

## **A Memorable Festival of the Spirit**

December 7th 1985 was a red-letter day in the annals of Brindavan. Bhagavan arrived at about 2 p.m. and the sight of Him as He alighted from the car and set foot on the soil of Brindavan was a dream come true for the thousands of devotees who thronged the grounds and spilled over into the road. Brindavan wore a gay, festive look. Festoons fluttered in the crisp winter breeze, flowers lay in multi-coloured profusion on the pathway leading to the Mandir, "Trayee Brindavan," bhajans filled the air with devotional fervour and all eyes were fixed on the decorated gate waiting for the first glimpse of the car bringing Bhagavan to Brindavan. When at last he came, it was a moment that no one can forget for the rest of his life. There was not a single pair of dry eyes. Some wept openly out of sheer joy. People of the villages on the way had lined up along the road and paid homage as Bhagavan's motorcade passed. Welcome banners spanned the road in dozens of places.

Bhagavan was received with traditional Poorna-Kumbham welcome. The students and staff of the Brindavan Campus, office bearers of the State Sai organization and the Karnataka Trust led Him in a procession to the Mandir, to the accompaniment of Vedic chants, Nadaswaram music and bhajans.

A week-long celebration had been programmed by the Karnataka State organization to observe the 60th birthday of Bhagavan. On Sunday, 8th December, there was a mammoth gathering of devotees in Brindavan. "That evening the orchestra of the Sri Sathya Sai 'Brindavan hostel students gave a concert of `vocal and instrumental music. On 9<sup>th</sup> December there was a felicitation function at which the first citizen and the first lady of the State, namely, the Governor of Karnataka, Sri A. N. Banerjee, and Mrs. Banerjee offered their homage to Bhagavan followed by the members of the State Trust and organization. The State President, Prof. Kesava Rao, conveyed the reverence and joy of the millions of devotees in Karnataka to His lotus feet. After Bhagavan's discourse (reported elsewhere) there was a violin concert by the veteran maestro, Prof. V. C. Jog, who thrilled the audience with a highly evocative rendering of the raag "Piloo."

On Tuesday 10th December there was a dance drama staged by the well-known troupe "Prabhat Kala Vidaru" in Bhagavan's presence in the Institute auditorium. The dance drama was imaginatively woven round the historical theme of Alexander hearing about India's glory from Aristotle before starting on his expedition to the east.

On Wednesday 11th December, a meeting was held in the Chowdiah Hall in Bangalore where the city's elite were gathered to listen to Bhagavan's discourse. The Chief Guest was the Chief Justice of Karnataka, Sri Jgannatha Setty. Prof. V. K. Gokak welcomed Bhagavan and outlined the features of the integral system of education that was followed in the institutions started by Bhagavan. Bhagavan in his discourse (reported elsewhere) emphasized the basic harmony between science and spirituality and the need to develop love and render dedicated service to society.

On Thursday 12th December Brindavan witnessed Narayana Seva done on a scale that was unprecedented here. Thousands of people were fed and saris and dhotis were distributed to the poorest sections among those who had come from many nearby villages. That evening there was a cultural programme presented by the units of the State Bal Vikas. This was preceded by devotional music by the well-known singer, Smt. B. K. Sumitra, and family.

On 13th December Bhagavan was the Guest of Honour at a function at Raj Bhavan in which Sri A. N. Banerjee, Governor of Karnataka, received Bhagavan with reverence. On Saturday, 14th December, the Principals, N.C.C., N.S.S. officers and professors of the colleges in the state were gathered in the Institute auditorium to hear Bhagavan's discourse on the ethical and spiritual aspects of the teaching profession (reported elsewhere). This meeting was arranged by the Directorate of Collegiate Education in Karnataka as the concluding session of a two-day seminar for the principals and teachers. The State Trust hosted a grand lunch for the participants before the meeting.

Sunday 15th December was the concluding day of the week-long celebrations. The large assembly of devotees was treated to a sumptuous lunch by the State organization and a soul stirring musical experience in the evening when Smt. Vani Jayaram, the popular singer, enthralled the audience with songs from Mira, Tukaram, Purandaradasa and other divine minstrels.

Thus ended a seven-day Festival of the Spirit which left its impact on the hearts of thousands of people, instilling and reinforcing faith and devotion towards Bhagavan, the living, divine phenomenon that is in our midst today.

—D. N.

#### **CHRISTMAS SANDESH:**

### **Bhagavan's call for Religious Harmony**

"All religions, all scriptures, all spiritual teachings point only to one truth—the Unity of Divinity. You may profess whatever faith you like. But you should not disparage another's beliefs. It is a travesty of devotion," observed Bhagavan Baba, in an enthralling discourse to over fifteen hundred overseas devotees who had assembled in the Kalyana Mandap at Brindavan for Bhagavan's Christmas message.

Bhagavan deprecated the propaganda, indulged in by some propagators of Christianity, casting aspersions on other faiths. This kind of propaganda, He said, does great harm to the personality of Jesus.

Bhagavan said:

*Oh man! Through good deeds and sacrifice*

*Foster the feeling of Love  
Get rid of evil traits  
And lead a worthy life.*

#### Embodiments of Love!

There is nothing more precious in the world than Time. You should not waste even a single minute of it. Men today tend to waste their time in selfish pursuits instead of devoting it to selfless service. They are eager to receive help from others, but have no desire to render help.

There are two types of human beings; the degraded and the sublime. The degraded are those who seek or receive things from others and not only forget to repay the obligation, but even try to harm those who have helped them. The sublime are those whose natural trait is to go to the help of others. If they give a word they will try to honour it whatever the difficulties and obstacles. They will not go back on their pledges, regardless of what others may say or do.

#### **Journey to the Divine**

The Bharatiya Culture, which laid emphasis on the four Purusharthas (the basic aims of life—Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha), looked upon life as a journey to the Divine—the attainment of Moksha (Liberation). But how can men caught up in the quest for wealth and sensuous pleasures develop the desire for Moksha? Man today makes no attempt to discover his true nature or his real destiny. Forgetting the great truths given to the world by Bharatiya sages and seers, men are leading utterly meaningless lives, unaware of the potentiality of the human to become the Divine.

There is, for instance, the simple gesture of folding hands when one greets another in offering "Namaskar." What is the inner significance of this gesture? For one thing, the coming together of the two palms is a demonstration of the unity that subsumes the multiplicity. For another, it represents the offering of the five sense organs and the five organs of action to the Lord as an act of surrender. The Muslims use the term "Salaam" as a form of greeting. What does the word mean? "Sa" refers to "Sat", the Lord who is the embodiment of Truth, Awareness and Bliss (Sat-Chit-Ananda); "La" means "layam" (mergence). "Salaam" means merging in the Supreme who is also the embodiment of Truth and Bliss.

The Christians have also similar expressions for indicating submission to the Divine. THE

#### **Basic truth**

All faiths have emphasized one common factor—that there is only One God and Truth is His form. There are no differences between Hindus, Muslims and Christians on this basic concept. All religions, all scriptures, all spiritual teachings point only to one truth—the unity of Divinity. Instead of realising this, men are lost in wrong paths.

Jesus sacrificed his life for the regeneration and welfare of mankind. Today there are some who exaggerate the so-called differences between different faiths and, for their own selfish purposes, exploit these differences and thereby bring a bad name to the great founders of these

religions, who were spiritual giants. No prophet or messiah asked his followers to hate other religions or the followers of other faiths. Every religion has declared that God is One and that the Divine dwells in every being. Jesus also proclaimed the truth that the One Spirit resides in all beings. When Jesus was addressing the Jews, an ethereal voice declared: "All lives are one, my dear Son. Be alike to everyone." When Jesus was being crucified, the same ethereal voice declared that the human body is only a vesture for the Spirit. The body is subject to constant change. But the indwelling Spirit is immortal. This was the truth proclaimed by Vedanta when it said: "The body is a temple in which the eternal Spirit resides as the indweller." The inner meaning of this is that wherever you may go, the Eternal Spirit remains with you. You must regard the body as the temple of the Spirit; bear in mind that Divinity is ever within you. Only when you realise this truth can you begin to experience the Divine.

Whether in Hinduism or Buddhism, Jainism or Sikhism, Christianity or Islam, Divinity is One and ONE ONLY. Those who profess great love for their particular religion are indulging in make-believe when they assume that their religion is superior to that of others. Hindus regard Hinduism as the greatest religion. Wherein lies its greatness? If you declare that the God of all religions is One, why claim superiority for Hinduism and decry other religions? Does that bespeak your love for Hinduism? This applies also to those professing Christianity. They say: "We are Christians. We believe in the unique divinity of Jesus. There is no other divine Saviour." One may claim that Jesus is Divine. But is he entitled to deride other religions? No religion should allow decrying of other faiths. It is not a religion at all that cavils at other religions. It is a form of arrogance. The great saints who worshipped Christ or Rama or Krishna or Allah were inspired by their profound teachings. But how many of the followers of these faiths live up to these teachings today? If the teachings of the Founder of a religion are not followed, can it be called a religion? Those who, in the name of religion, further their selfish interests are bringing discredit on the founder of the religion.

The first thing to be learnt is that THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD. Men may be different in form and name and colour and their country and historical circumstances may vary. But, God has no such differences. Hence, you should not cavil at any religion or attack it or deride it. You may profess whatever faith you like. But, you should not disparage another's beliefs. It is a travesty of devotion. Sri Krishna says in the Gita that the mark of a true devotee is absence of ill will towards anyone (Adweshtaa Sarvabhoothaanaam). We must respect the divine that is in every creature.

### **Religious intolerance**

It is a characteristic of the Kali Age that one religion is pitted against another. This only reveals the small-mindedness of the followers and is not the fault of the founders. It stems from envious intolerance and egoistic conceit. These afflictions prevent one from understanding his own religion, while condemning that of others.

No one should cast aspersions on the deities or founders of other faiths. All of them are worthy of worship. It is narrow-minded pettiness to say Jesus is great and Rama or Krishna is

small or vice versa. Such misguided propaganda is puerile and demeaning. It is not an index of true devotion. It is a kind of mental aberration.

We are all aware of the kind of selfless service which birds, animals and trees are rendering to man. But we see many men who out of selfishness are not only ungrateful to their community, their parents and their Gurus, but even to God. Such persons can never come to anything good. They do not realise the truth of the saying, "As you sow, so shall you reap." if you have good thoughts and do good deeds, they multiply like good seeds sown in a well-manured field. But if you fill your heart with bad feelings, bad thoughts will multiply many-fold.

### **True devotion**

You must make continuous effort to cultivate your heart on right lines. Karma Yoga and Jnana Yoga are considered important for this purpose. But these disciplines are not easy to practise. Bhakti Yoga, the path of devotion, is superior to these. The devotee seeks to enjoy the bliss of continuous contemplation of the Divine and does not even desire Moksha—mergence in the Divine.

Devotion means giving up all other desires and dedicating all actions and thoughts to God. When you offer every act of yours to God, it becomes worship. Everything you do must be done as an offering to God. The body has been described the temple of God. You must fill yourself with the feeling that God is in you, beside you, around you, and with you wherever you go. When you love God with this consciousness, the love results in Self-realisation.

There are two forms of Love. One binds you to God. The other binds you to the world. The mind is responsible for either of these states. It is like a lock. If you turn the key to the right, the lock opens. If you turn the key to the left, it gets locked. The heart is the key to the lock of the mind. If you turn the key towards the world, you have attachment (bondage). You must see that desire and hatred do not get lodged in the mind. Bear no ill-will towards anyone. Avoid the company of those who are evil-minded. By cultivating the company of the good, you can raise yourself, because your bad qualities get diluted by association with the good, like sewage water when it enters the sea.

In the Ramayana, we see that by his association with Hanuman, Vibhishana, the brother of Ravana, was transformed into a devotee of the Lord. On the other hand, Kaikeyi, because of the influence of the evil minded Manthara, brought infamy and widowhood upon herself and estranged herself from her noble son Bharata.

In the Mahabharata, we have the example of Dharmaraja, who had to endure many difficulties and humiliations because of indulgence in gambling with dice during a brief association with the wicked Kauravas. Association with the evil-minded can lead to endless troubles. Pay any price to avoid the company of the bad. Pay any price to acquire the company of the good. The company of the good takes you *near* to God. Sadhana makes you *dear* to the Lord. When you are *near* and *dear* you become one with God. When you have realised God, you have secured everything. Without God, everything else is valueless.

There are many who are deeply devoted to Jesus. Their duty is to glorify the great message of Jesus. The most important message of Jesus is the establishment of "Peace on Earth and goodwill among men." Without peace, mankind cannot achieve progress in any sphere - material, spiritual or moral.

In the Treta Yuga, Sri Rama came to establish the reign of Truth and Righteousness (Sathya and Dharma). In the Dwapara Yuga, Sri Krishna came with the mission to promote Love and Peace (Prema and Santhi). In the Kali Yuga (the present Yuga), Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema are the purposes of the Divine Mission. Hence you must make these four the guiding principles of your life. When you adhere to these four principles, Ahimsa (Non-violence) issues as a natural result. There is no use in merely invoking the name of Jesus and praying to Him without regard to His most vital message: "God is in everyone. Do not revile anyone. Do not cause harm to anyone," this was Jesus' greatest message.

At present there is a growing tendency among propagators of the Christian faith to cast aspersions on other religions. Money is being spent lavishly to spread Christianity. None of you should have any part in such activities. This type of propaganda does great harm to the personality of Jesus. Jesus was a supremely pure and sacred person. To forget Jesus' teachings and to profess love for Him is no love at all. You must all remember: "God is One. Love is God. Live in Love." Only by this means can humanity, despite the many divisions that exist at present, be unified. Absorb the teachings of all the great seers and prophets. Do not despise anyone. Everyone is entitled to accept what is good from any source. Differences of creed and caste are irrelevant. There is only one caste, the caste of humanity. There is only one religion, the religion of Love. There is only one language, the language of the heart. There is only one God; He is omnipresent.

No quarter should be given for propaganda which sets up one religion against another. All the diverse communities in the nation should be united. Mankind should become one family. The world will then become a paradise. If differences are allowed to grow, the nation will disintegrate. It is said that atom bombs will reduce the world to ashes. But those who are promoting religious bigotry and hatred are doing worse damage than what the atom bombs can do. They are destroying the love and compassion in human hearts. They are breaking up mankind into fragments. There is no greater sin than this.

What the world needs today is the redeeming and unifying force of love—love which continually expands and embraces more and more people. By giving up narrow ideas regarding one's religion, nation or caste, by developing a broad outlook and cultivating the company of the good, you can elevate your life and make it meaningful and satisfying. Many of you have come from distant countries at great expense. You must make good use of your stay here by cultivating good company, imbibing good thoughts, developing a large-hearted attitude towards all, taking to heart the wise words of elders and trying to put into practice at least some of their teachings. Otherwise, you will have wasted both life and money. I wish you all happiness.

—*Brindavan, 25-12-1985*

## **Sai Literature for the Blind**

It is not widely known that as many as 38 books in English, relating to Bhagavan Baba's life, writings and speeches, are available in Braille for the benefit of the blind. Miss Doris I. McLaughlin, who has been engaged in brailing Sai literature since 1981, presented to Bhagavan on His birthday in November, the computer version of eight books which were brailled during 1985. Bhagavan was immensely pleased with this work and has encouraged Miss McLaughlin to carry on the good work.

Master copies in Braille of 23 of the books are available in India. Miss McLaughlin set up in 1983 a Braille reproduction facility for the graduate students of the Sathya Sai Institute campus at Anantapur, of which Kumari Saileela is in charge. Master copies of 15 books (computer version) are with Miss McLaughlin and will be available at Anantapur in due course.

Copies of the following books brailled in English can be had from Kumari Saileela, Sri Sathya Sai Women's College, Anantapur (Andhra Pradesh):

Prasanthi Vahini (2 vols), Gita Vahini (5 vols), Sathya Sai Vahini (3 vols), Prema Vahini (2 vols), Jnana Vahini (1 vol), Upanishad Vahini (4 vols), Bhagavata Vahini (5 vols), Dhyana Vahini (2 vols), Dharma Vahini (2 vols), Chinna Katha (4 vols), The Rama Story Part I (7 vols), The Rama Story Part II (5 vols), Sathya Speaks vol 11 (3 vols), Sathya Speaks Vol. VI (6 v.), Sathya Speaks Vol X (6 v.), Summer Showers in Brindavan 1972 (6 v.), Garland of Precious Gems (2 v.), The Path Divine Part I (4 volumes), Part II (2 v.), Saints of India Parts I, II and III (3 v. each).

The following computer versions of nine books can be had from Miss Doris McLaughlin, 1626, Madrono Avenue, Palo Alto, California, 94306, U.S.A.:

Vidya Vahini (2 v.), Sathya Sai Speaks Vol. II (4 v.), Vol. III (4 v.), Vol IV (6 v.), Vol V (5 v.), Vol VII (9 v.) Vol IX (5 v.), Summer Showers 1973 (4 v.), 1974 (6 v.), 1976 (3 v.), 1977 (5 v.), 1978 (4 v.), 1979 (3 v.), Sai Baba (American version of Sathyam Sivam Sundaram) (4 v.), Sathyam Sivam Sundaram Part II (5 v.), Sandeha Nivarirni (2 v.).

Those interested in obtaining copies of these books for Braille libraries may write to Miss Saileela or Miss McLaughlin.

## **Christmas and the Avatar**

Our sweet Lord has been most generous to us this Christmas with His Love and His Blessings. We have all had a chance to taste the sweet nectar of His Grace. It is our one-pointed yearning and devotion that has evoked such a loving response from, our dearest Swami. When all we want is He, and when we follow His precepts for living in love and Dharma, then He gives us everything we hope for and fills our hearts with joy.

I want to relate a little incident that happened on the Veranda of the Mandir in Prasanthi Nilayam, a few months ago. Swami was walking by a line of devotees sitting there, when He turned quite unexpectedly towards one of them, and asked, "What do you want?" A little surprised at the -sudden question, the person being addressed by Swami, answered, "O Bhagavan, I'm very happy. I'm satisfied. I really don't want anything." Now it was Baba's turn to act surprised, and He said, "You mean you want *nothing*?" The recipient of all this attention from the Lord held his hands to his heart, and in an emotion-filled voice replied, "Dearest Swamiji, the only thing I want is You! Only You!" At this Baba leaned forward and said quite emphatically, "*That's Not Nothing!*" Spreading His arms wide apart, He said, "That's *Everything!*" Then pointing a finger towards the world outside, He added, "Nothing is there!" "Everything is here! Everything is here!" He concluded, waving His hand towards the heart which had just expressed its divine longing, so sweetly.

Swami's message is that all the sweetness we can ever garner, every joy, every delight, all beauty, all bliss, all goodness is experienced here inside us when we install the Lord in our hearts. This is also what Jesus proclaimed when he said, "Seek Ye the Kingdom of Heaven within you." This Christmas Swami blessed all with a taste of the joy and the divine love of that Kingdom within. We realize that Christmas is such a happy day because we celebrate the birth of the Divine Child. This Divine Child is not born in some far-off place, in some far-off time; it is born today itself, inside of us. It is born as pure delight, as pure love, as a bubbling sweetness that leaves an unforgettable taste of joy in our hearts. How can we ever forget fine honey, once we have tasted its sweetness? How can we ever forget the experience of the living Divinity once we have tasted His sweetness? Once we have experienced the Divinity as we did today, it is natural for us to go on with a work for which we have incarnated. We go onto realize our own Divinity, realize our own ineffable joy, realize our own springs of pure, selfless love, realize our own inner beauty, our own innate goodness, our own sweet essence. This very path is the one that Jesus walked long ago, before us.

### **Oneness with Divinity**

Unfortunately, we know very little about Jesus' life. There are just some glimpses given in the Gospels which were set down many years after his death. There is hardly anything to speak of the wonderful good humour that Jesus must have had. We know nothing much of his joy, his Ananda, his laughter, his happiness in the company of his devotees who must have been unable to take their eyes off him for even a moment, lest they miss his look or his smile or some endearing gesture. We know hardly anything of his physical beauty. But we do know that Jesus realized the ultimate goal of human life, he realized his oneness with Divinity, and so he must have completely transcended body consciousness and been filled with Divine Bliss. Even as he sacrificed his life for humanity and his body was undergoing the extreme trial of the crucifixion,



he himself must have remained immersed in Ananda and totally unaffected by the physical suffering of his body.

Swami says that the first step on the spiritual path is to be happy, to be always contented and satisfied. The spiritual path, He says, is not pressure but pleasure; it is not information but transformation. It is not taking on new burdens but getting rid of old ones, becoming light, giving up all burdens to Him. He says, "Get on My train and I will carry you and your baggage." But first we have to get on His train. That means thinking always of Him, loving only Him, surrendering everything to Him ..... everything we think we are, everything we think we do. A year ago, He gave us this promise, "I will always protect those who are Mine, those who surrender and say, 'Lord, I am Thine'."

### **Moses and Jesus**

There is a story of another great soul given in the Bible, whose life represents such a supreme level of surrender. Moses was the great devotee to whom God identified Himself in the burning bush, as 'I AM THAT I AM'. Moses brought the children of Israel, a million strong, out of the land of bondage where they had been impressed into slavery for 400 years. The divine command to go came early one morning, and they left suddenly without having time even to take some bread along for the long journey across the desert. After three days of forced marches they came to the Red Sea; there they rested, at last feeling free. Before them to the East was the deep sea which would have to be crossed. But then, when they looked behind them, they suddenly saw the far-off horizon to the west teeming with armies, chariotry, cavalry, infantry and elephantry; the whole Imperial Army of their recent captors was descending upon them, charging down, determined to wipe them off the face of the Earth. Moses was the only one completely unperturbed. His was an integral vision. He trusted completely in Divine Providence, in the promised protection. He said to the people, "Do not fear. Trust in the Lord. He will certainly take care of us. You can be sure that the Army you see today you will never have to see again." At this point the waters of the Red Sea parted and the people went across. When the pursuing Army followed, the waters came back together again and the waves swallowed them up.

We see how the love that God had for his devotee Moses changed the course of events for so many people, and thus, one scene in the Divine plan was fulfilled. Jesus had another part to play in that grand drama. He was the prince of peace, the apostle of love. When asked which was the most important commandment, Jesus answered, "There is only one God. Love Him with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your might." Jesus taught the people that to love God means to love your fellow-beings, to love not only your brother and kinsman and neighbour, but also to love the stranger and the foreigner and to love even your enemy. These pronouncements came from one who had realized the truth of the one eternal Self. Jesus shone as a great light for all of mankind, and for 2000 years he has been worshipped by hundreds of millions as the Saviour come on Earth.

### **The message today**

Now mankind is going through its most troubled time in history. Swami quoted Jesus as saying that the Kali Age will become so bad and man will become such a threat to himself, that God, the

Father, Himself will have to come to Earth; and Swami said that this very Baba with the crown of hair, whose name is Truth and who wears the blood-red robe, is that Father come to save mankind. This is the modern Christmas story, the coming of the Saviour, rising as a divine star over the Earth and bathing all the world with His brilliance. Recently, Swami said that soon a new era of peace will start and that He will act directly in the minds and hearts of people the world over, and be known in all the nations on the Earth.

Is this then the full story of the great drama that is now unfolding around us, as the Avatar graces the Earth with His presence during this present time of great crisis? No, the story does not stop there. Swami has revealed to us a destiny which is beyond anything we could ever have dreamed of. Swami was asked the question, "Bhagavan, over 3000 years ago, Moses led the people out of slavery and brought them to the Promised Land. Then 2000 years ago Christ came and taught them the way to the Kingdom of Heaven. Now we pray that another Messiah will come and bring final salvation. Swamiji, are you that Messiah who has come to deliver us all?" We expected that He would answer in the affirmative, since He had previously spoken in this way of His mission; but this time Baba answered differently, and in the process gave His highest teachings. He said, "No, it's not like that. Not one Messiah. You are all Messiah. In truth, you are God. Here and now you have the strength to save yourself and help others also. Live in God. Live in Love. Always think God. As you think so you will be. Dust if you think, dust you are. God if you think, God you are. Think God. Be God. Realize it! Realize it!"

This is the inspiring message of the Avatar, bringing to light again the ancient teachings of Sanathana Dharma. This is the fulfillment of all our religions. This is the path of Self-discovery, which step-by-step, leads us to realize that we are the one Transcendental Principle, that we always have been and always will be the Supreme Atma, ever pure, eternal, unchanging. With this revelation comes the mind-shattering realization that in essence, we and the Avatars and all the great Godmen of history are exactly the same.

This is the momentous message that Sai has come to bring, and with it He has lit the light which will forever banish our night of ignorance. "I am God. I am God. I am no different from God. Fear and grief can never touch me!" That is the mantra He has given us. It heralds the birth of the Divine Child of peace and love within our hearts. When the birth comes, every day will be Christmas and every day a celebration, for then *our* star will have risen in the morning sky and will shine as a beacon of hope for all mankind.

*—From the address given on Christmas Day 1985 in Brindavan, by A. Drucker*

### ***Delay No More***

*I am the Water of Life,  
Come to Me in the fullness of your mortality*

*And fill your cup and drink the  
Water of Immortality*

*I shall cleanse you, and purify you.  
I shall quench your thirst and fill you with the fullness of My love.  
I shall energize you. Like the dam that generates electricity and light,  
I shall turn you on to radiate like the sun.  
Like the coolness of the moon, I shall fill your days with the cool waters of peace and tranquility.*

*I am the Breath of Life, I come and go singing the Song of Oneness, "SOHAM", from birth to death.  
I am the food that nourishes as I travel through the intricate, circuitous network of the body.  
I am in the seen and unseen cells. I am in the smallest and biggest organs.  
You are Water too, but you proclaim your mortality. I proclaim: "I am the Waters of Immortality."*

*Your eyes cannot behold My vastness even as you look into the distant shores. I am Infinite.  
Your mind cannot comprehend My depth, I am Fathomless,  
The immensity of My vastness ramifies into riverbeds, streams and lakes like a million limbs.  
Yet, I am Beginningless. Endless.*

*I move on from day to day, from season to season, in and through the substrata of My creation.  
I fall from the heavens and mountaintops into streams and volleys, and into the farthest corners,  
quenching the parched souls of all creation.  
I play and dance with the wind, I come and go.  
I am here and there. I am everywhere.*

*In different shapes and forms you see Me, but you do not recognize My Essence.  
I am the dewdrops of early morn, and the showers that gently fall.  
I, too, am the rain that comes loud and strong in torrents when the monsoon tolls.  
I fall gracefully from the clouds as soft, crystalline flakes to become sleet, hail, or snow.  
In Winter I freeze and harden. In spring I change form and flow again.*

*I follow the cycles of nature. I am Nature.  
I am that which flows and pulsates. I am Life.  
I am that which gives abundantly, endlessly. I am Love.  
I create and guide the destinies of men and of all nations. I am Omnipotent.  
I know the thoughts and emotions that play in man's mind and body. I am Omniscient.  
I am near and far. Above and Around. Within and without Everywhere, I am Omnipresent.  
I have no age. I trace no birth or death. I am ancient. Beginningless. Endless.  
I am the Water of Life.  
I am Eternal.  
I AM GOD.*

*Come, my child, delay no more. Hasten your steps.  
I have come back for you. Take hold of Me now and surrender, at My Lotus Feet, the mortal  
chains that bind you life after life.  
And fill your cup and drink of the Waters that flow but never end.  
It shall fill you with My Essence: Love Joy, Peace and Bliss.  
And liberate you into Immortality.  
This is your Destiny*

**—Valen B. Patacsil, Miami, Florida**

**DIVYA SANDESH:**

### **"Equality through Love"**

Real equality among men has to be achieved not by the equal distribution of material things but by the cultivation of love, which promotes a sense of the divinity that is inherent in all beings, observed Bhagavan Baba addressing a vast over-flow gathering in the Chowdiah Memorial Hall in Malleswaram, Bangalore, on December 11.

The acting Chief Justice of Karnataka, Mr. Justice Jagannatha Setty, who presided over the meeting, hailed Bhagavan's visit to Bangalore after a long spell of absence as a blessing to the devotees who had been eagerly looking forward to His coming.

In the course of His address, Bhagavan said:

In this land of Bharat, through all the vicissitudes of history, Truth has been regarded as the highest value to be cherished by man. This is the essence of the cultural heritage that has been given down to us as Sanathana Dharma. The ancient sages emphasised the importance of Karma Yoga, the discharge of one's duties in life in a dedicated spirit. Through Karma Yoga man achieves control of the senses and develops the qualities of universal love, forbearance and compassion.

Everyone should realise that the body has been given to us for performing selfless service. It should also be realised that nothing in creation is intended for the exclusive use of any one person. We should therefore discard the feeling: "These things have been given for my exclusive use, they are my own."

There has been talk of achieving equality in society. The equal distribution of wealth through socialism is declared as the ideal, but is it possible to bring about such equality? Even if material wealth is distributed equally, can you ensure equality in desires and aspirations? Only when you have equality in terms of desires and aspirations can you get true equality. By taking away a part of a rich man's property and giving it to a poor man, you may give satisfaction to the latter, but what about the dissatisfaction caused to the man who has been deprived? You must look beyond

material things to the Supreme Being who is the provider of all things. When you recognise the One as present in all beings and respect everyone as a manifestation of the Divine, you will achieve equality in the true sense of the term. All those who claim to be Bharatiyas should strive to bring about this kind of equality through love for all beings.

A life without love is meaningless. The more you love, the more it grows. True love should be distinguished from attachment either to persons or things. Attachment is based on selfishness. Love is based on selflessness. Love is the fruit which is born from the flower of your good deeds. Only when we engage ourselves in selfless service can we experience the essence of this pure love.

There is considerable progress today in various fields-scientific, economic, political and so on, but all man's actions are motivated by selfishness. Man has become a plaything in the hands of his own selfishness. There is no unity among men. Unity can come only through Tyaga (sacrifice), not through the pursuit of desires and comforts. You must cultivate charity, which does not mean giving some money to a person in need or to an organisation. Charity calls for the removal of all evil thoughts that are within you and development of a largeness of spirit. Charity will confer Purity and through Purity, Unity will be achieved. Once you have Purity and Unity, you can realise Divinity.

When you look around today you find that there is little evidence of sacrifice for the sake of society. A person may call himself a great devotee, or Sadhaka or scientist, but without a spirit of sacrifice there is nothing great in him. Seva or service is the salt which lends savour to life. The spirit of sacrifice imparts fragrance to living. One may live for 60, 70, or 80 years but it will have no meaning unless his life has been devoted to the ennobling of one's character and rendering devoted service to others. What you must aspire for are not buildings, positions or factories or industries. A good character is the greatest wealth you can acquire. More vital than the five Pranas (Prana Apana, and others), Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa are the vital life-breath for every one. Of these the greatest is Prema (Love). Fill yourself with love. Love should express itself in service to society. You should look upon society this way. We exist for society and society exists for the good of all. Try to sanctify your life by doing service and spreading joy and comfort all around.

## **How the Lord Chooses**

I had been waiting for weeks to have an interview when 'SHE' arrived. Immediately 'SHE' was called in for an interview. The very next day 'SHE' received another. 'How unfair', I murmured under my breath as I continued to wait in the hot Indian sun. Eventually I did receive an interview. But time and again after returning to the U.S.A., I thought of the young woman who had several interviews and never had to wait! 'Why did she get such fine attention', I would ponder.

I was allowed to return to Puttaparthi the following year and as it was the time of Swami's birthday and the Fourth World Conference, the Abode of Peace was filled to the brim with devotees. This meant I was assigned to a hall. And I was living with one hundred and fifty women from all corners of the globe. Rooming directly across from me under a blue mosquito net was 'SHE'. Yes, it was the young woman who had received several interviews upon her 1984 arrival. I strongly remembered waiting week after agonizing week while 'SHE' was treated as royalty.

We had been roommates for three days acknowledging each other with eye contact but never speaking.

Then one day, out of the blue, 'SHE' approached me and said in broken English: "I think you were here last year when I was. I remember you. Do you remember me?" I replied I in fact did remember her. Then I mentioned that she had received several interviews in a very short period of time immediately upon her 1984 arrival. Smiling, she said: "Yes, I have a brain tumour. Swami touched my head and told me to think only of Him and not to worry. So, I have done just that. I am back at work now and I don't worry. I listen to Swami," Startled by what she said, I stammered: "Did you return to the doctor? Did you have surgery?"

"No," she calmly replied, "I never went back to the doctor. I only think of Him." How courageous! How beautifully faithful!

Aghast at my previous thoughts and judgements, I was sickened with myself. And I had to sit down. How selfish I was! How dare I question the motives of Divinity? Who did I think I was?

The ego is the most subtle aspect of man, as it can be very sneaky.

We can never understand the ways of God though the ego will make us try. It will garb itself in beautiful garments to hide the truth of the lower self from the Real self. It took this experience and much pain, with a lot of self-inquiry, to make me see a reality about my selfishness and judgements, which, garbed in beautiful clothes, I had neglected to look at.

The Lord is perfect in His priorities. Sai Baba is perfect in His picking and choosing.

As I again sit waiting in the hot sun for perhaps another magic moment with my Lord I often recall this painful lesson to remind me not to try and think for God.

I tell this story not to show literary excellence, but to help those who find themselves waiting and wondering. God makes no mistakes. Trust Him! Oh, I might add the woman never spoke to me again after that day!

—Joy Ziegler, U.S.A.

*Remember the Lord with thankfulness at least thrice or even twice a day; that will give you great peace. Do not give up your worldly duties, but do them with the name of God on your lips, inviting the Grace of God on your heads. Do not involve yourselves in the affairs of your neighbours or others to the extent that you get so entangled you cannot extricate yourselves. Spend your time in the contemplation of- the beauties of nature that are spread out before you in earth and sky: green expanses of the crops you have raised, cool breezes that waft contentment and joy, the panorama of coloured clouds, the music of the birds.*

—**Baba**

**GURUDEVA VANI:**

### **"Reform should start from Primary Stage"**

Educational reform should begin from the primary school, where the children's character will have to be moulded, observed Bhagavan Baba in a forthright address to nearly nine hundred College Principals, N.C.C. and N.S.S. officers and professors of colleges from all over Karnataka, who had assembled in the Kunwarba Auditorium of the Sathya Sai College, Brindavan, on December 13.

The meeting had been arranged by the Director of Collegiate Education, Karnataka.

Dr. Selvie Das, Director of Collegiate Education, spoke on the need for reform in the educational system, and invited Bhagavan to address the gathering.

In the course of his address, in which Bhagavan referred to the various ills affecting the present educational system, Bhagavan pleaded for imparting to the educational process a spiritual and moral content from the stage of primary education. Bhagavan criticised the attitude of parents who showed no responsibility for promoting discipline and moral behaviour among their children.

#### **Who is to blame**

Educational institutions Bhagavan said have the responsibility to give to society well educated persons who are competent and who are men of integrity and who can be relied upon to serve society with devotion and competence. The crisis in the educational field is well-known. Many attempts have been made to bring about changes in the educational system but it is forgotten that what gives education its true value and significance is its moral and spiritual content. In a world in which many technical and scientific changes are taking place, a balance has to be maintained between modernity and spiritual traditions and heritage of the country. The link between education and employment which has remained from the days of McCauley has to be broken. Education should be for life and not merely for earning a living.

Without emphasis on character, educational institutions have become the abodes of indiscipline and disorder. Who is responsible for this condition? Teachers who are unable to

understand the workings of the minds of the students are worried about how to deal with the situation. The students have no sense of discipline or respect for teachers. Both students and teachers are confronted with managements who are not primarily concerned with the real purpose of education. The result is we have students who indulge in agitations and teachers who are discontented. The managements for their part complain against the Government, but it is not the teachers alone or the students or the management or the government who are to be held responsible for this state of affairs. The parents of the students have forgotten their own responsibility for developing in the young the right attitudes and behaviour. In the past, the family was the first institution in which the students imbibed the culture and traditions of the nation through stories about the great sages, saints and heroes of the past. By too much indulgence the parents are also-allowing the students to have their own way and ignore what is good, noble and virtuous. The teachers do not impart to the students the essential values of life to enable them to discriminate between what is right and what is wrong, what is true and what is false.

Most of the problems in our country are created not by the uneducated or the illiterate but mainly by the educated persons. The reason is the educated persons have not had the right type of education.

### **The needed changes**

There is too much interference by the Government in the educational system which accounts partly for the prevailing evils. Attempts to tinker with the system by altering the number of years at school and the number of years at college do not effect any fundamental changes. Whether it is  $10 + 2 + 3$  or  $10 + 3 + 2$  makes no difference to the end product of the system. The change in fact should begin from the primary level when the children are in their most impressionable years. It is at that stage that discipline and moral values should be inculcated. Students who have been moulded on right lines in the early years by being filled with examples from our cultural heritage would develop into ideal citizens.

At the higher levels of education the major problem is caused by politics and the holding of elections in college associations. Elections to student bodies should go. They involve not only considerable waste of money but result in divisions and conflicts between students.

Changes are needed also with regard to examinations. Frequent postponement of examinations has become the bane of the educational system. The educational authorities should see that all examinations in colleges are completed by the first week of April so that the results are announced in the first week of June and all colleges are reopened for the new academic year by the last week of June. Only then will students be able to plan their further studies.

Teachers for their part should regard their vocation as a sacred duty. They have the responsibility to mould the future generations of young students both by what they teach and by their example. These teachers should inspire the students by example, by the way they live outside the classroom. If there are such teachers there will be no cause for students to go astray.



One of the principle aims of education must be to make students self-reliant. They should not become degree holders going around abegging for jobs.

I hope that you will devote yourselves to your duties with greater vigour and enthusiasm and bring' about a transformation in the students. It should make them useful and worthy citizens of this great country.

—*Brindavan Auditorium, December 15, 1985*

### **Seva—the First Step**

I spent a certain amount of time reading through a book of poetry entitled 'The Mystic in Love' in search of an appropriate poem with which to begin. At first sight the poem I chose didn't quite seem to 'fit' but on a closer reading I felt that it did in fact express something of what I was intending to say. The poem was written by Swami Vivekananda, entitled 'The living God.'

He who is in you and outside you  
Who works through all hands,  
Who works on all feet  
Whose body are all ye,  
Him worship and break all other idols!

He who is at once the high and low,  
The sinner and the saint  
Both God and worm,  
Him worship—visible, knowable, real, omnipresent,  
In whom is neither past life  
Nor future birth nor death,  
In whom we always have been  
And always shall be one,  
Him worship and break all other idols!

Ye fools! Who neglect the living God,  
And His infinite reflections with which the world is full,  
While ye run after imaginary shadows,  
That lead alone to fights and quarrels, Him worship, the only visible!  
Break all other idols!

The pillars on which Sri Sathya Sai Baba's missions are built are Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa—Truth, Right living, Peace, Love and non-violence. But there is another which Baba is stressing more and more these days—Seva or Service. At first it might seem that this is another dimension to add to the five but in fact if one is attempting to incorporate these

five into one's life it follows that the fruit of this attempt should be the desire to be engaged in Seva. These five 'pillars' could also be looked at in another way—as the spokes of a wheel upon whose hub is inscribed SEVA. All these aspects are interdependent and each in its way should inspire Seva—or the desire to serve God before self.

Take any one of these, Ahimsa (non-violence), for instance, and this can be seen to be true. If we are to cultivate non-violence we must in the process recognise that God is in ALL beings, not only the human species. Not in a particular being who might take our fancy either, but in All beings.

By practising non-violence, then, we are serving God, this is Seva. Many people in discussing the subject of Seva claim that Seva means being employed or involved in a situation which directly or concretely serves other people. I have no dispute with this except to say that it does not follow that just because you are not a doctor or a social worker you are not involved in Seva. Or, on the contrary, that just because you are a doctor or social worker you are necessarily serving God.

The problem is deeper than that. Seva to me is as much, if not more, an inner activity as an outer one. Most of us through our training or lack of it will never be doctors or social workers or teachers—nor perhaps were we intended to be. We can however serve God and humanity with as much potency as those involved in these activities can.

It is a matter of awareness—or perhaps a better word might be AWAKENNESS. By engaging in Sathya, Dharma, Prema, Santhi and Ahimsa consciously, we should begin to see the true pattern of things - the presence of the spiritual dimension, and as we proceed, the compulsion to offer as much of ourselves as possible to expand this dimension. If we are moving forward and growing, however imperceptibly, we should begin to be detached enough to recognise our self-centredness. This self-centredness or selfishness, is the antithesis of Seva. We must recognise the need to overcome our own selfishness. It cannot be done over night. It is a slow arduous process, like any process of growth. By doing this, by engaging ourselves in becoming aware or AWAKE about our true natures we are surely being engaged in Seva. How can anyone claim to understand, let alone espouse, Sathya or Dharma etc without recognising first his or her own adharma or ignorance?

It is not also correct to judge persons by what is apparently their outward activity. For aught we know they may be far more rigorous and determined about their inner growth and expansion than ourselves.

It is logical to me that the result of the kind of inner exploration that Baba demands of us would be the desire to serve humanity—or God as humanity. Everyone has some talent, skill, or virtue which can be utilised. It is only in this crazy modern world of ours that we are led to believe that one occupation or activity is somehow better or of more value than another. Our ways of seeing these things have been incorrectly conditioned. We are trained always to see the

outward appearance, the surface, the trappings, before we see the important thing which is the Heart.

All the great spiritual teachers have taught this point. It is the heart which counts. For me personally there is no greater truth than this. I am always having this revealed to me—the presence of the heart, of love, in the most unexpected places.

We must work on ourselves, we must be awake, this then is the first step in Seva. We must listen to the promptings of our own hearts, the clues, the signs are always there, sometimes obscured by the clamour of our minds, but always there.

—*Tony Reeder, Sydney*

#### ***EHV ON THE MARCH:***

### **Spanish-Speaking Devotees' Meet**

Bhagavan Baba's 60th birthday celebrations brought together many Spanish-speaking devotees from diverse parts of the globe at Prasanthi Nilayam, in November. They organised a seminar on Education in Human values in the premises of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning on November 25, 26 and 27. Sixty five devotees from Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Panama, Venezuela, Bolivia, Peru, Argentina, Miami, Spain, the Canary Islands, Germany and Italy attended the seminar.

The purpose of the seminar was not to train teachers, but to stimulate interest in the five human values so that the devotees could go back to their respective centres and interest the others in the EHV programme and start more Bal Vikas groups. In addition to covering the meaning of the five values and enumerating many sub-values, five strategies and three approaches used in practical application were demonstrated. Bea Flagg addressed the group and spoke about her efforts to bring these values to the New York schools. She and Denise Dake conducted model classes using the direct approach to teaching the values. Sanjeev Chaudhry reviewed the proceedings of the seminar.

A Latin American Publications committee was formed to bring out EHV material for all Spanish-speaking countries and groups, with Luis Muniz of Mexico as coordinator. The enthusiasm was so great that it was decided to hold a teacher-training course at a Pan-American conference to be held in 1986.

#### **EHV in El Salvador**

The government of El Salvador recently established a Rehabilitation Centre for soldiers returning to civilian life. Sai devotees were invited to give EHV classes three days a week, one hour each class. There are about twenty young men in each class. These boys have been fighting to make their country a better place in which to live and they want actively to build a better future for their children and country. The Human Values programme shows them the way.

On December 7, 1985, all the personnel of the rehabilitation centre including the colonel in charge and several doctors received an EHV orientation course so that the Human Values can be integrated with the activities and courses given by the centre. Twenty-eight trainers received this orientation.

The Rehabilitation Centre has solicited the help of a psychiatrist, who is also a Sai devotee, for giving the EHV course in 1986.

—J. B., El Salvador

GURUDEVA VANI:

### **"Students and Satwic Purity"**

A ten-point programme to achieve "Satwic" purity covering every aspect of a student's life and conduct was offered by Bhagavan Baba; when he spoke to the students of the Sathya Sai Hostel at Brindavan on December 29.

Dr. Sandeep Sastri, Warden of the Hostel, welcoming Bhagavan, expressed the deep gratitude of the students to Bhagavan for His response to their prayers. It was a red-letter-day in the history of the hostel. The students had been yearning for Bhagavan's visit after an absence of eighteen months.

Prof. Narender, Principal of the College, said that the students and staff had been eagerly looking forward to Bhagavan's visit. Their lapses in the past were due to ignorance and he assured Bhagavan that they would not repeat them.

Bhagavan then addressed the gathering:

*A son without virtue  
An education without aim  
A life without justice  
A community without morality  
And a night without the moon  
Are of no use to the world. Dear students!*

Moral education is the primary requisite in life for every student. It is his basic duty. In the Sanskrit language, personality is described as "Pourushamu"—the hallmark of a "Purusha". Although "personality" and "Pourusham" may have the same meaning, they are words pregnant with significance. People who do not know the inner meaning of these terms, use them casually. Only the one who manifests the indwelling, invisible divine principle in him is qualified to describe himself as a "person" (a Purusha). He should manifest the divine power in him.

The Sanskrit term "Purusha" means a quality associated with moral behaviour. The English word "person" is derived from the Latin term "persona". In the post-Christian period, the term "persona" came to be used to refer to the Divine assuming a human form. In due course, it was applied to all human beings as persons who were inherently divine.

The term "Purusha" is commonly used to mean hatred or anger or strength. The true meaning, however, is: it is a quality associated with "Purusha". "Purushatwa" does not refer to externals like dress or other physical features. The sage Narada referred to Purusha as "Pumaan" and declared that whoever realises "Pumaan" (the Supreme person) becomes saturated with Divine Bliss. Thus the term Purusha can be applied only to the Divine.

Hence it is the primary duty of man to manifest the divinity in him in his life: One's life-story is regarded as made up of his childhood, growth, achievements, his thoughts and ideals. But what is fundamental to a man's life is his moral stature. Morality (Neeti) is derived from the Sanskrit word (Nitha). Neeti means right conduct. It is the path that leads one to the sublime. Good character, purity of thought and selfless sacrifice are all covered by Neeti. It comprehends all good deeds. Only a community devoted to morality is a true community, says an adage. The ancients regarded "Neeti" as fundamental, without which the society will be ruined. To promote "Neeti" the divinity that is in each one must be manifested. For this purpose, even the body has to be made pure and hence good health is essential.

The word 'Health' is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word 'helig', meaning "wholeness" (paripoornamu) or "inner spirit". What is the "wholeness" that is to be achieved? The body consists of the sense organs, the mind, the intellect, the consciousness, and the indwelling Spirit. "Wholeness" means that all these elements should be whole. The mind should be in a state of fullness. It should not be in a state of "jumps and bumps". There should be no room for confusion or depression.

To achieve such a state of mind, it is necessary to understand the meaning of everything and every situation. For instance, if a student has failed in an examination, he should not get depressed. Instead, he should examine the reasons for his failure, whether he had not studied properly or understood the subjects correctly. If he finds that his failure is due to inadequate preparations, he should resolve to do better in the future.

To develop one's moral and mental strength, one should practise sadhana for disciplining the mind. For this purpose, one has to promote ten kinds of purity (Satwa).

The **first** is purity of the place in which one lives. It is necessary to fill the room in which one resides or studies with a Satwic atmosphere. The pictures or other objects you see should fill you with peace and pure thoughts. Objects which arouse agitation and bad thoughts should have no place. The room should be clean and free from anything that is impure.

**Second:** In the family with which you live, there should be mutual understanding and cooperation, and a sense of harmony. There should be no discord in the family that will create a bad atmosphere. A harmonious atmosphere will give you true peace of mind.

The **third** need is 'Satwic' food. This means that none of the edible items should be excessively sour, bitter, or hot. You should eschew 'Rajasic' food like fish or meat. Even good 'Satwic' food should not be taken in excess. Some people consume so much of Satwic food that even though it is 'Satwic', it develops Rajasic qualities. It is only 'Satwic' when you sit for the meal with a light stomach and get up from it with a light stomach! If you sit with a light stomach and get up with a 'weighty' stomach, it becomes 'Tamasic'.

**Fourth:** Whatever fluids you take should also be 'Satwic'. You should not drink whatever water is available. It should be pure water. Alcoholic spirits should be eschewed.

**Fifth:** 'Satwic' thoughts and feelings are of great importance. Students tend to neglect this factor. Only if your thoughts and feelings are pure, can you get the full benefit of a clean room, a good family and pure food.

**Sixth:** If you want to develop Satwic feelings and thoughts, your vision must be pure. All creation (Srishti) is based upon sight (drishti). It is only when you have wrong vision that you have wrong thoughts. You must look upon every elderly woman as your mother and all women who are younger as your sisters. When you are filled with such pure thoughts, you will have pure feelings. It is because you are students, you have to be told this. Imagine how offended you will feel if someone looks at your mother or sister with an evil eye. Realising this, you have to entertain pure feelings towards other women. You should not commit the sort of offences which you will not tolerate in others.

**Seventh:** Whatever books you read or whatever you write should be pure. This is the sadhana relating to study (Sahitya Satwika). If you read or write that which is not pure, it warps your mind. A good book makes for a good mind. Any book you may study about physics or chemistry or other subjects, does not affect your character. But books which are literary, are not always good literature. If improper books are prescribed for study, treat them as mere text-books, and do not attach any high value to them as guides for life.

**Eighth:** Pure 'Satwic service'. With regard to service, you have to decide what is 'Satwic' and what is 'Rajasic'. We go and clean streets, build roads in villages or dig wells and do them all as a service to the community. But the kind of service which we do should give real happiness to the people. In the name of 'Social work' you go to a hospital and approach a patient. This is not real service. Any person whom you wish to serve, you should regard as an embodiment of the Divine. Going to the help of the destitute and the neglected is rendering service to God. Narayana has two forms: one is 'Lakshmi Narayana', the other is 'Daridra Narayana'. This 'Lakshmi Narayana' is full of wealth. He is able to help any number of people. He will be able to get many persons to serve him. But, for 'Daridra Narayana' there is nobody to serve him. It is to such persons that we should do 'Satwic' service.

**Ninth:** 'Sadhana'. This is 'spiritual discipline'. This must be Satwic. Some people do Hatha Yoga. Some strive to develop the Kundalini Shakti. Some invoke evil spirits, to do harm to others. These forms of 'sadhana' are not 'sadhana' at all. The individual is 'Chit' (Consciousness). God is 'Sat' (The Eternal Absolute). When 'Sat' and 'Chit' combine, you have 'Ananda'—"Sat-Chit-Ananda". Only the sadhana undertaken to realise Satchitananda is true sadhana. Where is this 'Sat'? This Sat, the Divine, is in everybody. So, you must be prepared to serve everybody, regarding everyone as the Divine. You may have normal relationship with your kith and kin. There is nothing wrong in this. You must perform 'sadhana' in the spirit that the One pervades the many. In this process, you must cultivate the feeling of Love. There is no higher 'sadhana' than the cultivation of Love!

Uddhava was an adept in the path of Knowledge and Wisdom (Jnana Yoga). He wanted to teach the 'Gopikas' (the cowherdesses) the path of Wisdom. So, he approached Krishna. Krishna told Uddhava: "The Gopikas are totally devoted to me. Their devotion is fundamental to their life and reaches My heart! Their purity and devotion are like a light that shines! You cannot understand the hearts of such devotees! I am completely enshrined in their hearts." Uddhava doubted whether ignorant, illiterate Gopikas could understand the Divine. To dispel the doubts of Uddhava, Krishna sent him to Repalle. Uddhava summoned the Gopikas and told them: "I will teach you the Path of Jnana to realise the Divine!" The Gopikas came to Uddhava and told him: "We are not interested in learning any Shastras! Teach us one simple means by which 'we can realise Krishna! We are not aware of any 'yoga' or 'bhoga' or 'mantra'. Krishna is everything for us, our 'yoga' or 'bhoga'. Please, therefore, tell us the means by which we can obtain Krishna! We do not want to waste our time on 'yoga'!" Uddhava asked the Gopikas: "How can you become one with Krishna?" One Gopikas answered: "If Krishna were a flower, I would be a bee whirling round Him. If He were a tree, I would be a creeper twining round him. If He were a mountain, I would be a river cascading from its top! If Krishna were the boundless sky, I would be a little star, twinkling in the firmament. If He were the deep ocean, I would be a small stream, joining the ocean. This is the way I would be one with Krishna and merge with Him!" Another Gopi said: "If Krishna were a flower, I would be a bee which goes on sucking every drop of honey in the flower tasting the nectar that is there! This is our approach to God." So, spiritual sadhana means to regard a mountain or a tree, or a flower, or the ocean, as a means of God-realization!

**Tenth:** Your occupation or profession. What is the kind of work you should take up? It should be work which can benefit the nation, the community. The nation enables you to earn a living. You must see what you can give to the nation, in return. You must ask yourself: "What is the service, what is the help I can do for the community?" You must see that there is no untruth in any work you do, no unfairness, no fraud, no evil motive.

These are the pure things which you have to observe in your life. If you engage yourselves in right action, you will not be bound by the consequences of Karma. Because of past Karma, you have got the present life. By your present Karma you can ensure freedom from birth. Through love, you develop faith; through faith and earnestness, you acquire knowledge; through knowledge, you develop sadhana, and through sadhana, you achieve the goal. So, for practising sadhana, you require wisdom, and for acquiring wisdom, you require Shraddha (earnestness and

faith) and for Shraddha you must cultivate love. So love is the means and for this you must acquire control of the senses. If gradually you reduce your desires, you will be able to bring the senses under control.

Every student should prepare himself to serve as an ideal for the community. There should be no discord among your college-mates and no room for hate or ill-will. You should discharge your duties and please your parents by your conduct. Strive to bring credit to your educational institute. Above all, try to earn the grace of God by being helpful to your fellow-beings. Only these constitute true education.

Different branches of knowledge are like rivers, while spiritual knowledge is the ocean. Even as the rivers merge in the ocean, all types of knowledge merge in spiritual knowledge.

You must bear in mind the company you keep. Kabir said "I salute the bad and also the good!" Kabir was asked: "We can understand your offering salutations to the good, but what is the point in offering salutations to the bad?" He replied: "When I salute the bad, I am saluting them, saying: Please remove yourself from my presence. I salute the good, saying: Please come to me!" You must avoid the company of the bad and cultivate the company of the good. Association with the good is pure Yoga! I desire that you should pursue this kind of 'yoga' and confer happiness on all people with whom you are associated!

You should strive to get rid of all your bad thoughts, give up all your bad traits, discharge your obligations to your parents, render disinterested service to the community and thereby redeem your lives and earn the grace of God. This is my blessing for all of you."

There was thunderous applause when Bhagavan concluded His address. He then sang the bhajan, "*Hari bhajana binaa Sukha Santhi Nahi*," with all the students following Him in chorus.

The meeting was followed by a sumptuous dinner.

## **The Joy of Christmas**

As Christmas approached this year, hundreds of devotees came to Prasanthi Nilayam from far-off North America, South America, Central America, Europe, Africa, Southeast Asia, West Asia, Australia and the Pacific Coasts. For, in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan, Christmas has become a multi-religious outpouring of love towards the One God, worshipped in many names and forms. A week earlier, Swami had gone to Brindavan. When He left Prasanthi Nilayam, He was expected to arrive back any day. But on the Thursday before Christmas, He sent a message that all overseas devotees may come to Brindavan for Christmas. He encouraged them with the words, "They will not be disappointed!"

All the overseas devotees assembled in the Prayer Hall at Brindavan on Christmas Evening for the much-longed-for celebration in the Presence of Beloved Baba. Devotees had rehearsed a



few beautiful English devotional songs to be offered to Baba. Swami directed us to sing them while He showered His Love and Grace.

Christmas Day began in the hour before dawn, with Nagarsankirtan-cum-Christmas caroling, starting from the College Guest House. The candlelight procession, nearly a thousand strong, was joined by the students of the Sathya Sai College. It wound its way through the streets of Kadugodi to the Rama temple, and then came back to Brindavan. The Lord granted Darshan from the Santhi Vedika as we sang in unison, "Joy to the world, the Lord has come," followed by a chorus of the rousing 'Hallelujah'. Then, He beckoned the devotees to come into the inner court, past the glittering Christmas tree set up on the lawn outside of Swami's lotus-shaped Mandir—"Trayee Brindavan". More than 800 overseas devotees had the blessed chance to walk through His beautiful temple residence, passing from the outer hall into the Rotunda and out through one of the rooms, down the bridge across the lotus pond and back through the gate. All this was done with the lilting chorus of 'Gloria in Excelsis Deo' and other festive Christmas songs.

Then, the overseas devotees assembled under the Om Sai Ram tree for a half-hour programme of devotional songs in the Divine Presence.

That evening, the Assembly was held in the same Kalyana Mandap for Bhagavan's Divine Christmas Message (published separately). Swami casually seated Himself on the edge of the dais and elevated the occasion into a festive family celebration. The programme began with the chanting of the Bhakti Yoga verses from the Bhagavad Gita. Later, children presented some happy songs, including "Sathya Sai, Sathya Sai, Sathya all the way..." The culmination of the musical programme came when the famous jazz musician, Maynard Fergusson, played his trumpet to the accompaniment of our singing, "When the Saints go marching in." It was like the angels singing and the trumpet heralding the presence of the Lord! Al Drucker then addressed the gathering. He spoke of Swami's sweetness and love, and how He shapes us and moulds us in His divine Leela of love.

Then Bhagavan granted the boon of the Divine Discourse. He spoke of the Oneness of God proclaimed by founders of all religions and prophets. He concluded His moving discourse with the songs, 'Love is My Form' and 'Govinda Krishna Jai'.

The following evening, Bhagavan allowed overseas devotees to gather again in the Prayer Hall. Swami entered around 5 P.M., and asked, "What do you want?" The answer came in chorus from every one, "Swami, we want You!" Then He gave us more of His divine advice, this time translated not only into English but also into Italian. Swami said that the most important achievement in life is earning God's Grace, which is won by living in love and in being good, doing good and seeing good. He said that the recipe for spiritual progress is: first God, then the world, then the I. Later, He granted the devotees the chance to touch His Lotus Feet, blessing each one with a few soothing words, a touch of benediction or a smile of affectionate recognition.

Words cannot adequately describe the joy of this Christmas with Swami. The joy extended even into the New Year, for Swami granted special Darshans for the overseas devotees. Singing to the Lord continued on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. May all the world soon be blessed with the Peace and Joy He showered during this holy season.

