw ball, for example. Each of them has close links with practical details of our daily life. Football teaches us lessons of fearlessness, adventure and team work. The football field is a training ground for fortitude and-heroism. It promotes physical strength and muscular flexibility. The game has to be played within the orbit of many rules. Take the game of sixers—six on each side in their positions and the ball right in the centre of the field! Our life on earth below is the ball. Kama (desire), Krodha (anger), Lobha (greed), Moha (attachment to trivialities), Mada (pride), and Matsarya (envy)—these form one team; the team confronting them are Sathya (Truth), Dharma (Righteousness), Santhi (Peace), Prema (Love), Ahimsa (Non-violence) and Krama sikshana (discipline). The evil six try to foil the progress of the good six; the moves are towards joy and misery; the struggle is between sin and holiness. The ball is tossed up and down; it moves forward and backward. The goal posts on the side where the evil team opposes the good are Dharma and Brahma, Goodness and Godhead. When the team led by Sathya succeeds in leading life, beyond the evil six under the captaincy of Kama, and between these goal posts, victory is won. And, what do Brahma and Dharma imply? Brahma fosters equal, untarnished Love towards all living beings. Dharma means the unceasing yearning for the prosperity and peace of all. When the ball of Life goes through these two principles of thought and action, one can claim genuine victory. Players must have always this goal in view. They must devote all strength and will to prevent the evil sixers from winning.

Consider the game of basketball. Here, too, two teams, Right and Wrong, struggle with each other to use the ball for good or bad ends. What are they trying to do with the ball? To drop it into a net. How hard they try to drop the ball (Life) into the net! And when they succeed, how high is their exaltation! How disappointed are they if the ball escapes and leaps beyond the net!

Next, the Volley Ball game! In this game, the ball should not be allowed to fall or drop on the ground. It should be kept moving high and the players leap high to make the ball rise above a net that is tied across at a great height. The players on one side hit it above the net to the other side and they hit it back the same way. It should not touch the net in between.

Then, the fourth game, Throw Ball. This ball is comparatively heavier. It has to be thrown with all the strength one can muster, as far into the distance as possible.

Reviewing these games from the standpoint of the Spirit, it can be said that football is symbolic of the Brahmacharya stage of life, when one is a student, initiated into the wisdom of the ages. One has then to oppose and win over the emotions and passions which tempt the tender nature of the student. The mind then is, as the proverb says, a horde of a thousand monkeys! The ball of life is buffeted by every passing desire, and prevented by evil tendencies that team together, from achieving the goal of Brahma which that stage called Brahmacharya sets for it.

If the Ball of Life fails to reach the goal, it is caught in the second game and gets dropped into the net, 'Samsara', involving it in the second stage of life, the Grihasta, the 'householder', rearing a family and toiling to keep himself and the family in comfort. Passing from one pair of hands to another, often falling on the ground and bobbing up, the ball suffers a great deal.

The ball of Life, exhausted by the experience of the basket ball game, is thrown into the Volley Ball court. This is symbolic of the third stage, in the pilgrimage to the finale of the game—the Vanaprastha, the Recluse, intent on spiritual exercises. Here, the ball does not touch the ground. It is lifted high and moves with great force over the entanglements that hope to obstruct it.

Having undergone and overcome the hits that taught it to rise above the net and avoid the ground of Samsara, the ball of Life symbolically enters the game of Throw ball! This is another name for Sanyasa, the monastic stage, the fourth and final one. One has to cast off the burdensome dualities of love-hatred, joy-grief and pleasure-pain. They refuse to go far and may even rebound. Practice and resolute courage only can ensure victory.

Thus, when we contemplate on the problems one has to face in these games we play today, enjoying them only superficially, we find they are highly valuable for the lessons they teach. Football is the fight between good and evil, during Brahmacharya. Basketball is the pull of pleasure and luxury, wealth and renown, during the Grihasta stage. Volleyball symbolises the struggle to escape from earthly entanglements and rise above all bounds in the Vanaprastha stage. Throw ball signifies the systematic practice of renouncing desire and discarding all dualities from the mind, as an ascetic or Sanyasi.

Games make you fit for service to your fellows. They encourage you to practise selflessness, mutual love and respect and they promote love for the Motherland. However poor the country, people must feel that it is their Mother; they must love it and strive to keep it free and prosperous. India may be poor and weak but she is rich in spiritual wealth. When other nations boasted about their ideal of brotherhood of man, India spoke of the oneness of all creation, the identity of all living beings. While other nations picked up shells from the sea-shore, India dived deep into the ocean and gathered pearls. We have in this country all that man seeks. Yet, we are afflicted with poverty and other illnesses, since we lack the spirit of renunciation for the common good, the urge to work in unison with others in the spirit of mutual help and intense love for the Motherland, Bharat.

Students must take interest in physical culture, athletics, etc. for relieving mental tension. They exaggerate even minor obstacles and failures into monstrous disasters and sit depressed and sad. If they take interest in games, the worry will fade in the joy of sharing the adventure on the field. Often, when you sit down for study, everything appears to be wrapped in confusion. When you persist in reading under these conditions, you do not understand anything. At such times, it is advisable to go out into the open and do some physical exercise or, if the hour is convenient, run a little distance, and resume the study. You will find much relief from the tension and the

obsession. Running fast over a mile or two will quicken the circulation of blood and the mind will be cleared of matters that clog.

SAI EDUCATION:

Canadian Response

The world is shrinking. Cultures, nations, continents come nearer and nearer. But, as Teilhard de Chardin said, to understand, to accept, to love and to serve the brotherhood of men, greater hearts and greater intelligence are needed.

A million zeros joined together do not add up to one. Ultimately everything depends upon the quality of the individual. The future happiness of society is determined in considerable measure by the features of its leadership. A society that does not have its best men at the head of its institutions is a moral absurdity.

The aim of the Canadian Sai course on Human Values, organized north of Toronto, in Wesceanaskin during seven full days in August 1982, was just that: to learn and practise how to live in peace, truth, love, non-violence and righteousness and to serve one's fellowmen selflessly, through good example.

Every single detail of the camp was used to practise selfless service. Activities began at 5:30 a.m. with morning prayer, meditation and itinerant singing. Each morning two lectures were held. In the afternoons participants studied the day's subject in small workshops.

Food was cooked and served by the participants. Dishwashing, cleaning of the lodges and all the facilities of the camp were done by the participants of the course.

This co-operation by everybody, ladies and gents, young and adults, Christians and Parsis, Buddhists and Jews, Muslims and Hindus, in communal work, was as educational as the study program itself. The central poster in the camp reminded the participants: the end of education is character and the end of knowledge is love.

A full day was dedicated to each of the five great religions: Sanathana Dharma, Buddhism, Zoroaster, Judeo-Christianism and Islam. Speakers were priests or knowledgeable scholars of the respective faiths.

The participants from African, European, Asian and Latin American countries, together with Americans and Canadians, gathered twice a day in small work shops. In them practical recommendations were prepared by the teams on effective methods to live daily the teachings, at home and at the workplace. Christ's words were a constant reminder: not every one who says,

"Lord, Lord," shall enter the Kingdom of heaven, but He who does the will of God. Baba's WATCH inspired equally the participants: words, action, thought, character and heart should be serving God through selfless love to our fellowmen.

Unity of religions

Each day brought some new understanding to the participants and dramatically reinforced the essential unity of the various religious paths toward the same God. The conclusions of the day on Christianity were summed up in the words of St. John of the Cross: in order to arrive at possessing everything, desire to possess nothing.

What a powerful prelude to the worldwide action program launched by Prasanthi Nilayam for the coming three years on the needed daily effort in diminishing our desires. "See good, do good, be good." And Buddha's words: what is the use of discussing all the subtle doctrine about the soul; do good and be good. And this will take you to freedom.

The eternal truth was presented by the participants in theater pieces. Black and brown and white actors working with great respect and mutual effort exemplified Sankaracharya's recommendation:

Cease to identify yourself with race, clan, name, form and walk of life. These belong to the body, the garment of decay. Abandon also the idea that you are the doer of actions or the thinker of thoughts. These belong to the ego, the subtle covering. Realize that you are the Being which is eternal happiness.

And what a great joy, discovering during the successive daily discussions that the modern scientists and thinkers arrived at identical conclusions as Bhagavan's teachings:

We are what we are devoted to, and what we are devoted to is what motivates our conduct (Erich Fromm)

To love is not to look at one another but to look together in the same direction (Antoine Saint Exupery)

The superior man rises by lifting others (Robert Ingersoll)

Till now man has been against nature, from now on he will be against his own nature (Dennis Gabor)

Wherever you have somebody capable of giving some kind of direction and instruction to a small group attempting to gain the purity of heart, attempting to love and serve God and reach union with Him, you are bound to have some kind of monasticism. This kind of monasticism cannot be extinguished. It is imperishable. It represents an instinct of the human heart and it represents a charisma given by God to man. It cannot be rooted out, because it does not depend on man (Thomas Merton)

Monastic cells

And this is the tangible outcome of the Sai course on human values: building and strengthening of multi-religious monastic cells in the various areas of the vast Canadian scene.

Family and married couples: develop to become more loving and perform well the duties of all stations of life, without attachment to results; read the great teachings together and meditate upon the daily practice of human values.

Students: learn the most fundamental teaching on human values; magnify understanding of the deep meaning of the teachings; serve selflessly others; act as big Sai brothers for smaller children in the neighbourhood; teach them respect for all religions races and cultures.

Educators: develop effective materials for the children's groups.

Service to old and lonely people: establish permanent ties of love and service with lonely and old persons; visit them regularly, help them in every possible form to make their life meaningful.

Diminishing material desires, developing selfless service to man—these constitute the essential effort of the growing Canadian Sai cells from the Pacific to the Atlantic Ocean.

—*George Kibedi, Toronto, Canada*

DHARMOPADESHAM:

Karma, Dharma and Brahman

*Without Charity and Righteousness,
Devoid of Truth and Compassion,
With a mind bereft of scruples
And filled with bad impulses
The evil minded man fares ill
Here and Hereafter.
Oh foolish mind!
Seeking the Vision of the Divine
Where do you wander in vain?
What you seek is within you.
Know that as truth.*

There are in the world various kinds of knowledge—knowledge of music, literature, art, sculpture, economics, politics, and the like. All these are only components of worldly knowledge—knowledge relating to the phenomenal world.

All worldly knowledge can help to increase one's comforts, but will not contribute to his liberation (Mukti). However much we may acquire control over material conditions, this will not serve to produce peace of mind or the bliss of the soul. In a sense, the more the worldly knowledge the less is one likely to have mental peace.

Worldly knowledge is no doubt necessary. But it is not the be-all and end-all. Many great kings in the past, who had ruled over vast empires and enjoyed every kind of pleasure, chose at the close of their lives to renounce everything for the sake of realising spiritual peace. "Yad-drusyam than-nasyathi"—Whatever is perceptible, is perishable. In the pursuit of fleeting and impermanent pleasures, we are throwing away the permanent, the unchanging and the real elements in human life. You imagine you are the architect of your fate. But the Author, the Master and the Enjoyer of everything is the Lord. By failing to grasp the nature of Karma (action) and not seeking the path of Dharma, man is making himself remote from Brahman.

For the performance of Karma, the body is the primary instrument. It is through right karma that one understands Dharma (Righteousness). The Karma kanda of the Vedas indicates how the primary goals of life are to be realised by the performance of sacramental duties—Sandhya Vandanam, Yajna and Yaga. Even as birth is related to Karma, Karma to Dharma, and Dharma to Brahman, the mother, the father, Guru and God are related to the individual. The mother indicates the father. The father leads one to the guru. The guru shows the way to realise God. All the four are fundamental to one's life. The mother comes first because she bears the travail of carrying and giving birth to the child. Hence, the Upanishads urged "Matru Devo Bhava" (Regard the mother as God). Then comes the father, who takes the child to a proper guru for the acquisition of Jnana. The primary duty of the guru is to show the path to God realisation. Prahlada declared: 'Only the guru who teaches about God is worth the name'. True gurus are those who show what are the true purposes of life and how they should be realised. The guru is one who dispels the darkness of ignorance by leading one to the light of knowledge of the Good the True and the Eternal. The guru should demonstrate to the student that beyond the changing forms and names of the phenomenal world there is a Divinity that is permanent and unchanging.

The materialistic philosophers today speak about oneness of mankind. But how do they explain the vast and immeasurable differences among men—differences in abilities, conditions, attitudes and impulses? One is continually sick. Another is hale and hearty. One is always cheerful. Another is continuously miserable. People do not realise that these differences are the results of past karma. Karma is the cause of everything that happens. The fruits of one's actions may not be evident immediately, but sooner or later, they are bound to appear.

'I shall do this, I shall do that,'
Vain is this boast, Oh man,
As you sow, so shall you reap
As the seed, so will the fruit be.

Hence, it is only by doing good deeds can one achieve desirable results. It is for this purpose that the Vedas have laid down in the Karma kanda the good deeds by which beneficial results can be got.

The Karma kanda reveals that the law of Karma affects everything that has a body and not merely human beings alone. For instance, even the Trinity-Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra-cannot avoid the consequences of karma. By their actions they are demonstrating this truth to the world. For instance, like a potter, Brahma is continuously creating things in this Cosmos. This is his unceasing work. Why is he involved in this? Because he has a distinct body. Assuming the body for performing karma and discharging his Dharma through his karma, he is setting an example to the world. Vishnu comes down in human form whenever Dharma declines on the earth and is in danger of extinction. Facing the censure of the wicked, punishing evil-doers and protecting the good and the innocent, and receiving the praise of the devotees, Vishnu is carrying out His duty of protecting Dharma and reforming mankind. It may be asked, "Why should Vishnu go through this ordeal as the -protector of Dharma?" It is no ordeal. It is only a demonstration of the duties that are related to the assuming of a certain form. Easwara (Siva) covers Himself with Vibhuti, dwells in the burial ground and subjects Himself to various rigorous disciplines. Thus even Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara, by their actions, have been setting an example to mankind as to how to make human life purposeful.

There are in human beings three states; mala, vikshepa and aavarana. 'Mala' is the cause of mental disquiet (asanthi). 'Mala' represents the fruit of actions done in previous births. As long as this is not eliminated, like the faeces resulting from the digesting of food, it will give rise to all kinds of trouble and sorrow. How can there be peace or joy when the fruit of past karma remains in us? Only when we are rid of the burden of karma can we attain peace. The results of past sins continue as "mala". To get rid of "mala", we have to engage ourselves in sacred tasks. The Lord judges you by the sincerity of your thoughts, not by the forms of your worship. The Lord sees your Bhakti and not Shakti (power). He cares for your Gunas (qualities) and not your kula (cast or lineage). He looks at your heart (Chittam) and not at your wealth (vittam). You must strive to purify your heart and engage yourself in righteous action, with devotion and integrity. No sadhana is of any use if you are involved in sinful deeds.

"Vikshepa" consists in the Sadhanas one does for realising the Divine. The Sadhanas include meditation, concentration and performance of good deeds for achieving purity of mind.

When one succeeds in Vikshepa, one is confronted with 'aavarana' (the covering in which one is enveloped). This covering is known as Maya. It envelopes everything in the universe. The eyes with which one can see everything that is outside cannot see themselves. Likewise, Maya, which reveals the entire universe, cannot reveal the Divine. Because we are enveloped in Maya, we seek worldly pleasures and do not seek our own Divine essence.

Young people should realise the connection between food and the state of one's mind. For much of the demoniac qualities prevalent among men today, the primary cause is the food they consume. One will develop good qualities if one takes Satwic food, which is wholesome and

moderate in quantity. It should not involve causing pain to others. And all that is eaten should be regarded as an offering to God. This is the inner significance of the Sandhya Vandana mantras. When uttering the different names of Vishnu—Keshava, Narayana, etc.—one should bear in mind the meaning of each name. Narayana, for instance, means that He is the Lord of the Five Elements. If the name is recited, bearing in mind what it signifies, the full benefit of reciting the mantra will be got.

The Gayatri mantra is the royal road to Divinity. There is no fixed time or regulation for reciting it. Nevertheless, the young Brahmacharis would do well to recite it during the morning Sandhya and evening Sandhya to derive the greatest benefit. Because the Divine is beyond time and space, any time, any place is appropriate for repeating God's name. "Sarvadaa, sarvathra, sarvakaaleshu Harichintanam'. The Bhagavata declares: "Contemplate on God always, at all places and at all times." You must learn to think of God in whatever you see, whatever you do and whatever you touch. You must realise that you are playing temporary roles on the cosmic stage. You must get back to your true divine selves when the play is over.

By regularly reciting the Gayatri, you must purify your lives and be an example to the world in righteous living. This is my benediction for you.

—Bhagavan's Discourse on 17-3-83

YUGADI MESSAGE:

"No Cause for Fear"

The assurance that there is no need to be frightened by the name of the New Year—Rudhirodgaari, which means "belching blood"—was given by Bhagavan Baba, in the course of His discourse on Yugadi Day (April 14) in the Mandir at Prasanthi Nilayam. The past year was called Dundubhi, but no one heard the beating of kettle-drums. "Rudhirodgaari" is likely to be a better year than Dundubhi. Moreover, whatever the year, as long as one is pure-hearted and has firm faith in God he has no need to fear. The true Bhakta does not apprehend danger from any quarter.

Bhagavan said: There is no inherent conflict between man's life in society and his spiritual effort. Both the individual and society are projections of the Divine Will. Man is born to proclaim the greatness of the Divine consciousness.

Nature is the Cosmic stage for the sport of the Divine. Everything in Nature is based on the Divine. But there is need to observe certain regulations as laid down in Vedanta. Over-eating causes indigestion. Under-eating causes starvation. Both have to be avoided. There must be limits to what one enjoys from the things provided by Nature.

The man who has love for God is like the traveller with a ticket. He need not be afraid of anyone while making his journey. The ticketless traveller is haunted by constant fear. Although one does not see the physical form of the omnipresent Lord, one continuously experiences evidences of His existence. The man who is blinded by egoism is unable to see these evidences.

The heart is continually emitting alarm signals. But man does not attempt to determine his goal in life before the heart stops beating. All the diseases of the heart are the result of failure to remove the impurities in it. These impurities can be removed by cultivating devotion to God and seeking the company of the good and the godly. Single-minded devotion is needed. One must try to get rid of Ego and pride and proceed from ordinary (Samanya) Bhakti to undivided (Ananya) Bhakti. "Fill your minds with fortitude, patience, truth and peace and make them blossom so that they may scatter the fragrance of divinity. This is my New Year Message for you all. Get rid of evil habits and cultivate purity of thought, word, and deed. Constant repetition of the sacred name of the Lord is the means for achieving purity," concluded Bhagavan. Earlier, Bhagavan called upon Pundit Bairagi Sastry to read out from the almanac for the New Year what the configuration of planets portended for the country.

Dr. M. V. Narayana Murthy submitted to Bhagavan copies of his new book on Bhagavan's life and teachings, "The Greatest Adventure." Bhagavan graciously released the book, with His benediction.

Prof. V. K. Gokak, Vice-chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, spoke on the significance of observing New Year Day. He said that Time and Space were the first to be born out of Siva and Shakti, and then came Light and the rest of Creation. The Yugadi celebration is an occasion for remembering the divine origin of all creation.

Red-Letter-Day for Guntur Devotees

The yearning of Sai devotees from Guntur for many years to have Darshan of Bhagavan and receive His Grace was fulfilled on April 6, when Bhagavan arrived from Vijayawada to declare open the magnificent new Sathya Sai Mandir constructed by the District Sai Seva Samiti.

On arrival, Bhagavan was welcomed with Poorna-Kumbham and Vedic chants at the entrance to the Mandir. A gathering of over five lakhs of devotees, men, women and children, had assembled for the occasion. The Seva Samiti had made elaborate arrangements for the function.

At exactly 10-60 a.m., Swami ceremonially sanctified the Vighneshwara idol installed in front of the new Mandir. Sri K. Narayana Rao garlanded Swami, while Sri C. Mallikarjuna Rao offered Arati.

After unfurling the Sai flag at the Dhvajasthambha, Bhagavan cut the ribbon in front of the Mandir doors and entered the Mandir. Bhagavan was struck by the painting inside the Mandir depicting the scene in which Lord Krishna teaches the Gita to Arjuna.

Vedic pundits, who had assembled for the occasion, and other leading devotees offered their obeisance to Bhagavan in the Mandir Hall. Bhagavan then proceeded to the special shamiana which had been put up for His public discourse. Moving between the large concourse of men and women devotees, seated on separate sides, Bhagavan conferred bliss on the large gathering by His Darshan and benediction.

After garlanding by office-bearers of the Samiti and welcome address by the Zonal Convener, Sri K. Anil Kumar, Bhagavan delivered His divine discourse.

Self-confidence, Bhagavan said, was essential for carrying out any undertaking. It was even more necessary for spiritual sadhana. Bhagavan described Himself as one whose sole business was to deal in Love—to give Love and receive Love. Today what passed for Love was motivated by self-interest. What they should cultivate was disinterested, selfless Love. "Give up hatred and develop self-sacrifice. It is out of Love that all of you have assembled here. It is out of Love that I have come such a long way. The tie that binds us is Love," declared Bhagavan. "You have built this Mandir at great expense. Why have you done it? If God can be worshipped as the Formless Absolute, it may be asked, where is the need for a Mandir? But worship of the Formless Brahman is not possible for everybody. As long as you have a body, you need temple for worship. The lawyer reminds you of legal aid. The temple reminds you of Divine help. 'Deho Devalayamy Prokthah' the body is the tabernacle of the Divine. Our duty is to go to them to worship God."

Bhagavan named the new Mandir as "Sathya Sai Santhi Sudha".

After Arati, Bhagavan retired to the rest-house behind the Mandir for rest. Swami gave Darshan to the devotees from the balcony of the rest house and indicated to them that they might disperse.

Arrangements had been made for feeding many thousands of devotees who had come from distant places.

Swami took His lunch with about 200 devotees and went to each of them to enquire about their welfare. Swami blessed individually the doctors who are rendering free medical service on two days in a week and exhorted them to carry on the good work with zeal and devotion.

After a short spell of rest, Bhagavan agreed, at the request of numerous devotees, to sit on the jhoola, which had been set up in the Mandir. After Arati, Swami left at 2.05 p.m. for Ellore, filling the hearts of Guntur devotees with ineffable bliss.

Development work in rural areas:

Leaving Guntur by car around 2 p.m., Bhagavan halted at several Sai rural centres in West Godavari district before reaching Rajahmundry at 11 p.m. Large groups of devotees greeted Him all along the route. At many places, welcome arches had been erected and festoons strung across the road.

The first village to be visited after passing Ellore was Kovvali, where Bhagavan laid the foundation-stone for a building to house a school run by the District Seva Samiti. Swami visited also an Eye Camp run in the village-the fiftieth camp in the district for this year-and blessed the patients. Dr. A. J. Varma, who had been in charge of all the eye camps, was blessed by Bhagavan.

Swami arrived at Singanamuppavaram by 6 p.m. This village has been "adopted" by the District Seva Samiti for all-round development. Bhagavan acquainted Himself with the improvements effected in this village, which included repair of a fresh water well for drawing drinking water, building of an approach road to the well, bunding of the village tank, constructing an approach road to the tank from the Harijan colony, erection of a bus shelter and installing a shrine near it for the idols of Vinayaka, Nandi and Subrahmanyam.

Bhagavan delivered a 30-minute discourse to a gathering of over 75,000 who had assembled in the village from all the neighbouring areas.

While advising the Sai Seva Samiti members to engage themselves intensively in every type of rural development work, Bhagavan advised the villagers to eschew bad habits like drink and to develop good qualities such as cooperation, mutual help, integrity and devotion to God.

The large gathering felt itself doubly blessed by the opportunity to have Darshan of Bhagavan and listen to His divine discourse.

Proceeding next to the small town of Kovur on the western bank of the Godavari, Bhagavan inaugurated a Bhajan Mandir constructed by a devotee who had constituted a trust for that purpose. Seeing the large gathering of devotees who had congregated there, Bhagavan answered their unexpressed prayers by addressing them for a few minutes.

It was past 9 p.m. by the time Swami reached Rajahmundry, where a very large assemblage of devotees waited to receive Him at the Sri Sathya Sai Gurukulam.

Swami especially blessed the four 'pilot' riders, who had been riding on their motor cycles in front of Swami all the way from Guntur to Rajahmundry.

Call To Gurukulam Students

Bhagavan was received with Poorna-Kumbham and Vedic chants on, arrival at the Gurukulam. Sri T. Bullayya, Sri S. B. P. Sathyanarayana Rao, Sri D. Rama Rao and Sri Ramachandran welcomed Swami and followed Him to the Mandir in the Gurukulam, where a large number of devotees were waiting for Swami's Darshan. Swami blessed the devotees present.

The next day Bhagavan gave Darshan to the students after they had completed their Nagarsankirtan early in the morning.

Bhagavan formally inaugurated at 8 a.m. the new hostel for students built in the Gurukulam compound and presented new clothes to the engineers who had supervised the construction.

Bhagavan then proceeded to the auditorium where all the students and staff of the Gurukulam had assembled to listen to His discourse. Bhagavan exhorted the students to cultivate love for the Motherland and to prepare themselves, while at school, for serving the country in various fields with devotion and dedication. Respect for parents and elders, discipline, and adherence to the ancient ideals of Bharat were among the qualities they should acquire during their educational career. Swami called upon them to mould themselves on the example set by Sri Rama, who was the very embodiment of Dharma and Sathya. Bhagavan deprecated the craze for jobs abroad and urged that the links between education and employment should be severed. Education should be a preparation for the good life, in the service of society, and for Self-realisation. The aim of Sai educational institutions is to reform the educational system in such a way that the students develop respect for Indian culture and learn to live a life of sacrifice and dedication. Instead of imitating exotic styles of living, they should demonstrate the greatness of India's spiritual and cultural heritage.

In the evening, Bhagavan witnessed a 'burrakatha' performance on Swami's life and the enacting of a dance drama (Mohini-Bhasmasura) at the English medium Vidya Vihar School. Swami presented a gold locket to the boy, who played the role of Bhasmasura, who had also come out first in his class.

Swami later installed an idol of Sri Krishna in the Gokulam attached to the Gurukulam.

Later in the evening, Bhagavan addressed a gathering of over 50,000 devotees who had assembled in the vast open grounds of the Gurukulam. In His hour-long discourse, Bhagavan dwelt on various aspects of spiritual sadhana and expatiated on the importance of Bhakti, based on complete surrender to the Lord, as the most effective means of realising oneness with the Divine.

The students of the Gurukulam got up a programme of Bhangra dances and presented a play based on the life of Markandeya.

Swami left early in the morning on the 8th for Hyderabad.

STUDENTS' CORNER:

A Teenager's Concept of God

At times, in the brooding silence of the night and in rare lonely moments, I come upon a communion with something within me which is not strangely myself ...These moments are the supreme facts of religious life. They are the most beautiful and most profound emotions, an experience of an uncanny sensation of the mystical.

I am sure these moments, these emotions, crown the religious experiences of every human soul under the sun. He to whom these emotions are but waffle and strange is only a living corpse.

To understand and to experience that the Impenetrable, the Incomprehensible, and the Illimitable really exists, really manifests itself as the highest of wisdom, as the embodiment of bliss, as the personification of the most radiant beauty, which our dull drowsy and disingenuous faculties can comprehend only in a very shallow, primitive and naive form, this knowledge, this awareness is the central and the brightest flame of GODHOOD, of true RELIGIOUSNESS.

My religion consists of humble admiration and adoration of the limitless and unfathomable Supreme Spirit who reveals Himself in slight details which we are able to perceive with our frail and feeble minds.

That deeply emotional conviction of the presence, the existence of a superior reasoning power, which is revealed in this Universe, forms My concept of God. And thus it would only be proper to say that the concept of Godhood and GODLINESS is subjective, nestled in a heart which is continuously being replenished by a higher mind. In fact it is no more a concept. It is a living presence which overwhelms the mind and heart, yet satisfies both, and reaches out to dimensions which our entire being strives to Attain.

—*Abhishek Kumar Dubey, II Intermediate, Prasanthi Nilayam*

'SIVAM' anniversary:

"Samanya Bhakti" and "Ananya Bhakti"

Leaving Brindavan on the evening of April 3, Bhagavan returned to Brindavan at midnight on April 8. In between He stayed for two days in Hyderabad and toured four districts in two days, covering Vijayawada, Guntur, Eluru, Kovvur and Rajahmundry. Undeterred by the heat and dust of an Andhra summer, devotees in their thousands greeted Swami everywhere, happy to catch a glimpse of Bhagavan, touch His feet or the hem of His robe, or to listen to His discourse. Swami inaugurated the new temple at Guntur, built in granite in the traditional Indian style, and saw the rural development work being carried on in the West Godavari district by the Sai Seva Samiti. Swami's visit and His discourses at several places were an inspiration to Sai devotees and a reminder of the great tasks facing them in fulfilling Swami's divine mission.

When Bhagavan arrived in Hyderabad on the night of April 3rd, He was accorded a tumultuous reception at 'Sivam'. The tenth anniversary celebrations of 'Sivam' started on the 4th with Suprabhat Darshan by Bhagavan and Nagarsankirtan in the morning. Later, Bhagavan inaugurated the halls constructed in the 'Sivam' compound for carrying on the service and educational activities of the State Samiti. Bhagavan distributed Prasadam to the assembled devotees.

Bhagavan visited the medical centre in Hyderabad where a number of local doctors are running a free medical clinic.

In the evening Swami gave His divine discourse to a vast gathering at 'Sivam'. Following are excerpts from the address, which lasted more than an hour and covered a wide range of subjects—from the different types of Bhakti to the true goals of human life and the characteristics of disinterested social service: Bhakti is the cord that binds man to God. It is of two kinds: Samanya Bhakti (ordinary) and Ananya (uni-centred) Bhakti. Samanya Bhakti is concerned with the worship of idols, images, pictures, etc. They are the first step in devotion. One cannot dispense with images and forms as long as one has a body. Worship, again, is of four kinds: Swartham (out of self-interest); Niswartham (without self-interest); Parartham (for the benefit of others); Paramartham (out of complete dedication to the Divine). The first kind of worship is undertaken whenever one is in trouble or distress and God is forgotten after relief is obtained. The second kind of worshiper carries on his worship without depending on others, seeking the good things of life from the deity he worships. The third type of worshiper offers worship for the sake of others, praying for the welfare of all and holding to the belief that his welfare is bound up with the welfare of all. The fourth kind, which is the highest form of worship, is worship done in a spirit of complete surrender to the Divine and dedicating all actions to the service of the Divine. This is also known as 'Ananya Bhakti'.

In the Gita, Sri Krishna has given an assurance that He will look after the entire well-being (Yogakshemam) of the devotees who worship Him alone always with single-minded devotion. Many persons who devote half an hour or hour for daily prayers complain that the Lord has not cared for their well-being despite the promise in the Gita. They forget the condition attaching to the Lord's pledge. 'Ananyaaschintayanto Maam' and 'Nithyaabhiyuktaanaam', 'those who contemplate on Me alone, to the exclusion of everything else', it is their 'yogakshemam' that the Lord will ensure. The part-time devotees will receive only partial rewards.

Samaja Seva

Referring to the role of man in society, Bhagavan said: Man cannot live alone by himself. He has to live in society. He can progress only by service to the community. Whom should one serve? The most depressed and neglected sections of the people. They are described as "Daridra Narayana". In serving them we are serving the Narayana that is in every one of them. Devotion to the Lord does not mean merely offering worship in a shrine or taking part in bhajans or Nagarsankirtan. One must recognise the form of the Divine in the images one worships or the human beings one serves. This is the means of ultimately realising the Divine (Sakshatkara)."

'In the world today, spirituality is looked upon with amusement or disregard. It is considered a futile pursuit. This is a grievous mistake. Without the eye of faith, one will move like a blind man. For everything one needs faith. And no one has the right to question another's faith, whatever it may be. Faith and self-confidence are the basis of existence. All our actions are based on faith—faith in the continuity of our life, faith in what we can achieve, and so on. If even in the small affairs of daily life, we need faith, how much more is it necessary in the case of spiritual realisation, which will confer lasting bliss?

"It is by loss of faith that Bharat has lost its greatness. All our troubles are due to lack of self-confidence and loss of faith in God. To revere good persons to respect one's parents and to earn their love—these were the qualities which were cultivated in the past. Today no one has respect for anyone. Everyone makes fun of others, makes much of others' mistakes and lapses. Is this proper? One should be mindful of one's own weaknesses and mistakes, rather than point to others' mistakes."

On the 5th morning, after Suprabhatam and Nagarsankirtan, Bhagavan made a brief visit to the Sathya Sai Vidya Vihar High School in Shantinagar. Swami opened there a spiritual exhibition devoted to pictorial representations of various saints and the unity of all religions.

In the afternoon, Bhagavan addressed the Seva Dal members of Hyderabad.

"Spiritual Sadhanas," Bhagavan said, "are intended to develop that universal love which is identified with God. Among all Sadhanas, the sadhana of service (Seva) ranks foremost. It is the means both of expressing one's love to others and obtaining their love. It is through such love that God can be realised, because God is the Indweller in all-living things.

"In rendering service, one should have no thought of one's self. He should only consider how well he can render service as an offering to the Divine. One should note the distinction between Karma (action) and Karma Yoga (Action as a spiritual discipline). Ordinary Karma is motivated by self-interest or desire to achieve some objective. In Karma Yoga, the action is desireless. It is like the difference between a grain of paddy (with husk) and a grain of rice. The rice grain will not sprout. Ordinary Karma is the cause of birth, death and rebirth. Karma Yoga leads to freedom from birth. The Sai Seva Dal members should regard service as a form of Karma Yoga—rendering, service without any expectation of reward and without even the feeling that they are serving others. It does not matter whether they are able to perform Japa, Puja, bhajan or meditation regularly. Any service they do to anyone is service to the Divine."

Bhagavan said the Hyderabad Seva Dal members should carry on their service activities without minding the criticisms or remarks of others. The selfless spirit in which they render service is what matters. They should have firm faith in their divine essence and carry on their work with steadfastness and determination. They should have fraternal feelings among themselves, based on their faith in God.

Swami left early in the morning on the 6th for Gannavaram by plane. From there Swami left for Vijayawada by car. He inaugurated the new Sai Mandir, which is located in a crowded part of the town. All the roads leading to the Mandir were filled with devotees waiting for Darshan of Bhagavan. After opening the Mandir and blessing the devotees, Bhagavan left for Guntur.

Sutra Vahini

8

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

'Saastra Yonithwaath': 'Brahmam is the source of the scriptures and therefore is All-knowing'. The scriptures are expressions of the Truth acquired by sages while delving into the Reality. The words have emanated from the inhalations and exhalations of the Divine Breath. They were heard from no embodied entity, nor did they arise out of the imagination of any one. Hence, they are described as 'impersonal' (A-paurusheya) and 'eternal' (Saaswatha). From whom did they originate? The answer is, from Brahmam alone. Veda means knowledge; it always 'is'. It has no beginning, nor end. It is referred to as 'an-antha', without end, for it is sound, sacred, sustaining, salutary sound. It is experienceable only; it cannot be limited or communicated. So, it is a marvel, an unprecedented phase of personal experience for each one. Since Brahmam is the source of such knowledge, it is extolled as All-knowing, All-mighty and All-pervading.

"Saastra Yonithwaath." This aphorism conveys the meaning that the Vedic scriptures have to be resorted to in order to know Brahmam, that only they can reveal Brahmam, and that all Vedas lead man to the same knowledge. Besides, the scriptures derive their validity through Brahmam and their value, too, from Brahmam, for Brahmam is the very source of the illumination they contain and confer. Only the Omniscient One can be the source of the Vedas. The scriptures alone can liberate man through that illumination, named knowledge. They regulate man's life and foster it, guarding it from grief. The Vedas offer comforting counsel; they deal with man affectionately and lead him forward, for they are received through venerable personages who have attained the Highest Knowledge, Brahmam.

Brahmam cannot be comprehended by means of proofs or arguments. It is beyond reason and calculation. So, It is A-prameya. It cannot be measured. It is indefinable. It cannot be pronounced as being such or so, for this reason or that. It is immeasurable by time and space. The scriptures are the proof. The usual proofs for truth are direct perception (Pratyaksha) and inferential perception (Anumana). But Brahmam cannot be cognised by these two means. The sages have experienced It and expressed in the scriptures. That word (Shabda) is the firmest proof. 'Sastra' means that which brings to memory what has been forgotten. Brahmam is the very self-ness of every man. The Sastras (Directives or Counsellors) direct and counsel every one. But man yields to delusion and becomes one with the darkness caused by false values and attachment to the unreal, the 'me' and 'mine'. But, the scripture is the mother; she does not give up. She persists and pursues; she reminds man of the goal in order to ensure that he is saved.

Hence, the above aphorism, "Saastra Yonithwaath" declares that the Sastras or scriptures are to be considered as the cause of the awareness of the Incomprehensible, Immeasurable, Inexpressible Brahman. They are numberless, but, lifetime is too short. Aspirants are plenty; doubts and hesitations are numerous; steadfastness is meagre. As a result, no one can claim full mastery.

Of course, one has no need to drink the entire ocean to know its taste. One can discover the taste by placing one drop on the tongue. Similarly, it is impossible to understand all the contents of the scriptures. It is enough if one grasps the important lesson that is elaborated and puts that lesson into practice.

This lesson is: constant thought of God, as Prahlada told Hiranyakasipu, his father, when his father drew him near and fondly asked the boy to repeat what he had learned from his teacher, and make him happy. Prahlada replied, 'I have learnt the secret essence of all learning.' The father was glad. He asked him again, "Tell me that essential thing which you have mastered." Prahlada said, "Father! He who illumines everything, He who finally absorbs everything with Himself, is the ONE, the Narayana. Having Him always in mind and experiencing the Bliss thereof awards fulfillment to all." The boy uttered the name Narayana, which the father abhorred! He did not stop with that. He said, "Father! You have conquered the entire world, but you have failed to conquer your senses. How then can you receive grace from Narayana? These material skills and worldly achievements are hollow possessions. Brahma Vidya, the knowledge and the experience of the ONE, that alone is to be pursued."

It is an arduous process for man to become aware of the ONE which is his core. The person is of the essence of food (Anna). The gross body is the product of the food consumed. But in man, there is a subtler force, an inner vibration, named Prana or Vital Air. The mind (manas) within is subtler still, and deeper than the manas and subtler, is the intellect (Vijnana). Beyond the intellect, we have in us the subtlest sheath of Ananda or Bliss. When man delves into this Ananda region of himself, he can experience the Reality, the Brahman, the ONE. That awareness is indeed the most desirable.

In the Taittiriya Upanishad, the Bhrgu Valli, which comes after the Brahmananda Valli, has the story of Bhrgu, son of Varuna. While teaching the son the Brahman phenomenon, he says, "Son! Bhrgu! Brahman cannot be seen through the eyes. It cannot be heard through the ears. Know that Brahman is that which enables the eyes to see and the ears to hear. He can be known only through Tapas (extreme yearning in a cleansed mind and concentrated thought). No other means can help." He added, "Dear Bhrgu! Know that everything in the Universe originates from Brahman, exists in Brahman and unfolds through Brahman, and merges in Brahman alone. Discover It yourself through Tapas." The father gave him only these indications, before directing him to enter upon spiritual exercises which will ultimately reveal the Truth.

With full faith in the words of his father Bhrgu was engaged in Tapas. The process of self-control and self-enquiry raised his consciousness and he believed what he understood at that stage as Brahman and decided that food (Anna) was Brahman! When he declared what he had

come to know, his father, Varuna, told him that his answer was not right. So, he continued the Tapas and found out that Prana (vital air) was Brahman, since without Prana, other things are vain. Prana causes life, promotes life and puts an end to life. But the father pronounced this inference too wrong and sent him again for further Tapas. In this manner, Bhrgu had a third period of austerity when he came upon manas as Brahman and later, a fourth when he revised that conclusion and believed that It was Vijnana. At last, after undergoing a fifth course of Tapas, he became aware that Ananda was Brahman. He stayed in the Bliss of that Awareness and never more proceeded to his father. The father sought him out and approached him. He congratulated Bhrgu, who had cast the world away from his memory. He said, "Son! You have now visualised Brahman; you have merged in that Vision."

Man starts life as a creature of Anna (food), but he has to march on to the goal of an embodiment of Ananda. Not man alone, but every living being starts on food and yearns to reach the peak of Ananda. All efforts, all undertakings are directed to the acquisition of Ananda. All are born in Ananda, will live for Ananda, all die in order to attain Ananda. The Taittiriya Upanishad elucidates that Ananda is the urge for birth, growth, decay and death.

However, how can Brahman be Ananda? It is said: 'OM ithyekaaksharam Brahma', the Pranava sound OM, the one imperishable letter, is Brahman. The Cosmos is composed fully of the Pranava. It is also said, 'Ayam Atma Brahma', 'This Atma is Brahman'. Therefore, Atma, Brahma and Pranava—all are indistinguishably the same. The Brahma Vidya teaches that the Self in each living being, the Atma, is Brahman Itself, no less. The Sutras reveal that the outer universe (which has Brahman as the base) and the inner universe (the Antar-jagat) are identical and cannot be differentiated.

(To be continued)

The Quest and the Answer

Down the green valleys where the breeze made the flowers nod
I went seeking Him whom I heard as the merciful God
I searched for Him on the beaches where tireless waves lashed the shore
Failing to find Him there, I felt the Saline wave make my heart Sore
I looked for Him near the light blue hills where gurgling streams flow by
The silence that pervaded around them was broken by larks' Ft cuckoos' cry
I looked for Him in temples too, where I saw only images of stone
Which stand unmoved by pain and plight and deaf to wail and moan
I looked for Him from land's end to Kailash Peak
I continued the track far and in deep anguish appealed to Thee
"Mercy Oh! Lord! Come, show me where you are as my strength is ebbing fast!"
Soon fatigue overpowered me and the earth received me
In the depth of silence and peace I heard the Sai voice speak to me

"Come! My child! I reside in thy heart. Why cry in the wilderness for ME"

—*M. Radha Krishna Reddi, II C.I.C. S.S.S. Higher Secondary School*

"We Are All One"

This is the story of how I discovered the Brotherhood of Man. All around me sat thousands of devotees from almost every corner of the earth, faces turned towards the Mandir, waiting for that first glimpse of our Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, waiting to receive that most loving Divine Smile that only He can give. As we sat we experienced a beautiful quiet stillness, and a feeling of peace, as we waited for our Lord. And then there He was in His Orange Robe, moving quietly and ever so slowly among His people, smiling that beautiful, loving smile, a gentle word to some as He moved ever so gracefully amongst us. Tears of Love filling our eyes, yes, Dear Lord, we were home at your Lotus Feet, regardless of whether we were Chinese, Japanese, Russian, Swiss, German, Italian, Greek or whatever. Regardless of the colour of our skin, we were all one here at Prasanthi Nilayam, on the most sacred soil on this earth. Yes, Dear Lord, with your Grace, receiving your Darshan.

Then, He was in front of me, those beautiful, compassionate eyes looking deep into mine. Divine Mother, Divine Father, thank you for making me aware, and experiencing the love of a thousand mothers and the love of my brothers and sister

—*Betty Poyzer, Wairaa, New Zealand*

When man fails to use his attainments for the welfare of others he becomes a Naraksasura, hellish demon. But, when in a competitive race for individual glory, he spends billions on getting to the moon and bringing rocks from its crust, instead of feeding millions who starve down below and promoting the prosperity of backward nations, he is only condemning himself. Even the best of things can be misused by men. Ravana, Sisupala, Kamsa, and other demonic persons mentioned in the Indian pureness and epics had vast scholarship, enormous economic and military power, and even immense yogic and occult skills won by years of austerity and disciplined living. But, they could not earn one skill, the skill to suppress the ego, and so, they became too obstinate, too obstructive and too dangerous to be allowed to live and prosper. The lesson taught by the careers of Naraka and of Bali is that man should be master of his ego if he is to succeed in the art of successful living.

—**Baba**

"Your Divine Destiny"

*The Universe is illumined through and through by the splendour of the Lord.
The Universe shines forever in the glory of the Lord.
When the Light of the Lord is withdrawn from it, the Universe cannot shine.
The Universe AND Its Lord are eternally bound by all-pervading light and love.*

Embodiments of Love!

*Good thoughts in mind, good words in speech,
Good steps in every deed—When these are not found,
How can Sai pat end praise and give you joy?
Decide and declare the answer to yourself.*

What pleases man most is sweetness in thought, word and deed. This mysterious component that evokes joy in the human heart is the genuine Rama principle. Rama means 'that which causes delight'. A stomachful of food, an eyeful of sleep, a home full of children's laughter—these, according to most people, are the highest levels of happiness. But this refers only to the interval between birth and death. What of the before and after? The body is something separate from you. You own it for some years and you feed it and foster it and struggle with it, to tame it to do your will. 'You' or the 'I' in the body, the 'Atma', is the One, without a second. When identification with the body weakens, the effulgence of the Atma will be patent.

Attachment to the body complex implies accumulation and acquisition of things that cater to its needs and greeds. Accumulation promotes exploitation; it cannot win Grace. It has no limit, the thirst increases with each gulp. It always asks for more. Can a lake be filled with a drizzle? Can saliva slake the thirst? Can blades of grass burn as coal? Accumulation of things, of scholarship or fame can yield no good, unless what is acquired is put to practical use for oneself and others.

The wisdom to recognize that the body he believes is himself is only an instrument wielded by him, has to dawn in man. That is the first step to the higher spiritual consciousness. There is in every person the ever-free, ever-unattached, ever-pure Atma. That is the Brahman the Cosmic Awareness latent and potent in every one. Yoga awakens when the world is viewed with glorious unconcern. This is the source of supreme Ananda.

How can renunciation, non-attachment, result in joy, it may be asked. Discard the sense of egotism while engaged in activity; discard, while experiencing any emotion or reaction, the feeling of being a partaker—then, one can be ever in joy. Then the Bhogi is really a Yogi.

Consider the reality of the things from which one derives joy! Each one of them is saturated with the Divine Principle. The rain that falls, the sun that shines, the moon that cools, the rivers

that flow are all for all. Therefore no one has the right to claim them exclusively or to prevent others from sharing these gifts. The Divine is the basis for everything, objective as well as subjective. The eye cannot see nor the ears hear unless the life-principle is active through the grace of the Divine Atma or Brahman. Man can become aware of the Atmic Truth when he casts off the trammels of egotism and possessiveness.

The tender child is not burdened with these two. Fed at the mother's breast, inhaling fresh pure invigorating air, it is thrilled by the sweet lullabies the mother sings. But, as it grows in age, it assumes the dual emotions of mine and thine and gets entangled in greed and hate, in pomp and possessiveness. So, the basic divinity gets ignored. The Atma is unaffected by what we call ups and downs. When the waters of the lake are agitated, the moon reflected in its depths appears agitated and wavy but the planet up in the sky is unaffected by what happens to its image. So, too, the mind wavers and wobbles but the Atman is calm and unconcerned. Another facet of the Atma or the Divine in us has also to be kept in view. It is not only in us but outside us also. In fact, the Vedas say, 'Antar bahischa tat sarvam vyapya Narayano sthithaha' (Inside, outside That Divine pervades everything.) No one can see his own face except in a mirror or some medium that can reflect it. When he discovers that he has some dirt on his face he can clean it and become free. Retiring into a lonely silent place is like facing a fine mirror. Being in the midst of turmoil and trivial is like peering into a hazy dusty mirror. Hence such retreats are desirable.

The Atma in us is identical with the Cosmic Consciousness, the Param-Atma. It is Sat-Chit-Ananda, its nature can only be described as Being-Awareness-Bliss. The Vedas also refer to it as Truth-Wisdom-Infinity, Sathyam, Jnanam, Anantam, Brahma. The individual is derived from Brahman and so is entitled to the awareness of Brahman. The Vedas declare that the sky is the manifestation of Brahman, from the sky comes air; fire is a projection of air and water, of fire; the earth or soil arose from water, plants upon the earth from the food (anna) which, in turn, moulds man. So, man is directly derived from the Omnipotent. Man is enclosed in five sheaths—the physical, vital, mental, intellectual and Blissful. This Blissful is the core. So, man need only explore within himself for infinite Bliss. Bliss has to be sought not through accumulation but through renunciation and promotion of the welfare of others. Tyaga is recommended by the Vedas as the only path to immortality. Give in plenty, give gladly, give for the glory of God, in gratitude to God.

Selfishness is the canker that destroys charity. Though one is aware that a step is wrong, selfishness does not allow him to desist. But, it can be overcome by steady determination. Share with others the knowledge and skills you have earned, the ideas and ideals you have benefited by and the joy you have won by discipline and dedication. Sharing will not diminish them or devalue them. On the other hand, they will shine better and put on added splendour.

Of these ideals, Truth is the one that Rama upheld. Take it that it is Rama that speaks through you and honour every word as Rama would have done. Consider how much Lakshmana had to repent for not acting, on one fateful occasion, according to the word he had given to Rama himself. Rama had asked him never to leave Sita alone in the hermitage and he had agreed. But, he left the place and Ravana could kidnap Sita and carry her to his island city! Rama is

Atma-Rama, the Voice of God within. Do not disobey it or circumvent its directives. Pray that the Voice alerts you ever, pray with humility and surrender to the advice. Then Rama will guide you right with compassion.

Ramadas of Bhadrachalam was thrown into prison; he was whipped without mercy. But, he never lost faith in Rama. He pleaded plaintively for grace, and he was able to earn Divine intervention to save himself from torture. Unwavering faith is the sign of spiritual success. That is the result of the awareness of one's inner Reality, the stabilising core, the Divine in man.

Practise this ideal of inner peace and universal love. Shower selfless love on ten others and bring about once again the Rama Rajya of the Ramayana. 'Rama' means 'he who pleases'. Be pleasant to every one; let every one be pleased with you. Do not hurt or harm, by thought, word and deed. Purify your hearts; cleanse it of narrow selfishness

Bring million flowers and do Puja with them,
All will be rejected, none accepted.
Bring a single lotus, your heart so fresh;
Sathya Sai accepts, grants both love and peace.

Offer your virtues as flowers. Virtues that spread beauty and fragrance. Offer your heart-lotus freed from insect pests like lust, anger and hate.

The seed of Divinity has to be fostered by human effort and steady care, in order that it may blossom and fructify. Remove from your mind all traces of desire, to harm others, by thought, word and deed. The reaction you will encounter by indulging in such temporarily satisfying behaviour, will be disastrous. Each such act is a seed planted in your own mind, a weed that will grow wild and destroy your peace and joy. So, be vigilant against such tendencies. Cleanse your thoughts, words and deeds and act as men on the march towards their Divine Destiny. I bless that you may succeed and reach the goal.

—*Prasanthi Nilayam, 21-4-83*

Parading Quotes

In order to silence my granny from bothering me too much, I advised her to practise love and patience. I picked out choice phrases from the discourses of Swami and quoted them in plenty. While I was enjoying this wise exercise of mine, I remembered the word hypocrisy—. Swami had written a drama on that theme, even when he was younger than I am. That word coming to my mind at that time was not very comforting, I should confess. It meant 'telling some things and doing some opposite things.

I tried to justify myself. I assured myself that circumstances do differ and one has to behave accordingly. We have to preach according to others' needs and practise, according to our needs. But, somehow, something inside me did not agree with this. I heard myself answer "Isn't it better not to preach when you don't practise what you advise others to do?" I told myself. 'Do not try to show off your scholarship. You can quote from books but can you quote from experience?'

So, I told granny I was sorry and that she was not bothering me at all. Even if she did, it was her affection for me that made her bother about me. It must be Swami who taught me this lesson, "First self; then help."

—P. Krishna Kishore, II Inter, Vidyagiri, Prasanthi Nilayam.

Bhagavan went on tour to Bangalore, Hyderabad, Guntur, and the Godavari districts. He returned on 11th April, back to Puttaparthi. We all greeted Him. He blessed us all. That evening, when we finished Bhajans, a storm broke. The wind brought sand into our Bhajan Hall. The weather suddenly changed from hot to cold. The lights also went off. I knew that all this happened just to greet the Kaliyuga Avatar.

For, the wind and electric current had missed him at Puttaparthi. So, when Bhagavan came, the wind rushed in to have a glance of Him. Like us, the wind also wanted to greet Him. The bulbs had opened their eyes so long but Bhagavan was away. They closed their eyes when Bhagavan came, so that they could concentrate all attention on Bhagavan.

Just see, even non-living things want to have a glance of God outside or inside, direct or indirect. I am sure Swami has blessed all of them. One more thing
When the storm came, our school towels started swaying. This seemed to indicate their happiness. They were trying to say, "Glory to Sathya Sai."

So we who are human beings, to whom God has given a better mind, should also think of Him and thank Him. Then only can we take a step towards the 'White Path to Heaven'. Since White is the symbol of purity, people with pure hearts follow this 'White Path'. It leads to this place where God dwells. Then, they get merged in the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, Sathya Sai.

—Prakash P. Gokuldas, Class IV A (age-11)

Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, Prasanthi Nilayam

Bhagavan in Bombay

"Science and Spirituality are essentially one" —Baba.

Bhagavan Baba arrived in Bombay from Brindavan by the morning plane on May 11. That evening, a symposium on Science and Spirituality was arranged in the spacious Shanmukhananda Hall. The huge auditorium was overfull hours ahead with the elite of Bombay City.

Dr. A. K. Ganguly, until recently Director of the Chemical Group of the Bhaba Atomic Research Centre, spoke of the achievements of Indian scientists like Aryabhatta centuries ago. The Upanishadic concept of the ultimate Reality had conferred great benefits on mankind.

In the quest to establish the nature of truth the scientist would see to it that all end results to be accepted as true came under scientific affirmation. He made it clear that all scientific investigation was done with "no holds barred."

Prof. Rao of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research said that science is the quest to understand Nature and the principles underlying it. Objectivity, honesty and a spirit of enquiry were the tools for acquiring its understanding. "Science does not reveal absolute truth: it only leads you towards it." Nor does science pre-suppose the existence of Supreme Being though science does not disprove the existence of the Supreme Being either.

Mr. Nani Palkhivala, who was to deliver the keynote address, could not be present owing to unforeseen circumstances. A "message" from him was read, in the course of which he said:

"Science and Spirituality are subjects of the most profound significance. There is no dichotomy, or contradiction, between the two. Men have always been, and will always be, both spectators and actors in the great drama of Life.

"The most fundamental of all fundamental principles is that a Spirit, supreme and unchanging, pervades the entire universe, and the material world is merely a manifestation of that Spirit. More than three thousand years ago, India perceived this principle even more clearly, and understood its implications even more deeply than the most highly civilized nations do today. You may call it a principle, or evolution, or consciousness, or God. Each will speak in his own tongue.