—*Howard Levin*

### **The Lord's Footsteps**

Last night I had a dream,  
I dreamt I was walking on the sands  
with the Lord Himself,  
and on the screen of the night I saw  
like in a movie all the days of my life.  
As I looked at my past, on every single day,  
two footsteps appeared on that screen  
one was mine and the other the Lord's.  
So I carried on until all the days allotted  
to me were gone.

Then I stopped and looked back. In some  
places, there was just one footstep .....  
Those places coincided with the most difficult  
days of my life, the days of greatest suffering,  
fear, and pain .....

Then I asked Him:

"O Lord, You told me You would have stayed  
with me throughout all days of my life, and I  
accepted to live with You. Please tell me why  
in those worst moments You left me alone?"

And the Lord answered:

"My child, I love you and told you I was going  
to stay with you throughout this journey  
I would never leave you alone,  
not even for an instant, nor did I leave you .....

When you saw a single footstep on the sand on those days  
I was carrying you."

—ANONYMOUS

(A devotee from Lima, Peru, sent the above poem with a note that it belongs to the Brazilian tradition. - Ed.)

*THE CHANCELLOR SPEAKS:*

**"Truth and Love—the goals"**

An exhortation to students of the Prasanthi Nilayam Campus of the Sathya Sai Institute to "let Truth and Love be the goals" for all their efforts and studies, was made by Bhagavan Baba, Chancellor of the Institute, addressing the first meeting of the students after the birthday Celebrations, when the new Vice-Chancellor, Dr. S. A. Saraf, welcomed Bhagavan.

The meeting, which was held in the Institute's Auditorium on December 5, was attended by some prominent invitees, besides the staff and students of the Prasanthi Nilayam Campus.

Bhagavan began his address with a limerick on the tribe of persons who know little about themselves but are never tired of finding faults in others. Bhagavan said:

*He hides his faults, the pseudo-wise,  
And highlights the faults in others galore  
He knows naught of himself or his self  
And the rest that he knows is best unknown.*

Students! Teachers!

Birds, beasts and trees do service to man, without anticipating any recompense, but man seeks help from his kind, from his parents, preceptors and even God, offering in return only insult and injury. He parades his loyalty to Truth, Right Conduct, Peace and Non-violence—virtues arising from self-less love but it is only for exhibition and not for experience. He longs to receive respect and affection from others but is reluctant to treat others in the same manner. His concern is centred on the body-mind complex. He ignores the fact that even a hundred-year long life has to end in the cemetery. The Reality that is latent, that he has heard about, that he gets glimpses of, he ignores, for he is immersed in egoism and selfishness.

In order to free himself from the ego, man has to recognise the One Divinity that, temporarily wears different form and names to distract him by apparent multiplicity. The basic ignorance of man lies in his identifying himself with what is not genuinely he. Removal of this mistaken view and attainment of the awareness of the Unity in Divinity—this is the true purpose of education.

Education is a process of culture. One has to plant healthy and potent seeds in the inner field, so that a plentiful harvest of valuable fruits can be gained. A great deal of discrimination and preparation have to precede the sowing. What is happening today is indiscriminate choice of seeds leading to a harvest of disturbance—a contingency that can be avoided only by rigorous inquiry into values and their promotion.

Another point: When some friends, well wishers or relatives place a gift-article in our hands, we accept it gladly, though it does not please us, because our acceptance pleases them. When the gift pleases us, our reaction is hearty. We treasure it and are filled with it. Know that God too reacts in the same way to what man offers Him. When the offering is tainted, He may accept it in order to satisfy the longing of the devotee or Sadhaka. But when the offering pleases Him by its purity and sincerity, He welcomes it and His joy translates itself as abundant Grace. So, one has to discover and decide on the offering that gives Him delight and one is blessed thereby with Grace.

Let me tell you—the offering must be the Flower of Prema, the Flower of Sathyam. Sathyam has two facets: (1) Untouched by the flux of Time, Eternal, Unblemished, as Stable and Pure as Brahman Itself (vide the Upanishad Declaration: Sathyam Jnanam Anantam Brahma) (2) Sathyam in practice, as elaborated in the Upanishads—Sathyam vada, (Speak Truth), that is to say, voicing the seen exactly as seen, the thought exactly as it formed, the deed exactly as done.

Who was it that laid down the guidelines for this practice of Truth? They were prescribed by the great grandfather of a long series of grand-fathers, the Sage Manu, the ancestral lawgiver after whom 'man' is referred to as Manuja (the child of Manu). Truth is man's long-treasured heritage. Truth sustains the worlds and protects mankind. It is at the basis of justice and morality, peace and purity, faith and freedom. It has to be revered and activated by man at all times, under all conditions.

The Gita advises us to adopt "inoffensive speech, which is truthful, pleasant and beneficial" (17-15). In order to solve many problems that arise when one practises the sadhana of Truth, Manu directed man not to speak out unpleasant Truth or pleasant falsehood. When it becomes necessary to reveal an unpleasant truth, one has to soften and sweeten its impact by consciously charging it with Love, sympathy, and understanding. "Help ever; but never" - that is the maxim. Philosophy means the love for Truth which leads to the understanding and awareness of Truth. Today, it has become a superficial acquaintance, not a constant Vision of Truth, not a discipline to which one is devoted, nor a path along which progress is achieved. The various faculties of Science have also to be collated and coordinated, so that the scientific discipline might reveal the Truth. The Truth, when known, has also to be used beneficially. Newton lamented that his famous Laws were liable to be used for disastrous ends.

Instances abound in the history of Bharat of sages and rulers who sacrificed their lives in order to fulfill their plighted word. Emperor Harishchandra stuck to Truth in spite of travail and temptation. He refused to deny the word he had spoken, though he had to sell himself and his queen and son as bond-slaves and reduce himself to the position of a watchman in a burial

ground. Lakshmana too stuck to his promise to accompany Rama during the years of his exile though he had to leave his mother and wife and palace behind. Emperor Ball carried out his promise to Vamana though the Guru whom he revered predicted that he would be destroyed, if he stuck to Truth and gifted three foot-lengths of land to Vamana. So, he won God's Grace, as Harishchandra won it and both gathered immortal renown.

Attention to selfish interests will obstruct the path of Truth. Note how those great persons honoured their promises and compare it with the fate of promises today. Now, they appear as if they are inscribed on water. Students! You must free yourselves from this hypocrisy. Your promises are sacred bonds. The Vow of Truth should never be broken. This and the adherence to selfless love have to be your ideals.

See how Nature adheres to Truth by God's command—the regularity of the seasons, the rule of law, the orderly orbital gyration. Man too has to learn this Truth and live accordingly, with the heart attuned to Truth and the Mind saturated with love. Speech must be the flow of Truth. Truth must be revered, as one's very, breath. The Triple purity—speech free from the pollution of falsehood, mind free from the taint of passionate desire or hatred, the body free from the poison of violence—has to be attained by all.

Conflicts and factions, violence and upheavals are caused by the neglect of human values in daily life. Man becomes fit and functionally valid only when, along with scholarship and expert skills, he has imbibed these values. The person who is wedded to Truth and Love would need nothing more for peace and happiness. When Creation is witnessed through these values, it becomes a holy scripture, an inspiring lesson and guide. Therefore I exhort you: let Truth and Love be the goals for all your efforts and studies.

*—Institute Auditorium December 5 1985*

#### **SINGAPORE SYMPOSIUM:**

### **Unity of Faiths**

A symposium on "Unity of Faiths", at which spokesmen for different religions presented their respective point of view regarding the essential unity of all religions, was the climax to a series of functions organised by the Sri Sathya Sai Baba Sixtieth Birthday Celebrations Committee, Singapore, during 1985.

Over a thousand Sai devotees attended the two-day symposium on November 30 and December 1, held in the Singapore Conference Hall

Dr. Yeoh Kian Hien, Chairman of the Celebrations Committee, in welcoming the gathering, said the symposium was a fitting finale to the year-long programme, as there could be no better way of paying homage to Bhagavan Baba than holding a symposium on the core of His teachings—the basic unity of all faiths

The programme started with a video presentation of the life and teachings of Bhagavan, which was followed by the staging of three short plays based on moral themes.

At the Symposium on December 1, Dr. M. V. Nadkarni, presenting the Hindu approach to unity of religions, drew a distinction between religion and spirituality. "Spirituality", he said, "is the essential core of all religious disciplines and is the basic requisite for human development and fulfillment." Mr. B. V. Vakil pointed out from the Zoroastrian viewpoint, charity is the perfection and ornament of religion, "it is the greatest of all virtues." The Ven. N. Sumana spoke on the contribution of Buddhism to the promotion of unity, peace and harmony in the world. Rev. Father Keane explained how in the Christian view Love, Sacrifice and Service were supremely important.

Dattuk Pattingi Haji Abdul Taib Mohamed, Chief Minister of Sarawak, one of the States of Malaysia, emphasised the need for promoting religious tolerance and respect for all religions. "It is through the unity of faiths that harmony and peace can be achieved to ensure a better future for all mankind."

Mr. Antonio Craxi, member of the World Council of Sathya Sai Organisations, speaking on Sai teachings on unity of faiths, said "unity" did not mean "uniting different creeds and religions together" in a single faith. It really implies recognising the existence of one God—though worshipped under different names and faiths—and considering humanity as one family. "Let us become soldiers of Dharma, as Mohamed, Buddha, Jesus and Zarathushtra were, and as Bhagavan Baba is today," he concluded.

Each talk was followed by an appropriate audio-visual presentation of the highlights of each religion. A pageant of avatars, from Sri Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, to Shirdi Baba and Sathya Sai Baba, was presented by Bal Vikas children.

A well-prepared exhibition, devoted to the main themes of the Symposium - Man and Creation, Avatars, Unity of faiths and Sai teachings attracted large numbers of visitors. Besides the exhibition, a spiritual book fair had also been arranged for the occasion.

### ***Cheer for the Handicapped***

London: A programme to bring some cheer and joy to the mentally and physically handicapped inmates of a large hospital in East London was organised by the Sathya Sai Voluntary Service Organisation in association with the staff of the Leystone House Hospital on September 8, 1985. Over 100 Sai volunteers took part and entertained more than 150 of the handicapped residents. The volunteers came from many different London Sai Centres

The programme began with a lively sing-along session on the sunny lawns with chairs arranged around a semi-circular arena for residents, with a volunteer in attendance for each patient. As the tempo rose several residents began impromptu dance in the arena. The residents, their relatives and friends greatly enjoyed the Indian refreshments provided at tea time, which

was followed by Classical Indian dances on religious themes and other variety programmes like ballet and pop music by local groups. Residents took to the arena with volunteers for English folk dances.

Next day the organisers were flooded with telephone calls from relatives saying they had never witnessed such a lively event at Leystone House before. SSVSO has since received requests to organise similar events at a Hospital in Hackney.

—*L. R.*

**GURUDEVA VANI:**

## **Education for Transformation**

*Present day education develops the intellect and skills but does little to develop good qualities. Of what avail is all the knowledge in the world, if one has no good characters' It is like water going down the drain. There is no use if knowledge grows while desires multiply. It makes one a hero in words and a zero in action.*

Man's achievements in the fields of science and technology have helped to improve the material conditions of living. What we need today, however, is a transformation of the spirit. Education should serve not only to develop one's intelligence and skills, but also help to broaden one's outlook and make him useful to society and the world at large. This is possible only when cultivation of the spirit is promoted almost with education in the physical sciences. Moral and spiritual education will train a man to lead a disciplined life.

Education without self-control is no education at all. True education should make a person compassionate and humane. It should not make him self-centred and narrow-minded. Spontaneous sympathy and regard for all beings should flow from the heart of one who is properly educated. He should be keen to serve society rather than be preoccupied with his own acquisitive aspirations. This should be the real purpose of education in its true sense.

### **"Fear and faith"**

Education should instill in the student "fear and faith". 'Fear' does not mean timidity. It is fear of sin and faith in God which have to be promoted. One should feel that he will forfeit the respect and regard of the community if he commits a sinful or immoral act. The student should learn to avoid unrighteous conduct. Students should be taught to love their mothers and their Motherland with deep devotion. "Desha-bhakti" (devotion to one's country) is one form of devotion to God. One who has no love for his mother, his Motherland, his mother tongue and his religion will be leading a meaningless life.

The educational system is beset with many problems. It has failed to promote in the young such qualities as love, forbearance and fortitude. Instead, it serves to encourage the animal nature in students. There is no place in it for cultivating human values like Truth and Righteousness. It does not imbue the student with a sense of humility, which is the hallmark of right education.

Parents are keen about educating their children, but they are not concerned about the kind of education that should be given. Education should help to make students the embodiments of human values such as Truth, Love, Right Conduct, Peace and Non-violence. Academic knowledge alone is of no great value. It may help one to earn a livelihood. But education should go beyond preparation for earning a living. It should prepare one for the challenges of life morally and spiritually. It is because human values are absent in 'educated' persons that we find them steeped in anxiety and worry.



Who is responsible for the deplorable state of education today, for the lack of discipline among students and the absence of moral values among educated persons? It is not correct to blame the students. Teachers do not understand the needs and impulses of students and the students, for their part, have no great regard for the teachers. The managements of educational institutions and the educational administrators do not understand the problems of the teachers or the real needs of the students. Politicians utilise the situation for interfering with the educational system. Conditions arise in which the police have to intervene and sometimes close the educational institutions. For such a situation, the parents, the teachers, the administration and the Government are all to blame. Each is responsible in some way for the malaise in the system. All concerned have failed to recognise their respective obligations.

### **Parents' duty**

The educational system that we inherited from Macaulay's days was designed to train students for filling certain types of jobs primarily to provide an army of clerks for the foreign administration. The link between education and jobs has to be broken. Education should be for life and not for a living. It should prepare youth for all the responsibilities of citizenship.

Parents have the primary responsibility to mould the character of children. Too much freedom should not be given out of excessive affection. Children should be taught to exercise self-restraint and observe discipline in their daily life. If parents are negligent in bringing up the children in their most tender years, it will not be easy to correct them later on. There is a Telugu saying that if the daughter-in-law is dark in complexion, all the children will be dark. In the sphere of education, the system of education can be compared to the daughter-in-law. If it is defective the end products will also be bad. The entire country will suffer from the consequences of defective education. If students are disciplined and well behaved, the country will be safe and sound.

What is the Government's responsibility? We find that every time there is a change in the education ministry, the educational policy is changed, with the result that there is instability and uncertainty. The main defects in the educational system remain uncorrected. As a consequence, the students suffer.

There is no point in blaming students. They are like the stone out of which the sculptor chisels the figures he wants. It is the sculptor who produces a thing of beauty out of a piece of rough rock. Parents and teachers are the sculptors who have to mould the shape and figure of the students for whom they are responsible. If parents and teachers set the right example, the students will automatically blossom into models of excellence and bring glory to the nation.

### **Eschew politics**

There is a basic rule that should be observed by students and teachers. They should totally eschew politics. The students can enter politics, if they choose, after completing their studies and starting life on their own. I am not against politics or politicians. Politics is an essential element in the growth of a country. But what I urge is that one should not venture into it in an immature

and adolescent stage. When a student indulges in politics, he cannot be good in his studies or in his politics. He will only be wasting his precious life.

There is no room for teachers to indulge in politics. Their sole duty is to take good care of the students entrusted to their care and shape them into useful, patriotic and worthy citizens, reflecting the culture and traditions of the land. Teachers who take to politics do so for their own selfish ends to improve their position and influence. They are, in fact, betraying their trust as teachers.

What about elections to student bodies? We find that these elections are conducted on the lines of Assembly elections, involving considerable expenditure on campaigning through posters etc. Sometimes these electoral battles have resulted in damage to property and life. A great deal of energy and money is frittered away on this wasteful exercise. It is no doubt necessary to develop qualities of leadership among students. But this should be done in the proper way. Students after all remain in colleges for a brief period. The Vice Chancellors and Principals of Colleges should sit together and devise methods to instill in the students a sense of discipline and to promote good behaviour and keenness to pursue their, studies. There should be no elections, but only selection. The Principal should select a student, who is not only proficient in studies but is also exemplary in his behaviour and in rendering selfless service to others, and make him the leader of the students. Elections are conducted for so-called students' unions! What is the meaning of 'Union'? It is "coming together of all persons". But what we actually see in students' unions are only dissensions, disunity and mutual rivalry.

The students are innocent. It is the parents and teachers who should lead them in the correct path. Unfortunately, teachers are not doing their part. They have their own 'Unions' and indulge in undesirable activities, which are followed by the students, in their turn!

The characteristic of true Vidya (education) is 'Vinayam' (Humility). Humility helps to make one deserving of respect (patrata). Deservedness leads to wealth (Dhanam) and dhanam leads to Dharma (righteousness). Dharma is the means to liberation (Mukti). We are now giving importance only to intellectual cleverness. This is wrong. Importance has to be given only to character. Education is of no value at all without character. What is the use of having ten acres of wasteland? If you have a small plot of fertile land that is more valuable.

### **Academic standards**

The prevailing system of assessment of the academic performance of students is deplorable. If one gets 25 per cent or 30 per cent of marks in a subject, a student is supposed to have obtained pass marks and he is promoted. This only means that everyone has the license to commit errors to the extent of 70% to 75%. If one commits mistakes to the extent of 75% as a student, how much more mistakes will he commit when taking up a job? He may commit even cent percent mistakes and get away with it. This is not a satisfactory state of affairs. "Look up and aim high" should be the motto. Low aim is actually a crime! If a student aims at 90%, he may manage to get 60%, if, on the other hand, he aims only at 30%, he may get only 15%.

There is another undesirable practice now due to the interference of extraneous persons. The Education Minister gives some grace marks, the Chief Minister gives his own quota of grace marks and the Education Secretary gives some grace marks! With these quotas of grace marks in prospect, which student will have interest in his studies?

India is hailed as a Karma Bhumi, Tyaga Bhumi, and Yoga Bhumi (the land of righteous action, sacrifice and spiritual greatness). But, today we find that because of the defective educational system obtaining here, it has turned into a Bhoga Bhumi and Roga Bhumi, a country revelling in material pleasures and replete with diseases, ruining the health and character of the people as a nation. This is not a desirable state of affairs. Even if there are ten students of sterling qualities and impeccable character it is enough. What is required is quality and not quantity. If the education system could contribute to the turning out of students of good character, committed to human values, the country will become stronger and greater as a nation and be a model to the world.

### **Respect for the teacher**

Teachers should not feel that they belong to a despised profession. Teaching is a very noble and respectable profession. The teacher is actually a king-maker. Even Kings and Emperors have to be in their early years students under a teacher. Bala Gangadhar Tilak, the great patriot and freedom fighter, who was in the teaching profession, was asked as to what position he would like to occupy when the country became Independent. He replied that he was not interested in becoming a Minister or holding any office in the administration. He would prefer to go back to his profession of teaching so that he could mould several students into ministers or rulers rather than be a ruler himself. Such is the nobility and dignity of the teaching profession.

Science is tending to get out of control. There is a Sanskrit saying that there is no nobility without self-control. People are gloating over the phenomenal successes of science and technology. The scientist, in exploring the secrets of Nature, has acquired mastery over air, water, earth, fire, etc. But all these achievements are not greater than what Hiranyakasipu was stated to have achieved in his time. What should be recognised is that in controlling the forces of Nature, the balance should not be upset. In dealing with Nature, there are three requirements. The first is knowledge of the laws of nature. The second is the skill to utilise the powers of Nature for human needs. The third is to maintain the balance among natural forces. It is the disturbance of this balance that has led to such consequences as soil erosion, pollution of the atmosphere, etc.

### **Need for balance**

Today's education is knocking off the 's' from 'skill', with the result that the knowledge is 'killed', with disastrous results for mankind. Students should be given knowledge, skill and balance. In the present system of education, this combination is absent. Each is pursuing his own selfish interests, without regard to the interests of others.

This is the plight of man today. Science has enabled him to acquire immense control over the external world. But he has no control over himself. Winston Churchill once observed: "Man has

conquered all; but not himself.” And this was what Prahlada told his father, Hiranyakasipu: "Oh Father! You have conquered all the worlds, but you have not conquered yourself.”

If the present educational system is to improve, the only way is to eliminate selfishness and train students for the service of society. How are students to be trained for this purpose? It is only through the inculcation of love, with no trace of self-interest. Love is of two kinds: Sahaja Prema (Natural love) and Daiva Prema (divine love). Natural love is one which expects something in return. Divine love expresses itself in loving service without expectation of any return. Divine love always gives to others and receives nothing. Natural love always expects something from others. True education must teach this divine love of heart to heart, mind to mind, and Atma to Atma.

### **Freedom from government**

In order to effect real improvements in the system of education, it is necessary to free educational institutions from Government control and make them independent like the judiciary. They should be run by autonomous agencies free from Government and political influences. Education should be under the control of a national body of educational experts, who have the interests of students as their sole concern.

Now we find that for a seat in a Medical College one has to pay Rs. 2 lakhs or more. Parents who are anxious to give a medical education for their children somehow raise the money. When a student has gone through the medical course in this way and sets up practice, his first concern is to earn money by whatever dubious means to recover the amount spent on his education. He has to resort to corrupt practices. Once this process starts, his character is undermined. We should not give room for practices which demoralise the students from the outset of their educational career.

Another problem relating to our education is the difference in the system from State to State. These differences make it difficult for parents who are liable to transfer to get their wards admitted in the respective classes in a different state. There should be some uniformity in the system of education throughout the country. Vice-Chancellors and Principals of Colleges should get together and devise a common system of higher education for the whole country. They should ensure that all examinations are completed by April 20 and the results are announced by the second week of June so that all colleges can reopen before the end of June. This will enable students to seek admission to any institution of their choice anywhere in the country. It is essential to have a common schedule of examinations for all states.

### **Free education in Sai institute**

There should be no link between money and education. In the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Education (of which Bhagavan Baba is the Chancellor), we will be providing from the new academic year (June 1986) free education to students at all levels including Postgraduate courses. The aim is to train the students in the proper way and make them accept the institute's discipline. When you collect money from outsiders you become tools in their hands. When you provide free

education, you can control the students. You can impart moral values and mould the character of the students.

At present there are what are called moral instruction classes in some schools. These figure only in, the timetable. Often these periods are used for teaching other subjects.

From the most impressionable years the children should be taught to cultivate love for all. Love leads to unity. Unity promotes purity. Purity leads to Divinity. Today there is no love and we find enmity instead of unity. A human being without love is worse than a wild animal in the jungle. Animals, birds and trees are of some service to others, but the man who is selfish not only does no service but causes harm to other. The educated are even worse sinners in this respect' than the unlettered. It is educated young men who are found engaged in crimes like high-jacking, bank robberies and other grave offences against society. Is this the kind of transformation that should be expected from education?

Education should imbue students with certain ideals. They should realise that there is only one caste, the caste of humanity. There is only one religion, the Religion of Love. There is only one language, the language of the heart. If these basic ideals are followed, there will be no room for petty differences and mutual recrimination.

### **Teaching through love**

You can teach love to students only through love. Because of my love which is my nature (swabhava), the students in the Sathya Sai Institute are disciplined and orderly and there is no unrest in our campus. I have no ill-will towards anyone. There may be persons who may criticise me or even bear malice or hatred towards me. But I have no enemies at all. Everyone is dear to me. As I have love as my permanent quality. I have no worry and am always happy and at peace. Love in speech is Truth. Love in action is Dharma, Righteousness. Love in thought is Peace. Love in understanding is Ahimsa (Non-violence). This love (Prema) is flowing in us as an unseen river. It is only by developing love that we can sanctify the educational system and train the students in the practice of human values as the essential condition for leading worthy lives. I appeal to all of you to strive in this direction and make education really purposeful for turning out students who will be good citizens of whom the country can be proud. (Cheers).

*—Bhagavan's discourse at the Music Academy Auditorium, Madras, on 20-1-1986*

### **Instant Alchemy**

A group of 60 Americans, educators, anthropologists and other professionals, most of them ladies, studying the ancient mysteries of the East, with -Jean Houston, an eminent American scholar of ancient cultures, came on an all-India tour to experience the rich culture of Bharat and its ancient wisdom. A visit to Prasanthi Nilayam to have the Darshan of Sri Baba was on the itinerary and they arrived on January 13th.

At 3.30 in the afternoon I was walking out of Sai Sadan on my way to the canteen and I was greeted by two members of the group whom I had met in America, last summer. They asked for directions and I soon became involved with a few other hastily-recruited residents of the Ashram, in arranging for the comforts of these 60 souls. We arranged to bring the whole group together for Darshan but Swami was leaving the Mandir grounds in His car. It turned out that Swami was going to the Hill View Stadium.

The 60 confused and disappointed individuals were unable to decide whether to return immediately to Bangalore, without seeing Swami, or to go to the Stadium on the off chance that they might get Darshan there as they would have been more than satisfied with getting just one short glimpse of this world-acclaimed Person. It seems they had started from Bangalore, packed into two small tourist buses. At the Andhra-Karnataka border, one of the buses was found to be without the proper permit. So all the 60 had to crowd themselves into the other bus, to continue the journey.

Now, they learned that the Darshan had been cancelled. It started to rain, first in an intermittent drizzle and then in a steady fall.

"Can't we follow where Sai Baba went? We will go any place for just one distant look at him."

So they all drove to the Stadium, where a volleyball game was in progress with the Brindavan team pitted against the Prasanthi Nilayam team. Swami's grace allowed us and the 60 to be in His presence for about 20 minutes.

Moving this large body of people quickly took a long time. When the bus unloaded again in Prasanthi Nilayam, we discovered that Swami had arrived 20 minutes earlier. Luckily almost the whole group got seats in choice positions, directly across the temple. No better seats could have been obtained. The Divine Director provided for all.

Swami walked out of the Mandir heading for the flower-encircled lotus and suddenly walked straight to where the ladies of the group were seated. He made some Vibhuti for Dr. Houston, the group leader, and another. He also materialized rock candy for a member and took a few letters from some people in the group. Moving several steps along the Darshan line He materialized Vibhuti and rock candy for three other members of the group.

At this point, I offered Swami a handkerchief to wipe His Vibhuti-filled hands. He called me out of the Darshan line to come close to Him to bring the kerchief, which He then used to wipe His fingers. Swami uses us as His instruments to serve Him by serving others, and in the process He fills us with His sweet Love and Bliss. Swami tossed the handkerchief back to me. I returned to my seat. A member of the group, sitting directly behind me, asked to touch the kerchief, which she did with deep reverence. I told her she could keep it. Instantly, tears started streaming down her face. It seems that in Vancouver, Canada, this woman had a very dear friend, who had fallen ill with polio. The patient had made one request of her friend, that if she had a chance to visit Sai

Baba on her trip to India, would she please try to bring back something that Baba had touched, something that she could wear on her person. Every tiny detail of Swami's activity is part of His Divine Play.

After bhajans, the professors (as Swami referred to them) were taken by bus to the Lecture Hall. People who had received Vibhuti shared it with others. Supreme happiness was felt by all, even the gents in the group whom Swami had not approached. When the group settled down, Sri Drucker answered questions and gave a brief talk about the Path to God involving Service, Devotion and Wisdom. The joyous group of 60 professors boarded the bus for their return journey to Bangalore, and on to Delhi, the next morning.

In five hours, Swami performed what turned out to be a major transformation, in His incomparably loving way.

*—Polly Kirby, Prasanthi Nilayam.*

*EHV ON THE MARCH:*

### **Maharashtra Minister's Response**

Bhagavan Baba's programme of Education in Human Values was hailed with enthusiasm by the Governor of Maharashtra, Sri Kona Prabhakar Rao, the State Education Minister, Mr. Ram Meghe, and the Mayor of Bombay, Sri Chhagan Bhujbal, at a symposium on "integral Education for Human Excellence", held in the spacious Shanmukhananda Hall in Bombay on January 25, Bhagavan Baba gave an illuminating discourse on the role of education in moulding the character of children and the need to impart value orientation to the educational system from the primary stage.

Rousing cheers echoed in the fully packed hall when the Education Minister came to the mike at the end of the meeting to announce that the Government will soon call administrators in the Education Department to have a dialogue with the Sathya Sai E H V Trust to finalise details of measures for implementing the E H V system in the whole of Maharashtra.

The symposium was organised for the benefit of primary and secondary teachers of schools in which the Sathya Sai Education Trust's EHV programme is being implemented.

The Mayor, Mr. Bhujbal felt happy that the Sathya Sai organisation, under the guidance of Sri Baba, had evolved an educational programme which would do enormous good to the country. He was particularly impressed by the emphasis laid by Baba on national integration and re-awakening our people to India's cultural heritage.

Mr. Ram Meghe said he was deeply impressed by the efforts of Sri Sai Baba for the promotion of a value-oriented system of education, He said Maharashtra was deeply interested in promoting

the programme of Education in Human Values. He described Baba as one of our "great saints" and a source of inspiration to millions.

#### **Governor's appeal**

The Governor said a great deal of experimentation had gone on in India in the field of education since independence. But what was the benefit derived from it all, he asked. Actually, one found a steep fall in moral values and our society appeared to have lost its moorings. He was convinced that the whole system of education now prevailing needed to be changed to establish a society based on moral values.

Bhagavan Baba addressed another symposium held in the University Convocation Hall, with Mr. Nani Palkhivala in the chair.

The symposium, which had for its theme, "Education for National integration and Regeneration," was attended by a gathering of prominent citizens of Bombay, Bhagavan Baba said the prevailing system of education was basically wrong, particularly at the primary level. Children going to school with a load of books presented a pathetic sight. They were being taught the wrong way. The progress of science and technology had certainly brought about outward broadening of the vision. But the type of education needed for inner development was different. The students needed a good grounding in morality and spirituality as well. If the system of education adopted did not help total development of the individual and contribute towards character building it served no purpose. The people of India might turn to other countries for development in certain fields. But in the sphere of spiritual development India alone could teach something to the rest of the world.

Mr. Palkhivala deplored the lack of a sense of discipline in educational institutions. On one occasion he had to cut short his convocation address to a university, telling the student gathering present that they should be able to make a distinction between a convocation and a football match.

Prof. T. K. Tope, former Vice-Chancellor, was of the view that the process of national integration should start at the primary level.

*AMRITA DHARA:*

#### **Sanctifying the Meal**

From the moment of His arrival in Brindavan on December 7th, students of the Brindavan campus of the Sathya Sai Institute were experiencing inexpressible ecstasy. They were enjoying the presence of Bhagavan for which they had been yearning for months.



Every morning and evening, they eagerly awaited the emergence of Bhagavan from "Trayee Brindavan," sitting prayerfully in front of that inspiring edifice. Their faces glowed with delight and He searchingly looked at each of them and made an occasional enquiry.

While His mere presence is a source of joy and inspiration for the students, Bhagavan, as the Divine teacher, makes use of every occasion to impart some spiritual truth or other and turn their minds towards the sublime.

One evening, Bhagavan started asking questions about how the prayer that precedes every meal in the hostel should be recited ("Brahmaarpanam, Brahmahavih."). Swami corrected a student when he repeated the words in a hurry. He instructed the students on how the prayer should be recited, the stops to be observed, the cadence to be followed. All these, He said, were important if the mantra was to be efficacious.

He then proceeded to ask them about the reasons for reciting the prayer. When the students were perplexed for an answer, Bhagavan gave almost a full-length discourse on the importance of ensuring purity in the food that is taken and all the implications of this purity -purity of the items used in the preparation of the food, purity of the vessels used, the personal purity of the person or persons preparing the food and serving it. If there was impurity at any stage, it would have bad effects not only on the body, but also on the mind of the person taking the food. The mantra recited before taking food was intended to invoke the Divine to purify the food and render it wholesome for the body and the spirit.

Bhagavan illustrated the theme with the example of a Sadhaka who had mentally disturbing experiences after taking food which had been provided by a rich widower whose young wife had ended her life out of desperation. The moral of the story was compelling and the students felt they had learnt one of the most valuable lessons in their life.

### **Karma, bhakti and jnana**

On another evening, Bhagavan tried to impress on the students, by the use of a simple analogy, the importance of Self-Knowledge (Jnana) as the real goal of spiritual sadhana. Taking the example of a watch, Bhagavan said that there were three hands in it; the second hand, the minute hand and the hour hand. The second hand moved quickly and when it had moved sixty stops in a full circle, the minute hand moved one step. The hour hand moves even more slowly. Swami said that in life, the activities in which a Sadhaka is engaged are like the movement of the second hand. These are the Sat-Karmas he does. The minute hand resembles the Bhakti of the aspirant. But Karma and Bhakti are not enough, unless they lead one to the awareness of the Divine—of jnana. In a watch, the second hand and minute hand will serve no purpose if there is no hour hand to indicate the time. Jnana is the goal and Karma and Bhakti are the means.

*SEMINAR ON EHV:*

### **Bhagavan's Prescription for Educational Reform**

Addressing an elitist audience of professors, educationists and representatives of various professions, in the spacious auditorium of the Madras Music Academy on January 20, Bhagavan Baba gave a forthright analysis of the maladies affecting Indian education and offered a detailed prescription for curing the ills of the system.

The Tamil Nadu Sathya Sai Samiti had organised, in connection with 'Bhagavan's visit to the city, a seminar on Education in Human Values and had invited leading educationists and public men interested in educational progress on right lines to participate in it. It was the first time such a unique meeting had been arranged in the Music Academy. Over a thousand Bala Vikas Gurus also attended the meeting, besides several College Principals, professors, headmasters and teachers.

Mr. V. Srinivasan, Vice-Chairman of the World Council, in welcoming Bhagavan and others, reviewed the progress of the EHV movement in India and abroad.

Mr. B. B. Sundaresan, Vice-Chancellor of Madras University, traced the history of Indian education before the advent of the British, during the colonial era, and since Independence and pointed out that "ad hocism" had prevailed in the field of educational policy during the past three decades. Human values had been neglected. Bhagavan Baba had sought to correct this situation by making education value-oriented with the emphasis on character-building and ethical discipline. He urged that education in human values should be an essential constituent of university education. He commended in this context what, was being done in Sai educational institutions, especially the Institute of Higher Learning at Prasanthi Nilayam.

Mr. S. L. Khurana, Governor of Tamil Nadu, in his Keynote address, observed that, despite the reports of many committees and commissions, the evils prevailing in the Indian educational system had continued and many undesirable practices vitiated the educational process. Students were not aware of the greatness of India's spiritual and cultural heritage. Bhagavan Baba's programme of education in human values was the need of the hour.

Bhagavan then delivered His address, which was listened to with rapt attention.

The address had a profound impact on the audience not only because of the utter forthrightness with which he referred to the evils prevailing in the educational system but also for the reason that it offered a whole series of practical suggestions for reforming the system.

Bhagavan's proposals for freeing education from political influence and money power, for instituting a uniform national system in all states, and, above ail, for making character building the primary purpose of education, as against the present preoccupation with jobs and material interests, were widely appreciated and welcomed by the educationists present.

Many in the audience expressed the feeling that Bhagavan's address had come like an invigorating breath of fresh air in an atmosphere polluted with smoke and dust.

(Text of Bhagavan's address is published separately)

### **The Heaven of My Delight**

‘Tis said; Heaven’s battlements are burnished, gold,  
Its walls, are studded with gems of gorgeous hue,  
The friezes and cornices are Topaz and' Opal,  
Its bowers and balconies are mother-of-pearl,  
The paths are meandering silvery sheen,  
Its orchards and gardens a rich emerald glitter,  
The ruby rose and garnet lilies lovely and radiant.  
Its milk-white swans glide on the azure sapphire lakes  
Golden deer frisk and frolic in its glimmering glades,  
And the bejewelled peacock dances in gay abandon.

The Gods sit in state in their diamond chamber  
On thrones wrought with gems of colourful splendour  
Bathed in the lustre of their prismatic glow  
In rich shimmering attire diademed and adorned  
Tail, handsome, graceful and of majestic mien,  
Beauty incarnate, they cast the enchanting spell.

Hush the jingle of bells and tinkle of anklets,  
The divine danseuse comes tripping gently on her toes,  
Swaying to the rhythm of the lilting stringed symphony,  
Played, by the masterful hand's of the celestial bards.  
Breath-takingly beautiful, she casts, her toils of wonder and awe.  
Enraptured in, the swirl of her alluring dazzle  
Lulled by the gentle notes of the divine melody  
The Gods look like statues cast in art iridescent glow.

Is this them, the coveted Heaven? This the abode of the Gods?  
I searched and peered but could not find my God  
I gazed and gazed at the dazzle and the splendour,  
Confounded by the burning and persistent query, where is my God?  
Did some one call? Me thought, the voice was soft and soothing  
Again, yes, once again it was crystal clear,

I followed the entrancing voice and, found myself  
On the gleaming sands of Prasanthi Nilayam,  
I saw my God, Sathya Sai, more beautiful  
And radiant than, the Gods above  
He beckoned, and I, laid my head on His delicate feet.  
This was Bliss—this the Heaven of my delight.

—*Jayalakshmi Gopinath*

### **In Search of Flowers**

I searched for flowers over hills and dales  
Reciting Bhagavan's songs and tales.  
In dense forests with thorny shrubs  
I searched for flowers for Baba's steps.  
Over dark unfathomed levels of lakes  
I swam to gather the lotus flakes.  
Over dreary moors and marshes too  
I searched for blossoms of different hue.  
Hither and thither I roamed forlorn  
For flowers that Bhagavan's feet would adorn.  
But fool that I was, I looked not within  
To find the flower of my heart therein,  
And offer it to the Lord enshrined  
For whom I had always pined.

—*B. Ravichandran*

*GURUDEVA VANI:*

### **The Love of God**

*One may be a master of all the Scriptures  
And competent to teach the Vedanta,  
One may be a great ruler  
Living in a many-splendoured mansion,  
One may be a valiant hero  
Who has vanquished his enemies,  
Or one may be a pitiable  
Victim of poverty and privation –  
If he has no devotion in him  
His life is devoid of meaning.*

*A servant who is filled with love of the Lord  
Is more to be adored than the overlord of the world.*

"Bhakti is service to Hrishikesa," it has been said. Service to God has been described as Bhakti. The heart of the devotee flows with love of the Lord through constant remembrance and recitation of His name. Out of this stream of love, devotion emerges. One who is nourished by the nectar of Bhakti will have no desire for anything else. To be unaffected by joy or sorrow, gain or loss, praise or blame, to remain steadfast and unwavering in faith, is the hall-mark of true devotion. Affection, attachment, desire are natural qualities in man. When these qualities are directed towards God and when one is continuously engaged in good deeds, these qualities acquire purity and sacredness. Then a man becomes not only a great soul but can become divine.

The devotee is ever conscious that the universe is a manifestation of the Divine and is permeated by the Divine. His life is based on the recognition of the immanence of God in everything. This state of mind is called "Prema Advaitam" (unity in Love). Through this love the devotee experiences his oneness with the Divine. Enjoying the bliss of this experience, the devotee does not even desire Moksha (Liberation from birth and death). Unremitting love of the Lord is everything for him. Such devotion is known as "Ananya Bhakti" (Total devotion to One and One only.)

#### **Fifth Purushartha**

Bhakti indicates that man needs, in addition to the four Purusharthas (the objects of life—Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha)—a fifth object, devotion to God. Adi Sankara characterised this devotion as the mark of Jnana. There is no need to bemoan the fact that one has not been able to perform the prescribed rites or forms of worship. "Parama Bhakti" (Supreme devotion to the Divine) encompasses within itself all meritorious qualities.

The Puranas consider Moksha (Liberation) as mergence in the Divine. But, the bliss that is experienced by constant contemplation of the Divine through devotion cannot be got even by merging in the Divine. Vedanta has proclaimed that the love of God is Moksha. The heart of the devotee filled with love of God is tender and sweet. Sometime or other everyone is bound to make his heart such a shrine of love for the Lord. With the Lord enshrined in him, the devotee renounces the desire for liberation. Devotion itself will make him one with the Lord.

When a drop of water falls into the ocean, it achieves immortality and infinitude. If you hold a drop of water in your palm, it evaporates in a few moments. But when you join it with the ocean, it becomes boundless and one with the vast ocean. Only through Love can union with the Universal be realised. To a devotee who has achieved such a union with the Eternal, everything appears as Divine.

The Gopikas of Brindavan were such devotees. They experienced divine bliss through their intense devotion. Like a fish that cannot live out of water, the devotee, who is immersed in the nectarine ocean of divine love, cannot exist for a moment without the love of God. He cannot relish any other thing. Every part of his body is so much filled with the love of God that each

organ finds expression in proclaiming the glory of God or rendering service to God. This was the kind of devotion the Gopis had for Krishna. It was something beyond the intellect and the power of reason. Krishna explained to Uddhava the true nature of the Gopis' Bhakti. Because such Bhakti is incapable of intellectual analysis, it is dismissed as blind faith. Intellectual enquiry cannot explore what is subtle and can be known only through experience.

### **Ananya bhakti**

A Gopika once asked Radha how she felt when she saw Krishna, how her heart responded, what transformation occurred in her and what joy she experienced. Radha replied: "The moment I hear the melodious flute of Krishna, my heart becomes still, and I forget myself when I learn that Krishna is coming. I am lost in the music of His flute and I am aware of nothing else. How can I describe to you my feelings when I am intoxicated by the magic of His melody?"

The God-intoxicated devotee cannot describe his blissful experience in words. One who attempts to express it, has no real experience of it at all.

Those who regard themselves as devotees should recognise the vast difference between their narrow-minded attitude and the ineffable character of true devotion. They should resolve to shed all their petty attachments and develop steadfast devotion to God as the main object of their life. For this purpose, the company of the good is essential. Good thoughts are promoted only through association with the good. This means avoiding contact with the evil-minded and the unrighteous. Association with bad persons makes even a good person bad. There are classic examples of the evil consequences of association with the bad. Kaikeyi in the Ramayana and Dharmaraja in the Mahabharata are examples of persons who suffered grievously because of their association with evil-minded persons—Manthara in the case of Kaikeyi and the Kauravas in the case of Dharmaraja.

Everyone must strive to fill the heart with true devotion. Constant contemplation on the form of the Lord and frequent repetition of the Lord's name are the means by which the heart is filled with the love of God. When there is this love, the devotee is filled with inexpressible ecstasy. It was out of such ecstasy that Kulasekhara Alwar, the royal saint, exclaimed: "Oh Lord! People talk of Moksha as the means of redeeming life and getting rid of birth and death. I do not ask for such redemption. I shall be content with loving you and serving you in countless lives. Allow me to love you and serve you—that is the only blessing I seek from you and not Moksha."

### **Narada's prayer**

The universe is permeated with love. It is the embodiment of Vishnu. There is nothing in the cosmos, no place in it where He is not present. To regard the universe as a manifestation of God and to experience it as such is real devotion. The Sage Narada was the supreme exponent of this doctrine. He observed: "Thyago bhavati thrupto bhavati, Atmaramo bhavati". "The lover of God renounces everything; he is supremely content. He is immersed in the bliss of the Self. Endow me with such love, Oh Lord!"

Man today is behaving with less gratitude than what birds, beasts and even trees display. He is ungrateful to his parents, teachers, society and even to God. He makes a parade of his adherence to Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Love and Ahimsa, but does not practise any of them. Why is this so? It is because of intense selfishness and preoccupation with one's own concerns and interests. Only when man sheds his selfishness can he turn his mind towards God. The love of God will dispel the ignorance and conceit of man as the sun dispels the morning mist. The heart is the seat of love. That love must express itself, to begin with, in the home. From there it must extend to one's village or town, to one's state, nation and ultimately to the whole world. Love must expand from the individual to the whole universe. We must regard Love as God. The different forms attributed to God are products of fancy. But Love can be directly experienced. Whether one is a theist or an atheist, a hedonist or a recluse, a yogi or a materialist, he will have high regard for love. Love is the one form in which everybody is ready to accept God. The cultivation of love and achieving universal Love through love is the sublime path of Love—that is the path of Bhakti.

### **The bhakti marga**

To realise the Brahman through continuous meditation on the Brahman is not an enjoyable path for all to take. This was why spiritual teachers like Ramanuja favoured the path of devotion, experienced themselves the bliss flowing from the love of God and propagated the love-principle as the easiest means to experience the Divine. There have been teachers who have emphasised the Karma Marga (the path of Action), the Jnana Marga (the path of Knowledge), the different types of Yoga or other means to realise the Divine. But the common under-current that flows through all of them is the path of Bhakti-the path of Divine Love. This is accepted by all of them. Love is God. The universe is permeated by God. To see God in everything, to love everything as a manifestation of God and to offer everything to God as an offering of love-this is the way of Love.

The Gopikas, the sage Narada and the child Prahlada are supreme exemplars of the path of Bhakti. Prahlada means one who is filled with infinite delight. The delight with which Prahlada was filled was the love of God. He saw God in everything. When his father Hiranyakasipu asked him whether God was in a pillar, he said God was in it. Hiranyakasipu smashed the pillar and the Lord came out of it in the form of Narasimha (Man-Lion) to vindicate Prahladha's faith in the omnipresence of the Divine.

Without firm faith in the omnipresence of the Divine, devotion has no meaning. By developing faith, devotion is nourished and devotion enables one to face all the vicissitudes of life with fortitude and serenity, regarding them as dispensations of Providence. Final one-pointed devotion for God leads to union with the Divine. Today devotion begins with the morning ritual of worship (a form of yoga), progresses towards enjoyment at mid-day (bhoga) and ends with sickness at night (roga).

"Satatam Yoginah," says the Gita. Absorption in the Divine always is the mark of the Yogi. This cannot be achieved in one jump. But through constant practice it can be achieved.

Self-realisation is the goal. Love is the means. It's through cultivation of Love that life can find fulfillment. Everyone must strive to achieve this fulfillment by filling this human adventure with the sweetness of love and transforming it into an expression of divinity. This is my benediction for all of you.

—*Divine discourse at Abbotsbury, Madras, on 19-1-1986*

### **The Rock is Broken**

Transformations slow or sudden, surface or substantial brought about by Shravanam, listening to Bhagavan's words, are plentiful. So, I wrote these lines as part of a poem:

There: His word—a thunderbolt,  
A drop of dew; a ray of Light; a gust of air;  
A pregnant seed; it falls on your rocky heart.  
And, wonder of wonders, it germinates  
In the crack or crevice, it prods the rock.  
The half-blind silken baby roots  
Plead for suckling, wailing for wetness,  
Tickle and jab, nose around for food—  
Succeeding at last, they fasten and fatten.  
Trunk, branch, sheaves of leaves, clusters of stars  
On every twig, the glory grows.....And,  
The rock is broken, trampled into clay.

The region is warned of the poison of fratricidal hate and many are rescued from its consequences. Those whom He blesses become ardent messengers of His Love.

[From "Loving God," by Prof. N. Kasturi, a chronicle of his life and years with Bhagavan Baba. Third Edition.]

### **Change of Mind**

"I am too old to rush across the world,  
Sleep on the floor again and queue for food  
Those days are gone," I thought.  
"More seemly now  
To say my prayers for all humanity,  
To meditate, watch birds or sit and nod



Over a book or make my grandson toys.”

But I had read that LOVE was born again  
And wears an ochre robe in far Bharat.  
This lit a brilliant flame within my heart  
To Jet-propel me to His Lotus Feet.

—*Angelo Reade*

*BHAGAVAN IN BOMBAY:*

## **The Silent Revolution**

Bhagavan's four-day visit to Bombay in January was much more than an annual benediction conferred on Sai devotees. It heralded yet another significant stage in the onward march of the "Sai Spiritual Revolution", with its impact on every aspect of national life, especially in the educational sphere, where the Sai programme of Education in Human Values is developing into a great national and global programme for making education a primary instrument for the divinisation of man.

Bhagavan was greeted on arrival at Santa Cruz Airport from Madras, on January 25, by 500 children from City Schools who have adopted the EHV programme. The Bombay Sathya Seva Samiti had arranged Bhagavan's programme in the city as a continuation of Swami's 60th birthday celebrations. The children waved flags bearing the figure 60 and offered flowers to Bhagavan. Accepting this token of their love, Bhagavan blessed the children.

From then on, Bhagavan went though a crowded programme right up to the moment when He took off for His flight back to Madras on the 29th.

Republic Day (January 26) was marked by a prodigious reception to Bhagavan at Dharmakshetra in which over one hundred educational and welfare organisations in the City joined to felicitate Bhagavan on His 60<sup>th</sup> birthday. Sri Shivraj Patil, Union Minister for Science and Technology, was the Chief Guest.

The organisations represented at the function included industrial establishment, blood banks, colleges, schools, institutions serving the handicapped and spiritual organisations. On behalf of all of them, Sri Nana Chudasama presented a memento to Bhagavan.

Mr. Ramesh Thacker, Secretary of the Bombay Sai Samiti, welcoming the vast gathering, said they should all consider themselves fortunate that they were living in "the Sai era" and had the privilege of participating in His service programme. The "silent spiritual revolution" that was taking place should be understood in its proper perspective. The Sai organisations' work was a bridge between the sorry present and a better future for all mankind.

Speaking on Science and Spirituality, Mr. Patil said ultimately the two have to come together. For daily needs as well as for exploring outer space, science was necessary, but spirituality was equally essential for exploring the "inner space" in ourselves.

Bhagavan told the gathering that while man had undoubtedly great achievements to his credit, he had not cared to pause and think about who had endowed him with this capacity and how he should use his knowledge for his own good and the good of humanity. While man has acquired mastery over the external, he has not acquired control over his own impulses and desires. It is man's own internal weaknesses which are causing all the difficulties and holding up his progress towards a greater destiny.

Three hundred children from a number of primary and secondary schools in Bombay called on Bhagavan Baba at Dharmakshetra and held discussions on the "Human Values" being imbibed by them through the Sathya Sai integrated educational system.

Bhagavan inaugurated a new scheme of "adoption" of slum children by the Sai organisation of Bombay, with a view to imbuing the younger generation with human values.

To begin with, 120 children in the age group of 7 to 12 were selected from slums near Dharmakshetra, They were given free clothing and school books by Bhagavan Baba on Republic Day.

This scheme envisages training these children in a spirit of love to help them grow as useful citizens. Though initiated in Bombay, the scheme will be extended to cover slums in all the districts of Maharashtra.

A scheme of non-formal education for girls and adult villagers was inaugurated by Sri Baba at a meeting of the active workers of the Sai organisation from Maharashtra. Over 100 trainers from different districts of the State were trained during His stay in Bombay. The relevant literature and teaching material for the Non-formal Educational System were handed over to each trainee.

Bhagavan opened a new primary school building in Akse village, adopted by the rural welfare wing of the Sai organisation. This is primarily for Adivasi children of the village. He distributed saris to Adivasi women and school uniforms to the first batch of children.

Bhagavan addressed a combined gathering of Industrial workers and management representatives of New Bombay at Vashi. He urged both sections to work in a spirit of amity for the good of the community.

Addressing a gathering of active workers of the Sai organisation from all over Maharashtra at Dharmakshetra, Baba said he would consider that they had done something worthwhile in their rural welfare work only when they were able to bring about a change for the better in the life style of the rural people.

## **The Unbelievable**

Sathya Sai Baba tells us that if we surrender to the Lord, He is obliged to protect us. Does His Protection and Love stop with the individual devotee? It appears that His promise of protection also includes the devotees' whole family.

For the past 10 years, I have seen His Love and Grace spill over into the lives of my children, and recently I have witnessed this same Expansive Love reach out to touch the lives of my parents.

How many times I have read about Sathya Sai Baba's Miraculous Healings, never realizing that some day it would include my father. After all miracles are something you read about, but never happen to you.

In October 1984, my father was told that he had cancer of the colon and liver. It seemed like an unfortunate time to receive news of impending death. My mother and father were going to celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary in a few short weeks. We had planned a Mass and reception for family and friends. It was to be a time of joyous celebration.

The doctor told them to postpone the operation until after their Anniversary. It took great strength for my mother and father to go on with the celebration, even though Dad's illness was terminal. Somehow they would manage, and they did. Their strength came from their deep faith in God.

A few days after their Anniversary, Dad's colon became blocked and emergency survey was performed. I call this "Divine Timing".

As mother and I sat across from the surgeon, we so very much wanted to hear that the news was hopeful, but the prognosis was not good. My father had cancer in the small intestine, the abdomen, the colon, and in 50% of the liver. The colon was so inflammable and cancerous that he had to give my father a Colostomy. His death was only a matter of time.

Thanksgiving, Christmas, and the New Year passed. Dad's health went from bad to worse .... his large form shrivelled. He couldn't eat and lost 46 lbs. My mother was so depressed, she lost 35 lbs from worry.

I constantly called on Swami for courage, to help my parents through these troublesome days. I prayed that if it was His Will, to please heal my father, and give my mother the strength she needs.

My parents are devout Catholics and feel very close to Jesus. They cannot understand my relationship with Sai Baba nor the concept of "God in Human Form" being someone other than Jesus. When I speak about Sai Baba, I can see the fear in their eyes, especially my father's .... so I remain silent. They actually knew very little about Baba or my trips to India.

The day after my parents' Wedding Anniversary in November, our son Craig departed on his first trip to India, to see Sai Baba. We were so happy for him. Well, on Christmas Eve, Craig received our first letter, and we received his. "Divine Timing!" We told Craig about his grandfather's operation and cancer. He was upset and wrote a note to Swami, asking Baba to help his grandfather.

On Christmas Day, Craig had a first row seat and as Sai Baba approached him, he held up the note. Sai refused the note but made Vibhuti for Craig, and gave him Padanamaskar. Padanamaskar means, "surrender to the Lord."

Craig sent some of the Vibhuti home. It arrived mid-January. After taking the Vibhuti, Dad's weight stabilised. They used the Vibhuti because I told them of its miraculous power to heal. What did they have to lose they were desperate.

One afternoon in January, I was meditating.... mostly talking with Baba. It seems as if I heard Him say that Robert and I should come for a visit in March and November this year of '85. I replied, "but Sai, my father is dying of cancer, how can I come in March?" The voice replied, "Don't worry, I'll take care of your Father." Immediately, we arranged for airline tickets leaving on March 1.

Continuing with the sequence of events, in February my father received an unusual phone call. To have the doctor call you without any prior contact from you is unusual. The surgeon suggested that Dad have another operation to re-connect the colon, reverse the Colostomy. They prayed and decided to have the second operation.

This time after surgery, the doctor was so hopeful. He was smiling from ear to ear. He said that the colon was so much better. He removed the cancerous tumor and reconnected the bowel. As far as he could tell, all the cancer in the liver, intestine, and abdomen looked to be benign. A few days later this was confirmed by the tests. The doctors were amazed! They were further astonished by Dad's quick recovery after four hours of major surgery. We took Dad home in one week, three days before we left for India.... "Divine Timing".

At Prasanthi, Sai Baba gave us an interview. I held up my parents' picture and asked, "Sai did you cure my father of cancer?" Baba patted me on the shoulder and replied, "I sure did!" I will never forget the thrill of my "FATHER" telling me, He cured my father.

It's hard to believe that a few short months ago, my 76-year-old father was so close to death. This summer he looks great and is playing 18 holes of golf four times a week. The comparison is unbelievable; Sai Baba makes it believable.

He Changes the un-changeable.  
He Cures the un-curable.  
He Loves the un-lovable.

It could only be ....GOD IN HUMAN FORM.

—*Rita Bruce*

*The Gita advises that service to the sangha or community is the highest seva, as well as the most beneficial sadhana. You cannot run away from this obligation; you have to use the community of men wherein you are born for sublimating your egoism and saving yourself.*

*Seva taken up as sadhana teaches sahana (forbearance.) Even avatars demonstrate in their lives the supreme importance of seva. When Dharmaja performed the great Rajasuya sacrifice, on the advice of the sage Narada, in order to propitiate his deceased father. Lord Krishna attended the sacrifice and asked to be allotted some service; He preferred the service of removing the leaves on which food was served for the thousands who were fed every day! Since service was so dear to Him, He was revered as the King-maker of the age, the Law-giver for all.*

—**Baba**

***BHAGAVAN IN MADRAS:***

### **Week’s Shower of Grace**

To thousands of devotees in Tamil Nadu who had been eagerly looking forward to Bhagavan's visit to Madras in January, His week-long stay in the city was a blissful opportunity to have Darshan, Sparshan and Sambhashana and get their spiritual batteries re-charged so that they could carry on their service and spiritual activities with greater vigour and zeal. Bhagavan was so obviously impressed with the zeal of the Tamil Nadu devotees that on His way hack from Bombay He gave darshan for two more days and attended bhajans in the morning.

Large crowds had gathered at "Sundaram" early in the morning, on January 19, long before Bhagavan's expected arrival from Brindavan at 10 a.m., despite the inclement weather and the prospect of a downpour. But well before Bhagavan's actual arrival at 11.30 a.m., the skies cleared up and there was brilliant sunshine as Bhagavan was received with Poorna-Kumbham and Vedic chants at the portals of "Sundaram". Almost the first act of Bhagavan on getting down from His car was to lift His hand in benediction and bless the huge gathering of devotees outside the "Sundaram" compound, who had been waiting patiently for hours to have darshan of Bhagavan.

Entering "Sundaram", with the Vedic chanters and a Nadaswaram troupe heading the welcoming party, Bhagavan went round the enclosures where the devotees were sitting. The bhajans, which had started earlier, went on for some time, while Bhagavan gave darshan to all the waiting devotees from the Santhi Vedika. After Arati, Bhagavan went in for rest in "Sundaram" after blessing the prasadam (cooked food) which was to be distributed to all who had gathered for the darshan. The prasadam was a veritable divine feast for the devotees.

The Tamil Nadu Sai Seva Organisation had drawn up a fairly heavy schedule of engagements for Bhagavan, though His public functions were limited to two; a meeting at "Abbotsbury" on the 19th and an address to a Seminar on Education in Human Values at the Music Academy Auditorium on the 20th.

Thanks to advance publicity for the "Abbotsbury" meeting, large crowds had started pouring in from 3 p.m., and the entire open enclosures outside the main building were fully occupied by the time the bhajans started at 5 p.m. Bhagavan arrived exactly at 6 p.m. and gave darshan to all the devotees outside before going in for the meeting.