"It is precisely because the Spirit alone is the everlasting reality, that the infinite mystery of the material world can never be explained merely in material terms. In these days of spiritual illiteracy and poverty of the spirit, it is necessary to remind ourselves that civilization is an act of the spirit. Material progress is not to be mistaken for inner progress. When technology outstrips moral development, the prospect is not that of a millennium but of extinction. Our ancient heritage is a potent antidote to the current tendency to standardize our souls and seek salvation in herds."

Sri Baba declared that science and technology have undoubtedly made great progress. But *pari passu* man's outlook has become increasingly narrow. Divisive forces are playing havoc. What is the cause of all this? Why has man degenerated to this extent? Progress on one side and

mounting human problems on the other. Man has become intensely selfish. This is due to lack of unity of purpose.

Bhagavan pointed out that service to society was the true measure of progress. If man improves, so will the society and the world. Without a proper mental transformation, all development will be superficial.

The real end of science should be action and not mere knowledge. Knowledge without action is useless; action without knowledge is foolish. When will the benefits of science reach the masses?

Science is only half a circle. How can man, who is yet to comprehend the diversity in nature, gauge God through his faculties? The nature of gravitation was known only after Newton, but that does not mean gravitation did not exist before him.

Sri Baba drew a distinction between 'Sathya' and 'Nija'. What the scientists claim as truth is only 'nija,' which could be described as 'temporary truth', not absolute truth.

The need of the hour is a broad vision with a pure heart. It is love that purified the heart, pure unsullied love.

Anniversary of Dharmakshetra

Baba's visit to Bombay every May is for the anniversary celebrations of the Dharmakshetra. The large Sai family in the city and the State is all-aglow during the Divine visit. The anniversary programme this year (May 12) was dominated by the Bal Vikas, children's participation.

Children of the Dharmakshetra School and scores of Bal Vikas children from all over the city presented an impressive cultural programme. Even as this was in progress, 200 children participated in an on-the-spot drawing competition in another part of the Dharmakshetra complex. Baba enjoyed witnessing both for a while, deeply impressed by their zest to perform in His presence.

The anniversary gathering this year had the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Mr. Vasantdada Patil, as chief guest. Mr. S. B. Chavan, Union Minister for Planning, was also present.

Mr. M. M. Pingre, a member of the Dharmakshetra Trust, and a revered member of the Sai family, known for his deep interest in the field of education, welcomed Mr. Patil and Mr. Chavan.

Mr. Patil described Baba as an Avatar, a marga-darsi for humanity. He had heard of Baba's great work in the cause of education in human values and his endeavours as a moral force. This was, however, his first meeting with Baba. "It is my good fortune," he said. He was happy that

Baba's educational programme had grown upwards from the grass roots level, starting with the Bal Vikas movement, which had now acquired national stature.

Mr. S. B. Chavan said it was a matter of rejoicing for all the members of the large Sai family in Maharashtra to get together on the Dharmakshetra Anniversary day in the Divine presence.

Enlist the Help of God

Baba gave away Diplomas to boys and girls who had passed the Pre-Seva Dal examination. He also released Marathi translations of Dr. V. K. Gokak's 'Advent of the Avatar' by Mr. M. S. Gandhi and Mr. V. S. Page's "Dialogue with the Divine" by Mr. D. L. Nene.

Baba told the gathering that the relation between creation and God was eternal. Man's primary task was to understand the sacredness given to him. Japa, Dhyana and Bhajan help Man to be with God, even if it be for a while. It was only divine help that enabled man to overcome difficulties beyond his strength. Bhakti is the means to enlist divine help. The Lord looked at only his devotion and nothing else, cultivated with a pure unsullied heart.

Rural Uplift in Maharashtra

Bhagavan Baba opened three charitable dispensaries and a bus shelter and inaugurated a borewell in two villages of Vasai taluka, about 50 kilometers from Bombay, on 13th May. All the amenities were provided by the Sathya Sai organisation of Bombay as part of its rural uplift programme, particularly to benefit the weaker sections of society.

Bhagavan Baba was visiting the villages adopted by the Sai organisation to see for himself the progress made in the village adoption scheme, now being implemented on a national basis.

In a village near Vasai, colourfully dressed fisherwomen in traditional style welcomed Him to a gathering in a temple and sang devotionals specially composed for the occasion. Fishermen stayed away from all fishing activity for the day and joined in welcoming Bhagavan.

Kaner, near Virar, wore a festive look with welcome arches raised even on the outskirts. The Project Officer of Thane district accompanied Bhagavan on his tour of the adopted villages.

Two days before Baba's visit to the city groups of Bal Vikas children from all over the State had participated in a cultural competition comprising dance, drama and music. Winners in this competition will participate in the world rally of Bal Vikas children to be held at Prasanthi Nilayam in December this year.

Baba met all the children and blessed them.

Sai workers in 64 villages in Maharashtra spread over several districts met Baba.

Bhagavan Baba in a meeting with teacher-trainers in "Education in human values" clarified doubts that had occurred to them in the implementation of the scheme, particularly in relation to parents' participation.

—*V. N. B. R.*

Food For Thought

I had the great blessing of spending about 10 days in Swami's presence in India in late February, this year. Although I never had an interview, His answers came to me. Persistence and patience help.

I have been asking Swami in prayer how best to bring God into my office, other than by setting the best example I am capable of. I am President of a manufacturing firm that designs and produces dresses for little girls. The office is in New York City and the factories are in the state of Pennsylvania.

I received a clear inner answer from Swami during morning prayers. The answer was so simple and so perfect. "Follow the example that can be seen at Puttaparthi and Whitefield. Put up a large blackboard with written thoughts on it."

I put up the blackboard several weeks ago with the title, 'Food for Thought'. I change the passage weekly. I have put up such blackboards in five of our Pennsylvanian factories carrying the same thoughts at the same time. In New York there is a Spanish translation, for, there are some who do not read English.

I feel that this is the beginning of helpful service.

—*Hal Honig*

Free Will?

Free Will implies a 'willing' in freedom, the will arising from the essence of ourself and therefore being free from coercion of any type. Otherwise, we could not say it is 'free' will. If we measure what happens in daily life by the definition given above there is at once a doubt—when we last applied our will, did it come from freedom?

Mind and intelligence are coerced and modified by innumerable influences such as education, newspapers, nationality, fears, desires and so on and on. It is exceedingly difficult to be

conscious of our will alone by itself, separated from the many attendant influences. For this reason questions are raised about free will. Actually, in our daily life, we may ask if we are experiencing free will as defined.

But Bhagavan Baba's statement about free will does not support this common daily experience. He says that we have 100% free will, for we are God!

Our daily life is the result of a vast array of influences, yet Bhagavan Baba says we are God and have total free will. True, we can acknowledge that 'free' will is not usually evident in our life and that our body-mind complex is constantly being modified by influences ranging from the most minute to the cosmic, since every event in the Universe affects the total Universe to some degree. But here is the vital point: Why worry about all that? Nobody is forcing us to identify with the happenings of daily life. We identify only because we choose to do so. For example, Ramana Maharshi, when asked about the agony accompanying the cancerous tumour which was growing out of his upper arm, examined the situation for a moment and then replied, 'Yes, there is pain, but I am not in pain.' Ramana Maharshi did not identify himself with the affairs of the transient body.

Bhagavan Baba very clearly points out this way of detachment. He says that everything of subject and object is transient and will pass away. He asks, 'Why wait?' See through the transient phenomena and even now realize the imperishable Atma, the essence of yourself and of every other self.

Bhagavan Baba fully reveals how we may deal with free will in daily life. He says that in daily life we have the freedom to either turn body and mind to the world, or to turn them to God. This free choice, which we may exercise at any time, rises superior to all types of coercive influences, for it is a Divine Choice; it is God within us expanding in Maya, or gathering unto Himself.

If our choice is to turn to God, that is our Divine Will, and with Divine free will in our life we can will to be free of all attachment. For Bhagavan Baba tells us it is attachment to the body and to things of the world which maintains us as an ego which feels itself to be separate from God.

If one wants to take the turn of the tide and launch oneself on the magnificent quest for 'liberation', one must detach oneself from the familiar shore, let it go and boldly venture into the unknown. Thus, Bhagavan Baba's advice is to be watchful in our daily life.

Be conscious when you identify yourself with body, mind and feelings, or with worldly objects and do not hold to the identification; let it go. Be conscious of the effect on your mind and feelings when you become attached to objects, desires and people, and then let go the attachment. This is the exercise of true free will, and, Bhagavan Baba assures us it is the proper use of the free will.

For your identity, identify with God only. Be attached to God only. This is the advice of Bhagavan. Identify with Him, and His Will will become your will. The problems of individual

free will exist only as long as we hold to the belief that we are individuals unique and separate from God.

—*Dr. J. Hislop*

Amrita Dhara

Bhagavatam and Moksha

The informal meetings of Bhagavan with students and devotees in small groups are a blissful experience in themselves. The words of wisdom that come from Bhagavan on these occasions are like the flow of nectar from the infinite source of all Jnana. Very often Bhagavan divines the doubt or question that is passing through someone's mind and gives the answer in his own inimitable manner, by an illuminating interpretation of a word or phrase or an appropriate parable from the endless reservoir of the epics and the Upanishads.

The other day, casually as it were, Bhagavan gave a significant meaning to the Bhagavatam, after putting a question to one of those present. While everybody was under the impression that Bhagavatam was devoted to describing the various Avatars of the Lord, Bhagavan said its very name was intended to indicate the path to Moksha or Liberation. 'Bhaa' stood for Bhakti. 'Ga' stood for Jnana 'Va' stood for Vairagyam (or renunciation) 'Tha' stood for "Thathvam" or Truth. "M" stood for Moksha. Bhakti, Jnana, Vairagya and Tattwa lead to Moksha. The study of the Bhagavatam should result in the cultivation of qualities which prepared one for Moksha.

The entire interpretation was a revelation to all present and offered in a nutshell the basic requirements for achieving Self-realisation or Liberation

Dharma and Rainfall

On another occasion, when someone remarked that Swami had brought rains to Brindavan, Swami said that the fall of rain and the proper behaviour of the seasons were related primarily to the practice of Dharma. If drought, famine or floods affected a country, it was because of the growth of Adharma. In this connection, Swami recalled an episode from the Mahabharata.

The Pandavas were living incognito in the service of the king of Viratadesa during the last (thirteenth) year of their exile, each of the brothers taking up service under an assumed name. The eldest of the brothers, Yudhishtira, was with the king as a priest (Kanka) and used to play dice with the king. One day, during the game, the king got angry with Yudhishtira and threw the dice at him. Yudhishtira was hit on the forehead and blood started streaming from the face. Immediately Draupadi, who was acting as a dance teacher to the princess under the assumed name of Sairandhri, immediately rushed to the side of Yudhishtira and stopped the flow of blood with her sari.

The king was told that every drop of blood that fell on the ground from Yudhishtira, the very embodiment of Dharma, would cause a year's famine in the land. That was why Draupadi had rushed to prevent the blood from touching the ground.

The harm that is done to Dharma or to those practising Dharma can cause incalculable harm to a country, observed Bhagavan. Today the main ills from which most countries suffered could be traced to the assaults on Dharma by the rulers as well as the people.

—V. K. N.

AVATAR VANI:

Problems of the Sadhaka

An able monarch will have his ministers under control; he will direct them along proper lines and maintain the peace and security of the kingdom. On the other hand, a monarch who allows himself to be controlled by the ministers does not deserve the throne; he is spurned and disgraced: His kingdom has no peace and security.

The mind is the monarch in man; the senses are the ministers. It is the slave of its servants and so, the realm has no peace. Every Sadhaka who aspires to achieve the expression and expansion of the Divine in him has therefore to earn mastery over the senses. That is the first step. The next one is the conquest of the mind, its elimination. The third is uprooting innate tendencies, the Vasanas, and the fourth, attainment of Wisdom or Jnana. The branches are the senses; the trunk is the mind; the roots are the innate tendencies. All three have to be overcome and destroyed, so that the awareness of the Atmic Reality can be gained.

In the waking state, the senses have free play. The gross body is most active then. In the dream stage, the senses subsist in their subtle form. The mind revels in its fancies then. In the dream, the subtle body is active. It creates many attractive and astounding scenes and incidents for its own edification. In the deep sleep state, the mind along with the subtle aspects of the senses are submerged in the ego or the causal body. This is the Shoonya stage, according to Vedantic terminology. It means the 'Vacant' Stage! It is vacant because there is no positive gain associated with it. It does not confer awareness of the Atma and the Bliss of that Awareness. That can happen only in the fourth state after the gross (sthoola), subtle (sookshma), causal (Kaarana). That state is named the super-causal, the Maha Kaarana. The waking state is the gross region of Brahma, the Creator, when activity abounds. It merges in the dream, the Vishnu region, when mere existence or stithi abounds. That too merges in deep sleep, when both dissolve and lose their identity in laya (Rudra).

The fact to remember is that every individual, every day experiences Srishti (Brahma, Creator), Stithi (Vishnu, Maintenance) and Laya (Rudra, Dissolution). But, he fails to recognise

it and benefit by the experience. He mistakes birth as creation and death as dissolution. This is sheer ignorance. One has to transcend these three changes and establish himself in the stable unchanging Maha Kaarana, the Atma. One has to be cautioned against believing that the victories over senses, mind, Vasanas and the attainment of the Awareness can be won one at a time. Parallel efforts must be made in all four from the very beginning. You cannot place oil in one place, the lamp in another and the match in a third and hope for light. One has to succeed in mastering the senses, conquering the mind and eliminating the Vasanas all at the same time.

The mind hops from object to object with incredible speed. It rises to the heights and drops to the depths with every wink of the eye. It hides, deludes and distorts. One can subdue it through concentration only. The process can be practised in either of two directions—the A-rupa or the Sa-rupa. A-rupa means 'unbound'. One feels that he is not the doer or enjoyer; he is only an agent of God, a tool, an instrument. One is not affected, well or ill, when the act results in good or bad. One has no identity with the rupa or form or body. Sa-rupa meditation gets lost in dualities of pleasure and pain, profit and loss, for it considers the name and form, the body and its activities as valid.

Similarly, Man has the choice of two paths—the Pravritti Marga (the path of involvement) or the Nivritti Marga (the path of non-involvement). When involved, man is confronted with the six internal foes—lust, anger, greed, attachment, pride and hatred. When non-involved man is helped by six internal friends—sense control, mind control, fortitude, contempt, faith and equanimity. The human body is deified as a temple, yes, but the foes have to be evacuated and the friends admitted before the Divine can establish itself there.

—*Easwaramma Day Discourse, Prasanthi Nilayam, 6-5-83*

EASWARAMMA DAY:

Revere the Mother

The mother is man's first Guru. She gives the physical body to him. Besides, she gives man, the father. She alone can point the father to the child and draw his love and care towards it. The mother bears, fosters and moulds the child into human-ness and, therefore, gratitude is due to her first and, foremost. Next, the father. He clothes and feeds, helps you to grow and then, points out the Guru, the Preceptor, for you. So be grateful to the father. The Teacher sharpens your intellect, broadens your vision, endows you with discrimination, and helps you to attain higher levels of consciousness and wider horizons of love. Therefore, one has to offer gratitude to the Guru also. The mother leads you to the father, the father leads you to the Guru and the Guru leads you to God. Today, we have mothers who place the children under the care of the father and many fathers who place children under the care of Gurus, but few Gurus lead the pupils to God. The parents promote the health and strength of the body; the Guru reveals the Resident, the Inner Reality in the body.

My life is my Message. So, I am setting an example of reverence to the Mother. Nature is the mother in whose lap mankind grows. And Nature fondles the child and says, "Babu, That is your Father, See." Trough Mother Nature draws attention to God, the children seldom pay heed. How can they, who do not love the mother that fosters them with affection and zeal, adore the Master of Nature?

Swami has always been advising students thus. "Children! You have come here and gone through the course of studies successfully. Besides developing scholarship, you must live according to the wishes of your parents. You must earn great fame for them. You must maintain the honour they receive from people. By your actions you must please them and increase their happiness."

This day is Easwaramma Day. The significance of the Day is that it is celebrated as Children's Day, a day when little children are to be reminded of the ideal, a day when she presented an ideal. No one can escape death, but the aim of everyone should be to remind oneself at the time of death of the Divine or have some holy or sacred thoughts. The importance of this Day is known to many. Kasturi also spoke about it now. There is a saying in Telugu: "The proof of the Good is the way they die." Genuine devotion is evidenced during the last moments. I shall point out a small incident concerning the goodness of Easwaramma.

The Summer Classes were on at Bangalore. In the morning at 7, breakfast had to be served to the students. They went round with Nagarsankirtan and returned at 6. I gave them Darshan at its close. Then, I went for my bath. Meanwhile, Easwaramma had finished her bath; she drank her coffee as usual quite happily, and took her seat on the inner verandah. All of a sudden proceeding to the bathroom, she cried out, "Swami, Swami, Swami," thrice. At this, I responded: "Coming: Coming: " Within that period she breathed her last. What greater sign of goodness is needed? She had no need to be served and nursed. Swami will come to the memory at that time only for a very few. The mind will usually seek and stay on some object or the other, some jewellery or valuables. From the ground floor, she called: "Swami! Swami!" I replied, "Coming: Coming:" and she was gone. It was like the elephant's calling and the Lord proceeding to bless it—the two wires achieving connection, the release happening instantaneously.

This is the authentic consummation that life must strive for. Beside her at the time she had her daughter Venkamma, her granddaughter Sailaja, but, she called out only for Swami. Getting this yearning at the final moment is the fruit of holy purity. It is the sign of an ideal, adorable life. Such attitude must emerge of its own accord and not by means of some external force. Here is an example to learn from. Once, there was a man whose devotion was great. He had four sons. In order that their names may help him to remember the Lord, he had named them Govinda, Narayana, Krishna and Rama. He thought that he could, on some pretext or other, have the Lord's name on his tongue. To facilitate his plan, he started a factory and kept all of them busily employed there, so that they could respond to his calling them by name. The day when he had to yield to death arrived, He called Govinda; the son came near saying, "Father! I am here." He called Narayana; "I am here father," he too stood by his bed. He called Rama; Rama came to him and asked him what he desired to confide in him. Finally he called Krishna: He too bent low and

wished to know what message the father had for him. He said, "Don't hesitate. Tell me what you want to say." Seeing around him all the four sons, the dying man's mind was seized with anxiety. He blurted out "All of you are here! Who is in the factory?" Those were his last words. That was his last thought.

When one is involved in the world only worldly thoughts will emerge at the end. To those who yearn with full heart for the Lord at that time, the Lord will present Himself. So, one has to attach oneself to kith and kin and respect them so long as one is concerned with the world. One must needs humour them. But, one must offer unstinted love and loyalty all through life to the Lord alone.

—From Bhagavan's discourse at Prasanthi Nilayam, 6-5-83

Sai Family News

The Teacher they looked for

Dr. J. Hislop, President of the American Sai Council, is planning lectures intended to make the teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba available to a broader spectrum of the community.

On March 23, 1983, the Phoenix, Mesa, and Tucson, Arizona Centres hosted an open meeting at the Camelback Inn in Scottsdale. More than 300 people gathered there.

Charles Bollman, M. D., a practising gynaecologist, shared his fascinating experiences with Swami's Grace, particularly related to his medical field. Dr. Bollman spoke on Swami's life and teachings.

Winifred Bolton, President of the Service League at Saint Luke's Hospital in Phoenix, related stories that thrilled the assembly with the nearness and wonder of Baba's Grace. Swami had appeared to her in a vision. He stood at the foot of her bed one night and stroked her calf muscle, afflicted with severe cramps. For 27 years she had to tolerate the pain in her leg several times a day. After Swami appeared to her, the pain ceased, never to bother her again.

Karen Macklin, who heads the Phoenix programme for Education in Human Values, explained how the children's and parents' educational programmes had evolved in the Phoenix area.

Mr. Bob Bozzani, the Western Regional Director of the Sathya Sai Baba Council of America, explained why Swami has a World and American organization.

The gathering was a joy and inspiration to every one. Many said that they had finally found the teacher they had been looking for.

—Jonathan Roof

Adopted Villages

DELHI

Four villages have been adopted so far for intensive service. To give vocational training in tailoring for women volunteers are working in two of them. Sewing machines are provided and instructors are busy training them. Children are provided tuition so that they could learn quicker and acquire more knowledge. A villager from Razapur accompanied the State President and stayed at Prasanthi Nilayam for five days. He is now an enthusiastic worker with the Samithi in Razapur and neighbouring villages.

Seva Dal Camp in Nepal

BIRAT NAGAR (NEPAL)

For the first time, a two-day Spiritual Camp for Seva Dal members, Bal Vikas teachers and Sai devotees was held at the Sathya Sai Nilayam auditorium, Birat Nagar, on April 29 and 30. Representatives from all the eight Sai centres in Nepal, Kathmandu, Butwal, Birat Nagar, Duhubi, Dharan, Narayangarh, and Bhairava attended the programme, which included subjects like "Why organisation?" "The Bal Vikas programme." "Manava Seva is Madhava Seva ", "Ceiling on desires", "Health Ft Hygiene", "Study Circle", the systems of Indian Philosophy, Yoga, spirituality and religion, Human Values and service activities, was inaugurated by Sri Dharma Bahadur Thapa, the Zonal Commissioner of Koshi Anchal, Nepal. Sri Matrika Prasad Koirala, former Prime Minister of Nepal, was the Chief Guest, who delivered a brief discourse on spirituality and the responsibility of the younger generation. Nepalese lecturers for this camp were specially invited from the adjacent Kalimpong Samithi (India). Two representatives from Sikkim and one from Rongo Samithi also participated in the programme as observer and lecturer.

—V. K. P.

The Call To Serve

From the days of Jesus to the present, there are the hungry waiting to be fed the naked to be clothed, the afflicted to be comforted. All these categories of hapless persons are to be found today in every society. All you have to do is to open your eyes and ears. You will see or hear of hunger and drought, the poor with little or no clothes, prisoners, stranded strangers, and the sick in hospitals, in the streets and in their homes. All these areas of service activities were clearly identified for us by Jesus during His lifetime. Today, Bhagavan Baba has come to endorse what Jesus taught about 2000 years ago. With a clarion voice he is asking us to serve as He, the Father of all serves us. For service is the rock on which spiritualism is built. And what is spiritualism but the establishment of the Kingdom of God on Earth. Bhagavan has (as we all know) established His Kingdom viz., The Kingdom of Sathya Sai. You and I would like Swami to accept us into that Kingdom. Brother! Sister! and Friend! one of the conditions for acceptance into that Kingdom is selfless and silent service to all life. For as you serve so shall you be served by the greatest Servant of all—Bhagavan. Service which is worship is the true worship of God.

—Dr. H. K. Takyi, Accra, Ghana

The most precious possession is mental equanimity; and it is the one thing you cannot give, even if you have it. Each has to acquire it the hard way. But, you can enlighten people on the disciplines through which mental equanimity can be gained, and Santhi can be won. It cannot be earned through a higher standard of life, bush-shirts, transistors, sofas, air-conditioners, etc. It cannot be got through riches, through the acquisition of power and authority, through developing physical strength and endurance. When you plan for service, remember this estimate of comparative values. The rich, the healthy, the strong, the powerful, the influential—all are afflicted with discontent, worry, fear and anxiety. They have no peace of mind.

Peace comes from within; contentment is a mental condition. Do not feed the roots of attachment to worldly comforts, more than is absolutely necessary. They lead only to anxiety and fear; they can never satisfy the innermost craving of man. Lead them into the path of devotion and dedication; that will be for them the path of content and joy. Emphasise the universal Athmathathwam; encourage prayer, meditation, quiet contemplation of the grandeur and glory of God, reflected in Nature; repetition of the Name of the Lord; encourage silence and solitude, for the sake of introspection and contact with the springs of joy Inherent in man.

—Baba

Spiritual Camp at Sathya Sai Grams

Sathya Sai Grams, the picturesque village surrounded by a chain of hills, where the campus of the Muddenahalli Sal educational institutions is located, was en fete on, May 19, when Bhagavan Baba arrived from Brindavan to inaugurate a 10-day spiritual and educational camp for teachers from Alike and Muddenahalli.

Besides 125 teachers, 30 observers and special invitees attended the camp.

The entire area had been tastefully decorated for the occasion. Bhagavan was received on arrival by the Trust members and presented with a guard of honour by the students. A large number of villagers from the surrounding villages had assembled for Darshan of Bhagavan and to listen to His discourse.

Sri L. S. S. Chakravarthi and Sri Gangadhar Bhat welcomed Bhagavan and the gathering and spoke on the scope and purpose of the camp. In the course of His discourse, which lasted about twenty minutes because of Swami's consideration for the audience seated in the blazing sun, Bhagavan dealt with the special role of teachers in the education of the young on right lines. The k teacher should set an example by living the ideals he preached.

Addressing the participants alone in the new auditorium which is nearing completion, Bhagavan devoted more than an hour of His discourse in Kannada to every aspect of the problems of education in the context of life today. Your life should become the teaching. For this you should transform your way of living by spiritual sadhana. To practise sadhana, there should be solitude—not the solitude of remoteness from society, but the solitude of sole companionship with God anywhere and all the time.” ('Sarvatra Sarvadaa Hari chintanam') The teachers participating in the camp were all Brahmacharis—unmarried celibates—who had dedicated their lives to education. Brahmachari did not mean merely remaining unmarried. Only the one who was constantly living in the contemplation of Brahman could be called a Brahmachari. Swami later invited all the teachers to His Mandir, where He informally talked to them for, nearly an hour, replying to their questions, resolving their doubts, and clarifying many subtle points relating to sadhana. Swami spent in all nearly three hours with the teachers, who had the most blissful experience of their lives.

A batch of students from the College at Brindavan, who had accompanied Swami to Sai Grams, experienced the unique spiritual atmosphere prevailing in the Sai Grams Campus.

After lunch, Bhagavan returned to Brindavan.

The programme for the 10-day camp consisted of lectures on spiritual themes in the forenoon and discussions on Sal educational topics in the afternoon, with cultural programmes in the evening. On the first day, May 20, Prof. Kasturi spoke on the significance of the Sai Avatar. Mr. Drucker spoke on 'Science and Spirituality'. The camp concluded on May 29.

—F. O. C.

Sutra Vahini

(9)

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Thath thu Samanvayaath:

It is clearly demonstrable that all Vedantic axioms posit only Brahman. The statements in the Srutis, when studied in a spirit of reconciliation, reveal the Brahman and make known Its Reality. Besides, there is the question whether the Scriptures hold forth the supremacy of works or of wisdom. Though the profound mystery of Brahman is incommunicable to others, It has to be denoted by some categories of knowledge however unsatisfactory they are. Or else, It may remain beyond perception.

There is a school of thought which believes that the Vedas lay down Karma (works) as means of liberation and that the Vedanta (the Upanishads) does not. But, the Scriptures or Sastras are

concerned with guidance and counsel and not with exclusive adherence to some system or other. Advocacy of Karma or works is not the chief goal of the scriptures. When one is active through Karma, one has to do many merit-yielding works and these promote purity of mind. Since Karma cleanses the consciousness, many argue that the Sastras teach only this as the sole path, ignoring the fact that Karma (works) is only the means to the end.

In this connection, we have to pay attention to another fact. The desires of man, his wants, longings, resolutions and wishes, these are multiplied and prompted by Karma (works). And, the initial impulse for desire is Ajnana or Unawareness of the Reality. The doubt arises, naturally, how can the consciousness that is unaware transform itself into the consciousness that is aware (Jnana)? Darkness can never remove darkness, can it? So too, Ajnana can never destroy Ajnana. It can be accomplished only by Jnana, Awareness of the Truth. This is the dictum promulgated by Sankara. The world needs harmony very much. It needs Awareness too, to an equal extent, however difficult it may be to convey then knowledge of Brahman to others.

It has been said that there is vast difference between the impact of Brahma Vidya (Knowledge of Brahman) and the impact of Karma. Merit and demerit, happiness and misery, are the consequences of Karma. The happiness attainable by man through Karma ranges from the Manushya Loka level (the region of humans) up to the highest stage of Brahma Loka (the region of the Divine). So, too, below the level of the human region, there are regions where misery becomes deeper and deeper, more and more agonising. They are stages of hell. But, all these levels and stages are subject to origin and decay. They are relatively unreal and not absolutely real. The Awareness and the Bliss thereof is innate, existing in its own right. It is eternally present. It is the one unchanging, unaffected Truth. It cannot be acquired by practising prescriptions and exercises. The state of Liberation (Moksha) transcends the body-mind-ego complex. Therefore, the transcendence is beyond one's physical, mental or intellectual effort. When Awareness dawns, the darkness of Ajnana disappears. When the lamp is lit darkness is no more.

There are some who argue that it is not quite fair to declare that Knowledge of Brahman as the only Truth cannot be gained by personal effort. Sankara reconciles this point of view with his main thesis mentioned already. The Jnana that one is actually Brahman and nothing else is latent in the consciousness of every one but one cannot recognise it and establish oneself firmly in It by means of Karma or activity or even by Vichara or scholastic inquiry. Karma can only bind one further, for it deals with diversity as if it is real: it cannot loosen bonds and liberate him. It can at best purify the passions and emotions. Vichara can at best clarify the intellect and indicate the criteria of Jnana. Brahma Vidya alone can liberate man from bondage. Hence one is warned not to develop too much attachment to Karma.

However, we find the Sastras dwelling, once in a while, on the value of Karma. The Sastras are as affectionate to us as the mother. They teach lessons as the mother to her children, in conformity with the level of intelligence, and according to the needs of, time and circumstance. A mother with two children gives the one who is quite strong and healthy every item of food he clamours for, but takes great care that the other child who is unwell is not overfed and is given only such items that can restore it soon to health. Can we, on that account, accuse her of being

partial to one child and prejudiced against the other, in conferring love? The Sastras too draw the attention of those who know the secret of Karma to the value of Karma. For, Karma or Work can improve life and set its ideals aright. Every one has to be instructed on how to transform work into beneficial activity. Yet, Karma is not all.

Human life lasts but a moment, it is a bubble on the waters. Upon this ephemeral bubble of life, man builds for himself a structure of desires and attachments. Wisdom warns him that it might collapse or crumble any moment. The supreme Atma, the Param-atma, that is unattached and free from embodiment, has taken up a body and become man. Viewed in gross terms, the body is a material encasement formed out of the food consumed, the Annamaya Kosa. Within this sheath, there lies the subtle sheathing of vital airs or Prana, the mental sheath, the sheath of the intellect and the innermost sheath of all—the sheath of Bliss, the Anandamaya Kosa.

This aphorism or Sutra (Tat thu Samanvayaath) makes known that spiritual inquiry or Vicharana involves the journey from the Annamaya sheath as the basis to the Anandamaya stage and nature. However, the gross has two aspects—the dependent structure and the independent base.

In the current spiritual beliefs of mankind, one cannot discern anywhere a harmonising factor, a samanvaya. The principles of co-ordination and reconciliation have to be expanded and expounded. Though there are religions with separate names, and the doctrines are distinct from each other, considered as human all are men. The Sutra endeavours to emphasise the common core. Unfortunately, the apparent differences among the religions have subverted the amity of all men and the feeling of international brotherhood. The experience and wisdom of great seers who have unveiled the mystery of the Cosmos and their feelings of universal love are not appreciated, accepted and, respected by men today. All religious dogmas except a few, can easily be harmonised and reconciled. The same God is being extolled and adored under various names through varied ceremonial rituals, in the many religions of man. In every age, for every race or community of peoples, God has sent prophets to establish peace and goodwill. Since, at the present time, many religions have spread worldwide, they have lost fraternal feelings and have suffered in validity thereby. There is an urgent need for harmony. All great men are images of God. They form one single caste in the realm of God; they belong to one nation, the Divine Fellowship. Each must interest himself in understanding the practices and beliefs of the others. Then only can every one, with cleansed mind and loving heart, attain the Divine Presence with others. The principle of harmonising or Samanvaya is the very heart of all religions and faiths.

(To be continued)

The Divine Play

For most of us, after we come under the influence of Sai and begin to live His teachings, our vision of the world and our whole life changes. Other dimensions of reality than the previously familiar ones, impose themselves on our awareness. We discover an interconnectedness between events and experiences which should by all reason be unrelated. It is as if an unseen consciousness behind the scenes is directing all our moves; and not only our moves but everyone else's, as well. It is as if our lives become a series of unfolding scenes and events on an already existent tapestry, telling the story of a great flow homewards. With this realization we begin to see the grand play, in which we are both actors and audience. It is the play of the adorable Divine Child in which the Divinity progressively dons innumerable bodies and forms, and plays countless roles, for its own sweet delight.

On various occasions and in various ways Bhagavan has given us a little bit of insight into this divine drama that gives Him so much joy, wherein out of the One He, created the Many, and then drew the Many back into the One. Once He said, "...I have separated Myself from Myself so that I could love Myself..." Another time He said, "...The Divine Principle is ever engaged in a constant play with Itself. It wills Itself attributes, manifestations, energies, elements, activities, creations and dissolutions. It is like a lonely, imaginative child in a room filled with mirrors. It amuses Itself by playing with Its own images, sometimes painting different animal bodies and plants and trees and human bodies, some with moustaches and beards, some with hairdo's and dresses, on the different mirrors to differentiate one image from another; and the images are distinct or distorted according to the angle, curve and surface of each mirror. In this way, in order to have some change and amuse Itself in Its serene loneliness, It creates this multifaceted Universe as a reflection of Itself..."

With these assertions, step-by-step the overall play reveals itself to us, magnificent in its splendour. For out of His blissful, eternal Self, He fashioned the Universe and entered into it as its very substance. Having projected this huge stage for His play, He then assigned Himself a vast number of roles, as He simultaneously played the part of all the, myriads of individual souls, Jivas, deluded into believing themselves as small, separate and limited entities, unaware of their own true nature. They have their moments on stage and go through their parts.

They start their acting career as a dumb rock or a sea or a cloud and they move on to become a plant and a fish and a bird and an animal and a cave-dweller and a city-dweller: They sit, they move, they fight, they love, they weep, enjoy, gain and lose, they eat, sleep and experience and finally they fall... to run off-stage for quick change in costume and part, and then return for further pratfalls and heroics, in an ongoing melodrama. But throughout there is a story line. After many changes of costumes and many exits and entrances, the parts become more cheerful and heartfelt, and the acting becomes more noble, for we are reaching the high point of the drama. As one of the jive-players takes on the role of the spiritual seeker, the Divinity that is at once the actor-director-playwright-audience-and theater increasingly enjoys the performance for now He plays the part of Jiva discovering the divine and then, to his astonishment discovering himself as divine.

When He finally throws off all costumes and parts, His joy is unlimited and He hugs Himself with love unbounded and overflowing. For the long delusion is over, self has recognized himself as Self. A sweet, divine smile crosses His face as He enjoys His own play, Himself playing all the parts. Now He awaits with joy the next Jiva approaching realization, and He jumps back into the role of other Jivas going through their pains and struggles. It is His compassion for His own creation and His delight in the surprise ending that keeps the parts steadily flowing towards their divine culmination. What a marvellous performance He gives Himself, as He starts it all off with a Big Bang and follows it with an endless variety of parts, inanimate and animate, until the first realized soul appears a great journey from the Divine to the Divine by the Divine, believing Itself to be small, limited and separate, until the crowning final scene.

This is perhaps too whimsical an account of such a serious subject as the creation of the Cosmos and the evolution of the soul; yet some inner spark of the Eternal within us resonates and rings with this innocent child's view of a Universe whose very core is one of joy and delight and play. One is reminded of an American movie from the 40's which started with a fearsome tornado, enveloped in darkness, crossing the plains of Kansas, wreaking destruction in its path. A house with a little girl in it, is pulled up and carried off by the whirlwind into the unknown. Then the movie dramatically changes from black-and-white to brilliant vivid colour as the little girl is set down safely on a beautiful, winding yellow-brick road, surrounded by buttercups and daffodils, leading to a magical kingdom, shining like a jewel on the distant hills. Darkness and destruction had changed into a cheerful, sunny day, ablaze with colour and goodness, and filled with melodious song.

When spirituality roots itself deeply into our lives, our world turns from muted black and white into the beautiful variegated hues of the eternal play. A consummate sweetness begins to penetrate and permeate our inner being. As our devotion deepens and we attach more and more to the spiritual, and detach more and more from the worldly, we discover the Divinity which is everywhere and in everything, and whose essence is pure sweetness, joy and love and eternal delight. When we discover our own reality that is what we find.

The Sun never knows shade or shadow or darkness, even though the clouds, which are his own creation, whisper amongst themselves about the play of their shadows on the Earth; when he burns them off to get a good look at this strange phenomenon of darkness, he sees only light, the reflection of himself, everywhere. That is the message of the spirit. We are in truth pure consciousness and infinite bliss. Our destiny is to evolve and free ourselves from these limiting upadhis (sheaths) and limiting environments that bind us. We can expand and become unlimited, and realize the Unity, the One Reality which is our true Self. With that understanding we get a glimpse of the deeper spiritual purpose of what in other contexts we have called, evolution.

Evolution is an essential part of the divine Leela. It provides the succession of vehicles for this grand play of the soul sojourning in the world playing all those funny parts, but all the while struggling and longing to free itself and return to its source. Again and again Jiva seems to get lost, alone and forlorn on the vast stage. Such a Herculean task it is to get free, and yet so little

progress there is to show for all these many lives! An anguished prayer for help escapes his lips. A fervent call for the Saviour to come and deliver him. O what a magnificent play The Saviour incarnated as Jiva, now convincingly plays the part of Jiva crying out for the Saviour. The prayer is heard. Grace descends. Already manifested in every Jiva, the Supreme takes on a special role. After a lapse of thousands of years, He blesses the world with birth as Avatar, to hasten Jiva's progress. A divine figure now occupies the centre of the stage. He seems aglow from within, as the inner God is revealed in the perfection of the outer man, as the Eternal is made manifest by the life He leads as man. "My life is My message," He announces. "Come follow me!" Now Jiva takes heart; he finally has a light to lead him home. And where is that home? There within himself. He has been carrying 'home' around with him inside, all this time. Finally he sheds the heavy chains of delusion and ignorance that have been his load for so long. Now the fruit has ripened; he realizes his truth. And the lie of 'I-ness', of individuality, of attachment to life and body-consciousness, to relations and possessions, and all the other worldly brood of attachments, leave him forever.

Once Jiva knows his reality as the One, his part in the play is over. He merges back into Him from whom he came, and who truly never left him; he returns to being the One he always was...the Infinite, the Eternal, the Blessed Self.

Such joy! Such heights of love, and such sweetness! What a fine story! Evolution has done its job well. The Divine Child is highly pleased with Its Play.

May we all soon reach that endearing Child, our own Blessed Self. Om Jai Sai Ram.

—*Al Drucker*

The Grace of God

In His limitless love and compassion, Bhagavan Baba keeps on teaching us, guiding us and encouraging us all. Most of us understand His divine teachings in a correct way, because His language is a true and clear one. Most of us can take all advice equally earnestly, whether the advice highlights our personal failings or merits. However, quite a lot of courage and humility is needed for clearly seeing ourselves in the mirror of truth. Here we indeed need to put all the intensity we are capable of into our prayers to God, to cleanse our eyes, to calm our mind and to purify our intellect -to gracefully bless our efforts.

'See only good, God is in every man, Love your enemies.' and many other divine signposts He gives us, so lovingly and mercifully pushing us to overcome our ego, prompting us forward along the divine path of righteousness towards His peace, towards fulfillment in His divinity, within ourselves.

Whenever, wherever we are thinking of our beloved Lord, we can hear His voice, full of love and compassion. Our intellect understands that this is the one and only way for us to reach a peaceful coexistence on our earth, to enable us to take that immensely important and definitely necessary step out of our ego into oneness and unity with all His creation. We know that only this way leads to entire surrender to God, to finally merge into the ocean of eternal bliss, God Himself—the child having at last found its way back home.

Our intellect understands, oh yes, it does. However, to understand is one thing, to practise is another. We can do nothing at all without being blessed with God's grace. Bhagavan Baba has confirmed: 'I can give God's grace. But you will have to supply human effort. Unless God's grace and human effort come together, the result cannot be achieved.'

Our ego is not easy to conquer, and unless this is done by us, with His graceful help, our efforts, however wholehearted, will show up a petty meagre result. May we always remember in all turns of events that divine life is the core and motivation of all and everything. This is the real oneness of divinity, this is the guarantee that we all one day shall reach the goal, fulfillment in eternal bliss and peace.

—*Sisko Orefjaerd, Sweden*

The Interview

For most, I think, the Interview
Is Swami's gift for me and you.
Hoping our Lord bestows on us
Both lots of love and lots of fuss:
'Interview, Swami,' is the cry
Heard from all, both gal and guy.
'I need your help, I need advice,'
If He says "Yes," it would be nice.
But better still, should He say "Go."
Your heart starts pounding, I've been, I
know.
To the Mandir you slowly walk
Leaving your friends to stare and gawk.
The final seconds go ticking by
The door is opened and 'Come,' says Sai,
Into this special room of rooms.

And all your hopes and dreams just zooms.
He teases, jests and sometimes a scold;
Above all else, His love you behold.
"What do you want?" He frequently asks.
'In your love and your light always to bask'
Vibhuti, medallion, mala, a ring.
Makes me feel like a queen, like a king,
One thing for certain, I say this for sure,
Shri Sathya Sai's love is endless and pure,
When interview is over, most eyes are wet,
"Please, Baba; please, Baba! Don't leave us
yet"
But, the time has arrived for both me and
you
To start praying again for our next
interview.

—*Sylvester Scott, Santa Barbara, California.*

STUDENTS' CORNER:

THE ORANGE SUN

I've seen many a rising Sun,
I've seen the vastness of the Sea.
But, I see this dazzling orange Sun
Rising now from Compassion Sea.

This Sun has a million rays as bright,
Each to every heart brings delight,
And Truth and Love, both day and night,
Up from unconquerable lustrous height.

—*G. Sai Saravanan, II Inter, Vidyagiri, Prasanthi Nilayam.*

THE CHANCELLOR SPEAKS:

"Develop Devotion to Dharma"

In an inspiring address to the students and teachers of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning at the Institute Auditorium, on the occasion of the commencement of the new academic year on June 16, Bhagavan Baba, Chancellor of the Institute, exhorted the students to cultivate right attitudes and proper discipline during their stay in the Institute so that they may go out as ideal citizens well prepared to serve the country and uphold Righteousness. Bhagavan drew upon episodes from the Mahabharata to stress the importance of Dharma.

Prior to Bhagavan's address Prof. V. K. Gokak, Vice-chancellor, reviewed the Institute's progress during the past year.

Bhagavan began his discourse with a poem which deprecated conceit based on a little knowledge and stressed that only right action can yield right results. Bhagavan said:

Humanity has achieved today tremendous progress through science. Astonishing advances have been made in areas like plastics, computers, electronics and exploration of space. On the other hand, in the sphere of ethics, the picture is depressing. The world is confronted with grave economic and political problems. International, racial, religious, caste and communal differences, inter-state conflicts, violent agitations by students are rampant all over the world. What is the reason for these contradictory developments—scientific progress on the one side and moral deterioration on the other? How has mankind fallen to this egregious depth of ethical and spiritual degradation?

Wickedness and cruelty are spreading among men today. Lacking in devotion and righteousness, men are developing only their bad habits and tendencies. Mankind does not lack scriptures like the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Bible, the Quran, the Zend Avesta and other great works to show how peace and the Higher Wisdom are to be got. Spiritual books are published in countless numbers. Nor is there any dearth of religious preachers. Heads of mutts, religious scholars, sadhus and sanyasis are proclaiming spiritual and ethical truths to warn mankind. In spite of all these well-meaning efforts, why is it that men's minds are turned towards narrow, unrighteous pursuits?

There has been any amount of transformation in the political, social and scientific fields. But all this development is of no avail if there is no commensurate transformation in the mental outlook of the people. Ethical transformation depends on social transformation. Social transformation is related to spiritual change. Without spiritual transformation, social progress tends to become inimical to human advancement. Spiritual transformation is the basis for ethical transformation.

There is a belief that science is opposed to spirituality. Science by itself tends to make man's life artificial. Demonic qualities like envy, greed, selfishness and ostentation are today dominating men's minds. Selfishness has grown beyond limits in men. Behind every action there

is the desire, for personal, gain. Man is attached to worldly things out of selfishness. The world will make genuine progress only when men give up self-interest and self-centredness.

Dear students! Time is infinitely precious. You should not waste even one moment of it. In a man's life, the period as a student is most valuable and sacred. You should make the best use of it. Milk mixed with water cannot get back its original purity, however much you may try to separate it. But once you have converted the milk into butter, it will not be affected by association with water. It will float above the water and maintain its distinctive quality. Likewise, worldly attachments (Samsara) are like water. The mind of man is like milk. When the pure, sacred, uncontaminated mind is mixed with the water of worldly desires, it is difficult to recover the original purity. However, if in this sacred period of study you derive from your unspoilt mind the butter of knowledge, wisdom and right conduct, you will be able to remain unpolluted by the attractions of the world even when you are in it.

Students should realise the importance of ethical, Dharmic and spiritual development. These three should be present in teachers to a greater degree. The reputation of teachers and their success depend primarily on their conduct. The future of numerous innocent children is in their hands. The good conduct of the students depends on the example set by teachers. The teaching profession is a highly responsible one. Today there are three kinds of teachers. The first type consists of teachers who revel in "complaints". They are the teachers with grouses of one kind or another. The second type consists of teachers who "explain". They "explain" what the students have to learn. To the third type belong teachers who "inspire". This category of teachers arouse the enthusiasm of students and inspire them to take deep interest in their studies. Such teachers are becoming rare these days. Once the enthusiasm of the student is aroused, learning becomes a creative process. The teacher should patiently understand the problems of students and help to solve them. Teaching today has become mechanical, with each teacher content to "teach" the prescribed portions of the syllabus. Teachers should see whether the students have properly comprehended the subjects taught to them. Any deficiency on the student's part should be ascribed to the teacher's failure to do his job well.

In the field of science today, there is great emphasis on research and discovery. But unless the results of research are applied in practice, it will be an expensive futility. If all the time is spent on research when is it to find useful application in practice? Nor is there any sense of discrimination in the promotion of research. To give an example: When I attended recently a symposium in Bombay on "Science and Spirituality", a prominent scientist said that the nuclear arsenals of the Big Powers contained enough atom bombs to destroy the world ten times over. What is the sense in building up such arsenals? If you have destroyed the world once, what is there left for the other bombs to destroy? In the process, you would have destroyed yourself.

Those engaged in research seem to be more concerned about boosting their name and fame by their research than about promoting public well-being through the results of their research. Nor do they seem to be bothered about the harmful consequences of their discoveries. There is nothing great about causing harm to others. To destroy a million persons by a single bomb is no great thing. To do good to a single individual in the world is more praise-worthy. The scientific

knowledge we acquire must be used for the benefit of our fellow-men. Only that is proper education which prepares the student for disinterested action. The pursuit of the science of the Spirit (Parartha Vijnana Sastra) is more essential than involvement with the physical sciences (Padartha Vijnanam).

In every object (Padartham) in the universe there is a Supreme Principle (Parartham). The physical object is Matter. The Supreme Principle within it is Energy. There is no matter without energy or energy without matter. The Vedas proclaimed this by saying that the Supreme is in the subtlest of the subtle (Anoraniyaan) and the vastest of the vast (Mahathomahiyaan).

Students! By deriving pleasure from a small fraction of the Five Elements (the Pancha bhutas—Space, Air, Fire, Water and Earth) we are forgetting the truth of the Cosmos. What is it that sustains these Five Elements? The Five elements have their respective qualities: sound, touch, form, fluidity and smell. The corresponding sense organs in man are important for experiencing these qualities. But the power behind these sense organs should be noted. For instance, the eyes are able to see things. But the retina on which the images are reflected is more potent than the eye itself. The power of sight is more important than the eye. There are many who possess eyes but who cannot see. There are persons with ears but who cannot hear because they lack the power of hearing. We are trying to control the sense organs without trying to regulate the power that is responsible for their functioning.

For example, there is in the body a digestive organ. When one takes a balanced diet, the food is properly digested and the body is kept healthy. Similarly the body's temperature has to be kept at a certain norm. If the temperature goes above or below that norm it is a sign of illness. Similarly if the Five Elements that constitute the natural environment are kept in balance, the world is in a healthy state. If this balance is upset or if the elements are polluted, then the country suffers in various ways. If the products of science and technology result in upsetting the balance of Nature and pollute the atmosphere or the rivers and the seas, many harmful consequences follow. Pollution gives rise to many new diseases. Today even pure air has become a rare commodity. Three-fourths of the earth is covered by water. There are many minerals in the ocean bed. But in extracting them, some limits should be observed. Otherwise, even the ocean, which has been adhering to its bounds, will exceed its limits. Even earthquakes and volcanic eruptions are caused by the unsettling of the ecological balance in nature.

Take the body, for example. The body derives its vital force from the sun. There are five types of life-breaths (Pranas). These are known as Prana, Apana, Vyana, Udana and Samana Vaayus. The Prana (life-breath) comes from the sun. The Vyana comes from Vayu (Air). The Apana comes from the earth. Udana comes from Agni (fire). The Samana comes from Aakasa (space). Because of these five breaths functioning in us, we are able to live healthily. There are 72 crore blood-vessels in a human being. The Vyana Vayu blows through the entire circulatory system. The Vyana Vayu is derived from Air (Vayu). When the air is polluted, the 72 crore blood-vessels get polluted and the effect of this on the Apana Vayu leads to cancer and heart attacks. Man needs pure Vyana Vayu for good health. Students should realise the importance of maintaining the purity of the environment and developing a pure heart in the interests of their body and mind.

Some kind of cleaning powder is used for cleaning vessels. Similarly prayer is the means of cleansing the heart. Through a pure heart one achieves spiritual insight. Impure minds are the cause of many heart troubles. When the heart is filled with all kinds of worldly desires, there is no room in it for spiritual sadhana.

There is a vast difference between one who is attached to worldly things and one who is devoted to Dharma. This may be illustrated from the actions of Drona and Bhishma, the two principal gurus of the Kauravas. Both Bhishma and Drona were supreme masters in the arts of using Astras (weapons directed by mantras) and Sastras (lethal weapons). But what a difference between the two! Bhishma was highly spiritually minded. After he was wounded all over the body in the Kurukshetra battle, when blood was flowing from the wounds, lying on a bed of arrows he taught Dharma to the Pandavas. His teachings are contained in the Shanti Parva of the Mahabharata.

On the other hand, when Dronacharya heard Yudhishtira say "Ashwathama hatah" (Ashwathama is killed), he did not even wait to hear that it was the elephant named Ashwathama that had died, he concluded that his son Ashwathama had died, and he collapsed on the battlefield. Dronacharya was filled with worldly attachments. Bhishmacharya was filled with love of Dharma.

There is another example in the Mahabharata of the differences in response of those attached to Dharma and those filled with worldly attachments. When the news of the death of her son, Abhimanyu, was conveyed to Subhadra (Arjuna's wife), she saw in her son's death the signs of the impending Kali age in which mothers would lose their young children and unrighteousness would prevail on earth. She recalled that during Rama's reign no woman wept over the loss of her child.

When Arjuna received the news he bitterly lamented the fact that there would be no one to inherit the kingdom after his victory over the Kauravas. What use was there in winning a kingdom after he lost his son Abhimanyu, he wailed.

While Subhadra was grieved about the impending plight of all mothers in the Kali age, Arjuna was only worried about his personal loss.

Men today are either indifferent to Dharma or seek to use even the scriptures for their selfish purposes. The scriptures are to be used as guides for right faction. They are signposts showing the way to the realisation of the Divine. We must be ever conscious of what we owe to God. The air we breathe, the food we eat, the light that enables us to see the world, all these are the gifts of Providence. What gratitude are we showing to the Great Giver of all these benefits? We are thankful to many for small favours. But to the Lord who is the source of all the innumerable things we enjoy, we show no regard at all. The man without gratitude is worse than a cruel animal.

Students! Realise that without the Grace of the Divine we cannot exist for a moment. Cultivate good qualities and strive for the promotion of Dharma in the world. This will give you more enduring happiness than the acquisition of perishable worldly things. Once the sage Markandeya asked the Goddess of Dharma why she was leaving the earth. She smiled and replied: "I have no place in a land where wickedness prevails and there is no truth or Righteousness."

Education consists in cultivating the following six qualities: "Good thoughts, good actions, adherence to truth, devotion, discipline and discharge of one's duties." When you have acquired the friendship of these six virtues, your life will become purposeful and satisfying.

Students! Concentrate on your studies from-the beginning of the academic year itself and develop discipline and right habits so that you may make the best use of your opportunities in the Institute. Teachers should not consider that they are teaching for the sake of emoluments and students should not consider their studies as primarily for the purpose of getting a job. Education must develop in you self-reliance and prepare you for all the challenges of life. With faith in God and leading a righteous life, you must become, rue citizens of Bharat. The discipline and regulations you observe now will stand you in good stead all your life. Prepare yourselves to serve society and thereby propitiate God, whose Grace is a greater benediction than all the gains from the world.

—Prasanthi Nilayam, 16-6-83

AVATAR VANI:

Bhagavan's advice to villagers

More than economic development or provision of amenities, what is important in the reconstruction of our villages is the raising of the quality of life of the villagers and developing their moral and spiritual values, declared Bhagavan Baba, in his address to over 75,000 villagers at Singanamuppavaram. This village has been "adopted" by the West Godavari Sai Seva Samiti under the rural development programme.

Bhagavan said: Jnana (knowledge) is regarded as the primary requisite for man. But what is really primary is conduct—righteous conduct. One's conduct determines one's qualities and the qualities, in their turn, determine one's behaviour. All are God's children and are equally entitled to the love of the Lord. Why, then, are there differences among men? Why is there no equality or sameness? This is because of differences in the mental makeup of people. If the mind is impure, one's actions are bound to be impure. When the mind and the consciousness are warped by egoism, the human behaviour is also distorted. When these are turned towards the divine, good actions follow naturally. The mind is the cause of good and bad deeds.

Hence, whatever we wish to achieve, we should try to accomplish without excitement or agitation. For a human being, the important qualities are Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema—Truth, Righteousness, Equanimity and Love. The villages are very backward today. To remove

this backwardness, the first requisite is unity in the village. Villagers must be helpful to each other. If any one is afflicted with pain, all others should feel that they are equally affected. If the village is considered as a body, all the households in it are different limbs of the body. Harm to any part is to be treated as harm to the whole. Villagers should learn to speak sweetly and pleasantly. A harsh word can cause lasting damage. "If the foot slips, only the leg is injured; but if the tongue slips, one may go to hell," says the proverb.

The villagers must eschew hatred and discord. The village can prosper only when the villagers develop mutual love and cooperation. There may be differences between individuals. But these should not affect common action in the interests of the village as a whole. Unity should be their watchword. Through unity anything can be accomplished.

It is unfortunate that politics has invaded rural life and promoted conflicts and divisions among the rural population. This is not good for you. You must all make your village an ideal village by banishing factions and other differences. You must suppress your ego and pride. There is no basis for this pride when you realise that life is impermanent and all one's possessions may be taken away in one moment. Ravana made Lanka greater than Swarga itself. But his egoistic arrogance brought about his fall. Similar has been the fate of arrogant men like Kamsa and Shishupala. All of them courted destruction. The Kauravas met with disaster because of their arrogance. People should cultivate humility.

The villagers should avoid idle gossip and wasting their time in useless pursuits. I desire that you should build up your village as an example to the country by your unity, mutual cooperation and integrity.

—*Singanamuppavaram, 8-4-83*

AVATAR VANI:

"Build Temples in your Hearts"

"You have built this Mandir (temple). This does not satisfy me. Only the temples erected in your hearts are permanent. The sums spent on the construction of temples could be spent more usefully on service to the poor and the needy," observed Bhagavan Baba in the course of his address at Guntur on April 6 (a brief summary of which appeared in our May issue.)

In his hour-long discourse, Bhagavan stressed the importance of social service as a vital element in spiritual sadhana. The following are excerpts from the discourse:

Almost every activity of man is motivated by self-interest (swarthamu). This concern for self-interest is opposed to the divinity that is immanent in man. Without realising this divinity, how can man achieve peace internally or in the world outside? The individual, society and the world—all the three are inextricably interconnected. The individual's welfare is dependent on the

state of the nation. Everyone should strive to develop his spiritual qualities and utilise them for promoting the interests of the community and the country. Service to society should become the constant concern of the individual.

There is no greater quality in man than selfless love, which expresses itself in service to others. Such love can be the source of real bliss. The relationship between Karma and Karmayoga should be properly understood. Ordinary karma (action) done with attachment or desires causes bondage. But desireless, selfless action becomes Karmayoga. Our life should become a yoga rather than a 'roga' (disease). Today most of our actions result in 'roga' because they are related to sensuous pleasures. Freedom from this disease can be obtained by pursuing the spiritual path. The spiritual path does not consist merely in singing bhajans or reciting hymns. These are good deeds. Only actions performed as a complete offering to the divine can be regarded as spiritual. The man who is in a state of ignorance about the Self is like the bud of a flower that has not yet blossomed. When the flower blossoms, it sheds its fragrance all round. Likewise, the man who has realised the divinity within him becomes a source of light and strength.

Why should you build temples? The ideal is to make your hearts the temples for the Divine to dwell. But this is not possible for everybody. Temples in stone are reminders of the existence of God. When you see a lawyer you are reminded of your legal troubles. When you see a doctor you think of your illness. Like wise, when you see a temple, you are reminded of God. Temples are useful only as a reminder. But true worship consists in heartfelt devotion to the God within each one. Purifying this temple of your heart, you must dedicate your life to service. It is such dedicated service, done in the spirit of Sadhana, which distinguishes the Sathya Sai Organisations from other spiritual organisations. Innumerable Sai devotees—men and women, young and old—are rendering service in various forms out of their love of Sai. People talk about Swami's, Vibhuti and Swami's miracles. But the real miracle is Swami's boundless love. It is this love which is inspiring countless devotees to engage themselves in selfless service.

There is nothing greater than this love. You have all been drawn to me by this love. To give love and to receive love. This is my business. No income-tax officer can know the extent of the "income" derived from this "business". There is no limit to my Ananda. I am always immersed in bliss. This is because my bliss is associated with love and not with any material objects. If you follow this path, you will also derive this ineffable Ananda. You will realise peace of every kind. Look with an equal mind on good fortune and misfortune, on happiness and sorrow, loss and gain. These are products of nature like heat and cold, summer and winter. They have their purposes to serve. Similarly the ups and downs of life have lessons to teach us. In fact, without reverses in life, we shall not be able to experience divinity. Without darkness, we cannot value light. Without experiencing difficulties we will enjoy benefits. It is the lack of peace of mind us to seek the means to realise enduring peace. The Upanishads have declared that through renunciation alone is immortality to be attained. Men should learn to practise renunciation so that they may discover the secret of enduring peace and bliss.

—Guntur, 6-4-83

AL-BARIU: The Maker out of Naught ⁽¹⁾

[The evening of 7th March 1983-On seeing Baba at the step of the Administrative Building, at Vidyagiri as He stood with the members of the Academic Council of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, after the first meeting of the Council was over. —Z. B.]

Give us a moment's respite
From the mind's darkened vaults,
To bow at Your Feet
In love's wordless gratitude,
As You stand, Cosmic Architect,
Viewing Your work from this topmost terrace—
The evening breeze adoring
The silk-soft darkness of Your Hair
The twilight seeking refuge
Into the folds of the Orange Robe,
And the domes emerging
Slowly from the mists of the grey-blue sky.

Thus You must have stood, Maker out of Naught,
In the first light of a virgin dawn,
Looking, with a smile, at Your Creation,
And the young Universe, as this Vidyagiri,
Dream-like, must have reflected
In the tender depths of Your lovely Eyes.
Gently, You would have murmured
To the yet uncreated man:

"Yet, how many favours of your Lord will you deny!" ⁽²⁾

My Beautiful, Divine Beloved,
How can the miserable finite creature ever perceive
Your Infinite lovely perfection!

There lies Your exquisite plan for *Kaliyuga*
This Vidyagiri-unfolding
Like a string of fresh *Parijata*; ⁽³⁾
Like a jewelled necklace,
In the palm of mysterious, ancient hills
A haven of love and peace
For those who seek refuge in You alone. ⁽⁴⁾

And You have fashioned,

Down the corridors of time,
Countless temples of wisdom like these,
So that the foolish, ungrateful Man
Can see in these ripples
Your infinite Mercy to him
And for one brief, egoless moment
SURRENDER
To Your Perfect Love.

—(Mrs.) Zeba Bashiruddin

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1. Al-Bari=According to Muslim belief it is one of the ninety-nine names (attributes) of ALLAH (God)
 2. A Quotation of the Quran, chapter: Rahman (The Gracious)
 3. Parijata: Baba has once described this flower as the symbol of a vast mind.
 4. From GITA.

Love of Sai

Once you begin to love Sai,
the world you see around,
all of a sudden, becomes full of love,
pure, serene and divine;
that flows from heart to heart
leaving no trace of I and mine.

Once you begin to love Sai,
you begin to feel the face of Truth,
Seeing the Self is Knowledge.
Loving It, Devotion.
Serving It, Action.

—Dr. N. R. Shastri, *Prasanthi Nilayam*

Poems from Prasanthi Nilayam

The Wake of Morn

The morning spreads itself
Under a grey sky
Like the perfume of budding jasmine
In an impersonal beauty.
Shuffling footsteps
Gild the fabrics of silence
Like the soft droning of a silent prayer
And unnamed figures sway on their stems
Like eager lotuses
Opening themselves to the bee,
The messenger of a honey'd resurrection.

The Sastri invokes blessedness
Beading together holy syllables
Inside the cavern of silence
Crowned triple among the clouds.

Does morning always come thus?
Fragrant, silent, soft and forgetful.
Does such a dawn come
Many times, every day, upon the earth?
Perhaps, when it does arrive
Rolling up all memory and maya
Tucked up in a tiger-skin,
The world ceases to be
And the frontiers of time
Fail to hold back the surge of the sun.

Eventide

The day is dying out slowly.
The feathers of the quiet night-bird
Are visible round the pillars;
And the boys quietly prepare to sing
"Lord, hallowed be Thy Name upon the earth."
Some folks who look wise against the wall

Are reading with a stern face
"The Path of the Soul".
All shapes and sounds
Are slowly absorbed into
A quiet and simple balance.
I tell the few fluttering birds in me
To take baptism in This Solitude
And rest for ever.

—*B. K. Misra*

Sai Family News

Baba in Bahrain

It was the evening of Thursday, the 17th March 1983. I had gone with my family to attend a party, except my mother-in-law who insisted on staying back with my little one-year old son, Sai Gopal, in the house. At about 9.15 P.M., as my mother-in-law was giving bottle milk to my son, she heard a knock at the door which she ignored at first. But the knock persisted and it became a little louder. She then proceeded to the front door and opened it slowly.

Aghast she was! In the half-opened door position she saw Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba standing in front of her in full physical form with an apple in his right hand. He spoke to her in Tamil thus: "I have brought this apple for Dwarakanath." She was so dumbfounded that she could not say anything, nor could she move. Immediately Baba changed the apple from the right hand to left hand and applied Vibhuti on the forehead of my mother-in-law. By the time she looked up he was gone!

When we all returned at about 10 p.m., she was still in a dazed condition and she slowly related to us all that had happened. Though we were inclined to dismiss the whole story as a dream, the Vibhuti still on her forehead convinced us that Bhagavan had physically given

Darshan and blessed us. As a Vaishnavite, she never applies Vibhuti on her forehead. Also she was neither a follower nor a staunch believer in Baba's teachings.

On Monday 21st March, from one of the photos of Baba, Vibhuti started falling from the up-raised hand of Bhagavan. Later it changed from hand to heart and it is continuing as I am writing this.

Indeed we are blessed. All devotees are having the darshan of this miracle and deriving ananda in Bahrain.

—*N. R. Dwarakanath, Manama, Bahrain.*

(Sri Dwarakanath, in a covering letter, says that the Sathya Sai Samiti at Bahrain, in the Arabian Gulf, which was started in February 1981, with a handful of devotees, has now hundreds of devotees.)

In Brazil

Sao Jose (Sao Paulo, Brazil): Sao Jose dos Campos is a beautiful industrial city in Sao Paulo state of Brazil (South America). There are many Indians and Brazilians, who are aware of Bhagavan Baba's advent and mission in varying degrees. During 1982, Sai devotees at Sao Jose got together to hold Bhajan sessions on all Thursdays. Later Bal Vikas classes were organised. Many devotees rendered service by visiting an old people's asylum to give the inmates food, clothes and other articles of daily need. Gurupoornima, Ganesha Chaturthi, Dasara, Bhagavan's birthday, Shivaratri, and Ramanavami were celebrated. Although very few of the devotees have had direct experience of the physical presence of Bhagavan Baba, they have all experienced the Grace of Bhagavan in one form or another.

—*S. K.*

Exhibition in Dharan

Dharan (Nepal): To celebrate the 2527th anniversary of Buddha Jayanti, the Sathya Sai Baba Centre at Dharan held an exhibition of drawings and charts depicting the Sathya Sai revolution in educational ideals and practices. The only hospital in Dharan was visited by devotees and medicines were freely distributed to the patients. Srimathi Anjana Sharma, Secretary of the Mahila Bhajan Mandali, spoke on devotion and selfless service.

Cuttack (Orissa): Under the auspices of the local Sathya Sai Study Circle, a seminar on the role of teachers and parents in reforming the student generation was held on May 22 at the Stewart Science College. Sri C. M. Poonacha, Governor of Orissa, was the principal guest speaker. Messrs S. M. Patnaik, former Chief Secretary, Orissa, N. B. Banerjee, Principal, and B. Prasad, Lecturer in Chemistry, S. S. College, participated in the discussions. Three hundred teachers and professional men and women attended the seminar. Sri Brahmananda Panda, who presided, explained Sai educational ideals and programmes.

Pilani (Rajasthan): Dr. D. S. Kothari, Chancellor of the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, inaugurated a three-day training camp for Bal Vikas Gurus from Rajasthan at Udaipur on May 14. He commended the efforts of Sathya Sai Organisations to impart a moral and spiritual

content to the education of children. Mr. S. Adaviyappa, State President, called upon the gurus to carry on their work in a spirit of selfless service. Lectures and practical demonstrations were given by Srimatis Usha Nanda, N. Kanwar, Sawhney and Mr. Ashok Mehta, all from Delhi. Scientists, who had come to Udaipur for a workshop on "Cosmology and Relativity", participated in a public meeting held on May 14th. Dr. M. Mehta, former Vice-Chancellor of Rajasthan University, urged the need for a value-oriented educational system.

Madras: A Paediatric-cum-Mass-Tuberculosis Screening Programme for adults and children was held, on April 29 at the Sathya Sai Free Medical Aid Centre at Annanagar, Madras. A team of specialists—paediatricians, ophthalmologists, dentists and ENT specialists—in co-ordination with several Governmental agencies, namely, the Malaria Eradication Unit of the Corporation of Madras and the Institute of Tuberculosis and Chest Diseases, Chetpat, Madras, rendered service at the camp. A total of 333 children were examined in the Paediatric Camp and a thorough and comprehensive checkup was done by a team of child specialists, eye specialists, ENT specialists and dentists, assisted by paramedical workers drawn from the Annanagar unit members and Seva Dal. The camp helped the Sai workers to assess the state of health of the local population and to identify the measures necessary for improving their health.

Man has two varieties of troubles; the physical due to the imbalance between the three humours: Vatha, Pittha and Sleshma, and the spiritual, due to the imbalance of the three Gunas: Satwa, Rajas and Tamas. It is wise to adjust one's living so intelligently that there is no need to approach any doctor. Illness is due to the neglect of some simple rules of healthy eating and drinking and due to the damage caused to the system by evil habits and stupid cravings. Man ruins himself by greed and lust, worry and fear; he falls an easy prey to his insatiable thirst for a happy life. He does not know the source and spring of happiness which lies within himself; he believes he can get it in plenty and in quick time by running after the mirage of fashion or fancy, excitement or entertainment. He thinks that floating on the roaring raging torrent of the world will help, but that only gives him unbearable tossing and nausea.

—Baba

“Sathyam, Jnanam, Anantam”

‘The face of Truth is hidden by the lid of the Golden Orb;
Remove it, O Nourisher of the world, so that I, whose law of
being is Truth, may see It’. (Isa Upanishad)

We shall not attempt a definition of Sathya (Truth), because definitions compare; either they liken what they define to something or they distinguish it from some others. The Truth that we are about is the attribute of the Supreme Transcendental Reality as implied in the scriptural declaration, ‘Truth, Knowledge and Infinity is Brahman’ and in the summation of the essence of

Advaita by the great Acharya Sankara, in 'Brahman alone is the Truth, the universe is illusion.' For a clearer understanding of the concept let us turn to Bhagavan Baba, the embodiment of Truth: 'Truth is something that is not modified by time or space or guna. It must be the same forever, unaffected and unchanged. Then alone is it Truth. It should not be proved false by some subsequent event or knowledge'.

Here we have a lucid clarification of what Truth is and what It is not. The latter is important since we deal with many brands of truth in the phenomenal world. Science has taken phenomenal strides, and through systematic enquiry, analysis and reasoning, it has succeeded in establishing several 'truths', which of course, have to be termed 'scientific truth'. But we have the evidence of history—the history of science—about how facts established by science have changed over the years. We are now in the atomic age, a far cry from the stage when people held the earth to be flat. Far more astounding findings will be presented to man by the scientist in future too; but he will be compelled to realise ultimately that behind all the changing flux of physical achievements and materialistic knowledge, there is an abiding and eternal Truth that cannot be changed or negated. Science is indeed very meaningful from beginning to end; but on certain kinds of meanings and particularly the ones that are existential and universal, science has not broken its silence. We can travel through a series of thoughts and experiences, but the Ultimate is not a thought or physical experience. That explains why some of the great thinkers of the west, even at the height of their intellectual speculation, are unable to find much hope in a culture dominated by science. Bergson refers to humanity 'being crushed by immense progress', and Sartre concludes that 'we must learn to live without hope'. But the eternal truths of Indian Philosophy stand unrefuted and will remain, unaffected by these 'surface movements', however catastrophic they may appear to the human mind. The divine laws under which the universe operates, like the law of Karma, reign supreme, and the happenings in the world only confirm their inexorable operation.

Yes, the world exists. Acharya Sankara does not deny this. How can the apostle of Advaita deny the scriptural assertion: 'Indeed, all this is Brahman'? If however man sees the world as real in its own right, that indeed is an illusion. We err only if we credit our perception with more objectivity than it deserves. Illusion is of the mind, and whether it is the individual mind or the higher mind, it is of the world.

The question is: Do we aspire to realise the Ultimate Truth? If we do, then we have to go beyond the scope of the senses, mind and even the intellect. There is no denying the necessity for man to take a practical view of the world; he is in it and he has to accept the facts as arising in his own experience and out of his knowledge as true. That however will only be a limited and lower view of Truth. That truth is inconclusive and tentative until one has penetrated the 'within' and becomes aware of the truth of all that appears to him through his senses and in his ideation. It is to bring out this distinction in bold relief that the Upanishad terms all that appears to the mind and intellect as Sathyam (truth) and the Ultimate Truth behind all these as Sathyasya sathyam (Truth of Truth). However, in absolute terms 'Truth is One—and sages call it by various names'.

The Upanishads give several instances of aspiring souls who have followed with enduring determination the path of Truth. They did not confuse defeat with failure, and did not consider life in the world as a limiting factor in its realisation. They were prepared to spurn pleasure, power and everything of the material world in the cause of their objective. We see in the Katha Upanishad young Nachiketa's, humble but determined to uphold Truth even at that tender age, walking into the abode of Yama, the Lord of Death. Despite all the allurements which were placed before him, Nachiketa was steadfast in his quest and Yama had to give in and impart to him the knowledge he was after. Even before going to Yama, we see Nachiketa remind his father of the ephemeral nature of human life and the eternal majesty of Truth.

Here is a profound declaration of Bhagavan Baba: 'Truth liberates; Truth is power; Truth is freedom. It is the lamp that illuminates the heart and dispels doubts and darkness. THE EFFULGENCE OF GOD IS TRUTH.' In his infinite compassion, He is calling on the stricken man to shed his craving for the things that are sensual and materialistic and take to the path of Reality. Man is in bondage, and in his despair he cries for freedom—freedom from fear, sorrow and death. Weighed down by his own ignorance he forgets that his mind alone is the cause of this bondage. He hugs his illusions, and the greater his success in life, the stronger is his desire for pleasure and power and the tighter his hold on his illusions. It bears repetition that the physical, material and scientific 'truths' which he has laboriously developed have only added to his fear and affliction. The so-called gifts of science—indeed they are vast—have nearly pushed him to the wall, to the edge of a precipice. He has raised structures on the basis of what appeared to him to be real and true. But these structures appear and disappear. This itself validates that very Truth on which they rise and fall. He has now to turn, as sage Narada had to do on the advice of the great Sanatkumara, to the attainment of the Higher Knowledge (para-vidya) which alone can confer on him freedom from the travails of life. The world of duality cannot rid man of fear and sorrow, for, 'If there is anything which is dual, then, it is untruth' (Bhagavan Baba). Truth expresses in Dharma and Dharma is the greatest power. Let us listen to Swami Vivekananda, 'And here is the test of Truth: anything that makes you weak physically, intellectually, or spiritually, reject it as poison; there is no life in it, it cannot be true. Truth is strengthening, Truth is purity, Truth is all knowledge'. In Viveka Choodamani, Acharya Sankara reminds that man's bondage arises from the belief that the 'anatman' is 'atman'. Avidya (ignorance) which is the root cause of this gives rise to egotism, desire, hatred and attachment. 'The fetters of the heart are broken, all doubts are dissolved and one's Karma melts away when that Reality which is high as well as low is seen'. The freedom to which Bhagavan refers, is not the freedom to lord it over others. It is the freedom of the spirit in its own domain, the freedom of the eagle to wing its way in the clear sky. He is no more separate, particular, individual. 'Where is illusion or sorrow there?' The raindrop has merged in the sea, from where it arose.

Truth has to be realised here, in this world and while man is in his human form. The eternal philosophy as expounded by the Upanishads, as also the teachings of Bhagavan Baba emphasise this and it is to this consummation that all sadhana should lead. Only man is endowed with the discrimination necessary for choosing his path—of the many he has—and the will to pursue it. It is not too much learning that is needed, nor intellectual prowess. 'Ultimate Reality is not clearly and immediately apprehended except by those who have made themselves loving, pure in heart

and poor in spirit' (Huxley). Lord Krishna points out to Arjuna: 'Even here (on earth) the created (world) is overcome by those whose mind is established in equality. God is flawless and the same in all' (Gita V-19). Pious acts, dedicated life and virtuous living should enable man to reach a higher level in the evolutionary cycle; however, we have it from the scriptures that one has to revert to human life and work his way for the realisation of the Supreme Truth. The fundamental change that is expected for a man of the world—a world that does not change substantially—is that the soul should use the world, and one's own life's opportunities as stable rungs for its ascent. That ascent is not to a higher physical level, but to a higher degree of spiritual insight. What is needed is not an ascetic rejection of the world, but a burning passion for Truth and the will to achieve it.

'The discovery of Truth—that is the unique mission of man,' says Bhagavan. For, Truth is everywhere, full (poorna)—from which nothing can be taken away or to which anything more can be added. Truth has never retreated; it is man who has turned away from It. The Isa Upanishad therefore exhorts man to live a full hundred years, for the good of the world and his own good, using his discrimination to understand what is abiding as against what is transitory. It is only through activity that man can wipe out the taints of Karma. 'As blazing fire reduces to ashes a pile of wood, so, O Arjuna, does the fire of Jnana (wisdom) reduce all actions to ashes,' advised the Lord (Gita, IV-37).

Maya is divine in its nature, but the best that can be achieved while in this world will still be short of perfection, short of the fullness of Being. Having engaged in action, and lived a life dedicated to Sathya and Dharma, the seeker after the Ultimate Truth, in the maturity of his life, looks to the Sustainer of the world for fulfillment. This is the prayer of the worthy aspirant of the Isa Upanishad in the verse quoted at the beginning of this short study. He boldly claims that he is Sathya-dharma (one whose passion is Truth and its quest), and he is praying to the Sun, the Nourisher of the world, to remove Himself—the Golden Orb, so that he may experience the effulgence of Spiritual Reality that is still behind it. He has lived in Truth and righteousness and he has now to experience the Truth of Truth, the 'effulgence of God' as Bhagavan puts it. The purity attained by him liberates him from all fear, and it is in that freedom of spirit, albeit humbly and prayerfully, that he asks the Sun to remove the Golden Orb to enable him to experience the Ultimate Truth, the Supreme Reality behind it.

—C. P. K. Nair

Sutra Vahini

(10)

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Ekshather naa Shabdham:

The Vedas assert that Brahman is the Primal Cause of Jagat (Cosmos). They do not posit any non-conscious entity (achetana) as the Cause. The Shabdham, or the Voice of God or Veda, does

not support the view of the non-conscious as being the origin of Creation. On the other hand, the Being (Sat) is asserted to have resolved upon Becoming, to have entertained a Sankalpa (decision). Resolution, decision, design—these are acts of Consciousness; non-conscious entities are incapable of such exercises of will. Brahman, which is All-conscious, has therefore to be accepted as the Primal Cause.

The non-conscious or achetana is called the Pradhaana. The Vedas do not speak about it. This is what this Sutra reveals very clearly. Pradhaana is the designation by which the 'Name-Form-Flux', namely, the Jagat or Cosmos, is denoted by some schools of thought. Other schools refer to it as 'Atom-composed' or Prakriti (the Made). Others say, in terms of praise, "You are the Omniwill, the Absolute Self, the Paramatma. Because of You, *all this diversity is projected*." Others argue that the three Gunas or qualities are the fundamental constituents which, through the preponderance of one or the other, cause the diversity in Nature.

These views are not supported by the Vedic authority. The Vedas maintain that Brahman willed and Creation emerged. That Will is the prologue, the preliminary 'act'. The Sankhya school posits the Pradhaana and bases Creation on the Gunas. When the three Gunas (Satwa—Serenity; Rajas—Activity; and Tamas—Passivity) are well balanced and in equipoise, no conscious decision can arise, the Sankhyas said. That state has to receive the impact of a Purusha who is the Witness and who is Awareness or Consciousness, in other words, the impact of God's Will. That makes the Pradhaana knowing and knowable.

Considering each of these theories, the most correct conclusion is that Brahman is the Prime Cause. Of course, the highest accessible Truth is not the Attributeless, Qualityless, Intangible, Inexplicable Brahman. It is the Saguna Brahman, the Brahman cognizable through the Qualities which It has imposed on Itself. This Cosmos, which is composed of Consciousness and non-consciousness, is the Body It has assumed.

The individual has to be endowed with Consciousness (Chaitanya) so that he can either commit or omit, do or desist from, actions which he feels he should carry out. What has to be done today or put off till tomorrow, which crops have to be grown in the coming year—such thoughts, plans and projects arise only in the field of Consciousness and not in non-conscious stone and wood, hill and dale. Willing is the sign of Consciousness; that which has it not, cannot will at all.

When the Will emerged, Brahman became Easwara, God. And by that Will alone, God created the Cosmos or Jagat. From the superficial view (Sthoola Drishti), God and Jagat strike one as distinct. But when examined with subtle insight (Sookshma Drishti), one finds that there is no fundamental distinction between the material (Padartha) and the Maker (Paramartha), the Living unit (Prani) and the Life Principle (Prana). The Life Principle imposes a body on Itself and appears as Prani; and then from Prani, Prana emerges.

The Vedic scriptures deal with the Brahman Principle and Its manifestations. They give man the treasure of wisdom and intuitive experience of that wealth (Jnana and Virpana). But with the

passage of time, the hymns, verses and sacred formulae (Mantras) were interpreted ritualistically. They were extolled and expounded as useful for attaining worldly and other worldly objectives. Rites performed with the recital of these were considered as beneficial Karmas. In fact, there is nothing in the Cosmos apart from or distinct from Brahman. All of it emanated from Brahman, all of it is absorbed (laya) in Brahman, and all of it moves and has its being in Brahman only.

This truth is made clear by the Sutra, Thajjalaath: Tat (from That)... Ja (born) ...La (absorbed) ...Aath (grows). These are the four feet on which the proposition stands and is established. Birth, growth and death form a Yajna or Sacrifice of the Purusha, the Person.

The Cosmos (Prapancha—the five-element Composite) has emanated from the Omniself, the Paramatma, Brahman. There is no spot anywhere where Its manifestation is not. The Jagat .is ever in movement; the Lord of the Cosmos (Jagadishwara) is the mover. Worldly love is not genuine love; the love of the Atma is the source of all such love. The Upanishad announces that this was the teaching that Yajnavalkya imparted to Maitreyi. "Aatmanastu Kaamaaya sarvam priyam bhavati" (It is for one's Atma that all is dear.) Love for the Self is primary; love for other objects is secondary. If one loves another, that cannot be termed as love. The self craves for Ananda, and loves because of the Ananda derivable therefrom. Anuraga or affection or love flows from self towards Self. So, when the Atmic Reality is understood as the Source, we can know that all that happens through the Supreme Consciousness, Brahma Chaitanya.

Chara and Achara (the apparently moving and unmoving, active and inert) are both willed by the Divine (Daiva Sankalpa). That Will is Chetana, a Conscious Act; it is not A-chetana, a form of inertia. This is the truth revealed by this Sutra—Eekshather naa Shabdam.

Whatever arguments and counter-arguments are advanced by any person, the truth that Daiva Sankalpa is the root of everything stands unshakable. Those persons are either deluded by appearances or are only trying to bolster up their pet fancies avoiding deeper probes.

The human body is a support, a receptacle (aalambanam) for the Atma. Elements like water and wind are intimately bound up with the body. Therefore, the Atma Principle, the Brahma Principle, which is the core is not cognized. Man has lost the awareness of this Principle or Tatwa which is his Truth. It is in the body, but not of it. It is the A-sarira Tatwa, the Principle that does not belong to the body though active in it. That is the Atma.

The capacity of the eyes to see and the capacity of the ears to hear are given by the Atma. How, then, can the eyes see the Atma or the ears hear It? The eyes and ears are (Aadheya) sustained; the Omni-Consciousness (Sarva Chaitanya), the Brahman Principle, the Atma, is the Aadhara, the Sustainer. That is the real "You", the Will, the Sankalpa.

The elements (space, wind, fire, water and earth) that constitute the Cosmos operate only as prompted by the Supreme Wisdom (Prajnana). The gods (devatas) or the Shining Ones are luminous only through that Wisdom that energises them. The entire world of living beings (Prana-Koti) is sustained by that same Prajna. The fixed and the moving (the Sthavara and the

Jangama) are both firmly based on Prajna. The Supreme Wisdom is Atma; the Supreme Wisdom is Brahman. The Supreme Wisdom is the Loka, the Visible, the objective world. The Cosmos is Prajna, through and through; the Prajna is the Chaitanya that fills the Cosmos (Prapancha).

The Vedas assert that Brahman is the Cause of the Cosmos (Jagat) by using the word "Sat" to denote it. Sat is the "EVER-CONSCIOUS *Is*." The Vedas do not speak of anything that is "not-conscious" or A-chetana. All is Chetana, all *Is*, all is Brahman,

(To be continued)

AMRITA DHARA

"The Agony of the Avatar"

The other day, Swami spoke to a student of the College who had finished his examination and was leaving for Madras to spend the holidays with his parents. "Beautiful lotus flowers bloom in the pond. The frogs in the pond do not enjoy the fragrance and the nectar; they hop, leap and croak. Bees know the fragrance and the sweetness of the nectar; they come in swarms from afar. The frog uses the lotus as a perch! You do not realise what a blessing it is to be near to Swami. Look at all these persons who come to Swami from far off places!..." said Baba.

The boy was standing next to me; so, I could see the expression on Swami's face but also sense the anguish underneath those words. Surely they were not meant for him only. There were other boys within hearing and many elders. It was meant for all. He came near the boy and said, "Come back early. Have you applied for admission to the post-graduate class? Come in time for the admission test. Bring your brother's son too for joining the primary school."

Here was the Lord, the Avatar of the Age, the Chancellor of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, speaking intimately, so affectionately to students, asking them not to miss the chance of continuing to be under His loving care for some more years.

What amazed me was the `agony' of the Avatar, the anguish born out of extraordinary love. I had heard Him declare repeatedly, "If you ask Me, I would say, students are My property. I have no other property." His efforts to establish educational institutions, to equip them fullest with the best, the love and care He bestows on the teachers and the taught are evidences of His concern for the future of this great country and of a world on the brink of disaster.

Baba's unspoken message was, "O! Dear children! I am doing so much for your sake. I need no gain or dread any loss. You are all potentially Divine, amritasaya putraah, Children of Immortality. You have the capability to become Madhava, Master of Maya. Why do you love to be just puny little men?" He told the boy from Madras, "Be near Swami. Every thing will be added to you."

The agony is feigned by the Avatar to awaken our faith. If Swami sometimes feigns anger, that too is born out of His Love; He expresses sorrow and disappointment that all His boys do not realise what they are missing. He has nothing but their highest good in His Mind.

—*From "The Greatest Adventure" by Dr. M. V. N. Murthy*

Turkish Book on Baba

A book in Turkish on "Sri Sathya Sai Baba", written by Bilim Arastirma Merkezi, has been published in Istanbul. (Kitap No. 69 of Yayimlonnis Kitaplarimiz.)

The Ever-Caring Lord

On November 23rd 1982 our 25-year old son was due to undergo a tricky sinus operation up his nose. I wrote one of my little notes and placed it on my shrine, asking Swamiji to guide the surgeon's hand. In the early hours of Nov. 23rd I had a dream. I was beside Swami as he walked purposefully down the long hospital corridor towards the operating theatre. The message was clear: "Don't worry. I'll be there." I awoke saying, "Oh thank you, Swami!"

Calculating the difference in time I reckoned that when I was given that dream Swami must have been coming out to give Birthday Darshan to thousands at Prasanthi Nilayam. (Though He has said it is unnecessary to wonder what His Form is 'doing' at any particular time.)

The operation was very successful. When the nurse later entered the small ward of 4 beds she exclaimed: "Oh! What a wonderful smell! It's like joss sticks!" Our Beloved Lord had left His 'visiting card'!

It is such constant 'small' demonstrations of loving response which bring tears to the eyes of all devotees.

—*Peggy Mason, England.*

The Miracle in Reverse

Long ago, about two thousand years from now, Lord Christ trod on the surface of the earth in the small region of Palestine. He could only preach for 3 years. He spoke to the simple folk in a very simple language in the form of stories and parables to show them the way to the truthful way of life and righteousness. His life on the earth was a great Message for humanity.

At a marriage party, when the wine being served there was exhausted, Jesus turned water into wine.

Last year a couple stayed in one of the flats in Prasanthi Nilayam and a man who was a habitual drunkard took along with him two bottles of whisky in his baggage.

In the night he started drinking in front of Swami's photo which was hanging on the wall. He poured the drink in a glass and started drinking to the health of Baba in spite of so many remonstrances on the part of his wife that he should not drink in the holy place. But when he drank he found to his utter amazement that it was turned into water. He could not remain without drinking, he opened a new bottle and to his utter amazement that also was turned into water! Therefore the drunkard had to remain without his peg that fateful night. The next day both attended the Bhajan meeting and Baba came to him and made similar gestures as he had made in front of Baba's photo while drinking his stuff.

He was very much amazed and shaken and sat silent with folded hands and afterwards the couple left Prasanthi Nilayam. From then, he got rid of the bad habit for good.

—A. S., *Calcutta*

The Three Laws

There are three basic laws which motivate and guide man along the evolutionary path from the individual personality to the universal Spirit, from selfishness to selflessness.

(1) The LAW OF KARMA operates on all beings through the duality of pain and pleasure. According to this law, every thought, word, or action which is emitted by our gross and subtle bodies must return to them. Life is a mirror reflecting back to us what we are emitting so that we may see ourselves through others. When we harm, we are harmed. When we love, we are loved. Very simply, as we do to others, it will be done to us. Through the help of this law we learn by trial and error. When we suffer, we understand how others feel when we make them suffer. When we are happy, we understand how others feel when we make them happy. Learning through the law of Karma is a rather slow and painful process.

(2) When one has evolved sufficiently, he begins to operate more through the LAW OF DHARMA. Although he still learns through the Law of Karma, he now is very interested in doing what is right, regardless of whether the results will be pleasant or unpleasant. Pain and pleasure are not so important. He is motivated by a sense of righteous action. Many have been the great saints who have demonstrated this great steadfastness to the truth inspite of all types of physical and mental suffering. The "Dharmic" individual is concerned for the social welfare, and for the needs of others. He is very interested in manifesting the Law of Dharma, that is, the right order of things, here on the earth. Through a sense of duty, truth and correct action he begins to identify with the whole.

(3) Eventually the individual is inspired with selfless love. The LAW OF LOVE inspires a feeling of union and oneness between the spiritual aspirant and the beings and world around him. He ceases to feel himself a separate entity which has selfish needs. He loves everyone and everything and gives willingly all that he has for the benefit of all. His actions are not motivated by fear of retribution as in the case of the law of Karma or by duty as in the case of the law of Dharma. He simply sees no difference between his own needs and others' needs. He exerts no efforts in order to be in harmony with others, because for him there are no "others". Just as a mother easily gives all to her child, the individual under the law of love gives all to the world.

These three laws are summed up in the following words by Sathya Sai Baba. "Remember, when you love another man, you are really loving yourself, for there is only you in every one. So-Ham. He is I. Whenever you injure, it is you that suffer, whenever you, cheat, it is you who are cheap d. If you do not do your duty to the best of your ability and intelligence and to the satisfaction of your conscience, you are only cheating your Self."

—Bob Najemy, Athens

Unity of Religions

What Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is saying is most relevant to the contemporary situation. There is at present a crisis looming in many spheres of modern life, not the least of which concern science and its achievements, religion, philosophy, education and health (physical and mental). Politics and economics are also not immune from the malaise that has set in; one does not have to look far to see this.

But while a good many in these fields are aware of the impending crisis and the present destructive tendencies inherent in certain of the advanced fields in science—e.g. in nuclear and biological breakthroughs—a very few, in the West at least, would consider it absolutely essential to turn to the East and to Eastern teachers for a solution to the problems they consider at any rate to be local and historically determined, much as one would say about internal domestic problems. In other words, to use an example, take the moral crisis in the West. Now the best authorities will voice the opinion that this problem for most part is a result of the remnants of the clash between the extreme moralism of Christendom and liberated ethics of the materialist and secular society the West has come to witness after the scientific revolution in the last century. And that in order to resolve the conflicts and contradictions that have emerged little need is felt to turn to the East immediately.

Again, take the deadlock within the major Churches and denominations in the West. Attempts are being made to patch up differences and engage in ecumenical dialogues. Despite the endeavour towards increasing tolerance for each other's faith, nothing like a united Christian church has been achieved as there are problems that go back a few centuries that pose formidable obstacles in the way of Church unity, an ideal much spoken of in the West nowadays.

Despite this sad situation few church leaders have considered it useful to turn to the East for re-appraising their own difficulties in this attempt. Though their attitude is mellowing and slowly changing in this regard, as the receptions given by church leaders, theologians, and academics in the field, to His Holiness the Dalai Lama XIV during his recent visit to Australia have shown. The Dalai Lama participated in a number of interfaith and inter-religious dialogues and meetings held in his honour, and he did not hold back his own thoughts on the important matter of the unity of humankind despite differences in religion, race and philosophies. The Dalai Lama brought to Australia a timely message which no spiritual leader of his calibre has yet come to Australia to proclaim—namely, that all religions share the same goal and strive for an end to human suffering, and that for such a task we should put aside our differences and with love and compassion unite as one humankind. He repeated the message in his inaugural address to the VIIth annual conference of the Australian Association for the Study of Religions. The church leaders and those present at these meetings applauded the Dalai Lama's call for a harmonious co-existence of religions and an acceptance of religious differences in the spirit of real tolerance and understanding. Such lofty sentiments and ideals could have only come from the heart of one soaked in the wisdom of the East, where such ideals have been lived through for centuries.

One cannot help but wonder, however, how the same group of people would respond to the message of Sai Baba which is depicted appropriately in the Prasanthi Nilayam emblem. Here too, one sees a stress on the unity of religions and a call upon mankind to minimize their differences and to maximize the common core of religious quest that all humans share. But would not the emblem be too radical a draw-card for western intellectuals on the whole? Is the West fully ready to turn to the purer teachings of the East, particularly of Indian origin? Likewise with philosophy, education and other fields? Opinion at present appears to be divided on this issue. But with the increasing interest in the higher teachings that have been coming out of India—not just the minor interests in yoga, arts and styles, but the wealth of wisdom which both Hinduism and Buddhism have to offer—one can say that the East has begun to shine brightly on the western horizon. This point has recently been made quite pertinently by Father Frederick C. Copleston, a famous historian of philosophy and authority on theological dialogue, in these words: "The fact is that a need can be felt in our modern western culture which can have an influence on conceptions of philosophy and its function. Some people have felt driven to turn to the East for enlightenment". (Philosophies & Cultures, Oxford University Press, 1981, p14)

—Purushottam Bilimoria, Melbourne, Australia.

The Begging Bowl

When a child dies, ask yourself the question, "Is it for my sake that he was born?" He had his own destiny to fulfill, his own history to work out. Gautama Buddha's father was so overcome with grief when he saw his son with a begging bowl in the street that he told him thus: "Everyone of my ancestors was a King; what misfortune is this that a beggar was born in this line!" Buddha

replied: "Every one of my ancestors had a beggar's bowl; I know of no king in my line." The father and the son walked different paths, travelled along different route

*—(Baba's "**Chinna Katha**")*

AVATAR VANI:

Unity and Purity: Message of Ramzan

Whoever speaks, the expression begins with 'I' and revolves around 'I'. 'I am walking', 'I am sitting', 'I am eating', 'I am going', 'I am listening', 'I am seeing'—'I' is ever forward. It is then that man manages to live. 'I' am the doer, whatever the deed, whichever and whenever.

Who exactly is this 'I', the agent, the doer? There are three aspects connoted by the 'I'. 'I am this body' is the first; 'I am the life-force in it' is the second; 'I am the Atma' is the third.

'I am dark', 'I am fair', 'I am short', 'I am tall'—these are statements generally made. 'I am young', 'I am old', 'I am a Brahmin', 'I am a Non-Brahmin'—these statements too are indulged in. These qualities concern the body only. When a person is unconscious or in deep sleep, or dead, he is not aware of any of these characterisations regarding his body. They are extraneous to the real 'I', for the attributes adhere or fall off when time elapses or when circumstances change.

Next, the Jiva principle or Life Force: The incessantly active consciousness is ever wayward and restless. We say, "My intelligence is not clear" "My mind is perplexed". These apply to the second facet of the 'I' only. This facet too is linked with the body through the objects—senses-mind-reason complex.

Now, the third, the Atma: "I am Sadanand, Nityanand, Satcitanand! I am Nirmal, I am Nischal. I am all. I am Brahma. Aham Brahmasmi." The body is mortal; the Jiva Principle undergoes transformation; but the Atma is Immortal. The Atma persists in unaffected glory in the waking, dreaming, sleeping and the fourth level beyond. The gross body is active in the waking stage; the subtle I-consciousness is alert in dreams, the Causal Atma is dormant as 'I' in sleep. The real I or Atma has no exclusive affiliation to one body, one country, one nation or one sex. It is in every being everywhere, in bird and beast, plant and tree.' Each of these reveals its existence. The Atma is all- pervading and immanent in Bharat, Russia, America, England, all over the worlds.

All founders of religions have heard this impersonal Voice of God revealing the Atma that activates the entire Creation. Just as the Vedas were 'heard' and propagated as 'heard' (Shruti), the Quran too was 'heard' by Hazrath Muhammad. The Quran has Salat and Zakat as the two eyes. Salat means prayer; Zakat means charity. Those who consider charity as a high duty and elevate their consciousness through prayers and continuous meditation on God are Muslims. Islam is a word which denotes not a particular religion but a state of mind—the state of total surrender to the Will of God. Islam means dedication, surrender, peace, and tranquility. Islam denotes the social community whose members have achieved supreme peace through surrender to the All-Merciful, All-powerful God and who have vowed to live in peace with their fellowmen. Later, it came to be applied to communities that considered themselves separate and different and so hostile to the rest. Islam taught something higher. It directed attention to the One in the Many, the Unity in Diversity and led people to the Reality named God.

Every human being has three needs: food, clothing and shelter. Seeking to fulfill them, man has developed a variety of foods to fill his little stomach ignoring the purpose of eating them. Clothing has to be worn to protect the body from cold. But we are attaching enormously exaggerated value to clothing. Of course, one must have a house to live in and lay the body down for rest. The Muslim, Gibran, asks why build these gigantic dwellings then? They are erected not for oneself but to hoard one's treasure and riches. Gibran says these mansions are tombs erected by the dead for the living.

Hazrath Muhammad announced the message of God that he had heard to the townsmen of Mecca. At that time, people did not give heed to the Divine Declarations. They forced him to leave the place. But, Hazrath Muhammad knew that truth will win and God will prevail. He knew that the insult and injury were only for the body; the Atma can never be hurt.

The Ramzan month is set apart for the holy task of bringing into memory and practice the teachings that Hazrath Muhammad conveyed and attaining that stage of unity and purity which is truly Divine. Islam gives importance to the moon which regulates the months. Hindus consider the moon as the deity presiding over the Mind. With the Darshan of the New Moon, the Ramzan fast begins and when the New Moon is seen again, the fast ends. 'Fast' does not consist in merely desisting from food and drink. The fast starts at sunrise and is broken only after sunset and is observed most rigorously.

Waking as early as three or four, in the Brahma Muhurta, prayer is started, and throughout the day, the constant presence of God is sought to be experienced. This is the meaning of Upavasa or Fast. Also, during the Ramzan month, rivalry is avoided, hatred is suspended, husband and wife live apart though in the same home, mother and children both follow the same spiritual- regimen and an atmosphere of brotherhood is maintained. The body, the senses and the mind are subject to rigorous discipline.

Periods of fast comprising a month are prescribed in all religions. The Hindus observe it in Magha and Shrawana months. Zoroastrians and Christians have allotted for themselves months for the same purpose.

The Quran lays down that all men should cultivate the sense of unity, of interdependence, of selfless love and of the immanence of Divinity. Generally, all men take food of some kind or other for the body five times a day—an early cup of coffee in bed, breakfast two hours later, a heavy lunch at noon, tea at four and a fat dinner at nine. Islam prescribes food for the spiritual nature of man and directs that it be taken five times a day, as prayer. For the arousal of the Atmic consciousness, for earning spiritual joy and for promoting the manifestation of Atmic illumination, prayer is prescribed as many as five times a day, from the dawn of discretion up to the moment of death.

Prayer, in Islam, is also a congregational activity. Prayer in a group produces beneficial vibrations. Islam promises a greater flow of ecstasy when God is adored by a huge concourse of yearning hearts. All of them bow low at the sight of the Masjid. They sit in rows on their bended

knees and lean forward until their palms and foreheads touch the ground in humble submission to God's will. Misunderstanding, conflict and enmity should not disturb the serenity of the occasion. Thus Islam emphasises the One in the Many, the urge for God which manifests in various degrees in various minds. Unity is the basic teaching of every religion. Faith in Unity is cardinal. Without it, no system of belief and conduct can be a religion. God is One and the teachings in all faiths that exalt Him are all on Love, Compassion, Tolerance and Sympathy. The tragedy is neither the Mohammedans, nor the Hindus, nor the followers of other religions are practising these qualities in daily life.

Islam teaches that God's Grace can be won through justice and righteous living; wealth, scholarship and power cannot earn It. Holy Love alone can please the Lord.

This is the message of every religion. But mankind has ignored this crucial point. Ramzan brings together in bonds of love kith and kin, near and far, friend and foe. This type of negligence is happening in every religion. The followers adopt the rules they like and break those which they find exacting. So, they become narrow-minded and crooked. And, they rationalise their defects and justify their failings. They have become habituated to this practice of self-deceit.

Since Islam means surrender to God, all who in a spirit of surrender and dedication, live in peace and harmony in society do really speaking belong to Islam. Islam insists on full co-ordination between thought, word and deed. Muslim holy men and sages have been emphasising that we must inquire into the validity of the 'I' which feels it is the body and the 'I' which feels it is the mind and reach the conclusion that the real 'I' is the Self yearning for the Omniself, God. The Ramzan month, the fast and the prayers are designed to awaken and manifest this realisation. Whichever may be the religion, its emphasis is on unity, harmony, equal-mindedness. Therefore, cultivate love, tolerance and compassion, and demonstrate the Truth in every daily activity. This is the Message I give you with my Blessings.

—*Discourse on Ramzan, Prasanthi Nilayam, 12-7-83*

STUDENTS' CORNER:

An Unfinished Journey

As a child I used to enjoy seeing the vivid colours of the rainbow. Whenever there was a shower of rain I would rush out of my house to look for the rainbow. At that time I used to hear many stories connected with the rainbow. One of them was that at the foot of the rainbow—which was probably the end of the world—there lay buried a pot of gold.

As I grew up my fascination for the rainbow increased. Now I was not only fascinated by the beautiful and enchanting colours but also by the pot of gold. And as my understanding increased so also my greed for the gold. In such a state I started my journey—a journey more in search of the pot of gold than the rainbow.

Travelling endlessly I realised that I was no whit better than where I started. The story about this rainbow was a myth and it was nothing but an optical illusion. This made me dejected and disheartened, confused and confounded. All the same I fervently wished for a miracle—a miracle to enable me to secure that pot of gold.

And the miracle happened! It happened at a time when I needed it most. I was unconsciously pulled towards a great force. This was the force of a magnet which attracted pieces of metal from far and near. This magnet had not only the power to attract metal but also rusted scrap and purify it. This powerful magnet was no other than my Lord SAI.

It was here that I started my actual journey towards the rainbow and the pot of gold. I now realised that the rainbow was all around me and the pot of gold within me. Now my journey was to my Lord, to perfection, to my own self.

My journey is still unfinished and I have "miles to go before I sleep." But I know that if I follow HIM with unflinching faith and devotion I will reach HIM. That is why I would like to end with a prayer at HIS Lotus Feet—

O! Lord! I love you as I love my brothers
Although not as much as do others
But what little I love you, I will love you like that flower;
Your commandments I will follow and will break them
NEVER, NEVER, NEVER.

—*Dhruv Sachdev, Brindavan Campus.*

A CORRECTION

In the report of Bhagavan's discourse at the College Auditorium at Prasanthi Nilayam on 16. 6. 1983 (published in our July issue), it was wrongly mentioned that there are 72,000 blood vessels in a human being. What Bhagavan said was that there were 72 crores of blood vessels (naallu). The error is regretted.

Man suffers from two types of ills, physical and mental; the one caused by the disequilibrium of the three tempers of Vatha, Pitha and Sleshma and the other caused by the disequilibrium of the three Gunas, Satwa, Rajas and Tamas. One peculiar fact about these two types of Illnesses is that the cultivation of virtue cures both. Physical health is a prerequisite for mental health and mental health ensures physical health! An attitude of generosity, of fortitude in the presence of sorrow and loss, a spirit of enthusiasm to do good, to be of service to the best of one's capacity; these build up the mind as well as the body. The very joy derived from service reacts on the body and makes you free from disease. The body and the mind are closely interrelated.

—**Baba**

SADGURU SANDESH:

In Human Form

What is the difference between those who are born as human beings and the Avatar who comes in human form? Bhagavan in His enthralling Gurupoornima discourse on July 24, to an overflow gathering in the Poornachandra Auditorium, explained that while human birth was the result of past karma, the advent of the Avatar was the result of His sankalpa (will).

Bhagavan narrated a story to show how even yogis failed to recognise God when He appeared in human form before them. He said:

A great yogi, resolved to delve into the glory of the Divine Principle, retreated to the depth of a silent forest. He started ascetic practices; he sat in the lotus posture; he kept his eyes closed. He held his fingers in correct chin-mudra. His Tapas continued for five long years. God willed to test his sincerity and his earnestness. So, He came before him as a young boy. At that time, his eyes were a little open. The boy asked him "Grandpa! why have you shut your eyes thus? Whom are you praying to? Have you found out how God appears?" The yogi replied, "Boy! I have seen him only as much as my eye is open." Thereafter the yogi's eyes were half open. The boy returned again and asked him, "Grandpa! How much of God have you seen now?" He replied, "Boy! I have known half of Him." A year later the Boy came again. By that time, the yogi had his eyes fully open. "Grandpa! Have you seen and known God?" was the question and the answer was, "Yes! I have known." So the Boy demanded, "Tell me what you have understood." And the yogi said, "I have understood that He is beyond understanding." Now, God was before this yogi in human form but he could not identify Him and recognise Him.

When God assumes the human form and is behind, before and beside you, speaking to you and moving with you, and allows you to cultivate attachment of various kinds with Him, you do not recognise Him. The Divine cannot be easily recognised, when It is embodied. The Divine proclaims, "I am not a mass of flesh and blood; I am not a bundle of desires, which the mind is; I am not the heap of delusion which the imagination is; I am the Paramatma, the Origin and the End."

I am the urge within you, the knowledge which you seek as a result of the urge, of your own self. As a poet has said, "One word of Swami grants the treasure of all the riches. A single glance of Swami bestows all boons; it is the Parijatha Glance. The arms of Sai confer the Hai (soft

comfort) the mother gives, not one mother, no, the love or Prema of a thousand mothers!" This Sathya Sai is such Prema Dayi (Bestower of Love).

When the Divine plays and sings with us, meets us and eats with us, we should not be misled into the belief that It is just human and nothing more. We generally forget the Truth.

Embodiments of Divine Love! You must be clear about the distinction between birth in general and the Advent of the Avatar. Karma (the cumulative consequence of deeds and thoughts) is the cause of ordinary birth. Birth in the human body is the reward for the merit acquired by worthy Karma. What is the Karma that has caused the Advent? That too must have some Karma as the antecedent, it may be said. Well! In your case you earn the type of life which the good and bad karmas you have done entitle you to have. Unless you go through the mass of consequence, you cannot change the vehicle or instrument. For, it is a role you have been assigned in the Cosmic Drama on the world stage. The role is part of a play for which it is allotted. You may appear in the first scene but you cannot change your make-up.

But, God is not bound or affected by Karma. He takes on a role, as a consequence not of any Karma, but to reward good karma and impose retribution for bad karma. God incarnated as Narasimha as a consequence of the bad deeds of Hiranyakasipu, and the good deeds of Prahlada. The truth is, the body that the Avatar wears is not a karma deha, designed according to the nature of the individual's deeds in past lives. God, as Avatar, can mould or change the body in any way He wills. He can develop it or discard it, as and when He wills. No other power or person can affect it. Everything happens as He desires, as He decides. To look upon the Avatar as the body it has assumed is not correct. The Guru has, as his duty, to teach mankind this great Truth of the Paramatma and the Atma and of the Glory and Compassion of God.

GURUPOORNIMA MESSAGE

"Let God Be Your Guru"

"Look upon God alone as your true Guru", observed Bhagavan Baba, in His inspiring discourse on Gurupoornima day on July 24, at the Poornachandra Auditorium in Prasanthi Nilayam. The unprecedented gathering of devotees from many countries and all parts of India heard with rapt attention Bhagavan's two-hour discourse, in the course of which Swami expatiated on the significance of God's advent in human form. Faith was the primary requisite for recognising and realising Divinity.

The supreme meaning of human birth is the realisation of one's true nature. Self-realisation is the path to immortality. Man's life is a bridge between this world and the Divine. The language of Pranava (Om) is the only medium for conversing with the Atma. By wearing the garb of this body, made up of bone and flesh, encasing the Atma that is pure and eternal, man imagines that his happiness lies in the physical environment. This is a delusion. There are two kinds of

knowledge which man can seek in his quest for happiness. One is Loka Jnana—worldly knowledge. This relates to knowledge of music and the fine arts, of the physical universe, botany, chemistry, mathematics, and the like. All this knowledge is of use only for earning a living. All of it relates to matters which are ever changing and perishable.

The other kind of knowledge is Brahma Jnana—knowledge of the Supreme. This knowledge reveals that the origin, growth and dissolution of the Cosmos are due to Brahman. The Upanishads have described it as Akshayya Brahman. Man today needs this supreme knowledge. There are three steps leading to this knowledge. One is "Bhavam". The second is "Sadhana". The third is "Upasana".

In the first stage, the thought of Brahman should be, firmly established in the heart. When this is done, one has to look upon the whole universe as a manifestation of the Divine. One must realise that the Five Elements (space, air, fire, water and earth), the five Pranas (Prana, Vyana, Apana, Samana, Udana), the five sense organs, the mind and speech, all these have emanated from the Brahman. All that is beautiful and great in Nature—the lofty mountains, the vast oceans, the stars in the sky—must be regarded as proclaiming the glory and power of the Divine. The sweet fragrance of flowers, the delectable juice of fruits should be regarded as tokens of God's love and compassion. The entire universe must be considered as the temple of God.

The external world will reflect your thoughts. If you view the world with love, it will appear as filled with love. If you view, it with hatred, everything will appear antagonistic to you. Eyes filled with love shine with brightness and cheerfulness. Eyes filled with hatred appear bloodshot and fearful. Our thoughts determine our good bad actions.