Maj. Gen. S. P. Mahadevan, Chairman of the Tamil Nadu Sai Seva Organisation, welcoming Bhagavan in a felicitous speech in Tamil, described the various Sai Service activities in Tamil Nadu and referred in particular to the work done in the 300 "adopted" villages where a new spiritual awakening and social consciousness had been generated among thousands of villagers by the many sided activities of Sai Sevaks. As many as sixty free eye camps had been conducted in the State and Bhagavan was invited to bless the 61st eye camp at Chromepet and confer the double blessing of physical and spiritual vision on the patients attending the camp. Gen. Mahadevan disclosed that they proposed to "adopt" 200 more villages for development over the next two years with the blessings of Bhagavan.

Bhagavan then delivered His discourse. It was a scintillating exposition of the true nature of Bhakti. True devotion was nothing but the manifestation of pure unselfish love for God, as exemplified by the love of the Gopis or Krishna.

(Text of Bhagavan's discourse is published separately).

The next day (January 20) began with Nagarsankirtan in which thousands of devotees participated, going round the Raja Annamalaiputam street, singing Bhajans, and finishing at "Sundaram" where Bhagavan gave darshan to all of them from the balcony.

The devotees assembled again for Bhajan at "Sundaram" at 9 a.m. Bhagavan went round the enclosures and blessed the devotees before taking Arati.

Bhagavan distributed, in the Mandir, prizes to Bal Vikas children who had taken part in various competitions.

In the evening, Bhagavan addressed a distinguished audience of Vice Chancellors, Principals and teachers at the Music Academy Auditorium, which was filled to capacity. A large number of interested men and women, who had come to listen to Bhagavan without knowing that the meeting was confined to invitees only, were disappointed that they could not get admission. (Report of the meeting and Bhagavan's discourse appears elsewhere)

On Tuesday morning (January 21) there was a well-organised rally by Bal Vikas children—over two hundred boys and girls—at Abbotsbury. The boys gave fine demonstrations of pyramidal gymnastic formations. The girls presented some group dances depicting Bhagavan's message and mission. Bhagavan was very much impressed with the display.

Bhagavan gave darshan to the large waiting crowds outside the hall in Abbotsbury and was present in the hall for bhajans, which concluded with Arati.

In the evening, there was a fine 'mandolin' performance by the 11 year old artiste Srinivas, at "Sundaram", which was preceded by a concert by the young players of the Jaya Ganesa choir who orchestrated a variety of instruments in addition to Konakkol.

On the 22nd there was Nagarsankirtan in the morning at "Sundaram". Later, Bhagavan visited an eye camp conducted by the Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Chengleput district at Chromepet with the assistance of the doctors and staff of the Aravind Eye Hospital, Madurai. Bhagavan was received with Poorna-Kumbham at the spacious community hall attached to the Pallavan Transport Corporation's workshop near the Madras Institute of Technology Campus. As many as 1650 patients from surrounding areas were screened at the camp on the 18th and out of them 170 were selected for cataract and other operations. They were given round-the clock nursing attention by Sai volunteers.

Apart from the Medical camp, an exhibition had been arranged in the hall to present, through charts and models, the various service activities carried out by the Tamil Nadu Sathya Sai Organisation in the "adopted" villages. Models of the implements provided to the villages to take up self-employment, including ambar charkhas, and smokeless chulas constructed in villages were on display. Thousands of devotees had gathered at the camp for darshan of Bhagavan on the lawns adjoining the P.T.C. workshop. Bhagavan went round the gathering and blessed all of them.

Bhagavan blessed the patients in the medical camp and witnessed a programme of mass drill and kolattam dance by Bat Vikas children. Bhagavan distributed clothes to some poor and needy persons before leaving the camp.

In the evening, Bhajans at "Abbotsbury" were followed by a ninety-minute culture programme got up by Bat Vikas children. The fare included a ballet on "Krishna Leela", a dramatic presentation of the Nandanar story, a pageant of Indian saints from Narada to Thyagaraja, and an offering of "flowers" to Bhagavan by children, each representing a flower. The items were well conceived and artistically presented.

On the 23rd, during the morning bhajans at "Sundaram" Bhagavan distributed clothes in the Mandir to men and women from the 300 adopted villages in Tamil Nadu. In the afternoon Bhagavan visited the Sai temple at Guindy and returned to "Sundaram", where a violin recital by Kunnakkudi Vaidyanathan had been arranged for the evening.

On Friday (January 24) Bhagavan gave darshan to a large gathering at "Abbotsbury" and addressed a meeting of over 1200 representatives of the Mahila Vibhag who had come from all Sai centres in Tamil Nadu. Bhagavan emphasised the need to render selfless service to the people, without any sense of self-importance or pride of position.

In the afternoon, Bhagavan visited the Sathya Sai Mandir in Perambur and later visited the Headquarters of the Southern Railway Employees Sangh where an enormous number of Railway workers had assembled to have darshan of Bhagavan and hear his discourse. The octogenarian labour leader, Sri Anandan, received Bhagavan, and hailed his advent as the greatest boon for mankind.

From Perambur, Bhagavan proceeded to Kakkan Nagar, a new area in which the Sai organisation has been rendering service to slum dwellers. Nearly all the residents of the area had turned out for the meeting, which was held in an open square, where a stage had been improvised for Bhagavan's visit. Bhagavan witnessed an interesting programme of variety entertainment consisting of dances, plays and music presented by slum children who acquitted themselves well. Bhagavan blessed the children and distributed clothes to some old people of the colony.

Later, there was a programme of devotional songs rendered by some film artistes at "Sundaram".

Many thousands of devotees took part in the Nagarsankirtan and bhajans at "Sundaram" on the 25th when Bhagavan was scheduled to leave for Bombay. After darshan and arati, the crowds waited patiently for a last glimpse of Bhagavan before He left for the airport.

*S. S.I. H. L. CAMPUS NEWS:*

### **Sathya Sai Institute Makes History**

When Bhagavan Baba announced, quite unexpectedly, in the course of His address to the EHV Seminar at the Music Academy Auditorium on January 20, that education in the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning would be completely free, from the primary to the Post-Graduate and Doctorate levels, from the new academic year, few could realise its implications. Many were eager to know how the decision would be implemented and what repercussions this extraordinary innovation would have on the educational system in India and elsewhere.



Within less than a week of the Madras announcement, the trustees of the Institute accepted Bhagavan's proposal and all the steps necessary to give effect to it have been initiated with due expedition.

It has been decided to raise the fresh admission capacity at all the three campuses of the Institute to 250 in 1986-87 and gradually increase the figure to 500 by 1990-91. Another important decision is to make the Institute (deemed university) truly national by holding admission tests and interviews for candidates at nine centres in different parts of the country for the under-graduate and postgraduate courses. This will offer opportunities to talented candidates in any part of the country to compete for admission from the nearest centre at minimum expense.

Details about the courses offered and the time-table for tests and interviews are published in an announcement appearing elsewhere in this issue. Admission tests for under-graduate courses will be held on May 26-28, 1986, and interviews will be held from May 28-30. Written tests for Post-graduate courses will be held between May 31 and June 7 at different centres.

#### **Bhagavan's advice to girl students**

"The students of this college should set an example to the world outside, which is beset with so many problems and paralysed by violence and fear. You should be prepared to make any sacrifice for the sake of your country," declared Bhagavan Baba, Chancellor of the S. S. Institute, addressing the students of the Sri Sathya Sai College for Women, Anantapur, on January 17.

Bhagavan was visiting the college with the new Vice-Chancellor, Dr. S. N. Saraf, who succeeded Prof. Gokak in November last.

In welcoming Bhagavan Baba, Dr. Saraf said that a new social order based on the five human values emphasised by Bhagavan could only be brought about by an educational system in which these values were an integral part of the educational process. "It is our duty," he said, "as teachers and students, not only to talk about these values but to practise them in our daily life." Dr. Saraf said the Sai educational experiment was being watched by the world outside. They should do everything possible to live up to the ideals of Bhagavan and make Sai Educational Institutions "real symbols of perfection in every sense of the term." Women, even more than men, have to take a leading part in promoting Bhagavan's educational programme. The Anantapur College should give a lead to many other institutions in the country.

Bhagavan Baba, in His address to the gathering, dwelt at length on the ills afflicting the educational system in the country and the need to give an ethical and spiritual orientation to education so that students may be trained to lead a godly and worthy life rather than be concerned-only with earning a living.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with an exhortation to the students to cultivate faith in God and prepare themselves for a life of dedicated service to society. A person who does not engage himself in service is as good as dead. Character is the most important requisite for a student. One should seek to maintain one's integrity even at the cost of one's life.

Students should try to put at least one or two ideals into practice. Only then will they be indicating the value of their stay in the Sathya Sai College. Some people may indulge in the gibe that Sai Colleges train students to become Sanyasis (ascetics) and keep away from the world. This is not true. Whatever the world may say, spirituality is essential and one with firm faith in God is better fitted to serve his or her fellowmen. Spiritual awareness should be developed along with education in the natural sciences. An ideal life consists in a judicious mixture of spiritual and worldly, knowledge. "Acquiring such knowledge, you should consecrate your lives by service and devotion," urged Bhagavan.

#### **Bhagavan at cancer detection camp**

Bhagavan Baba inaugurated on February 2, at Brindavan, a cancer detection camp organised by the Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Bangalore, with the co-operation of Dr. M. Krishna Bhargava, Director of the Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology, Bangalore, and his team of 20 doctors.

Nearly 1,500 villagers from Kadugodi and the surrounding areas had turned up at the camp for a check up. There was general examination of all patients for ENT, Chest diseases, cardiac conditions etc. Dr. Bhargava explained to the villagers with the help of slides how cancer may be caused and how it can be cured in the early stages.

The screening of the patients revealed 11 suspected cases of cancer. They were advised to attend the Kidwai institute for further treatment.

Bangalore Mahila Seva Dal members had gone earlier round the villages to interest the population in the camp. Mahila members and the Bangalore Seva Dal were responsible for running the camp and looking after the patients.

On the evening of February 2, Bhagavan received all the doctors at "Trayee Brindavan", gave them Vibhuti and told them that he would make an early visit to the Institute. Swami presented saris to the lady doctors.

## **The Ultimate Security**

Recently while enjoying a meeting with my husband at a restaurant near his office, I mentioned to him that one of the cars had two tyres which seemed somewhat worn. I went on to say that since the other car had four new tyres, I preferred to drive it. At the conclusion of our luncheon, I got into the car to return home, feeling quite secure with four new tyres. However, I had only driven about two miles when a noise and a bump indicated that one of the tyres was quite flat. The car had passed over a broken bottle, slicing a six-inch hole in the tyre.

The lesson in this experience was crystal clear. I began to laugh before the car had even come to a complete stop. How many times am I going to be reminded that security is not in things? I knew that once again the Infinite Wisdom of the Universe had reminded me of the only genuine security. I thanked Baba for His presence in my heart and for holding me always in safety. I may forget for a moment, but He never does.

A very handsome, dark-skinned young man with a foreign accent stopped his car on the other side of the street. He crossed over, removed the punctured tyre, mounted the spare, and waved away my expression of gratitude so quickly that I estimate the total time lapse for the complete incident to have been not more than ten minutes. I continued the short journey then and arrived home permeated with joy and wonder at the beauty of the reminder I had just been given.

Perhaps the fact that my childhood had occurred during the so-called "depression years" had caused me to seek security in external things. Whatever the reason, I had for many years believed that security was to be found only in a monthly salary cheque. Then, when the decision was made to retire, I had transferred my belief in security from earning money to not spending any. I believed that as long as we never went into debt for anything that we would be quite secure.

My theory seemed to be working satisfactorily until I learned about Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Suddenly I found myself with a desire much greater than the desire for financial security. I wanted so very much to see this Divine Being, and there seemed to be no way to get money for the trip except to borrow it. I knew intuitively that the security to be found in knowing Baba was infinitely greater than the security of being debt-free. My husband's desire to go to see Baba was as great as mine and he had no concern at all about finances. So we borrowed the money easily and paid it back without hardship of any kind. Our lives were transformed from the moment we received His darshan. From an almost meaningless series of unrelated incidents which we had called "life" before, we were lifted into a realm which is purposeful. Every experience now moves us inexorably toward ultimate liberation from the bondage of delusion.

On my second trip to see Baba, He brought the message of His life to bear vividly on my awareness of origin, destiny, and the ultimate security. On the first day of my return, His beautifully expressive face registered mild surprise as He asked me, "Where have you been—Bangalore?" As it had been less than three months since I had parted from Him at Brindavan, the question seemed logical and quite human. I responded that I had been to the United States and He seemed satisfied with the answer. On the following day He again smiled

His recognition and asked, "Where did you come from?" This time I replied; "California, Swami." Though feeling that neither of these two incidents quite fit in with the omniscience which Baba expresses so naturally, I just allowed myself to enjoy the attention and interaction with Him without any real contemplation.

On the third day of this visit, I was privileged to attend a discourse which Baba was giving in the auditorium of the college. My seat was in the first row. When Swami came down the steps from the stage to greet those who were seated outside on the ground, He made a slight detour, stopped in front of me and asked pointedly, "Where did you come from?" He continued on His way, clearly uninterested in any answer I might give. My complacency was thoroughly shaken this time. Though I babbled some response at, His retreating back, I knew that He was not asking for geographical information. He was in fact educating me in accordance with His own definition of education.

He told those attending the First Conference on Education in Human values for College Teachers that day: "Education is not a matter of problem solving; it is a matter of problem posing." The problem He had posed three times in three days became the uppermost thing in my thought. Where had I come from? The intellect could provide answers. It quoted Wordsworth, "Trailing, clouds of glory do we come from God, who is our home." It quoted the Bible, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." But there was no feeling of resolution and the inquiry continued.

After several days and nights during which the question was always with me, I was still pondering it in the early hours of a Puttaparthi morning. It was very dark and very quiet when suddenly, "as when a lion roareth," a voice from deep within me spoke the words, "You have emerged from Me and you will merge with Me again." I heard the message with my entire being. The night seemed light about me and my heart was overflowing with gratitude for the Supreme Divine Teacher. He had taken the cold words from my head, warmed them with the flame of His love, and now they are aglow in my heart forevermore.

—**Joy Thomas, M.A. M.Sc. D., California, U.S.A.**

*The Lord is neither in Heaven nor in Kailasa or Vaikunta or Swarga. To believe that He is manifest only in one place or location and to journey thither is a superstition. He is everywhere, in everyone, at all times. He is the witness of all, in all. He is the energy that fills space and time, and He is the energy that manifests as causation. Man is a visible moving embodiment of Divinity in whom God shines, through whom God beckons. God is to be worshipped in and through man. Revere the Atma and derive Atma-ananda through love.*

**Baba**

*SIVARATRI SANDESH:*

## **Bhagavan and Bhakti**

The Upanishads are the outcome of the explorations into the nature of the Divine made by the ancient sages. They declare: "ISAA VAASYAM IDAM JAGAT"; the world (Jagat) is permeated by Easwara. Jagat is the place wherein all beings are born, grow and disappear.

Ceaselessly the air blows over the earth everywhere, but we do not see it. Time passes through a procession of days and nights filled with activity and sleep. Continuously somewhere or other births and deaths, joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain are occurring. The year is filled with varying seasons, blazing heat or freezing cold, heavy rains or temperate weather. It is not easy to overcome these changing phenomena.

Man's primary need is food. The production of food involves cultivation of land to grow food crops. Without the production of grains, hunger cannot be appeased by mantras or money. Hence agriculture is the basic occupation for man. With the basic needs of food, shelter and clothing satisfied and with rearing a family, man is content. But with the growth of knowledge and skills, huts develop into mansions, villages turn into towns and cities; population grows and man is proud of what he has accomplished. But he is not aware of the things which are outside his ken and beyond his capacity.

Although births and deaths have been occurring from the beginning of time, men have not been able to understand the reasons for these happenings or their inner significance.

Recognising that despite all man's intellectual achievements, there were many things beyond his understanding and control, the ancients concluded that there was some super-human power behind and beyond the phenomena. They felt that they should enquire into the nature of the power without which man could not exist, no plant could grow and no living being could survive. These enquiries were not based on blind faith. Nor were they products of wild imagination. They sought to find the truth by austere penance. They regarded it as a search for God.

The earliest finding of the seekers was that the Sun was the most important factor in determining the daily life of man and providing the basic requirements for living. Life would be impossible without the Sun for man, beast, bird or plant. The Sun was regarded as the source, of all energy and responsible for birth, growth and destruction of all things in creation. It was for this reason that Sage Vishwamitra glorified the Sun God (Savitr) in the Gayatri Mantra.

The sages believed that the Divine principle was present in and outside of everything and that it could be experienced directly as well as indirectly. They pursued their penances further, for the benefit of mankind. They realised the Truth that the Divine Effulgent Person was beyond the outer darkness and, experiencing this Reality, they called upon all to seek and experience it. This Effulgent Purusha is utterly selfless, full of light the embodiment of all auspicious qualities and free from attributes. He was described as "SIVA" meaning one who is beyond the three Gunas

(Satwa, Rajas, Tamas) and hence absolutely pure and untainted. He was regarded as eternal, omnipotent, all-pervading and the possessor of all that is great and glorious—the six indices of the Divine: Aishwarya, Dharma, Fame, Sacrifice, Wisdom and Reputation. And for this reason, He was, given another appellation—Easwara. Easwara is one who is endowed with all conceivable kinds of wealth.

The sages found that Siva is also the protector of those who seek refuge in Him. Hence, He was called SANKARA—one who confers protection and grace. His will (Sankalpa) and grace have no bounds and are not dependent on any person, condition or qualification. Hence He was described as "SWAYAMBHU" (Self-created). The sages conceived of Him as one who could incarnate at will for the protection and rescue of man and the safeguarding of Dharma. In view of this transcendental power, He was described as "SAMBHAVAHA" the one who incarnates whenever Dharma (the reign of Righteousness) is in danger and the good need protection.

The Sun's reflection is seen in innumerable objects. The sages considered the human body as a vessel in the water (the lake of the mind) of which the effulgence of the sun is reflected. Likewise, recognising that the divine is present in all living things, they gave Him the name, "AADITHYAH".

They realised that it is not possible to know this all-pervading, all-knowing, omnipotent entity. There are three bases for knowing anything: Direct perception, inference and Vedic testimony (shabda). The Divine is beyond direct perception (pratyaksha) because He has no form. The Divine may appear in the form one contemplates, but that is not the reality. Proof by inference may not be valid in the case of the Absolute. You may know that a seed has the potential to become a tree, but you cannot know what kind of tree it will actually become. Hence there are obvious limitations in seeking to know the nature of the Divine by means of direct perception or by inference.

We have, then, the testimony (Shabda) of the Vedas. The Vedas can only describe the Absolute, but cannot demonstrate it. It has, therefore, been declared: "Not by rituals, or wealth or progeny can you attain the Eternal. Only through sacrifice can you realise the Immortal." The Vedanta explored the process of elimination—"Not this", "Not this"—to arrive at the Absolute. Having found that the Divine cannot be known by any of the three methods of knowing, the sages gave the name—"APRAMEYAH"—the Indescribable, the Immeasurable.

The sages also found that the Supreme Person was not only the creator and the protector, but also the destroyer and that he combined in himself all the powers required for these three functions. In fact, he was all these and more, that he could confer joy or sorrow, affluence or privation, and that there was nothing beyond his Power. They wanted to choose a name which would be all-comprehensive and appeal to one and all and so gave him the name "BHAGAVAN"—a name which expressed all the glories and powers of the Supreme Person.

### **Control of senses**

The significance of "SHIVA RATRI" is that it is a time when one can get closest to Bhagavan; because the moon, which represents the mind, has shed fifteen of its aspects (kalas) and is about to shed the last (sixteenth) aspect. The ancient sages, who explored the link between numbers and the Divine, found that the letters in the name of Shivaratri amounted to a total of eleven, which was the number of the dark forces called Rudras (those who make people cry). The Rudras enter the intellects of people and turn their desires towards worldly things, thereby giving rise to attachments and hatreds and pursuit of sensuous pleasures. As they turn the minds of people away from God and towards evil, they were called Rudras. The sages declared that whoever is able to keep the Rudras in check on the sacred day of Shivaratri will be able to experience Divinity. This means that control of the senses is the primary requisite for realising the Divine and attaining liberation.

Control of the senses is not easy. Even an evolved person like Arjuna confessed to Sri Krishna that sense-control was extremely difficult. The sages knew this well from their own experience. Hence, they suggested that even if control of the senses was not possible all the time, it should be practised at least on sacred days like Shivaratri. If one has nothing to do, the mind wanders in all directions. Hence the sages prescribed continuous absorption in thoughts of God on Shivaratri night. Repetition of the name of God and meditation on His glories would help to keep the mind away from other trivialities and promote control of the senses.

### **Pseudo - vigil**

Sophisticated intellectuals of today look upon Shivaratri only as a night when they should try to keep awake. They do not see the need to observe it as a pure and holy day to be dedicated to thoughts of God. As keeping awake the whole night is their sole idea of Shivaratri, they try to spend it seeing three film shows or playing cards with their friends or playing with dice with their kith and kin the whole night. Keeping awake in this manner, they come home in the morning to have a hearty meal. Is this the way to observe Shivaratri? Not at all. It is a caricature of what should be a sacred occasion for contemplating on God.

What kind of vigil is it in which there is no purity of mind and no meditation on God? The stork that stands on one leg waiting to catch a fish cannot be regarded as doing penance. The drunken sot who is oblivious to the world cannot be equated with one who is absorbed in the divine. The man who gives up eating after a tiff with the wife cannot be described as observing a fast.

The vigil on Shivaratri night means concentrating one's thoughts on the sacred, the pure, the beauteous and glorious form of the Divine. The ancient sages experienced the unique value of Bharatiya culture and bequeathed it as a precious legacy to the world. Today many are not aware of what is Bharatiya culture. What is our culture, what are our traditions and what is Sanathana Dharma? One who is not aware of the three cannot call himself a child of Bharat. Bharatiya culture is one that is ageless. It has withstood the vicissitudes of time. The soul of this culture is Sanathana Dharma. It is the bounteous nectar that has emerged from the dedicated efforts and severe penances of the Rishis. Those sages did not embark upon these exercises out of blind faith

or ignorance and lack of knowledge. They were profound seers, free from attachment and self-interest. After discovering the basic truth through disinterested enquiry and personal experience, they gave it to the world.

In the world today, knowledge and skills have grown immensely, but human qualities have not developed at all. Every subject is riddled with controversy. The reasoning process is invoked, without understanding what exactly is reason. It must be clearly understood that the Divine cannot be known by ordinary perception or through rules of logic and reasoning.

### **The power of faith**

Faith is only one. There is nothing like blind faith. For faith there can be no reason and no season. Faith and spirituality are beyond reason. It is foolish to search for the grounds of faith.

There is a sacred pilgrim centres called Srisailam near Anantapur. In a small village adjacent to it, a widow was trying to give her seven-year old son, Ramanna, schooling with great difficulty. The Shivaratri festival was drawing near. In the Rayalaseema areas, it was customary to invite home the son-in-law and the daughter for the occasion. Ramanna heard from his friends that they were expecting their sisters and brothers-in-law for Shivaratri. He asked his mother whether he had any sister and brother-in-law, where they were living and whether they would come for Shivaratri. His mother had borne a daughter prior to the son, but she had died in infancy. Memory of that girl's death brought tears to the mother. Suppressing her grief, however, she told her son "Darling, you have a sister." The son implored his mother to let him know where she was so that he could bring her and her husband for Shivaratri. Yielding to his importunities, the mother sought to satisfy him by saying; "In Srisailam you have a sister named Bhramaramba and her husband's name is Mallikarjuna."

The boy then said: "Mother, let us both go to Srisailam and bring sister and brother-in-law and celebrate Shivaratri." He had complete faith in his mother's words; he was determined somehow to bring the sister and brother-in-law to their home. The mother was in a fix. She used various arguments to avoid the journey and ultimately said that she would have to stay at home to make the arrangements for the daughter and son-in-law. The boy said he would go alone and bring his sister and brother-in-law.

To please the son, the mother sent him to Srisailam with some villagers who were going there. They reached Srisailam. The villagers had been instructed in advance by the mother that at Srisailam they should take the boy to the shrines of Mallikarjuna and Bhramaramba, and bring him back. The villagers took him to the temple of Mallikarjuna, They showed him the temple and said Mallikarjuna was inside. The boy cried out, "Baava", "Baava" (Brother-in-law) and rushed into the temple. As he entered, the priests stopped him. The boy cried: "Baava! Please speak to me." The 'brother-in-law' was silent. The boy thought that as his brother-in-law had not seen him, he could not recognise him now. Meanwhile, the priests thought, the boy was out of his mind and pushed him out of the temple. Ramanna was certain that his 'sister' would recognise him. He went to the shrine of Bhramaramba and cried aloud, "Akka, Akka" (Sister, Sister). He



rolled on the ground and wailed; "Sister, speak to me." The priests in that temple too thought the boy was demented and cast him out.

Ramanna was plunged in grief at the thought of returning home without his sister and brother-in-law. The villagers who had escorted him to Srisailam were inside the temple engaged in their puja. Ramanna was alone outside the temple. He saw a big boulder. Climbing on it, he cried: "My mother will not excuse me if I go home without sister and brother-in-law. Even my friends will laugh at me. I shall not go home. If my sister and brother-in-law do not come with me, I shall end my life here." Such was his firm faith in his mother's words. Faith of this kind never fails one. Crying aloud, "Akka, Akka" he jumped from the precipitous boulder. At that very moment, a voice spore; "Maridi Ramanna; Maridi Ramanna" (young brother-in-law, Ramanna) From another direction, a loving feminine voice was heard: "Thammudu: Thammudu" (young brother, young brother). When the boy jumped, he was held from both sides by God Mallikarjuna and Goddess Bhramaramba. This spectacle was witnessed by all the pilgrims present there. Mallikarjuna and Bhramaramba, appearing in human form, carried the boy to his home in his native village, partook of all the special delicacies prepared by the mother, and then vanished.

Note how the Divine responded to the simple faith of an innocent lad. Faith can achieve anything. Who is entitled to make a distinction between "genuine" faith and "blind" faith? Some may look upon the boy Ramanna as a naive, ingenuous child, who could believe anything in his innocence and ignorance. The boy's faith was a firm, unwavering faith emanating from a pure heart. A big shrine has been erected on the spot where the divine couple rescued Ramanna. This is known as the shrine of "Maridi Ramanna" (Coming to be called later as Mythili Ramanna shrine). It is wrong to think that such miracles do not happen in Kali Yuga. The manifestation of divinity transcends the bounds of time, space and circumstance.

Hence, the first requisite is cultivation of faith. One who has no faith can accomplish nothing. With faith, he can achieve everything. Faith is the foundation for the realisation of God. I have often said: Where there is confidence, there is love; where there is love, there is peace, where there is peace, there is truth; where there is truth, there is Bliss; where there is bliss, there is God, (Cheers).

If you want to realise God, you must be immersed in Bliss. To experience Bliss, you have to follow Truth. To pursue Truth, you have to install Peace in your heart. To achieve Peace, you have to cultivate Love. It is confidence that begets love.

Today, faith works like a see-saw which goes up and down. It is one continuous process of birth and death, faith at one moment turning into disbelief the next, and so on. With a faith which comes and goes, you cannot discover the unchanging, eternal Reality.

The Atma shines eternally,  
With no birth and no death,

With no beginning, middle or end—  
Ever remaining the All-Seeing Witness.

You may give God any name or form. The Divine has been given various names. Even the Rishis have called God by many names—Siva, Sankara, Aditya, Sambhava and Bhagavan. These names were given to Him; He did not give Himself any name. So, all that you see may be called God. Nature is God. Energy is God. Nothing is God. But, it is really not nothing; it is everything. In what you call everything, there is nothing. What you call Nothing has everything. Everything is Nothing and Nothing is Everything. Some say, "There is no God" But everything is in God. The atheist denies the existence of what is. In saying "There is—no God," "There is" comes first. This means that he is denying what is. He is blind.

The truth is Divinity is all-pervading. After profound enquiry, the Rishis discovered that God is the source of everything in creation. The Rishis compared Jagat (the cosmos) to a seed. Every seed is covered by husk. It is only when the grain and the husk are together that the seed can germinate. Likewise; in the cosmos, the inner grain is God, the outer husk is Nature (Prakriti). The cosmos demonstrates the unity of God and Nature. Nature is dependent on God and God is the basis for Nature. Likewise, when we seek refuge in God, He provides the protecting cover for us. Dependence (of the Devotee—dasatwam) and protection (by God—daivatwam) together constitute Divinity at work. This is also described as Siva-Shakti-Atmaka-Swaroopam—the union of Siva and Shakti.

The Cosmos, thus, is not apart from God. It is one with God. The scientists are saying the same thing in their own language when they say matter is energy and energy is matter. The relationship between matter and energy indicated the Nature (Prakriti)-God (Paramatma) relationship. Energy is, in fact, one of the names of God; Prakriti is another name.

It is not possible for any one to describe the greatness or the qualities of God. The scriptures have declared that He is beyond the reach of mind and speech ("Avaang-maanasa Gocharah"). "From where speech returns, together with the mind, unable to grasp It," says the Upanishad. Devote yourselves to the contemplation of the glories of God on this sacred night and sanctify your lives by turning your thoughts away from mundane concerns."

Bhagavan crowned His elevating and inspiring discourse with the singing of four Bhajans, followed by the entire gathering in full-throated gusto. The bhajans were: *"Hey Siva Sankara! Namaami Sankara" "Hari Bhajana Binaaa Sukha Santhi Nahi", "Prema Mudita Manase kaho" and "Subrahmanyam! Subrahmanyam!"*

After Swami left, the bhajans, continued throughout the night. Bhagavan came to the Auditorium the next morning and went round the gathering. After Arathi, Bhagavan blessed the prasadam which was distributed to all the devotees.

***—Bhagavan's discourse on Shivaratri day, 8-3-86***

## **EHV and the Community**

In the summer of 1985, four teachers from the St. Louis Sathya Sai Baba Centre participated in a pilot programme of Education In Human Values (EHV) in the community. After our EHV presentation had been made to the Soularad Girl's Club, we were invited by the director to teach the values programme. We had two classes, for ages nine through eleven, and twelve through seventeen; each class had approximately fifteen students.

Soulard is a community in the city of St. Louis, Missouri. The girl's club has a membership of 250, ages six to eighteen years. Most of the girls are from low-income and one-parent families. "Fighting and lack of discipline are behaviour problems of most of the girls," stated, the director, Wanda Alexander, who was most interested in our values programme.

During the summer, I taught a ten-week course on EHV to the nine through eleven years olds. I used the EHV programme material on right conduct, and taught using all the five elements of tuning in, quotes, songs, stories, and activities. It was most effective. As I taught the sub-values of right conduct, perseverance, and sacrifice, I stressed community involvement. The purpose was to instruct the students in their "brotherhood role" of helping each other. The students in my class had two community service projects.

One of the advantages of teaching EHV in the community is that it provides the-students with a theatre to perform experiential learning. The values taught in the classroom can be practised in the community. The opposite is also true; the community can learn from the example of the teachers and the students. When I came in contact with people from the community—local business, organisations, or clubs—they asked about the programme. I gave a brief explanation and always got the same response—the response of encouragement. The community is supportive. One of the local businesses donated "many opera" tickets for all the EHV classes. The gift was a positive reinforcement for their effort and attendance in EHV last summer.

The last class included a graduation ceremony and party. The girls were so excited. They received their EHV graduation certificate for the ten-week course from the club director. It was their first "graduation" and they knew they had accomplished something of value. We have been invited to teach another course this fall (1986).

Our thanks to Sri Sathya Sai Baba, who made this class possible.

**—Rita Bruce, St. Louis, Missouri**

### **Progress in the U.S.**

The decisions and recommendations made during the Fourth World Conference relating to Sai Spiritual Education and Education in Human Values are very much in the forefront in the United States. In August, 1985, an international EHV teacher-trainer workshop symposium was conducted in Los Angeles, drawing participants from Canada, the West Indies, Latin America,

and the United States. Among other accomplishments, the symposium produced a clear distinction between Sai spiritual Education (Bal Vikas) and, Education in Human Values, which was then disseminated to all Centres.

The great success of that inter-hemispheric (Zone of overseas countries) symposium led to launching, in the month prior to the Fourth World Conference, a series of similar workshops in the cities of San Francisco; St. Louis, and New York. As a consequence, Sathya Sai EHV in the United States now has over two hundred trained and certified teacher-trainers. Dr. Michael Goldstein, under whose direction the training workshops were conducted, has indicated that the next step in the evolution of Sathya Sai Education in Human Values in the United States will be initiation of a two fold campaign involving the training of public school teachers and the implementation of EHV classes for children participating in programmes run by community agencies with national affiliations. Dr. Goldstein expressed gratitude to the corps of senior teacher-trainers—Bea Flaig, Ronne Marantz, Saroja Girishankar, Nadine Clegern, Denise Daka, and Bernice Mead—for their invaluable contribution to the great success of the Zone 1 Education in Human Values training effort.

—*William Harvey (Sathya Sai News Letter, U.S.A.)*

*GURUDEVA VANI:*

### **Human Values are for Everyone**

*Heroism in speech has grown  
Heroism in action has declined to vanishing point.  
Ostentatious living is the order of the day;  
This is the plight of the student today.*

Man's life is marked by the procession of days and nights. The rising of the sun in the east and its setting in the west are everyday experiences. But when it is noted that the earth is a globe revolving round itself and going round the sun, these phenomena have a different reality. Directions like east and west and north and south and the apparent motion of the sun are seen to be mistaken. Similarly, when we are seated in a moving train, we are moving along with the train, though we may be stationary. Though the earth is revolving at a speed of several hundred miles an hour, we are not aware of its motion at all. It is simultaneously moving in orbit round the sun at 66,000 miles an hour, carrying with it all things on earth. The earth seems firm and unmoving, while the sun and planets and stars appear to be going round the earth. Though the scientific reality is one thing, we are guided by the daily experience in which the reality is different. Even the scientist, who knows about the earth's movements, uses the language of daily experience with reference to directions like east and west and the rising and setting of the sun.

The entire creation is a conglomeration of subatomic particles. These particles are waves of energy. All of them emanate from the same source of energy. Even the scientist who knows all

about electrons does not seek to find the primary source of all energy—the Paratatwa (the Supreme Principle).

The power of Shakti (energy) is incalculable. A small stone cast on a tumbler of water causes a ripple on the surface. A storm in the sea has the power to sink a ship. Both are manifestations of the power of atomic particles under varying conditions.

Different combinations of atoms result in objects of different kinds like copper, gold or oxygen, which have varying utility and value. But the primary energy which manifests itself in different kinds of atoms and objects is one and the same. The Vedas indicated this truth when they declared. "The One willed to become the Many", (Ekoham Bahushyam). "The Reality is one, the wise call it by many names"(Ekam Sat Viprah bahudhaa Vadanti")

If the Universe is itself the manifestation of the one primary energy, everything in it is also an expression of that energy. For instance, a wall which you see as a solid block can be seen as a vast congregation of minute particles when it is viewed through a microscope. Empty space between different particles can also be noticed.

Thus, there is a difference between the appearance of objects as we observe them in daily life and their inner reality. But the external appearance is based on the inner reality. It is the basic truth of the internal which enables us to experience the external. The basis is the power of the primal energy which is in matter. This basic truth was proclaimed in the Vedic statement: "It is (Absolute) subtler than the subtlest and vaster than the vastest.” (Anoraneeyaan-Mahatno maheeyaan. This means that what is subtle can become the immense.

All, experiences in daily life are variations in form of the basic Reality and not different from it. Experience of this Basic Reality will reveal how the changes in the primary energy bring about the emergence and the disappearance of material substances. That experience is one only, with no difference. This may be illustrated from mathematics. All numbers up to infinity are simply multiplication of the primary number one. One plus one becomes two; two plus one becomes three, and soon. Without one, all other numbers will have no basis.

It should be clear from all this that there is one primordial power which is the basis of all that is. Until this truth is known, we may imagine we are know-alls. In this conceit, one man declared; "I alone am a Pandit (one who knows everything)" (Mameva Pandithah). After some investigation, he found that there was a power greater than himself. He then declared, "I am also a Pandit" (Mamam cha pandithah). After further enquiry; he realised that there was a greater power than himself in the world and declared; "Pandithah samadarsinah, (The Pandit is one who views equally everything) proceeding further, he came to the conclusion, "I know nothing" (Mamam na pandithah).

To realise the divinity in him; man should embark on this process of enquiry. One who claims to know everything should be treated as utterly ignorant. Before Buddha attained Nirvana, his disciples gathered round him and asked him what stage they have reached in their spiritual

journey. Buddha took out a handful of leaves from the branch of the tree under which he was sitting and said: "Children, can you reckon the leaves in all the trees in all the forests all over the earth? What you have learnt is equal only to the handful of leaves in my palm; compared to, what is to be known (that is, all the leaves in all the forests)."

We are today concerned with education in Human Values. In my view the cultivation of Human Values alone is education. Whoever tries to understand the human values of Truth, Righteous conduct, Peace, Love and Nonviolence properly, who practises these values and propagates them with zeal and sincerity can alone be described as a truly educated person.

There are, of course, the obligations and compulsions relating to one's daily life and the duties which have to be discharged to the family and others. For these purposes and for earning a living, one may have to take up some occupation or other. Knowledge of the natural sciences may be required for this purpose. But together with this it is essential to acquire knowledge relating to human values.

All are entitled to acquire knowledge of human values. Principal Narender mentioned that these values should be practised by persons in the home, the factory, and an office. But this is not enough. Everyone should practise Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa. (Cheers)

Everyone's body is a workshop. This body is a machine. The limbs and organs are integral parts of the machine. Every organ shares in the pains and joys of every other part. The body demonstrates the organic unity of every limb and organ. If we fully understand the workings of this human workshop, we will have no need to study any other workshop. When the mind desires to acquire an object, say, a fruit in a tree, all other organs, the feet, the hands, etc. cooperate in getting it. After the fruit is eaten, the stomach helps to digest it and supply blood to the heart for distribution to the entire body. In the process, every limb or organ has done its duty in harmony with the others. This kind of cooperation and harmony should be achieved in our daily life also.

The functioning of the various organs of the body is an object lesson in cooperation and mutual help. This kind of mutual cooperation and unity could be experienced in our daily actions.. For instance, when you are walking, your eyes may notice a thorn on the road. By a mysterious process of communication from the eyes to the feet, your legs automatically avoid the thorn. If the foot was to step on the thorn, the leg would be hurt and may start bleeding. Immediately, by the same mysterious process, the eyes experience the pain caused by the thorn and tears flow from them. This shows the remarkable link of love between the eyes and the feet. It is this kind of spontaneous love which is the mark of human-ness. It is when you experience another's suffering as your own that your human value is manifested.

Our senses and limbs demonstrate these human qualities and serve as excellent teachers for us. There are numerous lessons to be learnt from the body: It is engaged in a variety of actions as the instrument for all activity. Knowledge and skill are required for doing anything. The body has to be kept in a fit condition for this purpose. All parts of the body, from head to foot, are equally

important and have to be cared for with love and regard. Love should become the ruling principle of our life. Only then can we sanctify it.

You may think that the programme of education in human values was launched only five years ago. But in fact I initiated it nearly fifty years ago. When I was staying in Karnam Subbamma's house (in Puttaparthi) I used to sing a song.

*With Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema  
Carry on your life's journey, oh man;  
Karma Yoga is your bounden duty;  
Remembering the Lord is the great secret  
And Sadhana is the devotee's hallmark,  
Proceed, oh man, on your life's pilgrimage  
With Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema.*

Regard the heart as a vast field. Use the mind as a plough. Treat the gunas (qualities) as bullocks. Use the intelligence (Viveka) as a whip. With these aids, cultivate the field of your heart. What is the crop that is to be grown in it? Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema are the crops, Bhakti is the rain, meditation is the manure, Brahmananda is the crop.

This is your task today. Cultivate the heart to raise a harvest of Truth, Righteousness, Peace and Love. This crop has to be raised in your heart and should be shared with others.

Our life is like a block of ice which is melting away every moment. Before it spends itself, devote it to the service of others. Education in Human values is designed to prepare everyone for this life of dedicated service.

There may be doubts regarding this programme. No room should be given for futile controversies. The Human Values should be regarded as basic requirements for every human being. In spreading the message of these values to the world, you should all cooperate with each other and act in harmony. Whatever may be the experience in everyday life, the basic inner Truth should not be forgotten. "The Reality is one, though it may be called by different names." You have now the Sathya Sai: Seva Samiti, the Sathya Sai Bhajan Mandali, the Sai Seva Dal, the Sathya Sai Study Circle, the Sathya Sai Mahila Vibhag, and the Sathya Sai Education Foundation. All these may be distinct organisations, but the basis for all of them is Sathya Sai. This should always be borne in mind.

Today, everyone is being attracted to the programme of Education in Human Values. The reason is the realisation that the world is in a sorry mess because of the absence of these values. Principal Narendra referred to the monstrous lethal weapons in the armouries of nations and the danger of nuclear war and "Star war", and said that in this critical situation the promotion of human values was supremely important. But, in truth, it is not these bombs and missiles that are the menace hovering over us. It is our bad qualities that are the, more serious problem. The reason is: If the bombs are used, they will make an end of mankind and nothing will remain. But

the bad qualities in man are devastating the lives of people all the time. This calamity is worse than the other. If we want to eliminate bad qualities like hatred, envy, pride and ostentation, we have to employ Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema and Ahimsa as the cleansing instruments.

#### **Dedicated teachers needed**

Together with worldly education, you have to cultivate the human values and undertake spiritual discipline. Oil imparts life to a lamp to keep it burning. Love animates the entire life. Love is like oil., But can you make a lamp burn by having. a container, a wick and oil? You need some one to light the wick. Similarly, there must be some one to make a garland, even if you have flowers, thread and a needle. You cannot make a jewel out of gold and gems without a goldsmith. Likewise to teach the human values, which are like precious gems, you need competent and dedicated teachers who practise these values.

For spreading EHV to all children, it is necessary to have contacts with educational authorities in Governments so that they may depute their teachers for training. But one thing must be clearly borne in mind. Whatever relations you may have with the authorities, your primary association with Sathya Sai should remain unaffected. It is to ensure that the contacts with the authorities are maintained on a proper recognised basis, that the EHV Trust has been set up as a registered body.

#### **Practise economy**

Einstein was the greatest among the scientists of our day. He discovered the profound truth about the relationship between matter and energy. He showed that everything in the universe was made up of energy. Einstein did not have expensive equipment, like those you have in modern laboratories, to make his researches. All that he had was a pencil, paper and a wastepaper basket: He lived up to the motto: Simple living and high study. Today what we see is ostentation and luxurious comfort in educational institutions, students want cushioned chairs; the staff want air-conditioned rooms. Scientists want highly expensive equipment for their research.

We should observe strict economy in Sai educational institutions. It is very difficult to raise money. Hence care should be taken to avoid unnecessary and superfluous expenditure on equipment or other things which may serve only to lighten the labours of the teaching faculty. Excessive use of computers and calculators is fraught with dangers. They make the students abjectly dependent on the machine, without relying on their abilities. It must be realised that the human brain is the foremost computer. We must train our children to make proper and good use of their brains. It is not enough to acquire expensive, sophisticated equipment for education. We must know how to make full and effective use of them. Only then will the money spent on them be rewarding and justified.

In cultivating human values, emphasis should also be placed on avoiding wastage of money, food and time. Even teachers have to be trained in this respect.

In matters concerning expenditure, my attitude is strict. For anything that is legitimate and essential I am prepared to offer even lakhs of rupees. But I will grudge giving even a paise for



something unnecessary and useless. This is because money breeds all the evils in the world. Everywhere extravagant and wasteful use of money is taking place. I do not want such a thing to happen in Sathya Sai institutions, which should serve as a model to others. I wish to ensure that in every type of activity those connected with Sai institutions should behave in an exemplary manner. I am always happy. But what hurts me is when any one utters a lie. If some mistake has been committed, admit it. To cover it by one lie, many other lies have to be invented.

#### **Adhere to truth**

In my view, among the human values, Truth is primary. There is no greater Dharma than Truth. Once you indulge in untruth, everything you do gets tainted by the falsehood. Hence Truth is the life-breath of man. When truth goes, life goes.

Holding fast to Truth, you must make Righteousness, Peace, Love and Non-Violence, the guide-posts for your life. Teachers should try to impart the finest education to the children at minimum cost and make them lead pure and noble lives. Teachers should also not be bound by considerations of hours of work. When necessary, they should be prepared to stay on for hours to remove the doubts of students and help them to complete their assignments. This is your duty.

You should not limit yourself to imparting the five human values alone. You must create also the environment which will be conducive to the practice of the basic values. When you have dedication and devotion, you will be able to face all the challenges in the discharge of your duties.

If teachers play their role properly, the nation can be transformed. For all the malpractices among students the parents and teachers are to blame. The parents are allowing the children to go astray at home through misplaced affection. In olden days, the children had such great regard and love for the parents that they were loath to go away from them. Today it is the reverse. The reason is the failure of the parents to enforce discipline together with lavishing love on -the children. Teachers should establish contacts with parents so that the latter also practise the human values and reform their children. The authorities of the EHV Trust should arrange for meetings between teachers and parents for this purpose.

All the three elements—the EHV Trust, the teachers and parents should work in cooperation in the interests of the children and see that human values are promoted not only among students but in the entire community.

***—Bhagavan's valedictory discourse to EHV Seminar, Prasanthi Nilayam, 9-3-1986***

*Man is misled into believing that nature is his rival which has to be defeated and conquered. He struggles and suffers pain and sorrow in the process. He considers it heroic to undergo travail in what he calls conquest of nature. If you see the footprint of God everywhere on- every inch of ground, in every being, small or big, nature is seen in a new vesture of glory. It*

*will then appear as a manifestation that demands worship, rather than exploitation and enslavement.*

—Baba

## **In Quest for Peace**

"The world has to be brought back to the rails. Only love and peace can achieve this. Fill your thoughts, speech and actions with love, truth and peace and engage yourselves in service activities" declared Bhagavan Baba, in a discourse to a large gathering of devotees, at Brindavan on December 9.

Bhagavan said: We aspire for peace and comfort all the time, but where can we find it? Is it to be found in the material world around us? Experience shows that the peace or happiness to be got from external objects is not enduring. It is like a mirage, which cannot quench the thirst of the deluded animal that runs towards it. The real source of peace is within every individual and- it is this inner peace that can confer real joy. Saint Thyagaraja proclaimed to the world in his song that there can be no happiness without peace. Such a peace can be got only through achieving equal-mindedness on all occasions, whether one is subjected to pleasure or pain, praise or blame, gain or loss. One should not be affected by criticism arising out of ill-will, envy or hatred. Reacting to such criticism in a like manner will destroy one's peace of mind. We should rectify ourselves if the criticism is justified. We should ignore baseless criticisms motivated by ill-will or jealousy. We should be true to our own good nature and maintain our equanimity.

What every Sadhaka needs to secure and should strive for is this peace (Santhi). It is the fragrant flower which is born out of pure Love. It is the fragrance which is derived as a result of one's good deeds. This noble and fragrant quality of peace, if you lose it, then you have lost everything in life! Right from ancient times, in this country, there have been Rishis and sages who have striven to proclaim the greatness of this Santhi or peace. They were criticised, ridiculed and derided and they were subjected to untold ordeals, but they never lost hold of this Peace of theirs.

You must be like the sandal wood tree which transmits its fragrance even to the axe that is, used to cut it. When an incense-stick is lighted; it is burning itself away, but it radiates its perfume all around. In the same manner; a true 'Sadhaka', a true devotee, should see to it that he keeps his peace intact under all circumstances. He should radiate happiness all around. **THIS IS THE PRIMARY SADHANA.** Through Sadhana, try to get that peace. Peace cannot be obtained in the world outside. Our kith and kin, our material, possession or name or fame will not give us peace. Peace is something which swells from within you. It is not something Which is gathered from outside.

We desire peace, but we keep doing things which, far from giving peace, cause anxiety and worry. Trifles are allowed to upset one's peace of mind. The true Sadhaka should remain unaffected by what others say about him.

### **Threefold santhi**

The word "Santhi" is pronounced three times at the end of every prayer, ritual or offering. What is the meaning behind this? The first "Santhi" means: "May we enjoy peace for the body." It means that the body should not get heated by feelings of jealousy, hatred, attachments and the like. Whatever news you receive about any event, you should receive it with calmness and serenity. The second "Santhi" pertains to the mind. You should not get worked up when someone says something about you which is not true. You must simply dismiss it as something which does not concern you. If you get angry or irritated, you are losing your peace of mind. You should say to, yourself: "Why should I lose my peace of mind just because someone says something about me which is not true?" You resolve to stick to your truth and be true to your own nature. The third "Santhi" refers to peace of the soul. This peace has to be realised through love.

This world has to be brought back on to the rails and it is love and peace alone which can achieve this. Fill your thoughts, actions, and emotions with love, truth and peace. There may be people who may hate us but love them too. Only then will you have lived a life in tune with the spiritual traditions of this country.

Workers in the Sathya Sai Organisation should be filled with this spirit of love and peace and take to service activities. There should be no room for ego or hatred. Whatever the difficulties, we should not become despondent or dejected! You must be bold and courageous and plunge yourselves in the service of society. This is what Sai would like everyone to do. This is the ideal before you. Develop forbearance, patience, peace and love and carry on your work. This is your true "Sadhana".

The nine different types of "Bhakti" have two essential elements: love and peace. The great Mahabharata hero, Bhishma, was a supreme example of "Santhi Bhakti". For 56 days he lay calmly on a bed of arrows bearing all the pain with patience and peace, waiting for the propitious moment to come to surrender his soul to the Divine.

## **Love and Be Loved**

When we announce we love Swami, we generally mean that we love Him for His sweetness; His gentleness, His unselfishness, His love for us, His right actions; His gifts, and His capacity to protect us. All these are facets of His personality. These are also, paradoxically, signs of His transcendence. One cannot love a person who is rude, selfish, indifferent, and weak. So each time we say, "We love Him," we unconsciously agree that we love Him for His impersonality.

We associate Swami with, and recognise Him as, an ideal manifestation of life. In other words, Swami is not so much an Individual, as a way of life. Whenever a kind act is done to us or by us, we remember Him, for He is in it. When we see a flower, we remember Him, for its beauty is fulfilled in Him. Whenever we experience an act of unselfishness, we thank Him, for He is the source of all unselfishness. One cannot love Him and remain selfish; ugly in mind and act, rude to fellowmen. If these qualities persist in us, even if we yearn to be in His presence or feel greatly happy when He talks to us or talk about Him with great emotion, they are but short-term rituals. To love Him is to love the way of life He represents, the intangible clearly tangible in Him.

The more we grow in understanding, the more does our love grow in Him. For then, we can always experience His presence with us. His presence is not His physical presence, either as a vision or as a miracle. His presence is as peace in our hearts, gentle sweetness in our words, unselfish motiveless joy in our acts. That is possible only when we begin to love Swami as a wholesome way of life. A true lover of God instinctively withdraws from wrung-doing. Why? He loves God as one would love the morning air, pure, transparent and fragrant. To see God in a flower or in a grain of sand is to experience a boundless expansion within. Therefore Swami declares, 'Expansion is My life'.

So when we yearn to love Him, and be loved by Him, we must express the love in our thoughts, convictions, words, acts, in every twist and turn of our minds. And this has to be done spontaneously. Even in our most unguarded moments we should be able to express this sweetness. In fact, there should be no such thing as 'guarded moments'.

This brings us to another aspect of the life of a true lover of God. In him, one finds a harmony of thought (feeling as well), word (conviction), and deed. Swami says, "Rama and Kama cannot stay together. To love Rama is to be totally detached from Kama." One cannot be rough, rude, untruthful, and selfish and yet claim to love Swami. Though we cannot oblige others, we should speak obligingly, Swami tells us. Even if one cannot do good to others, one must refrain from doing harm to them, Swami advises. One cannot be egoistic, full of self-importance, look upon others as inferior erring human beings and claim to be loving God.

### **Express sweetness**

Therefore, when one says, "I love Him," one is putting upon oneself a great responsibility. When Swami calls us near, His very presence invokes in us the sweet experience of love. This comes as a gift from Him, for He is Love. After this initial experience of love for Him, we must express this experience of sweetness in all aspects of our lives. This would be our love for Him. Swami warns us that it is not enough if we love Him; we must win the boon that He loves us. Our love for Him is His gift, for we can hardly help loving Him! When we go out in the sun, we feel warm. This warmth is the gift of the sun. When we love Him, we express this love He gives us.

A wholesome, dedicated, natural and pure life is the state in which we shall be ever in His presence. To experience His presence all the moments of life is to be loved by Him, and also to be loving Him fully. In other words, to love Him is to be loved by Him.

—*Bejoy Kumar Misra, Prasanthi Nilayam*

### **“My Baba”**

It is often said "What does Sai Baba mean to me?"  
"Are you a follower—a Sai Baba devotee?"  
I then sit still and ponder on what has gone before,  
Of what has happened to me, since I first left this shore.

When I arrived in India, its wonders to behold,  
And to see if it were true, things I had been told,  
Of all the miracles that Swami had done,  
And hoping I might be blessed to witness just one,

Well, the feelings that were within me, of joy, ecstasy and bliss,  
This was indeed something I'm glad I did not miss,  
And of course I saw those miracles, although only—small  
I fee! more blessed than most who haven't seen at all.

And if at times I'm despondent and feeling a little low,  
I just close my eyes and think, and off to the Ashram I go,  
My spirit starts to soar, my face is full of smiles,  
As my thoughts go to India travelling all those miles.

And as I lead my life of working day by day,  
I try to remember the things He had to say,  
What we must do to help one another,  
How we must treat each' one as if they were our brother.

We must spread our love as He would have us do,  
Spread it without fear, not just from me to you.  
So when people ask "What does Baba mean to me?"  
I hope it shines from my face for all people to see.

I know I sometimes fall from grace, although I try with all my might,  
I then remember, I am always in his sight,  
I get a nice warm feeling which drives away my pain,  
And then I am ready to do my best again.

—K E. Elliot (U.K.)

*SAI SEVA SAMACHAR*

## Quake Relief in Mexico

"It was like an atom bomb had fallen—dust and chaos." Sai devotee Gail Muniz was remembering her first view of down-town Mexico City only hours after the initial September 19, 1985, earthquake measuring 7.8 on the Richter scale. Gail recounted quickly the moving events which led to her weeks of selfless service alongside other Sai devotees.

The time was approximately 7.00 a.m. on a typical day. The television was playing while the Muniz family went about their daily routines. But the routine was interrupted as the house began to sway in response to formidable earthquake tremors. The television blacked out because the Channel 2 studio collapsed, trapping many employees inside. Switching to an operating channel, Gail heard incomplete, live reports of the unsuspecting city's instant devastation. Her house in the suburbs had been rocked badly but was intact. Tediously placing many calls on faulty telephone lines, Gail realized the magnitude of the quake. Sai Centre members were unharmed, although some lost their homes.

Anxious to serve the needy, Gail, her driver, and daughter Monique rushed to the Red Cross to offer their help and to donate blood, if needed. At the shelter, sandwiches were being served to volunteers. "I saw the need to feed the volunteers, to be the volunteer of the volunteers," Gail said. Drawing on her nineteen years of vegetarian restaurant ownership and experience, she purchased food supplies from military sources. She contacted other Centre members, and they proceeded to a devotee's home, quickly made five hundred sandwiches, and sent them to the shelter.

The next day, the Sai devotees learned that, in the wake of the tremors, some tenement houses had crumbled. The homeless needed food, shelter, and support. Could they help? Given government approval, they set up a "kitchen" in a one-storey school in the damaged area. With no gas available for cooking, they had to improvise. Gail said, "Everyone was giving us food and donations of things, like soap. I have never seen anything like it ever, ever, except Baba's giving. Everyone was getting together to help." Another Sai volunteer, Maria Silva, added that "each time we ran out of tomatoes, bread, or other supplies, mountains of them would appear." In one instance, Gail was asked what the shelter needed. "I said I needed a refrigerator, and the next day I had one. It was Baba's work," she said with a hint of emotion in her voice.

A regular crew of fifteen Sai devotees and one nun prepared and served lunches. "On weekends, more devotees came to serve and clean up. Even people who hadn't attended Centre functions for a while came." Gail's day began with food preparation and cooking at 7.00 a.m. and

ended late in the evening. Sai volunteers provided food at the shelter for one-fourth of the approximately one thousand needy people per day, including refugees, rescuers, volunteers, and doctors. The fare was basic, healthful, and vegetarian—a Mexican meal of rice, beans, and tortillas with occasional treats such as cookies or fruit salad. A few homeless, elderly ladies received special, limited supplies of Jello.

The food crew made an impression on the refugees they served. Devotee Cristina Lara said people noticed the preparation of the food by devotees "was done with love and the food was clean and fresh." They would ask, "Who are you? Are you a religious group? You are different. You work so much and are so kind and nice to us and serve us with love." The devotees' answer would initially be, "We are all religions. We are people who want to help," and to the persistent ones, "We are Sai Baba devotees."

But Gail saw a problem developing at the shelter. The refugees enjoyed the atmosphere and the quality of food so much that they were not making any effort to become self-sufficient, to find horses, or to help with kitchen work. So, silently, Gail decided the next day would be her last. The next morning, one homeless man sought out Gail. Presenting her with roses, he told her, "These roses are, for the people who have been feeding me."

Maria Silva related how terror again struck at the hearts of all in the shelter when the second strong earthquake rocked the city. "We sang a bhajan and people put away their fears, stopped screaming and shouting, and listened." It was an instance illustrating the unity of all religions.

Sai devotees manned the shelter kitchen for a total of four weeks. During that time, a blossoming of unity was noted in the Sai Centre. This was true, selfless loving service in action, blessing all concerned.

*—Andrea Holly Gold, Ojai, California*

*SAI JAGAT SAMACHAR:*

### **Regional Conference of Bal Vikas Convenors**

**Rishikesh:** An inter-State conference and workshop for Bal Vikas Convenors from six states of Northern India was held from February 28 to March 3 at the Sri Sathya Sai Centre, Tapovangram, Rishikesh. Over 200 delegates and observers attended. Senior workers from the Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas Education Board, including Miss Githa Ghosh from Calcutta, Srimathi Vidya Srinivasan from Madras, and Mr. and Mrs. Nimesh Pandya from Bombay, addressed the conference and explained the new concepts relating to the implementation of the Bal Vikas programmes. All the participants were inspired by the sacred atmosphere of the Sai Centre and found the conference very rewarding. D.D.G

**Gauhati (Assam):** A five-day training camp for teacher-trainees in Education in Human Values was held at Gauhati from February 26 to March 2. In all, 26 teachers from various parts of North-eastern India attended the camp, including 21 teachers from Government lower primary schools. The training course included demonstration of group devotional songs, exposition of the five basic human values, national integration through religion, and the methodology of teaching Human Values. Sri. K. Bora, Education Commissioner, said the EHV scheme of Bhagavan Baba should be introduced in all schools. Sri N. Kalita, Director of Adult Education, Assam, felt that the EHV scheme should be introduced in high schools. The training programme was featured in the programme of the regional centre of Doordarshan, in the news broadcasts of All India Radio and in the Assam Press. —***L. M. B.***

#### **EYE CAMPS IN BIHAR**

**Patna:** Between December 1985, and February 1986 seven free eye relief camps were conducted by the Sai Seva Organisations in Bihar at the following centres: Samastipur, Berno, Barauni, Harihargahj, Dallonganj, and Dhanbad. While the medical services were provided by doctors from Government hospitals, the running of the camps and the care of the patients were looked after by Seva Dal members. A large number of cataract operations were carried out. Most of the patients were from rural areas. Free food, medicines and spectacles were provided to the patients. —***P.K.S.***

### **Sparks from the Divine Anvil**

Do not fritter away your energies playing the silly game of gaining and losing, gathering arid scattering, winning temporary fame, fortune and felicity. Go straight on the royal road that leads to self-realisation and don't stray into the bye-lanes of counterfeit bliss. This does not mean that you have to give up kith and kin and foot it all alone. The spiritual journey lies through compassion, sympathy, mutual help and service. These are fostered by society and are to be used for society.

Look upon external nature as the vestment of God; it is the manifestation of His Glory, His Power, His Might, His Majesty. See these in every blade of grass, in every floral petal, every slice of fruit. Learn lessons from the river, the mountain, the stars and the sky. Through this worshipful attitude to man and beast, plant and stone, you must remove the veil of Tamas, Rajas and Satwa and achieve equanimity. Then you become aware of your own self, behind and, beyond the three veils.

This Jagat is not mere falsehood, it is not a trap. It is the splendour of God, His reflection. He reflected and the Jagat appeared. It is His own substance, manifested as multiplicity, as latent energy. When activity is in accordance with awareness of the Divine in all, Dharma is in ascendance. When the awareness is befogged or belittled, dried up or deluded, then Dharma is descendent.



Service, the utilisation of time and skill for the uplift of society, that is the highest form of adoration which God will reward with Grace. You get the actual experience of Sat-Chit-Ananda through service. For through service, you conquer egoism and convince yourselves of the unity that underlies creation.

—Baba

*EHV MARCHES ON:*

### **African Conference to meet in Ghana**

Following discussions among Sai devotees from Africa who had gathered at Prasanthi Nilayam for Bhagavan's sixtieth birthday celebrations in November last, a Sathya Sai African Conference will be held at Ghana towards the end of August this year. Announcing this, in a report in "The Sai World Gazette," published in London, Mr. Victor Kanu writes:

Five years ago, at the 3rd World Conference in 1980, met and discussed with several African delegates the need for holding a conference in Africa.

Several meetings of resident Africans in Britain and visiting VIPs were subsequently held at Devereux House, 50, Longley Road, London, to discuss and plan strategies and venues. Similar meetings were held at Prasanthi Nilayam, in India whenever Africans were gathered there. These meetings were followed by extensive correspondence with African Sai Centres and devotees throughout the continent and Mauritius, to brief them and solicit responses and suggestions.

As a result of the resolution passed by the 210 delegates from the African continent and Mauritius who attended the 4th World Conference of the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation, and the 60th birthday celebrations of Bhagavan. Baba, a Sathya Sai African Conference is to be held in Ghana, West Africa, from 28-30 August 1986, under the auspices of the World Council. This decision was taken by the World Council with Bhagavan Baba's blessings at Prasanthi Nilayam immediately after the deliberations of the World Conference.

The main theme of the African Conference is **EDUCATION IN HUMAN VALUES**. It was resolved that the EHV programme should be highlighted among educationalists, teachers, social workers and education authorities in Africa with a view to introducing and implementing Bhagavan Baba's programme of Education in Human Values (EHV) in the continent's educational systems. We, African devotees of Bhagavan Baba, are convinced that the long-term and permanent solution to the problems of Africa is to be found in His EHV programme, and shall leave no stone unturned in taking this message to Africans at home and abroad. To that end the Sathya Sai (UK) Society for Education in Human Values, in conjunction with the World Council, are in the process of preparing EHV books, manuals, magazines and posters and other teaching aids.

There will be an input from the voluntary services of the Sathya Sai organisation -in the U . K. The input will take the form of active collaboration with Dr. H. Tachie of the Ghana Medical Services in conducting a model medical camp in Accra and its vicinity.

We invite devotees and friends of Africa to join us in making Africa a Prasanthi Nilayam, through the Divine Guidance of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Those wishing to help or attend this historic conference in the annals of African history should please contact me for more details regarding participation, travel, accommodation etc.

Victor Kanu (Convener) Former Sierra Leone High Commissioner to the UK,  
Norway and Sweden,

*Africa Office, Devereux House,  
50, Longlev Road, London SW 17 9LL*

*SAI JAGAT SAMACHAR:*

### **Zambia President Hails Sai Seva**

The President of the Republic of Zambia, Dr. Kenneth Kaunda, in a cordial message to the Ndola Sai Centre, on the occasion of the celebration of Bhagavan Baba's sixtieth birthday on November 23, commended the efforts of Sai devotees in Zambia "to spread the message of universal love without reference to colour, creed, religion and any other artificial barrier between person and person as fellow human beings."

The message, which was featured in a supplement to Zambia's leading newspaper, The Times of Zambia, was also broadcast on Zambia Radio, which gave a full report of the birthday celebrations. The President's message stated:

"On the great occasion of your celebrations of the 60th birthday of Lord Sri Sathya Sai Baba on 23rd November, 1985, I send you my best wishes and congratulations and those of the Party, the Government and the people of Zambia. Through you, Zambia is joining in the happiness of our brothers and sisters in many centres throughout the world who are observing this great day.

"In following the service of humanity, especially to the less privileged in our society, your organisation is carrying out in Zambia its mission to spread the message of universal love without reference to colour, creed, religion and any other artificial barriers between person and person as fellow human beings. In this regard the germ of your great faith is one with the heart of our country's philosophy of Humanism. We share the cardinal principle of human existence and love.

"I know with much delight how your organisation has been offering much needed services in the Ndola area in Institutions such as the Lions' Blind School; the Mitanda Home for the Aged,

the Cheshire Home; the Arthur Davison Hospital and the Ndola General Hospital, to mention only a few. You have supported well the financial needs of these institutions on a regular basis.

"Indeed the Blood Pressure Detection Clinic which your organisation conducts on a voluntary basis in various locations including churches is yet another, example of your service to fellowmen in the name of God."

"The people of Zambia, the Party; the Government as well as myself wish you more and more success in your continued efforts to create, with fellowmen and for fellowmen, a better, happier and more peaceful world. Once again, congratulations. May God bless you and guide your endeavours."

The birthday celebrations were presided over by Mr. A. K. Shapi, Secretary of State for Defence and Security; and one of the top men in the Zambian Government. Mr. Shapi spoke on the four cardinal principles of Bhagavan Baba—Truth; Righteousness; Love and Peace;—and said that the Sai Mission was in accord with the concept of freedom of religion enshrined in the Zambian Constitution.

As part of the birthday celebrations, the Ndola Sai Centre had organised Narayana Seva which included serving of lunch to the inmates of the Mitanda Home for the Aged and dinner to the children of the Ndola Lions' School for the Blind (S.T.)

### **Celebrations in Nigeria**

The 60th birthday celebrations of Bhagavan Baba were held at the permanently built Sai Centre at Ibadan, capital of Oyo State, Nigeria (reports Dave Oguntolati). Professor (Mrs.) S. D. Odutan organised the functions in the absence of her husband, Professor Odutan, who had led a team of 40 delegates to the Fourth World Conference of Sri Sathya Sai Organisations, at Prasanthi Nilayam.

Important dignitaries from all levels of Nigerian society joined the large number of devotees who had travelled from Lagos, Port Harcourt, Jos, Bauchi, Abeokuta and Aba. Prominent at the meetings were university dons and scholars, government officials, bank managers, businessmen and women.

The celebrations continued throughout the day with devotional songs in Nigerian and Indian languages. Speeches on the life of Bhagavan Baba were delivered.

What emerged at the end of it all was the indisputable evidence of the rapid growth of Sai influence in Nigeria, the largest country in West Africa, with a population of about 80 million.

*Each has his particular duty, task, role as an individual and as a member of the society to which he belongs. Do that duty, carry on that task, play that role as best as you can. That is how one can justify his existence. The body tingles with health only when every limb, muscle, nerve,*

*artery and cell does its duty efficiently and well. So too a society can be happy only when each individual does his duty well.*

**—Baba**

*Teachers in schools have themselves to be examples of what they require the pupils to be. Men in authority who exhort others to follow the paths of love and cooperation have themselves to practise those virtues. The people are not willing to be led; the leaders have no capacity to lead. Progress is the result of mutual trust between the leaders and the led. The unrest that is now rampant in all sections of the people everywhere is due to the irresponsibility of parents, teachers, administrators and leaders, as well as those who hunger to benefit from them.*

**—Baba**

## **Awareness of "OM"**

The OM, of course, is the primeval sound, the cosmic sound that brought the world into being as the diverse world of form that we see it to be today.

Motion creates sound. No matter how delicate that motion might be a sound results. Because we do not have sensitivity to hear much of the sound that exists we are prone to think it does not exist, yet it does.

The OM is still the primeval sound reverberating in the universe today. It is the cause behind all the manifestations we see. Man, in his present state, is the highest form of expression of this primeval sound, because man has been given the consciousness of mind that gives him the privilege of remembering all his past experiences in the eons of time he has been in existence. No other high form of life upon the planet has this ability.

All the forms on the planet, because of motion and movement, are evolving, and there is a sound behind their evolution, but it will take eons of time for each kingdom to move to its highest state before the doors are opened unto it to move into the next kingdom.

Thus the plan goes on and on and on because at the present time there is a given life wave in each kingdom that is locked into such kingdom until God or that Divine consciousness watching over the evolution of this planet chooses to open the door for more movement from one kingdom to another.

Man's primary purpose for being here is to garner the awareness of this sound, this cause behind his beingness, and come into the blossoming treasure that is unfolded to him in his search for God, for right where he is, God is also. His path is an inward path for man to reach God and his own GODHOOD.

The energy of the OM when concentrated upon and meditated upon can bring man to that level of consciousness that will allow him to cross into his own DIVINITY and merge with it.

Thus he will not have to generate another birth. The Death comes first and is followed by birth only if man is still bound to the sense world and what he feels is the import of such a world versus THE DIVINE WORLD and ability to merge into THE DIVINE WORLD and the consciousness thereof.

Should such a merger take place, and it is possible in man's lifetime, depending upon his disciplines and his efforts toward his own inward path, man will no longer have to comeback or be reborn into the world for he will have made and achieved his liberation from it and merged into his DIVINE CONSCIOUSNESS.

This is the value. This is the tool that man can use in working with the OM. If the OM is not of his choosing then he should continue his spiritual disciplines of meditation and repetition of the

Lord's name to constantly stay in the DIVINE or the highest consciousness of which he is capable.

Living in and acting through this consciousness should eventually allow his merger into it and get him the liberation he deserves, for it is man's destiny to become God.

It is only a matter of the length of time man chooses to travel this path of travail before completing his inward journey, and that time is up to each individual to determine.

—**Warren Lawrence Alkire, Euless, Texas—U.S.A.**

*Why is man afflicted today with fear and anxiety? Are we to search for the reasons outside us or do they lie within us? The reason lies in the false emphasis we have laid on things of the material world, ignoring things of the spirit. The body that man bears is essentially the receptacle of God. It is a temple, where God is installed and where God is the Master. It does not deserve all the attention you now pay to fulfil its urges, needs and whims. It is equipped with very valuable instruments which can help you in the journey; but, you seldom use them! The senses bring you impressions from the outside world, but, you do not evaluate these impressions by the touchstone of a clear reason or a balanced mind. You do not proceed from one step to another in the march towards the elimination of the ego and the mergence into the One.*

—**Baba**

### **Children's Corner**

### **At Bhajan Time**

*It started off with OM! OM! OM!  
And then it all began,  
We all were taking a flight into space  
We were no longer on land.  
Ganesha was praised first of all;  
Then the rest began.  
The great good God entered from Heaven  
And sat on the decorated chair.  
It was a pleasure and delight.  
To see the graceful sight.  
Then Arathi starts and God walks out,  
And we come back to earth with  
Om shanti, shanti, shantihi!*

### **What I am**

*I am neither big nor small,  
And I don't really exist at all,  
But what I know and believe  
Is God who is supreme,  
And I know I'm nothing but  
An instrument and child of God.*

### **What I Love The Most**

*I don't love day or night  
Or dark and light,  
I don't love sky or land,  
Or the clouds and sand,  
But what I love the most  
Is the lotus feet of Sai.*

*—Sonia Chawla, V Standard,  
Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School,  
Prasanthi Nilayam.*

### **Bhakti and Bhajans**

"I will install myself wherever my glory is sung," is the divine assurance given to the devotees in the Bhagavata.

Every religion has developed music and song as one form of expression of devotion to what man recognizes as the inexpressible. Man realizes that we can never truly express in adequate words the great feelings that swell in human hearts when we are in a state of God realization. Or even in lesser states of consciousness when our souls seem to yearn and reach out from the finite enclosures of form, to the infinite Formless. Yet, though any verbal expression is highly inadequate, and very limited, man must express these deep and moving emotions about his maker; and thus from the soul of man bursts out the songs of divinity, to the divine, for the divine. Thus prayer to God, in the form of songs, began to take a rightful place in man's expression of his highest love, called Bhakti in the Indian languages, (the closest English equivalent could be perhaps "loving devotion".)

In this Kali Yuga, this "loving devotion" to God, Bhakti, has been prescribed as the easiest way to achieve the Grace of God, to realize God in our lives. Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita expounded the four paths—or yogas—available for man to reach God viz., "Jnana Yoga" (the

Yoga of knowledge), "Dhyana Yoga" (meditation); "Karma Yoga" (the path of Righteous conduct) and "Bhakti Yoga" (the path of loving devotion).

Bhakti Yoga is in its essence the path of love. We find that love, from time immemorial, has found expression through songs, poetry—the mother's love for the child in a lullaby; in the man's love for his beloved, in a love song. Songs have been the medium to express the greatest emotions of man and thus also his love for god—in the form of solo songs or group singing, called bhajans. These songs to the divine, that express man's deepest yearnings, seem to have the ability to penetrate the dimensions that separate the world of man and the world of the Divine. When such songs are sung they have the power to transform the hearts of man and, even more, those who would have little to do with God and spiritual practice.

"Need I join a bhajan group?" "Can I not pray or sing alone?" is a common question raised by those who do not want to spare the time and effort needed to attend sessions of communal prayer. The answer is, "Of course; you can. You in fact must pray alone or with your family at least once or twice a day". But the prayer of one, by oneself; is often very, very short and perfunctory. Singing or praying alone has been likened to holding a single torchlight with a single beam penetrating the curtain of the night and group singing to the great beam of light coming from a number of torches and setting the surroundings aglow, not only giving light to the person holding the torch, but also helping others who do not have a torch to walk in the glow of collective light.

This is the importance of a bhajan, a collective vibratory force that can invoke the Divine and bring benefit and peace of mind not only to the lead singer and those who follow in the group singing, but also to those who merely listen. No greater service can man render than to help another person, by invoking the thought of God in his mind and soul.

If one prays alone, the concentration one will need for sustained prayer is often not within the ability of the average man, in silence or during solo prayer; the mind begins to wander, to get distracted. However, in bhajan singing, each person helps to reinforce the faith and devotion of the other and as all are direct participants, full concentration is more likely to be achieved.

The bhajan, it is said, is a rope or "lasso" that can be used to "rope" God and draw His attention to us. But, likewise, the bhajan is also a "lasso" to draw the hearts of one's fellowmen.

How often have we observed solo singers in a temple, singing kirtans with great love or "the vaarams"? These great songs by the saints of India, at one time would have captivated the masses to listen in silent rapture; but sadly not today. During such sessions, one is often able to observe adults and children and even temple committee members paying scant attention to the singer or the song. The reason is that our knowledge of the language and that particular form of musical appreciation is gradually dying out.

What, then, is the alternative? The good Lord in His great compassion has brought forth another form of musical expression—the bhajans. This method of worship, of invoking the



Divine, is not new, but somehow seems to have gone out of vogue over the years. Today, there is a revival of bhajan to express the devotee's love for God through songs.

Look at any well-sung bhajan session! The air becomes charged with the devotion of present, men, women, children, all singing their hearts and souls out, in full concentration on their respective "Ishta Deva". How often it has happened that cynical "modern" youngsters, who hang around outside, temple's during temple functions, slowly come forward, at first embarrassed and nervous at their own attraction to this form of prayer, and then slowly beginning to tap their hands and feet in time with the bhajans, and finally, as the call of their soul proves stronger than their inhibitions, joining the bhajans with full vigour! How often have we seen these youngsters and even children suddenly taking an interest in temple worship, eager for the "Bhajan day" when they may communicate their love for God, in the only way they know how—through devotional songs to experience divinity.

Thus, for those who involve themselves in temple bhajans, it would be well to remember that when you sing to the Lord, you are not only expressing your own Bhakti to the divine, but that you are performing a great service to your fellowmen—you are helping them too to reach out from the depth of their finite selves to the infinite Lord, who guards and guides this universe.

Sing the songs with love. Sing the songs with full devotion. Understand and enjoy the full depth of meaning of every word. Invoke the form of the God whom you are singing to, in, your mind’s eye, and enjoy the bliss of merger with the divine.

—J. Jagadeesan, Kuala Lumpur

Easwaramma—A Homage

*The Lord said In the Gita.  
‘In every age when this Earth  
Is dominated by sin  
And evil prevails.  
I descend on Earth  
To redeem humanity.  
However, while descending  
Even the Lord has to follow  
His own laws:  
Even He has to decide  
Who should act as His parents.  
Imagine!  
How fortunate the couple.  
How lucky the home  
Where the Lord takes His birth.*

*True, a mother is a mother,  
Holy beyond words for all time  
Even if the son goes astray.  
But among them all  
The one who begets Hari, the Lord.  
Is the holiest of all.  
Who has earned this honour  
As the guerdon  
For her relentless penance.  
Who can reckon the amount of Punya  
Kaushalya could gamer  
In her previous births  
Before Rama chose her  
As His mother?*

*And who can gauge  
The depth of suffering  
Which Devaki must have undergone  
To receive Krishna?*

*But O Easwaramma!  
Unparalleled is the sacrifice  
You made  
To set an example  
For women in every age  
Of what motherhood is.  
Let's open our hearts  
For you to tread gently.  
O Mother Divine!*

*It's not everyone  
Who can fathom your love,  
Your agony and your philosophy.  
Imagine the moment when Sathya,  
The darling of your heart.  
Stood confronting you and said,  
Maya Maya, it's all Maya,'  
And you the mother stood confounded!  
The lips quivered.  
The tearful eyes betokened  
An ocean of surging love,  
But you restrained their flow  
Not allowing a drop to fall.*

*Tell us O world tell us  
If there's a mother to compare with?  
—A mother, whose lotus feet  
Make you bow down  
A thousand times.  
“Kaushalya?” You say.  
You are surely mistaken.  
Kaushalya 's ordeal was limited  
To barely fourteen summers:  
And time flies—  
Years turn into months,  
Months into days  
And days into minutes and seconds,  
And hope persists.*

*‘What?Devaki?’  
Devaki's was no agony at all  
For who's that mother  
That wouldn't prefer  
To live away from her son  
And see him happy  
Than to keep him with her  
And lose him?  
And did she not know  
That He whom she deliver  
Was the Lord Himself,  
The World's deliverer?*

*Easwaramma's agony was unique.  
It's the agony of a fish  
Living in water and yet thirsty!  
The Lord said,  
"I belong to the Bhaktas.  
They need me,  
How can I leave them  
And belong to you?  
If you need Me,  
Come and join the congregation  
And forget the worldly bonds  
Of mother and son.”*

*The mother listened and listened  
To these heart-rending words,  
But she neither shrieked nor cried,  
Rather looked straight  
At her dear little Sathya  
Shedding affection from her moistened eyes.*

*Mother!  
The holiest of the holes,  
The Lord demanded your devotion;  
But what is devotion;  
If not the acme of Love—  
Pure and selfless Love—  
Which never gets dim  
Ev'n in the darkest hour?  
Who could claim better devotion  
Than you?*

*O Gentleness incarnate!  
You dived deep  
Into the agony of Love  
And had it in full measure.  
Your decision was clear,  
“Let Bhakti go to the Bhaktas  
I need my son.  
Let those who aspire for  
Deliverance, get, it;  
But the thirst of a mother  
Shouldn’t go unquenched.”  
"If God is Love and Love is God,  
And all else on earth  
Transient,  
Then let Love prevail.”  
And it did prevail.  
The words of the Lord  
Were rendered true  
By none else than the Lord's Mother.*

*In Brindavan  
When the elements wanted to  
Disintegrate,  
And you knew your trine was come,  
You called, “Swami! Swami.”  
“Coming!" said the*

*Lord And rushed;  
But you outpaced Him.  
When He reached  
The nest was empty,  
The winged-one had gone  
As if to tell Him,  
“Here lies the Maya dead,”  
And the Mother merged with the Son;  
For Love is eternal,  
Steadfast and immortal,  
Whereas Maya assumes  
New forms every day  
And the wheel of life and death moves on.*

*Thus O Mother.  
Your message of Love  
Is the message of the mother  
In every woman.  
It's a boon  
To strayed humanity  
And on this auspicious day  
Of 6th May  
We all adore you  
Paying our homage  
At the Lotus feet of Bhagavan.  
Om Shantih! Shantih! Shantih!  
—**Bhagwat Prasad Misra, Prasanthi Nilayam.***

## **Far and Yet Near**

*Thou art far away from us.  
And yet so near art Thou  
In the deepest chambers of our Heart.  
How shall we reach Thee. Lord?  
Pray, tell us the way  
That we may be happy and gay.  
How often do we forget Thee. Lord?  
And yet so compassionate art Thou  
Guiding and guarding us through life.  
Pray let us feel Thy Presence  
In every act that we.*

*Your instruments do.  
For our hearts are sullied.  
Cleanse them. Lord.  
That we may know Thee  
And feel Thee near us.*

—*G. Mahadevan.*  
*XII Standard. Prasanthi Nilayam.*

### **From Prasanthi—To Prasanthi**

Baba asked a devotee whom He had chosen for the interview, "Where are you from?" The devotee was startled, since he had been coming to Prasanthi Nilayam for many years and staying there for a few weeks every time. Baba used to accost him not by his name but by the name of the country from which he came, Guatemala. So he gave the usual answer, "Guatemala". Swami's response was Significant. "No! You should say, 'Prasanthi Nilayam!'" He was immensely happy with this remark of Swami which he took as an act of Grace! "Does Swami mean that I will stay in Prasanthi Nilayam for the rest of my life?" he wondered, hopefully!

I believe that Baba hopes to get the same answer from all of us. We must learn to have the courage, the confidence and the wisdom to declare with our hands on our heart that we are from Prasanthi Nilayam. That is the permanent residential address of human beings at all times and in all climes, whether they are aware of it or not.

Prasanthi Nilayam is not that piece of land near the village of Puttaparthi in Anantapur District, Andhra Pradesh. It is not an entity related to place and time. It is the abode from where all of us have come. It is the name for that state of the source where there is eternal peace because it is *Sat-Chit-Ananda*, Truth, Awareness, Bliss. That is our home from which we have migrated through eons, through several incarnations in multifarious frames. We have forgotten that home. We believe that we are what we think we are, and give wrong addresses to each other. We have come to believe that we are the body-mind complex with a name and form. Having strayed away from the abode of Supreme Serenity, Prasanthi Nilayam, we have lost inner peace, tossed on the waves of pleasure and pain, loss and gain, honour and dishonour.

The Prasanthi Nilayam that Baba mentioned to the devotee from Guatemala is not a stone and mortar structure, as He has so often reminded us. He is not really resident in that building. The Prasanthi Nilayam where He resides is our heart. So, He has advised us to make the heart a Prasanthi Nilayam. The first step is to discover the cause of our plight. We lost our peace when we started chasing the chimera of Desire. "Remember what happened to Sita," Baba instructs us in an affectionate way. She was very happy in the forest, so long as she had only the one desire to be with Rama, the embodiment and source of Love. But a new material desire for a 'golden

deer' overwhelmed her one day. It grew so obsessive that she literally chased away Rama, her Lord. "When *Kama* (desire) enters your heart, Rama, the Lord departs," says Swami. Both cannot co-exist! The "golden-deer" is enticing us in the present age too. We pursue the acquisition of tinsel and trash which, like the golden deer, tantalises us, stopping within reach and slipping when we approach. The hope of success urges us to sacrifice and suffering. Baba names this passion for possession, fire, since it is known in Sanskrit as *anala* ("never enough") the more you feed it, the bigger the blaze!

Baba advises us to reduce desires. *Moksha* is defined by Baba as moh-akshaya; the elimination of possessiveness; of attachment to objects. What a word, "possession!" Who possesses whom, asks Baba: Do we possess the car, or are we possessed by the car? When you become the victim of something without which you feel you cannot get on, then you are enslaved, you are not free. Many things we crave for are mere status symbols. We acquire them to satisfy our vanity, to keep up with the neighbours. The advertisers vie with each other in titillating our vanity: They create a competitive pursuit of pettiness in which our pockets get emptied to fill their coffers.

We struggle in this ever-expanding syndrome of one-upmanship. The wrist watch is no longer a chronometer; it has become an egometer instead. Dress is no longer the protective garment; it is a medium for parading our bizarre fancies. An automobile is no longer a mode of transport, but a weapon to make the eyes of our neighbours green. All the joy of achievement is only temporary, for it is soon overtaken by dejection. "No. Not enough. I must rise higher, become higher." We run on and on to reach a goal, ever receding beyond the horizon of possibility.

Once tied to pleasure and pain, loss and gain, honour and dishonour, we have no respite, no escape. Somebody is always a step higher, a little more swell. Finally we fall behind frustrated, with high BP, or Executive Stress; nervous breakdown, the physical escape from this doomed game. Baba says that we oscillate perpetually like a pendulum between the two extremes, pleasure and pain, loss and gain, honour and dishonour, etc.

Is there no way out? There surely is one, assures Baba. Reduce your desires. Next time, when you feel like buying something, ask yourself, "Do I really need this? When did I wish for this? Am I after this because my neighbour has it? Let him continue to be happy as he is now." "Stop before you proceed," is the traffic signal useful for us, too, on occasions.

When you have suffered from a loss, stop, ask yourself, "is there no other angle from which it can be viewed?" Has it no gain angle? Honour-dishonour are a dangerous pair. Here too when we feel insulted or feel that our honour is at stake it is better to look out. The ego plays many a trick. There is no dearth of sycophants around, persons intent on boosting the ego of their victims. They goad others to dabble in dishonourable acts. Beware! The method is simple. Stop the pendulum. Watch out! WATCH, says Baba, your Words, Action, Thoughts, Character and Heart.

We have to guard against outside events and influences from moulding our moods and modes. Let us learn to live on our inner resources and educate ourselves to derive joy from Nature itself.

A sunset or sunrise, a tree in full bloom, and birds chirping in glee, there are hundreds of pictures around us each of which can give us immense joy, provided we cultivate taste. Learn to give and get joy in a smile; have as a hobby collecting smiles from friends. Change your vision and lo! The whole world appears different. Take everything as it comes; be neither elated nor depressed. Accept everything as a gift of God.

Is this a philosophy of resignation? No! Baba is not advocating the resignation that is born of, incompetence, incapacity or cowardice. "Do your best and keep mum!" that is Baba's advice. Doing nothing means that you have failed to use the God given talents for everybody's welfare. Act, Act, with all the strength and skill, all the intelligence and insight endowed by Him. Don't shirk work. He who has confronted you with a problem will also help you to solve it. When some situation challenges you, don't ask, "is this good for me?" Remember that whether it is good or bad depends on how you tackle it. A green mango is sour; but we make pickles of it. A ripe mango is sweet, we eat it with gusto. We enjoy both the sour and the sweet. We do our best, as Baba says, and keep mum!

This is the secret of Prasanthi, not to be disturbed by external circumstances. If we can't change the circumstances, let us change our attitude to them. Let us find strength in the inner springs of joy. Prasanthi can be gained only by transcending the pairs of opposites; they disturb us only so long as we are their playthings.

All the *mantras* of the Upanishads end with glum *Santhih*, chanted thrice. The prayer prescribed by Baba for the Sri Sathya `Sai College has in it the secret for gaining Prasanthi:

*Asatho maa sadgamaya  
thamaso maa iyothis gams ya  
Mrithyor maa amrutham, gamaya.  
Om Shantih! Shantih! Shantih!*

*Lead us from untruth to truth,  
From darkness to light  
From death to immortality!*

If we learn to discriminate between *asat* and *sat*, between darkness and light, between the transient and the eternal, if we can recognise the immortal amidst the mortal and the dying, we have learnt the secret of peace. What we obtain when we have realised the meaning of this *mantram* is *Santhi*.

That is the Prasanthi Nilayam which Baba, wants us to reach and realise. He has come to lead us back 'home', yes, every one of us, sooner or later.

—*From "The Greatest Adventure", by Dr. M.V.N. Murthy*

### ***"Enjoy—or End joy"***

*Sometimes a person suffering from a serious disease comes to Swami and says, "Swami, I'm dying. Please help me." If he is told that he is going to die, then it may hasten his death. To infuse courage and confidence, Swami says, "Don't worry. I will look after you and take care of every thing." The principal thing here is that the dying person is given confidence to face his death, which will also help him to live for a few hours longer, spending that time in peace remembering Swami. To die in peace is most important. The conditions for the next birth are set by the thoughts at the time of death. We use the word, `enjoy'. We believe that is the goal of all the pleasures we crave for in life; but what is really important is that we "end joy," that the last moments of life be filled with joy. End joy is the real joy. Dying in peace is the thing that marks the last moments of great beings. We pay much attention to the time of birth, but the time of death is equally important. Bhishmacharya waited for the auspicious hour to come before he gave up his life; great sages all pay attention to the most auspicious time for casting off their bodies.*

**—Baba** (from a talk in Brindavan)

### **God's Grace—Our Effort**

*"If you take one step towards Me,  
I shall take ten steps towards you."*

So He says to us, our beloved Lord Sai Baba. And we know that His word is divine truth, all-embracing love and all-upkeeping righteousness. His word has the power of omniscience and omnipotence. His word is omnipresent love.

Sai Baba is ever watching us, guiding us, inspiring us, strengthening and guarding us. This is His mercy, His grace. This is His love and majesty, the reality of God. And we all are part of His incomprehensible, divine grandeur!

Here we have God's grace, His "ten steps towards us." How, then, about our "one step towards God"?

Of course, we love God, we have faith in His might, and we pray to Him with sincerity and belief. We call for God, we cry out for Him with the whole of our being. Yes, this is a step towards God—but, is it just this He means when prompting us to take a step towards Him? Is it this our Lord expects from us, encourages and inspires us to do?

Only praying to God, calling for Him and asking for His help—this is putting all the responsibility for our life into the hands of God. Can this be what He means by inviting us to

take a step towards Him? I strongly doubt it, as it would mean that we separate ourselves from God, whereas we in fact are one with Him.

With the right and the responsibility of our basic oneness with God our step towards Him must go far beyond our prayers and our belief, it must manifest itself in a wholehearted and courageous effort, as part of a divine action.

Certainly God's love is limitless. His patience with, us is endless, and His Mercy, is nothing but, compassionate understanding and forgiveness. He never leaves us alone in our struggle. He never demands from us to accomplish a task on our own. What He expects us to do, the one step He asks us to take towards Him is an effort, a serious, courageous effort with steadfastness, faith and love. An effort so strong that it blasts the boundaries of our ego. If our effort is pure and strong, it will, grow to the magnitude of divinity, it will reach the divine core of everything, and all. It will, together with the "ten steps of God", take us to the goal, for laying the fruits of our effort, laying ourselves, at His divine feet.

The result of our wholehearted effort is none of our business. With confidence and peace of mind we can put the result into God's hands, knowing that His loveful grace will work in our life, work with full divine power.

May all—embracing love and humble gratitude give wings to our prayers, may the light and power of His wisdom guide our efforts. May our faith in God give us the strength and the courage we need for victoriously fighting to the end, with full conviction that all is His will, His love.

—*Sisko Orefjaerd*

## Offering to the Lord

*"Please make no offering in cash or kind"—*

This is the notice one finds in front of the Ganesha temple at the eastern gate through which devotees normally enter Prasanthi Nilayam. There is an important guideline, too, in the 'Code of Conduct at Prasanthi Nilayam which reads thus:

*"You are not required to pay money anywhere to any one in the premises except for the services like accommodation and food. Beware of cheats and persons collecting funds!"*

What a contrast between Prasanthi Nilayam and places of worship elsewhere (temples, ashrams etc.) where money plays a prominent role in the process of worship! This fact was reasserted and demonstrated to the world last November (1985) when over half a million devotees gathered in



the precincts of Sathya Sai Vidya Giri for the World Conference of Sai Organisations and Bhagavan's birthday celebrations. Lakhs of devotees were fed freely, sumptuously and continuously for ten days, and the proceedings of the conference were a unique landmark in the history of mankind. When the Sai organizations made an offering of sixty-lakh rupees to Bhagavan Baba on His sixtieth birthday, Baba returned it with a reprimand that what He wanted was not the collection of funds in the name of 'Ceiling on Desires', but a true 'Ceiling on Desires', by abstaining from undesirable habits like smoking, drinking and extravagance. The money saved thus should be utilised for the service of the poor and the distressed.

So, what Bhagavan Baba expects from us is not the offering of money, nor even '*patram*' (leaf), '*pushpam*' (flower), '*phalam*' (fruit), '*toyam*' (drink), (as prescribed in the Gita.) What He wants is the offering of eight spiritual flowers, viz., (1) *Non-violence*, (2) *Sense-control*, (3) *Compassion* for God's creation (4) *Forbearance*, (5) *Peace*, (6) *Tapas* (Synchronization of thought, word and deed), (7) *Meditation* and (8) *Truth*.

But, is it possible for the modern man to make such an offering to the Lord? The eight spiritual flowers mentioned here are mere abstractions for him. However, Baba has been kind enough to resolve this riddle for us. He has shown us a way, a very practical way.

### "Seva pushpa"

The essence of the eight spiritual flowers has to be drawn and concretised into a single practical flower called '*Seva Pushpa*' (the flower of Service), and this is the most suitable offering to the Lord. But, Bhagavan cautions that this flower of Service must be offered with proper proportion of *Knowledge*, *Skill* and *Effort*. That is why the graduates of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning are administered in the convocation an injunction from the Thaitthariya Upanishad:

"Whatever you offer  
Offer with *Shraddha* (faith and devotion);  
Do not offer with *Ashraddha* (lack of faith and devotion);  
Offer with *Grace*;  
Offer with *Humility*;  
Offer with *Fear* (of ego);  
Offer with full *Knowledge*."

The Saint-Composer Thyagaraja sang thus: "Oh mind! With the full knowledge of the greatness of Rama, chant the name of Rama!"

In the same manner, a Sai Sevak, with the full knowledge of the greatness of Service, must offer service to his fellowmen in distress.

"Service is the ship by which one can cross the ocean of 'Samsara' (life)" —says Bhagavan.

Bhagavan's mission in this age of 'Kali' is to "Rescue the wicked from the deep valley of sin and ignorance, and raise them to the high peaks of Divine Love."

"Of what avail is it  
if you torture man and worship God?  
What '*punya*' (virtue) is there  
if you hate humans and prostrate before idols?  
What mercy is it if you revere a *shava* (corpse)  
and neglect a *jiva* (living being)?" questions Baba.

Baba beckons us to a life of service. Service done without hankering after name or fame, pomp or publicity, but in a pure spirit of 'Tyaga' (sacrifice) certainly reaches God.

*"Na karmanaa na prajayaa dhanena  
Thyagenaikena Amruthathvamaanasu."*

"We cannot attain immortality through mere work, or through offspring, or through money, but only through '*Tyaga*' (sacrifice)" —says the Narayana Upanishad.

"Love lives by giving and forgiving," says Baba. In fact, service is the medium through which we can promote and foster effectively the five basic *human* values: *Truth, Righteous conduct, Peace, Love* and *Non-violence*.

When an offering is made with a deep sense of love and dedication to the Lord, it elevates not only the giver but also the receiver.

### **DACOIT TURNED SAINT**

Once, when Vivekananda visited Hrishikesh, he met a sage. The sage asked whether Vivekananda had heard about Pahvari Baba. Since Vivekananda evinced interest in the Baba, the sage narrated a story.

One night a dacoit entered Pahvari Baba's cottage to rob him of his belongings. When he saw the Baba awake, the dacoit left the house and started running. Pahvari Baba saw this and began running after the dacoit, carrying his things for tire sake of offering them to the dacoit.

"Krishna! Krishna!" Pahvari Baba called out, "Please do not go! I have no need of these things. They may be more useful to you. Please come back and take them!"

"This great offering of Pahvari Baba transformed the very life style of the dacoit, and he (the dacoit) is now in quest of God. I was that dacoit," said the sage.

Vivekananda was astounded, and later he narrated this story (in America) in one of his discourses on 'Sinners too can become saints'. Valmiki, Bilvamangala, Vipranarayana, Ajamila were such sinners once, who were later transformed into saints.

There is an episode about Ranthideva in the Bhagavata, which highlights the greatness of the divine virtue of 'sacrifice'. Ranthideva, a devotee of Lord Sri Hari, had to observe a fast for 48 days. On the last day, he could secure some food and sweet drink. A Brahmin, a worker, and a man with dogs came one after the other and begged for food. Ranthideva offered all his rice and vegetables to them. When he was about to partake of the remaining item, the drink, an outcaste came and begged for food.

Ranthideva regretted that he had no rice to offer. He did not bother about his own hunger and thirst that were going to take away his life in a short while. But, he spoke to the suppliant in sweet and endearing words:

"Oh brother! I am so sorry!  
Rice is exhausted;  
only some sweet drinks are available.  
Please come in and partake of it!  
When humans are in distress,  
what else is greater than helping them  
and making them happy?"

Ranthideva offered what all he had. The Gods appeared before him; but, he asked for no boons. Chanting Sri Hari's name, he merged in Sri Hari.

The question may be asked whether a poor man can be a *Tyagi*? When he has nothing, what can he offer to others? Poverty or status in society does not stand in the way of Tyaga. "God *is Bhava Priya*," says Bhagavan Baba. God values the Spirit of sacrifice, and not the magnitude of sacrifice. In this context, let me narrate an incident from my personal experience.

#### **A bangle-seller's example**

Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samiti at Tirupati intended to organise a Free Eye Operation Camp in our native village (Vengalrajukuppam). The Tahasildar of our taluk, a Muslim by religion, evinced keen interest in the programme. The responsibility of the Sai Samiti was to organize the camp with doctors, medicines, volunteers and publicity through newspapers and radio, while the local farmers were to arrange food for the patients for ten days (duration of the camp). The Tahasildar summoned all the land-owners in the valley for a meeting in our High School. When the Tahasildar called for local help, there was no immediate response from the land-owners.

Then, from one corner of the hall, a man in rags who was a bangle-seller by profession raised his hand, and offered to supply milk for the eye camp throughout the ten-day period. We know how flourishing the bangle-business is now-a-days! The poor man had some cows and buffaloes. He was supporting his family by selling the milk of these animals in the neighbouring town. He had now offered the entire milk to the camp for ten days. He had no other source of income. Yet, it was his spirit of Tyaga which was responsible for his spontaneous offering for a good cause. Nor

was that all. The bangle-seller suspended his bangle-business for two weeks to serve in the camp throughout. This is real *Tyaga*!

The spontaneous offer by the poor bangle-seller thrilled all the people who had assembled there, including the Tahasildar. Then other people came forward with their offerings. The exemplary sacrifice of the poor bangle-seller transformed the entire scene and the minds of the people. Contributions in cash and kind poured in. After the camp was over, some money was left over. The villagers collected some more, and with a liberal matching grant from the government, a pucca school building with five classrooms rose up in the name of Bhagavan Baba.

The ways of the Divine are mysterious. In numerous inexplicable ways, the process of transforming men is going on all over the world. As the poet says:

"As one lamp lights another, nor grows less,  
So nobleness enkindleth nobleness."

—*Dr. K. Balabhadra Naidu, Prasanthi Nilayam*

## Pranava Prasad

It was a Holy time, the Sacred Week between Palm Sunday and Easter. It was also the beginning of Holi, the Hindu festival. The Jewish Passover was within a day or two. For me it meant an opportunity to reach deeply into my heart with renewed prayers that my own life itself would cease from all its human will and fall utterly and completely into alignment with God's Perfect Design. I had lit special candles and spent special time in prayer. The time was late for lunch, but, I also knew I was going to have a special lunch. I was going to take a simple and hearty meal at one of the canteen facilities provided by the Sai Organsation; and, I had overheard that the volunteers helping in the kitchen were regularly chanting the Gayatri mantra, which Baba extols as a source of enormous spiritual light and strength. This meant a great deal to me.

When my son was only four years of age our Sai Baba Centre avidly took up the study and learning of the Gayatri. All members of the Centre had begun chanting enthusiastically and humbly. We read carefully in "Vision of the Divine" all of Baba's words about this sacred mantra. So from the age of four, Sathya had known and felt its healing upliftment. When he was eleven we decided he should recite it thrice daily and he himself became so deeply aware of its special goodness that he would not take food no matter what the occasion or earliness of the hour until his morning Gayatri was completed. I often sat with him as he recited the deep prayer and felt an especially calm beauty in those moments. Even at the age of four he had, through constant exposure to Baba's teachings, begun to grasp the subtleties of God's play. One day as I had succumbed to a feeling of dejection and sat down on the floor moping, Sathya toddled around the

corner and upon seeing me, stopped, leaned his pudgy little face down into my gaze and patting me on the cheek softly said: "Don't forget, Mommy, you're the Immortal Atma."

I was thinking of my son on this special day of prayer giving deep gratitude that he was being educated in a school blessed by Baba, and being taught in that school the rich tradition of Sanathana Dharma, Vedic morals and trust in God. Knowing that my son had eaten heartily and often from Mother Gayatri's sacred meal of upliftment, I, too, felt a kinship of protection for him as I walked to my own meal prepared in its Holy Light.

I was almost the last one to enter the canteen. I quickly requested 2 chapathis, and was most graciously served. However, suddenly I saw, almost as though drawn by a thick crayon, the lovely outline of an OM. It was made of the toasty darker brown and was vividly clear. (Later when the chapathi was cut in half the OM was seen to be perfectly centered in its raised puff of dough.) How beautiful, I thought. I tip-toed into the kitchen to show it to the workers. How lovely it had been for us all to see that sacred Symbol so perfectly drawn, in the very food we were to eat. One lady said she had felt particular guidance from Baba that morning to recite the Gayatri as the chapattis were rolled, whereas previously they had done so over vegetable chopping.

The Gayatri's very meaning, Baba tells us, is the affirmation of God in everything. He says it draws down upon us enormous spiritual benefits. All I could think, when all of us stood looking at the lovely Chapatti OM is: can we ever estimate the unseen value of the love and care we receive when we eat food prepared in a holy way and in a reverent environment? What prasad it is to receive food prepared by those who follow Baba's Intent and Instructions?

One man volunteered to preserve the OM by taking a photograph of it. I had even prayed to God that ...though I did not have a camera, such beautiful message from God as an OM in chapathi should be saved. Imagine my surprise when someone stepped forward and mentioned a desire to photograph the Precious Symbol. The man having the camera also mentioned it was his son's birthday. I could not help but think again of the Rebirth which the Gayatri affords and, my own child basking in that light. So many of the persons who saw the Chapatti OM felt special meaning in its manifestation. All of us felt most deeply, I think, a pure gratitude to Baba for letting us feel once again the precious efficacy and worth of Sadhana done with love, a most Precious Food.

—*Samrita (Mardee) Inglis Kadugodi (28.3.86)*

**VIDYAGIRI SAMACHAR:**

### **Sai Institute Gains in Status**

Following the visit of a team of educationists, deputed by the Association of Indian Universities, Mew Delhi, to the Vidyagiri Campus of the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning

in March, the Institute has been accorded permanent membership of the Association and has acquired, within four years of its inception, a national status on a par with the older universities.

The A. I. U. is a registered society comprising the Vice-Chancellors of all the Universities. The Association, besides serving as a forum for the discussion of common problems of universities and higher education in general maintains liaison with governments and other agencies interested in university education.

After the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning was started as a "Deemed University", with the approval of the University Grants Commission, it was accorded temporary membership of the A.I.U. in April 1982.

In order to consider the proposal for granting permanent affiliation, the A.I.U. sent a high-level delegation of eminent educationists including Professor S. V. Chittibabu, Vice Chancellor, Annamalai University, Prof. B. M. Shukla, erstwhile Vice Chancellor, University of Gorakhpur, and Dr. Jagdish Narain, Secretary, Association of Indian Universities. This team visited Prasanthi Nilayam for three days from March 7 to 9, 1986. On the basis of detailed information provided to them regarding physical facilities, finances, academic programmes, research activities, students facilities etc., detailed discussions with the Faculty, visits to the Departments, Science Laboratories and Planetarium and meeting with the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor and other officers of the University. The visiting team were impressed with the philosophy of education that was being followed and the areas selected for research. The Secretary of the Association has written to the Institute that they know of no other University in the country which has a planetarium on its campus. He has conveyed the Association's desire to sponsor a programme for the training of University teachers in Education in Human Values in the form of workshops to be organised by the Sathya Sai Institute next year.

### **Spiritual Leadership**

The Chairman of the Association has written to say that it was an intellectually, emotionally and spiritually exhilarating experience for him to stay on the Institute's Campus, particularly on the occasion of the Shivaratri celebrations, and what is more, to get the coveted opportunity to listen to the discourses of Bhagavan. The Association of Indian Universities felt honoured to have the Sai Institute as one of its members. He has expressed the hope that this Centre of Higher Learning, heading, as does, the new movement in the cause of education in human values, will provide the needed spiritual leadership for higher education in our country.

***GURUDEVA VANI:***

### **Spiritual Pancha Sheela**

Five principles which have to be observed for realising the divinity in man were indicated by Bhagavan in an informal discourse to a gathering of students and older devotees at 'Trayee

Brindavan'. They are: Ahimsa, Sathya (Truth), Soucham (Purity), Daya (Compassion), and Aasthikyam (faith in God).

Elaborating these principles and explaining their importance for the spiritual aspirant, Bhagavan said:

Ahimsa: (non-harming) is a supreme virtue. But, in daily life, almost at every step some harm or other is being caused. When we breathe in or breathe out, countless microbes perish. There are occasions when wittingly or otherwise injury is caused to some being or other. Complete non-violence is not a practicable ideal. What should be ensured is that there is no deliberate causing of injury or harm to anyone.

Truth: Truth is Divine. Where there is Truth there is Divinity. When Dushyanta forgot that he had given a ring to Sakuntala when he met her near the sage Kanva's ashram, Sakuntala declared in the open court of the king that Truth was the supreme Dharma and a king should uphold truth at any cost. She pointed out that in the order of merit, starting from digging wells to performing horse-sacrifices, the horse-sacrifice ranked higher than having a hundred virtuous sons. But greater than a hundred horse-sacrifices (Aswamedha yajna) was honouring one's plighted word. While the king was ruminating over this exhortation to uphold truth, some fishermen brought to the king a ring which they had found in a fish caught by them. The king then remembered the incidents that had happened when he had gone a hunting near sage Kanva's ashram, his encounter with Sakuntala and the ring he had exchanged with her. He accepted Sakuntala as his queen and the child born to them was, Bharata, after whom this country has been named.

Purity (Soucham): Both internal and external purity is essential. They should try to ensure cleanliness of the body and purity of the mind. Our ancients used clay for cleaning the body. In naturopathy mud bath is used for the treatment of many physical ailments. The body is made of clay. But it is also the abode of the Divine. The importance of physical cleanliness could be illustrated from a story in the Mahabharata. Once, the disciple of a Guru, after completing his studies, requested the Guru to state what he would like to receive as Guru-dakshina (offering) from the disciple. The Guru asked the disciple to offer the ear rings worn by a certain queen. The disciple ascertained who the queen was and went to the king to inform him of the mission on which he had come. The king permitted him to visit the queen's apartments to, make his request. But he could not see the queen anywhere and reported his failure to the king. The king then told him that no person who was physically and mentally impure could see the queen. The disciple then went through a process of purification and was able to see the queen.

Another example of the serious consequences, resulting from personal impurity was the case of King Nala, who had to face many ordeals because of a single lapse on his part. He lost his kingdom, became deformed after a snake-bite in the forest, separated from his wife and had to serve as a charioteer. It was only after he had purified himself by strenuous performance of Gayatri japa that he could get back his kingdom, his original form, reunion with his queen and his prosperity. (Incidentally Swami spoke about the unique efficacy of the Gayatri mantra.)

Compassion (Daya): Daya is not mere display of kindness or sympathy to someone in distress. It calls for complete identification with the suffering experienced by another and relieving that suffering as a means of relieving the agony experienced by himself. (By way of illustration, Swami related the story of a calf which was caught up in a slushy pond while trying to reach a small pool of water. A crowd of urchins were watching with glee the plight of the calf which was unable to move forward because of the slush. An ascetic who was passing by saw the plight of the calf and taking it out of the mud, carried it on his back to the pool of water. The urchins asked him why he had done this, while they were watching; to see how the calf was going to get near the water. The sanyasi told them that the sight of the struggling calf had caused him great anguish and to relieve himself of his agony, he had gone to the relief of the calf.) When any service or help is rendered to anyone, this is the spirit in which it should be done. You must feel you are helping yourself when you are helping another.

Faith in God (Aasthikyam): Faith in God implies recognition of the omnipresence of the Divine in the universe and seeking to experience that divinity within one's self. The Divine is One, though it may be called by many names. It must be realised that God is all-pervasive and nothing exists without the power of the Divine. One should not allow one's faith in God to be affected by the, ups and downs of life. All troubles should be treated as tests and challenges to be faced with courage and faith. They should learn from the example of Ranthi Deva, who retained his faith in God and exhibited his compassion for the suffering despite the extreme privation to which he was reduced by the vicissitudes of life. To feed a hungry man, he and his family gave up the meager food they had gathered and denied themselves even water, to relieve the thirst of a man crying for water. The Divine had subjected him to these ordeals and later blessed him with grace.

Prahlada was unaffected by all the torture's to which he was subjected because he saw in everybody and in everything the form of Vishnu. He exemplifies the strength derived from the love of God to the exclusion of everything. Worldly love is blind and fickle. Divine love is all-embracing and defies description. When the heart is freed of all impurities, it can experience the Divine. It will revel in the bliss of that experience and will not seek any other trivial pleasure. When one is immersed in the nectar of divine love, he experiences ineffable bliss. Such a person has direct experience of the Divine (Saakshatkaaram).

*When truth, justice, compassion and peace flee from man, the world degenerates into a snake-pit. God then comes down as an Avatar to rescue mankind from its doom. He comes to reveal to man his Reality, to restore to him his birthright of Atmic bliss. He does not come to found a new creed or religion, to breed a new faction or install a new God.*

—Baba

*You have to keep yourself busy in order to utilize time and skill to the best advantage. That is your duty and duty is God. The dull and the lazy will refrain from activity for fear of exhaustion or failure or loss. The emotional and passionate persons will plunge headlong and*



*crave for quick results and will be disappointed if success does not come their way. The balanced persons engage themselves in work because it is their duty. They will not be affected either by success or failure.*

—Baba

*YUGADI SANDESH:*

### "Strive for World Peace and Prosperity”

*Many significant changes for the better may be expected in the new year Akshaya, although the first two months may be fraught with troubles, observed Bhagavan Baba, in the course of His Yugadi Day message on April 10th to a large gathering assembled in the Mandir at Prasanthi Nilayam and on the grounds outside.*

Bhagavan called upon everyone to cultivate the spirit of Akshaya which signifies the union of the Eternal and the changing and to strive, with faith in God, for promoting the peace and welfare of the whole world. He declared that the peace and prosperity of the individual is intimately bound up with the peace and welfare of the world.

Prior to Bhagavan's discourse, Sri Bairagi Sastry spoke on the astrological indications relating to the prospects for the New Year Akshaya.

Prof. Kasturi spoke on the supreme good fortune of all those who could participate in the celebration of Yugadi in the presence of Bhagavan and get the benefit of His divine message and His benediction on the auspicious occasion.

#### **Bhagavan's Discourse**

Bhagavan began His discourse with a poem which dwelt on the omnipresence of God in the Cosmos and the permeation of everything in creation by the Divine.

Bhagavan observed that the dualistic attitude of man was born out of a sense of separateness, which was not correct. Man should realise his inherent divinity and get rid of identification of his real Self with the body. The body is only an instrument for realising the Self. No great scholarship is needed for achieving this realisation. The attitude of surrender to the Divine and dedicating all thoughts, words and actions as an offering to the Divine will lead to Self-realisation. The bliss one will experience in that state is beyond description in words.

Bhagavan spoke at length on the phenomenon of Time and the significance of the names of months in the Roman calendar and the Hindu almanac.

#### **Practice—not precept**

Turning to the prospects for the New Year Akshaya, Bhagavan said:

Today marks the beginning of the year "Akshaya" (according to the Hindu Almanac). "Akshaya" is a combination of "Kshaya" and "A". "A" represents the Atmaswarupa—the Absolute, the Eternal. "Kshaya" represents the Jivaswarupa—the individual entity that is liable to change. "Akshaya" indicates the union of the unchanging Eternal Spirit and the impermanent individual entity. Because of the association of the human entity with the indestructible and eternal principle, you have to investigate what is permanent and unchanging and what is transient and liable to decay.

The march of time is inevitably associated with ups and downs, joys and sorrows, gains and losses. This is inherent in the nature of the world, which is called "Jagat"—That in which birth and death take place. ("Ja" means birth and "ga" means passing.)

According to Indian astrology, today marks the beginning of a new year, with the first day of the first month Chaitra. It is a Thursday. For every year, there is a ruling deity and there is a minister to the ruler from among the nine planets. For this Akshaya, the ruler is Brihaspati (Jupiter) and the minister is Chandra (the Moon). Both these planets are favourably placed and will have beneficent influences on the world, according to astrology. Because of the moon's favourable aspect—the moon being the presiding deity for the mind the mental dispositions of people in general are likely to be calm and peaceful. It is essential, in this connection, to recognise the intimate link between thoughts and actions. All the world's troubles today are due to the fact that there is no harmony between men's thoughts and words and their deeds. There is no dearth today of persons who preach dharma (righteousness). There is no limit to propagandists, but those who practise what they preach are few and far between. The world needs today more people who will practise the good life and strive for the welfare of mankind. Rather than preach a hundred precepts, it is better to practise a few of them.

### **Significance of rituals**

In many of the religious practices today, there is concern only for observing the external forms, with little regard for the inner significance of these rites. For instance, one wishes to offer a coconut to the idol in a temple. No care is taken to see whether the coconut is a good one or not. The mere breaking of a coconut, even if it is a rotten one, is considered enough for fulfilling the offering. Note the inner significance of the ritual. The coconut is a symbol of the heart. Before it is offered to God, all the outer fibre has to be removed. This means, spiritually, removing the Tamasic (evil) tendencies from our heart. The shell of the coconut symbolises the Rajoguna in us. The white kernel inside the coconut represents the Satwa guna. What we have to offer to God is a pure heart, without the Tamasic and Rajasic qualities such as anger, hatred and attachment. It is this purity of heart that must be manifested in making any offering to God and not the mechanical breaking of a coconut as a meaningless ritual.

Some persons imagine that they will derive spiritual benefit merely by going to a sacred shrine and spending sometime there. When you are in a temple, your thoughts should be centred on God. When you are inside a temple, you must install God within you. That is true worship. If you merely sit in a temple, while your mind is wandering in the bazaar, there is no merit in it.

There are persons who recite mantras regularly, repeating the words correctly. But such recitation is of no use if there is not some understanding of the meaning of the mantras. Meaningless chanting of mantras, visiting temples without thoughts of God and breaking coconuts before idols without purity of the heart are spiritually useless. In every small act of worship, one must have regard for its inner significance and sacredness and do it with earnestness and purity.

Whatever troubles you may face, whatever ordeals you may encounter, you should not allow your faith in God to weaken to the slightest extent. You must learn a lesson from the Chakora bird. There may be terrible thunder and blinding lightning in the sky. But the Chakora bird will follow the cloud to catch the raindrops in the sky and will not go to any other source for water. Nothing less than the pure raindrops from the cloud will satisfy the Chakora. Likewise, you should yearn always for the bliss of nearness to God, whatever difficulties or joys you may experience in life.

### **The individual and the world**

Moreover, in the quest for mental peace, you should not be concerned only about your individual need. Apart from such a quest being an index of intense selfishness, it is also a futile one. Is it possible for a single individual alone to achieve peace? If there is chaos and unrest all around you, how can you alone have peace? If there is no peace in the home or in the community, how can you have peace? Your peace is dependent on peace in the family, in society and in the world. When there is peace in these, you will get peace.

You cannot be indifferent to the state of the environment in which you live. One who wishes to dig a well for pure water will choose a spot far from polluted or saline areas. If you want to achieve peace, you have to see that the atmosphere around you is conducive to peace. This means that you have to cultivate the feeling that your individual peace is intimately related to the peace of the world. It was out of a realisation of this profound truth that the ancients prescribed the universal prayer: "Lokaas Samasthaas Sukhino Bhavantu" (May all the people in all the worlds be happy).