The Kauravas and Pandavas were cousins. But because of the inimical attitude of the Kauravas towards the Pandavas, they looked upon the Pandavas as their enemies. Because they looked upon Karna with a friendly eye, they made him ruler of Angadesa. The attitude of man to God is dependent on similar likes and dislikes. There are some devotees who worship God with devotion for a time. Then they turn against God. The reasons for these changes in attitude are traceable to their ideas about God. When they feel that their prayers are being answered and their desires are being fulfilled, they adore God. But when their wishes are not fulfilled, they revile God in all sorts of words. This kind of devotion is based on self-interest and has nothing divine about it. Pure devotion will not be affected by changes in circumstances or fortunes. True love is not based on any conditions. It is equal in weal or woe and is not affected by the vicissitudes of fortune.

The Upanishads regarded love (Prema) as a quality of the eternal and hatred as a demonic quality (Asuratvam). Looking upon love of God as a sacred quality, one should cultivate it and strengthen it. One should realise that he alone is responsible for his happiness or misery. He should not blame God for his difficulties. God has no likes or dislikes. As thoughts are the most important factor in determining one's attitude and behaviour, one should entertain only good and sacred thoughts.

The second step is Sadhana. Sadhana does not consist merely in Bhajans, Kirtans, Japa and Dhyana. All these are auxiliaries. The primary requisite is concentration on the Pranava (Om). All Sadhana should be based on Pranava. There are seven crores of names for God all of which have to be uttered with Pranava at the beginning. "Om! Narayanaaya Namah; Or Om! Madhavaaya Namah, Om! Keshavaaya Namah!" This is how the names of the Lord should be recited. To utter the name without the Pranava is like using a revolver without cartridges. By meditating the Pranava, one can glimpse the nature of the Supreme Reality, according to the Upanishads.

The third step is Upasana. Upasana means approaching near the Divine. Upasana is often equated with fasting. This is not correct. There is a bliss that is greater than food. When one is immersed in that bliss—the bliss of Brahmananda—one gives up food of one's own accord. It is such giving up of food that constitutes true Upasana. To subject oneself to fasting as a compulsory regimen is not Upasana, but mere starvation. For instance, to keep awake on Shivaratri night by watching films or playing cards is a caricature of the sacred vigil that one is expected to observe on that day.

The Upanishads speak of seven degrees of Ananda. The first is the happiness derived from enjoyment of worldly goods, from good health and bodily comforts. This is called Manushyananda (human bliss). The Pitrudevananda (the bliss enjoyed by the Manes) is hundred times Manushyananda. Devananda (the bliss enjoyed by the Devas) is hundred times that of the Manes. Hundred times this Ananda is the Viraat-Purusha Ananda. Hundred times this bliss is Prajapati Ananda. Hundred times the previous one is Hiranyagarbha Ananda. Hundred times this is Brahmananda. You can reckon how much greater is Brahmananda than Manushyananda. The word Brahmananda is nowadays bandied about to describe any and every kind of pleasure. "I am filled with Brahmananda because a son was born today." "I got first marks in my class. I feel supremely happy." Such expressions of happiness are far remote from Brahmananda. This experience is tantamount to Moksha (Liberation). The Brahmananda experience is not to be got by the mastery of various Sadhanas. It is only when the heart is purified that divinity can be realised. There is no room for divinity in a heart filled with egoism, pride and hatred.

Even when the Divine appears in human form, moves freely amongst men, and is near in various ways to people, few are able to recognise Divinity in the physical form. It is not easy to recognise the nature of the Divine through the corporeal form alone. A true Guru is required to reveal the real nature of Divinity. Such a Guru has been equated with the Trinity—Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. The devotee who regards God Himself as his Guru will not have any difficulties. Today many who are looked upon as gurus utter the mantras in the ear and stretch their palms for money. For everything they do, they expect money. Such gurus are "baadha" (harmful) gurus and not "bodha" (enlightening) gurus.

The true guru is like an ophthalmic surgeon. The latter removes the film in the patient's eye and restores his natural vision. The guru also should remove the veil of ignorance and attachment that blurs the vision of the disciple and restore his natural spiritual vision.

What is the recompense one should make to such a guru? On Gurupoornima day, it is the practice for disciples to offer Padapooja to the guru and give Dakshina. The significance of the full moon should be understood. It is a day on which the moon shines in all his fullness, without any blemish. It is a day of purity. The moon sheds his cool rays on the earth. The moon is the deity controlling the mind. Only the day when the mind is rid of the darkness of ignorance and achieves fullness of illumination, is the real Gurupoornima day for man. Looking merely at the full moon in the sky and calling it Gurupoornima is only worshipping the external, while internally there is a void (Sunna). It is only when you have cleansed your heart by getting rid of ignorance, sorrow, worry, greed, and envy, that you can celebrate your Gurupoornima and realise the Fullness of your Reality.

To achieve this Fullness (poornatwam) you have to cultivate Prema (love). You have to go through all the three stages of hearing, meditating and practising (Shravana, Manana and Nidhidhyasana) to achieve the goal of human existence.

You must all realise that relationship between you and me is not related only to the physical body. Thinking only of the physical relationship, you should not waste your life. The body is a passing thing. You should concentrate on the attainment of that which is permanent and beyond the limitations of time and space. You have seen for yourself and experienced the Divine here. You must carry with you this experience and enlarge it by contemplating on it internally.

Here is an example. Thousands have assembled in this Poornachandra Hall. I have been conversing with you. How long can this last? Perhaps for two or three hours. Tomorrow you will all be returning to your respective places. After you go back, the memory of what you have experienced here—Swami's discourse to you, the presence of thousands of devotees in the Poornachandra Hall—will be etched in your mind whenever you try to recall this day. It will be a life-long possession for you. This is because you are carrying me in your mind. Looking at things externally, the Poornachandra hall will be before you only for a short time. But you must retain permanently what you have seen with the outward looking eyes. What you see externally is a burden. When you have made it apart of yourself it ceases to be a burden. It is like the food which a traveller carries on his head for consumption on the way. As long as the food remains outside it is a burden. But when he has eaten it, he gets stronger and there is no burden on his head.

As long as we are involved with external appearances, we have to carry the burden of doubts and weakness of faith. We will not be able to get rid of involvement in unnecessary things. Faith is like a live volcano. No seed will sprout on such a volcano. Doubts are like seeds. If the doubts multiply, it means that your faith is weak and unstable. It is like an extinct volcano. If your faith is strong, no doubts will crop up. Where there are no doubts, there can be no faith.

We alone are responsible for our doubts. The Divine acts as only a Witness. The Divine shows you the path to self-realisation. Your doubts arise or disappear because of your past karma. To realise divinity you must first get rid of all your doubts. From time to time, God subjects you to

various tests. These are not intended to be punishments as you may imagine. These are intended to strengthen your faith.

Arjuna himself was subjected to such a test by Krishna on the eve of the Kurukshetra battle. Arjuna was worried about how to wage the war against his kinsmen and what strategy he should adopt. Krishna took him to a forest in the evening. It was twilight. The light of knowledge was setting and the darkness of ignorance was emerging. Krishna wanted to find out whether Arjuna was fit for receiving the Gitopadesa the next day. He pointed out to Arjuna a bird on a tree and asked him whether it was a peacock. Arjuna said: "yes, my Lord." "No, no. It is a dove", observed Krishna. Arjuna immediately said: "yes, it is a dove." Krishna then said: "you senseless fellow. It is not a dove but a crow!" "Yes, Swami! It is a crow," said Arjuna. Krishna then told Arjuna: "You have no power of discrimination at all. You cannot decide whether it is a peacock, dove or crow and only say `yes' to whatever I say. Should you not have this much of understanding?" Arjuna replied: "Krishna, if one does not know your real nature, one may attempt to agree or disagree with you. But I have understood the truth about you. If I declare that it is not a peacock, a dove or a crow, you have the power to turn it into a peacock, a dove or a crow. I have therefore no need to enquire into what it is. Your word alone matters for me. That is sufficient authority for me." When Arjuna displayed such implicit faith in Krishna, he felt that Arjuna was fit to receive the message of the Gita. Hence He told him: "Be thou my instrument" ("Nimitha maathram Bhava!").

Therefore, the first requisite is deepening of one's faith in the words of the Lord. It is not possible to know the Lord by book knowledge or by human intelligence. When the Lord comes in human form, His measureless powers are not to be judged by looking at his age, size or innocent behaviour. Such judgement will only lead to greater misunderstanding of the Divine.

When the child Krishna was brought before his mother Yashoda and accused of eating mud, Krishna protested to his mother that he was not an infant, or a naughty boy or a madcap to eat mud. Krishna then revealed to His mother His divinity. The Avatar is not to be judged by reference to age or actions.

Premaswarupas! On this holy day of Gurupoornima, take a resolve to purify your minds and to install in your hearts the Supreme Lord. Look upon God alone as your true Guru.

—*Gurupoornima Discourse, 24-7-83*

"I Play My Flute"

Many years ago Sri N. Kasturi wrote in "Sathyam-Sivam-Sundaram". "Long, long ago Puttaparthi was known as Gollapalli or Home of Cowherds, a designation reminiscent of the

Leelas of Sri Krishna and redolent with the music of His Flute. It was the abode of prosperous Gopalas, and the cattle at this place were sleek and strong and beautiful to behold."

When telling about the legend of the stone that an enraged villager threw at a cobra caught stealing milk from one of his cows, Sri Kasturi related: "Strangely enough that stone has acquired a feature which was revealed by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba some years ago. Baba directed some people to wash the stone and smear sandalwood paste on the jammed side. When this was done they discerned the clear outline of a picture of Sri Gopalaswami with the world-captivating Flute at His Lips, leaning on a cow."

Kasturi further wrote, "Some unsophisticated rustics swear, even to this day, that they can hear the melody of Krishna's Breath passing through the straight and hollow reed. From that day the curse of the writhing cobra that the place would be full of ant-hills lost its evil power and cattle have begun to thrive at Puttaparthi."

This legend serves as an introduction to another miraculous Leela which brought me to the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, for the celebration of His fifty-seventh Birthday.

On Sunday, November 7, 1982, at midnight I began meditation in our home in California. Almost immediately I heard a telephone ring. At once I knew it was the "telephone" in me and that it was from Swami. I continued meditating and soon found myself in the Poornachandra Auditorium in Prasanthi Nilayam, witnessing myself placing a special garland on Swami.

Early the next morning I told my wife, Faith, that I could be joining her and Althea, her 89-year old mother, and Markell Brooks, a long-time friend, who were leaving for India the following Sunday for Bhagavan's Birthday. I then related to Faith how Swami had "called" and given me a vision of the garlanding scene. Seemingly insurmountable obstacles, mostly pertaining to my work, which threatened to prevent leaving on such short notice, were removed. On Sunday, November 14, 1982, the four of us began our pilgrimage to Bhagavan.

On Wednesday, November 17, 1982, at 3:00 a.m., I was meditating while sitting on the Ashram grounds at Puttaparthi. I was very close to the Mandir with a small group of devotees also there bright and early for Omkar-Suprabhatam-Nagarsankirtan.

Now Sri Krishna Sai was not on the other side of the world but just a very short distance from me. Twinkling playfully in the darkened heavens with depth without end were His diamonds suspended majestically in space over the silhouetted roof of the Mandir.

My prayer that early morning simply asked that He speak to me. I became ever so quiet deep within, and waited. Then He clearly whispered these words: "I play My Flute. The notes I play for you can always be the sweetest notes. Always strive to earn the chance to hear only the highest notes. Why concern yourself with any notes other than the sweetest. Keep the reed ever clear; keep the channel ever open."

During His Divine Discourse the next day in the Poornachandra, Swami said that for successful meditation one must have a quiet mind; a mind that flutters, is an obstacle when striving for Santhi.

On the glorious morning of His Birthday I was given the joyous news that I was to garland our Lord. Because of the elaborate festivities, my mind did not recall the November? vision. This blessed honour therefore came as a lovely surprise. Minutes after garlanding Swami, I was told to return to His side. I take a moment here to bring to memory this wonderful scene of thousands of devotees in the Poornachandra watching every movement on the Divine stage. As I knelt before Baba, He quietly asked, "Charles, you have a few words to say?" "Yes, yes," I replied.

The extemporaneous talk lasted some twenty minutes. At one point I found myself turning and saying to Swami, "Now, strange as it may seem, I am going to ask Swami's permission for all of us to wish Him a happy birthday." Moments later, after receiving His smile of approval, thousands of devotees in unison tearfully spoke the sweet words, "Happy Birthday, Baba."

A few days later our party was in the Divine presence in the Mandir for an interview. Swami turned to Faith and said, "I heard your prayer." (He was referring to a prayer which she had given at the close of a talk I gave to the college students at a class presided over by Professor V. K. Gokak, Vice-chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning.) A few minutes later Swami turned to me, and with His fingers "in place", He mimed playing a Flute. His eyes twinkled as His fingers "covered" the "holes," as He said: "The Flute has nine holes; the body has nine holes."

My eyes blurred in the living presence of Sri Gopalaswami with His world-captivating Flute at His lips, playing to those devotees whose channel is open to hear Him.

—Charles Penn, U. S. A.

No Longer A Beleaguered City

Besieged by as many as six foes
each powerful enough to subvert a kingdom
sinister enough to work havoc
how can one hold out against
their collective might and stratagems?
The desire to possess and to enjoy,
the anger when this is thwarted
the ego which perks up its head
the craving which never abates
the attachment which forges unbreakable chains
the envy smouldering unnoticed,

the more deadly like an invisible enemy
—all these lying in wait for us
leering at us as we go past them.
How shall I save myself, Swami,
from their ever-tightening hold F.
unless you come unto me.
Pray, walk into this little niche of my heart.
There's nothing of the splendour of your mansion here.
But once you have stepped in
it will lack nothing
and the mischief-makers battering
at its door, conspiring to take possession,
will know at once that it's no longer
to let or available for occupation
or even for temporary sojourn.
With you installed within me
I'll be proof against the fearful hosts,
my heart, a temple bathed in your glory,
no longer a beleaguered city.

—*P. P. Sharma.*

THIS LIFE - HIS LIFE

What is life?
Here for a moment
then gone—repayment for another time
then gone again.
In this moment
without a smile from the Guru
I say 'tis all a waste;
without touching the Feet of Sri
Ramachandra

'tis no life at all;
without approaching Shirdi Sai Baba
no sun has shone;
without knowing that figure clad in a
Red Robe
life itself is unborn;
without having Him speak to you
'tis all a dry and desert in need of water;

without having Him be pleased

'tis all vain—all the selfish ego;
and, yes, most of all
without serving another
'tis no life, the moment never came,
the dream for not a second was real.

—*Michael J. Hollander.*

Sai Family News

Bhadratha Dal

Prasanthi Nilayam: A three-day training course for a special task force, called Bhadratha Dal, to regulate crowds at festivals and mass gatherings at Prasanthi Nilayam, and to ensure order and public security on such occasions, was inaugurated by Bhagavan Baba at Prasanthi Nilayam on July 22.

About 1000 men and women, from all parts of India, who had expressed their eagerness to undergo the training and render service at Prasanthi Nilayam, gathered on the eve of Gurupoornima celebrations. The trainees were addressed by experts who explained how large crowds were to be handled and the guidelines they should follow in maintaining order, discipline and peace.

Bhagavan, inaugurating the course at the College Auditorium, said that one must win security by the awareness of his own Atmic reality so that he may be able to help others to win security and to overcome anxiety or worry. (Bhagavan's discourse appears elsewhere in this issue.)

Bijapur (Karnataka): The District Seva Samiti has taken up a programme of adult education in rural areas as one of its Seva activities. To begin with, 30 centres in 11 villages in Bagalkot taluk have been started. A training programme for 30 teachers was conducted in May. It included training in bhajans, spiritual sadhana and methods of teaching adults. Bhajan mandalis are working in all the centres.

Dhenkanal (Orissa): The Mahila Vibhag of the Sathya Sai Seva Samithi, Rengali Dam Site, Dhenkanal, is running a tailoring centre to give free vocational training to women. The classes are held twice a week.

Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh): The Sai Seva Samiti, Jhalna, in a remote tribal district of Madhya Pradesh, has "adopted" a slum in Raati Talai, with a population of 550 belonging to different communities—Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Buddhists and Animists. Besides improving civic amenities like lighting, roads, etc., the Samiti has brought about harmony among the slum dwellers by promoting respect for each other's religion and encouraging settlement of disputes by

conciliation. Many court cases which had been pending for decades have been settled amicably. All the huts were given a face-lift and carry on the front wall the Sai symbol of religious unity.

Jabalpur (M.P.): Intensive training in Seva activities like rural development, promotion of health and hygiene, and Bal Vikas courses, was given to 101 Sevaks from all over the State at a "workshop" held in June in a school for the handicapped in a rural area near Jabalpur. Villagers from three "adopted" villages participated in bhajans, Nagarsankirtan and Bal Vikas activities.

AMRITA DHARA

Saving and Seva

We recently returned from visiting Sri Sathya Sai Baba in India where we were with him in Bombay, Whitefield, and Puttaparthi, for a week in each place.

Looking back over this visit, I think that the one point which Baba stressed most emphatically, both in his public discourses and in group and private interviews, was the recently proposed ceiling on desires programme. Baba frequently made it very clear that he does not want material gifts from devotees on his sixtieth birthday, but that effectively reducing our desires from now until then would be a gift he would prize above all else.

He repeatedly referred to four main areas in our lives which are being constantly controlled by our desires, namely, the way we handle money, food, time, and energy. He pointed out that in the lives of everyone, except the very poor, there is a shocking amount of waste which he wants reduced to a minimum in these four areas.

In Sri Baba's wise and compassionate way, he did not say that devotees completely give up all their desires as that would obviously be too drastic a step. Everyone needs a certain amount of money and food to survive, but few are sufficiently disciplined to impose limits on budgets.

Baba elaborated on the four categories (money, food, time, and energy) and gave some pointers on how we can eradicate waste from each.

Money needs to be looked at first as it determines, to a large extent, what we do with the other three. He referred to the fact that in this one respect the poor are more fortunate than the wealthy, as they have fewer temptations to be wasteful. He pointed out that the wealthy, both individuals and countries, need to cut down waste and use the resulting savings to help those in less fortunate circumstances. Thus, Baba ties the ceiling on desires programme directly into his other priority, namely, service.

It appears that the four areas fall quite naturally into two pairs: money and food; time and energy. It might be helpful to concentrate on one pair at a time. When Baba mentions food, he

means far more than the food-stuff which we eat at our regular meals. It includes anything we take in by way of our five senses, tasting, seeing, hearing, smelling, and touching.

When-considering money, which is the chief means by which we are able to gratify our desires, we need to become aware of how we are using it, for one of the main obstacles to budgeting is the lack of a definite idea of how much is spent and on what.

Baba said that in India many rich people are in the habit of giving very elaborate and costly dinners to which they invite other wealthy friends who could well afford to feed themselves and, therefore, do not need such extravagances lavished upon them. He advised that it would be preferable if the money was used to feed those who do not have enough to eat. He also mentioned indulgence in such habits as smoking, drinking, going to the races, and other kinds of entertainment which have no real value as an upliftment agent.

As you start to list your expenditures, you will see a pattern beginning to emerge which will enable you to decide where you can start to cut down.

—*Phyllis Krystal, Pacific Pasales, California*

Students and Social Service

Inaugurating the social service programme of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning on July 24, Bhagavan, who is Chancellor of the Institute, called upon the students to render whatever service they did with all their heart in it. "It is not the quantity that counts but quality and sincerity with which service is done."

Bhagavan was addressing a large gathering of students and devotees in the Poornachandra Auditorium in the Morning of Gurupoornima day.

Prof. V. K. Gokak, Vice-chancellor of the Institute, in inviting Bhagavan to inaugurate the service programme, said that social service was an integral part of the educational programme of the Institute. Every student had to do eight hours of social work per week and his record was evaluated along with his academic performance. To begin with, the programme was to be taken up in Puttaparthi itself, with cleaning of streets, service in the Harijan colony, building of embankments, etc.

Bhagavan lighted a lamp to mark the inauguration of the programme. In His discourse, Swami stressed the importance of Samaja Seva as an essential part of one's education. Service should be rendered in a selfless spirit, without any sense of superiority or condescension. Swami reminded the students that devotees who came from different parts of the world to Prasanthi Nilayam were

watching the behaviour and attitudes of the students. They should conduct themselves in a manner compatible with the spiritual ideals of the Institute.

After the address, Swami proceeded to the Ganesha temple and gave His benediction to the students who had assembled there before they set out for their service work.

Education in Human Values

At the afternoon meeting on the 24th, Mr. Indulal Shah, Mr. Justice Bhagavathi and Mr. V. Srinivasan addressed the gathering. Mr. Srinivasan reviewed the programme of Education in Human Values and said that the Central Government had offered grants for the programme. Bhagavan presented to State Presidents grants for the Bal Vikas programme. Bhagavan then delivered His Gurupoornima message (published separately.)

Thousands of devotees who had come for the Gurupoornima on July 24 felt immeasurably grateful to Bhagavan for blessing them with a second discourse on June 25th.

Two guest speakers at this meeting were Al-Haj Muhammad Zainul Abidin, well known scholar and poet in Telugu, and Pundit Jammalamadugu Madhavarama Sarma.

In a scintillating address in Telugu, punctuated by quotations from the Quran and the Bhagavad Gita, Janab Zainul Abidin pointed out the similarities in the teachings of both the scriptures. The doctrine of surrender to God was the essence of the Quran. Equally it was the message of the Gita.

Sri Madhavarama Sarma, commenting on the meaning of the word Guru, urged that it was applicable in all its fullness only to Bhagavan Baba.

Satwic Food and Sadhana

Bhagavan devoted the bulk of His discourse to the effects of the food consumed by a person on the qualities he exhibited. Men's qualities are derived from the kind of food they eat—whether it is Satwic, Rajasic or Tamasic. The type of food consumed determines even the thoughts of people. The difference between Ravana and Vibhishana, though they were brothers, should be ascribed to the difference in the kinds of food they took.

The Divine is of pure Satwic nature and to approach God one has to promote his Satwic qualities by taking Satwic food only. Limited and wholesome food should be the rule. Sadhakas should take food only once a day. The man who ate thrice a day is a "rogi" (sick person). He who ate twice a day is a "bhogi" (a sensualist). He who ate once a day is a yogi. Swami said that excessively salty food caused blood pressure. Excessively hot food resulted in demonic tendencies. It causes "matsara" (envy) which is the worst of all evil qualities. All Sadhanas are of no use unless one takes to Satwic food.

Sutra Vahini

(11)

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Gounaschennaathma Sabdaath:

"Atma sabdaath": since the Sabda or word, Atma, is used, the "eekshathe" (mentioned in the previous sutra) or projection has to be the function of the Atma. Fire or water is the product, the effect of the Will. The words 'projection' or 'manifestation' cannot be interpreted in a secondary or figurative sense (gaunah). The Atma alone is indicated as the Primal Entity in the Shruti or Veda. The urge or resolution is a happening in the Atma itself, not in any other entity. The entire cognisable Cosmos was just Sat or IS. Whatever form It has assumed in the process of Time and in the perimeter of Space, all of it is in reality Sat only, that is to say, Atma! This is the lesson the Veda holds.

Nothing is inert, inactive, jada. For, we find the word Atma being applied, once in a while, to denote even Pradhana, or Primordial Matter, Moola Prakriti. The Pradhana is the instrument that fulfils the will of the Sovereign Consciousness or the Purusha, the Overself. Being operated by Purusha, who is the Cause, Prakriti or Pradhana too has consciousness ascribed to It.

The Individual or the Jivi, believing that it is divided from the whole, the Universal, is subject to desire and despair, love and hate, grief and joy. He is attracted by the world of Name and Form. Such a person is characterised as 'bound', as baddha. Hence his need for liberation is urgent. And, to be liberated he must give up his dependence on and attachment to Prakriti. The blind cannot be saved by the blind. The destitute cannot be helped out by the destitute. How can a man, himself destitute and helpless, remove the poverty, the suffering and the pain of another? The poor must approach the affluent, the wealthy. The blind must seek the guidance of a person who can see. Those who are bound and blinded by the dualities of Prakriti have to take refuge in the inexhaustible treasure of Compassion, Power and Wisdom, namely, the Divine Atma. Then one can get rid of the destitution of grief, and revel in the wealth of Ananda; one can attain the Goal of Human Existence.

This consummation is reached, the Atmic awareness is won through the grace of Brahman. Wherein is the Atma to be sought? Where does the Atma reside? How can one know the Atman? Adoring the apparently consciousness-less things too as manifestations of the Sovereign Consciousness or Atma helps the process. The Atma Principle can be genuinely understood only by seekers who are grounded in the formless, attributeless Brahman. But, even the Saguna embodiment has the Atmic Reality in full measure. There are many examples to illustrate this Truth. Brahma Vidya is another name for understanding and experiencing the Atma as the Brahman, the Individual as the Universal.

Every one has the right to Brahma Vidya. And, every man passes through four stages in this search, every day of his life. They are, according to the Veda, the waking stage, the dream stage, the deep sleep stage and the Turiya or the fourth. These are demarcated as states or even steps. In

the first stage, one is awake to the objective world and is oriented outwards. Objects in the Universe are seen by the eye; sounds are heard; the senses are able to smell and taste and touch. Life is lived to the fullest in contact with society. The five sense organs of perception, the five organs of action, the five Pranas or vital airs, the four internal instruments, namely (1) the mind, (2) the buddhi or faculty of discrimination, (3) the levels of consciousness, and (4) the ego-sense—these nineteen means of contact and impact provide man during the waking stage the experience of grief and joy, gain and loss, success and failures in their gross forms. Since one is identified with the gross body complex at this stage, the experiences too are gross.

The region of dream is different. There the self is in-faced, Antarmukha. Reactions, responses and experiences are all self-contained. They do not belong to the area outside of oneself. There may be ten others sleeping in the same room; still, each one has his own dream. One's dream experience has no relation to that of anyone else. Each is disturbed or delighted by his own dream only. The dreamer is unaffected by outer circumstances. In fact, the external world is beyond one's consciousness. During the dream stage, one creates a world out of one's mind and dwells in the experiences it provides. Though the objects perceived are imaginary, the feelings and emotions like joy and grief, love and fear are as real as in the waking stage. The nineteen instruments of contact and impact are present even during the dream. They do not act materially or physically; they operate only through the mind, for the mind has a luminosity that produces the pictures. This is the reason why it is designated as Taijasa (from Tejas, i.e., light, splendour, etc.) The Tejas enables one to formulate and design any form, the sound, the taste etc. it decides upon. The dream state is the second step or stage in the acquisition by the self of its own awareness.

Next, Deep Sleep or Sushupti. This stage is free from even dreams. One is lost in undisturbed sleep. The person will not be conscious of his limbs, or of the sounds, the smells, the forms, the tastes and the sensations of touch. All activity is subsumed by the mind and is latent in it. All experience is absorbed into the higher levels of consciousness, Prajnana. There is no feeling of either separation or identity, the particular or the universal, the part or the whole. There is no experiencer or experience. There is only the Atma in which he has temporarily merged.

Then, the Turiya or the Fourth Step. Here, the Vyakti or Individual is no more so. It has attained the Basic Truth of life and of Creation—The All-pervading, All-inclusive Atma, the Peace and Power of the one and only Atmic Empire. Those who have reached this step have no concern any longer with the individual self. One cannot assert either that these persons possess knowledge or that they do not have it. For, they are ever immersed in the highest Bliss.

The Atma in which they have merged is invisible to the eye. It cannot be grasped or held by hand. One can only know that It exists and that It is Goodness and nothing else. All urges that draw one towards the objective world have to be exterminated, before faith in the Atma can take root.

The four steps of Atmic awareness are very much akin to the four steps in the recital of OM. The A.U.M. and the ultimate Matra are on a par with the waking, dreaming, sleeping and

merging steps already dwelt upon. The Atma is evident during the Jagrata or waking stage in the eye; in the dreaming stage, it is evident in the mind; in deep sleep, it reposes in the heart; in the fourth stage it is all of oneself.

To sum up, it can be laid down that in all stages of daily life, in all circumstances and conditions, and in all activities and experiences the Atma exists in all beings. All is Atma, Atma is All—The Cosmos is manifested as One by the One. This is what the Sutra reveals. Without the awareness of this unity, there cannot be joy and peace. Without joy and peace, Truth is an empty concept. Therefore, one should know the Cosmos as full, Poorna. It is not a void or vacuum. It is Atma Itself.

(To be Continued)

The Lord's Lotus Feet

To kiss the Lotus feet of God! When, with my Western protestant background, upon His merciful call, entering the sphere of His divine radiation, the kissing of the feet of the Lord was entirely beyond my understanding. I felt convinced that all there was in the depths of my heart, all my deep love, my humble reverence and gratitude, my unconditional faith, all this would reach Him even without my trying to adopt such a strange custom for expressing all I felt for Him, all He is for me. I also felt quite sure that God's acceptance of my devotion and love in no way could be dependent on an Indian customary expression of feelings of devotion. (In my heart I still know this is correct.)

So it started and—thereafter things developed beyond my control. As a very small contribution of mine I can possibly see my strong honest yearning to learn to know and understand the glorious, great Indian heritage of spirituality. And, as a divine, loveful answer to this my yearning, Bhagavan Sai Baba pulled the strings that only He knows to pull. The play went on.

While far away from those divine surroundings, where one constantly is reminded of this specific expression of devotion, there little by little grew up, in the stillness of my heart, an unexpected wish, and it soon flamed up to an intensive yearning; to kiss the Lotus feet of God Sai Baba. With this yearning inside, I then again reached His physical presence.

Oh yes, in His omniscient love and compassion He has let me kiss His feet. I have had the enormous privilege to kiss the Lotus feet of our Lord five times, but out of these five times I am inclined to ask for His forgiveness for four of these.

Once, one single time, I really kissed the feet of my Lord. There had been a yearning from my heart to His divine heart, there had been an invitation from His heart to my heart. I kissed His Lotus feet—and there was nothing else than God and I. Even the "and" disappeared, so there was only God-I, SO-HAM. There was nothing, nothing else, only the Reality of Divinity! He, our

Lord knows when and where I kissed His feet, and He also knows that He, by accepting and blessing this kiss, gave me all the strength, all the confidence and patience I may ever need. He knows my humble gratitude, He knows my love, He is my peace. May be I'm starting to understand real spirituality, having had a vision of the goal, God? I humbly, sincerely hope so-through His grace and the power of His love.

Those four times I nearly regret? Yes, they were all dictated by the behaviour of people around me. But now I know better and I hope I never shall forget it: kissing the Lotus feet of the Lord is to be entirely independent of outer circumstances. It is solely an act between heart and heart, between Atma and Paramatma.

I thank our Lord for this lesson, I kiss His divine Lotus feet in deep devotion, in the silence of my heart. May He mercifully accept this expression of my love.

—*Sisko Orefjaerd, Stockholm*

The Perennial Message

One evening, thousands of miles away from home on a visit to the city of New Orleans, U.S.A., I sat in my apartment feeling tired, lonely and bored. I began to think of Baba, my family and friends, and then finally resorted to the daily ritual of listening to the radio. I would normally be happily entertained by the dulcet tones of the local Jazz music, for which New Orleans is famous, but on this occasion, for some unknown reason, it did not appeal and so I searched for another radio station. Within a few moments I was greeted with the words, "If you have tuned to this station for the first time, do not think it is by chance. In God's Providence everything is arranged."

I began to listen intently. Christ's doctrines were related and it soon became clear that they were very reminiscent of Sai Baba's own teachings today. The phrase, "Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and salute no one on the road," (Luke 10:4) epitomizes Jesus' life and teachings. Jesus makes the point that wealth is not necessary for a happy existence. If total trust is placed in God then all one's needs are amply catered for "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for their's is the Kingdom of Heaven." "Salute no one on the road," describes the way in which a person should conduct his life. The devotee of God should not linger in performing less important things when God calls him to do greater things. All too often less worthy tasks distract us from accomplishing the work God calls us to do.

Sai Baba speaks similarly of the evil and the harm which is done in the pursuit of wealth and other materialistic, mundane objects rather than the spiritual path which leads to God. He has said, "Endeavours made in gaining self-realisation are hindered by the growth of attachment to the material world. Attachment to worldly things is the single source of unhappiness. Man tends

to get distracted from the path of Dharma in order to amass wealth: money comes and goes but morality comes and grows."

The similarities in the lives and teachings of Jesus Christ and Sathya Sai Baba are boundless. Both avatars have exhibited love and compassion and have conferred solace on the oppressed, the sick and the suffering.

—*Ajay Kumar, London*

AVATAR VANI:

The Uniqueness of Man

Rarely does man realise that he is the crown of creation. Rarely is he aware of his innate glory. If he dwells in the constant consciousness of his uniqueness, his life would be lighter, more beneficial and fully saturated with ecstatic delight. Man, then, will strive unceasingly to reach higher and higher levels of consciousness enveloping both the objective and subjective worlds. He will not allow himself to slide into lower levels of animality, which he is now able to subdue and rule over through the use of his intelligence.

Of the traditional 84 lakhs of living species, man is the last and the most significant. He is the only animal that is capable of knowing not only itself but also its Creator and Master, not only its own potentialities but the potency of God. Other living beings strive to preserve and prolong life. Man is prepared in pursuit of an ideal or in answer to a call to sacrifice and surrender life.

Man alone can posit for his consolation a series of past lives and for his guidance a series of future lives. He can peep into the past as well as into the future and profit thereby. He has the power of choice to rise or fall, to become a God or a beast or a demon. He can use his unique intelligence and memory enshrined in language to widen his vision, to adjust his reactions to nature and society and to benefit by the knowledge and experience of others. He can influence society as much as society influences him.

Man is the only animal that can transform his own nature, along lines consciously laid down. A beast continues to be stupid or cruel until death but man can by spiritual effort or godly company deal with himself as a problem and modify his feelings and actions. The dacoit who became Valmiki and the highway robber Angulimala who became a staunch Buddhist are illustrations of this characteristic of man. By association, through teaching and faith, sinners become saints.

Again, man alone is capable of awakening the serpent-power of the life-energy that lies dormant in him as the Kundalini Shakti and elevate it through higher fields of awareness or chakras, up to the thousand-spoked wheel on the very crest of the head. This is the Oordhwa

Gati, the Upward Path. This yoga sadhana is possible for man, since he has a straight body and can sit with his trunk and head held in a straight vertical line. Quadrupeds and bipeds other than man are severely handicapped. They cannot tap the vital Kundalini Shakti.

The Sanskrit word Manava for Man means Ma (not) nava (new). That word intimates that man has had a series of births and deaths and is heavily laden with burdensome heritages of good and bad. He doesn't land on earth for the first time. His task is to discard this burden and become free. For that he must concentrate on another meaning of the word Manava, where Maa stands for 'nescience, delusion and mistaken identity', na stands for 'without' and va stands for 'Varthana' or Action. Man must act, speak and think without being deluded by the apparent, in preference to the real. Man ignores the Atma, which is the only Reality, and allows himself to be fascinated by Maya, which scintillates and deceives. Since he has in him the Divine enshrined as the Atma, man has the high status of an embodiment of the Divine, a Pratinidhi or a representative of the Divine. The senses activated by the mind bring in experiences which are collected and coordinated by the mind. Buddhi illumined by the Atma examines these and directs action along beneficial lines. Acting under the dictates of the mind brings disaster; acting under the instructions of the illumined Buddhi is desirable. This is the great boon that man has won from God.

—From the Divine Discourse, Inaugurating Security Training Course, 22-7-83

The Yearning Remains

Behold! There comes the Lord himself slowly appearing, nay, gliding through Nilayam doors, like the Sun from horizon with fresh amber rays, beaming on all, welcoming all, waving gracefully, floating and not walking so peacefully.

Everyone's attention is focused on Him, so slim, slender and fresh, with halo of black hair and orange robe.

Pondering with deep gaze, with movements so subtle and mysterious, you simply cannot fathom the depth of His thoughts.

Seeing Him majestic, firm, charming and cool, spellbound one remains as if in school. Peace and tranquility seem to flow around; watching one beholds suddenly in front, His grace unfolds. Desperate one becomes to touch Him.

Prasad of 'Vibhuti' from His Hands; is so tasty and fragrant, one treasures it as a priceless gift from the Divine.

Since this is God's grace one has got, soak yourself in Bhakti, that is the lesson He has taught, to be patient and persevere.

Brothers and Sisters! We are all one; the World is ONE, join together under the Prasanthi flag to sing God's Glory.

O! Lord! From this body kindly remove the shackles of material holds, bring us closer and take us in Your folds.

Having travelled far and wide with eagerness and patience, one longing remains, O! Lord! Would I ever get Your Darshan again? With tears in eyes I part with heart full of pain. Will I ever be given the chance to talk with You and see You again?

There is another question to ask: O Lord! Will You ever pardon me, shortcomings I have many. In your Bliss, will I ever bask? I know I am guilty of many sins, sometimes my conscience pricks me like needles and pins, perhaps that is the reason I could not touch Your Lotus Feet, even though I stood eagerly and patiently in that crowd and heat.

There will always remain in my heart that yearning for Your `Darshan'. O Lord, will You ever allow me your `Sparshan'? In this heart You always reign. You always hear my cry and respond to my pain.

In Your eyes I looked once, twice, perhaps, thrice, but I found them so powerful, no longer could I hold. Yet You are so loving, kind and compassionate, You have always taught us not to HATE. You are Love.

—An Overseas Child.

The Avatar behaves in a human way so that mankind can feel kinship, but, rises to super-human heights so that mankind can aspire to those heights.

—Baba

SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

The phenomenal growth of Science in the last few decades has cast aside all doubts and misgivings about the results of such an explosion in knowledge. This knowledge has been considered by many as a panacea for all economic and social ills in society.

Armed with powerful instruments like laser beams, electron microscope, computers, and what have you, the whole phenomena of Nature and existence are being explained in terms of various scientific laws. But is that sufficient? Is this sense of satisfaction justified?

On the other hand, we see that the present day Sciences do not really grapple with human and individual problems, as they should. Probably, it is not considered within the scope of present-day Sciences to bring to the laboratory, such human experiences as pain, joy, hatred, love, jealousy, etc. Do these then fall outside the bounds of science?

If we are talking about Science and Philosophy then, truly the goals of Science are not far different from the goals of Spirituality, that is, in their search for ultimate verities or truths. The broader definition of "science" would therefore have to include the "Science of the Spirit" as well as the "Science of mater".

The points listed below, considered outside the purview of science as it is understood in its present context by the majority, but which may be demarcated as "Spirituality, or the Science of the Spirit", highlight the similarity and differences between Science and Spirituality.

SCIENCE	SPIRITUALITY
1. Its search for truth is objective.	Its search is subjective.
2. It is based on logic and reasoning.	It is based on intuition and direct perception.
3. It is ever expanding, breaking down barriers, crossing new frontiers.	It is all-embracing, all encompassing, universal.
4. It seeks relations for various entities, various phenomena.	It seeks oneness in all phenomena.
5. It seeks to study how one is born? how one will die	It seeks to know why one is born, why one will die?
6. Its tools are the senses, the mind and reason.	It considers sense perceptions and knowledge derived therefrom as secondary knowledge.

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| 7. It acknowledges error and insufficient knowledge in understanding phenomena. | It acknowledges ignorance of our true nature as cause of phenomena and aims at experiencing the Noumenon. |
| 8. It believes, albeit sincerely, that the tree of life has its roots in this world. | It believes that the tree of life has its roots in the great Unknown. |
| 9. It seems to tell us "you are in this world, try and understand the world." | It seems to say "The world is in you, Realise That." |
| 10. It has its being, and works in and through Nature. | It aims at transcending Nature. |
| 11. It seems to say "The secret of the universe is locked in the nucleus of the Atom." | It appears to say: "The secret of the universe is locked in the heart of Man." |
| 12. It rings out the old and rings in the new. | It tries to- harmonise the "ancient" with the "ever-new". |
| 13. Its language, is the language of mind and the intellect. | Its language is the language of the Heart. |
| 14. It seems to say "Knowledge is Power". The end of education is knowledge. | It says "Character is Power." The end of education is Character. |
| 15. The experience, the act of experiencing and the experienced, are 3 different entities. | It says the three entities should merge in one. |
| 16. It seems to tell us "You the individual, is the real man." | It seems to say "You as an individual, is indivisible, hence eternal. Your present individuality makes for the apparent man." |

—*S. Suresh Rao, Bombay*

MESSAGE TO STUDENTS:

To Divinity Through Service

"Divine Grace and the power it can confer can be acquired by rendering social service in a selfless spirit." observed Bhagavan Baba, while inaugurating, on July 24th, the social service programme of students of the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. Besides the staff and students of the Institute, a large gathering of devotees was present in the Poornachandra Auditorium on the occasion of Gurupoornima.

Bhagavan said:

"This Cosmos is sustained by one fragment of the Divine"—(Ekaamsena sthithaw Jagat) proclaim the scriptures. The universe is permeated by the Divine. The sun's rays cannot emanate, if there is no sun; the Universe cannot exist without God. We say there is a 'pot', there is a 'picture', there is a 'tank' and so on. The basic word in these statements, "IS", proclaims the existence of God.

The five basic elements which constitute the primary factors in Creation are present throughout the Universe. If the five elements, which are products of creation, have this limitless power of presence throughout the Universe, how can we doubt that the Creator permeates everything in the Universe?

The first of the five basic elements is Prithvi, the earth substance. It is the base on which everything—mountains, forests, rivers, oceans, cities and villages—rest. Though the earth is rotating fast, it holds in position all that rests on it. But, what is the base on which the earth so revolves? It is the Divine Principle, the immanent Divine Will which regulates its function. The second element is *Aap* (water), which too is present everywhere in space, whether patent or latent.

The third, *Agni* (fire) is also omnipresent. Indeed, all living beings do function because of the existence of this latent 'digestive' fire (*Jatharaagni*). Fire is present even in inanimate objects like rocks. How else could fire be produced by striking stone against stone?

The fourth element is air. Although air is not patent to the eye, its presence can be noticed in breeze or storm. In living beings, it exists as the inner vital force.

The fifth element is Ether (*Aakasa*). This ether is present everywhere. The Upanishads have therefore declared it as the most pervasive element.

When we understand the nature of these five basic elements that constitute the created universe, it needs no argument to realise the truth asserted by Prahlada, quoted in the Bhagavata: "Do not doubt whether God is here and not there. You will find Him wherever you seek Him."

Persons, unaware of the omnipresence of God, develop antagonisms among themselves based upon religion, caste and race. All religions have accepted the timelessness and the omnipresence of God. So, it is strange that even those who accept this truth display such narrowness of mind. For, hatred between people professing different religions leads ultimately to the destruction of faith in religion itself. Those who are bent upon destroying religion must be utterly thoughtless. What has to be destroyed is religious bigotry, not religion itself. To despise other people's religion out of love for one's own religion, is like demonstrating one's love for one's mother by denigrating the mothers of others. One should realise that other people have the same regard and devotion for their faiths, as one has for one's own religion. Young men of today should, while cultivating attachment to their own religion, respect the beliefs and practices of all others,

To give one example of intolerance The Vedas declare that the Divine permeates everything in the Universe: "Isa Vasyam Idam Sarvam." ("God resides in all this"). With faith in this declaration, the people of Bharat revere trees, ant-hills, mountains, rivers and even serpents. This holy attitude towards all things in creation is interpreted by some people professing other faiths, which teach the omnipresence of God, as blind superstition! The obvious absurdity of this dual attitude has not struck them.

The urge in the mind that animates the senses is stronger than the sense organs themselves. The eyes, for instance, are merely instruments for seeing, but "seeing" itself is a power that is superior to them. Similarly, hearing power is higher than the mere ear. The mind is superior to the sense organs and superior to the mind is "Buddhi", the power of discrimination. Above the Buddhi is the animating Life Principle—the Jiva. Above the Jivatma is the Paramatma. Between the individual and the Divine, there is an attractive deluding veil, "Maya". When this veil falls, the individualised soul and the Universal soul-God-become one.

When the mind turns away from the senses to the Buddhi for enlightenment, Ananda starts to flow and the glory of "Atma" is revealed. Buddhi promotes the search inward. While the sense organs—the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue and the tensile skin—all open out towards external objects, true sadhana consists in turning the vision inwards, in fact, to swim against the onrushing current. It is seldom realised how near is the goal of self-realisation when once the sense organs are turned inwards.

Students should realise the importance of service, to realise the Divine. It makes one's life significant and purposeful. The first requisite for service is the elimination of the ego. Divine grace and the power it can confer can be acquired by rendering social service in a selfless spirit.

Students! Except the Grace of God, nothing else will stand by you, for long. Develop faith in this never-failing source of strength and support. The famous wrestler King Kong, who could stop a fast moving car, died in a car accident! That reveals the limitations of muscle power. How many kings have left the earth, leaving no trace of their wealth or power? Do not postpone the cultivation of devotion to God. Start serving God through service to fellow-beings. Every act of service, however small, is service to the Divine. Demonstrate by reverential behaviour, selfless

service, truthfulness and integrity that you are pursuing the ideals for which the Sathya Sai Educational Institutions stand.

—*Prasanthi Nilayam, 24-7-83*

AVATAR VANI

Food and Character

All men everywhere are of one species. Yet, man hates man; one religion is opposed to another; one race feels superior to another; one country avoids contact with another. How does this conflict arise? When one delves deep into this question, the answer becomes clear.

Everything in creation has five properties. The first three are Sat, Chit, Ananda and the last two are Rupa and Nama. These two, Form and Name, are lent to the thing only temporarily. They are 'subject to modification but the first three—Being, Awareness, Bliss—are inherent, unchanging characteristics. In the language of Vedanta, the three are named Asti, Bhaati, and Priyam. They are the innate qualities of every manifestation of the Divine. The last of the three is Ananda. Every human being is an embodiment, repository and vehicle of Ananda.

The awareness of this Ananda or Bliss is the goal of man, the consummation of human life. But, man seeks pleasure and happiness from objects through the senses and attains the low material Ananda, not the supreme Ananda he ought to win. It must be said that the Ananda attained through the objective world or through subjective means is only a fractional expression of the Ananda which merges in Brahman grants. We speak of hot water, though heat is not a quality of water; fire has given it the heat. So, too, objective Ananda or subjective Ananda are rendered so, through the grace of Brahmananda.

Man prides himself that he has earned Ananda himself by his effort. It is sugar that makes the bland globules of flour into sweet Laddu. The grace of the Ground of all Being can alone confer sweetness or Ananda. The stars are proud that they shed light on a darkened world but the bright moonlight renders starlight too faint to be noticed. The moon's pride, too, is humbled when the sun illumines the sky. Brahmananda is the Sun. This does not mean that one should ignore starlight and moonlight or Vishayaananda and Vidyananda, Ananda derived from Nature and from spiritual sadhana. They are steps, stages, and samples. While valuing them as such, the goal of Brahmananda has to be relentlessly pursued.

How, then, can man earn that Awareness, that Ananda? What Sadhana has he to adopt? Though men are all equally subject to birth, life and death, though all are of one kind, why do they allow the Ananda which is the right of each to slip away through hatred and conflict? Why is the demon prevailing over the divine in man? The answer has been deluding man for ages.

Well! Aham is the cause. The narrow limited self, the ego, is at the root of the evil. Probing the problem a little deeper, I would say that the nature of the food relished is primarily responsible. Food is of three qualities—Satwic, Rajasic, and Tamasic. Some consume Satwic-Rajasic or Tamasic-Rajasic food, or they change from one type to another, for better or worse. Since food alleviates or arouses, prevents or promotes emotions and passions, it moulds the behaviour, conduct and attitudes of men. Ravana and Vibhishana, two brothers born of the same parents, had diametrically opposite natures because of the food they grew upon. Ravana relished Rajasic food while Vibhishana stuck to Satwic. Fellow-feeling is difficult when the same quality of food is not preferred. When both live on Rajasic food, though they may have the same nature, friendship cannot last. Envy and hatred will soon break the bond. The Satwic nature will free man from these evils and purify his mind, preparing him for the journey to God. For, God is pure Satwa.

Many slide from the Satwic nature into the Rajasic where the ego predominates. They slide away from God too, for where the ego swells in pomp and pride, God cannot reside. They may parade other reasons for their losing hold of God but the fault lies in their own self.

What exactly is Satwic food? Food that confers Ananda to the body, mind and heart is Satwic; that which sustains holy living; that which keeps one light, even at the end of the meal. The Satwic are satisfied with one meal a day. Rajasic nature demands continuous feeding on hot stuff tasting sour, salty or pungent. Tamasics appreciate cold, stale, acrid tastes. The grosser parts of the food consumed are eliminated. The less gross parts build up muscles and bones. The subtle parts make up the nerves and the mind. Therefore, Sadhakas have to be extra-careful about the quality of food they consume.

Pungency in food heightens feelings of pugnacity, intimidation and vindictiveness in men, against those who oppose, disagree with or disappoint them. Such men are worse than scorpions and snakes, sharp swords or serrated saws. It is tragic that factional conflicts arise even among persons claiming to be devotees of God. Often, such men behave as if they are desecrating God by deserting Him. When their desires do not fructify as and when they arise, when their faults and failings are laid down before them in order to warn them, or when, they are directed to give up the wrongs they are fascinated by, they turn away from God in a fit of fury! There are two types of men—the Amaras (the good) and the Asuras (the wicked). The Rajasic persons are Asuras.

The Gita directs us to adopt, as the very first sadhana, the rule: Adweshtaa Sarvabhoothaanaam (Do not hate any single being). To approach God, one must be clothed in divine qualities. When it is sinful to hate a fellow-being, what shall we say about hating God? Live in the love of God—Sthithi-Mathir-Bhakti. Devotion arises in the constant mind, not in the agitated, kaleidoscopic mind. Allah showers Grace only on those who surrender wholly. The purification of the senses of perception and the senses of action, the mind and the intellect and the sublimation of the ego-consciousness will happen spontaneously once the attitude of total surrender is strengthened. That which we consume through the mouth is food. We consume also through the eye, the ear, the nose and the skin. That food too has to be Satwic, not pungent or stale and corrupt.

—Prasanthi Nilayam, 25th July 1983

EDUCATION IN HUMAN VALUES:

Bhagavan's Call to Bal Vikas Gurus

The Sathya Sai Bal Vikas programme, which was launched in India under the inspiration of Bhagavan over twelve years ago, acquired new momentum and dimension in August this year when over 400 Bal Vikas gurus from more than thirty overseas countries assembled in Prasanthi Nilayam for intensive training in Education in Human Values. Simultaneously over 600 Bal Vikas gurus from all the States of India attended a training programme to extend Bal Vikas teaching to students of the age-group 13-15 (pre-Seva Dal.)

In His inaugural message to both the groups on August 14th, Bhagavan summoned the Bal Vikas gurus to a career of dedication to the service of the young so that the children may grow into worthy human beings who cherish the higher values of life-Truth, Righteousness, Peace and Love. "Look upon your task as a Sadhana, a form of worship," He said. Teachers have to fill their own hearts with good thoughts, good ideals and yearning for good deeds and devotion to God. They should be like the sun which stimulates the lotus buds to bloom and scatter fragrance. Gurus imbued with Divine Love and understanding are urgently needed in every country.

The two training programmes got off to a flying start with the inspiring message of Bhagavan. The overseas gurus had come from every continent and represented many races, religions and nationalities. They had come from countries as far apart as Australia, New Zealand and Fiji in the Pacific, to Canada, the U. S. A., Mexico and Salvador in the western hemisphere. It was a thrilling sight to witness such a gathering of teachers, predominantly women, united by their common faith in Sai ideals and dedicated to the cause of Sai education as the key to the building up of a new world based on Dharma and Prema.

The training programme for the overseas teachers consisted of lectures by specialists on the role of human values course in overseas countries, the unity of faiths, scriptures of the world, the power of prayer, the role of group devotional singing, the technique of story telling and the use of role play and aptitude tests, the development of parent-teacher relationship, the preparation of teaching materials, and allied subjects. By combining expositions of the subjects to be handled with practical demonstrations of teaching methods, the training programme offered to the overseas gurus a complete insight into the objectives and methods of education in human values.

On the 17th, Prof. V. K. Gokak, Vice-chancellor of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, and the principal exponent of the Sai philosophy of education, offered some clarifications regarding the human values which were included in the educational programme.

Truth, for instance, had a complexity of meaning. Intuitive truth is the most significant aspect of Truth as a value. The Bal Vikas gurus should awaken the intuitive faculty in the children. Intuition is related to the soul, while knowledge is related to the senses. Dharma (Right Action) relates to exercise of will and not merely observance of scriptural injunctions. It calls for an exercise in discrimination in making the choice between right and wrong in various situations in life.

Peace has a twofold significance. It represents calmness in the individual—what the Greeks called stoicism, the absence of desires, passions, etc. This is a negative concept. The positive aspect of Peace is experienced during meditation. There is no agitation of the mind. The stillness of the mind leads to self-realisation. Prof. Gokak recommended reading of good poetry to children as one method of awakening their love of the beauty in Nature and the divinity that permeates the Universe.

Bhagavan's Discourses

Beyond the scheduled lectures, the most inspiring and enlightening part of the training programme was the series of discourses given by Bhagavan on every day of the programme. His discourses were not only incisive commentaries on some of the lectures—like His simple but illuminating exposition of the Nyaya-Vaisesika, Sankhya-Yoga and Purva Mimamsa and Uttara Mimamsa systems of Indian metaphysics—but, more than that, they provided deep insights, into the purposes and methods of education in human values.

Swami gave generously of His time to answer the questions submitted to Him by the teachers. More than an hour was devoted one morning to clear the doubts of overseas teachers who were keen to extend the programme of education in human values to children outside the Sai fold.

On the question "of keeping apart boys and girls in the Bal Vikas classes, which did not find favour in some western countries like Sweden and the U.S.A., Bhagavan explained the need for such separation. He said the difference between the sexes was a fact of Nature. If the separation was effected from an early age, boys and girls would grow up in a way that they would learn to respect the distinction. Boys should be treated as boys and girls as girls. Bhagavan referred to many of the problems of Western societies as the outcome of too much permissiveness, and promiscuity in the relations between men and women. Comparing the human body to an automobile, Bhagavan pointed out that just as a car required brakes to control its movement, man should cultivate "Indriyanigraha", (control of the senses) to check the waywardness of the senses and the mind.

Answering a question regarding what constitutes sin, Bhagavan said that the concept of sin existed in all religions. Vyasa had put it succinctly when he declared that the essence of the Puranas and Sastras was contained in the aphorism: "Paropakarah punyaaya, paapaaya Parapidanam;"—"Rendering help is meritorious; inflicting pain on others is sinful." Bhagavan said that causing pain to others by indulging in slander or abuse is a great sin. Abuse of God is the worst sin. To speak ill of others behind their backs is a totally reprehensible quality. One can point out mistakes in another in his presence. But to talk ill of him in his absence is utterly wrong.