It is only when we strive for world peace can we ensure our own individual peace. The mark of a genuinely godly person is that he strives not only for his peace, happiness and bliss, but also for the peace, prosperity and happiness of the world as a whole.

### **Faith and love**

Faith and Love are the two primary requisites for leading a godly life. These two are as important for man as the two wings for a bird or the two wheels for a chariot.

You must take a pledge on this Yugadi day to face with equanimity all the vicissitudes of life, the joys and sorrows that are incidental to human existence. Traditionally, on Yugadi day people consume a preparation made up of ingredients with various tastes—sweet, sour, bitter, etc. The inner meaning of this practice is that one must be prepared for every kind of experience in life. Whether happiness or sorrow, praise or blame, gain or loss—whatever comes along—you must

resolve to face it with serenity and faith. Our ancients placed this ideal before the nation out of their experience and realisation. Today no heed is being given to their teachings. The traditions and teachings that have come down to us are full of significance and have perennial validity. It is only when we practise these truths that we will realise their inner purpose and enduring value.

### **Good prospects for akshaya**

The akshaya year will be altogether a fairly good year with no serious untoward developments. However, the first two months—from mid-April to mid-June—are likely to witness some serious troubles. The heat will be excessive and some fire disasters may occur in May-June (Vaisakha month). Serious accidents during travel are likely. From the third month onwards (that is, after mid-June) conditions will be favourable for peace and prosperity. Astrologically, important changes all over the world are expected during the year. But all these will be for the good. Not India alone, but all countries will benefit from these changes.

In this contest, it is the foremost duty of everyone to pray for the peace, welfare and happiness of all people in every country. Everyone should take note that during this year, however soft and careful one may be in speech or action, there is likelihood of differences and divisions developing between persons and groups. Even friends are likely to fall out. Every care has to be taken to observe restraint in speech.

Compared to the past two years—Rakthaakshi and Krodhana—the new year Akshaya promises to be a good year. Some hangover from Krodhana may continue in Akshaya for a short spell. Hence in the first two months people have to conduct themselves with caution. After that, "Akshaya will be Akshaya." (The year Akshaya will see no deterioration or decline.)

Strengthen the "Akshaya" in you—the Imperishable Supreme—and there will be no need to worry about any year or month. Fill your mind and heart with the spirit of "Akshaya" and sanctify your lives by having pure thoughts and doing pure actions. This is my benediction for you all on this sacred Yugadi day.

Everyone must strive to promote the peace and welfare of the world. You must broaden your outlook, shedding the narrow concern about your own well-being, and developing the eagerness to promote the welfare of the world as a whole. You must recognise the basic truth 'that your individual well-being is bound up with the well-being of all people. On every available occasion recite the sacred name of the Lord. (Cheers).

Bhagavan concluded His inspiring discourse with the singing of "*Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahi*", with all the devotees joining in chorus.

***"The Only True Friend"***

*Who is a real friend? It is said that a friend is one who helps you when you are in need. What is real help? Is it to help you go to the cinema? There are two qualities that a friend should possess. He should be like the sandals that protect the feet and the eyelids that protect the eye. The eyelids are always guarding the eye. A true friend is one who always protects you from danger and keeps you safe from all evil. The kind of pal who tells you how to get away from the police is not a real friend. A real friend is one who sees to it that right from the beginning you don't get into any kind of trouble by entering into evil company and getting lured into committing wrong deeds. You cannot find such a friend in this world, no matter how much you seek. The worldly kind of friendship is mostly selfish where each person has primarily his or her own self-interest at heart. Only God is totally devoid of selfishness and self-interest. God can be called the selfless Self. In the various worldly relationships there may be love present but it is not real love because it is tinged with selfishness.*

—**Baba** (From a talk to students.)

## Teach Me to Love

I have not loved you enough, my lord.  
I have not loved you enough.  
Seems ages past when I was young and ardent,  
Asking of you nothing but the storm and surge of your divine love.  
It came cascading and torpedoed my mortal frame,  
Till it left me chastened, ecstatic and purified of all the dross.  
Your divine melody played its myriad tunes in the sanctum of my heart.  
Awed, humbled and mute my heart overflowed touching the soft petals of your  
lotus feet.  
I forgot the day, the night, the din and bustle of the world.  
I longed and yearned for more and more, my thirst was never quenched.  
My life was charmed and became blessed, for you were All in All.

When old and matronly ladies served your personals needs.  
I prayed to go old that  
I may anoint you with the holy water,  
Imagined how I could press with devotion those tender feet.  
Or, secretly longed to serve the food with loving care.  
Days have fled and I have grown old.  
I dreamed and dreamed, but where are they now?  
Gossamer webs, torn and shattered, leaving only the anguish behind.

I sit in the line anxiously vigilant  
Waiting breathless to behold your divine visage,  
Longing for the compassionate look, the kind word.  
Your regal tread bespeaks of a divine aloofness,  
And I gaze in wonder, struck dumb, unable to tell you I have grown old.

Each morning repeats itself, dissolving into the mellow twilight of numb despair.  
Somewhere within the smarting query,  
Will tomorrow be a better day?  
I gaze at the blessed ones that go confidently into your chamber.  
I wait and wait and the day has ended joyless without your darshan.

Tortured by resentment I analyse and judge your actions.  
My Ego pops out, sneers and mocks at my own little insignificance,  
My heart bleeds whipped by the stripes of my own inadequacies.  
Clouded I do not know whether I love you or myself more.  
The immaculate Young frisk and frolick around their shepherd.  
I ask myself now, why have I grown old?  
I played my part, ill or well on life's illusory stage,  
The epilogue remains, but what is it that I have to convey?  
Shall I say I loved you enough and could teach all to love?  
It's time to take stock and the sad truth, remains.  
That, unmindful of fleeting time, I frittered it away;  
In useless, cogitations, ever demanding, ever, asking.

Is it too late? for, I have grown old my lord.  
Now I stand before thee repentant and ashamed.  
I know, I have not loved you enough my God.  
I have not loved you enough.  
Pray, teach me to love, the love that surrenders and never demands.  
Teach me, my lord, the love that longs to enfold you in its protecting care,  
The love that will shield you from carping criticism and the world's calumny.  
The shrine of my heart is wide open my lord.  
Come, whenever you will.

—*An Old Devotee*

*You cannot destroy anger by anger, cruelty by cruelty, hatred by hatred. Anger can be subdued only by forbearance, cruelty can be overcome only by non-violence, hatred yields only to charity and compassion. There is nothing more effective than the weapon of love.*

—*Baba*

## "The Inner View"

I had the good fortune of being asked to do some small service work during a recent visit to Prasanthi Nilayam. Apparently, foreigners were found to be spending time at the tea stalls and gift shops outside the ashram gates activities which detract from the purpose of a pilgrimage to

Swami. The habit of spending time in this way must be a strong one because it prevailed despite repeated requests by the Public Relations Office to avoid unbalancing the local economy with foreign currency and, instead, to engage in ashram activities. The simple task that several foreigners and I were assigned was to stand at the ashram gates and remind foreign devotees to return from the bazaar as quickly as possible if they needed to go out to the bank, tailor, and so forth. Swami has provided shops on the ashram grounds, run by devotees for devotees, to meet most of our needs.

Needless to say, this simple seva was also a delicate one. Some devotees responded to the reminder graciously with a smile, some were annoyed, but within a few days the flow of foreigners into the bazaar greatly diminished. It is a privilege to follow the Lord's bidding in His immediate presence, and as the number of people we spoke to decreased, time became available for pondering over the meaning of the experience.

The most significant lesson became clear to me only after leaving the ashram. The seva metaphor for a central aspect of Swami's teaching—restraining the outgoing mind. We can conceive of the gates to the ashram as the senses. The mind is the devotee who has the choice to run after the senses in the bazaar or repose in the Lord in the ashram. The ashram is like the body with the Lord living in its centre. Swami often says, "my home is in your heart." By doing sadhana, the "inward path ", we can find Swami in the heart.

To carry the metaphor further, the job assigned to me and the others was to act as the Buddhi, the intelligence, which has the function of discriminating between the real, lasting, treasure of the Lord and the unreal, temporary, distractions of the external world. By reminding the devotees not to wander in the bazaar, Swami made us cultivate Viveka or discrimination. What is the treasure we have come such a long way to find? Is it outside the body? Outside the ashram? Is it inside? Should we continue running after the senses in this holy place?

The hidden message in the seva work—turning the mind inward—was especially poignant for me at another level. I have had the good fortune of visiting Swami a number of times over the past nine years but have never had the coveted interview. This yearning multiplies in myself, as in most all devotees, when we see His beautiful form glide by during darshan. Swami has said, "learn to yearn," and also, "I take you from the physical relationship to the mental relationship, to the causal relationship." These words have often comforted me, but I have been unwilling to take the step in a committed way to seek the Lord within. His physical form is also Maya, an object of the senses; in one of its most entrancing nuances. Would I find Him in the heart if I put more effort in that direction? Would I not be giving up the thrill of physical darshan for...for what?

Thoughts like these developed steadily in my mind, as I was reminding foreign devotees to spend their precious time inside the ashram. I noticed my letters to Swami were asking for the "inner view" rather than the "interview". I did not need any gesture verbal remark from Swami validating the correctness of this new path... His Grace came quickly, through glimpses of the other side of Maya and inner peace. By God's Grace, the yearning for Swami will only intensify, but by this simple seva work I learned, finally, where to find Him always.

### **With Bhagavan in "Trayee Brindavan"**

Bhagavan's stay at "Trayee Brindavan" during March-April was an unforgettable experience for the students in the Brindavan campus as well as devotees in the ashram who had the benefit of attending the bhajans and listening to Bhagavan's unscheduled discourses in the evenings.

Bhagavan made use of every conceivable occasion to bring home to the students their duties towards their parents, their obligations to society, and, above all, their primary purpose as students of the Sathya Sai Institute to uphold at all times Sai ideals and principles. The students lined up before "Trayee Brindavan" every morning for Swami's darshan before going to college for their examinations and every evening for bhajans. Bhagavan had words of advice or admonition for each one of them.

In the evenings, the students assembled round Bhagavan in the crescent verandah of "Trayee Brindavan" for bhajans, which were preceded by requests for a discourse from Bhagavan.

On some evenings, Swami invited older devotees or past students to speak on their experiences and what the Sai message meant for them. These talks revealed to the new students the innumerable "miracles" of Bhagavan over the past many decades and brought home to them, His divine mission aimed at transforming humanity through the principles of Truth, Righteousness, Peace and Love. As the speakers were drawn from different walks of life—educationists, bankers, journalists, doctors, etc.—the impact of the speeches was profound.

There were quite a few evenings when these speeches were followed by Bhagavan's own discourses, which were as scintillating as they were inspiring. Episodes from the Bhagavatam, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana figured as illustrations in the nectarine discourses, punctuated often with poems and songs sung with delectable sweetness.

To awaken the students' interest in spiritual subjects, Swami would invite the students to ask questions. And the question, whether it related to concentration and meditation or to Bhakti or Prema, would be the starting point for an illuminating discourse covering a wide range of related themes.

One evening, the discourse was about the supremacy of Bhakti Marga—the Path of Devotion. On another evening, it was all about the basic requisites of spiritual discipline. On yet another evening, Swami gave a marvellous exposition of the way the Divine operates in coming to the rescue of devotees in distress, illustrating it by the ways in which Sri Krishna came to the help of the Pandavas.

—“N”



## **Exploring the Mystery**

"Is this, think you, the Christ?" These words have been in my mind in recent months more and more as I have read and thought about Sai Baba. It is difficult for one who has for years been steeped in orthodox Christian theology to throw off the idea of the Creed which says 'the Only Begotten Son of God' and to accept the claim of Sai Baba that he is 'The Father' who sent Jesus into the world, that he is the incarnation of The Christ Spirit, that he has incarnated before and will do so again. It means a complete re-think of one's cosmology and a rejection of beliefs that have been the guiding principles of one's life and thought for many years. It means an internal revolution; and that can be agonising. I have been greatly helped to make this re-adjustment, or at least to make another step along this path by attending a 'Retreat' organised by John Morris and others over the Easter Weekend in March this year at a conference centre near Malvern in Worcestershire. Let me tell you about it.

Invitations had been sent to Sathya Sai Study Groups across the country to a Retreat at Runnings Park. Apparently the organising was done in a few weeks and presented no serious problems, as if all possible difficulties had been smoothed away. A series of phone calls to contacts in the Sai Groups around London quickly evoked a response and the available spaces were so quickly taken up that there was a reserve list of people wanting to take up places left vacant by last minute cancellations. The cost was quite modest so my wife and I accepted places and two other members of our Group also decided to come so we felt we could perhaps take with us something of the close relationship of our Group and bring back some experiences to share with the other members who could not go.

As I looked around the dining room at the first meal I thought to myself, "what an unprepossessing collection of mortals." And yet when we gathered for the last session two days later every face was that of a dear friend with whom I had shared the secrets of my inner struggles. We found we had faced similar traumas in life and had bonds of experiences that were more than co-incidental. Had we been brought together for a special purpose to explore the hidden caverns of our minds and find light by this fellowship? It was an extraordinary experience and I saw a number of tears shed (including mine) as we discovered deeper truths than we had met before. One elderly spinster lady, in her own simple way summed up her experience by saying, "Before I came here I felt that no one really loved me except my brother. Now I have experienced real spiritual love." Others were equally enthusiastic in recording their appreciation of their expanded consciousness during this weekend.

So what did we do? Firstly may I say that there were no set lectures. I had brought a clipboard and plenty of A4 paper to take copious notes but they languished un-used. There were no famous names to give talks and impress us with their erudition. We all, in turn, contributed our own inspiration to the pool of thinking and achieved a remarkable degree of coherence; it was almost as if it had been highly organised. The poetry, readings, recounting of experiences, flashes of inspiration constituted a whole with a remarkable degree of unity in the diversity.

In the first session we had a special message from Baba received in meditation by Lucas Ralli exhorting us to strip off the outer bark that conceals the inner soul, the inner Divine element where God is, and release the Light to shine out into the world. In the second session we were asked to think of Sai Baba's discourse on Service at the recent World Conference on the occasion of his 60th birthday. It was entitled 'Practise what you Preach' and contained many striking ideas about the methods and motives of service (seva). We broke up into small groups to discuss this in our own personal situations and then to report back in a plenary session on the thoughts of our groups. On another occasion the theme centred around Baba's teachings on The Ceiling on Desires and in our group discussions we addressed ourselves to the personal and practical ways of putting that into effect. We got to know one another with a remarkable degree of intimacy in a very short space of time as a result of these discussions. At one of these group discussions I made a list of the backgrounds of the people I was with and it was astonishing; one was an ex-nun, another was a Russian Orthodox lady, a musician, a translator, there was a geriatric nurse, an acupuncturist, a Liberal Jew, the list could be continued to show the remarkable diversity of backgrounds of my new Sai friends.

We started every morning at 7 am with bhajans for half an hour and then went into a period of meditation. We found Jean Ralli's 'Guided Meditation' recording particularly helpful. On another occasion we listened to the beautiful tape of 'The 108 Names of God' before meditation. These periods of silence were deeply refreshing and, probably because we were such a close-knit group, the spiritual strength we generated affected us all. In the afternoons video-tapes of Baba were shown and were thoroughly enjoyed. The bookstall was well patronised and we all took away further food for thought.

All in all it was a wonderful weekend and an experience never to be forgotten. For each of us it was another milestone in the journey of life, another chance to explore our understanding of the great mystery of God in all manifestations. Our thanks to our hosts and organisers were heartfelt and often repeated. I am sure that their joys were as real and rewarding as ours.

—Peter Morgan, (From the Sathya Sai Newsletter, U.K.)

*Wealth, when it comes, has to be treated as something given on trust and must be used for the amelioration of the needy and welfare of society and not for personal aggrandisement. When people use it for pompous display, they become ludicrous specimens of society. How can wealth shine except against the background of virtue and humility? Wealth comes and goes. But man must remain unmoved. He must not swerve from the path that he has chosen towards the ultimate goal.*

—Baba

*Tamaso maa jyotirgamaya is the prayer. Egoism is tamas; Sharanagati is jyoti. There is an easy way to illumine the inner consciousness and the outer behaviour, with the light of God. Put the lamp of the name of the Lord, the illumining flame, on the tongue! That is the doorstep; that light will drive out the darkness from both inside and outside. Have it ever burning, clear and bright.*

*You will soon reach remarkable heights and enjoy happiness, the like of which you cannot get by sticking to the senses.*

—Baba

## **Blossoming Together**

I didn't really believe in miracles, in fact, in 1973, I had just begun to believe in God! Sathya Sai Baba then started to open his treasure chest before me, and showered miracle after miracle to astound me. Despite the stories my friends related to me, I continued doubting the glory of Sai Baba.

During my visits to Prasanthi Nilayam, I would spend much of my time praying for interviews and receiving them. Yet, I remained unfulfilled. My eyes looked on; they did not see, what would it take, for me to know God?

But, I persevered, for had I not passed through atheistic belief to the understanding that God does exist? I knew that if I continued to seek, the answer would reach me some day and, when it did, doubts would disappear.

At last, the answer reached me. It was during my visit to Prasanthi Nilayam in the summer of 1983, the first time that I received no interview.

I was distraught. "What had I done to deserve this?" I cried. So Baba worked his great miracle. In my despair, I had to delve inside me, toward my true being. I went over the events of my five-week-long stay. Finally, my eyes saw. I was no longer blind.

The Lord, I realised, had given Himself to all of us—teachers from all parts of the globe gathered to learn His educational programme, day after day, showering His Love and Light, seeking nothing in return. I recognised for the first time the perfection of God in human form. How blessed I was that He conferred this Grace on me.

I understood clearly what my soul had prayed for, in poetic form, ten long years previously.

I'm not impressed by deeds like these:  
A wave of the hand, a cure for the ill.  
Tell me instead in your simplest words  
Of Love, of Peace, of Serenity.  
When these miracles You offer me  
I am Yours, I am Yours, I am Yours.

The tears I now shed flowed from gratitude and love. I longed to know how I could serve, in what way I could share in God's work and earn peace, serenity and Love. I found that Educating

in Human Values is the very heart of the Lord's teaching. I knew that EHV will soon become part of the school system of every country. I found myself blessed to play a small part in this Divinely guided Revolution.

Since then, my time is spent with EHV, planning, writing, speaking, teaching and training. When my friends ask, "Aren't you tired of teaching? Don't you want to retire?", I enthusiastically reply, "Of course not! Look at the wonderful chance I have, not only to teach values to children but to learn Values from them as well". Together, we are blossoming into excellence.

—B. Flaig, New York

### **"Live Carefree and Happy"**

The ancient scriptures say that God only is and that all else is illusion superimposed on the reality of God. The power which projects the many people and the universe and invests them with independent empirical reality, whereas in truth God is their reality, is called Ignorance, or Maya. It owes its continued existence to lack of inquiry. This Ignorance comes into existence as Mind, and within the mind illusions are born and dance about as the world and its contents. Baba tells us, "All the names and forms that fill up this universe and constitute its nature are but creations of the mind. Therefore the mind has to be calmed in order to see the truth. The ever-flickering waves of the lake have to be stilled so that you can see the bottom clearly."

It is said that this Ignorance, or Maya, is inscrutable because it cannot be explained, yet it exists. The scriptures then go on to say that the wise know that Ignorance is not inscrutable because in fact it does not exist at all and that upon inquiry as to the truth of oneself, Ignorance will disappear, that in fact there is God only, and that for this reason man should live carefree and happy regardless of all else.

The scriptures are in writing. The men who said them are long dead. Who can know what errors may have arisen from word to ear and from thought to the written word. For this reason, for lack of deep faith in the truth of the scriptures, men read and hear them but do not put them into practice. But now we must awaken from long habit and realize that Baba, the Lord incarnate, who is living today, says from his own reality, "It is my experience that I am in every heart." He tells us the eternal truth of man, nature and God directly and not from hearsay or books. We can go to where he is and with our own faculty of hearing listen to him declare from his own universality that God only exists, that all else is appearance and that we can know this for ourselves and that we can, starting from this instant, live carefree and happy. Moreover, out of his love for us, Baba is spending every moment in loving service to us and in teaching the truth so that we may be free of ignorance and be happy. Grant us the good sense to have at least provisional faith in what the living Avatar, the living embodiment of divine wisdom, is saying to us.

Acknowledging that many wise people may indeed be doing exactly as Baba says, yet why is even the least of us not at once living carefree and happy when we hear the truth from Baba? Baba tells us that our present lack of happiness and of a heart overflowing with divine love is due to the confusion which accompanies desire.

Through habit, perhaps age-long habit, we look upon the objects, situations and experiences of the world as being real in themselves. The mind will always attend to that which it takes to be real. Happiness and misery are experiences which the mind takes to be very real, and these experiences arise from contact with the world. Desire for more is aroused by the experience of happiness, and desire to avoid misery is aroused by the experience of misery. Sri Sathya Sai points out to us that neither the happiness nor the misery which follow in the wake of desire are lasting, and thereby neither are real. When asked, then, how to kill desire, his response is that it is not possible, that desire is an expression of the universal energy by which we move and have our being, but that the confusion which now accompanies desire can be eliminated by turning every desire away from worldly objects and directing it to God. Desire to have God Himself from whom all blessings and all prosperity flows. Why scramble in the dust for coins when we can have the Treasury itself?

Baba teaches us that as soon as a desire arises, turn it to God, then confusion will end and we can live carefree and happy. When desire is allowed to turn away from God and to fasten itself upon objects, ideas, conditions or experiences, it becomes attached and reluctant to let go. To illustrate this unhappy attachment, we are referred to the way monkeys are captured. Food is placed in a container which has a narrow neck, barely large enough to pass the open palm of the monkey. The monkey closes its paw around the food at the bottom of the vessel, but the narrow neck of the vessel will not allow the monkey to pull out its closed fist which is grasping the food. Thereby, the monkey is caught by its attachment to the object of its desire. Was the monkey to abandon its attachment to the food, its fist would open and it would regain its freedom. In our human way, we are suffering the same fate. Whenever there are unhappy or anxious moments, if we can separate ourselves from our feelings long enough to take a close look at the situation, we will see that invariably some attachment is involved. Once identified, the attachment can be abandoned by the power of our intelligence and our will, and that particular source of discontent will no longer trail after us.

Now, live carefree and happy! That is the divine advice. Baba assures us that without doubt it is possible to live in the world, fulfilling all our duties and at the same time remain happy and unaffected by events. The following illustration is given: suppose there is an actress, taking the role of a poor person, who is in fact a wealthy lady with a happy family and vast estates. She plays her role and suffers with such deep feeling that members of the audience find themselves in tears. Despite her wonderful art in portraying suffering and misery, has she ever even for a moment truly forgotten that she is a wealthy, happy person? She plays her role to the full, but always knows deep in her mind that she is wealthy and happy and that when the play is over, she will remove her costume and make-up and will rejoin her family. Baba again and again likens us to actors in a play. He says that the individual self is the role; the reality is God.

If we are unhappy now, if we believe our role and forget that we are the majesty of Divinity, it is of our own choosing; no outside power is forcing us to be inwardly unhappy. Try it now; at this moment be happy and carefree. Happiness will be felt, even if briefly. But that moment of happiness is the proof of itself. Baba says that happiness is one of the essential factors of enlightenment. Take happiness as a spiritual practice. Feel happy and continue to feel happy regardless of conditions and events. Happiness, joy, they are other words for love. Be happy, be joyful, be loving at all times; that is the way to God, declares Baba.

—J. S. Hislop

*FROM THE VIDYAGIRI CAMPUS:*

### **"Love, Light and Delight"**

"Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed", so said Jesus to His apostles. Today, after the advent of so many world teachers and Avatars we find people, who have seen but refuse to believe. Caught in the maze of their own doubt and delusion, these people with rational temperament demand proof of everything, even God's existence. Unless endorsed by tangible evidence, they won't accept anything as real and true. It must have been easier for the previous Avatars of the Lord to convince people of their Divinity, because the hearts of men were pure then, and faith in the Glory of God could easily grow there. Today, the seeds of devotion and faith often get withered away because they are not fed with the waters of simple and innocent Love for the Lord.

Even those who come to Bhagavan Baba usually cherish secret desires to see Him perform some miracles before them. A ring, a watch, an amulet or rosary, these are the gifts that He materialises by a wave of His Hand, and for many, it is these that prove that He is Divine. People crave more for His creations than the Creator Himself. The Lord, in all His compassion, performs miracles galore so as to instill faith in the hearts of His children. The greatest of seers, the holiest of Rishis all fail to describe his Leela and Mahima for it is like a boundless ocean. Although we see Him everyday at Prasanthi Nilayam, giving Darshan and granting interviews, He is seen, felt and experienced by His devotees thousands of miles away in the distant Himalayan regions, in the arid deserts, in every nook and corner of the world. The following narratives are only a few drops from this endless Mahima-Sagara.

The train screeched and sped towards its destination, Madras, from where we would have to travel roughly another fourteen hours to reach Puttaparthi. I sat more close to the narrator, a simple looking man from Bamesbeg Tea Estate in Darjeeling and almost envied the look of contentment and faith that exuded from him. His second son suffered from dehydration and swollen eyes only nine months after his birth in 1968. Though his right eye could be cured through medical care, the left eye became worse after a course of treatment by a village doctor. His eye remained afflicted and protruded from its sockets till his fourteenth year. One night, he

wept bitterly and as he slept, he dreamt that he was driving a yellow car. On the way, he caught a black rabbit with a halo around it who spoke to him 'SAI BABA'. The same night, he dreamt again that he was visiting a hospital where a doctor in a black attire received him. He woke up to find that it was 5 A.M. and to his amazement, he discovered that the pain with which he had lived for the past years had completely vanished. The swelling too had subsided. Two weeks following that, he dreamt again that he was kneeling before 'the' doctor, who pierced his temples with sharp rods. Needless to say that the doctor had cured his disease which had nagged him for fourteen years.

## II

"Today Swami came to me and massaged my back". The words were uttered by an octogenarian, who smiled at me vivaciously. In normal circumstances this would not have aroused any sense of curiosity for Swami usually does that to His devotees during Darshan. But this was unique since Bhagavan was away in Madras. My persistent enquiry bore fruit and she told me her experience. She had been suffering from excruciating backache. That day, she was being massaged by a lady. Lying down helplessly, she called Bhagavan's Name, praying that He should come to her succour. There were two photographs of Swami in the room, one placed against the wall on the floor and the other hanging on the wall. All of a sudden, Bhagavan emerged from the photograph placed on the floor and stood in front of her. He reached out with His Hands and gently massaged her back. She felt that His Hands were cool and comforting. The next instant, the pain had vanished and she could get up all on her own and walk back to her room. For me, the information was astounding and breathtaking, but for her, it was nothing unusual for Swami was always by her side.

## III

I kept my container among the others in the altar where the father of the home was showing us the signs and wonders of His Grace. Inserted inside my container was a small image of Lord Buddha. The atmosphere was fragrant with the smell of Vibhuti and the aroma of burning joss sticks. Every photograph of gods and goddesses and every icon in the altar were overflowing with streams of ambrosial nectar. An image of Buddha made of clay was washed away to half of its size by the flow of the nectar. Every vessel in the house was filled with Amrita and the photographs were partially covered with Vibhuti, kumkum and chandan. I picked up my container after a few minutes to find two-thirds of it filled with the Divine nectar. The house father told me that every day the ambrosia tastes different with different flavours. This phenomenon was to last for another fortnight. I left the house with my heart warm with reverence, awe and delight.

## IV

As I looked around myself, sitting amidst a sea of humanity, all eagerly waiting and pining for a glimpse of that figure clad in red, I was transfixed and mesmerised by the grandeur and beauty of the sight that greeted me. Far in the horizon the evening twilight announced the closing of yet another glorious day. Clouds of different colours and shades adorned the sky with various patterns and on the grounds of the stadium sat the vast multitude of men, women and children in

silent prayer who had assembled to offer their gratitude and Love on His Divine Birthday. Towering above the stadium stood a splendid castle of light, so splendid and celestial.

It was only about a decade back I had come to Parthi and had trudged my way up to Tulsivanam. I could not have thought by any stretch of imagination that such an untamed land full of thorns, shrubs and anthills would one day become the site of such a historic occurrence. Such is the power of His Sankalpa. In the inner recesses of my mind, I registered this event as a Great Divine Miracle, full of Love, Light and Delight.

The expectations of the devotees reached its zenith as the Lord, with His charming smile, appeared on the stage of the Santhi Vedika, looking as fresh as the morning dew, in spite of all the hard work that he had done from dawn to dusk. It suddenly occurred to me that could there be a greater miracle than the Lord Himself? He looks so human and yet He is so Divine. Though He dons his earthly vesture, He lives such a perfect and harmonised life as to teach perfect living through His own personal example. For ages, man had craved that God should come down upon this earth to redeem mankind. And here we have the very Living God, walking and talking as an ordinary human being. There can never be a greater miracle than this for all times to come. For those, who want to believe in the Lord only by the evidences of His Miracles, let us look at the pinnacle of His Miracles, His Own Avatarhood and when we look into those serene eyes full of Love and Compassion, we will know that we are in the presence of GOD.

—Sunam Gyamtso, Prasanthi Nilayam

TRAYEE BRINDAVAN ANNIVERSARY:

### Message of the Vedas

*The essence of all the Vedas and Shastras  
Can be summed up in one sentence:  
The Atma that resides in all beings  
And in you is one only  
Seeking liberation, man adores  
Crores of deities in the three worlds.  
Of what avail is it? The bondage remains.  
If he can shed the ego in him,  
He needs no liberation. Liberation is his.*

The Vedas, which are limitless and which were revealed as illuminations of the Eternal Truth to the Rishis, were codified and presented in three collections of hymns by the sage Vyasa for the benefit of humanity. They are: Rig, Yajur and Sama Veda. The Vedas—together with the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas and the Upanishads—provide the guidelines for the proper conduct of the four Ashrams (stages) in life—Brahmacharya, Grihasta, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa. In



addition, they serve also as essential guides in the pursuit of the four Purusharthas—the basic goals of human life—Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha (Righteousness, material well-being, desire realisation and Liberation).

Bharatiya culture and tradition is based on the authority and message of the Veda. Veda means that which demonstrates the Divine principle. The Veda permeates the universe. It is the embodiment of Truth. It flows in eight streams: Shabdabrahmamayee (manifesting as all pervading Cosmic sound); Characharamayee (pervading all moving and unmoving objects); Jyotirmayee (all-pervading effulgence); Vangmayee (sacred speech); Nityanandamayee (eternal-bliss); Paratparamayee (embodiment of the Omniwill); Mayamayee (manifestation as Maya); Srimayee (the embodiment of all prosperity).

### **The Purusharthas**

In all these different ways, the Vedas have served to promote the well-being of mankind. The Vedas, however, have been regarded as the lower knowledge—Apara Vidya—as distinguished from Para Vidya, Knowledge of the Absolute. Vedic ritualism was regarded as helpful for dealing with worldly concerns, but not of much use with regard to the understanding of the transcendental. The Vedas were useful for achieving mundane and heavenly pleasures and overcoming pain and giving encouragement and support in the pursuit of such objectives. Their main concern was with the first three Purusharthas—Dharma, Artha and Kama. Moksha (spiritual liberation) could be attained only through Jnana (as distinct from rituals and yajnas performed with Vedic mantras). The higher wisdom can be won, not through rituals, wealth or progeny, but only through sacrifice or renunciation. All the disciplines or practices (sadhana) practised now relate to worldly interests, motivated by selfish desires. The spiritual goal transcends these worldly objects. It is beyond reason and the bounds set by the sacred texts. It is the concept of Moksha. "Mohakshayam = Moksham"—the elimination of Moha (delusion) is Moksha. The concept of Moksha is related to the concept of Parama Prema—Love for the Supreme.

In the process of realising this state of Supreme Love, several opponents have to be overcome. Foremost among these are the six "enemies"—Kama (passion), Krodha (hatred), Lobha (greed), Moha (delusion), Mada (pride), Matsaryam (envy). If one manages to overcome these six enemies, he is confronted with eight forms of pride, which stand in the way of his spiritual progress. Among these are pride of wealth, or physical strength, youth, beauty, scholarship, power or penance. These different forms of pride lead man away from his real goal. Modern man is filled with one or other of these forms of pride.

### **Get Rid of Pride**

So, the first requisite for man is the shedding of pride. A man without riches poses as a millionaire. One without learning poses as a scholar. And a miserable weakling struts about like King Kong (a champion wrestler). What is the basis for this pride? How long can it last? The wielder of power may lose it the next day. Puffed up with pride of wealth or position, men forget their inner divinity. They are relying on things which are essentially transient and impermanent.

A bird swaying on the branch of a tree has no fear because it relies for its safety not on the branch but on its wings. Man, on the contrary, has no confidence in his own inner Self. He is dependent on others. He is ready to abase himself for the sake of position or office. The basic reason for this lamentable predicament is the ill-conceived craving for undesirable things. Man's desires are limitless. Man is attached to things none of which will accompany him when he dies. He should realise that there is greater joy in giving, than in possession and accumulation. Renouncing is as essential as acquiring. If there is no exhalation of breath in the wake of inhalation, man will not be able to survive.

It is the attachment to property or position born out of the sense of possessiveness that is the cause of man's sorrow and unhappiness. Man must strive to get rid of this feeling of "I" and "mine" to experience enduring happiness. When everything appears to be going well, man forgets everything including himself. His ego gets inflated as a result of his achievements and acquisitions. He should realise that he is only a temporary beneficiary of what he possesses and has no permanent title to any of them. He should regard power or position as a moral assignment carrying the obligation to discharge the duties relating to it. It is only when all actions are done in this spirit of moral imperative that man can experience genuine happiness and satisfaction.

### **Birth and Gunas**

The Vedas have laid down the basic regulations for the proper conduct of man. But these regulations are honoured more in the breach than in the observance. The first duty is to enquire into one's divine substance. The Divine is omnipresent and all-pervasive. The cosmos is permeated by the five basic vital elements. In the air we breathe, the water we drink or on the ground we tread on, there are innumerable microbial organisms which are destroyed. In such a situation, absolute nonviolence is impracticable. What we should try to do is to avoid causing any harm to any living being consciously and deliberately. This is Ahimsa. To observe this non-violence you have to cultivate the feeling that the One Supreme dwells in all beings. With this conviction there will be no tendency to cause harm to anyone.

Born as human beings, many tend to forget their true human qualities. It is not birth or form that determines the nature of a person, but his qualities. The lotus, for instance, grows out of the slush, but finds its place on the head of the Lord in a temple. It has earned this honour because of its qualities. Likewise, we should develop our human qualities without regard to our birth or circumstance. The air we breathe or the water we drink knows no distinction of caste or community. The sky or fire has no such distinctions. Only the earth is marred by barriers and differences.

We may erect barriers around our little plot of land. But can these barriers be extended to the sky above? Or to the air around? Why, then, cherish such narrow ideas which restrict our spiritual horizons? All the wealth we have, our positions, knowledge and power are all transient and fleeting. Our life itself can end any moment. In this context it is utterly lamentable that we ruin our lives with likes and dislikes. The precious time that is given to us should not be wasted to the slightest extent.

## **Education and Character**

Youth to-day are leading undisciplined and meaningless lives. They are not adhering to any regulations and are lacking in reverence and gratitude. Even dogs have deep gratitude, but the young do not revere elders or evince gratitude towards their parents. Education is wasted on such a person. It may enable him to earn a living. But even street beggars without any education get money enough to live. Education is not necessary for mere livelihood. Even if you live for only three days, your life should be righteous and meaningful. Your conduct should be good and commendable. If a man does not behave righteously, his high position or rank has no meaning. If a man claims to be a great scholar but has few good qualities, what reputation can he have? Even an illiterate person, who has good qualities, can command respect. Degrees are turning the minds of persons towards wealth and office and not towards God. Character should be the primary purpose of education. An educated person should be respected for his conduct and qualities.

"Neeti" (Ethics) is of paramount importance for anyone who calls himself a human being. It comprehends many qualities. It implies regard for society, reverence for the human personality, love of one's country, care for one's physical well-being; love for one's kith and kin; and yearning for knowledge. These should be regarded as the five life-breaths for man. But these are hardly present today.

Love of one's country means being proud of the country's ancient culture and having the determination not to degrade it in any way. Love and gratitude to one's parents is the foremost duty of a student. For the mis-behaviour of students today, parents are largely to blame. They do not exercise sufficient control over children. People celebrate the birth of children. But the real celebration should be only when children have earned a good name and brought credit to their parents. Parents who do not bring up their children properly are unworthy of the role. Affection for children should not mean allowing them to go astray. Such parents are like Dhritarashtra, who allowed his children to have their way and ultimately faced wholesale disaster. The "Mahabharata" says: "The unwise wail over the lack of children. But what happened to the Kaurava king who had a hundred children? What good did they do to him? The sage Suka had no children. Did he experience any untoward fate? He was always in supreme bliss."

One's birth is the result of one's actions in previous lives. The divine gate-keepers of Lord Vishnu, Jaya and Vijaya, were born as demons on earth because of the curse of the sages Sanaka, Sanandana and others. They came under the curse because of the dominance of the Rajo and Tamo guna in them which induced them to show disregard to the great sages. Despite the high position they enjoyed in the Divine Presence, they had not absorbed the vital moral values—humility and duty. Hence, they were cursed by the sages and took birth as Rakshasas.

Hiranyakasipu was the greatest among the Rakshasas. But his son, Prahlada, was the greatest devotee of God. How did this happen? It was because of the divine message which Prahlada imbibed from sage Narada. A Rakshasa's son became the greatest devotee of Vishnu. Those who had been nearest to Vishnu, Jaya and Vijaya, were born as Rakshasas! Their moral qualities account for the difference. Likewise, if one born as a human displays demoniac qualities, he is not a man, but a demon. If one who is born among Rakshasas has divine virtues, he is divine in

nature and not a Rakshasa. Hence, whether one is good or bad should be judged by his qualities and not by his family affinities or form. Learn to lead a life of virtue for, without virtue, life has no meaning at all.

### **Lessons of the Vedas**

Man has to be guided by the directives of the Vedas. Of the three Vedas—Rig, Yajur and Sama—the Rig Veda contains the essence of all the three. Its principal teaching is humility and duty (Vinaya and Vidheyata). The Yajur Veda enjoins the quality of Dharana. This means that whatever difficulties you may encounter, whatever hardship you experience, you should fulfill your duty with fortitude and forbearance. Through both these means you can develop your human qualities to the highest extent. The essential teaching of the Sama Veda is "Vignata" (Propriety). This tells you how to conduct yourself with any person, how to behave towards elders and superiors, how to treat guests, how to approach God and what is the right behaviour in any situation. These three Vedas ("Trayee") provide the basic rules for right living: Devotion to duty (Vidheyata); Steadfastness (Dharana); and Propriety (Vignata). The Love principle integrates all three guidelines-laid down by the Vedas.

The sages compendiously described the Vedas as "Trayee". "Trayee" means three. Three is a significant number with sacred associations. The human qualities are three in number: Satwa, Rajas, and Tamas. Man's body is subject to ills from three sources: the head, the stomach and the feet. Three has a sacred significance in worship. In offering Bilva leaves to Lord Siva the devotees describe Siva as having three qualities, three weapons and three eyes. Time also has three aspects—past, present and future. The chaos in the world today is due to people ignoring the present and either brooding over the past which is beyond recall, or speculating about the future, which is unpredictable. What people should be concerned about are their obligations in the present. Their foremost duty is to try to discover their inherent divinity and transform their lives, recognising that the Divine pervades everything in Creation.

The present is the product of the past and the future is the result of the present. Both the past and the future are contained in the present. Hence live in the present with good thoughts and good actions. Rid your heart of all bad feelings and make it pure and holy.

You may be confronted with many problems. Do not allow them to occupy your mind all the time. Have a timetable for all your daily activities. Set apart half an hour or an hour in the evening for thinking once your problems. You will be able to find solutions for them, if you worry about them all the time you will be wasting your time and not solving them.

Once an opium addict came to me and expressed his immobility to get rid of the habit in spite of many efforts. Swami suggested to him to have a chalk of the size of the opium he used to take and each day write "Om" three times on a slate and take opium equal to the size of the chalk. As the chalk got reduced by writing, the quantity of opium consumed also got reduced from day to day and by the end of the month the chalk and the consumption of opium got reduced to nothing. It is by such regular practice that one has to overcome bad habits.

Students should develop their powers of discrimination, to know what is right and what is wrong, what should be done and what should be avoided. They study a variety of subjects like Physics, Chemistry, etc., but there is one knowledge by knowing which they can know every thing else. This is knowledge of the Spirit. Spiritual knowledge is like bathing in the ocean, which is equivalent in bathing in all the different sacred rivers. Faith in self and Faith in God is the secret of greatness. One who has no faith in himself cannot develop faith in God.

Sankaracharya once told a disciple who came to him and said: "Jagat Mithya" (the world is unreal) that "if the world is unreal, you try to find out the truth about yourself, you will know the truth about everything" Sankaracharya told him: "You are not unreal. You are Bliss. You, however, think you are this body and this fickle mind. They are mutable and changing. Seek the consciousness that is unchanging and eternal. If you identify yourself with the body, you will fail to know the Reality. Learn to discriminate between what is permanent and what is transient. Use your intellect (Buddhi) and not give way to the caprices of the mind."

You are now in "Trayee Brindavan". The three Vedas are in the Brindavan. Your heart is a Brindavan. It has three gunas (Satwa, Rajas, Tamas). To experience the Lord in the Brindavan of the heart is Bliss (Ananda). The three gunas have to be harmonised like the blades of a fan. When they revolve harmoniously, after you have turned on the switch of Discrimination and the current of sacred Love flows through the fan, you will experience the cool breeze of Bliss.

*Discipline is important in life. It trains you to put up with disappointments. The path of life has both ups and downs. Every rose has a thorn. Now, people want roses- without thorns. They expect life to be one saga of sensual pleasures, a picnic all the time. When this does not happen, they turn wild and start blaming others.*

—Baba

## **New Orientation to Bal Vikas Programme**

How to make the five Human Values—Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love and Non-violence—the basic principles in the lives of the children going through the Bal Vikas programme was the theme of three regional conference-cum-workshops held in March covering all the States in the country.

The conferences were organised by the All India Board of Bal Vikas Education in accordance with the decisions of the Fourth World Conference in November to give a new orientation to the Bal Vikas programme and make it more effective both for children and the gurus.

Participants in the conference-cum-workshops were drawn from Bal Vikas State Convenors and three experienced gurus from each state. The members of the All India Board moved from one centre to another to conduct the workshops.

The workshop for the northern states of Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh was held at Hrishikesh from Feb 28 to March 2. The workshop for the southern states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Karnataka and the eastern states of West Bengal, Orissa and Assam was held at Madras from March 21 to 23. The workshop for the States of Maharashtra, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat was held at Indore from March 28 to 30. In all 353 convenors and gurus participated in the workshops. The respective state presidents had made excellent arrangements for the conferences. The participants felt thoroughly at home.

In addition to formal lectures and demonstrations, there were group discussions in which problems relating to the actual implementation of the programme were considered and practical solutions were evolved. Besides the Board members, who were the main speakers, experienced faculty members from different states were invited to speak so that they could gain experience to organise State training workshops in their respective states. The participants had been asked to come prepared with innovative techniques in teaching and the use of visual or audio-visual aids. At all the workshops a variety of models, charts and games were displayed and there were demonstrations of the use of puppets in teaching human values.

As the Bal Vikas programme is an integrated nine-year programme a major aim of the regional conferences was to indicate improved methods of assessing and evaluating the impact of the programme on the children at every stage. Each guru has to observe the children in different life-situations and assess whether the children have formed the desired habits, whether there is a change in their behaviour pattern at home, in the school or in the community and to evolve new methods to ensure improvement. As the responsibility of the gurus is increased, the workshops discussed also methods of assessing and evaluating the performance of the gurus. The main speakers at the workshop were Mr. Nimish Panday, Dr. A. S. Sethi, Dr. Mavin Kurve, Prof. Lilamma and Smt. Indu Hebbalkar. At the Madras conference, the EHV convenors, Smt. Sarala Shah and Smt. K. Maniamma, were present and answered questions relating to the EHV programme.

As a consequence of the regional conferences, the Bal Vikas programme will acquire a new momentum and lead to the involvement of parents and the community as a whole in the realisation of the objectives of the movement—namely, to inculcate in the younger generation respect for the ethical values and commitment to a life of righteousness and love.

—G. G

## Sai Jagat Samachar

### Sai Mandir in Tanzania

**Mwanza (Tanzania):** Sai devotees in Mwanza have been running a centre here for ten years under the name Shree Sai Satsang Mandal. Besides regular bhajans, the Mandal has been observing all the festivals that are celebrated in Prasanthi Nilayam, including Bhagavan's birthday on November 23. The Mandal has constructed a Sai Mandir within the local Hindu temple. The entire community participated in the birthday celebration, which included "Sad Guru Puja", bhajans, distribution of gifts and prizes to children and a community dinner. People of all creeds participated in the programme.

### Sai Seva in Hong Kong

**Hong Kong:** On the Chinese New Year Day this year (February 10), the local Sai Centre, with the help of Chinese Sai devotees, set up a small altar for the old people in the Street Sleepers Shelter near Kai Tak international airport. Pictures of Chinese deities were installed on the altar. The old people lighted joss sticks and prostrated before the altar and then burnt paper money as an offering to their ancestors. After the prayers, hot "Chow Mein" was served, along with Vitasoy drinks, fruits, cakes and traditional red melon seeds. Small packets containing toothbrush, paste, comb, mirror and soap were also distributed to them. The elderly inmates were happy to celebrate their New Year in this way.

A group of dedicated ladies belonging to the Sai Mahila Vibhag have been rendering various kinds of service at the Home of Love run by the nuns of Mother Teresa's order of Missionaries of Charity for the aged. Their service includes washing the clothes for the 40 odd residents of the Home, making soup and sandwiches for the street sleepers at Yau Ma Tei, cooking and serving lunch to the residents when needed, feeding the disabled residents, helping to clean the Home and rendering any assistance sought by the nuns. The Mahilas arranged for a band of Bal Vikas Children to entertain a group of old people at a party given by the nuns. (From the Sri Sathya Sai Quarterly, Hong Kong, April 1986).

**Rajkot (Gujarat):** A free veterinary diagnostic and treatment camp was held on April 12 at the Ram Charit Manasa Mandir, Ratanpur, by the Rajkot Sai Samiti. A large number of doctors and paramedical personnel offered their services' at the camp, which was run by Seva Dal members. Over 1500 goats were given de-worming treatment. 25 surgical operations were done. The sarpanches of 15 villages cooperated in making the camp a success.

**Gorakhpur (Uttar Pradesh):** The local Sai Samiti, in cooperation with the Rotary Club here, organised a surgical camp for polio patients at the Sri Hanuman Prasad Poddar Cancer Hospital in the first week of March. a team of surgeons from Visakapatnam and Tirupati performed the operations. Out of 800 patients, 144 were operated on and Callipers were provided for them on May 4.

***Kurukshetra (Haryana):*** A district level eye camp was organised at Karnal in March. Two hundred patients from the surrounding villages, including those adopted by the Sai Samiti, were examined and 51 cataract cases were operated on. They were given free spectacles on April 6.

***Tapovan (Rishikesh, U.P.):*** Sai devotees in U.P. arranged for free medical service to the large number of pilgrims who visited Lakshman Jhoola, Rishikesh and the Sathya Sai Centre at Tapovan during the Maha Kumbha Mela at Haridwar from April 10. The local administration was all praise for the service rendered by the team of doctors and the Sai Seva Dal members.

*Know that Seva (service) is a better form of Sadhana (spiritual discipline) than even Dhyana (meditation). How can God appreciate the Dhyana you do, when adjacent to you, you have someone in agony, whom you do not treat kindly, for whom you do not make all efforts to help? Do not keep yourself apart, intent on your own salvation, through japa or Dhyana. Move among the people, looking for opportunities to help; but have the name of God on the tongue and the form of God before the eye of the mind.*

—Baba

### Thanks for the Anguish

Swami says, "Open your heart to pain as you do to pleasure, for both are my gifts of Grace." At first this sounded odd to me but now I think I understand a little, for would I have searched within myself for the true meaning of life had I been happy and content? Probably not. I had everything any woman could wish for, a husband whom I love, two lovely little girls, and a nice home, but I was far from happy.

I was brought up in the Christian faith; we went regularly to Church and Sunday school as children but when I left school, I stopped going and for many years pushed all thoughts of God to the back of my mind. I got married, went to Australia with my husband and then returned to England three years later to settle down and have a family.

I think it was being responsible for the two innocent little children that first started me thinking about the sort of world I'd brought them into and what the future held for them. I couldn't see any silver lining. Every news bulletin is full of hate, violence and the threat of nuclear destruction. I wanted to take the whole of mankind by the scruff of its neck and shake it and shout at it. "Stop it, don't be so stupid, we're All God's children, can't you see that?" I felt helpless and frustrated and I began to suffer from depression. Life became a one long heartache. Oh! How I longed for the never-ending sleep!



But through all this dark despair my thoughts kept turning to God. As I went about my housework, I pondered on life after death, renunciation and all the different religions of the world. Many Christians believe that theirs is the only true religion but I could not accept this. Surely, it is the sincerity of the heart that matters not the name you call God by. So I was lost, not knowing what to believe in and my depression deepened until finally I prayed from the bottom of my heart, "Oh God! Please help me."

Dear mum, she had been telling me for ages that she was reading about a 'wonderful man' and that she would lend that book to me. I wasn't taking a great deal of notice. I assumed she was talking about a great doctor or a missionary and so when the book, "Sai Baba, Man of Miracles" finally came, I started to read it quite unaware of the treasure in store.

My prayer had been answered, my journey back into the sunshine had begun and I thank Thee, dear Lord, for the anguish that brought me to your Lotus Feet.

—*Sylvia Bishop, England*

### **The Celestial City**

A few years ago In the Sanathana Sarathi I wrote about 'experiencing' Sai Baba from afar. Like many people at that time I had only read of him and relied upon other folks' experiences to give me knowledge of the Avatar of the New Age. However, this state of affairs was soon to change.

In November 1981 my daughter became seriously ill and for no apparent reason that the doctors could discover, she started having epileptic fits which became impossible to control. The tissue over her brain began to swell and one very black Monday permission was sought from me to agree to a surgeon operating upon her brain in an attempt to find the cause of her trouble. Very reluctantly I agreed to this but at the same time felt impelled to embark upon the almost impossible mission of speaking to Sai Baba on the telephone. Of course I should have known that pleas for help over the Sai telegraph are received by him instantaneously and it was not necessary for me to spend seven hours trying to get through to Puttaparthi via British Telecom. However, I did manage it, only to be told that I must send a telegram instead!

The next day when I contacted the hospital I was told that although the surgeon had been ready to perform the operation, a further examination of the swelling revealed that it had stabilised and indeed appeared to be shrinking. Needless to say it continued to shrivel and, as predicted by Swami, Clare left hospital after a five-week stay.

Some four weeks before this incident I had dreamt of following Sai Baba across a narrow footbridge, only just catching my daughter by the hand as she began falling into a flowing river which ran beneath the bridge.

You will appreciate, therefore, what a tremendous sense of excitement and anticipation I felt, on setting out on a visit to India to see for myself that Embodiment of Divinity in human form who had already manifested his power to me.

Imagine God's first beautiful day, with a clear blue sky and a sun reaching high ready to warm all under its rays and birds using the soft breeze to carry their songs of joy at the imminent approach of their Lord of Creation. Anticipation turned the atmosphere electric and all human heads turned as one when, as if from nowhere, Sai Baba appeared, drifting along like a cloud through a sky filled with human longing for his touch. He was here at last and I was seeing him!

When you have yearned for something for so long it is almost too difficult to grasp when the reality occurs, but nothing can ever erase for me that first moment of seeing Swami in the flesh.

Going to see Sai Baba in India is probably the wish of most devotees and like so many I saw the trip as the zenith in my life. It has made me realise I was turning a very important corner and being led down another street where life and all its works were just beginning. Certainly that road Sri Sathya Sai Baba shows us all is a main highway and major route to the Celestial City.

Like others I came back from my trip filled with new resolve and strengthened with spiritual energy and know now that when I wrote before of Baba's grace in allowing me to experience him from afar, I must now recognise that greater blessing he has bestowed upon me in allowing me to experience him in human form.

—*Christine Draper*

## **The Devotion of Sabari**

*While Bhagavan Baba, in His Rama Navami discourse this year, dealt with the Ramayana story as an allegory, with a message for every human being aspiring for mergence in the Divine. In His narration of the Ramayana story as the account of Rama's heroic exploits and the blessings he conferred on devotees, He has supplemented Valmiki's account with descriptions and interpretations which are unique and pregnant with new meaning.*

*We reproduce below the episode relating to the meeting of Rama and Lakshmana with Sabari, whose good fortune in being blessed by Rama is celebrated in a famous Kirtana of the Composer-Saint Tyagaraja. The story is taken from Bhagavan's Rama Katha Rasa Vahini:*

Rama, the large-hearted lover of all, moved on from the spot where he slew the demon Kabandha, walking on foot, with his brother as sole companion. They soon came across an old woman—she had a stoop; her head could not be held erect; her eyesight had become dull; her hands were quivering; she was coming towards them, with a basket of fruits on her head! She saw the charming figures of the brothers and inferred that they were the two, who were described with excitement and delight by the Rishis of the forest! Placing the basket on the ground, she

stood on the track, whispering 'Rama', 'Rama', in reverence and thankfulness. Lakshmana guessed that this too was an impersonation by some wily Rakshasa to harm them. But, Rama knew that his guess was wrong; he proposed to sit under a near-by tree, the tree was adjacent to the very hermitage where the old woman was residing.

Sabari the old woman noticed the lotus-petal-like eyes, the ringlets of hair on their foreheads, the long arms that reached down to the knees, and the dark-blue complexion of Rama. She could contain her ecstasy no longer; she could not suppress her adoration. She ran forward and fell at the feet of both. She asked, "Where are you coming from? What are your names?" Rama replied, smilingly and coolly: "Mother! We are coming from Ayodhya; we are residing in the forest; I am called Rama; this brother of mine is known as Lakshmana." At this, Sabari exclaimed, "Father! My long cherished desire has been fulfilled, I have been waiting for your arrival, day and night, and looking for you into the distance, until my eyes have become dull and insensitive. I have achieved success. My longing has had its result. My vigil and fasts have borne fruit. Ah! I have been rewarded! This is the result of my Guru's Grace; this is the mysterious working of God." She brought the basket near Rama. Meanwhile, Rama asked her, 'Mother! You speak of a Guru: who is he, this Guru of yours?'

She said, "His name is Matanga Rishi. But, since women are not taken as pupils in this hermitage, I listened to his lessons, hiding behind bushes and trees. I served my Guru and other Rishis, removing the thorns from the tracks that led to the rivers where they take their bath, mostly by rolling over the ground, for, I had to do it pretty early, before dawn. I also removed the pebbles and stones that might hurt their feet. I lived on fruits and tubers as the other pupils did. I served my masters unseen, and spent my days in the recesses of the jungle. Matanga, the Mahatma, who knew the yearnings of my mind, told me one day, 'Mother! Your body has reached a ripe old age. If you strain so much, you will soon be exhausted. So, come, reside in the hermitage and take good rest.' While I was spending my days thus in the service of this hermitage, the Rishi desired to quit the body and called me beside him. He said, 'Sabari! The task on which I have come is over. I have resolved to leave this body now. You shall remain in residence at this hermitage itself. Within a short time Rama will come into this forest. Invite him to enter this hermitage and offer what little service you can to him. Let this hermitage be sanctified by the touch of his feet.' I protested a great deal; I told him how I could never be happy in the hermitage without him. I prayed to him to take me too, through death to where he was proceeding. My Guru was not in a mood to accede to my wishes. He said that I had to be here awaiting the arrival of Rama and that I could not avoid that responsibility or lose that joy. From that day, I am existing here, with arms outstretched to welcome you, with eyes watching the horizon, and carrying about with me this decrepit body so that I may live to see you and serve you. "O Rama! O Lord! O compassionate to the afflicted. O Dweller in the hearts of Rishis. The wish of my Guru has been fulfilled. The hermitage is just a few feet off; please sanctify it by entering it." Sabari fell at Rama's feet and entreated him to accede to the last request of her Guru.

Rama was naturally happy at the dedication and devotion of the old woman. He was the very embodiment of spontaneous surging love. So, he rose and walked towards the hermitage with his brother, Lakshmana entered it.

Sabari was overpowered by a flood of joy; the flood broke all limits and expressed itself in ecstatic thrill and speech. That gem among women was until that moment too weak to tread a few paces; now, she found herself endowed with the strength of a thousand elephants! She marched buoyantly to the river and brought, in quick time, cool limpid water that was eminently sweet. She tasted first the fruits she chose from the basket and she offered to the brothers those she found sweet and ripe. While they ate, she looked on happily and with gratitude at their charming faces, and when they had finished, she washed their feet and placed on her head the drops of water sanctified by the contact. "Lord! I have no more desire. For what shall I live on? I survived until now for that one piece of good fortune—the darshan of Rama. I have had the Darshan. Now, save me by merging this life, this breath, in thy Lotus Feet. I have heard your glory extensively from the sages and saints. Today, I have witnessed it; I am full of gratitude and joy."

Rama relished the fruits she offered with so much devotion; while partaking of them he said, "Mother! These fruits are as sweet as your own heart. Really, these are not fruits that grow on trees. Why, the wild fruits that grow in jungles are not so sweet at all. They can never be. These are fruits that have grown on the holy tree of life, on the branches of the pure mind, in the sunshine of love." Rama ate the fruits extolling their taste all the time.

Seeing Rama in this mood, Lakshmana was happy beyond words; for, Rama had not eaten fruits with such joy since long; all these days, Lakshmana had to persuade him to taste a few, with a good deal of parley, pleading and praying, even after the fruits were peeled, cut and placed before him. Rama was so afflicted by the separation from Sita. In spite of all the efforts of Lakshmana, Rama would eat only half a fruit or so; never was Lakshmana satisfied with the quantity that his brother ate. Today, Sabari gave him the fruits which had dropped ripe from the trees; she used to dust them and clean them and keep them for him every day, and when Rama did not arrive, she consumed them herself as sacramental food, given to her by Rama himself! Day after day, she roamed the forest in search of sweet ones to be placed before Rama. Thus, daily the fruits were saturated with her love and devotion and the fruits became doubly desirable. Lakshmana noticed that this was the reason Rama was eating them with joy. He was filled with delight, and he admired the devotion of Sabari that was so richly rewarded. He appreciated the divine joy that she had filled herself with as a result of her long years of spiritual study and practice.

Sabari stood with folded hands before Rama and said, "Lord! I am of low caste; I am of untutored intellect, dull and stupid. I am not learned in any sacred art or text. I am lower than the lowest. How can I extol you or describe your glory? I have no skill in the use of words. I have not cultivated my Reason. Nor have I practised austerities prescribed to gain insight into Divinity. I am on the lowest step in spiritual Sadhana. My only strength is my love for God. I

have no other support or sustenance." She spoke of Rama's compassion, in accepting her offering. "Your grace is boundless," she said.

Rama was listening to her words intensely. He lifted her chin and looked right into her eyes. He said: "Mother! Devotion is the thing I need; the rest are subsidiary. Other things like scholarship, intelligence, status, social prestige, caste, I do not pay any attention to them. They are of no value in my eyes. More than all powers gained by spiritual disciplines and austerities, I relish the sweetness of devotion saturated with love. I seek only that. A man who has no love in him is as barren as a cloud with no moisture, a tree with no fruits, or a cow yielding no milk; he is ever far from God and can never earn Grace. Sabari! Of the nine ways of evincing and cultivating devotion, I only desire that any one be followed consistently by man. But, I find you have followed to the very end all the nine ways. So, I do not see any one higher than you in spiritual attainment. I am indeed elated in all manner of ways, for, you have offered me devotion that is pure, steady, and self-less and which is Love springing from the heart and surging from it in all directions and towards all directions and towards all beings. You have not cast aspersions on any one, even while dreaming! That is what makes your mind so pure. Your mind does not blossom when 'good' comes to you; not does it wither, when 'bad' comes. You are blessed in all ways."

Sabari drank in these words of counsel that Rama spoke to her. She said, "Rama! There is no path for the devotee other than doing one's best to please the Divine, is there? I do not crave for naught else. This day, my father, my God, the Lord of my life, the Lord of all the Worlds, the Lord of all Creation has appeared before me! How can I measure my good luck, O Lord of Janaki, of Sita the daughter of Janaka?" At this she remembered Sita, and the brothers, too, suddenly realised their plight. Rama told her, "Alas, Sabari, all this while you kept us happy, rid of anxiety, floating in joy: but, now, you have plunged us in grief." Sabari was struck with remorse; she raised her head in consternation and pleaded, "Lord! What is this you say? Pardon my indiscretion" and she fell at the feet of Rama.

Rama asked her, "Sabari! Do you know anything about Sita? Have you heard anything about her?" Sabari replied, "Don't I know! Don't I know about Sita? No woman who knows the Rama principle will be ignorant of the Sita principle, that Gem of womankind, that Crown of virtue; that Light of femininity? O! What great good fortune is hers! She is the very shadow of my Rama! Rama! I must tell you what my Guru Rishi Matanga has taught me about the Sita principle. Of course, there is nothing you do not know. But, since you asked me now whether I know anything about Sita. I shall tell you what I know. 'Rama deluded the minds of Manthara and Kaikeyi, in order to fulfill his mission of destroying the Rakshasa brood'. As a result of this, my Guru told me 'Sita, Rama and Lakshmana have entered the forest as exiles.' He said, they would visit hermitages and bless the ascetics and that Rama would kill the demons who obstruct their rituals and disciplines. He said that Rama would devise a plan by which Ravana, who is knit strongly with the Rakshasa clans, will be tempted to enact a role in a drama centering around the 'abduction' of Sita! He assured me that the Sita abducted by Ravana is only a pseudo-Sita and not the real, genuine Mother. He had told me that Rama would come into this forest, while searching for the Sita who has been abducted and that I would be rewarded as never before by

that visit. My Guru also told me that Rama would cultivate an alliance with Sugriva, who has taken refuge in the Rishyamuka Hills (adjacent to this hermitage) from the deadly depredations of his elder brother, Vali. Rama would accomplish the task of seeking out Sita through Sugriva. Rama! You are the Director of this Cosmic Drama, which you have designed. The incidents of your Drama were known to my Guru and he has revealed them to me. Your stage is the entire Cosmos. Your will decides the future of the Universe; it ensures the stability and progress of the Universe. All that happens is the unrolling into action of your Will; without it, nothing great or small can ever happen.

"Lord! You are acting in this play, as if you are unaware of your own plot. You are pretending to be grief-stricken at separation from Sita! Only those who are foolish, or who have no faith in the Atmic reality, or who are atheists can take it as true; those who are aware of Divinity and its mysteries, those who are devotees, and Sadhakas seeking to know God as their own Reality, will not be led away into the belief that it is genuine. You are the Doer of all that is done; no one however powerful can hinder or oppose your Will. You *will* the reactions of people to all happenings as good or bad; they are not the authors thereof. The ignorant may assert that they are the executors of their deeds. Rama! Pardon my impertinence. I have spoken too much in your presence." Thus saying, she fell at the feet of Rama. She developed the inner Fire of Yoga and as a result, her body was reduced to ashes, while her breath was merged in the Rama-principle she adored.

*Teachers in schools have themselves to be examples of what they require the pupils to be. Men in authority who exhort others to follow the paths of love and co-operation have themselves to practice those virtues. The people are not willing to be led; the leaders have no capacity to lead. Progress is the result of mutual trust between the leaders and the led. The unrest that is now rampant in all sections of the people everywhere is due to the irresponsibility of parents, teachers, administrators and leaders, as well as those who hunger to benefit from them.*

—Baba

## The Mother as an Apprentice

Prasanthi Nilayam was inaugurated on Swami's Birthday in 1950. The Birthday until that year had been rather informal. Swami delighted the Mother and the Father and their sons and daughters by visiting their home and going through the ritual of lunch in their company. After the parents had placed a few drops of oil on His cluster of hair, the ceremonial bath was gone through and Swami fulfilled the longing of some one devotee by accepting the robe and dhoti he placed at his feet. All those present then touched His feet praying for boons and blessings.

Prasanthi Nilayam, however, challenged the devotees to inaugurate a more impressive although still intimate celebration of the Birthday of their dear Lord. Elderly women gathered at

the Nilayam in the early hours of the twenty-third day of November. Each one had a plate on which were piles of flowers, fruits, sweets, coconuts, turmeric, kunkum, rice grains, betel leaves and areca, sandal paste, blocks of jaggery, glass bangles and other auspicious materials. Shining pots filled with consecrated water were carried on their hips. One of the group bore a silver plate with a silk sari upon it. A few elderly men joined them with a silk dhoti for the father and they proceeded to Puttaparthi village preceded by pipers and drummers. When they reached the Ratnakaram home, they announced to the parents that it was the Birthday of Bhagavan and invited them to Prasanthi Nilayam. One could sense a feeling of awkwardness and unpreparedness that dimmed their eyes, for, both of them would rather be left alone than be placed before the flood lights on the centre of the stage. Nevertheless the Mother and Pedda Venkama Raju did fulfill the wishes of the thousands. They were overwhelmed with gratitude for the opportunity given to them by Swami.

As soon as they stood before Him they lost all sense of time and space. Easwaramma placed flowers on Swami's feet and stood up to dip a rose in oil. When she lifted her palm to drop the oil on the son's hair, He bent low so that the head would be within reach. The father too did the same and as both of them descended from the dais, the devotees hailed the occasion expressing their joy in loud acclaim. It was only then that Easwaramma became aware of the Hall and the crowd, the Nilayam and the village. It was an embarrassing moment for her. But she was soon relieved, for she found another wedded couple climbing the steps to place flowers at Swami's feet and apply oil on His hair. Swami selected about eight others to share in the joyous ceremony. They come from different linguistic and geographical regions and are invariably old in age and rooted in faith. Easwaramma shunned publicity and prominence and loved to lose her identity in a group of devotees but on the Birthday she had to submit to what she dreaded most a pre-eminent love.

During Swami's discourses, she stood for a few minutes somewhere on the circumference of the audience, thrilled by the free flow of His silver voice. And when the applause sounded in the auditorium she wondered what He had said that could evoke such spontaneous acclamation. When she next passed by my residence she would ask me in confidence, "Was what Swami spoke so profound? Where does He gather all these mantras?" By 'mantras' she meant the Sanskrit verses, the Upanishadic lines, the Vedic hymns that Swami quoted. When the monthly magazine, Sanathana Sarathi, was inaugurated, she could not suppress her curiosity to know the number of people to whom it was sent. When I informed her that devotees not merely demanded it but actually adored the issues as they arrived by post considering them 'Prasad' granted by Swami Himself, I found her not quite happy. She could not forget the fact that Sathya had left school too early and that he was venturing into depths that no one, known to her, would dare plumb.

Easwaramma found that doctors and lawyers, monks and merchants, Rajas and Princes were coming to Puttaparthi and, sitting around Swami, pleading for answers and solutions to the doubts and questions they placed before Him. She herself only understood conversational Telugu but she could see the relief and rejoicing that settled on their distracted faces when they heard Swami's words in reply. She gasped when Swami gave them His assurance, "Don't worry. I will

be with you... Why bother? I am yours." He was promising too much to too many, she felt in alarm, and it took years for her to get rid of this fear. She had no knowledge that Avatars could address gatherings and transform base metal into gold through the alchemy of speech. The Rama and Krishna she knew had been householders who had themselves learnt from sages. Krishna inspired and instructed others to obey him and be saved. Rama had no time or inclination to give discourses on Dharma he just lived it and people learnt it. Easwaramma feared that some day some old pundit would arrive and silence her son. It took some years before her heart was set at rest. Meanwhile, people of all races and all levels of civilisation were arriving with hope and departing with faith after hearing Swami's intimate instructions imparted in confidence in their own native dialects and languages.

Mother was happy when Swami was before her eyes. She grew nervous whenever He proposed to leave Puttaparthi on a visit to distant villages and towns. She was afraid that He would stay on indefinitely or go on from there to other places nearby. She had heard that there was a wave of atheism and religious irreverence invading village after village in the Southern parts of the country and so, when a group of elders from V. arrived and prayed that Swami accompany them to their town she resolved to countermand the visit at all costs.

Srimathi Susheelamma, who witnessed her frantic efforts, gives this description of her agitation: "They do not know the real situation in that place, or if they do, they don't care what happens to Swami or themselves. It is sheer bravado", Easwaramma told herself as she hurried to the Nilayam in hot haste. Swami was in the dining room and at the table, ready to go through the rite called lunch when Easwaramma came in gasping for breath, for she had climbed the steps at one stretch, "Why this excitement? What has happened?" Swami asked, pretending to be ignorant of her mission. The mother said, "I have heard some news. Is it true?" "First tell me what they have told you" Swami replied. "I won't tell you until you give me your word that you won't go now to any town", she insisted. Swami had a hearty laugh at her anxiety. "How can I stick to this one room all the time? I have come from where I was in order to go to places near and far", He said. "That is not the point. Have you agreed to go with these people to V., tell me," the Mother asked, her voice shaking with trepidation. "Promise me that you won't go to that place. That is all I ask. Listen to me. Heed my prayer. They say it is a centre of wickedness and cruelty. When I say don't, don't" she pleaded. "That is the very reason I have agreed to go there. The doctor visits only the sick. How can people who are seriously ill harm the doctor? I do not hate them, so, they will not hate me. I am not angry with them; so, they won't be angry with me," He replied. But the mother's fears held on. She shed tears and looking straight into Swami's eyes said, "What more can I say? Bangaroo. Send these people away. Give me this one boon". Swami rose and holding both her hands in His soft grasp, He wiped her tears and spoke so sweetly that she left the room greatly relieved.

Yet, she met the group of hosts and requested them to be ever vigilant of who approached Swami and when. She was lost in prayer all the days that Baba was away, and she was right there at the door when He returned. As soon as He spotted her, Swami said, "Do you care to know what happened there? I plucked the fangs of every serpent!"



*—From "Easwaramma - The Chosen Mother", by Prof. Kasturi*

## **The New Me**

I would have never expected it to have such a deep impact on my life. And yet, when I think back to my early childhood I remember listening to stories of Jesus, being so impressed by how this man lived his life, feeling a deep love for Him, and above all being so angry with 'them' for treating him so badly and finally nailing Him on a cross. So, often I thought to myself, 'Well, If I had been around I would have defended Him; I would have believed in Him.' Or, 'if only He were here now and I could spend time with Him, or meet Him, I would surely recognise Him.'

Time passed and I grew up... Then, after many years of having Sri Aurobindo and the Mother as my guiding light I finally made it to Auroville about nine years ago. Within two days of arriving there I met some old friends who had just come from Sai Baba's ashram. They told me about him, his miracles, the Vibhuti, about his being an incarnation of God down here to help us get on with it. I saw the pictures they showed me—one of them is so clearly fixed in my mind that I can still see it when I close my eyes. And after all that, I said, 'Oh well, another guru who does things. I'd better get on with my work.'

Then, a few months ago a friend of mine, here at Findhorn, handed me a book with Baba's picture on the front and said, 'This man is amazing. He walked into my life a few weeks ago, and I don't know! It's all amazing, and I was told by Baba to give you to read.' Somewhere it clicked. The picture I was shown nine years before emerged from my memory as clearly as ever, and the next day I had finished the book. Then, as if by a miracle many more books about Baba came my way; I met Baba devotees; I dreamed about Baba....

Four months later I was on my way to India—admittedly with lots of doubts and fears. But I was encouraged by Baba, who says over and over again. 'If you are not sure about what, or who, I am, come and check it out for yourself, and then make up your mind.'

Prasanthi Nilayam was amazing. As soon as I walked through the gates I was 'home', feeling the crystal clear energy of the place, refreshing to my being, and spreading peace all over me. I stayed only twelve days and in that time I felt reborn, transformed.

Soon after seeing Baba for the first time I realised I had to rid my mind of all its fears and arguments. And so I did. And the next morning I realised I was so full of untruth, and muck, and stuff—it was as if someone had opened a window into my being. Suddenly there was the sun shining into me, showing me the junk!

That morning in the darshan line I knew I didn't want all this junk. I wanted to be free, and I didn't know how to get rid of it. What to do? My mind was going at top speed, doing overtime. I needed help. A few days later, after many mind-battles-and insights, I ended up in the front row of the darshan line. And I knew very clearly that I could ask for Padanamaskar. As Baba passed by, I tried to get his attention by looking up, politely waiting for him to stop, but I again realised that this is not how the universe works. Didn't God say, 'Take one step towards me and I will take ten towards you'? So I have to do it, I have to take the first step! Baba had stopped in front of me, but my mind refused to remember the word in Sanskrit! Why didn't he look at me? At this point he began to move away, and all I could get out of my mouth, in a small voice, was 'Baba, feet please?'

He stopped again, and again looked at people behind me, but not at me. Why? Screamed my mind. Almost giving up, I looked down. There was his left foot right in front of me! As I bent over, the foot moved towards me and his right foot joined the left. And I? I melted, all disappeared. Bliss! I realised it was all over when the people around me were getting up. I walked to my room about three inches above the ground, and spent the rest of the day blissed out....

My soul was re-aligned that day. I saw the world differently, and still do. I understand now, deep in my heart, what it means to surrender and receive grace. Life has never been the same since. I react to things differently. And what's more. I like it a lot better. I still feel slightly strange about the new me. What I do know is that I want to devote my life to God. In a new way. And that I need help, and a lot more grace. But I feel it will all be there at the right time. I know it. It's there every day. And somehow it's confirmed in the way Baba smiles in the picture that now hangs on my wall.

*—From an article by Eric Franciscus in The Sathya Sai Magazine, London*

## **"The Opened Eye"**

As each day passes I am beginning to see more and more clearly the divine dimensions of Swami—His power, the majesty and the fascination He wields over people and His deep mystery. In the early days I used to visualize Swami as just a holy man. Today I see the vast dimensions of the Avatar, the god come to earth. There is no trace of disbelief left in me about His Godhead.

In life we sometimes see our loved ones handle us rudely and even destroy our life; we see our closest persons betraying us. We see friends talk behind our back. Previously this used to make me angry. Today I realise that they are not to blame. Oftentimes it is the leela of Swami. He has an overall plan for each of us and he makes them act so that His Master plan is carried out. When

you look back in life, you will realize that the betrayals and tragedies eventually turned out to be blessings. So today when things go wrong I find myself not blaming people but thinking that God made them act in such and such a way as part of His overall plan.

—*Subba Rao, Fort Washington, U.S.A.*

*SRI RAMANAVAMI SANDESH:*

## **The Rama Story is Ours**

The five basic elements that compose the Universe are cognised by the sense organs in man as sound, touch, form, taste and smell. The response of the person to these impacts can be either pleasure or pain, beneficent or maleficent, for it depends on how and in what spirit they are welcomed and accepted.

Man has three vital tools which, can handle these impacts—body, speech and mind—capable of deed, word and thought. The body is essential for every act and achievement. "Man is human because of the body, it is the first requisite for moral living". Man has been blessed with the body in order that he may realise the purpose of life—revering elders, serving parents, and loving God. The body has to be sanctified by the study of scriptural texts and the lives of holy personages; further, it is rendered pure and sacred by engaging' in the promotion of the happiness of others and earning affection and appreciation of all.

The second tool, namely speech. This tool has to be sanctified by adherence to truth and love and avoidance of violence. Speech has to be free from harshness and frenzy. It must be soft, soaked in love and pleasing. The words must be so sweet, that the listener desires to hear them more often. He should love to bring them back to memory, in order to relieve the joyous moments.

The third tool is the mind. It requires persistent effort to sanctify the mind. It is named "manah" since it is ever busy with Manana or recapitulation of the past, confronting the present and planning for the future. It alternates between likes and dislikes, yes and no. It is carried away by fits of passion or panic. So, it has to be curbed and cured by patient persuasion. Above all, one must prevent it from catering to the greedy senses and thereby losing both health and happiness. The mind is described as the 'husband' (pati) of the senses (Indriya). Dasaratha allowed one of his three wives to lead him so far astray that he forfeited his own life. Utthanapada had two wives, their conflict to establish mastery over him cost him his own son, Dhruva, who left him, and later, his life. Man has ten Indriyas to pester him. If his mind yields to their demands, woe be to him!

Tongue demands, "Bring me tasty delicacies or else, I won't speak to you". Ear demands, "Bring me pleasant music and tell me delightful counsel; or else I will stay deaf." So Eye is adamant. She shouts, "Take me to some attractive Exhibition. Show me fine films, Video tapes

or T.V. programmes; or else, I will no longer stay in this home!" The poor mind is tormented thus by every sense organ. So the mind gets feeble, faint and stunted.

Therefore, the mind must be saved from being enslaved by the senses. The master should never allow himself to be the servant of his servants. The mind has been provided with a master, whom it is neglecting and ignoring, through its degrading subservience to the senses. That master is Intelligence (Buddhi), the faculty of discrimination. When controlled and directed by this faculty, the mind becomes a sacred tool.

This day, the birth of Sri Rama is celebrated in all lands. Rama had deed, word and thought, body, speech and mind, ever pure and totally free from blemish. Really speaking, one ought to revere the story of Rama is a profound allegory. Every act and actor in that story attracts attention and gets imprinted on the memory because the allegory is personal to each of us.

For example, consider Dasaratha, the Ten-Chariot King? He represents the human body with the five senses of perception and the five sense-organs of action. He has three wives—the three Gunas or dispositions, Satwa, Rajas and Tamas—named Kausalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyi. He has four sons, who embody in themselves the four goals of human life, Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. Rama is the very embodiment of Dharma (Morality, Virtue, Right conduct). The other three goals can be achieved only by steady adherence to Dharma. We find, therefore, the brothers Lakshmana, Bharata and Shatrughna following the footsteps of Rama.

Rama had mustered so much spiritual strength through his consistent observance of Dharma, that he could wield and bend the mighty bow named Sivadhanus. That was the proof of the Jivi (the Individual) having overcome delusion. Janaka, the Ruler of Videha, had the bow in his custody. He was on the look out for a hero who had mastered the fatal flaw.

The story relates that Janaka, the Videhi, (ruler of Videha, that is to say, 'without body' or 'body-consciousness') offered his daughter (the awareness of Brahman) to Rama. Wedding Sita is another way of saying 'acquiring Supreme Wisdom,' for, from where was Sita gained? The story says, 'from a furrow on the Earth', that is to say, from Prakriti, from Nature. This statement reveals that Brahmajnana can be won by meaningful involvement with Prakriti.

The next stage in the career of Rama finds him in the thick jungle of life. The jungle was infested with attractions and aversions. The Supreme Wisdom cannot co-exist with duality. It insists on the renunciation of both aspects. Rama pursued the golden deer, which Sita longed to possess. Brahmajnana disappeared as a consequence of this lapse.

Rama (the representative Jivi) had to undergo many spiritual austerities to regain the Supreme Enlightenment. He reached, according to the story, the Risyamuka peak, the abode of total detachment. There he secured two allies, Sugriva (Discrimination) and Hanuman (Courage). The alliance was sealed by an act of service from Rama, which indicated his loyalty to Dharma under all conditions. He slew Vali, the vicious victim of wickedness. Vali had dethroned his father, forced him to take refuge in the jungles, associated with Ravana, of evil fame, and ill-treated his

brother Sugriva for no reason at all. Vali succumbed so low, because of the company he preferred to be in. He serves as a warning to everyone. Einstein said, "Tell me your company; I can tell you what you are."

Rama installed Viveka on the throne of Vali. With his allies, he entered on the quest for the Wisdom that he had lost. He found across his path a wide ocean of delusion (Moha). His ally, Hanuman (Courage) had a vision, unclouded by desire or ignorance. His only desire was fixed on the Name of Rama and the Form of Rama. So he was able to leap across the ocean, smooth and safe.

Rama reached the other shore. He slew Ravana (the embodiment of the Rajasic, passionate, impulsive, possessive traits) and his brother, Kumbhakarna (the embodiment of the Tamasic, the dull, the self-destructive, the lethargic, traits). Rama recovered Sita (Brahmajnana) now confirmed by striving and struggling, and more convincingly precious as a result of constant meditation. And, Rama returned with Her to Ayodhya (the Impregnable city, the Source and Spring of Wisdom). The consummation of the soul's journey is the Coronation, the Maha Pattabhishekam.

This is the Ramayana which needs to be gone through, during the life of every aspirant. The heart is the Ayodhya. Dasaratha is the body, the Gunas are the consorts, the Purusharthas are the sons, and Sita is Wisdom. Attempt and attain this Realisation by purifying the three tools—body, speech and mind.

#### **Hanuman's greatness**

Hanuman is the brightest example of such a realised soul. When he first presented himself before Rama and offered his services, Rama turned to Lakshmana and said, "Brother! listen! Notice how Hanuman has mastered the Vedas. His speech is saturated with the humility and dedication which the Rg-Veda embodies, the retentiveness and reverence that the Yajurveda promotes and the intuitive vision that the Samaveda grants. Hanuman knows all the scriptural texts. He is a genuine devotee. Sugriva is fortunate to have him as his Minister, Hanuman, whose thoughts, words and deeds are offered to God". When these three are in perfect harmony, the person wins the Grace of God, as Hanuman succeeded in securing.

#### **Rama is Dharma**

Sugriva fumbled in this Sadhana. He failed to keep his word. He had not commandeered his forces, though the rainy season had ended. So, Lakshmana vented his anger at his ingratitude and iniquity. "You can never cleanse yourselves of the sin of ungratefulness and breach of promise. Your conduct is so reprehensible that even vultures will desist from feeding on your corpse." When the terrified culprit fell at the feet of Rama, seeking pardon, Rama said, "Lakshmana! Safe and happy on his throne, Sugriva is blinded by pride, power and ignorance. Misery alone can open the eyes of people to the values they have neglected. He has been holding on to the trivial and the temporary which intoxicate man with fleeting joys. How can such a person follow the path of Dharma?" Hanuman, who heard this compassionate reaction, returned with Sugriva and

advised him to repent and reaffirm, his rectitude and thankfulness. One has to recognise one's faults and remedy their consequences by sincere self-examination and repentance.

It is often said that Rama followed Dharma at all times. This is not the correct way of describing him. He did not follow Dharma; he was Dharma. What he thought, spoke and did was Dharma, is the Dharma forever.

The recitation of Ramayana verses or listening to the exposition of those verses must transform the person into an embodiment of Dharma. His every word, thought and deed must exemplify that ideal. Steady faith (Shraddha) in Rama, Ramayana and oneself is essential for success. And for what end? To become good and help others to unfold their goodness. Be totally human with every human value expanded to the utmost and promote those traits in society to help others too.

Purify the body by means of holy activity. Purify speech by adhering to truth, love and sympathy. Purify the mind, not yielding to the clamour of the senses and the desires they breed. But, the tragic truth is that learned people do not accept any moral responsibility now. The world is therefore enveloped in fear, for people whose thoughts, words and deeds are vitiated by inhuman and nonhuman motives have gained control over science and technology.

The senses supply material to the mind. The mind is a by-product of the ego. The ego is a reflection of the Atma. The Atma is a wave of the Paramatma, the Universal Consciousness. Everyone must trace the ego to its spiritual origins and direct his life on the lines of that heritage.

—*Prasanthi Nilayam 18-4-1986*

*STUDENTS' CORNER:*

**Three Things**

*Three things to live for:  
Honesty Purity and Truth.  
Three things to admire:  
Intellect, Beauty and Music.  
Three thing to cultivate:  
Cheerfulness, Sympathy and Contentment.  
Three things to respect:  
Old age, Religion, and Law.  
Three things to Value:  
Time, Health and Action.  
Three things to govern:  
Tongue, Temper and Action.  
Three things to avoid:  
Idleness, Falsehood and Slander*

*Three things to promote:  
Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram.  
(The Truth, the good and the Beautiful).*

**—Shiraz P. Pavri, Navsari. (Gujarat)**

## **Why Delay?**

We should discard the illusion that we have an exclusive rapport with the Lord. It is essential to understand that the grace of the Lord will come to any person whose thoughts, words and deeds demonstrate consistency, integrity and godliness, regardless of the form of the Lord that he has chosen to worship. Our beloved Bhagavan Baba has instructed us not to consider ourselves as members of a small sect, the Sai family, but rather as members of the human family. The qualifications for membership in the human family are very simple:

- Have faith in God.
- Believe that the Lord is in all men and that all men have the capacity to recognize this and achieve union with the Lord.
- Recognize that we can achieve this ultimate spiritual goal through spiritual devotion, discipline and study and the selfless service recommended by Bhagavan Baba and by all religions.

We profess faith in God and the desire to develop spiritually. We should understand that all of the programs that Bhagavan Baba has lovingly given to the world are practical and necessary steps toward the goal. They are compatible with every religion and culture. All people who embrace these programs wholeheartedly will derive spiritual benefit.

The study of Bhagavan Baba's message and the scriptures of all religions will bring clarification to our spiritual experience, helping us to develop the ability to discriminate between the genuine and the spurious, the eternal and the transient.

Coming together in Satsang and rendering selfless service to our fellow man affords us the opportunity to learn and earn the selfless love that is a prerequisite for real spiritual growth.

Through devotional exercises, spiritual discipline and control of desires, we dampen the incessant static emanating from our egos. In controlling our minds and bodies, we achieve the detachment that is essential for real spiritual growth. Only in the theater of detachment can we hear the inner voice, the true self, the object of our quest, the voice of the Lord.

Lasting peace and fulfillment are attainable only after we have discerned a genuine purpose in life. A genuine purpose in life can be discerned only after one has acquired deep unchangeable

convictions. Deep unchangeable convictions are acquired only through faith in God based on genuine spiritual experience.

The message of Sai and the scriptures of the world's religions provide the definition of life's purpose and the basis for the convictions that we should have in order to accomplish our purpose. They describe the voyage that we all must take now or in the future. Since the Lord, in all the forms that He has assumed throughout the course of human civilization, has assured us that the greatest peace and joy are attained only when we dedicate ourselves to this divine journey, WHY DELAY?

*Sai Ram!*  
—*Michael Goldstein, U.S.A.*



*AMRITA DHARA:*

## **The Ways of the Divine**

The ways of the Lord in granting relief to devotees in distress or trouble are infinitely varied and often baffling.

In one of His informal talks to devotees at "Trayee Brindavan" in April last, Bhagavan illustrated the inexplicable and unique ways of the Divine by a reference to episodes in the Mahabharata in which Sri Krishna saved the Pandavas from catastrophe.

On one occasion, the Pandavas during their exile from the kingdom, had strayed into the forest of Romarishi.

Romarishi was a sage whose body was covered with hair so long, that it spread as a carpet into the surrounding forest. There was a holy tree in that forest, yielding a very special fruit. The unique quality of that fruit was that once it was tasted one would not have hunger for years and years. But that fruit should not be plucked; it should be eaten after it dropped by itself. So, waiting for the fruit to fall, Romarishi was doing Tapas there.

One day, when Dharmaraja and Draupadi were on a stroll in the woods, Draupadi happened to look at this particular tree and saw the luscious big fruit hanging from it. "Can we not take this," she said to her husband, "so that all of us could share it today?" Then Dharmaraja shot an arrow and the fruit fell to the ground. Holding his bow in his right hand, he went to lift the fruit with his left hand. It was so heavy he could not move it. Draupadi also tried to help. Dharmaraja used both his hands, still the fruit would not move. In the meantime, Arjuna also came there and all three, Arjuna, Dharmaraja and Draupadi, tried to lift that fruit, but it would not move. The two younger brothers also came and tried to help lift the fruit but however hard they tried it was no use; it would not move. Finally came the strong man, Bhima. He asked the others to move away and said, "I will lift this." But even Bhima could not succeed.

Meanwhile, the hair of Romarishi, which had spread over all that area, began to stir. Because these six people were trampling about trying to lift the fruit, Romarishi felt the disturbance as strands of his hair were being trodden and pulled. He realised that there was someone trying to steal the fruit and he became very angry. Immediately his long hairs started to come together and coil round the Pandavas and tie them up.

Draupadi realized the danger, and immediately prayed to Lord Krishna. Draupadi called on Lord Krishna whenever she sensed any trouble. Krishna appeared before her. Draupadi fell at His Feet and prayed to Him for help to protect the Pandavas from the danger that was about to engulf them. Krishna told Draupadi that there was nothing He could do, since Romarishi was a great sage. As Lord, He resided in the hearts of all Rishis, including Romarishi; so how could He do anything against the wishes of that Rishi? But Draupadi held on to His Feet and said, "You alone can save us. You can do anything you wish to do, in all the three worlds!" Then Krishna

said, "All right, I will help you, but all of you should be totally silent, not say a word; you should do exactly as I tell you. Do not have any doubt or hesitation, but do exactly as I direct."

Draupadi promised that they would obey Krishna's orders. Krishna went to each of the Pandavas and whispered His plan, in their ears. He told them: "I will now go to Romarishi's ashram; a little later, you must follow me there."

In the meantime, Romarishi was furious with anger. He was about to curse the poachers. At that very moment, Krishna entered the Ashram. Romarishi fell prostrate at Krishna's Feet. He was overjoyed to see Him and asked Him, "What is it I can do for you, Lord?" Krishna kept Romarishi occupied, making a few casual inquiries, till the Pandavas arrived.

As soon as the six reached the Ashram and entered it, Krishna fell at the feet of the Pandavas. The Pandavas were feeling very embarrassed, but remembering Krishna's command, they said nothing. Romarishi, seeing Krishna fall at the feet of the visitors, also fell at their feet. Then Krishna introduced the Pandavas to the Rishi.

As Romarishi listened to the words of Krishna praising the greatness of the Pandavas, He totally forgot his anger. When Krishna explained that these were the people who were tempted by the fruit he awaited, Romarishi was so transformed that he said, "Let them take the fruit. I would like them to have it." By eating that fruit the Pandavas were able to live without hunger for a, long time.

Soon after the Battle of Kurukshetra, Krishna used the good offices of the Sage Durvasa to keep in hiding the Pandava brothers, whom Ashwathama had vowed to exterminate, before the dawn of another day. Krishna approached the Sage, who was reputed for his quick temper as well as his adherence to truth, and told him about the peril confronting the Pandavas and requested him to keep them hidden in a cellar under his seat. The Sage told Krishna that he would not be able to utter a falsehood if Ashwathama came to him enquiring about the whereabouts of the Pandavas. Krishna suggested that the Sage could tell the truth in a tone which would deter Ashwathama from questioning the Sage further. The strategy was eminently successful. When Ashwathama, after a futile search for the Pandavas, came to Sage Durvasa and requested him to reveal to him their whereabouts, the Sage ejaculated gruffly

"The Pandavas? They are *beneath* me" The roar rattled Ashwathama so much that he did not dare to pursue the matter further, lest the Sage lose his temper and curse him... And the Pandavas 'beneath him' were saved!

(April 4, 1986)

## **Discipline and Desire**

In an interview Baba asked me, "What is yoga?" "Union," I answered, having read a book about yoga.

Baba looked at another person in the room, who perhaps was thinking of labour unions. "Not that kind of union," Baba told the man. "Yoga means sense control. First sense control, then union with God. God is beyond the senses."

A re-orientation was in order: from physical and breathing exercises to an ideal of self-mastery, an ideal of not being a passive slave to one's senses, whims, impulses, passions, sensations. Baba suggested that one could learn to control one's mind, not be the unconscious follower of each little want.

At the same time Baba said: "Self-control and self-sacrifice, self-confidence and self-satisfaction lead to Self-realization." He knew I had come with the hope of finding peace of mind, Self-realization, and so he set me straight as to what was necessary. The great task is to conquer oneself. There is a saying that it is easier to become a world-conquering emperor than to turn within and conquer oneself. Buddha chose to be self-conqueror, and not emperor, and in so doing his sway was felt over much of Asia. Baba told us, "With love you can conquer the world." His own example shows how.

Human nature is known for its recalcitrance. There is a humorous Russian proverb which expresses the mind's tendency: "The church is near, but the road is icy. The tavern is far, but I'll walk very carefully." We have many excuses, and often choose not the right way, but the pleasant. Baba told us the secret of happiness is not doing what you like, but in liking what you have to do.

Baba takes us as we are, and gradually leads us higher. He promises that if we practice even a fraction of his teaching it will grow on us. He advises us to have patience and persevere. We cannot expect overnight success. I remember Baba saying: "If you go too fast, you lose balance and fall; if you go too slowly, you fall asleep. Slow and steady wins the race." Balance and consistency of effort are desirable.

In interviews Baba brought up a particular problem or tendency of mine (as he does with others) and then said: Don't worry, I am helping. And this knowledge gave me the confidence and patience to go on. I could live more comfortably with myself knowing that whatever was bothering me was one more passing illusion to be endured, it was just a strand of nature's play, and in time it would not seem so important.

### **A universal challenge**

Living in the modern world with advertisements meant to stimulate desires, we may forget that human beings have always been faced with this challenge. Every saint has struggled with this human condition, and everyone who has wanted to help mankind has had to address this

issue. The Greek ideal was, "Nothing in excess." The Confucian ideal is the golden mean. And the Ramayana states that "Excess of anything leads only to suffering."

Benjamin Franklin was a signatory of the American Declaration of Independence. He printed many wise sayings in his popular Almanacs:

*"Each year one bad habit rooted out,  
in time makes the worst man good throughout."*

*"What it takes to maintain one bad  
habit would bring up two children."*

*"'Tis easier to refuse the first desire,  
than to satisfy all that follow it."*

*"Many a man thinks he is buying pleasure  
when he is really selling himself as a slave to it."*

*"Do you love life? Then do not squander time,  
for that's the stuff life is made of."*

*"Prodigality of time produces poverty  
of mind as well as of estate."*

Baba has given us this sadhana of not wasting time, energy, food, skills and money, as steps towards self-mastery and self-realisation.

**—Dr. William Jackson. Eureka, U.S.A.**

**THE CHANCELLOR SPEAKS:**

### **“Discover your Divine Essence”**

Self-realisation, the understanding of one's own basic Reality, should be the fundamental purpose of education and not the mere acquisition of information about the external world, observed Bhagavan Baba, Chancellor of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, addressing the students and staff of the Institute on July 3, at the commencement of the new academic year.

Students and staff from all the three campuses were present in the Institute auditorium for the unique occasion, which represented the beginning of a new chapter in the career of the five-year old University. Bhagavan's concept of imparting education in the Institute at all levels with no tuition or special fees of any kind, to which He had referred in January during a discourse in

Madras, was implemented in the current academic year. The Sathya Sai Institute has thus blazed a new trail in the annals of higher education in India. 600 students will be beneficiaries of the new scheme this year and the figure will go up to 1200 in three years.

A large gathering of devotees was present outside the auditorium to have Darshan of Bhagavan and listen to His discourse.

Welcoming Bhagavan, the Vice Chancellor, Dr. S. N. Saraf, recalled the remarkable way in which the Institute came into existence in 1981, by the Will of Bhagavan, to give effect to His philosophy of integral education, imparting a spiritual orientation to the educational process from the earliest stage. This year Bhagavan's concept of free education at all levels from the primary to the doctorate stage has been implemented in the Institute by conducting tests at eight centres for the selection of students from all over the country—from Kashmir to Kanya Kumari. Nearly 250 highly talented students were selected from out of 600 applicants. Welcoming the new students to “this Divine Campus,” Dr. Saraf said all students should realise their responsibilities and follow the ten-fold path to Divinity indicated by Bhagavan in His Convocation address in November last.

#### Bhagavan's Address

*Bhagavan then delivered His discourse. He said:*

Creation is a marvel. It has to be seen and experienced with wonder and awe and not dissected, disfigured or analysed or explained. The Cosmos is the glorious work of art projected by the Supreme Artist, without a wall or canvas to draw upon, without brushes or colours to paint with. Imagination boggles, beholding this cosmic scene. It defies description. It exhibits what is not real and conceals what is. Confronted with a Universe, so difficult to decide whether true or false, some have concluded, it is real, some have declared it unreal and some have described it as a mixture of the real and the illusory. The problem has been the subject of endless debate and controversy. Right education should aim at discovering the basic truth, which will lay at rest this uncertainty.

The world is experienced by the "I". As long as the "I" dominates the mind, the world is cognised as real. And so long as the "I" is involved with the world; sorrow cannot be eliminated. In the state of deep sleep, there is no consciousness of the "I" and so there is no consciousness of the world too. When the world is absent, sorrow disappears. Man seeks to banish sorrow and acquire happiness (Ananda).

What is happiness? Do wealth, power or health confer happiness? The world has numerous wealthy men, but are they experiencing happiness? There are many wielding power or having good health, but are they happy? No. The reason is there can be no real happiness as long as one is infected with the ever-greedy ego.

Like animals which run towards a mirage in the vain hope of quenching their thirst, man goes after sensual objects hoping; to derive happiness from them. In the end he meets with disappointment and frustration and quits his life without realising his true destiny. Only when the feeling of "I" drops from him can man realise his Brahmic reality and attain Ananda.

### **Ego and universe**

The Vedanta declares: "Brahmam is Sathya (Truth); the Cosmos is Mithya (illusory)". Whether the Universe is real or illusory, or whether it is real-unreal need not be your concern. For, the cosmos itself will reveal to you its permanent-cum-transient character. Your primary concern must be to understand whether you are real or unreal or what in you is real and what is unreal. It is only when you have recognised the truth of your own being, that you can recognise the world as illusory and your own reality.

The realised, person asserts: "I am Brahman." Wherefrom has this statement emanated? What does it mean? It is a spontaneous expression and not the result of thought or feeling. But when one states, "I am a man," the attribute "man" expresses a thought accepted and a feeling welcomed. "I" is inherent (Sahajam); "Man" is an intention (Bhavamu). The "I" is boundless infinite. When the finite concept "man" merges in the infinite "I", the "I" alone remains. When a river reaches the ocean, there is only the ocean; the river ceases to exist. Before it joins the ocean, the river is bound by its banks and it has a distinct form. But when it merges in the ocean, it loses its separateness, its form and name and taste. It becomes the ocean. Likewise, when "man" merges in the infinite "I", only the infinite "I" remains and the limited human entity disappears.

### **"Aham" and atma**

What is the source of the term "I"? In Sanskrit, "I" is referred to as "Aham". The word "Aham" has its roots in the word Atma. Aham arises from the idea of "I". The mind also is a projection of the idea of "I". The mind and the ego are thus related to the Atma as its manifestations. The Atma is the grandfather, Aham is the son and the Mind is the grandson. The ego has emanated from the pure, unchanging, selfless Atma but the ego has birth and growth; it comes and goes. The Atma has no birth, growth, decay or death. It is changeless, immutable and eternal. From the One unchanging Infinite Atma, the finite and changing ego and the mind, with its diverse feelings and ideas, have emanated. The multiplicity of names and forms can be understood in their true nature only if the truth about their fundamental basis is recognised. Hence, everyone should seek to know the basis of what he terms as "I". Instead, when one is engaged in exploring Nature (the physical universe, Prakriti), he is pursuing only a chimera.

Consciousness (Chaitanyam) is all-pervasive in the cosmos and in the individual mind. But, in the mind it is limited. It is most active, potent and prominent in man. Man is able to enquire into, examine and explore the phenomenal universe because of the consciousness that prods him. Nature and the phenomena that comprise it are reflections of inner experience. The world is a beautiful painting, a grand work of art. The art is outside, but the beauty is experienced by the heart inside us. Art becomes art when the heart recognises it.

All investigations of the external world are indeed reflections of mental processes which emerge from the "I" projected by the Atma, a spark of Paramatma. If we concentrate on this basic truth, we can see the Divine basis that sustains everything. Education, therefore, has to develop this power of concentration and not the mere capacity to collect facts. Today with the accent on "collection", we are ignoring "Concentration". The essence of education is concentration of, the mind and not collection of facts.

The world is teaching man innumerable lessons all the time. Each one should try to discover for himself the secret of his life and the Universal Consciousness that is inherent in him. The first requisite for each one is to make himself his own guru.

### **Nature and life**

Nature is a preacher; Life is a teacher. When this truth is recognised, life becomes meaningful and purposeful. Everyone should strive to unfold the divinity within him and illumine his life. Poring over a few books, one may secure a high rank in university examinations by one's diligence and industry. But this is not the consummation of education. Knowledge is not to be derived from books alone. Nature is to be accepted as a better instructor. By its forbearance, adherence to its genuineness, unselfish bounty, patience and serenity Nature is continually proclaiming its inherent and real role of preacher of spiritual truths. Consider, for instance, a tree. It puts up with heat and rain, summer and winter, and all the harm inflicted on it. It offers shade and distributes fruits to whoever approaches it. It has no feelings of hatred or vengeance towards those who cause injuries. It seeks no return from those who benefit from it. Everyone should learn this lesson in selfless, patient service from the tree.

Consider, next, the bird. The lesson it teaches is self-reliance. A bird perched on the leafy twig of a tree is not affected by the wild swaying of the twig or the storm which might blow it off because it relies not on the twig or tree but on its own wings for its safety. It knows it can always fly and save itself. The bird is always happy and carefree, sporting as it pleases. Birds are not concerned about acquiring things for the morrow, They are content to make the best of the present, living on whatever they can get for the day. They do not worry about the careers of their children or the state of their bank accounts. They have no anxiety about the upkeep of houses or properties.

Now, look at what man has made of himself. Sitting on the branch of the life tree, he is worried about every little tremor in life; he is consumed by it, and loses his peace of mind.

Man's ignorance of the Reality stems from his incorrect understanding of the World. This ignorance cannot be dispelled by yagnas, yagas or japa or even long bouts of dhyana. Only when he discovers his indwelling Divinity and realises the true nature of his self can he rid himself of this ignorance.

The individual who regards God as separate from Nature will declare that Nature is unreal, mithya. But, when he recognises that God is immanent in Nature, it becomes real to him. What is needed, therefore, is the removal of the defect in the vision (drishti).

Nowadays, we hear of more and more people complaining of tension, as a reaction to frustration, failures and disasters. Tension is caused as a result of the mind indulging in likes and dislikes. Everyone must be vigilant about the mind, its capabilities and character. It reacts in fifty million different ways, not in one or two. It assumes fifty million forms. Each of these is a wave that agitates. The system of education practised today does not divinise the mind and turn it towards the I which is a reflection of the Atma within. Students must, even while they are undergoing this education, probe into the divine basis of mental activity, so that the mind can bestow wisdom and bliss.

God is as far from you as you are far from yourself. That is to say, you are not the body to which you cling. God reacts to the status assigned to the I. Who is it that says I? The body? How can the body speak? It is gross matter. The Atma? How can the Atma speak? It is subtler than the subtlest. Really, the "I" serves as the link which disappears when the body-mind complex merges in the Atma. This is the illumination you have to acquire as students. When you light a lamp in each home, the entire street gets light. I bless you that you will steadily inquire into the Divine principle and that you will receive all the encouragement and inspiration while on this task.

### **Divine Leela**

*Creation has emerged from God, who is free from desire. It is a spontaneous unfolding, beyond human understanding. No one can unravel the Divine Mystery. Human activity, however spontaneous it may seem, can be explained to originate from some patent or latent wish or other. But, God's activity can never yield an answer to human enquiry about its why or whence or wherefor.*

*God is omniscient. He is the source of supreme delight, of extreme ecstasy. The joy flashes as sport, as prank and purposeless play, leela.*

*God needs neither helper nor material for the process of Creation. His serene, stable, sovereign Fullness can become movement, rotation and vibration, when He wills. And, all the living and non-living entities God projects are led towards acquisition of the very Ecstasy whose overflow they are. God is the paramount principle of Bliss that is not affected by time or materiality, for He is the basis for the material world of time and matter. His Bliss pervades all Creation. That is the way His leela works.*

*But, created beings are diverse and entangled in duality. If they emerge from the Bliss of the One, how could some be so fearful and anxious and some calm and peaceful? An inference such as this is very wrong; it is unwarranted and unjustified. The Rain-God showers his gift on all things on earth, edible crops as well as thorny weeds. The seeds of both sprout and grow to*



*accordance with their different natures. Likewise, the Divine Bliss, Love and Light are the sustenance for all nature. The qualities of head and heart, either virtuous or vicious, decide whether life is happy or miserable, praiseworthy or blameworthy. Good deeds mould men into saints; bad deeds shape them as sinners. God initiates men into innocent, tender, loveable and loving childhood. But men relish envy, greed and hatred and cast off the gift of softness and sweetness. They cultivate instead the thorny weeds. Men seek joy in this Cause-Consequence duo.*

*God has no gain to achieve, no need to project the Cosmos. He has everything; He is everything. He plays motiveless and unattached out of sheer elan.*

—Baba

## **From Birth to Birth**

We are all aware of the importance of properly nurturing an unborn child. All of the mother's activities and habits have an impact on the baby. The food she eats, the thoughts she has, the substances she either uses or refrains from, and the external stimuli she is exposed to—all have an effect on the new baby. Caring, well-informed parents prepare for the entrance of the new soul, doing everything within their means to ensure that the event is filled with happiness and joy.

No one will deny the miracle of birth. We Sai devotees and others whose lives are devoted to seeking spiritual truths are fortunate, indeed, to be aware of not only the blessings of an opportunity for an earthly sojourn, but the responsibilities faced in exchange for the precious gift of life.

In a sense, we are pregnant with our own souls; and the responsibility we face is the nurturing of those souls, just as our parents nurtured us during the time spent in the womb. At birth, a child is born; at death, a soul is freed. The state of the soul at death depends entirely on our efforts, or lack thereof, during our precious earthly sojourn, the soul's gestation period.

Sai Baba tells us how to nurture our souls, so that upon death we're free to fly to the Lap of God and remain there, free from lifetime upon lifetime of "nurturing", as it were, over and over again.

He tells us to speak softly, not because there's too much noise on Planet Earth, but so that peace and quiet will become a part of our being and our soul will peacefully leave the body.

He tells us to avoid bad company, alcohol, and the cinema, not because He's a year-long Scrooge and doesn't want us to have any fun, but because He knows worldly activities will keep our souls bound to earthly longings and attachments.

He tells us to control the vagaries of the mind by repeating the Name of the Lord, not because He's an egoist who wants constant adoration, but because He wants us to be aware of our own Divinity—His Name is our Name, and, His Reality is our soul's inheritance.

He tells us to eat certain kinds of food, not because he has stock in fruit, vegetable, and grain-growing companies, but because these Satwic foods promote loving, peaceful behaviour, which is then, the level our soul attains.

Baba tells us to serve others. Serving others is the way to serve Him. Serving Him is serving ourselves, scraping away at the ego which keeps us out of His Lap.

Most importantly, Baba tells us to love. Certainly not because He hasn't got time to get around to loving everyone and He needs our help, but to love for our own sakes—to make us loving beings who nurture our own souls with our own love.

The most important birth we all face is the birth of soul—its emission from the boundaries of the physical form. When it is finally freed, Baba promises to be there for all who have been true to Him. To be true to Him is to be true to His Words.

Now is the important time. Every day is precious. A day at work, a day of illness, a day when everyone you meet is ill-tempered, or a day filled with beauty and happiness is a day with the opportunity to put Baba's Words into action. Words such as...

*It is only in the depth of silence that the voice of God can be heard.*

*Slowly and steadily coax yourself away from bad company and join the company of good people, or sit alone with God.*

*Repeat the Name of God. It is like a thunderbolt which will pulverize mountains of sin.*

*If you wish to build up a permanent relationship with God, you must strengthen Satwic tendencies.*

*Glorify your brief span between birth and death. Do God's work.*

*Be embodiments of Love.*

*Cultivate the habit of remembering the Lord with every breath, then only can you remember Him with the last breath.*

**—Barbara A. Rodgers, Indianapolis, U.S.A.**

## Message of the Song

The twentieth day of August 1948, my wife and I reached Puttaparthi. That was the first time I set foot on the holy ground and sat face to face near Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He was vital and vivacious, bubbling with love and laughter. He was in His twenty second year. Every word He spoke during conversation, dialogue, discussion or discourse, every song He sang during the Bhajan sessions in the morning and evening hours at the Bhajan Mandali building where He lived or on the sandy bed of the Chitravati river, to which He often led His devotees, and even every reply, repartee, and remonstrance had, I noticed, the stamp of originality, generosity and sympathy, as well as the sweetness and sustaining content which was most welcome to head and heart.

One song that He had composed and taught the inmates of the Mandali struck me as unique in content. I had participated in Bhajans at many Ramakrishna Ashrams and at the Rama Mandirams in many urban, suburban and trans-suburban areas. The songs in those places were in the names of God. His exploits and excellences, His compassion and conquests, His beauty and bounty. This song was a lesson, an exhortation, a prescription, an Upanishad. It had, nevertheless, the time and tune, the rhythm and raga, the joy and jingle, that made it attractive and amply satisfying. It was in Telugu and so, found its way straight into the crevices of the heart. Swami had dictated the song, and instructed His sisters and other devotees to sing it, full six years earlier, when He was residing mostly in the house of Karnam Subbamma which was adjacent to the place where His "parents" dwelt.

When translated, that song, which moved me so much, read:

*With Sathya Dharma Santhi Prema  
Let your journey daily move on and on.  
As man, your duty is just try your best.  
Success and failure happen at God's behest.  
Keeping God in mind, for ever in faith.  
Be busy, fulfilling the duties of the day.  
That's the path which led Janaka, the  
King, Into Bliss of Release, beyond human reach!  
With Sathya Dharma Santhi Prema  
Let your journey daily move on and on.  
Why crave and cry, for attainments eight?  
They are snares, which delude and deceive.  
In life's dark jungle, so thick with gloom,  
The Name does bring bright light of day.  
With Sathya Dharma Santhi Prema  
Let your journey daily move on and on.  
Cultivate the heart, the inner patch of land.  
Use the mind for ploughing; as bullocks for yoke.  
The gunas can serve; but hold your Reason, as whip.*

*Your courage is the best food to render soil fertile.  
With Sathya Dharma Santhi Prema  
Let your journey daily move on and on.  
Sow the seeds of Love in the softened heart-land;  
Let devotion rain as tears, to refresh and reinforce.  
While fear or fumbling feelings sprout, uproot the weeds  
When harvest time arrives at last, be happy, you can  
Bring home the Treasure, that knows no measure.  
The Bliss Divine, the Grace Supreme, Brahmananda.  
With Sathya Dharma Santhi Prema  
Let your journey daily move on and on.*

When I sat alone on the sands that evening watching the crows and cranes coming home, the cattle returning to the village and the children playing in the dusk, the message of this song seeped silently into me. The need to weed out the crooked and narrowing thoughts and feelings, to expand the little patch beyond the bounds of self, family, community, country and nation and the sowing of Love therein in order to gain a thousand-fold harvest of Bliss!

And, Swami was instructing us to dismiss the exhibition of the "eight attainments", the Ashta Siddhis, as unworthy of adoration and attention, as snares which delude and deceive. They delude the person who has gained them into the belief that he has risen into Godhood and deceive those who witness the performance and abjectly applaud and approve. I had learnt from Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa that these Siddhis are powers that the ascetics acquire at a certain stage in their spiritual climb, like tonsillitis or measles during childhood. Swami also condemns any one who parades them as credentials for superhuman status. What exactly are the eight? The capacity to make the physical body as small as an atom or as big as a mountain, or as light as air and as heavy as steel, feeding it with fulfillment of all desires, crowning it with sovereign overlordship, catering to its greed for controlling others and achieving instantaneously whatever wish one fancies! Down-dragging, ego-boosting, trivial tantalising absurdities!

The eight Siddhis which force us to wade in mirages are, according to Patanjali, attained along with birth (the result of strenuous effort in previous lives) or by the use of drugs (mostly reprehensible) or the repetition of certain mantras under prescribed conditions or the mortification of the flesh under the watchful eye of an adept. But, of what avail are these powers won by whatever means? Patanjali, the author of the Yoga Sutras, himself declares, after listing them, that they are obstacles to Samadhi, the mergence in the Absolute. (III-8). Swami Vivekananda clarifies, "They are, as it were, to be met in the way; and if the Yogi rejects them, he attains the highest. If he is tempted to acquire them, his further progress is barred." They are tinsels with which the ego delights in decorating itself but, the ego unadorned is adorned the most. It has to be transparent and luminous, as pure as the Cosmic Person, in order to be welcomed back and accepted.

Swami has come to draw innocents away from quacks and charlatans who 'perform' pseudo or semi or mini spiritual feats and parade their skill and earnings, to boost their image. He does

not pardon those who pretend that their 'performances' are the result of the Grace showered on them by Him. When the Lotus circle was constructed facing the Prasanthi Nilayam (Abode of Supreme Peace) Prayer Hall, Swami spoke on the stages in spiritual exercise which it symbolised through a series of concentric steps one has to climb and the final process of arousal of one's psychic energy (as represented by the Lotus Pillar) until it expands into the thousand petalled Lotus with the pericarp of Perennial Wisdom, radiating light and love. There are eight flower-pots kept on the circumference, one in each of the eight directions. Swami explained that they represent the eight siddhis which happen but, which have, nevertheless, to be cast away as fraught with disastrous consequences.

### **The call**

Swami was calling for a more exciting, exacting adventure, I realised. The call came from Him, along with his revelation at the age of fourteen of His being the Teacher of Mankind to sow the seeds of Love, mould the sword (the mind) into a ploughshare and prepare the heart to receive the seeds and yield a plentiful crop of Love which you can share with all. Love is the Siddhi one must strive for, not a microscopic body or a telescopic eye.

I dwelt long on the refrain of that Bhajan song. When I pleaded for a little elaboration of the two lines, Swami had told me, "Sathya is the Power-house, Dharma is the series of pylons and cables that bring the Power to the home, Santhi is the tube or bulb through which the power flows harmless, and Prema is the Light which reveals and makes every one rejoice." Prema, selfless, universal-the same that Swami asks us to foster with our tears, tears of joy at the chance to share with others the Love He confers on us. Love is the one supreme Siddhi; it leads us to Sathya, directs us along Dharma; it ensures Santhi and frees us from any unloving thought, word and deed.

Swami has designated Love as the quality that interpenetrates, illuminates and validates every aspect of man physical, intellectual, emotional, psychic and spiritual. He says, "Love as thought is Truth (Sathya); Love in Action is Righteousness, Dharma; Love as feeling is Peace (Santhi); Love as understanding is Nonviolence, Ahimsa." In fact, Love is no Siddhi at all. It is one's genuine nature, the birthday gift from the Creator which we bring into the world with us on arrival. The Gita says, "Saha yajnaah prajaah srishtvaa" (III-10), "Humans are created with sacrifice as an inescapable duty." Sacrifice involves the shedding of attachment to 'I' for the sake of 'Mine' and the shedding of the idea of 'mine' for the sake of 'ours' and 'theirs' and finally for all'. The seed of Love sprouts in the form of interest, concern, affection and sympathy, and grows into compassion, mercy, charity and caring and sharing until God Himself is reached, as the river reaches the sea. This consummation is the end result of the expansion which is Love. This was the message the Bhajan song conveyed to me.

### **The values**

The four values Swami highlighted in that song which He directed devotees to repeat were the basic principles on which the Sai movement has been built. While addressing on 9th March 1986, more than 600 teachers from all over India gathered at Prasanthi Nilayam for a three-day long Seminar on "Education in Human Values" sponsored by Him, Swami announced, "You

may think that the programme of Education in Human Values was launched only five years ago. But, in fact, I initiated it nearly fifty years ago. When I was staying in Karnam Subbamma's house in Puttaparthi, I used to sing a song, beginning: 'With Sathya Dharma Santhi Prema...' Let your journey daily move on and on and describing Karma Yoga and Namasmarana as Sadhana for spiritual success."