Bhagavan advised the gurus to go about their task with dedication and concentration and not be over anxious about quick results. It was better to build the movement on strong and firm foundations so that it may achieve enduring results. A tree does not grow and yield fruits immediately after the seed is planted. The tree has to grow according to its own proper time.

Bhagavan told the gurus that it was because of the good deeds done by them in their previous lives that they had become Bal Vikas gurus entrusted with the sacred task of educating children on right lines. In the discharge of their duties they should follow the dictates of their conscience and not be afraid of, consequences. If they found that some parents were not in favour of sending their children to the Bal Vikas classes, even if the children wished to attend them, they should meet the parents and convince them about the value of the programme in the interests of the children and society.

Bhagavan explained to the gurus how they should deal with evils like the drug habit among youth. They should themselves abjure meat and drink as non-Satwic food. The gurus should exemplify in their teachings and personal lives the Prema tatwa (the Love principle) which is the basis of the Sai Organisation. Purity is fundamental for a spiritual life. Through purity they will achieve unity, which will lead to Divinity. Within the Sai fold they should behave like brothers and sisters.

Bhagavan made it clear that the programme of education in human values should not be divorced from the Bal Vikas programme. It should be conducted as another wing of the Sai Organisation. The Bal Vikas programme and Education In Human Values should be two wings of a single education programme for the moral and spiritual regeneration of the young.

The training programme concluded on August 18th with a valedictory discourse by Bhagavan in which He dealt in detail with the tasks of teachers and gave numerous practical suggestions to enable the students to achieve academic excellence and spiritual growth.

World Council Decisions

A joint meeting of participants in the training programme and members of the World Council of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations was held on August 17 to review the progress of the Bal Vikas programme and the programme of Education in Human Values in overseas countries and the future of this programme of educational activity among children of the age group 6-15. The first question considered at the joint meeting was how to expand and impart momentum to the Bal Vikas programme so as to make it a movement in the overseas countries to spread the Divine Message of Bhagavan Baba to the younger generation.

The following points arose during discussions out of the experience of some of the countries

- (1) How to expand this programme among children of Sai devotees after school hours;
- (2) Whether this programme can be extended to the children in the schools and/or to the teachers in the schools; and
- (3) What should be its administration. After discussions the following decisions were taken:

(a) The Sathya Sai Centre in every country should expand the programme under the name "Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas Class or Centre" for the children after school hours according to the course prescribed by Sri Sathya Sai Bal-Vikas Education Trust, India.

(b) The meeting also confirmed that the objective of the Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas programme, which includes the Human Values programme, is to draw the future cadre of Sai workers for Sai Organisation from those who complete the 9-year course in Bal-Vikas. In this connection the World Council decided to allow any country to add a 4th group for the age group 15-18 and prepare their courses for the same.

(c) Where the Sathya Sai overseas centres and/or Coordinating Committee or the Central Council of the Sathya Sai Organisation of the country, wherever formed, feel that the movement could be introduced to the students in the school through teachers or directly, the following procedure should be adopted

- (i) The programme may be started in the name of "Institute of Training in Education in Human Values" or "Society for Education in Human Values":
- (ii) For this Institute or Society, every Sathya Sai Centre or Coordinating Committee or the Central Council, as the case may be, will appoint a Subcommittee to run the training course in all its aspects;
- (iii) The Centre or the Coordinating Committee or the Central Council, as the case may be, may, if they choose, nominate members on this Sub-committee from among educationists who believe in this programme;
- (iv) The "Education in Human Values" Wing will be one of the separate Wings of the Sai Organisation for the purpose of promoting the programme of Education in Human Values under the guidance of Bhagavan Baba through the World Council, especially in respect of the programme for training of Teacher-Trainers, publication of necessary literature and formulation of teaching techniques;
- (v) This new Wing may also publish supplementary publications to suit the local requirements of the area, keeping in view the overall objective of the course as defined by Bhagavan Baba.

The meeting reviewed the strength of the present Bal Vikas teachers in every country, especially in the light of the proposed expansion programme. It recommended that each country should conduct twice in a year the teachers training programme and refresher courses for existing teachers to upgrade their knowledge, at a place and time convenient to all. It was also suggested that a country may take the help of senior and experienced Bal Vikas Gurus from a neighbouring country to help conduct the training at such training camps.

From the discussions it was recommended that where the Bal Vikas classes cannot be expanded, the Centre should take up the programme in any one or more ways mentioned below

- (a) To train primary teachers coming voluntarily for the course in "Education in Human Values";
- (b) To train the teachers after school hours with the permission of the management of the school; and
- (c) To hold the classes for children in various localities belonging to various societies who invite the centre to conduct this course.

The World Council will help the overseas units in the supply of literature, training and technical aids, whenever required for the above programme.

The joint meeting decided to organise a seminar or symposium on "Education in Human Values" in the area where they have teacher-trainers to take up the programme. Such a symposium, to start with, may be conducted among the heads of the schools. Such a programme will help to create awareness among the educationalists of the area as well as the parents regarding the aims and value of the course.

Bal Vikas News

Retreat in Canada

The Canadian Coordination Committee organised in July (8, 9 and 10) a three-day retreat for Bal Vikas children from all over the country at Point Pelee National Park, Leamington. Besides 70 children, the retreat was attended by 180 gurus, parents and guests. The programme consisted of bhajans, recitations, dramas and ballets on spiritual themes by the children, speeches on Bhagavan's teachings, study circles and campfires.

West Bengal Institute

The Institute of Training in Human Values, West Bengal, held its first annual function on July 2, at Rabindra Sadan. Mr. Tushar Kanti Ghosh, Editor, Amrita Bazar Patrika, inaugurating the celebrations, emphasised the importance of education in human values to promote discipline and develop the character of children. Dr. Shankar Prasad Mitra, former Chief Justice, said that when even communist countries were beginning to realise the significance of human values, it was a pity that these values had been neglected in India. He welcomed the efforts of the Institute to train teachers to impart education in human values. Mrs. K. Mani, Director of the Institute, described the progress the human values programme had made in India. Prof. Vatsala Acharya stated 1181 school teachers had been trained by the Institute in the past year. Dr. Pratapchandra Chander, former Union Education Minister, distributed certificates to the teachers who had gone through the training course. An exhibition of paintings and models relating to Human Values and Spiritual Education was held from July 1 to 14.

Climbing the Highest Mountain

SAI-ideals, when assimilated by the individual devotee, give a new confidence in the real Self, and gradually one dares *to be*, just to be—openly and wholly—what one really is. To realize that *to be*, is to experience one's own Divinity and the Divinity of the whole Creation. This is SATHYA, Truth, the first of the basic SAI-ideals.

When we express this (inner) Truth in our actions, it is DHARMA, because to express the immanent Divinity in actions is: to see good, to hear good and to do good. It is a philosophy of life completely transforming man. It requires total unity of thought, word and deed. Dharma is, and has always been, the same "SANATHANA DHARMA". The way it is actually expressed in daily life might vary with time, place and circumstances, like age, culture, sex and life stage, but basically it remains the same throughout the ages: to express the immanent Divinity, the one and only Truth, in action.

He has told us how our intelligence should be used to discriminate, as a God-given faculty standing next to Atma. This discrimination is helped by the AHIMSA principle: never to harm anyone, anybody or anything by what we think, say or do. When we are able to identify ourselves with the entire Creation (and experience all as manifestations of the One and only), Ahimsa comes about quite naturally. Finally we radiate and express PREMA, unselfish Divine Love, because Truth, Love and Light are Divine principles generating compassion and understanding.

Then we have reached our goal of harmony and happiness, because now we feel SANTHI, inner peace, total equanimity, regardless of ups and downs in the transitory, outside world. This unshakable stability within is what enables us to think God, to breathe God, to talk and act God, finally unite with Him and *be* God, and stay in that incommunicable bliss, when the last hour arrives.

Though highly imperfect and only a beginner on the spiritual path of Glory, I can paint this image for you and know it is truthful, because of the incomparable wisdom of Bhagavan Baba's Divine teachings and because of His compassionate Grace, where He allows human beings like you and me to involve ourselves in His work even-while we are ourselves in the process of reformation.

In the midst of a world governed by an ever-increasing material greed, some of us have become seekers. We found out that something was utterly wrong. Selfishness is closely followed by its twin-brothers greed and envy, and on this level of egos, distrust, hatred and violence are increasing all over the world. When we started to experience this as a glaring dissonance, we were motivated to seek harmony in our lives.

I believe this quest for harmony and happiness is as old as mankind. There is a thought provoking old legend about the downfall of man, when God decided to take away from man the Divine spark within. The lesser gods and the archangels suggested to bury it deep down in the ground, but God said that man would search everywhere and find it. Then the lesser gods suggested to bury it at the bottom of the sea, but this also God refused as man would eventually find it even there. As a last resort the lesser gods suggested to hide it at the top of the world's highest mountain, where man couldn't even breathe, but God resolved that at some stage man's search would also bring him there. Then the lesser gods and the archangels gave up, but God said: "No, let us hide it within the heart of man. That is the last place he will look."

Now, materialism and modern science have been ever pointing at the outside world as the source of happiness. But as this "happiness" more and more clearly remained an interval between two sorrows, earnest people all over the world are today turning to the way of the Spirit as the answer to the crisis that faces humanity.

All along He has been the director of the play. But now that so many consciously take the first step towards Him, He takes a hundred towards us. He has even taken a human body and is here ready to show us the way.

Once in ancient Greece a disciple of the famous philosopher Socrates asked: "How am I to go to get to Mount Olympus?" (the mountain of the Gods) and Socrates answered: "Make sure that each step you take leads you in that direction."

Through many lives mankind has struggled to find happiness and harmony, and now at the peak of this Kali-age, with all its resistance, an increasing number of people are turning their awareness towards the inner truth. A spiritual hunger is growing all over the world. We have, so to speak, reached the foot of "Mount Olympus".

Now we have to choose our path uphill. At this stage the Lord Himself is there as our guide, saying:

"Follow the master, face the devil, fight to the end and finish the game."

So it seems that in struggling uphill of this the Lord's mountain, which is higher than the world's highest mountain, the devil will try to stop us.

Who is this devil we are to fight in order to proceed? And where is he? Sathya Sai points out that he is staying with us and is our selfishness, our small ego, our own polluted mind, our own attachments and ignorance.

But such a fight is not going to be easy! It will really be like fighting kith and kin. We have grown accustomed to our worldly attachments, we kind of like them and do not feel as separate entities. Not at all! Must we really fight our own self? Like Arjuna, we are hesitating. But like Arjuna, we have "Sanathana Sarathi", (the ever-existing charioteer), now in the form of Sathya

Sai to show us the path of Truth, SATHYA, the inner Truth, the voice of the Divine spark hidden in our very own heart. He is telling us that through the conquest of passions and desires, we may win, come to the point where we can give up attachments and more and more express this inner Truth, our true Self, in our actions as DHARMA.

But are we prepared to follow HIS advice? Do we open our eyes for the guiding light? Are we prepared to go on climbing the spiritual path and fight the devil?

It is our choice! We must decide! If we can muster the courage and self-discipline required, just a dim light is enough to see, where we should put our foot for the next step. HE *has* begun to teach us. If we choose to learn, we will develop our capacity to distinguish the transitory from reality.

When climbing the highest of mountains, after a while, it is not possible to advance further without the cooperative skill of several strong and reliable mountaineers, who can help each other. Invariably the foot will slip while climbing, so when the passage is difficult the climbers are tied together in order to support each other. Still each of them must be always alert and pay one-pointed attention to the next step and to the mountain-guide, who is the only one, who really knows this very particular mountain. An un-cautious step may be fatal and send you rolling down to disappointments and disaster.

Likewise on the spiritual path, we need both a disciplined SADHANA, a close co-operation with other one-pointed devotees (SATSANG), and the SADGURU as the guiding Light.

With the Sathya Sai Organisation Bhagavan Baba has given us a unique means of implementing HIS ideals in our daily life. Through the study-circles we are clarifying our intellect and by means of bhajans we are purifying the qualities, of the heart. Bal Vikas or Education in Human Values is an extremely important task, where the gurus selected are working not only for the benefit of the young ones, but for the whole of society, and in the process it is an excellent opportunity for the gurus to come nearer to Him. SEVA, which I feel has been neglected to a certain extent by westerners, is to be regarded as an outstanding possibility of improving one's Sadhana in the very best way through unselfish service.

The rules and regulations are meant to keep us on the narrow, but safe path. When we pass the deepest canyons, they are the safeguarding fences, and, when there are sidetracks, they are the signposts. Sathya Sai Baba is Himself the inner motivator and the experienced, all-knowing Guide, whom we must trust and follow. Remember, we are on our way to His abode, to *our* home. When the highest mountain is to be climbed, the Guide must impose a strict discipline en route in order for us to avoid the many dangers.

In HIS endless wisdom, Bhagavan Baba has designed all this for His devotees. Gradually it becomes a way of life to work through the Organisation. It becomes the very process of living to express HIS ideals in the Organisation and little by little everywhere in our daily life. We are following the Master, making our life our message and spreading the One. Truth through our

example. This will change the devotee, it will involve his family, it will influence the community and the whole of society—and eventually the relations between the nations. Through these ideals and this work the world can be changed. Through HIS Grace we may see the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God as a living reality.

And this, I am sure, is *the* way to ascend "Mount Olympus", to reach the Lord's mountain-top, His abode, our parental home, where all the universes become One. —And HE says it is our birth-right to go and stay there. To be one with the One.

—Extracts from the address given by Dr. Thorbjørn Meyer, Chairman, Coordinating Committee, Europe Group One, on Gurupoornima day, at Copenhagen

The Rabbit And The Earth

Wherever you go, you meet only Me. I am present everywhere. Have you heard the story of the Rabbit that had borrowed from Mother Earth four naye paise? She thought that if she moved into a new region she would be free from the obligation. So, one day she ran as fast as her legs could carry her and went far far away from the place where the amount was originally received. At last, she sat down in great relief and said to herself. "Now, no one will ask me to repay." What was her surprise when from the ground underneath she heard a voice: "Mother Earth is right under your feet, here. You cannot escape from me, however far you run."

So too, you cannot run away from Me. I will demand good conduct, good habits, good thoughts, good company, wherever you go, seeking refuge.

—Baba (From "Chinna Katha")

GURUDEVA VANI

Guidance for Gurus

Inaugurating two training camps for Bal Vikas gurus from India and from over thirty overseas countries, Bhagavan Baba exhorted the teachers to realise their great role in the world today. "Do not condemn yourselves as petty peddlers of knowledge," said Bhagavan. "You are the makers of the future of mankind. You are the ray of hope that illumines the dismal night enveloping countries. You are the revealers of the Divine Power that animates every living being and prompts it towards self-sacrifice and self-knowledge." Calling upon the Bal Vikas Gurus to

extend the usefulness of the Sai programme of education in human values to all children in their respective areas, Bhagavan said:

"Adoration to the All-consuming Time" -this is the prayer of the ancient poet Bhartrhari. Time is self-motivated. It halts for no one. We may pronounce the blessing, "Live for a hundred years" but it may not fructify. Death may call any moment. Why? Every moment, everyone is nearing death. No one can recall the time that has flowed-by. So, man has to utilise the years he, spends on earth for attaining the goal of life, conscious of the great responsibility and the great opportunity.

Man is equipped with a wondrous instrument-the body-so that he could engage in fruitful activity on righteous lines. The word Manush in Sanskrit meaning man indicates that man is essentially mind (Manas). The mind involves man in thoughts, thoughts lead man to action, and action brings about grief and joy. When one is not as healthy as he deserves to be, the reason has to be sought in the nature of his actions and thoughts. When these are sacred, sublime and holy, he will be healthy in body and mind.

The mind is engaged in thought without rest. Constantly dwelling on one, subject, attachment and relationship develop. Thus, desire is aroused; when it is frustrated, anger arises and in the frenzy, discrimination disappears. Harsh words end up in hard blows. Man widens the gap between 'his' and 'theirs' every second. This duel is not genuine human nature. In the early years of life, man spends his days in pranks and play. Even while he loses himself in these carefree activities, youth creeps in and provokes him into wild antics and competitive exhibitionism.

He brooks no opposition; he is extremely possessive and proud. He builds castles on the foundation of muscle and passion, of group and emotion, not on divine Grace and righteous life. Meanwhile, age undermines him and he grows old. At that stage, he might lament over lost boyhood and lost youth. But, however much his repentance and regret, he cannot get those stages again. Man dies as boy, lives as youth, dies as youth and lives as old person. So too, he dies as Yelliah and is born with another name and form. This is how Nature works.

The Human Pilgrimage

While on the pilgrimage of life, man's activities are three-fold—Akarma, Sakarma and Nishkama Karma—the Tamasic, Rajasic and Satwic types of Karma. Akarma: It starts with high hopes and much fanfare but at the first touch of disappointment, all activity is given up and the man shuts himself up for good. Sakarma: It is undertaken without discrimination. Whatever comes to hand keeps one busy. This is the Rajasic approach. The third type of Karma is Nishkama, gladly done as duty, as worship, as grateful homage, with no eye on the benefit therefrom.

Man has physical urges like hunger and thirst and needs like sleep and exercise. A person may be a scholar in many fields of knowledge or a famous figure crowned with diverse powers, but he cannot escape these urges and needs. But, man has also spiritual urges and needs. While the

physical urges are transient and temporary, the spiritual ones have deeper sources and longer satisfactions. They clamour for purity and unity.

The purification of the mind is attained through humility, integrity and a sense of justice. The educational process prevalent now cultivates only the intellect of man; it does not unfold and cleanse the mind. An expansive mind is more laudable than an expert brain. One person shedding love is more desirable than a hundred hard-hearted companions. Reputation as a loving loveable person is to be striven for. Such reputation has its origin in little acts of love, tiny upsurges of compassion. When it expands and flows over vast areas, it becomes divine. Truth, too, is established in the heart from small beginnings growing steadily to purify all activities. Falsehood grows quick and wild. When Truth is yet putting on its shoes, Falsehood would have travelled round the globe. Untruth spreads fast; Truth strikes root slowly. No one can hurry the process. One can track and trap a ferocious lion and be proud of it. But, one cannot by one's heroism force a stalk to become a tree. It takes its own time to put forth branches, leaves and flowers, to fill the flowers with fragrance and to waft the fragrance to the four quarters. This fragrance of the fundamental Divine nature in man is his true claim for greatness.

Makers of the Future

Teachers are the Sun which encourages the lotus buds to bloom and scatter fragrance. Their conduct and counsel are the rays which unfold the virtues and talents latent in the hearts of the leaders of tomorrow. Teachers have to fill their own hearts with good thoughts, good ideals, yearning for good deeds and devotion to God. When their hearts are reservoirs of these qualities, the taps, when opened, offer these only and children, who slake their thirst at the taps, are inspired to be likewise. Students need study only for a few years, but the teacher has to keep on studying for years and years, in order to be an efficient Guru. When one lamp has its flame steady and bright, hundreds of lamps can be lit therefrom.

Do not condemn yourselves as petty peddlers of knowledge. You are the makers of the future of mankind. You can make it bright and joyful or mar it as dreary and dreadful. You can weaken or strengthen the foundations of life. You are the planners and engineers who lay the royal road of peace and prosperity. You are the ray of hope that illumines the dismal night enveloping all countries. You are the revealers of the Divine Power that animates every living being and prompts it towards self-sacrifice and self-knowledge. You mark out and build the proper steps for man's ascent to God. You direct the eyes of the pupils inward into the Reality and invite them to revel in that light. You hasten the holy process of ignoring and forgetting the superficial veneer of human-ness and acknowledging and advancing the Divine Consciousness, which is the reality of man.

Gu (Ignorance), ru (destroyer), the word reminds you of the role you have assumed. The teacher is known through his pupils. They proclaim his sincerity and excellence. They are the witnesses for his erudition and endurance. King Bhoja once arranged a scholastic duel between two renowned Pundits. When neither succeeded in defeating the other, he invited their respective pupils to continue the debate. But they too were engaged without end in meeting arguments with equally valid counter-arguments. So, the King had to honour them as replicas of their masters!

Today teachers have degraded themselves so low that their own pupils dare correct their habits and practices!

Gurus imbued with divine love and understanding are urgently needed in every country. They are invaluable assets in every place at any time, for they have such strong faith in their mission and their ideals that they can never compromise or collude. We have this Camp in order to train such Gurus all over the world. Gurus must stand forth as living examples of love and light. They have to cleanse their minds of evil, the worst of them being "talking ill of others." This can be accomplished only through the cultivation of selfless Love.

The Three Stages

Constant recitation or remembrance of one Mantra is believed by many to be a method useful for cleansing the mind. But, the same Mantra cannot serve the purpose for all. Can one size of bushshirt fit all men? Those who identify themselves with the body-mind complex need an embodied God, an idol, image or picture, and a five-letter or eight-letter Name to fix the mind on. "Dasoham" (I am your servant) will be such a person's spiritual attitude. So, the Mantra will purify and strengthen him. It will destroy egoist feelings. The constant thought of dependence will destroy pride of power or scholarship or authority over fellow-men, or riches and treasure. Nowadays, ninety nine out of hundred persons suffer from egotism and they need the curative Mantra "Dasoham".

Persons who have attained a higher stage believe that they are distinct individuals or Jivis. For these, the Mantra can be "Soham" (I am He) so that the sense of distinctness can be eliminated. In fact even this Mantra has a face of distinction, for it posits an "I" and a "He". How can this Mantra lead one to the awareness of the One? The next higher stage is the Atmic. When man reaches this level of consciousness, the idea of 'I' as different from 'He' disappears. That is to say, Sa (He) and Aham (I) fade away and Soham is elevated into OM. OM or Pranava is the Mantra for persons conscious of the Atma in them.

Youth today are enmeshed in the coils of the body-mind complex. So, they are engaged in acts prompted by pride, envy and ignorance. "Son! You are not the body; the body is only your vesture. That Vesture has been given to you so that you may lead a beautiful, beneficial life. You should not pollute your years of life with ignorance of your reality. Remove that pollution, acquiring true wisdom." You must advise youth thus, so that they may become aware of their innate Divinity. No one has faith in any others today. Suspicion prevails in the relationship even, of parents and children, wife and husband. The more educated a person is, the wider his suspicion. The reason is, education fills the brain, instead of fashioning character.

Teaching as Sadhana

Education has to develop insight along with skills. You have come here, to Prasanthi Nilayam, from over thirty countries, spending enormous sums of money, devoting precious days for journey and stay.

Make that stay supremely useful. Understand the importance of disciplined freedom in education. Students might ask, "Grant us the freedom that birds have in the sky or fish in the sea." But, birds behave as birds and fishes as fish. Instead, man clamours for freedom to behave as beast! When the brute in him overwhelms the human, God incarnates as man to warn and guide mankind on the path of genuine human values.

Boys and girls must grow with confidence in these human values. Confidence promotes Love. Love fosters Peace; Peace nourishes Truth, Truth confers Bliss and Bliss is God. While dealing with children, do not be influenced by their creed race, poverty or wealth. Look upon your task as a Sadhana, a form of worship, in fact, the highest form. In the Sai Organisation, no trace of conflict or contempt, of conceit or humiliation should be tolerated or encouraged. During these five days, concentrate on learning from the speakers and from one another and from the Prasanthi Nilayam atmosphere the lessons of humility, tolerance and service, so that the world can have peace, prosperity and joy.

Surdas And The Lord

Surdas was a blind mystic, singer and poet. Lord Krishna once appeared and asked him, in His infinite mercy, if he wanted eyes, so that he could see the world. Surdas replied, "Though people have the kind of eyes you are offering to give me, they are befogged with ignorance and are not able to recognise You in all forms and in all beings. Though people have ears, they cannot hear the melody of your flute. I want eyes that can always see Your beauty everywhere; ears that can hear Your flute, from every corner of the world"

—Baba ("Chinna Katha")

"It Blew My Mind...."

In giving talks to various groups around the city of Milwaukee about the experience of Baba—how He came into my life (my life was saved from destruction thanks to Swami) what happened on my trip to India to see this Holy Man to receive His Darshan and to thank Him for saving my life, and how all this has considerably changed my life since then, invariably the expression "it blew my mind" is used. For it seems to say exactly what happened to me. The moment I realized who Baba was, the moment He looked into my eyes with His large luminous eyes, tears began streaming down my face. I was unaware of the torrent of water until it began to drip off my chin unto my chest. The moment he touched me and told me, "Don't cry ...everything is going to be all right now." It is true—everything has been all right—and nothing, nothing, has been the same for me. My life has completely changed. It blew my mind is the only way of describing these momentous events.

I have been taken to task by an acquaintance for using this remark. "Ange, why do you use that expression; it is so negative. It is awful! You are saying that your mind is blown up!" I was surprised at her discomfort and agitation- she was angry with me for using that phrase—and she could not accept nor understand my explanation. But it seems the most fitting way to tell it as it is.

That favourite expression is still my favourite phrase when recalling my `Baba Experiences.' Baba blew my mind! And this is validated by a reasonable source—my inner being! What may pass as a negative in someone else's consciousness is a positive one in mine. For Baba did empty my mind of all thought, all time, all space! I was free, not enmeshed in a net of thoughts, worries, doubts, agitation—all were released into the ether ... into the void...Baba removed it all. I was filled with joy—with pure love—completely thoughtless, completely desireless, blissful filled with the grace that only the Lord can give! For the five days I was with Sri Sathya Sai Baba, I felt completely outside of time—the eternal had entered and completely transformed my being. There was a feeling of close kinship with all creation. It is difficult for me to find the proper phrases, the proper words to convey the proper feeling, to describe it all.

The only way I can is to continue saying: "Oh, Lord! You blew my mind!" (Thank you, Baba!).

—*Angelina Marcotrigiano, Milwaukee, Wisconsin*

Returning To God

In my room at Prasanthi Nilayam, awaiting the beginning of a most sacred Hindu festival, Dasara, I contemplate that very auspicious time in Christianity, the Holy Week of Easter. On that Good Friday, I had an overwhelming experience that awakened me from the deep spiritual sleep I had been in for years.

On holiday from teaching at the University, I was spending Easter vacation at a very beautiful place, Esalen Institute, on the Pacific coast in Big Sur, California. For five days, while attending a seminar, I found myself inexplicably immersed in thoughts and images of the Christ story. I say inexplicably because I thought I had long since abandoned my Christian roots and freed myself of all religious fetters. But during this Easter week many warm remembrances of childhood Bible stories filled my consciousness, bringing profound joy and inner peace. My plan had been to spend my last two vacation days returning to my home, but some inner voice was now inviting me to remain one more night in this lovely setting to continue experiencing my own calmness.

I went to the office to arrange for another night's lodging, but was told there was no room at the inn. I remember feeling a little like Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem. When I left the office, I

met a warm, friendly soul with whom I had exchanged nice contacts during the week. As we talked, she offered me her extra room. It seemed the cosmos was making sure I remained that night.

I went to purchase a meal ticket, but was told none was available. The place was crowded with more people to feed than there was food. Remembering it was Good Friday, the day Christ had suffered on the cross to save mankind, I decided I could certainly forgo one meal on this holy day. But, as I went to get a cup of tea, a friend handed me a plate of food. Again, I was being totally cared for, just as Mary and Joseph at the birth of Christ.

What a strange course of events! I, a fallen-away Catholic, spending so much time thinking of Christ. Growing up in a strict Catholic family, I was very devout until college graduation. Then I stopped going to mass, deciding Catholicism was no longer right for me. No longer could I blindly follow the religious rituals that were not providing any meaningful inspiration for my new life as a career woman. I even decided to give up on God. Certain there would be no further need for it, I remember throwing out my college Bible, which I had used in many theology classes.

Now, eight years later, as I looked at the beautiful Pacific Ocean, I was contemplating how Jesus spent His time in the garden after the last supper. I was aware that He knew all that was to happen, but let the drama be enacted because of His overwhelming love of mankind.

After a lovely evening tuned in to God and nature for the first time in many years, I retired. My room had a skylight through which one could gaze up at the starlit sky, and I arranged to sleep directly under that window.

As I relaxed and reflected on the wonderful events of the past week, a star suddenly started from the heavens. Streaking through the sky, becoming brighter and brighter, it entered my room through the skylight. It was awesome. I was utterly stunned and amazed. I must explain I do not use intoxicants and have never had visions, hallucinations, or unusual happenings. Being a fairly conservative college teacher, this was outside my known realm of experience. At first, I was truly frightened, but then the children's story of Pinocchio came to my mind, in which the star entered Gepetto's shop and the wooden toys began to do the dance of life. The room shone with a very strong light. Everything was clear and beautiful. It was totally overpowering and I was awed and wondering. I remember saying "Is this happening to me? Is this a dream? Am I asleep?" But I was totally awake and my mind was perfectly clear. Yes, it was happening!

The star flashed streams of light, and as they flashed, I heard a very loving voice giving clear directions about my life. The messages were very simple and there was no doubt this was guidance from above. First, the sweet voice said, "You need to give up sugar, particularly colas." This star knew me very well. Usually I spent mornings observing students at the hospital before rushing to the university for afternoon lecture class. On the way, I would stop at the vending machines for a candy bar and two colas for my lunch. I knew this was not good but it seemed I

needed God's intervention to change. The voice also told me to become a vegetarian, become celibate, and begin to worship God.

Then I was told to come, and live at this institute in June to begin the study of natural medicine. I was told not to worry about my job, my house, or anything. All my needs would be met. This was astonishing, as I had been very interested in alternative healing methods and had been wishing for a way to leave the traditional health setting. Again, I was receiving direct orders from the divine to fulfill a deep inner desire.

During the star's presence I remember feeling afraid, and the image of climbing up and down stairs came to me. To go down was to descend into darkness and the unknown, while to go up was to follow light and learn the real truth. As I recall this particular part of the experience, the Asatoma Prayer comes to mind.

"Lead me from the unreal to the real;
Lead me from darkness to light;
Lead me from death to immortality."

Even in that instance, Baba was imparting an essential teaching. I pray he will lead me to continue climbing these stairs to him.

After the star left, I rose, completely overwhelmed at what had occurred and so filled with energy I knew I could not sleep. I walked down to the rocks on the beach, and here I realized the true significance of this event. Gazing at the ocean and sky, I noted two white birds flying overhead. They appeared very much like doves, which evoked thoughts of the sacrament of confirmation in the Catholic Church. It is taught that, one receives this sacrament, the grace of the Holy Spirit enters your body and you become a full disciple of Christ. The symbol for confirmation is the dove.

In my Catholic childhood, I remember memorizing all the answers from the catechism to be well prepared for any question asked by the Bishop during my confirmation ceremony. As a twelve-year old, I eagerly anticipated this occasion which would complete my commitment to Christianity.

In our small Nevada town, the parish church held confirmation only every two years. This was a big event with many preparations, rehearsals, and other things necessary for an important event. The Bishop came, I answered his questions, was anointed with the sacred oil and supposedly accepted as Christ's disciple. I was disappointed, disillusioned, as I felt nothing significant had changed inside of me. What was the meaning of all this ritual? It seemed merely a chance to get a new dress, some presents and have a celebration.

Then about twenty years later, on a Good Friday on the California coast, I suddenly and unexpectedly received the sacrament of confirmation. This was the experience I yearned for as a child. Without any doubt, the Holy Spirit had entered my body. After complete alienation from

religious beliefs, I was experiencing that same feeling Christ's apostles had when the Holy Spirit descended forty days after Christ arose from the dead.

My given name is Pauline; my patron saint is Paul. It is no wonder Baba chose to reveal his divine presence to me through an experience with light. How special we are to him as he individualizes our experiences while we are led to his divinity.

I returned home the next morning with an entirely new understanding of God. I began to explicitly follow the directions of the star. I looked for my old theology notes from college and remembered discarding my old Bible and thought, "Oh, how foolish I was to think I could throw God out of my life." I now knew He was totally with me and I could not live this life without experiencing God.

The star had told me to live at the Institute in Big Sur, so I began my plans. I applied and was accepted for a three month work study programme.

Arriving in Big Sur June 1st, I felt a sense of complete well being which affirmed my new life direction. Shortly I discovered a Catholic hermitage eleven miles from the Institute. I began attending mass regularly, feeling comfortable in the cloistered environment. Walking into the chapel that first time, I felt I had returned home after a long absence. The monks were very kind, treating me as a fellow spiritual seeker. In strong contrast to my rigid religious upbringing, they seemed open and ready to accept a vast range of spiritual paths.

Two weeks after arriving at Esalen, I heard of a morning meditation period, which was followed by bhajans (holy songs.) That was my first exposure to Baba and I think he captured me with the bhajans. I loved singing them as it was very reminiscent of singing Latin in the choir as a child. As then, I did not know the meaning of the songs, but the sounds simply captured my heart.

I began reading about Swami. The first book, VISION OF THE DIVINE, disclosed Swami's trademark, TPS, which had been inscribed on a medallion he materialised. It means Tara (star) Puttaparthi Sathya; in other words, the star of heaven incarnated at Puttaparthi in the form of Sathya (truth). I knew then it was he who came as that wonderful star on Good Friday night, completely changing my life. Before long I was in India to experience his divine human form. First he makes his presence known in a form we easily recognise; then he reveals to us he is all forms.

When I received the Holy Spirit that night, I became not only a full disciple of Christ but also part of a much larger family; the family of all mankind that is soon destined to receive the Holy Spirit. The father of this world family is our beloved Sri Sathya Sai Baba, who has incarnated in human form to spread his divine love. He has promised he will bring this troubled world of diverse religious cultures and hostile factions together again in love, into one family. He gave us a wonderful view of the world family when he said:

There is only one language, the language of the Heart;
There is only one religion, the religion of Love;
There is only one caste, the caste of humanity;
There is only one God and He is omnipresent.

That is the true communion, the holy union of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit within us that we are all praying for. May God bless the world to experience this golden age very soon.

—Polly Kirby, *Big Sur, California*. (From *Sathya Sai Newsletter, U.S. A*)

Sai Baba: The Lantern Lighter in Latvia

(The following poem, by a Latvian poet, Mirdza Bendrupe, has been sent to us for publication by Mrs. Rasme Rositas, a Latvian who lives in Germany. In sending her English translation of the poem, which appeared in the Latvian journal, *Giteratura un moksla*, Mrs. Rositas writes: "I am sending you here something from the Soviet Union. In the Soviet republic of Latvia there are already devotees of Swami. One devotee, a famous poet, wrote a poem (entitled "A Dream") about Swami and it was published in March this year in the most popular newspaper in Latvia. In a communist newspaper! One of Swami's miracles!" Mrs. Rositas has visited Puttaparthi twice. —Ed.)

Kind, strange dreams appear:
Last night a lantern lighter
visited me
in poppy red clothes.
Sitting down opposite me, he laughed
heartily
at my astonishment.
"Forgive," I stammered, "I only
remembered...
Wait ...forgive...how come you are?
How come you could come, could enter?
You lived in ancient times
For ages you've rested in the sands!"
"I was there, yes, there, but I did not
remain,—
You must have called me, if I've come...
I'll tell you something: in bygone days
never could I stay
until at least in one homestead

all lanterns had been lit when evening
came!"
"But where do you live? What is your
name?"
My guest is laughing: "Since those days of
long ago
I've had many names...
Let's say, today my name is Sai Baba.
I live beyond thousand and one waters.
Only, you see, I have such a restless nature.
I'm wandering around to watch
that all lanterns, hearts and minds
are lit when evening comes."
"Don't go yet please, don't leave me."
"If I'm called, I come..."
...Why did I wake so sad from the dream,
from this
magic!

The lantern lighter,

His noble vocation

In my mind days and nights.

Sai Family News

Onam at Prasanthi Nilayam

Over three thousand Malayalee devotees—men, women and children—came to Prasanthi Nilayam to celebrate the Onam festival on August 22 and to receive Bhagavan's blessings and divine message on the auspicious occasion.

The area around the Mandir and the Poornachandra Auditorium was tastefully decorated in typical Kerala style. A troupe of panchavadyam players from Trichur, who had been brought for the festival, were presented with clothes by Bhagavan.

Besides the large gathering of Keralites in their festive robes, a good number of foreign and Indian delegates were present in the Auditorium. Children from the Sathya Sai School, Srisailam, greeted Bhagavan with lighted lamps in coconut shells as He came from the Mandir to the Auditorium.

After bhajans, Bhagavan released three books in Malayalam—"Sandeha Nivarini", "The Glory of Puttaparthi" and "Tiruvarul Tiruonam"—and a new monthly devoted to health and hygiene. The Kerala Samiti offered to Bhagavan a handicraft work made by a villager in an "adopted village."

Three poets read poems in praise of Bhagavan. A lad from the Srisailam school performed a Harikatha in Hindi on Saint Thyagaraja, which was highly appreciated.

Bhagavan, in His Onam message, pointed out that emperor Mahabali was an embodiment of all great qualities, but he had one defect—he was proud of his greatness as a ruler. When the Lord as Trivikrama placed His foot on Bali's head and thrust him to the nether regions, Bali's Ahamkara was removed and he became fit to attain liberation. Bhagavan explained the inner significance of the Vamana avatar of Vishnu. The place where Vamana became Trivikrama got the name Siddhasrama. "Ahamkara nirmoolam" (destruction of the ego) is the means to achieve "Atmadarsanam" (the realisation of the Atma) concluded Bhagavan.

In the evening the, 1341 Vikas children from Kerala presented a delightful programme of dances and dance-dramas on Bhagavan's life, the glory of Kerala and the devotion of Hanuman to Rama.

Narayana Seva in Auckland

That even in affluent countries like New Zealand there is scope for Narayana Seva (feeding of the destitute), was discovered by the Sathya Sai Centre of Auckland, New Zealand, when the members of the Centre found a group of homeless men and women all—of them alcoholics—sleeping under a bridge and living on irregular and indifferent meals. Since the beginning of this year the Centre has been serving meals to these people on Saturdays, asking them no questions and taking them for what they are. This service has brought about a change in the attitude of these people, as they have begun to feel that there are persons who care about them. (From a report received from the President of the Centre, John Peel.)

Of what profit is it to have a car, if you are ignorant of the art of driving it or using it for moving about? Of what profit is to have a radio, if you are unaware of its working and of the ways of benefiting by it? Of what benefit is it to have a body, if you do not seek to know how best to utilise it? Learn from the saints and sages who have realised the truth about the path you shall tread and the goal you have to attain. That Goal is God. He is beyond all notions of good and bad, right and wrong. These are earthly measures, by which the temporary is weighed and judged. He has no Form, no Limbs, no qualities, no references, no prejudices, no predilections. To say that He is Sathyaswarup, Jnanaswarup and Anandaswarup is also not correct. For, He has no Swarupa or Swabhava; He is Sathya; He is Jnana; He is Ananda. That is the experience of those who have tasted.

—Baba

Sai Organisations Abroad

In accordance with the rules and regulations of the World Council of Sri Sathya Sai Organisations, Central Councils and Coordinating Committees have been constituted in the following countries or groups of countries having more than ten Sri Sathya Sai Baba Centres:

CENTRAL COUNCIL

COUNTRY		CHAIRMAN
1. United States of America	...	Dr. J. S. Hislop
2. United Kingdom	...	Mr. Lucas Ralli

COORDINATING COMMITTEE

COUNTRY	CHAIRMAN
1. Europe-I (Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Belgium and Holland)	..... Mr. Thorbjørn Meyer

2. Europe-II (Countries other than those mentioned above)	....	Mr. Paolo Ceresa
3. Sri Lanka	....	Mr. S. Sivagnanam
4. Canada	....	Dr. Vishwanath P. Singh
5. Australia (New South Wales)	....	Mr. Karl Hillgenfeldt
6. Mauritius	....	Mr. Bala Sunnassee
7. South Africa-I (Natal Region)	.... ....	Mr. M. C. Reddy
8. South Africa-II (Transvaal Region)	....	Dr. L. Singh
9. West Indies	....	Mr. Tajmool Hosein

COORDINATORS FOR WORLD COUNCIL

COUNTRY	....	COORDINATOR
1. India	.....	Prof. S. V. Pappu
	.....	Dr. Keki M. Mistry
	.....	Mr. V. Srinivasan
	.....	Mr. Rajesh Khanna
	.....	Mr. Ranjan Jain
	.....	Mr. P. G. Achuthanandam
2. Malaysia	.....	Dr. J. Jegathesan
3. Australia (excluding New South Wales)	.....	Mr. T. Sri Ramanathan
4. Singapore	.....	Mr. S. T. V. Lingam

Sutra Vahini

12

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Heyathwa-Avachanaachcha

When the cause is known, one can know all consequences. The entire Universe, that is to say, the moving and the unmoving, everything formed from the five primordial elements and hence named Prapancha, has been projected by the Divine Will. It is a consequence of Bhagavata Sankalpa, the Will of God, which is the Cause. No consequence can happen without a precedent Cause. The Cause has, however, two aspects, the material cause (Upadaana Kaarana) and the efficient cause (Nimitta Kaarana).

The material cause is primary; earlier than the product. It is the entire, the total basis on which the product rests. Consider a silver cup, for example. The cup has no existence apart from silver.

When the silver, which can be shaped into a cup, is absent, the product too is absent. Silver is the material cause. In other words, before the Form (the Rupa) 'becomes', the 'Being' is and has to be. The cup is the form imposed on silver by the efficient cause, the Nimitta Kaarana. It is the consequence of art, artificial. Silver is the pre-existent Cause, the Upadaana Kaarana. A silversmith prepares the cup. Once the cup is ready, the smith has no affinity with it. But, the cup and silver have close affinity forever.

God is the material Cause of Creation, of the Cosmos, the Universe. He is the substance, the basis, the Upadana Kaarana. He is the efficient cause, too, the Nimitta Kaarana. He is both transcendental and phenomenal, both Being and Becoming. As silver in the cup, the Cosmos is all God. He has been manifesting Himself as all this. He has willed to Become all this. In every thing (Padartha), He, the Parartha, the Highest Truth, is immanent. In the absence of this Highest Truth, no Padartha can exist. Each one is sustained by the all-comprehensive Reality. This wondrous mystery is beyond man's grasp. His intelligence cannot unravel it. With his distorted vision (Ku-Darshan), he sees only the Name-Form, the Appearance. He is deluded into confusion. He is tossed by likes and dislikes, pleasure and pain, elation and depression. He is aware only of the unreal many, parading diverse names and forms.

Correct vision (Su-Darshan) makes him see the One in the Many. It reveals Unity in Diversity, and confers supreme delight, for, he becomes aware of the One Immanent in the multiplicity, the Supreme Truth, the Paratatwa. Liberation (Moksha) is the realisation of this Awareness, this achievement of Brahma-hood. Each and every living being has to attain this consummation, this goal, the Brahman. That is its true destination. Some day or other, the urge to win release from the shackles of grief and joy and the bonds of "I" and "Mine", will awaken and emerge. The path that is taken then inevitably leads to Moksha. Seeking that path is the sign of the intelligent person.

Instead of this search, when man considers the objective world as all-important, and feels drawn towards its charm, his life is barren and of no consequence. Nature is the embodiment of matter (Padartha Swarupa). One must be drawn to the Person who designed the Principle that underlies Nature, the embodying process. What benefit can a destitute gain if he seeks another destitute? How can a bound person be released from bonds by another who is also bound? When the person who is bound relies on the one who is not bound, he can get rid of his bonds and move about freely. The person who is deep in grief must seek refuge in one who is floating on Ananda, filled with joy. Bondage plunges one in sorrow all the while; the Lord is total Bliss personified. Therefore, one can be completely cured of grief only by resorting to the inexhaustible spring of Delight, the Lord. And what exactly is Moksha? Moksha is release from grief, absence of grief (Dukha Vimukti; Dukha Nivritti), and attainment of Ananda (Ananda Prapti). Paramatma, the Supreme Self, the Sovereign Lord, is the Embodiment of Indivisible Sweetness (Rasa), the Treasure house of Bliss (Ananda Nilaya). Hence, those who seek and secure His grace gain Eternity Itself.

The Eternity thus gained has no place for the sense perceptions of sound, touch, form, taste and smell. It has neither beginning nor end. Man must gradually and steadily endeavour to acquire

that victory. He must proceed progressively from the gross to the subtle, from the subtle to the causal, and from the causal level he must finally merge in the Prime Cause. That is to say, the spiritual journey has to be from Sthoola to Sookshma, from Sookshma to the Kaarana and from the Kaarana level, one must merge in the Maha-Kaarana. This is the regular route.

However, ordinary humans struggle to win material happiness and exterior pleasures. They do not seek the Ananda that the Atma, their inner Reality, can grant. They lose the great opportunity of experiencing it, nor do they take any steps appropriate for the purpose. All the time, their attention is directed towards the external world only. It does not turn inwards. "Pashyati iti pashuh" Pashu (animal) is named so, since it 'pashyati' (looks outward). Looking outward is the characteristic of animals, not of man. The important organs of sense perception in the human body—the eye, the nose, the tongue etc., —are all opening outwards, in order to contact external objects; so, one has to conclude that the physical urge, the body's vision (the deha-drishti) is all external.

The inner world is not as easily accessible to man as the outer world is. Perhaps, only one among many, one in a million, does contact and win this inner Atmic Reality through the inward vision. He is the Wise Man (the Jnani). The person born with a sense of the true Mission of human life has to gain the goal, the Goal of Ananda, the fundamental eternal Ananda. That is the supreme attainment that renders life valid, meaningful and worthwhile.

In fact, the external world and the inner world are not distinct and distant. They are indissolubly knit together (Avinaa-Bhava Sambandha). The belief of the common man is that the body is the medium through which he sees and hears, experiences and delights. No. There is another force, which rules and regulates the senses, the mind and the intellect. That force is the Atma. The Sutra directs man to be aware of this and with that awareness constant in him, to contact the world through the senses, the mind and the intellect.

The rain falling on the mountain range slides down the sides into many valleys and flows as turbid streams. The same rain falling on fresh water lakes or limpid rivers remains pure and clear. The sages who are cognisant of their Atmic Reality are transformed into the purity, equanimity and charity that the Reality represents. They are ever in the full awareness of the Atma, their inner core. In the purified consciousness of these persons, there is the experience of identification. Likes and dislikes, sense of I and mine, anxiety and calmness, elation when praised and depression when blamed—these cannot contaminate or agitate a person who has attained that state. These opposites become balanced and are accepted with equanimity as waves on the Atmic Consciousness. This is the authentic Atma Attitude, the Brahman in-look, the Unitary Vision.

(To be continued)

Unity through Love of God

As it happens with others, since I met Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba in person, in March 1980, I long for the time when I shall be able to visit Him once more. Each day I pray that I can take my husband with me next time, to share in this momentous experience. After my last visit, at my friends' request, I wrote of my experiences on that trip. Among other things, I mentioned that "Baba's influence was bringing about changes in me in many ways."

I was brought up as a Christian, but have over many years, held reservations about the Bible, because of so many contradictions, blood-thirsty stories and discrepancies in translations, as well as omissions for religion's sake. Since learning of Sai Baba's teaching and work, and since meeting Him, I feel He has thrown me, not to the lions (as the Romans did in ancient times) but to the Christians. I feel I better understand the work of Jesus the Christ—I feel closer to Him, as well as being very close to Baba—as if the Orthodox Church and the Bible, with all their controversies, have been removed and I can come face to face with Jesus Himself. It is a very strange thing to say, but it is a fact. I can now see Jesus, Sai Baba, and all the other Avatars or Christed Ones, divested of all their trappings, and working with nothing but love, to bring humanity to "at-one-ment with God."

From time to time I am asked to speak in a Christian oriented Church. On returning from India I told of Sai Baba and my wonderful meeting with Him. Since then, when asked to speak, I am impressed to talk about some aspect of His teachings, so I proceed to find His actual quotes to use for the reading prior to the address in the order of service. This I do; then a strange thing happens. Invariably I am led to the same teaching as given by Jesus in the Bible or the Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ, and get the distinct impression that this version would be more acceptable to my congregation. So I begin the service with the Christian reading, then, during the address, I quote Baba's words on the same subject, which usually explain things more simply. As often as I can, I try to impress upon my listeners the thought of the Universal Unity of the Basic Truth in Spirituality—that is the basis of all religions—LOVE.

This procedure confused me for a long time. I felt guilty and upset that I was not preaching what I feel in my heart about the glory of Sathya Sai Baba. But I have at last come to the conclusion that, as Swami Yogananda says, "The disciples may argue, but the Masters are in total agreement." I realise that I am giving Sai Baba's teachings to my Christian friends in words they will accept, and that is what really matters—that they should seek and learn the truth whoever says it and wherever it is found. This is why I said that I felt that Baba had thrown me to the Christians. I hope I am correct in assuming that the work I can best do is to help, whenever possible, to bring the true facts of life and living to all who will listen, in the terms they best understand.

There are, of course, among those who listen to me, some whose hearts Baba Himself touches, and also some who have seen Him clairvoyantly, even in the Church, and have had Him speak to them. As He implies, if we ALL REALLY live our spiritual philosophies as we know we should—not half-heartedly, half the time—peace and goodness will take a great leap forward in the world. But when we ALSO CONTACT BABA, even mentally, He will be a further

inspiration, just knowing He is always close by. He Himself says, "Call Me by any name, and I will respond."

Which really goes to prove the point that Baba teaches and that I try to get across to my friends-the UNIVERSAL UNITY OF ALL SPIRITUAL TRUTH IS LOVE.

—*Anne Warren, East Killara, New South Wales, Australia*

To My King

King of the dusk, and King of the dawn
King of the night, and King of the morn,
King of my dreams, sorrowful, gay
A lark I will be, a nightingale be
Among clouds I roam to sing of Thee
Thy Kingdom without, Thy Kingdom within
Shall be my work, day out, day in.

Wherever Thy name, keep Thou me there
Be ever with me, in sun and shower.
King of my life, King of my death
Hold me a flute, blow in Thy breath
Call me a tune ever Thy own
Spreading in dusk, spreading in dawn.

—*B. K. Misra*

Teach Me to Love

In my youth I prayed for houses with broad
lawns, swimming pools, fancy cars, fame,
security, and knowledge enviable by all.

As I matured, I asked for peace and joy and the
privilege of helping others in their
search for truth.
Today I have but one petition: Lord, teach me to love.

Indeed it is my greatest and my only need.
Not that love which I once deemed most fair—
the love that sees a sufferer and longs to
teach him to walk my own tried path.

Now I ask for wider vision and the gift to know
that Your grace is love beyond compare,

That suffering is only a word we use to
describe the tug-of-war between Your will and ours.

Teach me, precious Baba, to love You with such
unadulterated faith that all temptation to
help You do Your work is washed away.

Teach me the love that neither likes nor
dislikes anything in all Your universe.
That love which feels no pride, nor shame,
which does not waver when assailed by
praise or blame,
The love which casts out fear and asks for
nothing, knowing You are here.
Oh, Swamiji, free me from all desire save one:
Teach me to love

—Joy Thomas, U.S.A.

"God is on the March"

"Whether we have met Sai Baba or not, we nevertheless can see that love is there, that

love is the force, and when we look at the phenomenon of this incredible Being, possessing all knowledge, present everywhere, in the consciousness of all and the whole world, we are surely filled with the sublime hope that this is all true, that this truly is the manifestation of the Avatar." Thus declared Sir George Trevelyan, the British historian, addressing a large gathering in London on July 23 (Guru Poornima Day).

Sir George, in the course of his address, which dealt with "the extraordinary change that is taking place in our consciousness in the West and throughout the world," said:

This is the first generation in which we can really grasp that mankind, human kind, is one organism. This concept, this idea could not be grasped in earlier centuries. Only now does the realisation come through to us, that we are all one, that we are all cells of one organism, whatever country we live in, whatever colour, whatever make-up we have. It is an idea of enormous importance. We all here today have got this deep conviction that God is on the march, that the power of the light now is flooding into this planet to transform it. We have reached in this last two decades of the 20th century the most critical and dramatic and exciting turning point in the whole of history. This is the time when it becomes possible for the human race, for each individual, to take a step in consciousness, a leap in consciousness, which is not unlike a new birth, stepping beyond the limitations of self-consciousness and the old egotism into cosmic consciousness.

A transforming force is on the march which is burning up the negative, the cruel, the violent, the separative, because the harmony has to be brought about throughout the whole of life, and is being brought about. This is the exciting sense that we are getting, that before the end of the century the planet is to be cleansed by the energy of love.

God knows precisely what He is about. The Earth is to be cleansed and the operation for the redemption of the Earth has been launched.

All the great religions meet on the esoteric level, and they all teach the one great maxim to mankind: "Do unto others as you would have them do to you. Do not do to others what you would not have them do to you." If we look at the world today, how many are really following that great maxim?

All the great beings behind all the religions, Christ, Krishna, the Buddha, Mahomet, were not all separate. It isn't a question of which Prophet you think is right and which you are going to choose. It cannot be but that they are all working closely together, these exalted beings, to bring about this tremendous transformation of the Earth which is coming in the next years. In other words, the whole thing is God and these exalted beings who must be interpenetrating our consciousness are working in close co-operation to bring about the transformation of Man. We are convinced, so many of us now, that an energy of love has been released into the planet and is operating now, actively transforming Man.

Now comes this wonderful realisation, this supreme phenomenon, that that great energy of

love flowing everywhere, can canalize itself, channelise itself into one, the manifestation of one great being. This supreme possibility that in Sai Baba—that in Him truly God manifests upon Earth.

I, in all humility, begin to see how incredible this phenomenon is. I have the feeling about it now that either this is all nonsense or it must be true. It must be one or the other. And it is not nonsense.

If the rationalist, materialist, sensible people who are running the world, if they alone have the human self-sufficiency to attempt to solve our problems, these world problems will never be solved. We have had many communications from higher sources which are saying that so long as you go on treating the world as a separate and dead piece of mineral in a mechanistic universe, you will never solve your problems. They have gone too far already. But if we can really wake up to the presence of God and work with this Force there is nothing that cannot be solved.

Many people are terribly disturbed and feel terribly hopeless, that the world is truly apocalyptic in its nature. This is the wonder. Because the situation is so glad and so mad it is perfectly valid, for us, to see this sublime hope that God is truly on the march and manifesting Himself in this world in the flooding of love through the world, and to put everything that we have into this sublime hope.

I'll close with two bits of poetry which express the situation we're in. The first is by a poet of ours called Christopher Fry and this is what he says.

'The human heart can go the lengths of God.
Dark and cold we may be, but this is no winter now.
The human misery of centuries cracks, breaks, begins to *move*,
The thunder is the thunder of the floes, the thaw, the upstart spring.
Thank God our time is now when wrong
Comes up to face us everywhere,
Never to leave us till we take
The longest stride of soul men ever took.
Affairs are now soul size.
The enterprise is exploration into God.
Where are you making for? It takes
So many thousand years to wake,
But will you wake for pity's sake?'

These other two verses summarise our New Age situation.

'The wind has blown across the world and tremors shake its frame,
New things are struggling to their birth and naught shall be the same.
The Earth is weary of its past, of folly, hate and fear,
Beyond the dark and stormy sky the dawn of God is near.