Swami has added the value of Ahimsa to the four which His earliest announcement made nearly fifty years ago. While writing on Dharma in 1960 for the monthly magazine named by Him as Sanathana Sarathi, He emphasised the need for weeding out from the heart the latent instincts and impulses inherited from the primitive savage past and from the beasts of the jungle among whom and as whom we have spent a series of lives when we climbed up the spiral of evolution. He directed us to dissociate ourselves from thoughts, words and deeds that cause pain. "How can a person get the attitude of dedicating all his activities to the Lord, without at the same time being pure in thought, word and deed? Equanimity, Rectitude and Non-violence—these are the virtues of the servant of the Lord. How can cruelty and callousness co-exist with these virtues? To have selflessness the spirit of self-sacrifice, and the spiritual eminence required for the dedicatory attitude one must have, first, won the four characteristics of Sathya, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa." Ahimsa was thus elevated to a status comparable and conforming to the other four—Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema or even to a more emphatically enticing position.

—N. Kasturi

## **Prayers: For and From**

The fourth lesson of the Shiksha Valli, Taittiriya Upanishad, teaches *the student* of the Higher Learning the discipline which confers Divine Bliss, the prayer for physical, mental and intellectual excellence.

1. "Sariram me (pronounced like lay) vicharshanam (Able may my body be.)" Since the student is seeking the Atma and the Atma cannot be gained by weaklings, he needs a strong healthy body. It has to be efficient for the practice of meditation on the timeless and boundless OM. The body should not distract or delay or dilute the Sadhana by demanding constant care and frequent reconditioning. The gross physical body and the subtle sense organs are inter-related with the mind. A sound body bespeaks a sound mind and a sound mind guarantees a sound body.

2. "Jihvaa me madhumatthamaa" (Sweetest may my tongue, be). The tongue is the spokesman of the feelings, emotions and passions of man, of his delight and despair, his plans and prejudices, his love and hate. It can hurt or heal, soothe or suffocate. When, through self-control and sublimation, the character of man is purified and the heart is filled with love, speech is rendered soft and sweet. May the tongue become sweet by reciting the name of God and recounting His glory.

3. "Karnaabhyaam bhoori Visrutham" (With the ears, much may I hear) is the third prayer. One should not be afflicted with either deafness or monotony. The student must pay attention to the truths expounded by saints, sages, prophets and scholars and he must be encouraged to discover their value and validity.

4. "Sa me, Indro, medhayaa, sprnothu" (May the Lord cheer me with intelligence).

5. "Srutham me goapaaya" (What I have heard, let me treasure)—these are further prayers. The student prays for sharpness of intellect and for retentive memory. Information can promote transformation only when the chaff is winnowed and the grain retained by the vigilant intellect. Knowledge becomes wisdom through the alchemy of recollection, rumination and meditation.

### **The guru's prayer**

The Upanishad directs *the teacher* too to pray for earnest students, eager in the pursuit of the knowledge that illumines and liberates.

1. "Aa maa yanthu, brahmachaarinah svaaha" (May those who seek the higher learning, the knowledge of Brahman, come to me, Lord, from *every side*) is the first among the prayers. Enthusiastic disciples, sitting at the feet of the guru and imbibing the instructions, learn a great deal by mutual interaction. Since they come from every side, each one with a more or less distinctive cultural background, the process of living and learning together is bound to be a profound experience for all of them.

In fact, the second prayer is for this very variety. (2) "Vi maa yanthu brahmachaarinah svaaha" (Various may students come to me, Lord). The ideal of 'bahusrutham' can be realised only when the group represents an assortment of skills and insights. As regards these accomplishments, the Upanishad advises the teacher to pray thus: (3) "Pra maa yanthu brahmachaarinah svaaha" (May well-equipped students come to me, Lord)—students endowed with intellectual aptitude and spiritual hunger.

The students reside with the guru for many years and learn through precept and example. So, the teacher has to insist that they do not go out of hand or become recalcitrant or rebellious. The teacher has to keep out disciples who are not capable of discipline. Therefore, he is exhorted to pray, (4) "Damaa yanthu brahmachaarinah svaaha" (May students who have mastered self-control come to me, Lord) and (5) "Samaa yanthu brahmachaarinah svaaha" (May peace loving students come to me, Lord).

The ancient commentator elaborates the implications of these prayers thus: "Whatever be their respective ends and goals, may they come to me with intellectual longing for the unitive wisdom; may my students abstain from all puerile, sportive activities of the senses; may they be free from anger and other evil tendencies of the mind."

The teacher who has to feed and foster his students has, perforce, to pray according to the Upanishad, (6) "Anna paane cha sarvadaa (Grant me food and drink for ever), Vaasaamsi mama

gaavascha (clothes and kine) loamasaam pasubhih (having sheep and goats), and sree (good fortune) yasas (fame) sreyaas (spiritual victory) and pravesa (entrance into the Supreme Source)."

This is the path, the ideal, the Sadhana being revived and revitalised by Bhagavan, as a facet of His plan to re-establish Peace on Earth and Goodwill among men.

—*Gurudas*

## **Psychiatry and Spirituality**

Instead of leading to selflessness, a vision of brotherliness, a dedication to sacrifice for the good of the community and the, attainment of higher levels of consciousness, psychiatric values which, frequently over-emphasize the emotions, too often lead to a preoccupation with self-interest. We don't quite seem to understand what the saints have long known about the very special importance of morality in shaping character, and how character, influences the unfolding of consciousness. It is character, the concretization of morality, which determines the heights to which one's vision soars.

How essential it is for, the establishment of world peace and for the, highest state of individual growth that we come to recognize and accept a morality centered in an awareness of Universal consciousness and, leading to selflessness and brotherliness. Instead of dismissing this holy vision, we should be asking; just what are these values, this morality which leads to union, and how are we to adopt and incorporate into our character this special approach to reality?

Most choices of daily life are basically moral in nature, challenging our capacity to balance our need for gratification of animal drives and impulses with higher aspirations and our yearning for the infinite. These range from lower-level choices related to regulation and control of the senses and drives (do I need to eat so much?)—to higher-level choice's (should lie for selfish gain? )—to still higher choices regarding how best to spend time for personal gain and self-gratification, or sacrificial service for the benefit and happiness of others, and the cultivation-of our relationship with God.

Choices lead to action; action forms habits; habits solidify into character. The saints tell us that character is a concretization of our moral vision and that it is this structure which determines the depth of our vision into reality. If choice is strongly influenced by higher values and aspirations, if character grows out of the spiritual vision of oneness and brotherliness, it will lead us to ultimate union with the infinite. Seen in this light of morality—the guideline for directing thought, action and behaviour—takes on a new importance.

### **Morality and consciousness**

Psychiatrists may have a problem in seeing morality in this new light. We have too often seen overly harsh and punitive morality lead to psychological illness and bondage instead of freedom.



Yet there is a need to inquire more deeply into the nature of a balanced and sensible morality to realize its central importance in the dynamics of unfolding consciousness.

In psychiatry, we see people whose consciousness is fixated or caught by conflicts originating in early developmental stages. Frequently the object of therapy is to return with the patient to that stage of development in order to undo, resolve and relearn. Released from the bondage of fear, consciousness is free to move on its evolution to higher levels. It is at this point that the therapist, if not grounded in awareness of the dynamics of higher levels of consciousness, may unknowingly or knowingly focus too strongly on gratification of animal needs as the way to happiness and a fuller sense of self.

But the great spiritual personalities throughout history have taught the danger in this approach, that more important than self-gratification is the establishment of a morality and character that lead to real and lasting happiness. Here we can learn from the saints the special kind of disciplined spiritual work that leads to detachment from the temporary and transient, the world of duality—the world ruled by emotions and the pleasure/pain principle—in order to achieve higher levels of consciousness and, ultimately, union with the divine.

### **Perception of unity**

The dynamics of this process go something like this: First, one must have faith in the reality of a Universal Consciousness, or God, that created all this that we call the cosmos. As faith in this reality deepens, so too does our appreciation of the glory and grandeur of His handiwork. With this deepening appreciation comes an awareness of the love which prompted the creation. In turn our own love and devotion are ignited and form the basis for the development of higher consciousness. One begins to perceive divine handiwork and love in everything, and thus begins our vision of the unity underlying all the apparent variety in the universe.

This vision, practised in the outer world in the form of service to others and acts of brotherliness, and done in the spiritual attitude of selflessness without demand for personal gain or reward, leads to an even more penetrating vision and a deep and profound sense of peace and love. Detaching, in this way, from the ups and downs of a life governed, by the pleasure-pain principle, we enter a realm of steadiness of emotion and mind, peace and joy.

### **Vision of the divine**

With emotions and mind quieted, the vision of the divine is enhanced—and our confidence and faith in this vision grow. The more deeply centred we are in this reality, the more we are moved to greater expressions of sacrifice and surrender in its behalf. It is this sacrifice out of love, this holy act of surrender, that leads to the experience of union and the final realization that He and I are one. Such is the mystery of the dynamics of transcendence in Sai Baba's simple teaching of brotherhood.

When I hear psychiatrists discount what on the surface sounds like a simple teaching, I can only conclude that their consciousness has not opened enough to grasp the dire straits of our world condition; nor the great possibility of our human potential. Yet we must take these

teachings with the utmost seriousness. Not to do so is to constrict consciousness and to be content to live in the shallow and narrow. It is a sign of great short-sightedness, an unwillingness or immense fear of facing our mortality or immortality.

*—From "Spirit and the Mind", by Dr. Samuel Sandweiss,  
published by Birth Day Publishing Company, San Diego, California, U.S.A.*

## **Sai Jagat Samachar**

### **Flood Relief in Fiji**

**Suva (Fiji Islands):** Owing to a cyclone and heavy rains in April, several parts of the Fiji islands were ravaged by floods which left large numbers of people homeless and without food or clothing. The Sathya Sai Samiti of Suva joined hands, with other service organisations in the islands to provide relief to the affected population. The Sai Sevaks collected food, clothing, utensils and other requirements for distribution to the stricken people. Members of the Sai organisation donated fifty stoves to the affected, families.

### **Easwaramma Day**

**Singapore:** The Sathya Sai Baba Centre of Serangoon Gardens, Singapore, celebrated Easwaramma Day by holding special bhajan session on May 5 led by Bal Vikas children followed by short talks on Easwaramma by two pre-Seva Dal children..., Parents and elders were treated to a dinner prepared by the pre-Seva Dal children..

On 4th May, a full-day games programme was arranged for children and guests from the Hawkins camp, comprising mostly refugees from Vietnam.

### **Training Camps**

**Haryana:** Two State-level training camps for Lead Bhajan singers and Study Circle speakers from Haryana and Chandigarh were held on April 26 and 27 at Sonapat. The camp for singers was attended by 31 men and 20 ladies and the camp for speakers was attended by 20 men and 5 ladies. In addition to talks, the participants were given opportunities to show their mettle in singing and speaking. Besides the trainees, local Sai devotees and interested persons attended the camps.

**Quilon (Kerala):** A two-day training camp for about 250 Seva Dal members from all over Kerala was held at Mavelikkara on May 17 and 18. On the 18th the trainees, carried out various service activities' in seven "adopted" villages, such as constructing compost pits, cleaning of roads, laying approach roads, constructing smokeless choolas, and visiting homes for health and hygiene education. In addition, bhajans and Nagarsankirtan were conducted, in the morning.

The Sathya Sai organisation in Kerala State has been permitted by the Inspector-General of Police, Kerala, to conduct bhajans and study classes for prisoners in the Central jails and sub-jails in the State.

*Those attached to God, aspiring for God; aware of God, adoring God have certain distinct marks by which they can be identified. Such people have a compassionate heart. If a person turns the rosary on the fingers, and is intently engaged in watching the tip of his nose unmindful of the distress that dances around him, we can at best name him a sloth, that is all. Get up, place the rosary in its bag, and activate yourselves in relieving distress—that is the true spiritual path. Do not waste all your years with stone images, pictures of idols. Learn to see in every living vital active person, the embodiment of all energy, all beauty, all beneficence, namely, God. God is subtler than ether, filling the smallest crevice with His majesty. Know this and serve His manifestations, wherever you meet them.*

—Baba

## **The Grain of Grace**

"The person who has no knowledge can be taught with ease; the person who is fully conversant can be convinced quickly; but the person who has a grain of knowledge and proud of it can never be saved, even by Brahma," declares Bhartrhari, the ancient Sanskrit poet in his Neeti Sataka (verse 3).

The very first verse of the Ethical Hundred describes what is worth knowing as "the phenomenon beyond space, time and causation, the eternal embodiment of pure consciousness, knowable only through one's own experience, agitationless and self-effulgent." The lost ones are those who have had a flash of that effulgence but who have allowed that grain of knowledge to be neglected or negated, disowned or devalued.

When that vision is treasured, tasted and fostered, it can be made a source of continuous delight (Ananda). The source is the Atma within, a spark of the supreme Self which appears as the Universe. The Atma is the motivator in every being and thing. It operates through the three levels of consciousness, through the ego and its tools—reason, mind and the senses.

The grain of knowledge, the vision of the beyond, the thrill of ecstasy has to be kept in; the storms of doubt, the floods of passion; the gusts of attachment and conflict, (Raga-Dwesa), have to be shut out. Swami declared a few years ago, after the emergence of Lingam on Shivaratri, that those who had witnessed the event have been rescued from further lives. But, He mentioned, those who treasured the vision they were privileged to imprint on their memory—the vision of the symbolic repetition of the projection of the Cosmos achieved by the mere Will by the Omnipotent Universal Consciousness—and meditated on its supreme significance can wipe off their past and be weaned from their future and delight in the present.

Each of us is vouchsafed, through His Grace, at some moment or other, a wish to explore into our own truth, to peer into the mystery of nature, to listen to the music of the spheres, to hitch our wagon to a star, to discover the captain of our souls. And, our longing is rewarded with a 'grain' of wisdom, which we have to plant in a pure ploughed heart, and feed and foster until it fructifies and fulfils our destiny.

—*From a Devotee's Diary*

## **The Purpose**

*Many say there are roads to walk  
Seas to sail, and skies to fly  
Searching for what is the purpose  
In this life which is so short.*

*So much to do, so much to see  
And so much to be and become  
Wandering here and there  
Out of breath and without Peace  
We stumble over and over  
Searching for the hidden purpose.*

*Life goes on from birth to birth  
Seemingly never ending*

*There is so much in this world  
We want to have for our very own  
Many times not knowing what we do  
Searching for what we deem as purpose  
In this life which is so short.*

*If for once we stop and  
Let our hearts be our guide  
Let our minds rest, and ask who we really are.*

*We may someday realize that  
SAI is the purpose of our lives.*

—*P. Venkatesh Sonti, California.*

## **Call for Purity and Unity**

Purity, Unity, Divinity—these should be the watch-words of the millions in Indian villages; they alone can ensure material and spiritual well-being, observed Bhagavan Baba, during a discourse at a large gathering at Vagata village, where Sai Sevaks have been running a relief kitchen for feeding the drought-stricken people of the region.

Bhagavan visited the village on the morning of May 22, driving through the bleak countryside from "Trayee Brindavan". Men, women and children from Vagata and the villages around had gathered in front of the Varadarajaswami Temple to welcome Bhagavan and receive His blessings. A shamiana had been put up in front of the temple; the streets were decorated with flags and festoons. Bhagavan was received with Poorna-Kumbham and Vedic chants by the priests of the temple. He visited the temple and distributed Prasadam to the villagers, and moved along the long lines of eager folk.

Welcoming Bhagavan on behalf of the villagers, Sri Bachegowda. M.L.A. from the constituency, thanked Bhagavan for the relief provided to the drought-affected population and feeding over 400 people daily for over 50 days.

### **Lessons from the epics**

Speaking in simple mellifluous Kannada, the language of the area, Bhagavan said that men should take great care that their senses did not go astray and commit offences. Thinking evil, speaking evil, seeing evil invariably led to total ruin. Swami gave examples from the Mahabharata, which Indian villages still treasure in memory as precious heritage, to show how wickedness of one kind or other recoiled on the evildoers. Duryodhana always had evil thoughts about the Pandavas and ultimately he brought destruction upon his entire family. Keechaka cast an evil eye on Draupadi, when the Pandavas were living incognito in the Virata King's palace, and he paid for it with his life. The Ramayana, Swami said, had the story of Kaikeyi, who listened to the evil: counsel of Manthara, and so lost not only her husband but the regard and love other son, Bharata. No one today even likes to be known by the names of these infamous characters, Duryodhana, Keechaka or Ravana. But though the names are not favoured, the bad qualities associated with them have not been given up by mankind.

Swami asked the people to strive to give up evil thoughts, evil looks, vicious speech and the greed to give ear to evil counsel and slanderous gossip. People in the villages are more simple-minded and good natured than those in towns and cities. The atmosphere in the villages is less polluted. If villagers can cultivate purity in thought, word and deed, they can lead happy and contented lives, He said.

Learn to live in harmony and unity, He pleaded. "The village is to the villagers what the body is to the individual. Every organ in the body functions in cooperation with every other part. If the foot steps on a thorn, the eye feels the pain and sheds tears. If the eye notices a thorn or stone on the road, it warns the foot to avoid it. Villagers should develop the same sense of unity and share

their joys and troubles as one organic body. There is nothing you cannot achieve with unity as your strength."

"With purity and unity, you can disclose your divinity and develop genuine devotion to God. In Vagata you have an ancient temple venerated for centuries by your forefathers. You should conduct bhajans daily in the morning and evening and earn the Lord's grace. You should fill your hearts, with love and make your lives holy and purposeful. When all work in this spirit of unity and charity, this village would become a model for all the rest," Swami announced. Bhagavan concluded His discourse with a bhajan song which the huge gathering sang in chorus following them line by line.

On the way back to Brindavan from Vagata, Bhagavan halted for a while at Samethanahalli, an "adopted village," where the Mahila Vibhag was conducting Bal Vikas classes. Bhagavan impressed on the villagers the need to avoid factions among themselves and keep away from partisan groups. Mutual cooperation and love were the keys to a better and happier life, He said.

### **Relief centres**

The drought-relief programme in the Karnataka State was initiated by Bhagavan when He felt the distress of people in several districts. Bhagavan arranged for the supply of rice and other foodstuffs and directed the Sai Seva Organisation to run free kitchens in selected villages. The first relief centre was started at Lakkanahalli village in SiraTaluk, Tumkur District. Here 250 persons are being fed every day. The centres at Hulkoti, in Dharwar district, at Kagalgumba in Bija District and Bagepalle in Kolar District have kitchens feeding hundreds of famine stricken families. Besides members of the Sai Seva Samitis of these Centres, Sai Seva Dal members from South Kanara and other Districts are rendering assistance in the preparation and distribution of food at all the centres.

A spiritual orientation is given to the villagers of these centres by organising daily Nagarsankirtan and Bhajans besides talks on Service and Sadhana.

## The Mind - Use and Misuse

*The mind causes rebirth to beings  
The mind causes release to beings  
The mind confers victory to beings  
In the struggle to attain the four  
Goodness, Fullness, Fruition, Freedom, —  
Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha, —  
The mind confers mergence everlasting.*

The mind wills, yearns, prompts and insists on effort and action. This process is named Sankalpa. These are like commands (Sasana-s). Every one has to be aware of the variety and validity of the actions induced by these promptings. The mind is host to fifty million such! Of the thoughts that appear and vanish, the clouds that pass silently, many stay and stir the mind into activity. These are referred to as Sankalpas. Until these are well understood against their vast background, man cannot live happily and in peace. Good Sankalpas can elicit the best out of man and help him to use all his strength for his uplift. Man has to recognise bad Sankalpas or urges as soon as they arise and render them ineffective by the systematic cultivation of beneficial Sankalpas. These latter alone can save a person from disaster and keep him close to Prasanthi, supreme Calm.

Ships at sea are guided by the compass along the desired direction; without it, they risk being wrecked on rocks or icebergs. Man has to sail safe across the ocean of Samsara (Flux and Flow). So he needs a one-pointed agitation-less mind to guide him and guard him.

One can discover for himself how difficult it is to equip oneself with such a mind. The face photographs the mind; its moods, its decisions and desires, its Sankalpas, in short. Consider a gramophone record; its contents—words, songs, noises—can only be heard, they cannot be seen; but, the contents of the mind—evil Sankalpas based on anger, hatred, envy, despair, arrogance, egotism or good Sankalpas based on truth, love, charity, compassion—can be seen on the face, though they cannot be heard!

The face is moulded by the mind. Every single Sankalpa (or thought accepted and acted upon) is a streak or line which affects its shape. We can picture it as the Notice Board, which announces to all concerned the activities inside the Institute. The Sankalpa cannot be hidden or kept under cover. All attempts in this direction are as foolish as the ostrich's behaviour when pursued. It sticks its small head into the loose sands and considers itself safe from being killed by hunters. But its huge body attracts the eye. It is soon destroyed and dragged away. Evil Sankalpas as well as good are reflected on the face of man.

A Sankalpa affects the consciousness more subtly than an electric charge. It manifests as a need, a motive with a name and form. It colours the thought stream in a distinct way. It is no scribble on a blank mind; it causes clusters of reaction in the blankless mind. Its potency depends

on time and circumstance. Sankalpa-s breed further Sankalpas; they play their role, unaided, through their own latent force.

The mind activates the eye and ear, the tongue and nose and every organ of perception and action. The mind initiates its activation when a Sankalpa influences it. The mind is the unseen witness, the interested observer, as the queen inside the Raja's palace, watching the flow of men and vehicles on the road below through holes in the wooden window panes of the zenana. Whence do the Sankalpa-s originate? From the ego, the I and the I? From the inmost Atma.

Sankalpas or Conations or Inner Resolutions tend to be attracted towards one another, when they flow in the same direction or are related to similar desires. Cranes fly together as a flock; they do not mix with crows. Crows form their own groups. Among beasts of the forest, bison have herds of their own kind; they have no comradeship with elephants, which keep bison away and mingle only with elephants. Deer too form groups by themselves. Similarly, a musician attracts musicians around him. Teachers seek teachers for company.

The decisions which the mind makes, either to commit or omit, are amazing, for, the Cosmos and all its contents can be described as their consequence. The mind decides on the fact or facet of the objective world which it has to notice. The Sankalpa bears fruit and the fruit conforms to the seed from which it springs. It has to reveal its impact, sooner or later. So, man has to avoid evil Sankalpas and cultivate good ones.

For example, one might entertain a thought to harm or injure someone. And, it might fructify as harm or injury on him. But, the Sankalpa will surely rebound on the person who welcomed it bringing with it hundredfold harm and injury. A bad Sankalpa hurts both the person and his target. A poisonous worm injures all who handle it. The Mahabharata relates how the Kauravas fed and fostered the Sankalpa to adopt various tactics to disgrace and eliminate their cousins, the Pandavas; the result was their total elimination along with those who supported them. The Pandavas survived crowned with glory. Their Sankalpa was good; they achieved their aims and their subjects were happy.

Therefore, as soon as a passing thought sprouts in the mind as an urge or desire, one has to examine it with care to discover whether it would tarnish or promote one's reputation, hinder or help one's progress, weaken or strengthen one's character. If it is of the former category, cast it away, as a foul stinking object. And, save yourself by saturating the mind with good intentions. Earnestness in this direction is heightened by mutual encouragement. Rishis in their sylvan settlements benefited largely from such consultative, confirmative processes.

The nature of the Sankalpa that motivates a person can be sensed by others. The story of Ted Ross, a lone farmer in Holland, illustrates this quite well. He left his brother and mother in order to live in peace and freedom and settled on a forty-acre farm in a cottage he built thereon. He had interest in poultry farming and raised chicken. Killing birds for food was part of the culture he grew in. One night a fox entered the yard and made a meal of them. Its visit continued, night after night. So, the farmer took a decision (Sankalpa) to kill the fox and kept awake with gun in



hand. But though fowls disappeared, the fox was not seen. He could hear its approach, the flutter of the birds and its exit, but he could not spot where it was. His vain vigil persisted for five long years.

He consulted many elders about the mystery. A pure hearted sympathiser told him, "Ted! Your mind is so free from blemish that even a tiny blot is patent to all. The fox is aware of your intention and is taking clever measures to avoid being noticed." Animals have this capacity. It is a gift of nature. A dog curled on the brink of the road will not be afraid of your approach, when you are Sankalpa free. Plan to hit it, while even twenty feet away; the dog will rise and run! When animals have this sensitivity, why mention, men? Man's Sankalpas, their manifestations in action, can be detected easily. A person who has committed wrong, who has robbed another's property, who has scandalised another or uttered a lie—look at his face; examine it closely. You will notice the signs of confusion and fear. The anxiety makes the blood cells become weak; the face becomes pale; lips quiver. The person suffers in health. Suppression is dangerous; expression brings about infamy. This is the effect of evil Sankalpa. It must, therefore, be plucked by the roots and thrown out.

Unrest, anxiety and anarchy are fed by evil Sankalpa. You must see good, hear good and act good, so that evil intentions do not arise. People who move with criminals or read or write about them are likely to be infected with the evil. Sadhakas who move in the company of the godly are prone to develop serenity and compassion.

The mind travels quicker than sound, far quicker than even light. Just as one holds under greater control a car that moves at a speed faster than the rest, one has to exercise greatest control and mastery over the mind. Obey the mind's vagaries; you become a beast. Let discrimination control the vagaries; you become a candidate for Divinity. Every urge must undergo a test, must be cleared by a judge, namely, Buddhi. Does it prompt one to ridicule or defame another? Then, dismiss it as unworthy. Good intention sprouts as action; action fructifies into Sadhana; from Sadhana emerges Seela (Virtuous Character) that draws down the shower of Grace. Intentions can all be beneficial, when the person persists in good company. Of course, one cannot gain them from without; they have to grow from within, from the heart, freed from the weeds of pride and greed. Good company helps to purify the heart.

This is the lesson people have to learn today-cultivate Sat Sankalpa (good thoughts) by seeking out and sheltering in Satsang (good company). Planting poisonous seeds, people hope to get nutritious fruits! Why blame God when bitter seeds do not yield sweet fruits? Man is the only animal that imbibes and expresses Ananda. The smile on the face is the blooming of the joy that fills the heart; it wafts away discontent and depression from other faces.

The mind can be an instrument to gain success in any of the paths of Yoga and in the struggle to gain the goals of life. If it is given licence to foster any type of wish or conation, it is certain to plunge man in bondage. The mind shapes life and the world wherein one lives. The mind of the individual, the *i* has originated from the Cosmic Mind of God, Brahman. One's duty is to merge

it in the source. Then, the i becomes I. Before the mergence, the i is known as man and announces itself as limited.

In order to achieve the mergence, the consummation, saturate the mind with Sat-sankalpa. Remember: "From good thoughts, good minds; from good minds, Good God."

—*Bhagavan's Discourse at the Institute Auditorium on 10-7-1986*

### **"Be Like the Rose"**

One day not so long ago,  
I was seated beside my Lord.  
And in His Hand I saw alone red rose.

I watched as HE gently unfolded  
Each petal one by one  
The Creator and His creation  
Perfect as HE ordained it to be.

I recalled the words of the Lord then—  
"Be like the rose that speaks silently  
In the language of fragrance."

For one fleeting moment I wished I was the rose  
Held within the Lord's palm.  
He could then unfold  
Layers of doubt and hurt,  
Of pleasure and pain,  
Layers of egoism and mistrust  
Anger, joy and sorrow,  
One by one,  
Until the divine in me  
A spark of His  
Would resplendently be revealed.

—*R.R., Madras*

**STUDENTS' CORNER:**

**Always There**

*Sai is always there  
To bring us out of our despair  
He wipes away our tears  
And calms down our fears.*

*We are but playthings in His hand  
And sustained by his magic wand  
But his magic is none but that of love  
Which leads from here to above.*

*When we're weighed down by sorrow  
And have no hopes for the morrow  
Just a recital of His name  
Kindles our hopes like a flame.*

*Sai is always there  
To guide, protect and care  
He is the eternal witness  
Pure, blissful and faultless.*

**—Jayasri Srinivasan  
VIII Standard**

**Dharma in the Work Place**

One of the most important and difficult places for devotees to apply the concept of Dharma is in the work place or wherever income is earned. It is important because the world of commerce or income is where the forces of adharma or unrighteousness hold sway. The world of commerce is the world of possessions greed, fear, envy, hate, conflict, etc. It is a world that needs truth, honesty, trust, cooperation, responsibility and other positive principles, but these principles are being swept away by selfishness, cynicism, shortsightedness and passions.

Many people do not feel that they can do anything about the situation even though they have to work there. They can either go along with the crowd or try to isolate themselves while they work. These are survival strategies that produce tensions and unhappiness. The first is a tension between the social norms and the inner nature or teachings. The second is a tension and fear from isolation. Neither produces the inner peace and harmony that is possible by resolving how to

overcome the difficulties of keeping good relationships with your associates while being true to your inner self.

The purpose of this article is to suggest that the difficulties most people see in this process are largely illusory. For example, the fear of being different is an illusion because people are always different. Unity can exist without uniformity. Being different does not require conflict or disagreement with others. Part of the fear is a lack of confidence in "getting along" or being "well liked". This can be overcome with training. The third difficulty is a feeling of helplessness of one against many or against forces over which they have no control. This can be overcome by a clearer understanding of what is possible and the number of small things that add up to success.

### **Discussion groups**

The major point of this article is that the training and confidence can best be given by discussion groups at the Sai Centres. Principles, techniques and problems can be discussed, people can bring together their knowledge and experiences. The points that follow in this article are some suggestions for discussion rather than recommendations. Unfortunately there are no neat little formulae that one can apply without thinking very much. These problems of human interaction have been around for a long time and have intrigued psychologists, social scientists and others. It is only through a lot of discussion that people can become familiar with the problems and develop the thought patterns that will be effective. It may be a lot of work but it is important. What better place is there to improve your thought pattern than a Sai Centre?

Many people look for a great issue on which to take a stand—a great battle between good and evil—a chance to be here for righteousness. This may be so in movies and books but in real life it is thousands of little acts of understanding, kindness, cooperation, truth, etc., that make an impression. None of these will earn a hero's medal and many of them will not receive a 'thank you'. However it is little acts that form people's opinion of your character, instill trust and confidence in their view of you, and make them willing to follow your example. Do not look for thanks but trust that God's accounting system is more accurate and detailed than man's.

### **Little acts that matter**

Remember also that the forces of adharma operate on thousands of little acts as well. Your own attitudes to truth, honesty, and understanding are undermined by little lies, selfish acts and small indifferences to people's needs and feelings. The patterns of indifference to little acts as set by the general populace result in indifference to major scandals and corruption. Therefore try to fill each hour with equanimity, poise, unselfish acts and thoughts of God so that your bad habits will have no room to operate. Encourage others by noting their unselfish acts.

The great advantage of this concept is that it eliminates the previously mentioned fears of being different from or in conflict with the norms of the group because little acts are not threatening to the group. There is no moral judgement or preaching.

Some people think of good only in terms of giving money or doing a service of money value. There are also acts of understanding, encouragement, or listening to problems. Your acts of

generosity could be better applied to the poor and needy than to your associates who do not need them. Generosity in the work place can be misinterpreted and do more harm than good.

### **Flatten your ego**

When some people think of restoring dharma in the world of business, they think of correcting the dishonesty, lies and deceit in others, so that the world will be a better place. However, they cannot accomplish this task and it is wishful thinking or an ego trip. First correct yourself so that you can set an example. Do not preach against the sins of the world because the preaching that has been done seems to have had little effect. Do not attempt to correct others. They have to do that for themselves. Flatten your ego and confine your efforts to where they will do good for others.

If people have problems do not tell them what you think they should do, but help them to find their own solutions. Listen carefully to all aspects of the problem, discuss alternatives, and wait for them to find an answer. Meditate on the problem and pray for yours and their guidance. Give courage and encouragement. Allay fears. Keep your ego out of the road so that wisdom can flourish.

To successfully help others will tax all of your mind, patience, wisdom and discrimination. The task has never been easy and is exemplified by the prayer:

"Lord give me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

### **"Do not fear"**

Much has been written about the difficult moral decisions some people have had to face. These can occur but, if you constantly do your best with the lesser decisions and problems each day, you will be equipping yourself for the difficult decisions. Above all do not fear. If you have to give up some security or position because of a fundamental belief, then do so quietly in the faith that you may be going elsewhere to work with better people. Do not try to attract others to your cause lest you cater to your ego.

If you cheerfully practise understanding, tolerance, compassion, justice and similar virtues with your fellow men as you try to solve their problems, you will develop wisdom and keep your ego out of the road by not being attached to the results of your actions. You can earn the trust and respect of your associates. You will teach by example.

### **Enlightened self-interest**

If such principles as truth, honesty, responsibility, etc., are to be fostered in the work place it is useful to show that they are in the self-interest of everyone.

The discussion groups can consider how the concepts are to be put across to their associates by appealing to self-interest.

Consider the need for truth in the business world as an example. A manager needs to sort the truth out of all the information received. The untruths must be discarded because it is only the truth that can be used for decisions and action. If incorrect information is used, costly mistakes can result. The time that is spent collecting information that is wrong or suspect represents inefficiency. It is like a refining operation where only the pure metal is desired for a better product.

Lies or deceit can damage the trust and confidence that are necessary for individuals to work together. Anyone who lies to a superior has to work hard to reestablish trust. The effectiveness and productivity of an organization determine the ability to pay satisfactory wages to the employees and are directly affected by the percentage of truth. Truth is therefore in the enlightened self-interest of everyone in the organization.

Although the arguments expressed here may seem obvious, you can expect strong opposition. One of the philosophies that is currently popular states that if individuals operate in their own selfish interests it will be for the benefit of society. This is in direct contrast to the above which states that the individual must operate in the interest of the group to serve his enlightened self-interest, whether the group is the company or the nation.

The effectiveness and productivity of the nation determine the quantity of goods to be shared by the people.

Some people believe that competition and survival of the fittest strengthen people and cooperation weakens them. Others believe that conflict between classes is the natural order and; although cooperation within the group is desired, cooperation outside the group is frowned upon. The discussion groups can evolve strategies for dealing with the various forms of opposition that may occur.

### **Faith and confidence**

The great advantage of adhering to principles like truth, honesty, cooperation and responsibility is that they have a universal appeal transcending all religions, creeds and backgrounds. It is like appealing to inner knowledge or the Atma. If people's faith in these Godly attributes can be restored, they will find their own way to God. The opposition to these principles is only a thin veneer of cynicism and supposed sophistication. It is not likely to be strong or sustained.

The discussion groups are really necessary for people to get used to thinking about their work situation in terms of these principles and the challenge of putting them into practice. People have to develop the faith and confidence that it is possible to have a bridge between their spiritual world and the world of work which often has negative emotions and feelings. Talking with other people about their experiences can build confidence.

An interesting topic for discussion groups is the need for patience in dealing with people because it has probably taken a long time for their attitudes to develop. On the other hand, there

are situations where a change of technique can promote rapid progress. It is necessary to discriminate by understanding some of the factors.

Fear can complicate the situation and make it difficult to deal with. Many problems are associated with fear or lack of confidence. Extreme possessiveness, cheating or anger can result from a fear of poverty. The amount of negative news and conversation about global problems of pollution, moral decay, nuclear war, etc., tends to increase the level of fear and the interaction with the other aspects of adharma. Fear can be difficult to deal with because many people will not respond to statements such as "Do not fear" or "See, I am not afraid." It is possible to do more harm than good.

Anger is another emotion that is very hard for some people to control. It can be associated with fear and frustration, and be amplified by either.

There are many techniques to be discussed for overcoming these problems. They have plagued psychologists, social scientists and philosophers for decades. The discussion groups can benefit from people who have had experience as managers, supervisors, or in the above specialist fields. The objective is to combine the spiritual teachings with other available knowledge to make people live better lives. This will help to integrate the Sai teachings into the world.

*—E. Marshall Bauder*

### **"Let it Merge"**

I, I, I myself, I,  
Individualized ignorance  
asking who, what, and why.  
Not Self at all—  
That ego we call  
I, I, I myself, I.

I saw it, I did it,  
I lost or I won.  
I'm attached to my mother,  
my daughter, my son.  
I'm elated, dejected,  
loved, or rejected.

I'm so incomplete.  
Oh, please, Baba,  
dissolve this I

At your lotus feet.  
Let it merge with You  
and blissfully be  
Sai, Sai, Sai, the Self, Sal.

—J. Thomas, California

*The word Dharma, which is really bound up with an infinite variety of meanings, is being inadequately described by one word, duty, in the modern age. Duty is something which is connected with an individual, a predicament, or with a particular time or country. On the other hand Dharma is eternal, the same for everyone everywhere. It expresses the significance of the inner Atma. The birthplace of Dharma is the heart. What emanates from the heart as a pure idea, when translated into action will be called Dharma. If you have to be told in a manner that you can understand, one can say, "Do unto others as you want them to do unto you"—that is Dharma. Dharma consists in avoiding actions which would hurt others. If anyone causes happiness to you, then you in turn should do such things that will cause happiness to others. When we recognise that what others do will cause difficulties and if we do the same things, that would be adharma.*

—Baba

#### VIDYAGIRI CAMPUS NEWS:

### **Multi-Dimensional Research in Sri Sathya Sai Institute**

The wide range of research activities in progress in the different scientific departments of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning has been highlighted in a detailed report published in a recent issue of "University News", the weekly Journal of the Association of Indian Universities.

The report has underlined the purposeful character of the research programmes in relation to the needs of the predominantly arid and backward rural area in which the Institute is located.

Within five years of the inception of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Prasanthi Nilayam (states the report) a strong base for scientific research has been laid in the areas of Life Sciences, Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics. Interdisciplinary research is encouraged in the fields of environmental sciences, chemistry of natural products, fibre optics and holography. Research laboratories are being equipped with the best available equipment for quality research of the highest standard in these fields.



In the years to come this base is expected to be expanded so that centres of excellence in the selected areas of research develop to attract the best available talent in the field. In general the problems selected are of great research and development value both from the natural point of view and also taking into account the rural setting of this Institute as it is located in one of the most backward areas of the country, generally arid, drought—prone, poverty—stricken and sparsely populated.

An active centre of environmental research is emerging at the Department of Biosciences. Owing to the inaccessibility of this part of the country, scientific investigations have been negligible, if not completely lacking. Thus, there is a virgin and very promising area of research. The general aridity of the area makes the study of water quality, both underground and surface water, and its management with reference to geochemistry, fertility of soil and biological productivity a very meaningful study of immediate relevance to the people of the area for improving their living conditions.

### **Environmental research**

The problems investigated at this newly emerging centre of environmental research concern the following: microbiological aspects of soil and water, their relation to plant cover; species of aqua-cultural importance, their nutritional requirements with particular reference to micronutrients (minerals and vitamins) and water quality of the area; identification of plants as biological indicators for mineral wealth of the region; suitability of saline resistant crop plants for otherwise uncultivable saline soils of this region; general afforestation and improvement of soil and environmental quality; and intensive and in-depth survey of fluorosis reported in this area, with particular reference to Sri Sathya Sai Taluk which comprises 180 villages, and designing indigenous defluoridation methods taking into account ecological and socioeconomic factors.

A major project entitled 'Aquaculture with reference to water quality and water management' of the area, (Sri Sathya Sai Taluk in particular and Rayalaseema in general) is already in progress. As many as 36 water quality criteria are being investigated but special attention is being focused on fluoride content of the water with reference to fluorosis which is endemic in many parts of this region. In addition, physiological indicators of environmental stress (both extrinsic and intrinsic) are being investigated at the tissue, cellular, sub-cellular and molecular level by using blood as a sensitive index of the physiological status of the animal. Both haematological and haematopoietic parameters are being studied together with other organs and organ systems in vertebrates. Similar models in invertebrates and plants are being identified. Thus an integrated biological approach to various problems of environmental interest is being developed.

### **Chemistry of natural products**

The main area of research in the Department of Chemistry is the Chemistry of natural products which has been chosen in view of the importance of the subject vis-a-vis the aims of the Institute, the needs of the locality and the nation. A very comprehensive programme has been drawn up which envisages investigations covering all aspects of this branch of Chemistry. Close

collaboration with the Department of Biosciences is being established, though at present, the focus is on structural and synthetic chemistry so that a firm chemical foundation for the applied work is laid. The infrastructure needed for systematic work in this broad area of chemical research is being built up. The department has already acquired U.V. /Visible, infra-red, luminiscence and KI proton magnetic resource, spectrophotometers as well as a HPLC instrument. Investigations on the chemical constituents of locally available medicinal plants and on the synthesis of heterocyclic systems related to naturally occurring compounds with potential pharmacological activities are in progress.

The main areas of research in the Department of Physics are Fibre Optics Sensors and aspects of holography. A fairly comprehensive programme of work has been worked out covering different aspects of these areas. Facilities available in the Department include a 3W Ar-ion laser and advanced optical components, and spectrum and waveform analyzers.

The Department of Mathematics has initiated programmes of research in the applications of Mathematical, Statistical and Computer Simulation methods in various areas of practical importance such as Environmental and Ecological Modeling, Physiological Modeling, Crop-Weather Forecast Modeling, Fluid Dynamics, Geophysical Fluid Dynamics, Preference analysis in Social Sciences, and Cancer Research Modeling.

Investigations on 'Flow of suspension of particles' which has a wide range of applications in Environmental pollution, Bio-Technology, Chemical Engineering, Rocket Technology etc., are nearing completion. Work is also in progress on the project 'Mathematical Modeling of Environmental Effects (light and Wind) on plants'.

The Department has also initiated an. interdisciplinary research programme (with the Bio-science Department) titled 'Mathematical and Statistical Modeling and computer simulation of Environmental Effects on Crops', which has relevance to the problems of agriculture in the region. Research work in the fields of Geophysical Fluid Dynamics, Preference Analysis in Social Sciences and Mathematical Models in Cancer Research is also proposed to be taken up shortly.

**GITOPADESH:**

### **Near and Dear**

The Lord has revealed to Arjuna, and thereby to all mankind, that He is pleased by the devotion offered by aspirants for Grace. "Bhakthimaan me priyo narah," (The man so devoted is dear to me XII 19) He declares. The devotee offers prayer, worship and his thoughts, words and acts to God whom he clothes with a Form and Name and attributes like Love, Compassion, Wisdom and Power. Most devotees seek health, wealth, power and fame from God, which are all

trivial assets yielding momentary pleasure. Divine Grace can confer the most precious gift of His Love. Man may assert with the pride of achievement that he loves God. That takes him only halfway through. He does not gain much there from. Does God respond with 'me priyo narah', 'he is dear to me'? Only then can man claim to have achieved Grace.

How can man become 'dear' to God? The Gita emphasises two qualifications: *Samthushtah Sathatham* (ever contented) and *Drdhanischayah* (with firm resolve). He has to be contented and cheerful always, without regard for the changing tides of fortune. It should not be a pose, a passing phase, an artificial, superficial show. The prefix *sam* indicates that the *tushti* (contentment) has to be deeply rooted in the heart, manifested in and through every thought and act. The other word for contentment is *tripti*; the all pervading never changing form of *tripti* is also denoted by the prefix *sam*, which changes it into *samtripti*.

*Samtushti* fills the heart with divine delight. It marks a stage of detachment from the world, for the world makes one swing from pain to pleasure and back again. The devotee therefore must desist from attempts to earn joy or avoid grief. He has to be unconcerned with ups and downs. Success should not boost his ego, nor should defeat land him in dejection. Honours should not turn his head, nor dishonour make it droop. Equanimity, serenity, these are the signs of *Samtushti*. The devotee welcomes gratefully whatever happens to him or is given to him by the Divine Will, to which he has surrendered his own will.

### **Firm resolution**

*Drdha Nischayam* (firm resolve) is the other requisite. Of course, all men possess this qualification; it is an asset that assures survival, and secures popularity and pre-eminence. Those who climb Himalayan peaks derive the tenacious Courage, that sustains them, from the firmness of their resolve not to turn back. Others exhibit their heroism in crossing tumultuous oceans alone. Some others resolve on exploring fearful forests.

Firmness of resolution, bravery and skill are utilised even for merciless torture of others to rob them of their riches. Ignoring their inner divinity and setting aside their human-ness, some people descend to demonic levels and become fanatically cruel. We have to conclude that *drdha nischaya* can serve good purposes as well as evil.

Valmiki, when he was Ratnakara, used his courage and adventurousness in vicious and wicked ways. Contact with the Seven Sages and their teachings made him direct the same qualities towards Rama. He was transformed so completely that he became the author of the Ramayana.

Texts on devotion dwell at great length on the worship of the Personal and the Impersonal God, or of the Form-ful and the Formless God. This problem too is considered and solved in the Bhagavad Gita. So long as man is afflicted with the delusion that he is the body which contains him and so long as he is attached to it and attracted by it, he cannot conceive the abstract, impersonal and formless entity.

### **The form and the formless**

Nor can man stay without interruption on the Personal as the ultimate basis. He has need for both the Form and the Formless. They are as the two wings for a bird, the two wheels for the cart and the two legs of the human being. Both are valuable and valid for the devoted seeker, though Personal is not as lasting as the Impersonal.

We have now about a thousand in this Mandir, with me. When you are back in your own homes and recollect this experience, you reconstruct this situation, this Prasanthi Nilayam, Swami and the thousand. Since this experience was gained in the wakeful stage, you could recall it into the subtle region of your consciousness, the Chitta Aakasa, whenever and wherever you wish. In order to make a child understand that the letters 'chair ' represent that piece of furniture, you have to draw the picture of a chair and write the letters underneath. When once he has learnt to identify the kshara (the temporary form, the chair) with the Akshara (the formless eternal the Word), the picture is eliminated; the Word remains. The Word, henceforward, represents the thing, the concrete material visible thing. If no chair existed, the word chair could not have emerged. The word God emerged to indicate an entity that was experienced. A 'nothing', icon-existing being' needs no name. The name is evidence of the thing. The word God is evidence of the Divine Phenomenon.

The objection may be raised that words like sky-flowers or castles-in-the-air do not denote any concrete tangible reality. But these are not words, they are compounds, artificial strings of words. Consider another example of Form and Noform. Take this pillow. You describe it as cotton enclosed in a cloth bag. I disclose that the cloth too is cotton. The shapeless formless cotton has become yarn and by dealing with the yarn as warp and woof, the cloth has put inform for the bag and the pillow.

From the Form to the Formless, from the Formless to the Form—both processes are possible and progressive. The Personal God is an expression, a symbol, a representation of the Impersonal God. The Impersonal does personate and assumes Form and Attributes. This is the very Nature of the Divine.

The devotee must not be agitated by such controversies promoted by people who have no intuitive experience. He must be free from anxiety and fear, pride and envy. He has four enemies intent on ruining him—anger, envy, hatred and the horde of desires. He regards both high and low as roles in the Divine play. When he insults or injures or rejects any one, he is, in fact, inflicting them on the God he adores. He cannot reap the harvest of Grace or the Bliss from the Atma, if he sows spiritual ardour on a heart full of the weeds of greed and hate. The basic moral prescription for the devotee who aspires to be near and dear to the Avatar is "Worship God and offer Love to Him in every living being."

*—Bhagavan's discourse on 2-8-84, Prasanthi Nilayam*

## **Spiritual Course for Medicos**

The Akola unit of the Sathya Sai Organisation of Maharashtra organised during the summer a two months' course in practical medicine and spiritual studies for students from the local Ayurvedic and Homeo colleges. In all 200 boys and girls who were in the final year of their medical course attended the classes, besides some passed students and doctors.

Senior doctors from Akola delivered lectures on practical medicine, while old devotees delivered lectures on Vedanta and spiritual sadhana. During the course, the boys attended bedside clinics and participated in medical camps arranged by the Sai Organisation in slums. They also took part in other service activities.

The Sai message of service to all without regard to creed, caste or community was, enthusiastically imbibed by the students. A film on Bhagavan's life and message was shown on the last day of the course.

Based on the experience of this year's summer course, the Akola Samiti has decided to make it an annual feature. Sai Samitis in other cities like Pune and Nagpur are expected to organise similar courses.

—*D. R. B.*

### *GURUPURNIMA SANDESH*

## **The Five-Letter Mantra**

Man is the only being endowed with the unique weapon of the mind. Whoever is able to master it will be victorious in life. A slave of the mind cannot achieve happiness or peace.

The body with all the sense organs, made up of the five elements, is the dwelling which the mind has established for its fulfillment. It is like an armour. The mind is the basis for the body. It is the cause of all worldly activities and experiences. A body without the mind is like a school without a teacher, a crop withering for lack of water, a temple without a deity, an electric wire without the current—utterly useless and lifeless.

Men are generally prone to regard the mind as intimately bound to the body. Believing that the body, a composite of the five elements, is real and permanent, they devote all their time and actions to its well-being. Life is wasted in pursuing mundane objects. The highest realisation consists in using the intelligence (Buddhi) to acquire Vijnana (the higher wisdom) and conquering the mind through that wisdom. The Upanishad declares! Prajnanam Brahma (Realisation of Brahman is the highest wisdom). This consummation is attained only through good thoughts (Sat-sankalpas).

Sat-sankalpas constitute the most precious possession. They are charged with immense power, purity and divinity. They are life-giving and life-sustaining. They will yield the desired fruits according to the way they are used.

The mind, it should be noted, is not like a blank paper. It is a palimpsest which carries on it the imprint of the experiences and actions of many past lives. It manifests as a reflection of the spirit (the Atma). The Atma+the Mind=Man. Man-Mind = Atma. The mind is the cause of man's bondage or liberation. If man can fill himself with good thoughts in any situation, his life will become sanctified. Hence, it is necessary for everyone to see how he can cultivate good thoughts and make them govern his life and actions.

### **Sinners to saints**

The prime requisite for the cultivation of good thoughts is association with good people (Satsang). The scriptures have expatiated on the value of good company with appropriate examples. Ratnakara was a highwayman who supported his family by attacking wayfarers and robbing them of their possessions. Such a person was so completely transformed by association with the seven great sages (Saptarishis-Vasishta and others) that he later became Valmiki, the great Adi Kavi, who wrote the epic "Ramayana". Not only was he the first among poets, but he achieved the same status as the sage Vyasa. The Seven Sages hailed Valmiki as the "giver of the sloka" (Sloka dhaata), coming after the "Loka-daata", Bhagavan, the giver of all things.

Another example! During Buddha's time, there was a very cruel and wicked man known as Angulimala. Like Ratnakara, he was also engaged in waylaying travellers, robbing them of their wealth and cutting off their thumbs to use them as a necklace round his neck. The Buddha was able to reform even such a cruel man and turn him into a spiritual seeker.

Gauranga belonged to a community called Jagaayi-Maadhayi, who were noted for their wicked ways and their cruelty. Through his association with holy men, he became a great devotee of the Lord and acquired the appellation Chaitanya (as he was always immersed in Krishna Consciousness). He devoted his entire life to glorifying God in song and dance.

Thus through all ages there have been men who have been transformed into saints and sages by associating with good and holy men.

Coming to more recent times, we have many good examples.

### **Power of faith**

In Tamil Nadu, some decades ago, there was a young lad, belonging to a poor Brahmin family. At that time Gandhiji was emerging as the leader of the national struggle for freedom. Everyone was talking about the lawyer who was voicing the country's aspirations and demonstrating its determination to win freedom from foreign rule. The Brahmin boy's mother was keen that her son should become a lawyer like Gandhiji. She told him! "My dear son! You should study like Gandhi and try to relieve the sufferings of the poor. You must become a great

hero like him. You must adhere to Dharma and fight for justice." From that day, the young lad devoted himself to his studies remembering his mother's advice. He resolved to become a lawyer and serve the poor and the distressed. He overcame innumerable difficulties and handicaps. As he could not afford lamps at home, he used to study under street lamps and prepare for his examinations. Often he had to go without food. Once, on the eve of an examination, he was studying under a street lamp when he felt drowsy. As he could not afford a cup of tea—though it cost very little those days—he washed his face with cold water from a tap and continued his study. He passed the law examination with distinction.

He always kept in mind his resolve to live up to his mother's words. He worked with several seniors at the Bar, picked up practice and progressed as a lawyer. He had a deep faith in God. Whatever difficulties he encountered, he regarded them as intended by Providence for his own good. Because of his faith in God and association with good men, a great change occurred in his career. He was appointed Judge of the Madras High Court—the first Indian to be chosen for that honour. It was a fitting recognition for his character and abilities. Such was the career of T. Muthuswamy Iyer.

When devotion to God is coupled with good resolutions, anything can be accomplished. As in the case of Muthuswamy Iyer, there are instances of young men in other countries who started their careers to earn a living by polishing shoes or selling newspapers or washing dishes in hotels, but who rose to high positions because of their good resolutions and their unswerving faith in God. Some of them became great scholars and led dedicated lives.

In Britain, there was a poor lad who used to make a living by writing addresses on covers for illiterate persons and to give tuitions to children. Each time he wrote an address, he used to say, "May God bless you." He used to tell the young children before they went back to their homes after their lessons! "May God shower His grace on you." He had firm faith that some day God would raise him to a position where he would be able to render service to the people. He always told his young students! "Have faith in God." He himself had firm faith in God.

In course of time, he became the Prime Minister of Britain. He was James Ramsay Macdonald. From a poor address writer to the Prime Ministership of Great Britain—what a change in fortune wrought by the grace of God!

The union of good resolutions with faith in God is like the coming together of the positive and negative ends of electric wires; through this combination, any great thing can be accomplished.

### **Will power**

We do not realise the unlimited potentialities of man. Not only in respect of his physical form, but also in regard to his intelligence, man is far above all other beings on earth. He can achieve whatever he wills to do. He can even become the master of the world. But superficially man appears as a weakling. The life of man is subject to certain limitations. However intelligent one may be, one should not forget that one's life is governed by these limitations. One should use

the intelligence one is endowed with, within the limits inherent in the human condition, to lead an exemplary, ideal life. If the intelligence is not properly used, life becomes futile.

### **Misuse of talents**

Owing to absence of right thinking and right attitudes, the powers of the intellect are being misused now. Talents are being employed for selfish purposes. Though man has prodigious intellectual ability, it is being used for wrong purposes. Self-interest and self-centredness are distorting men's outlook and leading them astray from the righteous path. Truth and integrity are at a discount. Moral standards are declining. Caste and creedal differences are mushrooming. Parochial differences are breeding mortal enmity and hatred. The spiritual consciousness is weakening. Envy and hatred are reigning supreme. Fear of sin has given place to fondness for sin. Anything spiritual is viewed with levity. What is the reason for all this? Absorbed in sensual desires and worldly pursuits, man has lost all sense of morality and goodness. He has lost sight of his own divine nature. Greed has turned man against man. Bad thoughts and ill-conceived desires have wrought havoc.

Concerted efforts must be made to change this situation by influencing men's thoughts and attitudes. The primary requisite is to develop the will power of people along right lines. When the will power (ichhashakti) is developed, other powers like discrimination, intelligence, retentivity, articulation, analysis, contemplation and creative action, can be developed. Without a strong will, nothing can be accomplished. Will power is needed to get rid of entrenched habits like smoking. Through will power, desires of all kinds can be brought under control. The ancient sages were able to conquer all desires by austere penance, renouncing all worldly objects. The will should be directed towards God.

Faith in God is the bed-rock on which one's life should be built. All the scriptures one may read, all the rituals one may practise, the mastery of the Upanishads or the Gita, will be of no avail if there is no deep faith in God. They will be mere physical or intellectual exercises only. They may even strengthen the delusions regarding the body-mind complex.

Deepen your faith in God. Without God how can all the marvels in the cosmos be accounted for? By whose power are millions of stars held in their places? How does the earth turn on its axis without an axle? How does the wind blow to give gratuitous comfort to one and all? These phenomena are beyond human power. All these are the work of the unseen Power acting from behind the screen. It is the Unseen that sustains the seen. It is the power of God.

### **Eight gurus**

Today is the sacred day of Gurupurnima. Bharatiyas have held the view that one should try to sublimate one's life by seeking a Guru and acting according to his teachings. There are eight types of Gurus! 1) Bodha Guru; 2) Veda Guru; 3) Nishiddha Guru; 4) Kaamya Guru; 5) Vaachaka Guru; 6) Soochaka Guru; 7) Kaarana Guru; 8) Vihita Guru. Bodha Guru teaches the Shastras and encourages the pupil to act upto shastraic injunctions. The Veda Guru imparts the inner meaning of the Vedas, establishes the pupil in spiritual truths and turns his mind towards God. The Nishiddha Guru imparts knowledge about rites and duties and shows how one's



welfare here and in the hereafter can be ensured. The Kaamya Guru makes one engage himself in meritorious deeds to secure happiness in both the worlds. Vaachaka Guru imparts knowledge of Yoga and prepares the disciple for the spiritual life. Soochaka Guru teaches how the senses are to be controlled through various types of discipline. Kaarana Guru reveals the unity of the Jivi and the Atma. The Vihita Guru clears all doubts, purifies the mind and shows how Self-realisation can be attained. Of these eight Gurus, the Kaarana Guru is the foremost. Through various teachings and practices, he helps the individual to progress from the human to the divine consciousness. Only the divine can act as such a teacher. All other Gurus can be helpful only to a limited extent. There are, moreover, persons who claim to be Gurus, but who are really after the disciple's money. They trade in mantras and tantras. Self-realisation is not to be got through mantras or tantras. Only by the purification of the mind can the Omni-self will be realised.

"Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagat" The Universe is permeated by Vishnu. "Sarvam Brahmamayam Jagat" Everything in the Cosmos is Brahman." Vishnu and Brahman refer to one and the same, Universal Consciousness which pervades everything in the Cosmos. The Divine is present in everyone. Holding firmly to this belief, one should not cause harm to anyone because he would be causing harm to God who is present in every one.

Today we talk about peace in the world. How can that peace be found outside? It has to be found inside you. How can you find peace in a world which is in 'pieces'? Holding the atom bomb in one hand, is there any meaning in talking about peace? When you are haunted by fear how can you have peace? You can have real peace only when you throw away the atom bomb. Real peace can come only when thoughts about the world are replaced by thoughts of God. God is the author and the guarantor of peace. Only when we rely on God can we have genuine peace.

### **"Devudunnaadu"**

On this Gurupurnima day I do not intend to give you any Ashta-akshari (eight-letter) or Pancha-akshari (five-letter) mantra based on any particular deity's name. Nor am I enjoining you to study any Upanishad, or the Gita or the Brahma Sutras. There is a simple five-letter pronouncement. "God is" ("Devudunnaadu," in Telugu). Make this your sheet-anchor. If you go on reciting it, thinking over it, acting up to it and conveying it to others, immersing yourself in the bliss of this experience, you will be making the greatest contribution to the welfare of the world. (Swami recited a poem on the glories of God's creation to prove "Devudunnaadu.")