The wind is blowing through the Earth, a tempest loud and strong,
But the trumpets of the Christ the King thunder the skies along.
A summons to a high crusade calling the brave and true
To find a new Jerusalem and build the world anew.'

This, dear friends, is what we are doing. And we have beside us, behind us, with us, among us, present everywhere and inspiring us, this wonderful divine Being, Sai Baba.

God's Will?

The law of Karma guides us along the spiritual path. It helps us to understand right from wrong, through pleasure and suffering. Pleasure is the result of selfless actions and pain is the result of selfish actions. Through Karma, we learn the lessons which we need, to grow mature both mentally and emotionally. The same difficulty in life can be viewed either as a punishment or as a test; an opportunity to develop spiritual strength and faith. The true spiritual aspirant, although he does not seek suffering, does not resent difficulties which come his way; he knows that they are sent by life itself, to help him to take the next step forward. A general rule to accept is that life is always giving us exactly what we need at every moment in order to learn the lessons we need to learn. Perhaps they are not the experiences or lessons we would *like* to learn, but they are certainly the ones we need to learn. Consider these words by Sathya Sai Baba: "The Lord does not test a man just for fun; He does not pile suffering upon difficulty because He enjoys it. Examinations are held, to measure achievement and award marks, and honours. You must ask to be examined, so that your progress may be recorded."

St. Paul expressed the same thought in his letter to the Hebrews. "My son, pay attention when the Lord corrects you, and do not be discouraged when he rebukes you. Because the Lord corrects everyone He loves, and punishes everyone He accepts as a son. Endure what you suffer as being a father's punishment; your suffering shows that God is treating you as His son." We can interpret suffering as punishment, as a test or as a preparation for greater self-expression, as Sai Baba suggests here. "Just as sugar cane does not yield sugar juice unless it is crushed, as sandal wood does not give the fragrant paste unless it is rubbed on the stone, the goodness of people does not come out unless they go through difficulties. A diamond is first just a dull piece of stone, a pebble. Only when it is cut by a skillful artisan, does it become a multifaceted flame. Allow yourselves to be so treated, that all your dullness will disappear and you will emerge as a resplendent diamond."

Another aspect of Karma is that it helps us balance ourselves with the world around us, and within us. The way in which we treat others is a measure of the way in which we will ultimately treat ourselves. Emerson has said, "If you put a chain around the neck of a slave, the other end fastens itself around your own." Abraham Lincoln agrees that "This is a world of compensation; and he who would be no slave must consent to have no slave." Sathya Sai Baba expresses this

nicely:

"Do unto others what you wish them to do unto you; Do not do to others what you do not wish them to do to you. Do not have a double standard. Treat all as your own self. That is to say, you must have faith in yourself, and then only can you have faith in others. You must respect yourself and respect others. Love of Self is the measure of your Altruism. Mankind is one community: You harm yourself, and you harm all. You make a man stand erect and that act makes you stand erect. The treatment you wish others to render to you is itself the measure of your duty to them."

Because our mind is not strong enough to penetrate into the higher levels of our being where the memories of past lives are available, we must accept blindly that there is a just law which determines the results of our efforts in life. Sai Baba can see into the past and future. He is aware of the Karmic situation of each and every being who visits Him. He is able to understand the relationship of cause and effect, which our feeble minds miss. Here He refers to Himself as Baba and says, *"Everyone is good, but there are bad actions. Actions and reactions. In terms of the victims of bad action, everything was exactly right. You see only the present, Baba sees the past also. A four-year-old boy was attacked by robbers for the gold chain around his neck. The robbers blinded the boy so he could not identify them. The boy was crying bitterly that he could not see. The parents also were crying. They came to Baba. In the past life, the boy had been a cruel man who had blinded several people. The boy will continue to be blind but, as a man, if he starts to consider, understanding that he is blind because of past deeds, and makes a genuine effort to change himself, praying to God to forgive him, Baba may forgive the Karma and restore the eyesight."*

From this statement by Sai Baba, we can make some possible conclusions: All experiences are a result of Karmic factors. The average person is unable to see the relationship between the past action and the present reaction. Selfish, egotistical actions bring suffering; selfless altruistic actions bring joy. A lesson can be learned through the Karmic return. There is the free choice to learn the lesson or not. If the lesson is learned and one asks for Divine Grace, the Karma can be removed by Grace. All beings are innately good, only their actions can be harmful. There is no such thing as injustice.

Baba says, *"God is not involved in either rewards or punishments. He only reflects, resounds and reacts. He is the eternal unaffected Witness. You decide your own fate."* So, we can no longer blame anyone, or any government, or any weather conditions for our suffering. We must take full responsibility for what we experience; for we have created it with our *own* past actions. Even to say that it is "God's will" is shirking the responsibility that we ourselves have caused these situations. God is simply witnessing the fate we have created for ourselves.

—Bob Najemy, Athens.

"You wear coloured glasses and see everything through those glasses. Correct your vision; the world will get corrected. Reform yourselves; the world will get reformed. You create the world of

your choice. You see many, because you seek the many, not the One. Try to subsume the many in the One; the physical bodies of yourselves and others, the family, the village, the community, the state, the nation, the world. Thus progressively march on towards more and more inclusive loyalties and reach the stage of Unity, in thought word and deed. This is the Sadhana of Love, for, Love is expansion, inclusion, mutualisation. The individual has to be Universalised, expanded into Vishwa-swaroopa."

—Baba

Honour the Mother

Inaugurating a symposium on "The Role of Women in Social Change", organised By the Kingdom of Mother Sai (the association of old students of the Sri Sathya Sai College for Women, Anantapur,) Bhagavan Baba spoke at length on the vital role of women in nation-building.

Bhagavan said: The mother's lap is the school for every man. It is his first temple. The mother is every man's primary wealth. To recognise this truth about one's mother is the duty of every person. There is no higher god than the mother. The father is one's treasure; the mother is his god. Instead of valuing such precious wealth and divinity, men engage themselves in all kinds of activities to acquire riches and positions. The father and the mother are inseparable like the word and its meaning. Everyone should cherish one's parents as embodiments of the Divine. The mother and father may be physically separate, but spiritually they are one.

Even the distinction between man and woman relates only to the physical body. The indwelling Spirit in both of them is the same divine. In fact, every human being can be divided into two constituents. One is the body. The other is the Atma. Hunger, thirst, sleep, work, etc. are qualities derived from the body. Truth, forbearance, sympathy, love and other qualities originate from the Atma. If the truth is gone into, it will be seen that man is not the body, though he identifies himself with it. The physical body is common to all living beings. It is made up of the same five elements. It is subject to decay and death. Food, sleep, reproduction are common to all living things. It is the Indwelling Spirit in man that is immortal. That Spirit is Divine. Man strives hard in many ways to acquire worldly things. But he will not make the sacrifice needed to realise his Divinity.

We see in the world today disorder, violence and conflict. The world is like a sick man afflicted with many ailments. What is the cure for these ills? Man must shed his selfishness, greed and other bad qualities and rise above his animal nature. He must cultivate Charity (unselfishness) to achieve Purity. Through purity of hearts, men will achieve Unity, which will lead to Divinity. The mansion of human life should be built on these four bases.

In the cultivation of these basic qualities, the role of women is crucial. Only dedicated mothers can offer to the nation children who will strive for a great future for the country. Truth, sacrifice and peace are predominant qualities in women. Women are concerned about the purity and welfare of the community. When his son Abhimanyu died in the Kurukshetra war, Arjuna lamented that the war had been fought in vain as there was no one to inherit the kingdom. Subhadra, however felt grieved that the death of a son while the parents were alive was the precursor of the Kali age. She recalled that in the days of Rama no mother had to mourn the loss of a son. While the father's love was related to mundane desires, the mother's love was related to spiritual concerns. It is such broad-minded mothers who are needed today. Good mothers are more essential than good wives. A good wife is of value only to her husband. A good mother is a national asset. From ancient times, Indian scriptures have glorified the examples of great women like Maithreyi, Sita, Savitri. Their lives continue to be a source of inspiration to this day. We cannot afford to forget them.

RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL

I have been away from home far too long
drifting about without striking roots
chasing after the gaudy baubles.

I scarcely looked back to see how
you kept burning the fire of our
ancestral hearth.

Great was my shame when I came
trembling in every limb
anxious to decide whether or not
to show my face or finally
leave the place which may not
know me any more.

You put me so at my ease, O Mother,
Treating me as though no other
than one who all along has lived
under the same roof, no stranger.
When I stood confused as to how
I should look, tentative and open-ended,
the beam of love from your eye
hit me so hard in the heart
I could not bear the thought
of having lived from you so far apart.
being sundered from you.

Of my former self, O Mother dear,
I bring only a wreck to you.
The sun shines on all alike, we say,
 but its glow rests more firmly on the peak
 than the declivity beneath.
The smile you directed towards me
 shone so bright, stayed so long,
 bade me such a cordial welcome.
I took at once the pledge of never
Being sundered from you.

Do you keep waiting, O Mother, like this
for all those playing with shadows
 away from you?
Once their steps turn towards you,
do you come rushing out all the way
to hold them up in your arms
and instead of scolding them,
 blow their remorse away?

Mother dear, I'm now longing to
 return to thee.
Pray, hold me tight and make me
 part of thyself.
I know I am not worthy of thee.
Burn up the base alloy
 and enfold me unto thyself.
I had sprung from your loins,
 and something of you must be
 immanent in me.

— *P.P. Sharma, Kanpur.*

Sai in Salvador

All I knew about El Salvador was what I had been reading in the newspapers, that the Left and the Right were busy with killings of every type and that the only benefit of being a civilian was that you were easier to kill because you did not have a gun. So when John Behner, leader of the Salvadorian Sri Sathya Sai organization, asked me to come there I said it was way out of my territory and that Swami would have to decide. Swami was very brief. He said "Go!"

July in El Salvador is the rainy season, everything was verdant and green. It was picture-book tropics. The city of San Salvador is a half-hour drive up into the mountains from the sea-level airport. Its streets head up and down hill in every direction and have absolutely no relationship to the typical grid layout of our American towns and cities. The car passes many large and beautiful homes.

The Behner family, John, wife Rosa, daughter Wendy and son Erick live in a home surrounded by an orchard of tropical fruit trees and flowering bushes and trees. This was the site of the Salvadorian Sai Retreat.

There were two downtown public functions—an evening talk about Bhagavan and an afternoon symposium on Human Values. The rest of the time was spent at the Behner home non-stop talking about Sai and His teachings, from breakfast to bedtime, with devotees from some four Sai Centers plus a visiting group from Guatemala. The devotees were a total economic and social-status mix, ranging from those in spartan circumstances to the wealthy elite. Yet the camaraderie was perfect.

This closeness to each other was the first difference I noticed. It was a contrast to what we observe in America and in India. Why this strong feeling of unity and of mutual affection and esteem? It is what Bhagavan Baba says, but why so strong in San Salvador? It was not just that; the intensity of devotion to Sai was, for a total group, most unusual in my limited experience. I suppose a contributing factor could be the danger from the civil war, with feelings more alert and acute.

Also, one could not help but notice that the questions from the devotees were asked with more emotional content than is the case with us, at least typically. The emotional commitment to Bhagavan Baba was strong with the Salvadorian devotees. Of course, they are Latinos, and Latinos express emotion more freely than we northerners do. But in any event it was interesting to notice and it certainly charged all conversations with more intensity than I have been accustomed to.

Another difference I noticed was the age factor. There were more young people than is typically the case in our Centers. Many teenagers were attending and also quite a few college-age people. That probably owes something to the Spanish culture, where family ties are still strong.

An interesting decision taken by the devotees is that they will start a Sai Elementary School as a first step in the building of a Sai system of education which will finally extend up to a Sai College.

The Salvadorian Sai family is also strong in seva projects. Their seva work is well recognized by the community and by the Government and by the citizens in general. They work as an independent Sai group under His Name rather than combining with other service organizations.

The Sai family gave a fine welcome to this Northern devotee. They are eager for talk of Sai

and thirsty indeed for discussion of His teachings. Countries may be far from India, but they are not distant from Sai. His Presence in Salvador is so clear that it is strongly felt.

One incident which certainly was entertaining and which was most intriguing to the devotees occurred during a conversation at about 5 in the afternoon. Somebody had asked about the crucifix which Swami created some years ago in the Mysore Bandipur forest at Mahasivaratri. At the point of the story where ourselves and the photographer and his wife were looking at the crucifix and the photographer's pictures of it in our house in Mexico and out of a clear sky came lightning, thunder and a great wind, a recapitulation of what had actually occurred at the moment of Christ's death, we were greatly startled in that room in San Salvador by a roar of thunder, flashes of lightning and a big wind which blew through the open windows of the Behner home with a flurry of curtains, banging doors and papers blown helter-skelter. Was it the power of the crucifix again, or just a tropical storm? Since love of mystery is common to all, we chose the crucifix as the cause of the incident!

So, all in all, the visit to San Salvador was most interesting, and I departed with a very, very high appreciation of the quality of the Salvadorian Sai devotees.

—John Hislop

Saving Grace

When Swami appears in a dream, it is no longer a dream. It is the way he awakes us to the Atman. It was on one such occasion that He appeared and told me: “you know the story how one gopika crossed the turbulent river Yamuna with namasmarana alone to serve as her guru. Do you want to know the condition of her mind then?” Abruptly the scene changed. There was a splendid golden yellow light, no form (not even Baba). Time has no relevance in such a state. It was blissful and all pervading. At one stage even these feelings were not known. After sometime I was aware that I was part of that light and so was Swami. Suddenly there was a rapport between us. “You know now this state is really indescribable. Even the nearest descriptions like ‘Tatwamasi, Aham Brahmasmi’ when once put into words are far away from the Truth.” This blissful state continued for some more time.

Swami told me two more words which I could not recollect later inspite of my best efforts, partly because I have no knowledge of Sanskrit and mainly because of my ignorance of the Upanishads. The reader can well imagine the depth of my ignorance if I say it took me nearly a year to recall the missing words which were communicated to me by Baba. They are “Pragnanam Brahma and Ayamaatma Brahma”. I also came to know that these four constitute the “Maha Vakyas” (great pronouncements) taken one from each Veda—‘Pragnanam Brahma’ from the Rigveda, ‘Aham Brahmasmi’ from Yajurveda, ‘Tatwamasi’ from Sama-veda and ‘Ayamaatma Brahma’ from Adharvanaveda. Still more recently I was amazed to see these were the Maha Vakyas with which Sri Adi Sankara was initiated by his guru, Sri Govindapada.

Acquisition of this book knowledge itself makes an interesting story. In 1972 my mother-in-law became sick and both her lungs showed extensive lesions. Experts varied in their opinion—lung cancer or massive tuberculosis. In either case, the count down had begun in her life. I thought that if it was cancer then there was nothing that could be done at that late stage. If it was advanced tuberculosis, I thought that injection of streptomycin and other drugs could be tried, hoping against hope. This was explained to the old lady. She wanted to have the darshan of the Lord before her last breath. Immediately my wife, Dr. Sanyasamma, and her mother took the next available train. This they did simply because we had heard that Swami wanted to start some Summer Course (the first Summer Course) and that He would be at Whitefield. On 30-4-72 both the ladies were seated in the Bhajan mandap. Swami asked Dr. Sanyasamma abruptly, "why are you still sitting here? What has happened to that Kasturi?" Later, Sri Kasturi explained that Swami had instructed him the day before to hand over a badge and ask her to stay for the whole summer course. This clearly showed that Baba's will and will alone put the two ladies in the train and drew them to His feet even though they had no idea of attending on Srimati Easwaramma during her last days.

Later her mother had a reeling sensation—a reaction to the streptomycin injections she was receiving. She thought it could be remedied only by placing her head on Swami's Feet or if Swami placed His hand on her head. The very next day Swami, while talking to the lady doctor about the symptoms of her mother, created vibhuti and was about to hand it over to her. He then said: "if I give it personally, the patient would be more happy." He went among the crowd of devotees and stood before her. She made use of this opportunity and immediately bowed down at His feet. While getting up Swami placed His hand over her head and blessed her, thus fulfilling both her wishes. Immediately all treatment was discontinued. When she returned after three weeks to Vishakhapatnam, her X-ray picture revealed that both lungs were absolutely normal. She is alive to date!

Dr. Sanyasamma brought all the notes of the summer course in long hand and both of us studied the originals one by one and came across the 'Maha Vakyas'. Then it became apparent that whatever Swami says either from the stage or in a side talk or even as an apparent joke is pregnant with meaning, always paving the way to the final goal of knowing our own self.

—Dr. M. S. Krishna Rao, Chittoor

Sutra Vahini

13

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Swaapyayaath:

'Swa' means 'in oneself', that is to say, 'in Brahman'. 'Apyayaath' means 'since it merges'. The two words convey this meaning. They tell us, "since it is said that the individual Jivi merges in Brahman," what happens to the Jivi during deep dreamless sleep is its resumption of its real nature, Sat or Being. Since the self attains the Self which is itself, it is then the Atma and nothing else. The Atma which appeared as if enclosed in name and form discards the name and form and merges in the Universal Atma. The wave has merged in the ocean. It had Become; now it is just Being, Sath.

The core of all Vedantic texts and teachings is this truth: (1) Brahman is both the efficient and material cause of the Jagat, the Cosmos, which merges and emerges (Ja and Ga) and (2) Brahman is one and one only and so, there is nothing in the Cosmos apart from Brahman, without consciousness. There is nothing jada or inert and inactive. Brahman is, according to the scriptures (Shruti) and the Vedanta texts, not only Sat but also Chit, Consciousness, awareness.

Sleep is very necessary for every living being. Without sleep, man as well as other beings cannot live. Of all the joys that the world provides, sleep is the most rewarding. All the rest are arid and dry, trivial and wasteful. When a living being sleeps, the five vital airs—Prana, Apana, Vyana, Udana, Samana—do function along with the five fires in the body conferring warmth. The inhalation and exhalation of the breath proceed serenely, as the Samana in a serene Vedic series. The 'Prana' vital air acts like aahavaneeya fire (consecrated fire perpetually burning in the household) of the Vedic rite. It energizes us in the same steady manner. Vyana is as the Dakshinagni lit on the southern side of the altar in the Vedic rite. Udana helps the mind to "reach the Brahma-loka which the person has earned by his Karma to attain." In other words, it enables the person to experience the taste of mergence with the Supreme. For, that which rests in sleep, is happy during sleep, is refreshed by sleep and derives bliss while sleeping is the Jivi, the embodied Atma. The Jivi is the deity enshrined in the body, its temple. The Jivi experiences all that is seen, heard and contacted by the mind in the outer world, as well as the impact of all that it could not see, hear or contact by the mind. Besides these, the Jivi might reconstruct and experience in dreams and witness such experiences undergone during previous lives. It depends on the activities stamped on the mind of each one. Or, it might happen sometimes, the person gives up at one stroke the association with the body and the senses and gets immersed and lost in his basic principle—the Param-Atma, the OmniseIf. The Bliss that fills the Jivi is the authenticity of the Param-Atma.

During the dreamless sleep, the Jivi enters and revels in the Anandaloka, the region of bliss, led thereto by the splendour of the Udana prana, the vital air that elevates. That region is known also as Brahma Loka, the Ananda Loka. This is the splendid chance that man gets effortlessly during sleep, the chance to enjoy the proximity of the Param-Atma which is the prime source and substance of the five Basic Elements, the five senses and the Inner Instrument of Awareness—the Five Bhutas, the Five Indriyas and the Antahkarana.

But this experience doesn't last; it is quite temporary. The person who has gained the Awareness through the purification of the mind and the clarification of Buddhi (Intellect) will have the unchanging Bliss of Mergence in Param-Atma. He alone can become omniscient, who

is ever in the region of Akshaya (undecaying), merged in the Akshara (imperishable) Parabrahma (the Supreme Vastness), the Param-Atma. When he is aware that all is He, that there is nothing without him or outside Him, he becomes all or Brahman.

In deep sleep, the Jivi is in the tamoguna or dull ignorance. To the realised person, however, even dreams will award as much bliss as the consciousness does while awake. Even when awake, this person gets rid of the impact of the body-sense-reason complex and is saturated with the bliss of his authentic Reality. The particularised self shares the chaitanya or Consciousness of the Universal and it can merge only in that Param-Atma, the Supreme Chaitanya. Therefore, this Sutra emphasises for us the truth that the 'Sat' or 'Is-ness' (which 'becomes' and 'subsumes' all creation) refers only to Para-Brahman, the Supreme Consciousness and not to any entity derived from it and dependent on it.

(To be continued)

EDUCATION IN HUMAN VALUES:

Devotional Group Singing

In the Bal Vikas educational programme, training in devotional group singing forms an important element in the cultivation of spiritual values. An interesting paper on how devotional group singing should be taught was presented by Dr. J. Jagadeesan, from Malaysia, to the Overseas Bal Vikas gurus who attended the teachers' training camp at Prasanthi Nilayam in August. The following are extracts from that paper:

The word 'Devotional' implies two things, (a) Songs of devotion to God, (b) Songs sung with devotion and in a manner that helps to invoke devotion in the listener. Whereas every bhajan song qualifies for (a) not all qualify under (b). How often have we heard the song 'Maanasa bhajare Guru Charanam' or the song 'Prema Mudita Manase kaho. Rama...' sung with neither devotion nor with ability to invoke devotion in the listener. All Bal Vikas Gurus and bhajan leaders helping to teach children devotional songs must pay attention to these aspects-or the seedling of devotion can be stultified even before it has the chance to bloom.

In the context of D.G.S.—and the element of devotion—Bal Vikas Gurus should ensure that the children understand (a) the God form or other aspects that the song is addressed to and (b) the meaning of the words of the song. Both aspects will lead to greater level of devotional singing. Anyone singing any bhajan song—Bal Vikas or adults—should know the God forms or other aspects referred to in the song. These may be obvious to Indian or Hindi speaking children, but to non-Indian children, or Indian children born and raised overseas, special attention should be given to ensure proper understanding.

Bhagavan Himself has said that when bhajan is sung the "halo of the meaning" and the God form or aspects addressed should be in the mind's eye of the devotee, for us to get the full benefit of the devotional singing experience.

Because not all the songs address the God forms by their popular names—efforts should be made to make all these aspects clear to the children. Examples of this is where Rama is addressed as Ayodhya Vasi, or Krishna is referred to as Gopi Lola, Murali Manohara, Brindavana Kumara or Shiva is addressed as Trishula Natha, Nandi Vahana, Triyambaka Natha etc.

Another important aspect is that the great qualities of the God forms as implied in their Names and forms should be conveyed to the children, so that these qualities can become an inspiration and a motivation to all, for higher levels of behaviour. For example the name Dasaratha Nandana—that describes Sri Rama—should invoke the image of the quality of the Dharmic Son, who followed his parents' slightest wish even to the point of accepting happily his exile; "Gopi Lola" should invoke the image of God's love for all those who love God without any strings attached. "Easwaramma Bala" should invoke the image of the dutiful son that Bhagavan Baba was to His mother and the love and respect that He shows even after His parents have passed away.

Thus it goes on—numerous adjectives are applied to our God forms that project beautiful aspects of divine qualities that we should emulate.

Bhagavan Baba through the Bal Vikas programmes and the concept of Devotional Group Singing is in effect launching a huge programme of bhakti and spiritual education. He has given numerous discourses over the years where He has explained the significance and inner meanings and messages of the God forms and symbolisms. He has translated the language of the Gods and has presented it to us in an easily understandable form.

The next word—'Group'—clearly means that D.G.S. sessions cannot be solo efforts, with long solo introductions, intended to display the musical versatility of the lead singer (unless of course such introductions are very relevant to the song.) Also, the 'Group' implies that there must be songs that all, or most of those in the participating group at that moment, must follow and understand.

All this is of course much easier in India where most people understand Hindi and are able to follow the Indian bhajan songs. But outside of India, and to those who have never been to India and have no knowledge of things Indian, how can the Group concept be implemented?

For a long time in many Centres outside India, there was a quaint belief that only Indian bhajans should be sung. It was Bhagavan Himself who placed the issue in its proper perspective when He emphasized to a group of Singapore devotees that "any devotional song in any language can be sung as long as all can follow." Now it has come out as a directive from the World Council: "*Sai Centres abroad should not confine singing devotional songs to Indian bhajans only. All languages can sing His glory.*"

Very few countries in the world can lay claim to a greater diversity of languages, religions and

ethnicity than Malaysia. Here we have Malays—who are Muslims and who speak the Malay language (which is also the National language), the Chinese, who speak Chinese—but who have a variety of dialects, each as alien to the other as Tamil is to Hindi; also their religious backgrounds range from Christianity and Buddhism to Taoism, Confucianism, ancestor worship and to no worship; we have the Indians whose languages and religions are as varied as those in India, but with the vast majority being Tamil speaking and a greater majority being Hindus.

Thanks to Bhagavan's divine guidance, the SAI devotees in implementing Baba's message have evolved bhajan songs in Chinese, (in different dialects) and in Tamil, with even elements of the National language (Malay—though Malays are not members of SAI Centres and do not participate in D.G.S. sessions). Thus, typical bhajan sessions in some Centres in Malaysia have long practised the World Council guidelines with bhajans in Tamil, Hindi, Chinese, English etc. This has created a situation in Malaysia, where due to Bhagavan's Grace a tidal wave of Sai devotion is sweeping across the country, and though no statistics are available, I would hazard a guess that Chinese SAI devotees in Malaysia outnumber the Indian (though a majority of them may not be active participants at SAI Centres).

There are some Centres that are 100% Chinese and I know of Bal Vikas Classes held where approximately 100 Chinese children have participated. Likewise there are Centres where the SAI devotees are 100% Tamil speaking and do not understand any other Indian language. In racially mixed Centres in urban areas, English is the only language spoken. As the Bal Vikas activities of our SAI Centres go beyond children of SAI devotees there is increasing involvement with 100% Tamil speaking groups in estates and other rural areas where they are all Hindus. Also numerous temples have now realized the beauty of the bhajan concept to inspire devotees who come for temple worship. At such temple and rural locations we go under the name of "Sarva-dharma bhajan group", enabling us to implement the D.G.S. programme without any initial resistance, though all know that we are SAI devotees. By singing songs in Tamil, the language close to their hearts and to their traditional God forms—Shiva, Parashakti, Muruga, and Ganesha, we have the love and respect and have been able to introduce Bal Vikas and even study circle programmes in the rural and sub-ban areas.

Finally the word "Singing" is equally important i.e. the songs and the singing must be pleasing to the ear; it should not be shouting and should be in consonance and with proper melody, rhythm and 'feeling' or 'Bhava'. It also means that only those who can sing well should lead bhajans and attempt to teach Bal Vikas children.

The D.G.S. being the inspirational core of the SAI movement, should move from the nursery of SAI Centre bhajans into every aspect of religious and spiritual life of all religions and into society itself.

The Malaysian Experience

To reach the masses, to enable the D. G. S. concept to have any greater meaning and to go beyond Sai Centres, the SAI devotees must use the language, the imagery and culture of the people of that land, in songs they compose.

In Malaysia for example, we have a simple Namasmarana song that involves five languages and is simple to follow. The languages include Tamil, Hindi, English, Malay and Chinese i.e. all the principal languages spoken in Malaysia. Depending on the situation we have included other languages and the (Italian, French, etc) potential here is infinite.. based simply on the words "God—Dear Lord—come to me."

Songs can be composed of general application to any God form and conveying teachings of religions and Swami's message. Chinese devotees in Malaysia have created a beautiful Sino-Indian link by composing Chinese songs using Indian bhajan tunes. With Bhagavan's guidance, Malaysian Chinese devotees have not attempted to artificially transfer the Indian imagery or God forms. The songs praise their own God forms. Also songs totally Sarva-dharma in nature and encompassing other religions have been composed. It becomes a beautiful unifying experience when during a D.G.S. session with a mixed group of Chinese and Indian devotees, the Chinese version is sung followed by the Indian version or vice-versa. It creates a tremendous feeling of unity—a bond of love!!

In Malaysia, the multi-religious situation has created a need for such diversity: and songs have been born that have helped Sai groups to conduct D.G.S. sessions, during Church functions, Buddhist sessions and functions of other religious groups, without offending the sentiments of the devotees of that faith.

The Ego and the Avatar

In His discourse on Onam day, Bhagavan spoke on the significance of the term “Bhagavata” and the allegorical meaning of the Vamana Avatar in which Vishnu, incarnated as a Brahmin boy, sought three feet of ground from Emperor Bali. Bhagavan said:

“Bhagavata” represents the essence of all the sastras, the truth proclaimed by all the Vedas and the goal to be aimed at. “Bhagah” means the omnipotence of Divinity. It also means That which is worthy of worship and meditation. “Bha” means effulgence. “Ga” means “Making it shine.” “Va” means “all-pervasive”. Another meaning of “Bhagah” is “Sambhartha” and “Bhartha”. “Sambhartha” creates the Cosmos out of Prakriti (or Nature). “Bhartha” is the Protector of the created universe. Creation and Protection are both covered by the term “Bhagavata”. Not only all material things in creation, but also all qualities like fame, knowledge, honour, health, charity and sacrifice are properties of the Divine (Aishwarya).

Emperor Bali, the grandson of Prahlada, was the repository of all great qualities. He was a righteous ruler. There was no want in his realm. On the advice of his guru, Shukracharya, he performed the vishwajit Yagna and became the ruler of the world. When he wanted to conquer Indraloka, Indra got frightened and sought Vishnu's help to save him. Vishnu came to Bali as a

Brahmin lad, Vamana, and sought from him the gift of three feet of land. Bali readily agreed to make the gift despite warnings from his guru that the person to whom he was making the offer was Lord Vishnu Himself. Bali felt that if the Lord of the Universe came to him for a gift, there was no greater honour for him than to give it. Immediately the dwarfish Vamana grew to cosmic proportions. By his first foot, he covered the earth. By his second foot he covered the heavens. He then asked Bali wherefrom he should get the third foot of ground. Bali begged the Lord to place His foot on his head.

While Emperor Bali felt supremely happy that the Lord's sacred foot had been placed on his head, Shukracharya was burning with anger. He was the kind of guru who did not practise what he preached. Hence he had only one eye. Bali was greater than his guru because he practised what he believed in. He was a true devotee of the Lord. He had only one defect—pride in his greatness. The Lord blessed him by destroying his ego.

This ego exists in every human being. As long as it remains, man cannot achieve anything good, nor secure God's grace. Bali shed his ego when he told the Lord that he had no more land to give after the Lord had measured the earth and heaven by two steps and that he was offering himself for the third step. "My ego had warped my mind. Lord, destroy that ego by placing your redeeming foot on my head," he said. The Lord by placing his foot on Bali and pressing him down to the nether world destroyed also his ego and thereby sanctified him.

The place where the Lord assumed the Cosmic form (Trivikrama) is known as Siddhashrama. This siddhashrama is in every human being. The intelligence in man is his spiritual essence. The Vamana avatar is the divine principle in man. The ego arising out of man's consciousness represents Bali. The navel in which Divinity resides is the Siddhashrama. It is called Siddhashrama because it is the place where all aspirations are realised.

The three feet of ground Vamana sought from Bali are: bhuloka, bhuvarloka and suvarloka. Bhuloka means the entire world constituted by the five senses and the five vital airs. Bhuvarloka represents the subtle life force that is present in the atmosphere enveloping the world. It is the world of Prana (Life force). Suvarloka is the Atma, the consciousness which permeates everything from the atom to the vastest thing in the Cosmos. These three worlds are not one upon the other. They inter-penetrate each other—the Suvarloka permeates the Bhuvarloka and the latter penetrates the Bhuloka. The three worlds represent symbolically the three bodies of man—the gross body, the mental body and the causal body.

Man must move forward from the gross body to the mental path and from the mental to the Atmic State (Self-realisation). The inner meaning of the Onam celebration is that man must destroy the ego and achieve Self-realisation.

Prasanthi Nilayam, 22-8-83

The Human Destiny

"God in the form of Man" (Daivam maanusha roopena) declare the scriptures! They describe God as the Cosmic person, the Viraat Purusha, with 'thousand' heads, 'thousand' eyes, 'thousand' feet—that is to say, all heads, all eyes, all feet are His. While the individual Person or Purusha is God installed in that body which is thereby a temple, the Purushottama, the Supreme Sovereign Person, is the sum-total of all the Purushas and so has in Him all of them. The human being alone can know the identity and the Bliss thereof. He is the crown of creation, divine in nature and unique in destiny.

There can be no privilege without responsibility. So man has to observe very many regulations and restrictions and abide by duties and directions. The higher the status, the heavier the burden. The office of Prime Minister or President is a position of eminence and therefore, their duties too are of vast importance. Man, holding eminent status and possessing Divine capabilities, has to keep his vision broad and clear and his actions pure and beneficial.

The obligations that bind man can be considered under four heads: avoiding sin (papam), escaping curse (shapam), observing Law (shasana) and following the codes (shastra). Let us consider sin (papam). Birds and beasts do not commit sin; they have no need to be specially careful to avoid it. For, they are free from unrestrained imagination, of cleverness in manipulation or desire to accumulate and possess. Man alone has these qualifications and the duty to use them for his own good and the good of others. Man alone is equipped with a conscience and the faculty of reasoning which can present before him the pros and cons of every step in thought, speech and action. When his reason tells him that a certain thought or speech or action is wrong and he sets aside the judgement, preferring the evil, the wrong and the low, he sins. When an insane person commits evil, no court of justice punishes him; it is only when a person, capable of distinguishing good from bad, deliberately chooses the bad, that his act is pronounced a Sin. Man has to be ever alert to avoid sin.

As regards the method of escaping the curse of elders, one has to be equally vigilant. When a man behaves badly or rudely towards persons deserving veneration on account of their fullness in wisdom and virtue, he invites on himself the consequences of this denial of the essential 'man' in him which is God. Such action brings down a curse as an automatic consequence or as a willed reaction. Do not insult others; do not ridicule others; do not demean them in any manner. If you do, you are defying, distorting and destroying man's innate Nature, which is Love. In order to make such men recognise the crime committed against oneself and retreat from this unnatural course, the curse is pronounced.

Consider the behaviour of Parikshit which resulted in a curse. He was the Emperor, reputed and respected; he was highly learned; he was an earnest practitioner of spiritual disciplines. Yet, in a fit of anger, he placed around the neck of a hermit who was sunk deep in meditation, a snake that was dead! That was not a pardonable prank. As Emperor, his task was to be an example, a model, an inspiration for his subjects. Punishing him would be an effective method of teaching

good conduct to millions. So, Sringeri, the hermit's son, cursed him to die of snake bite at the end of the week. The sage Gautama cursed his wife Ahalya for transgressing the limits imposed by the higher self on the lower self. Man or woman each one has to honour the glory of mankind and examine each thought, word and deed on the touchstone of Dharma, Divinity. Or else, one has to
Encounter a curse.

The third obligation is 'obeying the Shasana' (Law). When a stray dog enters the house, moves into the kitchen, guzzles the food kept ready for lunch and runs out breaking a few dishes and cups, it will not be dragged into court and forced to pay compensation. But, when a man does the same, the law takes hold of him and binds him. When a pig enters a field and damages the crop, no one arrests it and claims payment for the loss inflicted. Animals have no moral responsibility to leave alone the property of others. They are not human beings who ought to control their greed and their hatred. When men are moved into inhuman ways, the law has to restrain and reform them.

Next man has the duty to observe consistently and sincerely the Shastras (Codes of Morality). The codes are framed for guidance of living beings who can uplift themselves by their own efforts and determination. Others cannot utilise them or revere them as texts meant for instruction. However arduous and affectionate the training given to a tiger may be, it can never be made non-violent! One can feed a cat on milk and sweets for long but, when it sees a rat, it pounces on it and relishes its taste more than all the fine fresh food one has given for months. A tiger will not eat 'poori' however gnawing its hunger may be. It will eat only flesh. A beast has to be always beastly. But a vicious man can transform himself into a saint! He may be born and bred in wicked surroundings, but he can be shaped into a good person through the influence of precept and example.

Ratnakara waylaid travellers and pilgrims and robbed them of their belongings. When some sages whom he attacked reacted with loving kindness, warned him and revealed to him the sacred path of devotion and dedication, he gave up his cruel profession and plunged into severe spiritual exercises which transformed him into a great poet-saint, Valmiki. There is the example of the highway robber who collected the fingers of those whom he robbed and strung them into a garland round his neck. He was so proud of this horrid achievement that he named himself Angulimala. But, when he encountered the Buddha and listened to His compassionate counsel, his mind was cleansed and he became a faithful follower of Buddha. Man can be educated or nurtured into higher levels of consciousness. The Shastras offer the means of purifying the mind. Other living beings have no such help or encouragement offered to them; they have to plod on as of old. This is the reason why life as a human being is a unique gift

From Bhagavan's Discourse on Gokulashtami, 31-8-83

The Lord's Response

During Onam celebrations this year at Prasanthi Nilayam, a batch of students from Sri Sathya Sai Vidyapeeth at Sri Sailam in Kerala, went out on a stroll to see the holy places in the precincts of the Nilayam. They were returning from Gokulam when a bullock-drawn cart with a heavy load of green grass approached them. All on a sudden, the big-sized bull yoked to the cart got agitated and rushed towards the girls who were standing close to the barbed wire fence. The frightened girls ran hither and thither, screaming and crying, "Sai Ram! Sai Ram!" The cart was overturned and the load of grass fell on the teachers. Three girls fell flat and were trampled upon by the bull. The sharp horns were caught up in the wire fencing. The bull struggled to get them released. One girl was lying between the legs of the bull.

The girls were pulled out at last and rushed to the hospital. They were badly shaken and their dazed appearance seemed to indicate something serious. The doctors who examined them came out with the news that none of the girls had been kicked or hit by the bull. Swami had responded to their prayers and saved them from a serious mishap.

—K. Mukundan, Principal S. S. S. Vidyapeeth, Sri Sailam.

The Way

In the depth of loneliness of my soul
I found the way to dawn
But first I had to learn to be alone
alone without crying
alone without yearning
alone without hoping
alone, still, without demand

This loneliness gave me
Stillness—and I learnt to listen
Twilight—and I learnt to see
Freedom—and I learnt to love
Forgetfulness—and I was freed from pain
So I then stood there in the dawn
purified, healed, forgiven
Stillness, fulfillment, God.

—Sisko Orefjaerd, Stockholm

Why the Avatar Comes

“Deho devaalaya proktho, Jeevo Devas—sanaatanah”. “The Eternal Supreme dwells in the temple of the human body as the new-born Jiva”. For this reason, all avatars assume the human form. The scriptures have declared that the Divine submits to devotion.

In the Gita the Lord has declared that in Man He is the power of discrimination—the budhi. Man cannot achieve greatness by the acquisition of all forms of wealth. It is intelligence that makes man respected. One who does not exercise this power of discrimination is no better than birds or beasts.

It is to raise man to a higher level that the Divine comes down as Avatar. Avatar means descent. To raise man God has to come down to his level, even as a mother has to stoop down to lift up the child for coddling. To raise man, who is caught up in petty desires and trivial pursuits, Divinity descends to the human level and teaches how man can divinise himself. This is the teaching of the Gita. All the great scriptures—the Bible, the Quran and others have originated for the same purpose. The scriptures, by themselves, cannot redeem man. They serve only as guideposts. They indicate the roads to be taken to realise the Divine.

All Avatars are Purna Avatars, have all the attributes of the Divine. But the shastras have held that the Krishna Avatar alone is the complete incarnation, with all the sixteen aspects. Despite His omnipotence, Krishna was easily accessible to the devotee. He submitted Himself to the devotee. When we are filled with devotion, the Lord is ready to serve us as our servant. The Lord is ever prepared to subject Himself to any kind of difficulty or ordeal to protect or help His devotee. Many a devotee has sung songs in praise of Krishna and lamented the fact that he had not been fortunate enough to be born during His advent and enjoyed His divine music and witnessed His divine exploits. One devotee has decried the dull-witted disbelievers who cannot shed their petty desires and seek the bliss that comes from devotion to the Divine.

Many devotees go on pilgrimages to Benares, Prayag or other sacred places in the hope that thereby they will be absolved of their sins. Pilgrimages are not the means to wipe out sins. What is required is purification of the heart and the mind. If the mind is cleansed through sadhana, Divinity will reveal itself of its own accord. Saint Mira gave the same message when she sang a bhajan calling upon the mind to go to the Ganga and Yamuna. The Ganga and the Yamuna she had in mind are not the rivers in Northern India but the inhaling and exhaling breaths in each of us—the Ida and Pingala nadis. The central spot between the brows is the Prayag, —the place where the Ganga and the Yamuna converge—and by concentrating on this spot Krishna can be discovered. This spot is described by Mira as cool, pure and undisturbed. Inhaling and exhaling symbolise what one should take in and what one should reject and the holding of the breath (Kumbhaka in Pranayama) signifies what one should hold on to—namely, Divinity. One should take in the pure things and reject the impure.

The Gita has laid down three directives: Do not be afraid of troubles. Do not forget God. Do

not adore what is false. It is by adhering to these three injunctions that countless devotees all through the ages have sought to realise the Divine through Sadhana.

The Bhagavata shows how the Lord responds to the yearning of the devotees and assuages their anguish caused by separation from the Lord. When Krishna left for Mathura, the gopis (cowherdresses) were languishing in grief, unable to bear the separation. They were all the time looking towards Mathura to see when Krishna would return. One day, they espied a cloud of dust and imagined that Krishna had at last relented and was returning to Gokulam. They saw a chariot and a man seated in it. The chariot stopped but there was no Krishna in it. With their hearts given over to the Supreme Lord, the Gopis were not inclined even to look at the strange visitor, who was none other than Krishna's very dear friend, Uddhava. Krishna, who was aware of the agony the Gopikas were experiencing, had sent Uddhava to offer them solace and to cheer them up.

Uddhava and the Gopis

The moment Uddhava got down from the chariot, he started delivering a long exhortation to the Gopikas. "Oh ye Gopikas! You are ignorant of the shastras. You have no wisdom. Like silly, dumb persons, you are pining for Krishna. If you know the shastras, you will realise that Krishna is ever with you. He resides in your hearts. Instead of taking delight in the Krishna that dwells within you, you are pining for the physical form of Krishna. This is due to your ignorance. I shall teach you the science of Yoga for which Krishna has sent me."

The gopikas did not consider it proper to speak directly to a stranger. They adopted the device of addressing a bee to give their reply to Uddhava. The gopis said: "Oh bee! These words (of Uddhava) are adding fuel to the fire that is burning in us because of separation from Krishna. Enough of these words." Uddhava then held out to the gopikas the letter Krishna had sent to them and said: "Here is Krishna's message to you. At least read that." One gopi immediately said: "Oh bee! We are illiterate village folk. We are stiken with grief. Show us Krishna." Another gopi wailed: "We are being burnt by the fire of agony caused by Krishna's absence. If we touch His letter, it may be burnt to ashes. We dare not touch it." Yet another gopi said: "The tears from our eyes will stain the pearl-like letters in Krishna's epistle. We cannot endure seeing His message." Uddhava then said: "At least listen to my message. I shall teach you knowledge of yoga." A gopika answered, addressing the bee, unable to control her grief: "Oh bee, we have only one mind and that has gone with Krishna to Mathura. If we had four minds, we could turn one to yoga, another to some other subject, and so on. But the only mind we had has been surrendered Krishna. We have no room for lessons." Uddhava was stupefied when he realised their single-minded devotion to Krishna.

The essence of all the Vedas and shastras is single-mindedness. This single-mindedness results in one-pointed devotion to God. Udhava reflected within himself that he had not cultivated the single-minded devotion which the gopis had demonstrated. He decided to return to Krishna.

Among the gopis, the foremost devotees of Krishna were Radhika and Niraja. Before Uddhava left, he heard them address as Krishna as the Rama-parrot and plead for a vision of

Krishna to assuage their grief-stricken hearts. Uddhava asked Radhika, who was lying unconscious on a sand dune, whether she had any message for Krishna. Recovering her senses, Radhika thought only of Krishna. She cried:

Were you a tree, growing upwards,
I would cling to you like a creeper;
Were you a blossoming flower
I would hover over you like a bee;
Were you the mountain Meru
I would cascade like a river;
Were you the boundless sky,
I would be in you like a star;
Were you the bottomless deep
I would merge in you like a river;
Where are you, Oh Krishna?
Whither have you gone, Krishna!
Have you no pity, Krishna! Krishna!

Divine Love

On seeing Radhika in this piteous state, Uddhava's heart melted. He realised that Krishna had sent him on this mission to the gopis to make him learn what is true Bhakti. Uddhava realised that Krishna had enacted that episode to show to him that even those well versed in the sastras had to learn the inner truth about true devotion from the one-pointed, unalloyed devotion shown by the gopis towards Krishna. Love of God is the means and the goal. This was the secret revealed by the gopis. They saw love in everything: in the music of Krishna's flute, which filled the world with love and flooded the parched earth with love.

The Divine is in every one. But to realise it, there is only one way. It is to cultivate intense love of God. Only that day when one strives to develop such love for God is the day of Krishna's birth. Krishna is not born on every Gokulashtami day. Krishna is born in us when we try to develop divine love as the means to overcome our bonds. To live up to the teachings of Krishna is the true way to celebrate His birthday.

(Bhagavan thrilled the vast audience in the Poornachandra Hall by singing a number of songs in the course of His discourse, which was a nectarine feast for the devotees.)

—*Prasanthi Nilayam, 31-8-83*

"With Adoration and Devotion"

A novel method of conveying their devotion to Bhagavan Baba was adopted by the Sathya Sai Baba Centre of Cherry Valley, California, U.S. A., when long scroll, signed by all the

members of the centre, addressed to as follows:

“Dear Baba, Thank you for the many Blessings you have bestowed on us, the members of your Cherry Valley centre. We crave one more boon, Swami. When you come to Southern California, please visit your centre. It would give us great pleasure to see you sitting in your chair, to have your Darshan where we meet to sing Bhajans and study your teachings.

We love you very much. Please help us develop the strength of character to be everything you want us to be.

With adoration and devotion."

Some of the signatories have recorded above their signatures such expressions as: "Tears of love," "Thank you for your gift of health and peace", "Thank you Bhagavan for your presence, your guidance and your love."

To Divinity Through Sacrifice

Explaining the significance of 'Poornahuti' ceremony on the completion of the 'Veda Purusha Saptah Jnana Yajna' at Prasanthi Nilayam, Bhagavan said: "The sacred and fragrant articles that are offered and the precious gems that are placed in the sacrificial fire are symbolic of the offerings which man should make in life. He should offer his pure heart and good qualities such as Truth, Dharma, Santhi and Prema to the Divine. The real spirit of giving to society and the community the wealth, knowledge and skills one possesses is the true Yajna." Without the spirit of sacrifice the performance of external rituals has no meaning.

Bhagavan, in his discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium on October 16th, which was listened to with rapt attention by a gathering of over ten thousand devotees from all parts of the world, said:

Life itself is a Yajna. To make human life an oblation in the sacred fire of duties and actions is itself a Yajna. To get rid of one's bad qualities, is Yajna. Every individual who seeks to lead an ideal life, to achieve bliss and attain self-realization has to cultivate the spirit of sacrifice. Yajna is the means to lead one from sorrow to happiness, adversity to prosperity, darkness to light. Human life can be worthwhile only when it is based on sacrifice or the quality of renunciation. Thereby not only can it become meaningful but Divinity can also be experienced. Life does not consist in eating, sleeping and such activities. The Vedanta has declared that the human goal is release from bondage or Moksha. What is this bondage? It is not association with wife and children, with property or attachments and hatreds. Even the sense of 'I' and 'Mine' does not constitute bondage. It is the ignorance of one's true self that constitutes bondage. The process of liberation begins with the attempt to discover one's own Self. This Yajna is intended to reveal to man the truth about himself and lead him to the Divine.

From ancient times wrong conceptions about the purpose of Yajna resulted in sacrifice of living beings, and the true purpose of Yajnas was forgotten. Yajna is also called 'Adhvaram'. 'Dhvaram' means killing'. 'Adhvaram' means non-killing. Hence the inner meaning of Yajna is that in which there is no violence. All the Mantras used in Yajnas are aimed at achieving Ananda or Bliss. Yajnas must lead to Bliss and Self-realization. Only when the import of the Mantras is fully understood and experienced will there be Self-realization.

The Lord! Hailed as the Yajnapurusha. He is known as Yajnobhrut, i.e., the Lord of the Yajna. He is the Master of all that takes place in the Yajna: From this, the supreme significance of the Yajna should be obvious. The Lord is also known as Yajnakrit and Yajnobhuk. That is, He is both the performer and the enjoyer of the sacrifice. The Lord is thus the protector and the destroyer of the sacrifice. All the sacred things that are offered in the sacrificial fire, including the Mantras and Yantras, are accepted by Him. When each offering is made with the Mantra 'Swaha' it means that it is being offered to the Divine. Hence, everything that is offered must be pure, sweet and enjoyable.

We have to look upon our body as the sacrificial platform. Our Mind is the altar on which the offerings are to be made. Our desires represent the ghee that is poured into the sacrificial fire. Our hatred is the sacrificial animal. Our, mental conflicts are the blades of Kusa grass. Our heart is the sacrificial fire. It is with these elements that life should be turned into a sacrificial Yajna. Every pure thought should be regarded as a 'Samit' (holy twig) which is offered in the fire.

The essential significance of Yajna consists in the spirit of sacrifice. Knowledge or strength or wealth that is not used for the good of others is useless. The object of Yajna is to make man realise that all the powers given to him should be offered to the Divine to elevate one's life.

To perform Yajnas and Yagas in the true spirit no special sacrificial altars or priests are necessary. The external Yajna is only a reflection of the internal Yajna: Through the performance of the external Yajnas, by rituals, religious practices and righteous deeds, the Inner-Self is purified. At the time of 'Poornahuti' (completion of the Yajna) many sacred and fragrant articles are offered in the sacrificial fire. Precious gems like diamonds, rubies, emeralds etc., are also put into the fire. Even pure silk cloth is offered. The significance of this is that man should offer to the Divine his pure unselfish heart and such noble qualities as Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema, compassion and equal, love for all beings.

The world has any number of wealthy persons, profound scholars and, knowledgeable scientists. But if none of them has compassion and kindness, their wealth or knowledge is of no avail. It is only when we resolve to offer all that we have for the promotion of the well-being of the world and the good of society, will we be embarking on real Yajna. Without faith in God and this spirit of sacrifice all actions will only result in evil.

Man today has made considerable progress in science. He labours to acquire wealth, scholarship and skills of various kinds. What is the use of acquiring all these if they are not put to right use? The use of these things depends on the character of the persons possessing them. If they are good, these will be put to right use. If they are bad, these will be misused. If wealth, knowledge or scientific skills are possessed by persons with Rajoguna they will be used for wrongful ends. If persons with Tamoguna have them, they will be used purely for selfish ends. The persons with Rajoguna may some time or other reform themselves, but those with Tamoguna Will use their talents and energies in sinful and anti-social ways.

Man has, therefore, to cultivate primarily the sense of discrimination between right and wrong. The Gayatri Mantra declares, "Dhiyo Yo Nah Pracho Dayaat" It is a prayer to the Gayatri Goddess to illumine the mind. Gandhiji's favourite prayer was "Sab Ko Sanmati De Bhagavan". "O Lord, bestow good sense on everyone." Because today evil-minded men are active everywhere the world suffers from violence, disorder and confusion.

Too many wealthy people nowadays prefer to hoard their wealth rather than utilise it for the good of society and for relieving the distress of the poor. They are behaving like a dog in the manger. It is high time every person who wishes to lead a purposeful and righteous life decides to engage himself in service to society and devotes all his wealth and energies to spreading

happiness in the community. Men must realise that there can be no greater source of real bliss than sacrifice (Tyaga).

Look at the trees, the rivers and the cows. They are supreme examples of self-sacrifice for the sake of others. The trees grow and produce flowers and fruits for the enjoyment of others. A tree gives shade even to one who is felling it. The rivers keep flowing all the time to provide life-giving water to all living things. The cows offer the milk which is intended for their calves to man. If trees, rivers and cows can exhibit such exemplary qualities of sacrifice, it is deplorable that man, who has inherently noble qualities, should be lacking in the spirit of sacrifice. Bharat had the reputation for centuries of being the land of Tyaga, Yoga, and Karma. If today persons born in such a country have no sense of sacrifice it is a matter for shame. The educated persons and those who are affluent should try in every way to help the weak, the distressed and the poor in society. They must go to the relief of the sick and suffering. Those who go abroad to acquire scientific and other knowledge should come back to the mother country and use their knowledge for building up the national economy and serving their countrymen.

Instead of cultivating the higher human qualities we are developing selfishness and other undesirable traits. Many are engaged in looking at the faults of others and ignoring their own defects. The right attitude is to learn from the good qualities of others and correct one's own faults. If you do not like a person you may keep away from him, but you should not go about decrying him. When you point your finger at the faults of others you must remember that three fingers are pointing at your own faults. There are many Sadhakas and devotees who go to Ashrams, cultivate the company of elders and listen to their teachings and who imagine that they have renounced everything. However, if there is no change in their mental attitude and way of life, of what use is this renunciation? If you cannot shed your envy or likes and dislikes, what is the point in staying in an Ashram? Many Sadhakas are in the habit of moving from house to house and indulging in gossip. Is this the kind of life that should be led in an Ashram? Instead of devoting their time to spiritual and Godly matters, indulging in idle gossip is a gross abuse of one's life in an Ashram. It is more important to put into practice even one or two good things that one learns from a preceptor than listen endlessly to discourses.

Embodiments of the Divine! On this auspicious POORNAHUTI day, offer in the sacrificial fire of your heart all your defects and bad qualities such as envy, greed, and antipathy and take a resolve to cultivate good qualities. All the wealth about which you boast is valueless. The real wealth is the practice of Virtue. Good character is real knowledge. This knowledge is wealth which will not decline however much you may use it, and no one can filch it away from you.

Today this Yajna has come to a close. This should mean that our spirit of sacrifice has achieved fulfillment. Henceforth, develop universal love and dedicate yourself to the service of society. Life is constantly ebbing away. To utilise all your resources for the good of others is the way to experience real bliss. Whatever may have been your lapses in the past, begin a new life of dedication and devotion from today. Make the best use of the sacred atmosphere prevailing in the Ashram and engage yourself in spiritual sadhana and service to the people around you.

On this 'POORNAHUTI' day I bless you that you should find fulfillment by becoming integrated personalities, enjoying unalloyed Bliss.

—*Prasanthi Nilayam, 16-10-1983*

Akhanda Bhajan: Some Do's and Don'ts

Bhajans done with single-minded attention and devotion become a spiritual Sadhana. A state of mind akin to "Dhyana" is achieved and one gets drawn very much into oneself in a region of deep silence. At times, a window opens to put one in direct communication with the One within.

During an Akhanda-bhajan session, if one can manage to sit through for full twelve hours out of twelve or, say, twenty hours out of twenty four, with eyes kept closed, the withdrawal from the external world for such a long period would itself be a unique experience.

The Akhanda (or uninterrupted) Bhajan would apply to Bhaktas or devotees who sing of His Glory continuously for twelve or twenty four hours. So far as Bhagavan Baba is concerned, the flow of devotional music from thousands of devotees and Bhajan Centres located throughout the world never ceases.

The long inward journey during an "Akhanda Bhajan" session provides better chances to reach the innermost regions of peace and bliss. If all devotees restrict their attendance to the limited number of hours, it will be like a "relay fast" in which none may really observe a fast. Participation in an Akhanda Bhajan must be for the full period of the programme.

The long sessions normally begin very well when the best of the bhajan leaders are leading. The Bhajan hall is full to capacity and the devotees assemble with high expectations. Devotees are charged with emotional stirrings within, as though Bhagavan would appear in His physical form. A sublime atmosphere is created. The Initial tempo, intense, peaceful and soothingly even, is well maintained for the first few hours.

Devotees who come with prior plans to leave at a certain hour, do so while the bhajan is in progress. Where the night hours are not allotted to different units, the attendance gets thinner as time goes on and untrained singers try to lead bhajans. When the rhythm is lost, it becomes very difficult to follow the lead, despite the best efforts on the part of sympathetic devotees.

The situation becomes embarrassing for all concerned. Good singers with discerning ears feel uncomfortable, to say the least. Even at the cost of missing the Sadhana aspect in trying to follow such renderings, they prefer to leave with the intention to return at the closing hours. Many new singers who kept back, hesitant and unsure of themselves muster the will to start singing without

inhibitions. While their efforts are commendable, the musical quality of the bhajans may suffer to some extent.

Bhagavan, in His infinite grace and compassion, may receive such bhajans as expressions of devotion, however inadequately and poorly expressed.

Bhajan is essentially an expression of love soaked in devotion for God. When a song is sung with sincerity, it creates a divine atmosphere of sublime-peace and Ananda. "Bhava" (feeling) more important than raga or tala is common but its expression in the form of Bhajan involves interaction of various human faculties, which vary from person to person. We can communicate to others, at best, only that which we ourselves feel.

Akhanda Bhajans, in which devotees with different degrees of musical ability participate, provide an opportunity for devotees to develop; mutual tolerance and love. Granting that defects in singing or lack of self-control, do not necessarily imply deficiency in devotion we have to see that the impressive image of "Sai Bhajans"; created by disciplined and melodious singing, is not tarnished by the performance of untrained and ill-equipped enthusiasts.

Our experience shows that keeping the eyes closed and attuning the mind to concentrate on the Lord for such along period, makes the Akhanda Bhajan a "mini-Tapas". The power of faiths overcomes the fear of excessive strain. When the limit is reached, the mind agrees with the body in demanding rest.

Once, at 'Parekh's Wadi' in Ahmedabad, my hands became cramped due to continuous playing of 'Manjiras', for several hours, and I prayed to Bhagavan to give me strength to play through the remaining period. Immediately, I saw before my closed eyes only the two hands of a friend who was sitting to my left. The hands appeared to be playing 'Manjiras' in a different mode with the right hand moving in vertical circles involving a minimum strain. The hint helped me to carry on till the end of the session.

At Kanpur, I was keeping rhythm by clapping hands. In my left-hand wrist, I felt a slight pain which I ignored. But, without my complaining or praying about it, I saw, with eyes closed, my right-hand thumb striking on the left wrist at the pain-spot, while clapping. Was Baba saving me from more pain?

It struck me that it would be nice if more persons learnt how to play Tabla and thereby remained ever associated with Sai Bhajans. Soon after this fleeting thought, at Dharmakshetra in Bombay, I found myself playing 'Dhapli' in the divine presence of Bhagavan under circumstances beyond imagination. This happened again, after an 'Akhanda Bhajan' session.

Our experiences are that in any Sai activity, any strain beyond our normal capacity often earns tangible recognition; in some way or the other, from Bhagavan. He said: "I know it, I know it." Difficulties, if felt, are surmounted, increasing our faith. For example, at Kanpur, after an 'Akhanda Bhajan' session, a devotee had a very sore throat. He craved some soothing drink. One

of the organisers directed him, to his residence for a morning cup of tea. The grand old lady of the house not only served him some snacks but leaving her daily chores, came to him twice again to press and see that he took all the items served in the tray. Feeling shy he was restricting himself, but was still wishing for more, to soothe his throat. She was determined, as it were, to give him more and more although he had not given her any indication about his burning throat. The bad throat was the result of his continuous singing of the Lord's glory, unmindful of everything else. Like a mother, He took care of him in His own experienced way.

Whilst on a spiritual-pilgrimage, apparently momentary experiences might prove to be the milestones on the way giving us strength and encouragement.

—**Balloabhai Desai, Ahmedabad**

Believe firmly that the body is the residence of God, that the food you eat is the offering you make to your Deity; that bathing is the ceremonial bathing of the Divine Spirit in you; the ground you walk upon is His domain; the joy you derive is His gift; the grief you experience is His lesson that you tread the path more carefully. Remember Him even in sun and shade, day and night, awake or asleep.

—**Baba**

From the Known to the Unknown

'Unless you know yourself, you cannot know ME'.

—**Bhagavan Baba**

Bhagavan, you are the Known and the Unknown in one. The Avatar of the age, your love and glory draw us to your lotus feet. Our thoughts stand still, charmed as it were, in your divine presence. Your form fills our eyes, your words ring in our ears, not only in your presence, but long after we leave it. But how far from us is the Unknown, the Ultimate Truth that Sathya Sai is! 'Know yourself'-this is your commandment. How feeble are our instruments of knowledge for that Awareness! You inhere them; pray, bless us so that the 'doer', the 'I' in us steps out surrendering those instruments wholly to your will and direction. Lead us, Bhagavan, so that by knowing the Reality that we are, we wake to the Splendour that YOU are, and experience that freedom and beatitude which found ecstatic expression in the words of the Rishi of Mundakopanishad: 'The fetters of the heart are broken, all doubts are dissolved and one's karma melts away, when He, that is high and low, is seen.'

Science and technology have contributed immensely to the material progress of the world. The spirit of enquiry of man is ever soaring to greater heights and the horizons of knowledge are receding further and further. Whatever the scientific civilization has achieved is however the

creation of the human brain, of human genius, employing the senses and faculties on the one hand and the world of objects on the other. The former are too imperfect to grasp the Ultimate Reality, and the latter can offer only what the world itself is endowed with. The impact of the one on the other cannot reveal more than 'facts' about the objective world—facts, which are very often tentative. The best of knowledge can only be a masterpiece of the human intelligence. It cannot fathom the mystery of which these are the outward signs and expressions. The truth is well beyond these.

Man is pursuing a path which he thinks will lead him to happiness. He has been on this pursuit for long—perhaps from the beginning of time. An honest appraisal of the result should be disappointing. Happiness has been eluding him. He was trying to build up a civilization paradoxically, he himself stands out as the possible destroyer of it. Thinkers, educationists, philosophers—all see it quite clearly; but they do not seem to be in a position to change the course of events. Wisdom has not increased with the increase in knowledge; there has been only an increase in sorrow, fear and frustration.

There can be no happiness where there is fear. Knowledge should therefore confer freedom from fear, which it has not. If the spirit of enquiry that is characteristic of the scientific attitude does not remove fear, it is not the failure of that spirit or of science, but of the human element involved, either of the individual or of the society or of both. The progress of science and the growth of the intellect are indispensable for the full evolution of the human entity. They are not evils. Unfortunately however, while claiming the capacity to wipe out prejudices, dogmas and superstitions, they went beyond their competence and capacity and started questioning the validity of those truths which are spiritual and which are wholly beyond the realm of the senses, mind and intellect.

It is only in and through man that any major advance can be achieved, any progress made in the path of evolution. To be of ultimate benefit to mankind it is necessary to understand how far the knowledge of the physical world can go and what lies beyond the reaches of such knowledge. If all the knowledge that man has acquired has not helped him with the wisdom that removes his ignorance—and 'ignorance' here is intended to include fear, sorrow, frustration and all the maladies that contribute to the human predicament in the material world—he should rely on that subtler faculty which is already in him, the spiritual, and thus transcend the tyranny of his sense life. The known has unquestionable merit; but man should develop the discrimination to make use of it in a manner conducive to his own evolution.

The malady of the materialistic outlook that afflicts man has reached a critical stage. Eternal Philosophy has been proclaiming for centuries that there can be peace and happiness on the earth only if man learns and follows the laws of inner life. The truths propounded by the Rishis may not perhaps stand the test of logical reasoning and detailed analysis in all cases; but they are the product of spiritual intuition and an inward, personal experience. The scriptures emphasise the study of man as a spiritual entity destined to achieve his divine status. The great Upanishadic declarations like 'Tattwamasi' (That thou art) and 'Aham Brahmasmi' (I am Brahman) have their validity which centuries have not impaired.

Indian Philosophy distinguishes all knowledge that can be acquired about the finite world through the human instruments of knowledge as the lower (apara vidya) and the knowledge of the Infinite as the higher (para vidya). One is the knowledge of the structural form with all its subtleties, and the other is of the contents. The term 'lower' here does not in any way mean inferior or inconsequential; for, it includes all branches of learning like science, ethics, logic, mathematics and so on and even the Vedas with their highest scriptural authority. To a confounded Sage Narada, who despite his great erudition still found himself in sorrow and grief, the great Sanatkumara points out that all such knowledge can achieve only what the words can achieve. Even so, he advises Narada to worship the name initially. This advice has a significance in that the name is an image and contemplation on it is an occasion to evoke the attitude and temperament towards that which the image stands for. It is through such worship that higher reaches of the spiritual temper are attained. 'We raise the image to the dimensions of the Absolute,' says Bhagavan. The known should subserve the knowledge of the Unknown. The Unknown is not unknowable; but that knowledge is not an intellectual achievement, but Pure Awareness—an awakening into Reality, the consciousness merging into Pure Consciousness.

What man seeks in the nature of happiness is nothing but pleasure, the titillation of the senses. Far beyond such pleasure is the Bliss that is Satchidananda. The human mind cannot even imagine that state, because there is nothing in human experience or knowledge with which it can be compared, even remotely. The great souls that experienced it through their enlightenment could only say 'neti, neti' (not this, not this) about it. At the same time it is not beyond the comprehension of one who makes himself fit for its realisation through discrimination, dispassion, discipline and the desire for release. For, it is everywhere, inhering everything sentient and insentient. 'God is the echo of the hills, the flutter of leaves, the whisper of men, the babble of children, the OM that is wafted everywhere. God is present at all places, but to recognize him saints have had to prescribe a thousand methods' says Bhagavan Baba. Satyakama Jabala of Chandogya Upanishad realised the Supreme Truth from the friendly cows and bulls he tended at the behest of his guru, the whispering trees and leaves, the singing birds, the bubbling brooks, the sun, the moon and the stars; they all taught him that everything that is animate and inanimate is part of Brahman.

Bhakti, yoga or Jnana—all are individually or collectively the paths to perfection. That perfection has to be achieved in this very world, while one is yet in human form through the cleansing of the Inner personality. 'The purpose (of Vedanta) is to cleanse the mind, to sharpen the intellect, to purify the emotions, to concentrate the thinking faculty so that the Reality could be experienced in its full clarity,' says Bhagavan. The knowledge of Atman is a revelation, a discovery, an unveiling of the Divine Principle that inheres the Self. In that knowledge there are no distinctions such as the knower and the known.

While the scriptures distinguish knowledge as lower (apara vidya) and higher (para vidya), the Vedantic import of Jnana is absolute knowledge. It is not the result of any antecedent process of knowing, but the essential nature of a realised soul. Perfect knowledge can flow only from

perfect source and that source cannot be anything other than Brahman or Supreme Reality. Brahma jnana alone is the ultimate goal of all seeking.

Man is finite in regard to his consciousness; but in him lies the capacity to turn his faculties inward and apprehend the Infinite. Sadhana is the process of activating that capacity and it is along the path of sadhana that the Avatar of the Age, Bhagavan Baba, exhorts man to strive so that he may realise his own divine identity. It is an opportunity of ages, and blessed are we that we are living today, to see Him, hear Him and be led by Him. His life is His message and the example for mankind. May we have His grace and blessing so that all that we have imbibed from whatever sources serve as the spring-board for the leap into that pure State of Being from which there is no return.

—*C. P. K. Nair*

Health: Food and Sadhana

A new hospital building in Prasanthi Nilayam, with provision for 100 beds, and equipped with up-to-date facilities for diagnosis, treatment and surgery, will be ready by November 23, announced Bhagavan Baba addressing a vast gathering in the Poornachandra Hall on Hospital Day (October 8).

Dr. Alreja, in his report for 1982-83, mentioned that 56,000 outpatients and 30,000 inpatients had been treated in the Sathya Sai Hospital during the past year; 104 operations and 148 delivery cases had been attended to.

Prof. Kasturi said that all devotees were patients in the presence of Bhagavan, seeking His healing touch and purifying grace for curing them of all their ills, physical and mental. They can only pray to Bhagavan to relieve them of all the ills affecting the five Kosas in each of them.

Dr. Rajeswari, who was the chief guest for the day, said that whatever the treatment given by the doctors, the real healing was done by Bhagavan. The doctors were only His instruments.

Bhagavan, in the course of His discourse, said that it might be asked what was the need for a hospital when Bhagavan could effect cures by His grace. There are, however, many who have faith in hospitals and the Sathya Sai Hospital is intended for them. Moreover, the hospital is intended also to impart knowledge about health, hygiene and diseases to the rural population in the surrounding areas.

Good health, Bhagavan said, is a primary requisite both for worldly life and spiritual Sadhana. Proper food and recreation is necessary for maintaining health. In the matter of food, among the 84 lakh species of living beings, man is the only consumer of cooked food. All other creatures

live on natural food and manage to remain healthy. In consuming all kinds of cooked food, man is acquiring many diseases.

Man should consume only Satwic food and that in moderate quantity. Today, diseases of the heart are on the increase. Diabetes and blood pressure are suppressed by drugs, but are not wholly cured. Through proper diet control these diseases can be got rid of. There are proteins and vitamins in many fruits and, vegetables. These nutrients are lost or reduced in cooking. The resulting deficiencies are the cause of many diseases.

Bhagavan referred to the application of chemical fertilisers for producing bigger vegetables. While these, vegetables were big in size, they lacked the taste and nutritional qualities of the small-sized vegetables which were formerly grown by the use of farmyard manure. The use of urban sewage water for irrigating farms is also another factor in the production of vegetables and foods not conducive to health. Bhagavan drew pointed attention to the use of bones and certain chemicals for refining sugar and said consumption of this kind of sugar was one of the predisposing causes for cancer.

Bhagavan commended restrictions in diet as one of the primary means of maintaining good health. The one who ate only one meal a day was a Yogi. The one who ate two meals was a bhogi (an enjoyer). But the one who ate three meals a day was a rogi (a sick man control of palate is an essential part of spiritual Sadhana concluded Bhagavan.

Now in Human Form

(Mr. Karin Schalander, a Sai devotee from Stockholm, has sent the following poem by his guru, Professor Shyam Sundar Goswami, which was recited by him during the celebration in Stockholm of Bhagavan Baba's fiftieth birthday, marking the Golden Jubilee of His advent. Prof Goswami was a leading exponent of yoga in the West and completed a classic work on "Laya Yoga" three days before he passed away in 1978 at the age of 17. In submitting the poem for publication in "Sanathana Sarathi", Mr. Schalander writes: "The source of strength and light for Professor Goswami was the Only One, our beloved Lord Sai Baba, whose grace made it possible for him to humbly and indefatigably work here in Sweden among his disciples, work for God with faith and love, leading us along the God-ward path of truth and righteousness as per the eternal divine laws.")

Who knows the first word?
What is birth?
Is the universe first, and the Divinity next?
Then who will know the Origin?

How the Creative Impulse arose?
Is He a creator, or not?

Was there someone where there was nothing?
Does He know the secret, or not?

There was neither Real nor Unreal
No air, no sky
Was everything covered, how, who then sustained?
Was there all water deep, very deep?

There was neither Death nor Immortality
Neither night nor day
There was only One, who breathed in airless sphere
Only He who was awakened, others sleeping.

There was only deep darkness,
Endless water having no shore,
One, possibly in void, remaining in secret,
Awakened by His own tapas; it is He.

It is He who is immanent in the Universe,
He who is within every living being,
Sometimes, He comes out from His secret dwelling
And appears as non-man and man.

So He became fish, tortoise, boar,
And Vamana, Rama, Krishna,
And others;
And now in human form
Manifesting, as much as necessary,
the Power and imparting Wisdom
as much as our cranium can hold.

And with the Spiritual Message
"manaso mano, praanasya praanah"
(Mind of the mind, life of the life)
He, as Truth, has reincarnated and as Father of all,
As Sathya Sai Baba.

—*Shyam Sundar Goswami, November 23, 1975*

Sutra Vahini

14

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Sruthathwaath Cha

Since the All-Knowing Brahman is declared by the Vedas to be the cause of the Cosmos, description and understanding of this sublime phenomenon has been made. The very expression, Brahman, conveys the meaning that It has the power of willing, etc. The Vedas which speak of Brahman as unconditioned and devoid of attributes also declare that It has, as its very nature, total beneficence. For, from the standpoint of the Cosmos, Brahman is without qualifications.

The Upanishad texts which form a section of Shruti or Vedic scripture, do not convey any distinction between Brahman or Easwara, the Absolute and the Almighty. What has to be understood from all these texts of Vedanta is that the Cosmos is the manifestation or projection of supreme Consciousness. On the contrary, when the Cosmos is considered inert and devoid of consciousness, some may ask, how can it be so invitingly attractive? It cannot be irresponsive and dull for if It were so, It will be ever the same. No. This view is incorrect. God is the efficient cause as well as the material cause of the Cosmos. He has become Himself all this. He is the inner and the outer Truth. Hence, the Light that illumines and reveals, that draws and discloses.

“Pishtaadi Guda samparkaath”, It is said. ‘Pishta’ means ‘flour’: any flour, rice or wheat or pulse. The flour is rendered sweet by “guda samparkaath”, getting mixed with ‘guda’, jaggery or sugar. By itself, flour is not welcomed by the tongue; sugar makes it tasty. Similarly, wherever charm, attraction or splendour is manifest in the Cosmos, it is the Cosmic Soul, Param-Atman, that is evident and nothing else. The Shruti makes this very clear. The Param Atma, as the Sruti texts assert, creates, fondles, fosters and sustains the Cosmos (Jagat) and finally, it is He who induces It to merge in Him. Param Atma is the sole Creator, the sole Enjoyer, and the sole Protector and Master. This is the proclamation contained In the Shrutis.

The Shrutis declare that Brahman is Ananda-swaroop, of the Nature of Ananda or Supreme Bliss. Elaborating on the Atma, they mention the sheaths which treasure it—the Food sheath (Annamaya), the Vital Air sheath (Pranamaya Kosa), the Mental sheath (Manomaya Kosa), the Intellectual sheath (Vijnanamaya Kosa) in that series. After these four, the innermost sheath is the Bliss sheath (Anandamaya Kosa). All these are in Brahman and so, it is proper to conclude that Brahman is inherently Ananda. Each of these Kosas is subtler (sookshma) than the other, the subtlest being the fifth, the Anandamaya. The Pranamaya is subtler than the Annamaya, the Manomaya subtler than the Pranamaya, the Vijnanamaya subtler than Manomaya and the Anandamaya subtler than the Vijnanamaya. Therefore, all these can be taken to be the body' or 'upadhi' of Brahman.

The Food sheath or the Food Coat is a gross covering, which protects the coating that is less gross, namely, the Vital Air one. The Vital airs are nurtured and directed by the less gross Mental sheath. The Manomaya kosa controls the Pranas, which regulate and operate the physical and sensory instruments. So, it is much more powerful than the Breath or Prana. Subtler than this sheath is Vijnanamaya. It is ever engaged in discriminating between the temporary and the permanent, the Anitya and the Nitya. It is very close to the experience of Ananda. In fact, it helps to evoke that experience, which is the awareness of Brahman itself.

In order to guard the body against disease we wear different varieties of clothes—first a banian, then a shirt, after that a coat, and, over the coat, a shawl. When we have to observe the heart, the shawl has to be laid aside. Then, the coat must be taken off. The shirt also has to be removed. It is only when the banian too is pulled out that the heart can be examined. Similarly, one has to eliminate the Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya and Vijnanamaya sheaths or upadhis in order to be intimately aware of the Supreme Atma or Brahman which is Ananda Itself. The journey known as 'life' is but a pilgrimage from the Annamaya (the food plane of matter) to the Anandamaya (the blissful spiritual plane). This is the goal, the end. The Sutra conveys to us this truth. Param Atma, the Supreme Soul, is essentially of Ananda nature.

There are some who do not agree with this conclusion. They posit the Jivatma or the individualised soul, not as Ananda but, as Vijnana, the discriminating faculty of the Intellect. That is to say, Brahman is effulgence, in Its own right; it needs no external source of light. It is established in Its own splendour. Others declare that Para-Shakti (Supreme Energy) is the entity known as Anandamaya or Param-Atma and this Entity is also designated as Para-Aakasa, Supreme Space. However, these are theories arising out of different thought processes of people in different planes.

Brahman encompasses all and awareness of any entity is awareness of Brahman Itself. It cannot be differentiated or divided. Ananda is all; Brahman, the Anandamaya, is the Jivatma too, appearing as individualised. The quality cannot be identified and considered apart from the thing possessing it. The Atma is Ananda, whether universalised as Param-Atma or particularised as Jivatma. Ananda cannot be measured out as less or more. Anandamaya (full of Ananda) means Ananda itself, not something having Ananda. So, Jivatma is not less or Param-Atma is not more of Ananda. They are both the same Ananda.

In the ordinary worldly sense, too, Ananda is the characteristic of each living being. As a consequence, every human being seeks to express and develop it. Living beings are found renouncing various desires and lines of conduct in order to attain Ananda. But, belief that Ananda can be secured from external objects is a sign of ignorance. "Sarvam paravasam dukham" (From all outside you, grief); "Sarvam Atmavasam sukham" (From all within you, joy). According to this axiom, when man feels that his Ananda is dependent on external objects, he is moving beyond himself and courting grief. He plunges into needless grief by the enslavement to objects which, according to his fancy, can make him happy. He becomes the target for anxiety and worry. The attempt to derive Ananda through external objects and external activities is, therefore, not commendable at all. It ends only in sorrow and disappointment. Those who long for genuine Ananda have to turn their attempts inward, bound to the Atma. When Ananda is sought from external objects, one has to suffer much, just as a person afflicted with thirst runs towards a mirage. He gets nothing to quench his thirst and he has a miserable end.

One point at this juncture: When it is said that Rama made Bhima a wealthy person or that Rama made Bhima a well-informed person, does it not follow that at the beginning Rama was wealthier or more knowledgeable than Bhima? If Rama was indigent and ignorant, how could he

transform Bhima into a wealthy or knowledgeable person? Obviously, it would not be possible. Brahman is Ananda-swaroop—Ananda Itself. So, every living thing receives Ananda from Brahman. He is All-knowledge. So, He awards, arouses and advances knowledge in all. God is the grantor, the promoter of Ananda. This is confirmed in the Sutra "Aanandamayobhyaasaath" ("The Blissful One is the Supreme Self, since the statement is repeated many times.")

Mantra Varnikam eva cha:

"Sathyajnaanamantanam Brahma" (Truth-Knowledge-Infinity is Brahma). This mantra or sacred axiomatic formula also refers to the same Ananda-swaroop Brahman. Brahman is Ananda; Brahman is Truth, Sathya; Brahman is knowledge, Juana; Brahma is Infinity, Anantam. Sathyam or Truth is a synonym for Ananda, Bliss. It does not mean anything else. Sathya implies indivisible, immeasurable Ananda. It cannot be affected by limitations of space or the passage of time or the varying moods of the experiencers. Ananda will itself purify time, space and the individual. These three are subdued by Ananda; Ananda is not subservient to these three; it is not bound to time, space or the individual recipient. Therefore, God who is designated and described by the mantra can be only partially known through the Mantra; He does not limit the Mantra, the Mantra may limit Him. Ananda is the bond which binds both.

(To be continued)

The Mind and the Cosmos

Man perpetually seeks happiness (Ananda) without enquiring into the source of real happiness. Forgetting his own true nature, considering only the body and the senses as his reality and devoting himself to the satisfaction of the desires arising from them, man wastes his life. Vedas and Upanishads have declared that true happiness cannot be got through pampering, changing and perishable entities like the body and the senses. The pleasures derived from them will be as transient as they are, observed Bhagavan in His discourse on the third day of the Saptah Yajna.

How far is the Mind responsible for the human condition? The Upanishads have declared 'Mano Moolam Idam Jagat' (the Mind is at the root of the world). It is not easy to recognise the truth of this statement that all that exists in the cosmos is based on the Mind.

Experience of the world and the pleasures and pains of life are creations of the mind. This can be demonstrated by actual experience. Consider for instance the three states of Sleep, Unconsciousness and Samadhi. In sleep the mind is absent. Because the mind is absent the world does not exist for us in that state and in the absence of the world pleasure and pain also cease to exist. In sleep only the One remains. There is-no Second. This is the Advaitic state. When we wake up duality starts. For one-ness and duality the mind is the root-cause.

We tend to imagine that we are experiencing all states through the body and the sense organs. We assume we see through the eyes, hear through the ears, speak through the mouth, but this is not true.

Even if we have eyes if we don't open them they cannot see. When you close your eyes and are in deep meditation you are not aware of what goes on in front of you. This is because although you have eyes your mind is concentrated on something else. It is clear but although the sense organs are there it is the mind that functions through all of them.

The Gita points out that the senses, are like horses, that the Intellect is the Charioteer and the mind comparable to the reins that are held to control and direct the horses. The mind is thus linked to the Indriyas on the one side and to the Intellect, which is the Charioteer holding the reins. The intellect, which is the charioteer, has to control both the mind and the senses. If the mind and the senses are under the effective control of the intellect, man will be able to lead a proper life. Unfortunately man tends to follow the mind rather than the intellect.

It is necessary to understand the true nature of the mind. The mind is described as the master of the senses, as the husband of the Indriyas. The plight of the mind is very much like that of a person with many wives. As each of the senses tries to pull the mind in its own direction, the mind ceases to be lord of the senses. The conflicting pulls and desires of the senses cause confusion and vacillations in the mind and in its inability to satisfy all the senses the mind experiences suffering. The entire life becomes a continuous series of worries on one account or other. In this lifelong succession of worries, man has to, learn to turn his thoughts to God and thereby end all worries.

—(*To be Continued*)

The Temple

The Lord will keep you in *Perfect Peace* when your mind is stayed on Him.

In a spiritual sense a Temple is *a House of God-a House of Prayer-a House of Worship*.

Now, this place can be a Church, a Chapel, a Tabernacle, a Synagogue, a Mosque, a Home or The Mind.

Each and everyone is of *itself* a Temple. You, your very self, are a Temple of The Living God. And the Lord, whom you seek, shall suddenly come to your Temple—his Temple. For, is it not said that *The Father* (The Lord), *and you are one*, and of the same substance.

The First Temple (The Universe): Before the days of Creation, God was one without the second, and He thought of a residence, a place of abode and created this vast universe out of Himself and made it His residence—your eternal home. All religions speak of this first creation.

Therefore, the universe, our home, is the first Temple of all Religions, built by God Himself—for Himself for you and I.

The Second Temple (the Living Body) The Universe was ...inanimate. God wanted to sport, that is to play—so he created multitudes of bodies similar to the first Temple and He himself entered into all these bodies. Now, every being has to see God in his own body and in all other bodies, no matter whatever religion he claims. Therefore, the Living Body is the Second Temple of all Religions—built by God himself for the grand host of individual beings that are you and I.

The Third Temple (Prasanthi Nilayam): In spite of God providing wisdom and intelligence to the living beings, even the highest evolved living beings that is Man did not recognize God in the Universe or in the Living Body, in spite of God teaching him as the indweller of the body and the indweller of the Universe. Of course, Man studied the Universe and the Body and acquired a lot of knowledge and Man called it *Science*. With this knowledge he discovered many, many things and made his life comfortable. But, he did not recognize the Indweller of these two Temples.

Therefore, God spoke to a few highly evolved men called Sages, Prophets and so forth, in different parts of the world at different times who promptly carried His message to their fellow human beings who were nearby. *The Message* was written down and was called *Scripture*. The way of life according to a particular Scripture was called *Religion*.

There were some persons who had acquired a lot of power by the study of nature and by certain discoveries that they had made but did not recognize. *This Message* and gave trouble to the followers of the Message. They were called demons.

Then God took the form of different spirit beings as Lord eight times. That is He incarnated and killed these demons. Though the demons were killed their bad qualities persisted in the world and spread to every human being. Finally one began to kill the other and destroy his Temple. Strange as it may seem even those who believed in God began to fight with gone another, and of all things, in the very name of God and Religion.

Therefore, God has now taken the form of a human being and the name *Sai Baba* and is teaching the world by words, deed and action. He creates articles similar to those present in this world out of His hand, to demonstrate that this universe was created by God out of Himself.

Accepting this teaching when you address Him as God, He teaches that every Soul is God and every human body is The Temple. He teaches worship of God who is the Indweller of the Universe and all bodies. He teaches that Selfless Service is the ideal method and has established thousands of Sathya Sai Service organizations all over the world, where persons belonging to any Religion, any Faith can join themselves together to do *Service—To God and Mankind*.

In order to further all this He built a Temple for all Religions and called it *Prasanthi Nilayam* (*Abode of Peace*) in India. To further advance His divine purpose He has prescribed group

singing of the different names and qualities of God mentioned in the different World Religions as the common mode of worship. The singing is called BHAJANS.

Thus, Prasanthi Nilayam, India, is the third Temple of all Religions built by God Himself for Himself and for all the human beings, for all mankind, for the whole world itself. Yes, Yes, — indeed for you—you and I... *Worship God in the Mind... Your Prasanthi Nilayam.*

—James W. Johnson, Greater Cleveland, Ohio

DASARA SANDESH:

The Triple Debt

"One may study the Sastras, perform Yajnas and Yagas, proceed on pilgrimage to sacred shrines and acquire mastery of the eight branches of knowledge; but still he is unable to control the sense organs and concentrate the mind to achieve enduring, unwavering Samadhi.

"The person who thinks only about the world gets worldly things, while the intelligent man who meditates on the Lord realises the Supreme."

Every man, irrespective of the country, race or period of time in which he is born, comes into the world burdened with three debts. The first debt is owed to the Divine. The second is to the Rishis. The third is to one's parents.

A debt is an obligation arising out of what one has received from others. We can easily identify these debts. In the human body different divine forces are present nourishing and protecting it. This divine energy permeates the entire body; it is called the Divine Essence or Rasa. We owe a debt of gratitude to the Divine which has not only endowed us with this precious human body but which also sustains it. We shall be able to enjoy these gifts of the Divine only if we discharge this debt to the Divine. How is this to be done? It is by rendering service to other bodies saturated with the same Divine, by doing righteous deeds and consecrating all actions in the service of society. The debt to the Divine has to be discharged in full in this life itself or during many future lives. The earlier we repay this debt, the sooner we shall realise Divinity.

Next, the debt to the Rishis: By selfless investigation's and experiments the sages discovered for mankind the paths to be followed for bettering our lives here and attaining mergence. They have laid down the types of right action that will help man to lead a good and worthy life and successfully strive for Self-realisation. These guidelines and codes of conduct have come down to us in the form of Sastras. The Sastras also deal with rituals and forms of worship for propitiating the Divine. The sages have taught how man can proceed from the human to the Divine. Such codes have other names elsewhere. But, whatever the name, these are essential for human survival.

When man strays from these codes, he is subject to many calamities. Man will have to pay the price now or later for violating these codes. Because the sages of yore have given man these precious guidelines for a righteous and sacred life, we repay the debt by respecting these codes and observing the injunctions laid down by them.

Today, instead of honouring and following the Sastras, people are dishonouring and violating them and committing many wanton sins in the process. When we follow the path laid down by the sages, we can lead exemplary lives and reach the full height of human potentialities.

Pitru-Runam

The third debt we have to pay is to the parents (Pitru-runam). A person desires to have a 'son' and feels that without a son he cannot escape hell. This is not a correct interpretation of the debt to the parents. The ancients desired to have sons who would lead righteous lives and help the parents in discharging the debt to the Divine (Daiva-runa). Many of them performed sacrifices (Yajnas) to secure such noble sons. They desired not only to acquire merit for themselves by having such sons, but also to ensure that the sacred traditions of the family were maintained and continued untarnished. In the old days, a father did not feel happy when a son was born; he was delighted only when the son earned name and fame by good conduct and righteous living.

When a child is born, no one can know how it will turn out, whether into a good and noble person or a wicked and evil person. The father too should set a good example to the son and try to keep him on the straight path. It is by following the example of the parents that a child grows in life.

It was to discharge his three-fold debt that Emperor Dasaratha performed Yagas and Yajnas and ensured the presence of his sons on those occasions. He sent them to great gurus so that they may learn the sacred heritage of the past, before they confronted the challenges of the world. He did not calculate that his sons should serve him in his old age. He had no selfish interest in rearing them. He desired sons for the sake of his spiritual well-being. The son owes a deep debt to the parents for the trouble and expense they underwent to bring him up on right lines. This is the primary duty of a son. The son is entitled not merely to a share in the father's worldly property. He is entitled also to a share in the godly life lived by the father. He must follow the high ideals of the father. If the father is given to evil ways, the son can acquire merit himself and reduce to some extent the effects of the sins of the father by cultivating good company, entertaining good thoughts and doing good deeds. The sage Vasishta assured Dasaratha that many of the sins committed by him had been wiped out by the numerous Dharmic deeds of Sri Rama, such as destruction of the Rakshasas and protection guaranteed to the Rishis.

It is to discharge the debt to one's parents that rites like Shraddha and Tharpanam are done. Only a few perform these ceremonies now. The ancients felt that it was sinful for children to be ungrateful to parents to whom they owed their bodies and their achievements.

The Inner Yajna

Yajnas and Yagas are symbolic rituals designed to redeem these three debts. Yajnas are of two kinds; internal (Antar-Yajna) and external (Bahir-Yajna). The internal Yajna is the striving to realise the Divinity within. The Divine is in every one and it can be realised only through Dhyana, meditation. The mind is the sacrificial altar. One has to offer as sacrifice on this altar all one's bad qualities. It may be asked how any bad quality can pollute the body-mind-complex when the Divine is the in-dwelling Spirit. But, it must be realised that this is not one's first birth in a body: Many lives have preceded this. Man in Sanskrit is called "Manava"—which means, "Man" (not), "nava" (new)—"not new".

Birth as man is the final stage in the upward evolution of the 84-lakh species of living beings. In previous lives, one might have been an insect, a worm, a bird or an animal. It is as a result of this that, despite the presence of the Divine, man displays now many animal qualities. For example, pride is not an innate human quality. It is the natural trait of a buffalo. If one displays pride, it means he has been a buffalo in previous lives and this buffalo quality inheres in the human. Some persons exhibit stupid stubbornness. This is not a human trait. It is the quality of a sheep. Sometimes some persons tend to indulge in petty thefts. This is derived from previous lives spent as a cat. Similarly, the vacillating and fickle nature displayed by a person may be attributed to a previous life as a monkey. Fickle-mindedness is characteristic of the monkey. Some persons are incurably ungrateful. They indulge even in harming those who help them. This is not a human trait. How, then, is it present in a man? It is because he must have been a serpent in a previous birth. The serpent is notorious for emitting poison even when fed on milk. So, an ungrateful person must have been a serpent in some previous life.

One should offer, therefore, at the altar of his mind as a sacrifice his stubbornness, thieving propensity, Ingratitude and pride. This is the Inner Yajna. Unfortunately, instead of performing sacrifices of this kind people treat goats and fowl as offerings. As a result the bad qualities continue to grow in man. It is to eliminate this evil sense of Ingratitude that external sacrifices like Yajnas and Yagas have been recommended to man. Yajnas enable us to promote and refine the beneficent qualities in man. In the Yajna Indra is the principal deity generally invoked. Indra is the presiding deity of the mind, which is the master of the senses. It is because the senses tend to dominate the mind; instead of being subservient to it, that Indra is invoked in this Yajna. Indra has another name—Puruhuta—that is, one who is invoked frequently. Rudra is deified as the supreme Lord, the Ishwara of all the Indriyas. When a man has mastered all his sense organs, he becomes Ishwara! When we wish to progress from the human to the Divine state, the state of Rudra, it has to be sought through Sadhana.

The sole purpose of the internal Yajna (Antar-yajna) is to see that the mind does not run after the whims and fancies of the senses, like a master pathetically carrying out the dictates of his servants. The man who is a slave of sensual desire is the world's bond-slave. One who has conquered desire is master of this world and the next. It is desire that makes one dependent on others. When there is no control over the senses, desire grows wild.

Yajnas and Yagas are not undertaken to promote self-interest. They are performed for promoting the welfare of the world. Instead of emphasising the inner meaning and significance

of Yajnas, most people pay attention to the external features. Preoccupied with external forms of the Yajna, people ignore the basic need to win sense-control, without which spiritual sadhana has no meaning.

One must constantly strive to get rid of evil tendencies. Inherited evil traits rooted in the mind must be given up at the sacrificial altar. Of these traits, the worst are hatred and envy. They arise from intense selfishness. They are qualities of the leopard and should not find place in a human being. Some people try to pretend that they have overcome anger, hatred, jealousy and pride. The devices adopted by such persons are only the cunning tricks of the fox. As these traits make their appearance from time to time, they should be immediately cast off. This calls for continuous internal Yajna, as against the external Yajna which is performed only once a year at one particular place. The internal Yajna has to be performed at all times, in all places and under-all circumstances. The sacrificial altar for this Yajna is within each one of us. Whenever an evil thought or desire occurs, it should be mercilessly scotched. It is only by constant vigilance and continuous endeavour that Divine grace can be earned. Only when evil traits are banished can Divinity manifest itself in all its glory. This is the real purpose of Yajnas—to enable man to achieve purity in order to realise Divinity.

—*Bhagavan's Discourse, Poornachandra Auditorium, 10-10-83*

A Midsummer Day's Bliss

Quiet and peacefully I sat on the mountain and looked far over God's beautiful nature, which is especially lovely for us Scandinavians to experience in Midsummer time, when the sun during some days keeps uninterruptedly shining over us. The entire nature spreads itself out in all its divine glory. It is like God Himself saying: "Behold! how beautiful I made Myself for making you happy. Come to me, come very close to me. Come in me, enjoy and experience me." Nowhere else can we find and experience such a beauty, as when being invited to behold the beautiful vesture of God, when being at its fairest in Midsummer time.

These were my thoughts, when I suddenly felt His gentle caress on my cheek. My heart was filled with love, bliss and inner peace. God was in me, around me. A long while I sat and let myself be filled and surrounded by His loving presence.

Then I heard the song from His divine lips, which in the wind was singing about love. Who can stay unmoved when God fills us with intoxicating tunes? —My inner trembled, when I was listening and enjoying His echoing melody, which ended in the eternal symphony of the cosmos. So I was carried on wings of divine heavenly music to another and still more beautiful world.

I was no longer bound by my body, I was free. My true `I' was carried away with the speed of light. As if by a stroke of magic, I was transformed into a beam of divine light. I was in the light,

and the light was my real I. A crescendo of sound and light surrounded me. I melted into one with all in the entire cosmos, which was without beginning and without end. In an indescribable way I was conscious about everything that appeared before my inner divine I. The earth, the sun, the moon and the stars passed me in their cosmic eternal dance, which I now joined in.

God is limitless, He is too big, too mighty for us human beings to understand and describe, when He appears in His full divine majesty. I had a crystal clear consciousness, that maintained the memory of this cosmic divine journey.

Slowly I then again sank towards the earthly sphere, and ultimately into my bodily temple, where God has His abode in my heart. During this descent I was accompanied by a strong sound, similar to the vibrating booming of a big gong. It echoed in the space and in myself, and followed me till I was back in my body consciousness. The surge from this heavenly gong was, however, still sounding a long while in my inner, after I had returned from this cosmic journey. Finally it died away into a SO HAM in my heart.

So I then awoke out of this divine vision, which God in His endless grace had let me experience. When we manage to free our inner divine consciousness from the bonds of the body, God in His grace can appear before us in all His splendid magnificence and majesty, in all His creation. God is everywhere and in all.

I wish to close this wonderful Midsummer Night journey, which God in His grace invited me to, with a prayer from the depths of my heart:

In gratitude I humbly bend my head and
lay my prayer at Your divine Lotus feet.

God, let not a single day run out of time
without Your being in my thoughts.

Lord, let me every day sing the praises
of Your name and glory.

God, let me always be conscious of
Your divine presence in all Your creation.

Let Your divine wisdom prevail and guide me and
let the rays of Your light enlighten and cleanse my heart,
so that I may walk along the path of light and truth.

Let my love incessantly flow towards You.

You merciful, loving God,
may You one day find me worthy to serve You,
as pleases You.

—*Curth Orefjaerd, Stockholm*

To The Guru

The light of Wisdom within me shines brighter today because of you.
The knowledge of the first light has been fanned by you.
I have within me all the Truth that is, was, and is to be.
I am unaware of all that is.
With you, O Great One, I shall realize the Truth.
With gratitude, I honour Your Name, which is many.
With humility, I bow to Your Form, which is changing.
With trust, I merge my mind with Yours to become the One Mind.
With you as my guide, teacher, Guru, I know I will come to know my true
self, the One Self of all.
Your name is Sathya Sai. You are Truth. The Truth that I am.

—*Daine McCabe, Milwaukee Center, U. S. A.*

Song of Shankari

You look at me,
And my origin is mirrored in your glance.
Recalling, I fall
Far out into an abyss of countless eons.
Far, far back before the very moment of creation.
There we became two,
And the great Dream of Manifestation exploded into an infinity
Of time and space;
And I, flowing into countless forms, searched and searched and searched
For You ...
I found a myriad suns beyond imagination,
Each blazing with boundless beauty,
Yet the greatest of these was less than You in Your fiery radiance,
Your voice called through my dreams: 'Stay here—I am near.'
But I pursued You across eternity,
Leaving a trail of bitter tears, that traced
The tortuous trackways of my soul, like drying stars
Falling sadly earthwards in the dark skies of my delusion.
Weary, I fell into forgetfulness, drifting in despair,
My Divine Quest forgotten.
Now You stand before me, and I awaken

To the Unified Being.
Beauteous OM, I have loved You with a deathless devotion.
Beyond reason I have loved; beyond propriety;
Beyond what you required of me.
With this love I pierced beyond the dark circle that marks the limit
Of Your matchless Cosmos.
In my blindness I would have placed this soul in jeopardy to find You;
Who was ever my solace and my wholeness.
Ah, Parameshwara!
Flee no more before me through the mirage of Maya;
I am weary of incompleteness.
Call me back into Your primordial Bliss,
That this vast universe
May fold in upon itself,
And once more
Cease to be.

—*Marjie Smith, Hatfield, U. K.*

World Bal Vikas Rally

In connection with the observance of 1983 as the Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas International Year, a week long World Programme has been drawn up for December, 1983.

Immediately after Christmas Day, there will be a three-day Bal Vikas Teachers' Conference. Thousands of Bal Vikas gurus from all countries where there are Bal Vikas centres will participate in the conference. Bhagavan will inaugurate the Conference on December 27th.

There will be a grand International Rally of Bal Vikas children on 29th December In the vast open air amphitheatre that is being got ready in the Vidyagiri Campus. Galleries which can seat thousands of spectators are being constructed on a hillside adjoining the hill top where the administrative building of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning stands out as a shrine dedicated to the Goddess of Wisdom.

Various cultural programmes will be presented on the special open air stage that is being got ready for the rally.

Bhagavan will deliver His discourse to the valedictory meeting on December 31.

Thousands of Sathya Sai Seva Dal volunteers will be present for service during the week.

(In view of the Bal Vikas Programme in December, there will be no conference of Sri Sathya Seva Organisations in November 1983.)

Yajna-Jnana Dasara

Next to Bhagavan's Birthday celebrations, the Dasara at Prasanthi Nilayam is the most sacred event to which thousands of devotees look forward every year. This year the Dasara became doubly memorable for the austerity with which the celebrations were conducted and the series of unforgettable discourses delivered by Bhagavan on the seven days of the Veda Purusha Saptah Jnana Yajna from October 10 to 16th. Unprecedentedly large numbers of devotees were present this year.

The celebrations began with Kalasasthapanam on October 7th. On October 8th the annual Hospital Day of the Sri Sathya Sai Hospital at Prasanthi Nilayam was celebrated with Dr. O. Rajeswari as guest speaker. Bhagavan's discourse provided new insights into the role of food and health in man's spiritual journey. On the 9th, there was Narayana Seva, when nearly ten thousand villagers, men, women and children, were fed and clothes were distributed to several thousands by Bhagavan.

Unlike in previous years, the Saptah Yajna began on the morning of 10th October in the jam-packed Poornachandra Hall with Bhagavan as Veda Purusha dispensing with the conventional ceremonial entry into the Hall to the accompaniment of Vedic chants and Nadaswaram music. To many devotees who had looked forward to the traditional ceremonial entry, this year's innovation seemed to mark a new emphasis on spiritual practice rather than external forms as the primary requisite for Sadhakas. To compensate, as it were, for the absence of ceremonial formalities, a larger number of Ritwiks had been brought together on the Yajna platform. There were two Ritwiks performing Suryanamaskar and two others were engaged in Sahasralingarchana, while a larger number of scholars participated in scriptural chantings than in the last two years. The Yajna included Athirudra Homa and Devi Puja. Bhagavan gave Darshan during the morning hours at the Yajna Vedika and moved among the thousands of devotees who were witnessing the Yajna and listening to the hymns.

On the evening of the 10th, before Bhagavan delivered his discourse, Prof. N. Kasturi spoke on how the Saptah Yajna was initiated by Bhagavan over twenty years ago. He recalled that it was a thrilling experience for all those who had witnessed that first Yajna. On the last day of that Yajna the Ritwiks who had participated in the Yajna desired to behold Bhagavan as the Tribhuvana Vijaya Sriman Narayana. As though by divine Sankalpa, an ardent devotee from Bombay had brought a giant-size wooden figure of Adishesha which was installed on the platform. When Bhagavan reclined on the coils of the improvised Adishesha, the Ritwiks and all others present in the Hall experienced the bliss of seeing the Divine in His own celestial home. When one of the

Ritwicks observed that it all appeared like a drama, Bhagavan remarked: "I have come to play my role in the Divine drama."

Bhagavan's discourse was on the theme that every man started his life with three debts—to God, to Rishis and to parents—and Yajnas and Karmas were performed to discharge these debts. Bhagavan's discourses on all the seven days were Illuminating expositions of the various obligations of man in the fulfillment of his role as a human being and in the achievement of his final goal of Mergence in the Divine. (Reports of the discourses appear elsewhere).

During the seven days of the Yajna, Bhagavan had graciously arranged for Harikatha Kalakshepams by leading members of the Sanathana Bhagavata Bhakta Samajam, and speeches by prominent speakers and some students of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. The Harikatha discourses were on "Sati Sakku Bai", "Hanumat Sathyagraham", "Mira Bai", "Krishna Thula Bharam" and "Krishna Raayabharam". Among the speakers in the evening meetings were the nonagenarians, Swami Karunyananda and Sri Sista Chandramouli Sastry, Prof. Anil Kumar of the Christian College, Guntur, Gopichandran, Sanjay Sahni and Abhishek Dubey, students of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute, and Prof. V. K. Gokak, Vice-chancellor.

On the 14th, Bhagavan released "Smruti-83"—an excellently produced volume containing 40 articles on Bhagavan's life and message from the staff and students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute and a few others. Besides an inspiring message from, Bhagavan, the volume carries four beautiful pictures in colour of Swami. Mr. Sandeep Sastri, Lecturer in Politics in the Brindavan College, who presented the volume to Bhagavan, was graciously presented with a ring which was materialised for the occasion.

The Saptah Yajna concluded on the morning of the 16th after Poornahuti and the adoration of Bhagavan as the Veda Purusha by the Ritwicks. Swami then went round the Poornachandra Auditorium sprinkling the holy Mantra-charged Yajna-theertham on the thousands of devotees who considered themselves as thrice-blessed by Bhagavan's benediction.

Bhagavan's valedictory address in the morning was a stirring call to the devotees to develop the true spirit of Yajna (sacrifice) and to bear in mind that Tyaga (Renunciation) is the only means to realise Divinity. Swami exhorted visitors to the Ashram not to fritter away their time in idle and purposeless talk but to concentrate their minds and actions on spiritual matters and make worth use of their stay in the Abode of Sublime Peace.

The Dasara celebrations concluded with the Jhoola Festival at night when Bhagavan, in immaculate white robe, reclining on the glittering silver swing, gave bliss-filling Darshan to the thousands of devotees present. Srimati P. Suseela and party rendered some songs on Bhagavan on the occasion.

“Unity in Divinity”:

Bhagavan's Message to Rome Conference

"It is only when one is established in the Spirit that one can understand the springs and the nature of society. Till then one will be caught up in the differences based upon caste, colour, nation, race and religion. All the attachments and hatreds arising out of these differences are born out of selfishness. Once the Truth of the Indwelling Spirit is recognised, there dawns the awareness that the world is one family," declared Bhagavan Baba, in his divine message to the International Symposium in Rome, held on October 30 and 31, on the theme, "Unity is Divinity".

In His message Bhagavan said:

Embodiments of the Divine Spirit!

The ancient saying, "All roads lead to Rome," has been vindicated today. It is not without great significance that people from many countries have gathered in this historic city. You have to realise that you have come here to learn things which you have never heard before, and to derive inspiration from new ideals about the human adventure.

This conference is not concerned with anyone religion, nation, race, caste or individual. It is intended to reveal the essential Truth that underlies all scriptures and to strive for the peace and welfare of all people through the establishment of Truth and Righteousness.

The whole of mankind belongs to one Religion—the Religion of Man. For all men God is the Father. As the children of one God all men are brothers. This conference is therefore a family gathering. It is not a meeting of nationalities and religions. It is a meeting of minds. It does not relate to any one culture of philosophy. It is concerned with the divine way of life that is implicit in the teachings of all religions. Its purpose is to see Unity in Divinity.

The basic Truth in all religions, irrespective of country or race, is one and the same. The philosophic ideas or the practices and methods of approach may vary. But the final objective and goal is only one. All religions proclaim the Unity of Divinity and preach the cultivation of Universal Love without regard to caste, creed, country or colour. Those who are ignorant of this basic Truth develop pride and ego because of their own religion. Such people are creating great confusion and chaos by fragmenting Divinity. To confine and divide the Infinite Divine into such narrow compartments is treason to the Divine. The basis for a spiritual, God-based life is the indwelling Spirit—the Atman. The body is the home of Spirit.

Life in society should also conform to this spiritual basis. Man, however, bases his life on the belief that the body alone is real. It is to rid him of this error that he has to be taught about Spirit. Mankind has to realise that both the individual and society are manifestations of the

Divine Will and that the Divine permeates the Universe. Only by recognising this Truth can man give up his ego and lead a life of devotion to duty. Society should not become a cockpit of selfish individuals, but a community of divinely guided Individuals.

With the progress of science man imagines that he is the lord of the universe and he tends to forget the Divine. Although man today has gone to the moon and is exploring outer space, if he were to consider the innumerable mysteries and wonders in creation yet to be known, he will realise that these are far beyond the limited capacity of mind and intelligence. The more man discovers the secrets and mysteries of the cosmos, the more he will realise that God is the creator and motivator of all creation. All religions are agreed upon this Truth. All that man can do is to strive through his limited intelligence and knowledge to understand the invisible and infinite Divine and learn to worship and adore Him.

Instead of realising his innate divinity, man is caught up in the prison house of his own material achievements. Greater than all his scientific and technological progress is man himself as a being endowed with the divine consciousness. By choosing to regard only the material world as real, it may be possible to bring about the prosperity of a scientific, technological and materialistic society for a time. But if, in the process, human selfishness, greed and hatred develop, as they usually do, society will destroy itself. If, on the contrary, the essential divinity of man is realised, mankind can build up a great society based on unity and on adherence to the divine principle of Love. This profound change must begin in the minds of individuals. When individuals change, society will change. And when society changes, the whole world will change. Unity is the secret of social progress, and service to society is the means to promote it. Everyone therefore should devote himself to such service in a spirit of dedication.

It should be realised that material comfort is not the sole aim of social living. A society in which the individuals are concerned only about material welfare will not be able to achieve harmony and peace. Even if it is achieved, it will only be a patched-up harmony for, in such a society, the strong will oppress the weak. Nor will an equal distribution of the bounties of nature ensure anything but a nominal equality. How will the equal distribution of material goods achieve equality with reference to desires and abilities? Desires have, therefore, to be controlled by developing the spiritual approach and diverting the mind from material objects to the Divine seated in each one's heart. Once the Truth of the Indwelling Spirit is recognised, there dawns the awareness that the world is one family. One is then filled with Divine Love which becomes the driving force for all of one's actions. Man turns away from the pursuit of endless desires to the search for peace and equanimity. By converting the love for material things Into Love of God one experiences the Divine. This experience is not something beyond man. It is, in fact, a part of the inherent nature of man. It is the secret of his humanness and his divinity.

Whatever one's religion may be, everyone should cultivate respect for other faiths. One who does not have such an attitude of tolerance and respect for other religions is not a true follower of his own religion. It is not enough merely to adhere strictly to the practices of one's own religion. One should also try to see the essential unity of all religions. Only then will man be able to experience the oneness of Divinity. There should be no kind of coercion or compulsion in the

sphere of religion. Religious matters should be discussed calmly and dispassionately. Do not entertain the feeling that one's religion is superior and another's inferior. Conflicts on the basis of religion should be totally eliminated. To divide men on grounds of religion is a crime against humanity.

Man today imagines that he knows everything about Nature and the universe. But of what use is all this knowledge if man does not know himself? It is only when he understands himself that he will be able to know the Truth about the external world. Man's Inner Reality cannot be known by exploring the world outside. When he turns his vision Inward and realises his essential divinity, he will acquire an equal-mindedness towards all beings. Out of that feeling of oneness he will experience the Bliss that passeth understanding.

ROME SYMPOSIUM REFLECTIONS:

"Are You Ready?"

This is how one individual experienced the first international Sai conference held outside India, the Symposium in Rome at the end of October 1983. Each of the three thousand odd participants present must have seen it in a slightly different light. Yet it was evident that each of the speakers, all of whom came from different parts of the earth and different backgrounds, held a strong and common conviction that, from the enthusiastic response of the audience, was also reflected there: a belief in the imperative need and the inevitability of mankind living as one family under the Fatherhood of God, in love and divine bliss. This divine call comes from everywhere—within and without the individual.

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba did not attend the conference, but his spirit was obviously the guiding motive of all activities. As we sang together the last few bhajans after the final plenary assembly, I suddenly felt my slight disappointment at his absence disappear, for it came to me clearly, "Baba did not take a plane and come over here, but He is here...not just one of Him, but over 3,000 Babas: each one of us. We are Baba."

This conclusion followed logically another insight described by one of the conference's galaxy of speakers, Sir George Trevelyan. Sir George recalled a scientist addressing a conference on the holograph suddenly pausing in mid-speech, and starting to fumble for words, struck by a shattering thought. The holograph is a three-dimensional photograph made by a laser beam. The scientist had just finished saying that if a holographic plate is broken, each of the fragments is found to contain a complete picture of the subject when it occurred to him: "The world is a holograph and the shattered pieces are each human mind." Sir George stressed that the universe is chiefly mind with matter as an outgrowth of mind, and that the human race are co-creators with God.

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has said, "The universe is my mansion," and in the Bible it says, "In my father's house are many mansions." Are we then those mansions in his house?

To measure the impact of such a conference is beyond the scope of this little papery we shall come to realize it individually and collectively as the days, months and years go by. Much was happening, and one could take in only a part of it. The theme of the conference was explored in several directions.

Rounding off the conference, Dr. Gokak spoke of the positive aspects of the purity that enlightens. It is not enough just to get rid of bad qualities. Cultivate what promotes nobility of nature, what is good and beautiful: nature itself, human character, friendship and love, the arts, science and technology which can also be beautiful, and the nearness to the soul itself which gives us the capacity to appreciate beauty and truth. The intellect at the service of the soul interprets intuition clearly. We know we are in touch with the divine when all the chatter and disharmony within disappear, and we are happy and have no doubts. We then become a channel for the divine. Dr. Gokak summed up the messages this conference has for participants and the world around:

1. A world family can live under the same roof for three days in harmony. Why not longer and more widely?

2. World culture does exist, and national cultural styles are a part of it. We see Indian songs sung here beautifully in Rome by people from all over the world. How wonderful it would be to see Indian students come to Italy and bask in the superb cultural tradition there, and bring western music, back to India.

3. The people offering their services voluntarily to make the conference run smoothly—in the office, welcome service, kitchen, or as singers, interpreters or technicians did so with joy and love, and exemplary self-control. To be with them made the symposium a happy, unique, memorable experience, for we felt surrounded by love. Many, yearning for love and goodwill, would be happy to experience such joyful, loving service as the Italian followers of Sri Sathya Sai Baba have radiated here.

4. Finally, the conference asks those present and all mankind, "Are you ready for the grace of the Lord?" For it will surely prevail and bring victory to humanity here on earth.

The Message That is Wanted

The whole spirit of the conference was love, uprightness, and the courage to come out and express a belief in these qualities in the context of our troubled world. Speakers and audiences coming from all over the world expressed and responded to a strong feeling of unity in the conviction that Sat Baba's message is what the world is longing for and that it will prevail over all. This current of beneficent power was felt at all times, whether alone in one's room, listening to an inking speaker, chanting the Om in the Puja room, or chatting in the lobby with someone last seen in India. Flags of 35 nations, representing the participants, were hung along the front of the stage in a colourful drapery.

—*Helen Heubi, Geneva*

Men try to know everything about everybody else; but, they do not try to know about themselves! The attempt to know about the knower is called Sadhana; knowledge about the knower is Atma Vidya. It is only through that knowledge that man can live in peace anywhere. For, when you know that you are but a spark of the Divine and that all else are the same Divine sparks, you look upon all the reverence and true Love; your heart is filled with supreme joy; and canker of egoism is rendered ineffective. Man is seeking joy in far places and peace in quiet spots; but, the spring of joy is in his heart, the heaven of peace is in himself. Even when he walks on the moon, man has to take with him, his fears, his anxieties, his prejudices and his pet aversions. Have faith in God, and in the correctness of moral living. Then, you can have peace and joy, whatever may be the fare that fortune offers you.

—Baba

A Trinity Chair for Swami

Seven years ago in the month of May I dreamt of a Chair. I remember it vividly because the dream was almost like a vision: through an intense outburst of light rose what I could dimly perceive was a chair. When this picture faded I could still see in my mind the top of the chair in definite outline of a triangle. In my heart came the word, "Trinity". A Trinity chair! I asked myself in amazement. For a long time I was unable to forget this dream because I felt that the triangle as well as the bars seemed to have been created by the bright light that came from the centre, wherever the centre was.

In the morning when I awoke I was so shaken by this strange experience that I continued to sit in my bed and to cogitate. I then knew that I had to turn it all into a living thing. The chair began to take a concrete shape within me, and even obsessed me for some time.

However, it was not easy to start making it. Doggedly I pursued my dream, refusing to allow the many obstacles in my way to deter me. I don't know what compelled me to go on. During those months of struggle I had experimented continuously with different timbers, and as if a power from above willed it, the final choice fell on African walnut of an entrancing rich dark brown with a purple sheen on it. Soon it became a total involvement.

When at last the chair was made and I contemplated on it with a secret emotion that bordered on shock that I (who was I, I often asked myself) had made it, quite staggering myself, I got yet another surprise waiting for me. Without knowing it I had used most of the important holy numbers: the three, the seven, and the nine. In fact, the chair looked only suitable for God! I did not know very much about Sai Baba then. But I had begun to be on the fringe of hearing about Him. Had I made the chair for Sai Baba?

I think so. For, I was actually able to bring it to India by air, with the Customs officials accepting its large presence with me in the most natural way, and then by train to Dharmavaram

station, and finally by ekka-tonga to the bus stand, where, believe it or not, stood a van coming to Puttaparthi that fitted exactly the measurements of the huge card board box.

Came the beautiful morning when Baba stood in front of me. I gazed at Him unable to open my mouth. But in the Interview room I forced myself to tell him of the chair as a Birthday gift. "Yes, yes," He said, "I know, I know." And Baba began to describe the shape of the chair with his finger, in the air, step by step, up, to the top of the triangle, adding, "I know, the chair is inside a box which is tied with a yellow cord. Bring it tomorrow." I sat stunned by the detailed description of my chair and His acceptance of it.

Two months ago I was in Athens with my family visiting my parents when I was suddenly invited to see a furniture exhibition in Milan. Before I knew it I was joyously designing and making a chair for the conference in Rome where it became the symbol of the symposium on "Unity is Divinity, Purity is Enlightenment." I was never so surprised in my life, for now I not only attended the conference but became an active participant—with the Trinity chair right in the centre of the show! I imagined that this was Baba's way of being present at the proceedings as per his promise.

Mystic Numbers

The Greek scholar-mathematician Pythagoras (pita-guru?) believed that all things are numbers, that heaven and earth are a musical scale and so are numbers. Trinity, or Trimurti, means "three": a beginning, middle and end. Father; Son, the Holy Spirit as one Godhead.

The spine of the chair is made up of seven slim elongated bars supporting the trinity, triangle at the top. Seven, as some of us know, is considered both occult and mystical: seven days of creation, seven continents, seven phases of the moon, seven representing Uranus the heavenly planet.

The base of the chair's spine begins with six squares: two times three is double perfection. The squares with four corners (which could represent justice, equality, hard work and discipline) extend themselves one hundred and sixty two centimeters (one plus six plus two make nine—which is Brahman!) and end at the top, step by step (which Baba had described with his finger in the air) of three centimeters each till the apex is reached—where sits OM! To this day I am astonished that the final height of the triangle is eighteen centimeters—eight plus one is nine. From the bottom to the extreme top the length of the chair measures one eight zero centimeters.

Was there to be a pattern of spiritual evolvment for me when I dreamt of the Trinity chair? Most certainly it has brought me closer to Sai Baba, my guru of many lives.

—Chrislos Kalogeridis

THE CALL FROM ROME:

"God has a Plan"

The morning session on the second day was devoted to the addresses of the three guest speakers, Sir George Trevelyan, recipient of the Alternative Nobel Prize and President of the Wrekin Trust, United Kingdom, Mr. Eugene Roy Davis, Founder President of Centre for Spiritual Awareness, Lakemont, Georgia (U.S.A.) and Mr. Victor Kanu, former Ambassador of Sierra Leone in U.K. and other countries.

In a scintillating address on "Towards Human Unity," Sir George Trevelyan struck an extremely hopeful note about the prospects for human unity thanks to the powerful spiritual forces at work in the present. Recalling the words of Bhagavan Baba, Sir George said:

"Listen to the words of the Avatar: 'I have come to repair the ancient highway to God. Avatars do not succeed or fail; what they will must occur, what they plan must take place'. And again: 'I have come to inscribe a golden chapter in the history of humanity, wherein falsehood will fail, truth will triumph and virtue will reign. Character will confer power then, not knowledge or inventive skill or wealth. Wisdom will be enthroned in the councils of the nations.' Mankind is to be transformed by lighting the Lamp of Love in our hearts.

"That, in concentrated form, summarizes our whole situation. Those who are consciously and by free choice attuned to the Divine Light have no need to fear. We 'are all ambassadors of God and an ambassador is not entitled to despair, however grave the world situation appears to be. Many people believe God has a plan but that it has gone hopelessly wrong and that the Almighty must be distracted by its failure. So comes the assurance which is vital to us and gives us courage, 'I carry it out.' Believe that. He both has a plan and carries it out. God has complete control of the whole situation.

"He can afford to let individuals go as far as they wish into darkness and confusion, knowing that when time is ripe they will come back to him. This is happening now and will manifest when He decides. Once we grasp this concept, we are filled with a new joy. The mere fact that the world situation is outwardly so bad and mad justifies us in grasping this superb hope that there could be an apocalyptic change in consciousness and a flooding of humanity with the Power of Love.

"For us who have seen a glimmer, a gleam, a flooding of the Other Light, the Great Hope, it is absolutely valid to throw all we have into this supreme possibility and certainty that God has a plan and is carrying it out and has complete control of the situation. There never was such a drama and it is an honour and joy that we each have an active part to play. What a generation in which to be alive!

Leap in Consciousness

"Ours is the first generation that can really grasp the great concept that Humankind is One Organism. We are each of us cells in the body of Humanity. Grasp that Idea and look at it. What happens in our body when cells choose to abandon the programming of the Whole and go their

own errant way? You have cancer. What happens when human cells, personalities fired by egoism, desire, greed and aggression, decide to go their own way to get power or pleasure for themselves? We become cancer cells in the Body of Humanity. So the world is sick unto death. But each individual cell, having consciousness and free will, can choose to stop in its reckless tracks and re-attune to the Divine programming. Then it can lift into the Light. Then it opens itself to the in-flooding of the Love, which is the true life blood of the soul. We stand on the threshold of a change in consciousness, a quantum leap from the limitations of self--consciousness into the expansion of Cosmic Consciousness. Despite all its present internal divisions and conflicts, mankind is in process of discovering that it is One.

The Power of Love

"Sense the thrill of being alive at this turning point. Mankind must be allowed to reach the point of despair so that the cry goes up for help. God must play the game of brinkmanship and will not show his hand fully until the moment of supreme tension when the agonized cry will be sent up. Then He can manifest. In the world agony He, as the Supreme Intelligence and power of Love, is present everywhere. Personified in the Avatar, this transforming power is being released and is available to all who will attune and open the play. Watch when real crisis looms and then expect the manifestation. He has given his word and will not fail. Much must be swept away to allow the New Age to dawn and the New Humanity come to birth."

Dawn of the Age of Enlightenment

Speaking on "Spiritual Responsibilities in our fast awakening world," Mr. Eugene Roy Davis said:

"We all possess a common sameness. We are expressions of the One Grand Life. We are, therefore, innately endowed with all of the attributes, characteristics, and even the capacities of the Godhead! To become conscious of our real nature and to actualize, to 'make real' our capacities, THIS IS THE REAL PURPOSE OF OUR LIFE ON PLANET EARTH!

"We can never hope to help our world in the direction of ultimate good, ultimate fulfilment, so long as we are struggling to do so from the personal understanding that we are limited human beings. It is when God becomes increasingly expressive through and, as us, that we are able to be open conduits through which Light and Power can flow to fulfill Its purposes. God has a plan and a purpose for his creation. The worlds are formed out of the very substance of God and the Life of God enlivens the worlds. Here is what Sathya Sai Baba said during a talk at Prasanthi Nilayam in November of last year: 'The presence of God, the vision of the Absolute, is not a state to be attained or newly achieved. God or the Absolute is the very nature of the Self. The individual is the indivisible expression of God'. We are, therefore, to take our stand on truth, on the teachings of Vedic seers, on that which is revealed truth and not upon opinions and theories.

"During the summer of 1980, news media carried a story to millions concerning the condition of mankind and Planet Earth. The theme was a challenge to all of us. If present trends continue, the world will be more polluted, less stable ecologically and more vulnerable to disruption than the world in which we now live. One view of world conditions is that man is heading for disaster

and seems unable to prevent it. Another view is that the divine nature in man will awaken, due to mounting pressures and needs to solve problems, so that, in the long run, the condition of man on the planet will be better than even the most positive optimist might hope for.

"We cannot underestimate the challenge before us. Scientists and sages agree that we live in a time of crisis. We have pulled away from the Age of Ignorance to a degree and we are moving in the direction of the Age of Enlightenment. Many say that we are now in but the dawning of that True Golden Age—and so it seems.

The Divine Will at Work

"What those who yet think in materialistic terms do not know is that there is currently a powerful evolutionary movement which is being felt throughout creation and this movement is nothing less than the urge of God to fulfill his purposes. Some see this activity of God in the world as Divine Intervention ...and I feel this to be so.

"Creation was not a divine accident. The whole process is being nourished, sustained and directed by God. But we must also do our part ...because it is partly through us that God is able to manifest Himself and fulfill his purposes. It is inspiring to behold the fullness of God manifesting through another person, even through a saint. It is also necessary for us... individually to surrender selfishness and ego so that God can unfold in and, as us.

"I clearly recall my first visit to Sai Baba, in October, 1972. A small group of us were invited to visit Baba at his house in Whitefield, near Bangalore. We sat on the floor at the entrance of the house. Baba knew of my background, that I had begun my spiritual training with my guru, Paramahansa Yogananda. Baba looked at me and said 'It is not enough for one to be a disciple of a great master. One must awaken his own inner nature and also become the master'. This is the intention of a true spiritual teacher—to waken others to the realization of God that he, himself, has.

"Central to all enlightenment teachings is emphasis upon the importance of making the world a better place by assisting others in practical ways, as well as to encourage spiritual growth. I know that all of us here share the vision of a better world and that we are willing to do all we can to assist this world in the direction of awakening transformation and fulfillment. ...We are not, I feel, merely to help others to live a more comfortable material existence—although it is obvious that material needs must be met. We are to also encourage our brothers and sisters to acknowledge their own innate divinity and the divine nature of others. When we are able to truly love another, when we are able to see through the appearance of personality and behaviour to that central Divine Essence, we can then work with people as we ought to work with them and treat them with non-judgemental respect.

Evolutionary Transformation

"We are here to make some useful contribution to the ongoing of the world. I am so impressed with Baba's emphasis upon service to others, as revealed in his words, his actions and in the many projects and activities which have unfolded under his guidance. Each person here at this

symposium is an important part of the grand evolutionary transformation now being experienced by mankind. It is with thanks and love that I acknowledge the tremendous work and influence of Sathya Sai Baba. I have known of him for about twelve years, have visited the ashram in India on two occasions—the last, being in November, 1981, when the University system was dedicated—and I maintain close contact with the movement through the publications and many devotees. Not a day goes by but that I attune my mind to his and am uplifted because of such attunement as well as inspired and motivated to continue in the work of humanity enlightenment. I pledge to Baba and to all who are in a position of organizational responsibility—as to you who are here gathered today—my continued support. Whatever, at any time, I can do to assist this great cause in which we are involved, I am willing and responsive to do. May we be firmly established in God-realization. May we work together for mankind's true good. May God's will be done."

"The hope of mankind"

Greeting the delegates in his stentorian voice with "Jai Sai Ram," Mr. Victor Kanu, Vice-President of the Spiritual Association of Great Britain, said:

"The Advent of Sathya Sai Baba, God Incarnate, is the greatest event of our times. Born to restore man to his rightful place in God; born to make man free and to make him realise his true self; born to awaken the divinity that is in him, Sathya Sai Baba is the hope of mankind today and the hope of mankind yet to be born.

"It is gratifying to note that the first World Conference ever to be held outside India should take place in Rome—a city that is of great historical significance, a city that is a centre of the Christian Religion, a city that was the capital of the Roman Empire. For the Sathya Sai Organization of Italy to organise a World Conference for the first time, to discuss the Advent of Sathya Sai Baba in relation to Purity, Unity and Divinity makes yet another significant landmark in the annals of World History.

"God moves in mysterious ways. For was It not Simon of Cyrene, a man from Africa, who helped Jesus bear the cross as he was flogged, punched, pushed and dragged along the way? In doing so Simon of Cyrene identified himself with Jesus, his purpose on earth and his suffering on the way to Golgotha. He identified Africa with God and His numerous Incarnations. Africa played a significant role in the growth and development of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The first continent outside India which the present Divine Incarnation, Sathya Sai Baba, visited was Africa.

"Africa may not be scientifically or technologically advanced. She is often described as a Third World continent but her spiritual awareness and consciousness have never been low, indifferent and negative. Her people had God at the centre of their lives. And the continent had, by and large, been a continent of religious tolerance, accepting and encouraging the growth of all religions and forms of worship. And so it is with profound humility and gratitude that I speak on behalf of my country and our people, because I am convinced and firmly believe that Sathya Sai Baba has come to save all of mankind.

"The problems of Africa are multifarious. These have arisen simply because the great spiritual traditions and beliefs which the people of that great Continent once had are now given a low priority. We, the people of Africa, have allowed ourselves to be carried away by the marvels of science and technology; by the demonstration effects of advanced consumption standards, and by the false feeling and belief that we have been forsaken by God. The Independence Movement of Africa, which ushered in political freedom for most countries, brought many blessings as well as many woes. In terms of material prosperity and advancement, Africa has progressed tremendously. Yet, in spite of the advancement in material welfare, the African Continent is riddled with dissensions and torn by conflict. It is true to say that whereas the material advances have been in arithmetic proportions, the moral and spiritual weaknesses have progressed geometrically.

"And I believe that the solution to the problems of Africa lies in the acceptance and implementation of the teachings of Sathya Sai Baba, more specifically His Human Values programme which He introduced in India and which has now taken the form of a world movement. The acceptance and practice of the Human Values of Truth, Love, Peace, Right Conduct, and Non-violence are the only saving grace of Africa and the hope of the world. May the example of this Conference be the beginnings of the spiritual reawakening and strengthening of Sierra Leone and the entire Continent of Africa! May the deliberations of this conference and the activities of the Sathya Sai Organisation be extended to Africa, so that the people of Africa can play an effective role in the Sai Mission."

Unity of Mankind

The afternoon session was devoted to presentation of reports of the various committees. Presenting the report of the committee on "The unity of Mankind," V. K. Narasimhan said that the Rome Conference was just one facet of "a global spiritual movement under the guidance and inspiration of Bhagavan Baba for transforming and unifying mankind. It is clear that powerful cosmic forces are at work to transform the human condition and lead mankind to an era of harmony, peace, goodwill, and godliness."

Narasimhan said: "The advent of Bhagavan Baba marks a new chapter in the history of mankind. His avowed mission, in his own words, 'is to achieve the supreme task of uniting the entire mankind as one family through the bond of brotherhood, of arming and illumining the Inner Reality of each being in order to reveal the Divine, which is the basis on which the entire cosmos rests, and of instructing all to recognise the Divine Heritage that binds man to man so that man can rid himself of the animal and rise to the Divine.'

"The paradox of the present situation is that we have today all the technology and resources for building a genuine cooperative global community. At the same time, the political barriers and, what is more, the intellectual and ideological barriers remain. Suspicions have continued to grow. National self-interest continues to dominate discussions in international forums. The problem, therefore, is how to strike at the root of the suspicions and prepare the ground for a genuine co-operative world community.

"In Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's mission to unite mankind, the process of transformation is taking place at two levels. At the individual level spiritually earnest people in many parts of the world are being influenced by his message and life to transcend their own limited loyalties and to develop a respect for people of all religions and cultivate a genuine sense of unity with all human beings regardless of race, religion, language or ideology. At the national level, leaders of the various countries are increasingly being influenced by Bhagavan's message to transcend narrow national and sectarian loyalties. People from over 34 countries have assembled in this Conference to demonstrate their faith in a Divine Order as the foundation of the universe and to express their determination to strive for the creation of a New World Order based on adherence to the eternal principles of Truth, Righteousness, Peace and Love.

"All transformation, Bhagavan has said, begins with the individual. The purification of our own character and the cultivation of qualities which make us worthy instruments of the Divine is the first step. Together with individual sadhana must go the process of divinisation of everything with which one comes into contact.

"There are today millions of Sai devotees all over the world. They belong to different faiths and they adhere to their respective religions, with the deepest faith in the form and name to which they are attached. The Sai movement is not intended to promote a new cult or start a new religion. The advent of Bhagavan Baba is primarily intended to awaken in every human being a living faith in God as the Inner Motivator and Sustainer in everyone. The real miracle we are witnessing today in many countries is the awakening of this faith among innumerable persons through experiences which are unique to each person. When Sai devotees experience this Divine Grace in their lives and live up to the measure of their capacities and opportunities in the areas in which they work, we may soon expect a tremendous process of transformation all over the world. We must do this work in a spirit of deep faith in the Divine, with humility, love and, above all, courage."

Sai Ideals in Daily Life

Dr. John Hislop, Chairman of the Committee on "Sai Ideals in Daily Life," in his report, stated that there was intense participation of delegates in the general discussions in the Committee.

"There were two aspects to the topic: the spiritual life of the individual, and the role of the individual as a member of society. The core of Bhagavan's teaching is that Divinity is in everyone. Bhagavan says that God is love. That means that we are love. He says that love is His form. This means that love is our form. If we play host to lesser feelings such as hatred, resentment, envy, fear, anger, etc., then we have filled our hearts and minds with that which creates a false separation from our real Self—our real Self being Love. The task of our spiritual life then becomes a concentrated effort to purify the mind and heart. Bhagavan says that when the heart and mind are purified, the truth of man's divinity is revealed in a flash.

"The Sai teaching directs us to see all diversity as transient and ephemeral, and to look always to the One Reality. Each time we meet a person we should use our intelligence to look through the impermanent personality and see God as the One and only Reality of that person. The

practice of the Constant Presence of the Divine is equally necessary and equally beneficial. With Bhagavan as our closest companion, moment-to-moment, it will not be possible for us to have ill-will towards any one or to entertain the dark moods of anger, envy and fear. It was agreed that besides being deeply engaged in spiritual life, Sai devotees have a duty to the people amongst whom they live, a duty to mould society into a spiritual community. Society can be basically influenced only through personal example. Through their righteous conduct and their harmonious life, Sai devotees should prompt others to enquire into the source of this undisturbed peace and unalloyed happiness. Sai devotees should elevate society through Service, especially to the weaker members of society. Love must be the basis for service to society, Love that is awakened in us when we contemplate on, the Love with which Bhagavan grants us His Grace and His Blessings."

"Science and Spirituality"

Dr. Samuel Sandweiss, Chairman of the Committee on "Science and Spirituality," said: "The hopes raised by the advances of science and technology have proved dupes. While science has overcome the barriers of time, distance and nationality, it has done little to promote better understanding between man and man, nation and nation. Never has there been so much distrust, hatred and violence as witnessed today in almost every countryThe scientific community must take a new hard look at the central spiritual questions—does God exist, does man have a soul—is devotion a viable path of inquiry providing both spiritual and scientific insight? Sai Baba tells us that a science based on spiritual insights, attitudes and values would operate in a profoundly different manner than at present and would be a mighty instrument for the betterment of man's condition on earth ...We are drawing closer to scientific confirmation of the intuitive insights of the great spiritual systems which see mind as well as the material cosmos itself as creations of Universal Consciousness (the Divine)."

Referring to Bhagavan's advent, Dr. Sandweiss said: "Perhaps more than ever before in all of recorded history we have the chance of observing striking evidence of Universal Consciousness in a living man who can be approached and measured. He can transcend the laws of physics and chemistry. I've therefore to describe and declare that he is a phenomenon, that he is a transcendental being, that he is divine... When scientists stop identifying with the intellect, and through spiritual practice become humble, devotional and filled with a sense of service to mankind, then the scientific mind and its pursuits will be truly transformed and there will be unity, peace and happiness as a result."

Mr. Howard Murphet, Chairman of the Committee on "The Essence of all Religions," recalled Swami's statement that "There is only one religion, the religion of Love." He said that all the main religions are agreed on the five vital matters: one, the concept of the Soul's separation from its Divine source; two, the Soul's fundamental urge for reunion, which finds expression in Divine love; three, the recognition that the reasoning, logical mind cannot take us back to God; four, that the psychological tools for projecting us beyond the mind into the "spiritual heart" are basically the same for all religions; five, that God is everywhere, but the easiest place to realize Him is within one's own heart. It is the duty and privilege of Sai devotees to help bring tolerance and heart-unity to religious systems so long in conflict.

Mr. V. Srinivasan, in his committee's report on "Human Qualities and Divine Nature," said that all that man needs is to cultivate unity of thought, word and deed within himself to reunite with the Divine. Unity within man will create unity with other men.

After presentation of the Committees' reports, Prof. Gokak delivered his concluding address. He referred to the successful manner in which the symposium had been conducted and said that the conference had clearly reaffirmed Bhagavan's Message: "Unity is Divinity; Purity is Enlightenment." It was up to Sai devotees all over the world to make this message a vital part of their daily life and serve as an example to the world.

The President presented to the three Guest speakers and the Chairmen of the five committees specially made silver medallions carrying the bust of Bhagavan Baba as mementoes.

The historic conference concluded after Arati offered by Antonio Craxi to Bhagavan Baba. The entire gathering stood up to recite the Arati Song and hail in unison: "Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba Ki Jai"

Miracle of the Missing Spectacles

It all happened in Rome. Meeting Sri V. K. Narasimhan on October 27th in the spacious foyer of the Ergife Hotel, I requested him to read through the pre-publication copy of the Australian Sathya Sai Annual, which I was editing, to ensure that it conformed to the desired standard. Sri Narasimhan pleaded that he could not find his reading glasses anywhere and had a hunch that it might have been left behind in Brindavan (Whitefield). He wondered how he was going to get through the Conference, let alone reading the material I had given him.

I called on him the following morning in his room. We were seated on a settee and were talking about how each of us had come to Swami. All of a sudden, I heard the sound of something dropping on the cushion between us. We were astonished to see a pair of black-framed spectacles that had just fallen and we looked at each other to see whose spectacles had fallen. They were in their places all right.

Sri Narasimhan had another look at the glasses on the cushion and exclaimed: "These are my reading glasses! Swami is here!" Even before these words were uttered, I too felt something "unusual" was happening.

Sri Narasimhan was overwhelmed at the miraculous appearance of his reading glasses. He was indeed so much moved by this incredible happening that he was in tears with gratitude for Swami. This miracle, happening in my presence in Rome, convinced me beyond doubt about the transcendental powers of Bhagavan.

When Sri Narasimhan returned to Prasanthi Nilayam from Rome, the first question Swami asked him was about what happened to his glasses. Narasimhan told Swami that he felt as if somebody had brought the glasses to him. Swami remarked: "I brought the glasses."

Sometime later Swami confirmed that the glasses were brought from Bangalore to Rome.

—*Dr. Sara Pavan, Homebush, Australia*

"UNITY IS DIVINITY":

Rome Symposium: An Epochal Event

The International Symposium in Rome on October 30 and 31, organised by an Italian committee headed by Antonio Craxi, with the blessings of Bhagavan Baba, was a unique world gathering of kindred spirits, united by devotion to Bhagavan and determined to play a decisive part in the historic process of transforming mankind through the realisation of the divinity of Man.

Bhagavan had indicated both the theme of the Conference and its venue. The theme was to be: "Unity is Divinity Purity is Enlightenment." The venue was to be Rome. "Hold it in Rome. All roads lead to Rome!" said Bhagavan to Craxi.

That was in February, this year. From then on Craxi and his follow devotees in Italy got to work on the arrangements for the first International Conference of Sai devotees to be held outside India. The choice of Rome was particularly significant because it is the citadel of the Catholic Church. To proclaim the unity of all religions and races, as propagated by Bhagavan Baba, from an international forum in Rome, marked a historic stage in the unfolding of the Sai movement for the spiritual regeneration of mankind.

Over 1200 delegates from Italy and 800 from 34 countries as far apart as Argentina and Chile in South America and Australia and New Zealand in the Antipodes, took an active part in the symposium. Besides, three thousand interested visitors from all parts of Italy benefited by attending it as observers.

Well before the dates of the meeting, a special handbook of Bhagavan's sayings was prepared and printed in nine languages with the title, "Unity is Divinity". An entire block in a prestigious hotel, with provision for 2000 guests, was booked for the conference and for three days the hotel was run by the Sai Sevaks and Sevikas of Italy, who did the cooking and the serving of food, besides taking care of the various tasks incidental to an international conference. Scores of men and women volunteers worked as a single team, often round the clock, without the slightest sign of fatigue or ennui. The aesthetic aspects of the Conference like the display of Sai literature, the

Sarva Dharma emblem, and the like were taken care of by Sylvie Craxi and her enthusiastic women colleagues. Everyone participating in the Conference felt that it was a well-knit family gathering. The presence of Bhagavan was experienced by all as the bond that had brought them together in a unique spiritual fellowship.

The conference began on the morning of the 30th in the vast auditorium in the Hotel. The specially prepared stage was in tune with the spiritual theme of the conference. An illuminated white screen served as a backdrop and in the middle of the stage was installed an artistic ebony Chair, specially designed by a Greek devotee, according to a vision he had experienced earlier. Everyone who faced it experienced the presence of Bhagavan in that Chair.

The atmosphere of the Conference was sanctified when Antonio Craxi, while welcoming the delegates and visitors, began with the recitation of the "Om" mantra and the "Asato maa Sadgamaya" prayer. The entire gathering joined in the recitation of that universal prayer.

Welcome To Rome

Welcoming the large gathering of the global Sai family, on behalf of the Organising Committee, Craxi said: "First and foremost, I should like to express, what I believe is shared by all here today, our respectful homage and thanks to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, who has been the inspiration and motivator of this Symposium and who is now with us, present within our hearts. Let us not forget that this Symposium was made possible because He willed it so. It is through His Grace that leading personalities from the worlds of religion, science, arts and culture have come from all over the world to Italy, moved by the unquenchable thirst for peace and joy. Many of you, who have not yet seen Him, have come here hoping to be near Him. To you I repeat the words He spoke to me before my departure for Italy, 'Everyone who attends the Symposium will later visit me at Puttaparthi.' This is a promise; when the Lord so wishes, His will prevails."

Craxi extended a warm welcome to Prof. V. K. Gokak, the President of the Conference, and the Chairmen of the Committees dealing with the five topics to be discussed at the Conference—Dr. John S. Hislop, Mr. Howard Murphet, Dr. Sandweiss, Mr. V. K. Narasimhan and Mr. V. Srinivasan—and the three Guest Speakers, Sir George Trevelyan (U. K.), Mr Eugene Roy Davis and Mr. Victor Kanu (Sierra Leone). "Our heartfelt thanks," he said, "go to all the delegates from the United States, England, France, Austria, Germany, Sweden, Belgium, Denmark, Holland, Switzerland, Spain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Babrein, Greece, Yugoslavia, Ghana, El Salvador, Guatemala, India, Singapore, Sierra Leone, Thailand, Argentina, Peru, Chile, Japan, Hong Kong, Indonesia and Mexico. Each one of you will be contributing to the work of the Symposium by your active participation in the meetings and in helping to compile the reports of each Committee."

Referring to the choice of Rome as the venue of the Conference, Craxi said, "Rome, the capital of Italy, once 'Caput Mundi', the capital of the known world, was the heart of a civilization where the disciples of Jesus sowed the seeds of the Christian faith, which later spread throughout the globe. Even though Rome is no longer the 'Caput Mundi', it is without doubt the most important religious centre of the western world—a world where materialism has suppressed the true values

of mankind, and where corruption, crime, drugs and dissipation are serious signs of a moral decadence. This cycle is now coming to an end and once more the winds of Truth, Righteousness, Peace and Love are blowing in from the East to cleanse what is rotten and corrupt and to bring back morality to the world and peace to the hearts of men. This Symposium announces to the whole world that the Era of decadence is coming to a close and the dawn of a new age is evident on the horizon.

"The Word has become Flesh and has reincarnated at Puttaparthi! The new Jerusalem, headquarters of a revolution of the Spirit, a revolution more powerful than ever before, is now based in Puttaparthi. All roads used to lead to Rome; today all roads lead to Puttaparthi!

"The Lord is calling on all men of good will, whatever their religion or ideology, to form a world movement which will sustain, by its purity and love, the flame of unity so that the peace and prosperity of humanity is ensured. We are all part of this movement and, in so far as we have faith and endeavour to translate into our individual lives, families and societies the ideals of Sai as regards Love, Dharma, Truth, Peace and Non-violence, its purifying power will increase and the world will change completely. All social strata are represented in this movement and the Divine Call is being heard by men and women of goodwill everywhere.

"The moral codes established by the sacred texts of all religions are signposts along the Royal Road which leads to unity, but for many, religion has become mere outward pomp and the exercise of economic power. This power is not real. Love is the true power. It is with Love that God created the Universe, and with Love He nourishes it and it is with Love He regenerates it."

Prof V. K. Gokak, President of the Symposium, then read Bhagavan's Message to the Conference. Mr. Craxi read the Italian version. The entire gathering stood up and greeted the message with loud and prolonged applause. (Bhagavan's message is published separately).

Expatiating on the theme of the symposium, "Unity is Divinity," Prof Gokak said: "Man evolves towards consciousness through identity with all the manifestations of life, where the Many become One. Divinity is the foundation of man's consciousness and existence. Today two problems face man: the reorganization of the individual and the reorganization of society. For the individual there exist ways for developing his consciousness and assisting his spiritual evolution-the true pilgrimage of man." Speaking on Bhagavan as the Avatar of the Age, Prof. Gokak said, "The Avatar is the summit of human creation. He is the Divine Itself in the human, come down to play and shape anew. He is a direct descent from Sat-Chit-Ananda, the triune Reality in its transcendental aspect. He stands above Cosmic Law though born within the cosmos, and he can manipulate or change it at will. He identifies himself with the human level and strives incessantly to raise it. As a matter of fact, his advent itself marks a decisive step in the evolution of the human race."

Dr. Gokak concluded with the touching exhortation: "To be on the way to the Divine is as exhilarating as to be one with the Divine. Fellow pilgrims! Let me salute the love on your lips, the song in your hearts, the lightness in your limbs and the sweetness in your soul. The way shall

not be long because of your companionship, and the wind shall not be cold because of your warmth of heart. May it be given to each one of us to tread the path steadily and to reach the goal!"

The delegates met in the afternoon in five separate groups to discuss the five topics announced earlier. Each group of over 200 delegates met in separate committee rooms under its respective Chairman. As during the inaugural session, the speeches were translated into English and Italian. The committee meetings lasted over three hours and some committees met even after dinner to complete the discussion.

Prasanthi Nilayam in Rome

All the participants reassembled in the auditorium at 6 p. m. for bhajan, by a group which was international in its composition. The bhajans were rendered excellently and created the Sai atmosphere at Prasanthi Nilayam. The bhajan session was followed by the screening of the film, "Love is my form," produced by Mr. Jerko Tognola at Prasanthi Nilayam. In Its simple realistic presentation of Bhagavan's activities at the Mandir and the way He showered His blessings on the thousands of devotees, the film transported the entire gathering for a brief hour to the holy precincts of Prasanthi Nilayam and the Divine presence of Bhagavan.

Sai Family News

Human Values For London Schools

Thanks to the sustained efforts of the Education in Human Values Society, of which Mr. Victor Kanu is the President, the Inspectorate of the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) has agreed to run an "In-set" programme for teachers in the ILEA schools on Education in Human Values. The programme will be treated as one of the ILEA's centrally organised courses.

The ILEA's decision was communicated to Mr. Kanu by Mrs. Kamal Paul, Coordinator, Multi-ethnic Education, London.

The Education in Human Values Society, which has since changed its name to "Sathya Sai Society for Education in Human Values," was launched in 1982 after the visit of 50 teachers from U.K. in 1981 to Sathya Sai educational institutions in India and to a conference on Human Values for overseas teachers at Prasanthi Nilayam. The Society's report for 1981-83 refers to the problem of crime and violence among young people in Britain and records that the absence of education in human values in schools is one of the factors responsible for this situation. The Society considered also the racial problem in multi-ethnic schools, with special reference to the Spencer Park School, with which Mrs. G. Kanu is associated. At her instance, education in Human Values was introduced in the School, with gratifying results. A multi-ethnic educational policy to combat racism has been evolved.

The Society has planned to hold a number of teachers' conferences, training courses and symposia for promoting education in Human Values in 1984.

SATHYA SAI INSTITUTE:

Second Convocation—A National Festival

"A national festival"—this was how Professor V. K. Gokak, Vice-chancellor of the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning ("deemed university") described the second Convocation of the Institute held in the spacious Poornachandra Auditorium on November 22. With thousands of devotees present in the auditorium and Bhagavan Baba presiding over the Convocation as Chancellor, it was indeed a unique national festival in which a fresh batch of young men and women graduates were being inducted to a life of dedication and service after the successful completion of their studies.

Dr. Madhuri Behn Shah, who delivered the Convocation address, referred to "this invigorating and beautiful Campus" and said that the Sathya Sai Institute had become a pace-setter in the field of value-oriented higher education designed to give to the world good men and good women.

Bhagavan Baba, In His address to the Convocation, drew pointed attention to the many evils present in the prevailing system of education and called upon the University Grants Commission to take firm steps to eradicate them.

Precisely at 4 p. m., the students of the Institute, dressed uniformly in immaculate white clothes, assembled at the Prasanthi Mandir in a semi-circle. When Bhagavan Baba came, dressed in the Chancellor's white robe, they bowed to Him with folded hands and chanted the University Community Prayer.

The Convocation procession started from the Mandir with the Registrar, carrying the Mace, and two students, carrying the emblem of the Institute, heading the procession. Behind them came the members of the Academic Council, the Deans of Faculties, the members of the Governing Body (in pairs), the Vice-chancellor, the Chief Guest and the Chancellor. A military band from Bangalore marched in front of the procession, while the students came at the end.

The whole gathering cheered when Bhagavan went up and took His seat on the Stage.

The proceedings began with the chanting of invocatory hymns from the Narayanopanishad by students of the Institute.

Prof. Gokak, in welcoming Dr. Madhuri Shah and others, referred to the Chief Guest's career as an educationist and the crucial role she has been playing in giving a new direction to the

destinies of higher education as Chairman of the University Grants Commission. In the process of converting the "colonial" system of education, which India had inherited at the time of Independence, into a truly national system of education, Dr. Madhuri Shah had revealed her passion for reforming the courses of study, teaching methods and examination systems. Over 30 universities have begun to make the change in the syllabuses, examination and teaching methods. Dr. Madhuri Shah has also been keen to impart a moral and spiritual orientation to higher education, which would otherwise be anaemic and mechanical if it was confined to academic knowledge.

Prof. Gokak explained how the Sathya Sai Institute stood for an "integral system" of education, which combined academic studies with moral and spiritual discipline. Science and Divinity were brought together in the Institute. It advocated a world view, which was not theological or scientific-humanist, but mystical, embracing both science and God, the finite and the Infinite. Through yogasanas, prayers, lectures on religious subjects and special courses in Awareness, the moral and spiritual development of the students was promoted. Participation in social work and in self-service activities in the hostel was obligatory. The most valuable part of the education they received came from the afternoon contacts with Bhagavan at the Mandir.

Prof. Gokak referred to the grants received from the U. G. C. for a new library building and the programme for expanding the hostel and building quarters for the staff.

Endowments For Faculties

The Institute, he said, has post-graduate and research departments in the following subjects: Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Bio-Sciences, Commerce, History and Indian Culture (at the Prasanthi Nilayam Campus) and Philosophy, English language and literature, Telugu language and literature (at the Anantapur Campus). Post-graduate and Research Departments in Philosophy and English language and literature will soon be opened in the Prasanthi Nilayam Campus also. Each department required a minimum of one professor, two readers and three lecturers. On this basis, the present requirements of the Institute are 11 professors, 22 readers and 33 lecturers. Professor Gokak announced that of these positions, the following had been permanently endowed at the rate of Rs. 5 lakhs for a professorship, Rs. 3 lakhs for a readership and Rs. 2 lakhs for a lecturership to meet the recurring salaries and other emoluments:

Professorships: Reliance Tex. Ind., Bombay; State Bank of India (Chair in Rural Banking); Sri Sathya Sai Centre of U. S. A. (two chairs); Mrs. Elsee Cowan; Sri Sathya Sai Centre of West Bengal; Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation, U.K.; Mr. Kulwant Rai, Delhi; Sri Sathya Sai Centre, Canada; Mr. P. L. Chopra, Calcutta; Mr. D. P. Agarwal, Assam; Mr. A. Craxi, Italy; Mr. Paul Mishan, Guatemala; Mr. Hiroo N. Bharwani, Indonesia; Mr. Mohan Mirpure, Indonesia; the Vaisya Bank, Bangalore; Mr. Eugene Wolk, Switzerland.

Readerships: Sri Sathya Sai Centre, New South Wales, Australia; Sri Sathya Sai Centre, West Bengal; Sri Sathya Sai Centre, Madhya Pradesh; Mr. V. Srinivasan, Madras.

Lecturerships: Kingdom of Sathya Sai (Association of past students); Swami Karunyananda; Mr. C. L. Gandhi, Calcutta; the Sri Sathya Sai Centres of Trinidad, Mauritius and Singapore (one chair each); Ratnani & Co., Gujarat; Srimati Sowbhagya M. Gowda, Mysore; Lala Teluram Keshavram, U. P.; Sri Sathya Sai Centres of West Bengal, M.P. and U.P. (one chair each); Mr. T. G. Krishnamurthi, Madras; Mr. Asudmull Kelwani.

Prof. Gokak then requested the Chancellor to declare the Convocation open.

Bhagavan Baba declared the Convocation open, speaking first in Sanskrit and then in English.

The Vice-chancellor called on the Deans of Faculties to present to the Chancellor the candidates for the various degrees. After the Deans had presented the respective candidates for the degrees of Master of Arts and Bachelor of Arts, the Bachelor of Science, and Bachelor of Commerce, the candidates stood in their seats and bowed to the Chancellor, who conferred His benediction on them. The Vice-chancellor then administered to the new graduates the Convocation pledge and read out the convocation commandments from the Taithiriya Upanishad.

Medals and Prizes

The Registrar read the names of Medalists and prizewinners in the following order and each of them went up to the Chancellor to receive the medal or prize: A gold medal and a cash prize were awarded to Hirak Changkakoti and Kumari B. Sailakshmi for all-round excellence in academic studies and moral behaviour. First prizes (gold medals) were awarded to C. Ramaprasad (B.A.), N. Radhakrishna (B.Sc.), B. Ravi (B.Com.) and Mridula Reddy (Home Science). Cash prizes of Rs. 500 each were awarded to the following first rankers in their respective subjects: Kum. Karuna Swarup (Political Science), Sai Ram (Mathematics), A. V. Ramanan (Accountancy), Lakshmi Rani (Social Science), E. K. Suresh (distinction in sports), Sunder Iyer (Yogasanas), H. Bhavani (yogasanas).

Sai Institute Sets the Pace

Dr. Madhuri Shah, in the course of her convocation address, said that after the Industrial Revolution, universities in the west tended to model themselves on the factory and became machines for turning out graduates on a mass scale. India had followed the same pattern under the colonial regime. The result was that educated Indians became "rootless", with no links with their ancient cultural past. After attaining freedom, it was necessary to give Indian thought and culture its rightful place in Indian education and inspire the students with respect for "the fundamental moral and spiritual values of Indian thought." Education, she said, must ennoble life. The Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning was setting the pattern for the new style of university in which cultural and, spiritual values would be coupled with academic excellence.

Exhorting the new graduates to pay their debt to society by serving it to the best extent possible" in whatever sphere of life they may happen to work, she said:

"You must change your mind to change your world. Change demands self-discipline. Change can be achieved by changing your environment. Let go all lower things and reach for the higher.

Concentrate on becoming the man or the woman you want to be. The Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning has given you the canvas, the paint, the pigments and brushes, the spiritual strength and moral values. Each one of you will have to paint your own picture according to your own creativity and imagination and then what you paint for yourself will be a masterpiece and life would become a wonderful experience."

Bhagavan's call to U.G.C.

Bhagavan Baba then delivered His discourse, which covered the entire gamut of problems relating to education and the prevailing defects in the system. Defining the true aim of education, Bhagavan said that education without "Samskara" (character) is like a kite that has broken loose, a boat without a rudder, a counterfeit coin, a room without light. 'Kriyaaseelatha'—good conduct—was greater than Vijnana (scientific knowledge). Today's education made one a slave of the senses, while the ancient Guru Kula system was based on ethical values and self-control. There is degradation in all spheres of life today. True Dharma consists in being truly human. Students should be ready to sacrifice their lives for upholding Dharma. Decrying the craze for Research degrees, Bhagavan said that between 1975 and 1980, 21,000 theses had been presented by candidates for Ph.D. degrees. It was found that much of this research had no practical utility at all. Those who got Ph.D. degrees were often unable to communicate their knowledge to laymen or to students. They had no teaching ability.

Students' Elections Should Go

Condemning the manner in which elections to students' unions were being conducted in colleges and universities, Bhagavan called upon the U.G.C. to put an end to such elections altogether as they gave rise to factions, ill-will and indiscipline. Bhagavan also condemned the obnoxious practice of "ragging" in professional colleges. Education has become "agitation". There should be a limit to the freedom given to students so that the atmosphere of indiscipline and bitterness prevailing in educational institutions may be changed.

Kankanas for Prof. Gokak

Towards the end of His discourse, Bhagavan sprang a pleasant surprise on Prof. Gokak and the entire audience by adorning him with two kankanas (gold bracelets) as a token of Swami's appreciation of the devoted and selfless service rendered by Prof. Gokak as Vice-chancellor during the past two years. Before placing the bracelets round Prof. Gokak's wrists, Bhagavan said:

"Allasani Peddana, the Poet Laureate in the court of Krishnadevaraya, on the occasion of wearing the golden bracelets that the king presented to him, said, 'I do not prize these decorations (Bhushanas) high. I esteem the Bhushana of God's grace most.' Our Gokak earned the title Padmabhushana. For Gokak, who is like the lotus (Padma) the grace of God is indeed a bhushana (decoration). Titles like Padmabhushana are no bhushanas (decoration) to Gokak, as the only bhushana that he esteems most is the bhushana of Daivanugraha (God's grace). He does vigorous sadhana to merit God's grace. Members of the Trust (Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust) have entrusted me with the responsibility of adorning him with Daivanugraha Bhushana." Sri Krishna wore three kankanas (resolves)—to protect the good, punish the wicked & uphold Dharma, to promote the welfare of His devotees, and give liberation to those who completely surrender to

Him. "Our Gokak puts on two kankanas, the first is the resolve to place before society a set of dedicated students and the second is the resolve to merit God's grace. Right now Swami is adorning Gokak with this Prema Kankana and Anugraha Kankana, the bracelet of love and the bracelet of God's grace."

There was prolonged cheering when Bhagavan concluded His address.

The Convocation came to a close with the singing of the National Anthem.

—*Ed.*

Sutra Vahini

15

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Jyothischaranaabhidhaanaath:

The word Jyoti (Light) does not connote the physical light of the material world. When material limits or qualifications like charana or feet are ascribed to light, how can the immanent, all-pervasive Entity be indicated? Such a limited or qualified phenomenon cannot become the object of adoration and meditation. When this word Jyoti is understood to mean the light embodied and having certain natural characteristics, it cannot signify Brahman, the Universal Absolute.

The Purusha Sukta, the Hymn in praise of the Cosmic Person, declares: "Paado asya viswa bhoothaani": "The entire Cosmos with all Its Component Elements is but one quarter of His Glory." Therefore, It is beyond bounds, measures or degrees. The Jyoti illumines Heaven and beyond, It reveals even Brahman. That which makes known, by its splendour, the era preceding the origin of living beings, and the regions beyond even the farthest and the highest, "That" is indicated by the word Jyoti. It shines in that supremest among supreme Loka (region).

Note also that the same Jyoti shines everywhere, at all times, in all beings. It comprises Asti (Sat: Existence), Bhaati (Chitta: Illumination: Knowledge), and Priyam (Ananda: Joy: Bliss). All things seen in the Universe have the unseen as its base. All things that move have the unmoving as its base. So, too, for every living being, why, for the very Cosmos itself, the invisible Brahman, the Supra-Truth, Para-Brahman is the Basis. It is this Para Brahman, the Omni-Self, that causes the Cosmos to shine. Jyoti is the word appropriate only for this Light and not the limited, inferior, physical light. Jyoti has neither beginning, nor end. It is the Param Jyoti (Supreme Light), the Advaita Jyoti (the Jyoti without a second), the Akhanda Jyoti (the Eternal Light). In other words, It is the Para Brahman Itself, for all this is revealed only in and through It. The Jyothi referred to here cannot be interpreted otherwise. The Upanishads do speak of Brahman as having 'feet' but that does not restrict or reduce Its vastness in any way.

"Jyoti" therefore, conveys, "Brahman" as it's meaning. When Brahman is imagined as having four 'feet', or quarters, all that is projected from Brahman comprises but one quarter. The Upanishads assert that the other three are "amritam", ("undying, undiminshable, changeless") in 'divi' (Divine Light).

A point to be remembered is that such amritam cannot be equated with the common light we deal with. The Upanishadic Jyoti is said to 'deepyati' (illumine). How can this process be limited and tied down to the effect of ordinary worldly light? Jyoti is embodied in Brahman; it operates in and through Brahman only. Brahman is immanent in all and so, Jyoti reveals all and shines in all.

The base, the root, the cover of the ever-vibrating, ever-moving Cosmos is Brahman, the stable, the fixed, the immovable, the ever-steady Jyoti. When Brahman too starts vibrating, changing and moving, what happens is total mergence, submergence, Pralaya. For example, when the train moves, if the rails on which it moves, also move along, what about the fate of the passengers? When we walk, the road is stationary. So, we are able to proceed safe along.

The light that shines individually is called the flame in the lamp; the light that illumines and reveals all is called Jyoti. This Jyoti brings to light the fire that pervades the regions, that warms the body and resides in the stomach, the gleam in the eye. The moon is lit by the sun and thereby made bright. All these activities are prompted and promoted by Brahman, which is Jyoti itself. Jyoti is the principle, the phenomenon of Illumination in all its aspects

(To be continued)

JANMADINA SANDESH:

The Source of lasting Happiness

It is only through the realisation of oneness with the Universal Consciousness (Brahman) that man can achieve lasting and infinite bliss (Brahmananda), observed Bhagavan Baba, in His discourse on Nov. 23, on the occasion of His fifty eighth birthday celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam.

Earlier in the morning, Bhagavan went in the special gilded motorised chariot to the Samadhi of His parents, while the milling crowds that had lined up on either side of the road cheered him and shouted "jais".

Bhagavan returned to the Poornachandra Auditorium, accompanied by Prof. Gokak and others. The celebrations began with Vedic invocatory prayers.

Prof. Gokak, speaking on the unique significance of Bhagavan's advent at the present juncture in the world's history, said that Bhagavan is the incarnation of supreme Love, Wisdom and

Innocence. He has come "to give all of us a spiritual rebirth and inspire us with a new sense of life and awareness." When someone, who was being shown round the Administrative Building of the Sathya Sai Institute, suggested that some relics of Rama and Krishna could be kept there, along with other curios, Bhagavan remarked: "I am the relic of Rama and Krishna!"

Referring to the recent Sai conference in Rome, Prof. Gokak said that all the nations of the world are now turning towards Prasanthi Nilayam for the new light represented by Bhagavan. All those who participated in the conference went home with the conviction "that though the world may be in chaos, there is in their midst Bhagavan who has come to save mankind and raise man to the highest level of his potentialities."

Ananda and Brahmananda

Bhagavan began His discourse with a reference to the "Happy Birthday" greetings received by Him since the morning and asked whether these words were said as a conventional ritual or out of a real understanding of the true nature of happiness.

Bhagavan went on to explain the real nature of happiness—Ananda—and observed that the ultimate source of happiness yeas the Divine, even if the object or experience that produced happiness was transient or impermanent. The highest form of Bliss is Brahmananda—the bliss of being one with the Divine. The Divine has been described as Sat-Chit-Ananda. Everything in the universe has these three qualities. Every individual seeks these three attributes. He seeks "Sat", which represents permanence. He seeks "Chit", which represents knowledge or understanding. He seeks "Ananda", the bliss that is ineffable. Each of these has two aspects, the internal and the external, the reality and the image. For "Sat", the reality is "Being" and the image is "Becoming". They are related inextricably like a screen and the pictures shown on it.

In a human being there are five sheaths—the body (Annamaya) being the gross one and the Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vijnanamaya and Anandamaya sheaths being subtle. In the dream state, man experiences through the subtle sheaths. Man is continually seeking bliss everywhere without realising that its source is deep within himself, that, in fact, it is his basic natural condition. But, as long as he is caught up in temporary sensual pleasures, he cannot understand the source of this bliss. It is only when he discovers his essential divine nature that he will be able to experience the Divine Bliss that is permanent and unchanging. There is no need to seek the Divine elsewhere. The Divine is in him.

The Five Mahamantras

Bhagavan called upon everyone to bear in mind the following five maxims to achieve the state of Sat-Chit-Ananda (Being-Awareness-Bliss): "I am Divinity and not separate"; "I am that Infinite Consciousness"; "Pain and sorrow cannot touch me"; "I am not other than Sat-Chit-Ananda"; "I am always content and no fear can reach me." If one dwells on these five Mahamantras and repeats the mantra "Om Tat Sat", he will realise oneness with the Omni-self (Brahman). (A full report of Bhagavan's discourse will appear later).

In the evening, Bhagavan filled with delight the thousands of devotees in the Poornachandra Auditorium by His gracious presence on the jhoola. Srimati M.S. Subbalakshmi, Smt. P. Suseela and others sang a few devotional songs. Later, Sri Vempati Chinnasathyam and his troupe of dancers presented an exquisite ballet, "Srinivasa Kalyanam", in the Kuchipudi tradition.