Consider this mantra as the message for this Gurupurnima and proclaim it in all circumstances and at all places with all the conviction and strength you can command. The world can be turned into an earthly paradise if you strengthen your faith in God and demonstrate it in your actions. You must have the courage and determination to face any kind of problems and difficulties. By propagating this mantra you can promote the love of God and the fear of sin among the people. The mantra "God is" can be more powerful than a mantra based on any particular deity's name. Moreover, mere repetition of any mantra is of little use. Greater than the power of Mantra or Yantra is the power of a pure heart (chitta-shuddhi). Your faith must stem from the heart, which is the seat of the Divine.

In the Gita, the Lord has revealed in which part of the body the Divine resides. He has declared that taking the form of Vaishwanara, the Lord enters the body of every being to consume food and digest it. This means that the divine dwells in the stomach, digests whatever food is taken and supplies nourishment to all parts of the body. If bad food is eaten, the effects will be bad. The digestive energy turns out pure or impure products in the system according to the nature of the food supplied to it.

### **"Deepen your faith"**

Spiritual disciplines determine the character of a person. Character determines the destiny—whether good or bad. Character is built up by constant practice of good actions. Actions, in their turn, are based on one's thoughts and intentions. Whenever any thought arises in the mind, one should examine whether it is right or wrong, whether it will do good to society or cause harm to it. Actions should be based on such enquiry. It would be wrong to blame anyone for our misfortunes. Our thoughts and actions alone are responsible for our plight. If one entertains pure thoughts and does all actions with firm faith in God, he will be favoured with God's Grace. Have this five-letter mantra as your constant companion and strengthen your faith in God. This will lead in due course to God-realisation. Unwavering faith in God will promote Atma-Shakti (spiritual power) and confer indescribable bliss. Doubts should not be allowed to sprout. Faith is essential for accomplishing anything in life. Without faith, even ordinary things in life are not possible!

From today, develop your faith in God, engage yourselves in dedicated service to society and make your lives purposeful and helpful to those in distress or need. Remember that whomsoever you may serve, you are serving God. This is my benediction for all of you.

—*Bhagavan's discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium on 21-7-86*

### **The Reward for Rashness**

*A selective tourist hurt by hunger was looking about for a good restaurant in a strange place. Several boards invited him in. He entered the nearest restaurant and asked for vegetarian food to which he was vowed. But, the proprietor argued with him, saying, "This is a non-vegetarian restaurant. You ought to have seen the board outside and walked in. Now that you are at one of our tables, you have to relish and pay for our menu. You have no excuse. This is the rule in this place."*

*The unfortunate tourist had to suffer for his ignorance and rashness.*

*This world too punishes us for our ignorance and rashness. The Gita announces, in clear, bold letters "the menu available here is Anityam Asukham (fleeting and flimsy)." Once having entered it, there is no purpose in quarrelling with the Proprietor, for the quality of menu, we are*

*supplied with. One ought to have been more selective and wiser in choosing the place we are born into as a result of our previous thoughts, deeds and words.*

—Baba

## **A Telegram to Save the Blind**

Sometimes we are blinded by temptations. Then, even the simplest logic cannot penetrate our mind. We overlook explicit warnings given by the Lord. Three years ago, unfortunately I fell a prey to such a temptation and went through a tremendous amount of suffering.

It all happened in the summer of 1984, when I went to Karnataka to visit my parents. Through a friend, we (I and my parents) met a man who claimed to be the incarnation of Shakti, the "Divine Mother". We were then told that Baba frequently manifests in him and, everything he says is actually Swami's Message, to whoever prays for it.

The story was temptingly attractive because, Baba is the Incarnation of Siva-Shakti. We completely succumbed to the possibility of overnight salvation and the assured solution to all our worldly problems. In the process we completely ignored Baba's repeated warnings that He does not talk or work through a third person.

A person who can lie in the name of Swami in spite of being aware of His being Divine can stoop to any level. That exactly was the case with this man. Eventually he caused us a lot of grief and damage. I would not go into details, but what was worse was that we completely lost confidence and faith in our own selves. This man slowly enslaved us; his threats induced fear and his orders caused anguish. This went on for nearly two years. In December 1985 I visited Karnataka again for a month. What I faced for a month was atrocious and this man did the worst possible things claiming them to be Swami's instructions.

When I returned to the States, I was totally confused, terribly depressed and became a nervous wreck. I could not forget what I had gone through and was completely torn apart. My parents were worried about me. They visited Puttaparthi. They held a letter to Baba praying for my well-being. Baba is Omniscient. During Darshan He walked straight to my father and accepted the letter. When I was informed about this act of grace, I got a gleam of hope, but I was still in the grip of fear, doubt and depression. I could not meditate or do my work at the university. Several times I felt as if I was losing my sanity.

One morning while lying depressed in my bed the inner voice said, "Only the Lord can save me, I have to surrender to Him"; and I prayed. I called Baba with all my heart. This time He answered; within a few minutes I felt a change. I could feel inner strength; all of a sudden, my depression was gone and I was my own self again. "No more blind faith" I decided. I have to find out from Baba about this whole "Shakti" business. I also realised that there were others like

me who were in the same boat as I was, trapped by this man but unable to leave him because they thought that he was Swami's instrument.

I decided to write to Swami. I made discreet enquiries from Sal devotees in New York whether Swami ever replies to letters or not. Everyone said no one had heard of such an incident and the chances were rather remote. However, something inside me kept telling me that Baba will rescue me and answer my query. I thought. Swami receives thousands of letters everyday and how can I expect Him to write to me. The inner voice was very strong and I wrote a long explicit letter to Baba; I poured my heart out since He was the only one I could confide in.

It is true that in His infinite mercy He always comes to the rescue of the needy. Within a few days I received a telegram from Swami, which clearly said that the "Shakti matter is completely false" and of "bad quality". He also instructed me "not to believe such people" and not to "follow them blindly" and to "inform others" who had fallen into this man's trap, which I promptly did.

Blessed are we who live in this point of time, when the Lord directly comes to our rescue when we get into trouble even though we disobey Him.

—*Somenath Mitra, Carbondale, Illinois, U.S.A.*

## Why Fear When I am Near

On 24th April 1986, in the hot, humid and sultry climate of Hyderabad, at about 2-30 p.m. I felt giddy and had a blackout. My wife prayed to Bhagavan and simultaneously she applied Vibhuti on my chest. I regained consciousness within minutes and saw my wife, my son and his wife hovering over me. I asked them what had happened. My wife narrated the sequence of events and said that Baba had responded and brought me back to consciousness.

A doctor who was called in took me for a check-up at the nearest Air Force Hospital. There the ECG (Electro Cardiogram) showed variations. As a result, I was driven in a semi-open ambulance to the Military Hospital in Secunderabad, 50 Km. away, over rough and uneven roads through dense traffic. There I was put on drip through a needle tied to my left wrist; a lead from an oxygen cylinder was inserted into my right nostril and both my wrists and ankles were strapped up with leads to a Monitor, for 72 hours. Neither at the time I had the black-out, nor at the initial check-up in the Air Force Hospital, nor during my 27 days at the Secunderabad Hospital, nor at Madras where I have been convalescing did I ever have the fear of death, because Bhagavan Baba had assured me on 21st September 1974, during an interview at Brindavan: "Why fear when I am *near*?"

At that time I wondered why Swami had modified his usual statement, "Why fear when I am *here*?" I thought to myself, if he had said "When I am here" I might have inferred, "only when He is in Brindavan or Prasanthi Nilayam!" That assurance served as a protective umbrella over me, saving me from many dangers and near-death situations.

To name a few: when I was commanding an Army division in the high-altitude, snow-bound region of Ladakh on the Indo-Tibetan Border, I was flying over the 18,920 feet high Kardung La pass when my helicopter was caught in turbulent weather. Some metal part of the helicopter fell off, forcing us to crash land on the narrow rock-strewn sandy patch on the Indus bed. I was praying all the time to Sai Ram. He saved us from a fatal accident.

On another occasion when I was travelling in a station wagon on the winding uneven mountain road between Ranikhet and Almora in the Uttar Pradesh State, we saw the front right wheel of our station wagon going ahead of us and falling off the slope towards the deep river on our left. We prayed to Bhagavan. The driver had the presence of mind to switch off the engine and the vehicle, through His Grace, cruised gradually into the slop\* of the hill on our right.

In July, the Lord motored from Bangalore to Madras and back, 720 Kms. to and fro, to bless me with strength and courage. Let us endeavour to install Him in our hearts, ever aware that He is near to save us from fear. Bhagavan is indeed the dearest, the most loving, the most eager companion and kinsman.

—**Maj. Gen. S. P. Mahadevan**

**GURUDEVA VANI:**

### **Bhagavan's Call for Indian Values in M.B.A. Course**

*August 21, 1986, became yet another significant milestone in the career of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, when Bhagavan Baba, Chancellor of the Institute, inaugurated the new Master's degree course in Business Administration. In His address, which covered a wide ground and surveyed the patterns of business administration prevailing in countries like the U. S. and Japan, Bhagavan deprecated the tendency to copy the management practices and courses of studies in other countries, without regard to the culture and other traditions of India and the conditions and needs of our people. A unique feature of the M. B. A. course in the Sai Institute is the accent on Indian ethos and values. He called upon the students (30 in all) —who had been admitted to the course after a rigorous entrance test—to imbibe Bharat's spiritual and cultural values, develop a broad outlook and prepare themselves well to serve society with sincerity and dedication. They must set an example in morality and bring credit to the country by their contribution to the development of the nation.*

Bhagavan said:

Every man has three bodies-the gross (or physical), the subtle (sookshma) and the causal (kaarana). When the physical body is rendered pure by taking pure food, the subtle body consisting of the mind is purified by pure desires, and the causal body represented by the conscience (antahkarana) is sanctified by sacred thoughts, the inherent divinity in man can be manifested and fullness in life achieved.

It is essential that every boy and girl should learn and practise the basic ethical principles for the blossoming of their true nature. Their primary obligation is to recognise the divinity that is in each of them. In the olden days, students used to pray to the Goddess of Knowledge, Saraswati, to make them good, truthful and sweet-looking. Handsome is that handsome does. Where truth and goodness exist beauty is present as a natural outcome. Control of the senses and observance of the accepted code of discipline are the hallmarks of a cultured man.

#### **Morality and survival**

In the pilgrimage of life, man has to guide his conduct by certain moral principles (known as Neeti). "Neeti" is derived from the word "nita", which means what is proper or right. Right conduct is the royal road for man to achieve the highest state in life. When morality declines in a man, or a society, or a nation, that man, society or nation faces destruction. The loss of morality may even result in the destruction of an entire civilisation built up through centuries. Without morality, people perish. Morality is the life-breath of humanity. It is because of the decline of morals that mankind today is decadent.

A man without morals is worse than a monkey. Darwin attributed to the monkey the claim: "Without me you man would not exist." Whatever may be the truth (about the evolution of man from the ape), the monkey does utter a challenge to man in these terms: “I am present in the human mind and form. I involve you in the affairs of the world. I make you forget the divine.

That is why man's mind is described as a monkey mind. I am indeed greater than you. I rendered service to Sri Rama. You are serving Kama (the demon of desire) because I became a servant of Rama, Kama became my servant. Rama is God. Kama is a demon."

It is only when man cultivates moral values and manifests the divinity within him that his true personality as a human being will be revealed. This means that man should strive constantly to cherish good thoughts and act righteously. One is called a "person" (Purusha in Sanskrit). Only a man with a personality can be called a person. This personality (paurushyam) is a term applicable only to a person who leads a model and truthful life, filled with good deeds. The Latin word "persona" means one who is a spark of the Divine. Only by recognising the inherent divinity in him can man become truly human.

The recognition of the divinity in man will lead to the realisation of the unity of mankind. Every one will then realise that he belongs to one human family just as all flowers in a creeper belong to the same plant, and all birds in a flock are one. It is this sense of unity that has been the core of Bharat's age-old culture. It has sought to promote the well-being of all as a cardinal faith. When Indians realise the value and validity of this heritage, they will make their lives meaningful.

### **Management patterns**

Every nation in the world has developed its institutions and way of life on the basis of its cultural traditions, its system of values, and its historic circumstances. These institutions and value systems cannot be transplanted to other countries whose history, culture and circumstances are different. The management pattern in the United States is of one kind and that in Japan is another. In America, the management pattern is built up on the basis of a competitive and profit-oriented system. The relations between management and workers are based on "hiring and firing." Money and profits are more important than human values. By copying the American management model, we in India are having difficulties and are not reaping the benefits we expected.

In Japan, the management pattern is different. The workers have a high sense of discipline and even when they have grievances, they do not resort to strikes which affect production. The relations between management and workers are generally cordial and cooperative. It is this which has helped Japan to progress industrially.

### **Indian ethos and values**

There are some things which are common to all business organisations in any country. These relate to such matters as accounts, production procedures, and maintenance of statistics, materials management and the like. But with regard to matters like business ethics and human relations, we in India have to choose our patterns in keeping with our culture, traditions and conditions. In the Sai Institute, we are attaching special importance to cultural and ethical values. Among these, the primary place is being given to "Indian Ethos and Values." The course will cover such matters as the Indian economic environment, Personnel Management, organisational behaviour, Business Communication. Emphasis will be laid on Personnel Management and

Human Values, which do not figure very much in the courses of studies in other management institutes now. The use of computers will be an integral part of the course.

The study of "Indian Ethos and Values" will be the most distinctive feature in the M.B.A. Course of the Sai Institute. No other Management Institute in India has provided for this subject. The relations between management and workers should be like those between a mother and the children, based on mutual love and understanding. It is desirable to start the day in every factory or workshop with a silent, common prayer in which managers and workers join. When such prayers are held, the workers will be able to experience harmony in the factory.

### **Avoid imitation**

There is no meaning in one country simply imitating or copying the management practices of another. Such imitation often leads to waste of resources and many undesirable results. This is what is happening in many countries, including India. What is good or suitable for one country need not necessarily be good for another. We should have regard to the circumstances, the individual attainments and the specific requirements of our country. Our culture and values are different from those of others. These different situations cannot be treated alike. The attempt to combine different sets of values may result in the loss of values of the less developed country.

There is a story which illustrates how by listening to the views of all and sundry one makes himself a laughing stock and a loser in the bargain. A fruit vendor put up a board over his stall to the effect: "Fruits are sold here." A passerby told the shopkeeper the word "here" in the signboard was superfluous. The vendor arranged to get the word erased. Another man, came along to say that there was no need to announce that fruits were being "sold" as that was obvious to anyone. And so, the word "sold" was erased. A third man said that there was no need to mention that "fruits" were being sold, as it was patent to any one what was being sold in the shop. Ultimately, all that remained was a blank board, while the sign painter presented his bill for painting the board and then erasing the words. The fruit vendor realised the folly of acting on the opinions of every passerby without relying on his own judgement.

### **India then and now**

In the sphere of business management, a similar situation has developed in India. By following the advice of one country or other India has made a hash of its economy and finances. In ancient times, India served as an example to other countries. A king from Greece came to India to study the conditions here, especially in regard to education and religion, after visiting other countries in Asia. He was impressed by the Gurukula system of education and the kind of relations that existed between the guru and the shishyas. The ashram of every guru was a veritable university, without any of the paraphernalia of modern universities. The students were prepared for all kinds of hardship to acquire knowledge from the gurus. He noted also the discipline and high character of the students. He collected books like the Upanishads and the Gita and realised what values Indians attached to truth and integrity. He made a study of the Bible, the Quran and Buddhist texts and found that all of them laid emphasis on Truth. He noted that the Bible declared: "Righteousness exalteth a nation." In the Quran he found that only by adherence to Truth can one be a real man. He noted the essential truth which was common to all faiths and recognised that in



Bharat there was religious toleration and harmony as part of the people's code of ethics. He decided to follow India's example in Greece. Alexander the Great; who came to India at the behest of his teacher, on his way back to Greece took with him a lump of Indian earth, a vessel full of Ganges water, copies of the Bhagavad Gita and Mahabharata and the blessings of an Indian sage.

In spite of Bharat's priceless heritage, many in this country behave like people under the shadow of a lamp who, unaware of its light, are attracted to distant things. It is the fascination for exotic things which accounts for the deplorable plight of the country. Hence, in the sphere of management studies, we should give due place to Bharatiya culture and values. Only the wealth or name that is acquired by righteous and honest means will be enduring and praiseworthy. Money that is earned by improper and immoral ways can confer neither peace nor happiness.

Communication is an important aspect of business management. But care should be taken to use it within limits. Unrestricted use of communication may cause considerable harm to the country. For instance, if undue prominence is given in the mass media to some student's agitation or a strike, say, in Bangalore, the news, immediately reaches Delhi. Calcutta, Agra, and other places and within a day the trouble spreads to other areas all over the country. "Communication" of this kind does more harm than good.

### **"Man management"**

The pursuit of money as an end in itself is making people greedy and excessively commercial minded. Many farmers are switching over to money crops to earn more money. This is not the kind of management we should have. We should be concerned with "Man Management". The proper study of mankind is man. Men should learn to be pure in thought, word and deed. This is the highest virtue. We do not want slogan writers and platform orators and "Yellow" journalists. We want leaders who will be persons of integrity and character. The aim of management institutes should be to produce such leaders. Their courses should be based on Indian culture and values.

Along with courses in other aspects of management like production, accounts, finance and personnel, we should have a course in "Indian ethos and values". We should concentrate on meeting the basic needs of the country. Our programmes should be based on our resources and on our practical ability to achieve the goals. We have also to combine morality with spirituality, in business and other spheres.

All over the world there are numerous institutes of management. They confer the Master's degree in Business Administration. I do not regard this as the right course for India. In some countries, instead of M.B.A. they have a Master's degree in Business Science (M.B.Sc.). In our Institute we want to turn out Masters in Man Management (M.M.M.). The students should develop a broad outlook and prepare themselves to serve society with sincerity and dedication. They must set an example in morality and bring credit to the country by their work and their contribution to the development of the nation.

*—Bhagavan's address in the Institute Auditorium on 21-8-1986*

## "Elimination of the Mind"

In Bhagavan Baba's teachings we often encounter expressions like "elimination of the mind", "conquest of the mind", etc. But what does it mean? It is difficult to understand and to a Westerner it sounds unintelligible, for how are we to fare in this world without a mind? In the *Upanishads*, it is said that our whole mind-consciousness is shot through and through with the threads of desire and that only by its purification can we know and possess our real and eternal self. If we turn from the written word to the spoken word of God, whom we worship in the Avatar, He tells us, "the mind is a bundle of desires and unless these desires are removed by their roots, there is no hope of eliminating the mind, which is a great obstacle on the path of spiritual progress." It is thus by eliminating desire that the real soul emerges and takes the place left vacant by the desire-mind.

To get rid of desire, however, amounts to getting rid of ego, and that is a formidable job, a battle, a war with oneself that is, however, much more easily won by surrender to the Divine. This surrender is even indispensable, for how else can His Power work in us? But it must be a surrender of love. An inner fire must be lit into which all is thrown with the Divine's Name upon it. In that fire all impurities are burnt away until a spirit of love arises out of the flame and smoke.

One can have a taste of what this "elimination of the mind" is about by withdrawing the mind's sanction to desire. There is nothing new in this, it has always been the principal aim of spiritual discipline. It has been clearly and wonderfully expressed in the *Gita* as a complete renouncement of desire for the fruits of action, a complete annulment of desire itself, thereby bringing forth a perfect equanimity.

"Elimination of the mind" also means "to detach oneself from thought and opinion", (again, this may be difficult to comprehend, "Are we then not supposed to think?"). Of course one has to think, otherwise one would be reduced to an imbecile, but according to the teachings of Indian seers and sages down through the ages, the mind has to convert its normal functioning into something of an infinitely higher order, without ego, bondage or reaction, manifesting love pure and divine. Such a mind is no longer a mind in the ordinary sense but an illumined, silent divine Mastermind.

Such a silent, intuitive, divine Mind is to-day at work here on this planet earth, ever watching, guiding, inspiring, encouraging and guarding us. "I don't think," says the Sai Avatar. A strange statement perhaps, but His is the direct subtle vision, the supreme reason ("far far beyond the reach of mind.") Thus He works ceaselessly for our uplift, always and wherever He appears reminding us, by the characteristic and symbolic upward turned movement of His hand, of our main concern in life: to lift our consciousness to higher level. He pours out over us that Divine love which is at the core of all creation and which in its purity fragile human nature cannot always bear nor even understand.

The goal is self-fulfillment. It may be somewhat far off for most of us, but there are milestones indicating that one is on the right path. By Sadhana a stillness can be created in the mind in which there is not the shadow of a wish or a want-this doesn't mean inactivity, the greatest works are done in the silence of the mind. In this stillness the Divine's Grace can and does descend; a look is often enough and the contact is established. The soul feels the touch; in the depth of one's being something starts vibrating with an unspeakable sweetness, everything inside and outside oneself is breathing a harmony without words but full of peace and strength, and one is ready to break the old ties and replace them by a greater truth of Oneness.

After this "foretaste" or "opening", as it were, ordinary life governed by the senses, and centered around a superficial ego seems immensely stupid, barren, a lie, a negation of the truth, an imprisonment, a very painful affair. The soul henceforth only accepts the ties that are God-ward bound, it listens only to the call of the Divine Flute-player.

—***B. R., Prasanthi Nilayam***

*Our good conduct is our true wealth. The Divine knowledge is the true riches that we should have. Proper action and proper conduct are our prosperity.*

—**Baba**

***GURUDEVA VANI:***

### **"Mano Moolam Idam Jagat"**

The mind is extremely subtle. It derives its energy from food. In the dialogue between Uddalaka and Svethakethu in the Chhandogya Upanishad the theme is the connection between food and the mind. Pure food is conducive to purity of the mind. One with a pure mind is filled with pure thoughts, and bubbles with energy derived from pure love. Wisdom is the efflorescence of purity of mind. Only such a person can achieve control over the senses. The self-controlled person, by discovering his divine nature, can illumine the; world around. Like a joss-stick, which scatters its fragrance in all directions, the name and fame of the pure-hearted self-realised individual reach all.

Pure thoughts hold the key for purity of mind. Thoughts have an objective reality of their own. They deal with six characteristics associated with physical objects: weight, form, quality, size, force and colour. If a man has a champaka flower in his hand, the fragrance of that flower is carried by him wherever he goes. Likewise, he will be' carrying foul smell too wherever he goes. It is the same with good or bad thoughts. They radiate their good or bad vibrations around them. Thoughts have so much power that when they are directed towards great objectives they can be used to influence the world. When the mind is filled with good thoughts, such as truth, love, forbearance and compassion, one's life is filled with peace and serenity. If, on the other hand, one allows thoughts of hatred, envy, anger and conceit to grow, life becomes perpetual misery.

### **Thoughts and life**

The face is the index of the mind. When you bear ill-will towards anyone, your enmity alters your face and manners. When you entertain good and loving thoughts, your heart is filled with joy and you experience an upsurge of happiness. If you fill your heart with love, your entire life becomes a saga of love. If you fill it with hatred, envy and pride, life becomes a dreary desert.

A tree that has roots deep in the ground cannot be destroyed when its branches or leaves are cut off. Likewise, when evil qualities like hatred and envy have struck deep roots for the tree of life, they cannot be got rid off by striking at some branches. By suppressing bad thoughts intermittently, these evils cannot be eradicated. The mind has to be completely emptied of all bad thoughts to achieve real peace. Every bad thought must be rooted out the moment it arises in the mind. The war against bad thoughts is like the war against enemy hordes who attempt to get behind a fort through a subterranean tunnel. As each one of the enemy emerges from the tunnel, he should be struck down. Each one of the sense organs—the eye, the tongue or the ear—when it is influenced by a bad thought, is led astray and behaves improperly. When they are influenced by good thoughts and impulses, they act in a manner which produces joy and contentment. When the eye sees someone who is regarded as an enemy, there is an upsurge of ill-will in the mind. On the other hand, when one sees a dear friend the reaction is one of love and affection.

### **Power of words**

As in the case of things seen, what we hear can also have bad or good effects. The power of words to influence the mind is even more. Great Vedic pronouncements like "Aham Brahmasmi", "Tat-Twam-Asi", "Ayam Atma Brahma" provide inspiration to aim at the highest goal. They should not be construed or used in a manner to inflate one's ego.

Every expression is charged with a power of its own. When the words used are sacred, they generate a sanctifying and elevating power. When the words are abusive and vulgar, they arouse excitement, anger or depression.

The joy or distress experienced by the mind is the result of the impressions conveyed by the senses. All experiences are products of the mind. The world itself is the projection of the mind. The mind can bring remote things near or send near things afar. It is the source of pleasure or pain. The sages have declared: "Mano moolam idam jagat". This universe is based on the mind.

The mind seeks to acquire something with much effort in the hope that its possession will give pleasure. But the pleasure derived from it does not last long. And the sorrow caused by its loss is considerable. There is trouble during the process of acquisition. Possession confers only temporary pleasure. The loss of the object leaves a trail of misery. Very often the pain from loss exceeds the pleasure from gain. It is a futile waste of one's life to go after such transient pleasures. Realising the meaninglessness of such pursuits the sages practised self-control as the means to enduring happiness. They evolved the technique of turning the senses and the mind inward to seek the source of lasting bliss.

### **Sadhana for self-control**

This technique is described as Tantra. It consists of a variety of practices called Mudras: Khechari Mudra; Bhoochari Mudra; Madhyama Mudra; Shanmukha Mudra; and Saambhavi Mudra. By practising these mudras, the sages tried to turn the senses and the mind inwards.

Khechari Mudra: It consists in concentrating the two eyes on the mid-point between the eye-brows during meditation. This exercise enables the integration of vision by which one's Reality is experienced. This mudra can also be practised by closing the eyes, but concentrating the look inwardly on the midpoint between the brows. Performing the mudra with open eyes is an ordeal. Hence concentration with closed eyes is preferred.

Bhoochari Mudra: In this, meditation is done with the eyes and the mind concentrated upon the tip of the nose. When the Divine is meditated upon in this manner, a unique kind of joy is experienced.

Madhyama Mudra: In this, the eyes are concentrated on the middle of the nose between the tip and the mid-point of the brows. Unlike the Bhoochari mudra, in which the eyes maybe fully open, in this mudra the eyes are only half-open. This mudra becomes easier after practising the Bhoochari mudra.

Shanmukha Mudra: This is a very sacred exercise. It is also a very difficult one to practise. It consists in closing with the fingers of both the hands the eyes, the ears and the two nostrils. By gradual practice, one should try to practise this mudra for as long as seven minutes at a stretch. Inhaling of breath should be done once in seven minutes. Through regular practice, this form of sense control can become a habit. No discomfort will be felt from control of the breath. By this practice, all the sense organs and the mind get absorbed in exploring the internal. The purpose of this discipline is to turn the sense organs away from the influence of happenings and objects in the outer world. For instance, when the ears hear sounds from outside, the mind gets excited or pleased. Similarly when the eyes see certain objects or persons, the mind is influenced one way or the other. But by closing the eyes and the ears, the mind is induced to think less about the outer world and thereby made to achieve some kind of serenity. By closing the nostrils, the mind is saved from the influence of odours. Hence, when the organs of sight, hearing and smell are controlled, the mind is turned inwards.

Today all our sense organs are totally absorbed in experiencing the external world. Listening to some gossip or hearing about some stranger, people develop an unhealthy curiosity regarding men and things.

### **Looking within**

All our thoughts are influenced by what we see, hear or smell. We must try to control the sense organs, especially the ears and the eyes. When you close your ears even for a brief moment, you will be able to hear the sound "Om" coming from within you. This Pranava sound can be heard when you close all the doors and windows in a room and let the wind blow through a small chink. The body is like a house which contains the ten Indriyas, of which four are important—the

eyes, the ears, the nose and the mouth. When you close these four openings, the sound "Om", which arises from within can be heard. It represents the primal sound—the nada bindu. The light of the Atma shines beyond this primal sound. Hence the Divine is hailed as "Nada Bindu Kalaatheetha"—One who transcends the range of the all-pervading Nada (Pranava). The purpose of the Shanmukha Mudra is to reveal to us the vibrations of the "Om". When we concentrate on this "Om", the senses and the mind turn away from the external to the inner world of the Spirit.

### **Purity is primary**

Control of the mind is the means to liberation (Moksha). Purity of mind is the primary requisite. When the mind is free from bad thoughts and is filled with good thoughts (Sankalpas), it is called Chitta (consciousness).

The Tamil saint Tiruthondar declared in one of his hymns: "Oh Rama! I am worshipping you with a pure mind!"

Saambhavi Mudra: This Mudra aims at controlling the five Karmindriyas, the five Jnanindriyas and the four psychic agencies- the mind, the Buddhi, Chittam and Ahamkara. All these fourteen elements have to be directed towards the spiritual quest. The "I" (Aham) is sustained by Ahamkara (egoism), Chitta, Buddhi and Manas. When Ahamkara (egoism) is destroyed, the Chitta (Heart) becomes purified. A pure Chitta imparts illumination to the Buddhi (intelligence or discriminating power). When the Buddhi is illumined the mind becomes pure. And only a pure mind can control the sense organs and direct them in the right path.

### **True culture**

The ego may be inflated by any number of things. It may be wealth, knowledge, power, position, beauty or intelligence. Such self-conceit is invariably associated with bad traits. It indicates the dominance of the sense organs over one's mind. Many are likely to feel proud about their knowledge or intellectual ability. But knowledge and intelligence without character and good conduct have no value. Learning by rote what is contained in books, without fully understanding their meaning or putting the knowledge to practical use, is a futile verbal exercise. Information from books and intellectual ability do not constitute culture. A truly cultured person is one who understands what he studies and makes proper use of that knowledge.

As regards the knowledge of the mudras referred to earlier, some may try to practise them. There is nothing wrong in doing so. The three mudras—Khechari Mudra, Shanmukha Mudra and Saambhavi Mudra—are of immense value in developing control of the mind. The practice of these mudras is closely related to the awakening of the shad-chakras (the six centres) in the spinal column.

The quintessence of the teachings of the Upanishads, the Gita and Vedanta is control of the mind. The first step in the process is developing faith in God. Without genuine and deep faith in God, it is utterly useless to master all the 700 slokas in the Gita. It is simply a burden on the memory.

Reciting the Vedas or ritual reading of the Puranas dozens of times may be mental gymnastics, but are of little spiritual value. Reading or listening to stories about Rishis and sages with superficial interest is valueless. It is only when they are studied with faith and earnestness that they can have an effect on our thoughts and actions. They will then cease to be mere stories and become sources of inspiration and solace for transforming our lives.

Students! You must develop self-reliance to face the problems of life with ability and fortitude. You must discharge your duties with devotion. You must draw the right lessons from the stories of the epics and the Puranas.

Even as, while eating you reject bad food, you must reject bad thoughts and take in only good and wholesome thoughts in the mind. Do not bear any ill-will towards those who may have done some harm to you. By returning evil for evil, how are you better than the other person? It is only when you do good even to the person that causes harm to you that you can show your better nature.

Be good, do good, see good—this is the way to Sai!

—*Bhagavan's Discourse at the Institute Auditorium on 31-7-1986*

### Spark from the Anvil

*Once a poet approached Bhoja for help and when the Emperor held before him a purse, he refused to accept it, because he said, "You must give me something which you have earned by the sweat of your brow, not something which you have appropriated from the earnings of others' toils." The Emperor appreciated the argument; he asked him to call on him the next day. When the poet presented himself the next morning as directed, Bhoja gave him 16 copper coins (paisa) which he had earned from a smithy, handling the hammer to beat the red hot iron. The poet held out his hand for it; the coins were given; but, what a wonder, they were gold coins, not copper. The toil of the king had made them pure gold. One must give only what one has legitimately earned. Then the dehi gives without deha consciousness.*

—Baba

VIDYAGIRI CAMPUS NEWS:

### Sai Institute Launches M.B.A. Course

Each year, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning is making history in one way or another. This year, under the inspiration of the Chancellor, Bhagavan Baba, the Institute started its

Postgraduate course in Business Administration, adding to its Commerce, Science and Arts faculties a quasi-professional faculty in business management.

Barely a year ago, Bhagavan Baba proposed the institution of such a course, with one significant difference from the courses offered by other Institutes of Management in the country. He wanted emphasis to be placed on India's spiritual heritage and millennial culture so that the candidates going out from the Institute will have a better perspective of their role as managers in India's developing economy and will bring both competence and dedication to their work as professional managers.

The first batch of students were carefully chosen after a rigorous entrance examination and interview. Thirty young men coming from different parts of the country, have been admitted to the course. As in the case of other students, the M.B.A. students receive free tuition and are exempt from all special fees.

On August 21, Bhagavan Baba, as Chancellor, inaugurated the new course in the Institute's Auditorium, which was filled to capacity with students, faculty members and special invitees. A large gathering of devotees watched the proceedings from outside.

Inviting the Chancellor to inaugurate the new faculty, Prof. S. N. Saraf, Vice Chancellor, referred to the report of the committee sent by the All-India Council of Technical Education on the Sai institute's proposal for a new faculty in Business Administration. The Committee, in endorsing the scheme, had observed that "because of its unique philosophy, location and rich academic programmes, the Institute would have the rare advantage of providing opportunities for reflecting on and understanding of the fabric of Indian society on which management practices have to be based."

#### **Pioneering faculty**

Prof. R. K. Sehgal, who will be heading the new faculty of Business Administration, traced the history of business management programmes in India since the 50's and drew pointed attention to the defects in the prevailing systems of management education. Among these, he mentioned reliance on "alien knowledge and wisdom", insufficient understanding of our country and its economic and social compulsions, preference to technology and tools instead of human beings, total neglect of Indian culture and ethos in the curricula and insufficient awakening of social consciousness in relation to the country, the people and the organisations the men are expected to serve. He said that the Institute proposed to develop an entirely different kind of pioneering faculty, based on integral education, academic excellence, and emphasis on active social and economic awareness through field, project and extension work. The aim is to produce true and dedicated managers who will be committed to human values and service to the nation.

Bhagavan Baba then delivered His discourse (published separately).

The function concluded with Arati to Bhagavan Baba.



*The ills of the country are due to under-nourishment; not so much under-nourishment of body, but under-nourishment of the spirit, want of spiritual exercise, neglect of spiritual regimen. Allowing the malady the fullest scope, people are engaged in reciting the names of the drugs in the pharmacopoeia! They do not make any attempt to take the drug in. The means of conveying into every home and village the life-giving waters of the spirit have all dried up or got choked up. That is the reason why under-nourishment, with all its attendant symptoms of debility, nervous disorder and mania, is so rampant today.*

—**Baba**

## Schooling for Excellence

A nationwide programme for developing "model schools", in all parts of the country, on the basis of Bhagavan Baba's concept of "integral education" for achieving excellence, has been taken up by the Sri Sathya Sai National Board of Education, which was set up in November last, with Dr. Madhuri Shah as Chairperson.

The Board, which has its headquarters in Dharmakshetra, Bombay, conducted a workshop in May last, which was attended by the principals and headmasters of 300 schools in 16 States of the country. The 300 schools have been adopted by the National Board for development into "model" centres of excellence in providing integral education. The new educational programme is being implemented in these schools, which are under different types of- management-govern-ment, municipal and private. Special packages of input have been designed for implementation in these schools. A month-wise plan of action was drawn up at the Bombay workshop.

It is proposed to extend the programme to 3000 schools in 1987-88 and in due course extend the scheme to the whole country.

According to Dr. Madhuri Shah, a unique feature of this project is that it can be replicated by any school. The Sri Sathya Sai Education in Human Values Trust, Prasanthi Nilayam, is intimately associated with the programme.

A one-day meeting of State Presidents of Sri Sathya Sai, Organisations from all over India was held at Prasanthi Nilayam on July 20 to acquaint them with the progress of the "Schooling for Excellence" project.

They were informed that since holding the workshop for the heads of 300 model schools in May, requests have been received from several schools wanting to adopt the "Schooling for Excellence" scheme. Among these schools are those run by top private industrial organisations for the benefit of their employees' children.

Bhagavan Baba, under whose guidance the project is being implemented, was present at the deliberations at the request of the state presidents. Bhagavan donated Rs. one lakh for distribution among the 'Model Schools' for buying equipment and aids for the promotion and expansion of the scheme. Under the action plan, one lakh students will be given medical check-up by doctors from Sai Organisations.

Copies of a guidebook entitled "Schooling for Excellence", giving an overview of the project, produced by the Sai Education Board, were handed over to the state level functionaries.

### **Bhagavan's message to teachers**

In a message to the National Board, published in the guidebook, Bhagavan Baba says:

"Dear Teachers! Teaching is the noblest of professions. It is also the holiest Sadhana for Self-realisation. For, it involves the cultivation of selfless Love and the showering and sharing of that Love. The teacher moulds the rising generation into self-confident, self-reliant, Atma-conscious persons. He is the architect of happy homes, prosperous communities and peaceful nations. He has not only to equip himself with knowledge and skills to inform and instruct, but also the vision and insight, to inspire and transform. Children absorb from teachers and elders their habits and manners, behaviour and beliefs. Therefore, the teacher has to be a constant example of the ideals he has to implant in their hearts. He must excel in humility, simplicity, morality and integrity, so that education results in excellence. Such a teacher can be a beacon of Truth, Love and Reverence. The children who grow under his wise care will shine as Lamps of Love in their homes, radiating courage, joy and hope. Let the Beacons never fade. Let the Lamps be ever bright. Good Teachers + good students = Good Nation."

*There is the story of a king, the minister and the servant going in a boat over a stormy lake. The servant was thrown into panic, at the sight of water all round. There was danger of his upsetting the boat itself. So, the minister caught hold of the fellow, pushed him into the water, dipped him a number of times in spite of his shrieks and then when he cried, "The boat, the boat", he was hoisted back. Once in the boat, he knew he was safe from the waters of which he was afraid. So too, we are in God, but, yet afraid of the waters of Samsara. It is when we suffer the ordeals of Samsara that the security and safety of faith in God can be realised.*

—Baba

### **The Birthday -1985**

The Smile was warm,  
As, touched by early sun,  
He stood apart,  
Before The Temple, there...

And, at that magic Moment,  
Suddenly,  
His Glory was reflected ...EVERYWHERE I

It wasn't just a moment one recalls  
A while, and then dismisses  
From the mind!  
'T was Something rare,  
For which, there are no words...  
For which, no apt description  
One can find!

One-ness was a sweet and blessed  
Thing...  
That flowed... from very great,  
To very small,  
As, Mother-like, He paused,  
And, quietly, spread  
The Mantle of His Love about us all,  
And, I can't forget, or minimise,  
The thrill  
Of 'being there'  
And sharing in His Grace,  
Nor will I e'er forget the ecstasy  
That showed  
On each adoring up-turned face!

He judged us not  
For what we might have done,  
By our many 'indiscretions' on the way;  
He didn't indicate, or emphasize,  
How heavy were The Debts  
We, yet. must pay;  
Nor did He seek to question or decry,

Tho' well He knew just who  
And what we are  
His wayward children, coming slowly  
Home,  
Who'd strayed... maybe too often...  
And too far!

I wonder...?  
Was there ever such a time  
Of Love, vast-spread throughout  
That ancient Land...?  
Would one dare estimate  
The Awesome Power

That flowed  
From that small, ever-giving Hand...?  
For, He gave ...O, HOW HE GAVE,  
To EVERYONE...  
Those Gifts that wealth  
Can never, never buy,  
While trickling tears of gratitude were seen  
To shine, like diamonds-bright  
In every eye!

I couldn't help but call to mind,  
Again,  
The Story, from my youth...  
So dear to me,  
Of One Who came in Peace...  
To show The Way  
Along The Path of Love,  
The same as He:  
Nor could I help but pray,  
With tear-filled heart,  
That, this time,  
It must NEVER be in vain...  
That we must hear... AND HEED  
The Voice-within,  
And never, NEVER stray from Him  
Again!

The night falls, soft and star-bright,  
Everywhere,  
As, here, I come,  
But, quietly, to my Shrine,  
And Visions, far too precious to ignore;  
Intrude into this private World  
Of mine...

I linger for a while,  
And, by His Grace,  
I 'span' the miles spread warmly  
And a-far,  
Then kneeling,  
I re-live it all again...  
The Birthday of our Lord,  
Our Avatar!

—*G. B., Australia*

*GOKULASHTAMI SANDESH:*

### **The Lord and the Devotee**

All animals have a modicum of intelligence  
To secure their needs and enjoy life;  
If man remains at the same level  
He is not a man but an animal.  
The intelligence that reveals God is all sufficing;

Of what avail is a mass of nondescript knowledge?  
The knowledge that does not reveal God is no knowledge at all.  
It merely serves to feed the belly.

Embodiments of love!

Every man is a creature of likes and dislikes, of attachment and aversion the pairs of opposites described in Vedanta as 'Dvandva'. In Vedantic parlance, these are called 'Sannikarsha' and 'Viprakarsha'. 'Sannikarsha' refers to the quality which attracts to oneself a distant objector being, 'Viprakarsha' makes a near person or object remote. Making use of these two qualities, man leads his life.

Bhakti or devotion is the highest expression of 'Sannikarsha'. The term Bhakti is derived from the root 'Bhaj', which means 'to serve'. Another meaning of Bhakti is "friendship coupled with fear". But true Bhakti is not based on service or a mixture of friendship and fear. True devotion stems from the consciousness that jivatma (the individual soul) is a spark of the Divine. Bhakti can be rightly understood only when this basic relationship is fully recognised and accepted.

As long as God is regarded as different from the devotee, the true nature of Bhakti cannot be understood. It is this feeling of difference which ultimately leads to loss of faith in God, despite the practice of bhajans, japas, meditation and yoga. One who regards himself as different from God can never become a true devotee. He must consider himself divine in substance, even as a spark is not different from the fire from which it came.

### **Purity of heart**

God is the embodiment of Love. Man, who is an image of the Divine, should have love as his basic quality. Why, then, is man infected with qualities like hatred, envy, pride and self-conceit? The reason is man's heart gets polluted by his love being turned towards external objects. The image of the Lord cannot be imprinted on a heart that is impure. It is only when man realises the omnipresence and omniscience of God that he can comprehend the nature of Divinity. Only then will he recognise the Divinity within him.

To experience the joy that springs from a devotee who has developed 'Sannikarsha' Bhakti, one has to show love and reverence towards elders and serve them with humility and respect. Towards equals, one should show love and friendliness. Towards the young, one should extend sympathy and loving care. By these means, we demonstrate our love and regard for the divine that is in each of them and in us.

### **Example of the gopis**

The Gopikas of Brindavan knew devotion in this exalted form and exemplified it in all their actions. They experienced the divine every moment of their lives and showed to the world what bliss is got from pure devotion to God.

The Gopikas looked upon Bhakti as greater than Mukti (liberation). They regarded the love of God as sweeter than anything, and so nectarine as to confer immortality. The bliss experienced from Bhakti is ineffable. Bhakti does not call for arduous spiritual practices or severe disciplines of any kind. There is no need to perform yagas or yajnas (religious sacrifices). The path of Karma or Jnana is rigorous and hard for common folk. The only easy and sure means for ordinary people to realise God, without regard to their caste, nationality, sex or any other qualification, and without their having to practise various austerities and penances, is intense devotion and love of God. The Gopikas experienced the continuous presence of God within them and outside them. They showed that such sublime love was possible for ordinary persons with little knowledge of the scriptures or spiritual disciplines. They demonstrated the inextricable link between the Divine and the individual.

### **Faith and love**

Where there is deep faith, there is intense love. Where there is love, there is earnestness (Shraddha). Through earnestness, the higher knowledge (Jnana) is gained. This knowledge enables the practice of Sadhana. Hence, without faith and love, it is not possible to realise God. The Gopikas were prepared to face any trouble and go through any ordeal to obtain the grace of Krishna.

Uddhava, who went to Repalle to teach the Gopikas the path of yoga for God-realisation, found that their single minded devotion to Krishna did not permit them to think of anything else. They saw Krishna in every plant, tree, hill or dale and were immersed in Krishna Consciousness. They experienced the unity underlying all creation.

Today, instead of unity, we have divisions of every kind. Forgetting the divinity that is present in everything in the universe, man is promoting differences and barriers between man and man, and nation and nation and subjecting himself to numerous difficulties. Divinity is present in every object in creation, from the ant to Brahma. Ignoring this basic truth, man is involving himself in endless problems. God is treated as a convenience, to be sought when in trouble and forgotten at other times. The Divine is not to be sought in some far off place. He is the Indweller in our heart. When this eternal, divine light is shining within us, it is a mark of ignorance to seek for illumination elsewhere outside.

### **The Krishna avatar**

The Krishna avatar has been described as a Poorna-Avatar—an incarnation with the plenitude of divine attributes. All avatars are equally divine and it is pointless to describe one incarnation as partial and another as full. The form and role of each avatar are dependent on the circumstances and the needs which led to the advent. Avatars are not to be judged in quantitative terms. Qualitatively, they are all essentially one. All avatars are "full" in fact. Only their forms and names differ according to the circumstances in which they appeared.

For the Krishna avatar, for instance, the Pandits have offered different interpretations from the name alone. The letters in the word Krishna—Ka, ra, sha, na and a—have been interpreted as signifying the glorious attributes of Krishna. 'Ka' represents "Kamalakantha", the Lord of Lakshmi. Other meanings given to the letter are: Kamaleswara and Kamalagarbha—the lord of the lotus and the one from whose navel the lotus has issued. He is also known as "Kamala-bandhavudu" the Kinsman of the lotus. The inner significance of these interpretations is that when divinity manifests within us, the heart blooms like a lotus before the sun. "Ka" thus symbolises the sun principle also. "Ra" represents the principle of delight. "Sha" represents Vishnu, the source of all wealth and prosperity. "Na" signifies the Narasimha avatar, the combination of man and animal in an integral unity. "A" reveals the "Akshara Swarupa" of the Lord, His imperishable and eternal quality.

Going by the letters in the name alone, scholars have derived the divine attributes of Krishna as avatar. Some others have regarded Krishna as the very embodiment of bliss (Ananda).

The nature of the Divine, however, is not to be determined by the name of a particular Avatar. Names are related to birth, and any meaning may be attached to a name. But the Divine is birthless. It is present at all times and everywhere. Men may describe the Divine in innumerable ways according to their experience and understanding. These are subjective expressions and do not reveal the real nature of the Divine. Each individual's description is limited by the nature and level of his experience. "The mind and speech turn back, unable to grasp the nature of the Divine," says the Upanishad.

### **Paramatma and Jivatma**

What is important is to recognise that there is no basic difference between the human and the Divine. They are integrally related to each other like the object and its image. Take, for instance, a seed. There are two halves in it. It is only when the two halves are unbroken, that the seed can sprout when planted in the soil. Likewise the tree of Creation comes into existence when the Paramatma (the Omniwill) and the Jivatma (the individual soul) come together. Without God, there can be no devotee. Without devotee, there is no God. Even as God creates devotees, devotees also "create" God. This is known as Dhyana (meditation). Meditating on the name and form of God constantly, the devotee strives to have the vision of God in the chosen form. Man alone is endowed with this capacity to give a name and form to God and to realise it.

But how many are conscious of the preciousness of this human birth? Few have any gratitude for the blessings they enjoy from Providence. In this respect even dogs are better than man. The dog's -gratitude towards one who has given it a few crumbs lasts all through its life. The dog may well ask: "Oh man! How are you better than us? You are lacking in elementary gratitude. All your knowledge, power and position have no meaning if you have no character and have no sense of gratitude. You are consumed by selfishness. Even your worship is tainted by selfishness. It is not done out of pure love of God."

### **Unity in diversity**

Selfishness will not go as long as man identifies himself with the body and does not realise the divinity in him. Diversity in creation is an obvious fact. No two human beings, not even twins, are identical. But diversity should not lead to differences and conflicts. We must learn to see the unity that underlies the diversity. This unity is based on the divinity that is present in everything in the universe.

The realisation of this unity can come only through firm faith in God. Prahlada, even as a child of six, was filled with love of God and could teach even his father profound truths. For God-realisation, neither age nor caste, neither power nor position matters. Valmiki was not a man of high birth; Nandanar was an outcaste. The Gajendra (Lord of the elephants) was an animal. Dhruva was a child. Sabari was an illiterate old woman. All these realised the divine by intense devotion and achieved spiritual eminence. Hanuman was a monkey. But his devotion to Rama was such that when the Rakshasas asked him who he was, he was content to declare himself a humble servant of Rama. Today if some one is asked who he is, he proclaims the string of degrees to his credit. Some advertise their past achievements as ex-ministers or ex-something else I All these are ephemeral attainments. One's true worth is his divine essence (Atmaswarupa). One should strive to realise it and manifest it.

Today we observe the birthday of Krishna as Avatar. In his own time there were many who did not recognise the divinity of Krishna. Kamsa and Shishupala underrated Krishna's powers. There have always been from age to age detractors of the Avatar. Krishna is described as "Navaneeta Chore" (one who stole butter). What is the butter that Krishna stole? It is the heart of the devotee. The devotee offers his heart to Krishna and Krishna accepts it. How can this be described as stealing? Only when a person takes away something from another without his knowledge can he be called a thief. But Krishna asks for your love and receives it from you when you offer it. The term "thief" has been applied to Krishna by devotees out of the fullness of their love. It has no pejorative significance at all. According to the level of their understanding and devotion, devotees describe God in different ways. These are expressions of subjective experience. The Divine transcends all limitations and attributes.

—*Bhagavan's Discourse at the Prasanthi Mandir on Gokulashtami 27-8-1986*

## The Tree and the Fruit

*The fruit comes from the tree. But can the tree know the nature of the fruit? When two sticks are rubbed against each other, fire emerges. But do the sticks know that there is fire latent in them? Likewise, the Divine is latent in man. It is through the process of enquiry and sadhana that man can discover the divine in him. It is like churning buttermilk to get the butter in it. Through spiritual discipline and pure love, man should manifest his divinity. The true nature of Bhakti (devotion to God) will then be clear.*

—Baba

## The Transformation

Once our hearts have been touched by Sai, then slowly, but surely, our way of life gets transformed. We also start noticing that others are not the same any more; they appear less cantankerous than before, and more likeable. The reason really is, we have changed! We all change in our habits and attitudes once we have experienced the Sai touch!

The first thing that happens is the discovery of the joy of the dawn of a new day. We never knew before that Dawn can yield us sublime delight, the Morning Star, the golden sky! We learn to get up at 4 A.M. and recite silently in bed a prayer Swami has taught us:

"O Lord! I am now born from the womb of sleep;  
I am determined to carry out all tasks this day as offerings to Thee,  
with Thee ever present before my mind's eye.  
Make my words, thoughts and deeds sacred and pure;  
Let me inflict no pain on any one; Let no one inflict pain on me.  
Direct me, Guide me this day!"

What a beautiful prayer this! It is more a pledge than a prayer. It does not ask for material boons. If we are determined to carry out our tasks with Baba ever before our mind's eye, He will help us to make our thoughts, words and deeds sacred and pure: The practice of the constant presence, learning to remember Him in whatever we do, is the very essence of making ourselves pure. And this is the key to make every act we attempt, successful, since it becomes His. When thoughts, words and deeds spring from a pure heart, they will never be divergent; when selfish thoughts dominate, we speak and act differently. The prayer has some unusual undertones. We pray to Baba to make us aware of the feelings of others so that we will not do anything which might pain them. And we pray that we might not be affected by anything which usually is painful; we pray for a change in our attitude to pleasure and pain, praise and blame! Finally, we place ourselves in His Hands and surrender ourselves to be directed by Him. It is interesting to find that all *sadhanas* are summed up in this little morning prayer!



Baba says: "Work is Worship; Duty is God." Unfortunately, our work now is as shoddy as the way we offer worship to God! Work and worship have become routine, mechanical; our heart is not in what we do. If only we remember that whatever we do, we are doing His work, then we will carry out our tasks more sincerely and also derive joy. "Who granted you the chance, the intelligence, the success?" asks Baba and He answers, "The Lord." We forget that every time we cheat the 'boss', we are cheating ourselves. We may believe that we have escaped unnoticed; but how can we escape the eyes of the one within?

Another problem arises because of our prevalent attitude to our work, which we somehow do not like, whatever we may be doing! We do it as a chore; this is a wrong attitude. If it is Baba that has given the job to us, how can we do it shabbily, more so because it is His worship? Baba is having us in mind when He says, "Happiness lies not in doing what one likes to do, but in liking what one has to do." This is a profound maxim of life. If every mother were to abandon the child because it is irksome to bring it up, none of us would have grown up. It is childish to think that, in life, we can always do what we like to do. There is hardly anything that comes our way, which we can welcome joyfully. After sometime everything becomes boring. So, we have to learn the art of being happy whatever the work we have perforce to do; the best way is to do it as Worship of Sai!

All our life, we are afforded opportunities to serve. If we do our work properly, and use the God-given gift of intelligence to help one and all, we are actually serving the Sai in others. The question may arise: Will this not mean our being exploited by others? No. Baba's advice is not to do the other man's job for him. We should help to make others work, so that they also enjoy the work as Worship offered to God.

Daily life affords opportunities to learn things such as controlling our anger and spreading love. Whatever we do to others has to be elevated into *seva*. We should not ill-treat official subordinate; we must treat them with respect. We need not also demean ourselves by overdoing, being obsequiously respectful to an official superior. We need not be afraid of any person or situation. "Why fear when I am here" says Baba.

"Spend the day with Love," says Baba. "Fill the day with Love," is His *Mantram*. How can we function effectively if we have to love everybody, it is often asked. This problem arises due to the mistaken concept of love. Loving does not mean that we ignore our duty as laid down; wrong-doers have to be punished. Even Government regulations stipulate that we impose punishment only after every other method to improve the individual has failed. The real problem is that those who have been charged with the responsibility of punishing the wrong doers, lack the objectivity, the tolerance and the compassion to correct a person. Punishment does not necessarily improve a person! Nobody would like to change his habits, unless he is convinced that it is for his good. Discretion applied at the proper time by one who has built up a reputation for high integrity, is very important for instilling discipline. The trouble is that the hand that wields authority itself is generally indisciplined. How can we expect to change others unless we are willing to change when our mistakes are pointed out?

What Baba says about teachers in the following words, applies to every profession: "We fight for rights, while functioning on wrong lines. Our right is the fulfillment of the duty devolved on us. Discharge your responsibility without demur or deviation, to the best of your ability. That is your right. No one should hinder you while doing that duty." But teachers do not work as sincerely and as fully as their salary demands. They are demeaning themselves "by this negligence of duty." Baba is very clear on our attitude to our work when he says, "Plunge into work whole heartedly. Is it 'work' to lounge under a fan, in an air-conditioned office, without damaging the crease of one's coat? The only justification for accepting remuneration is hard work with bone and muscle, sweat and blood, hard work to bring peace and happiness to the country and the world."

*—by Dr. M.V.N. Murthy  
From "The Greatest Adventure"*

*EHV FOR AFRICA:*

## **Accra Conference Hails Sai Programme**

The whole concept of Education in Human Values (EHV) is an attempt to put mankind back on the right path. The very survival of this world depends on a widespread renewal of individual commitment to active moral life, " observed Mrs. Aanaa Eninn, member (in-charge of education), of the Provisional National Defence Council of Ghana, while inaugurating the Sathya Sai African Conference on Education in Human Values, on August 28, in the imposing Banqueting Hall of the State House in Accra, capital of Ghana.

The Conference, which had been under preparation for months, was attended by nearly 500 teachers and teacher-trainees from all parts of Africa, besides senior officials and representatives of the mass media. There was a large contingent of teachers from the half-million strong Teachers' Union of Nigeria.

The Conference began in traditional African style with the beating of drums and the lighting of a lamp by Mrs. Ennin.

The Divine Message sent by Bhagavan Baba for the occasion was conveyed to the gathering. Bhagavan recalled His visit to East Africa eighteen years earlier, when He delivered to the African people His message of Love. Love was the key note of His mission then as now. Love is the prime mover in life and manifests as Truth, Right Conduct, Peace and Non-violence. Man leas to seek the Kingdom of God within him through Love. Bhagavan conveyed His blessings to the Conference. (A facsimile of Bhagavan's message was carried in the Accra papers.)

### **Recovery of moral values**

Mrs. Ennin, in a thoughtful and spirited address, said that moral values are disintegrating on all fronts in public and personal life as shown by the following trends: "Persistence of racism and discrimination of various types; decline in strength and integrity of the family with the result that most parents are unable to control their children; increase in violent and destructive behaviour; neglect of moral, spiritual and ethical disciplines and values in our schools and social institutions... We are bereft of the one single asset we need to achieve peace—the true values of life."

Stressing the need for adapting the EHV scheme to conditions in Africa, Mrs. Ennin said: "Education systems when exported, lock, stock and barrel, into our societies, have clashed with our traditional values and have left our youth confused and alienated them from their own cultures. Some of us have grown up knowing more about foreign countries and cultures than our own... All over the continent, we are witnesses to the harm which indiscriminate copying of ideas and systems has done to us Africa had a rich background of moral upbringing before this was adulterated by the influx of alien cultures from western and other countries... In the past Africa ably brought up her children along strict lines of moral probity. This training was not along the lines of admonitions and parental strictness only, but included folklore which is replete with stories illustrating morals to be emulated."

"Africa needs to catch up with her neighbours. We need, however, to be reminded that we sacrifice quality when we are impatient and in a hurry to enjoy the good things. We need patience, fortitude, forbearance and above all, love, and it is educational systems like Education in Human Values which can give these qualities."

Mrs. Ennin thanked the Sathya Sai World Organisation, as well as the Ministry of Health, for the thirteen medical camps organised in Ghana, and thanked those who had donated drugs.

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the World Council of Sathya Sai Organisations spoke about the evolution of EHV and the results achieved by the Sai education programme in different parts of the world. Mr. Victor Kanu spoke on the relevance of EHV in the African context.

The Chairman of the inaugural session, Dr. E Evans Anfom, an eminent Ghanaian surgeon, administrator and educationist, said: "Education without values is meaningless. This programme is called Education in Human Values. Why human? Because these are the values and virtues we humans have and can cultivate in our lives, and it is important that we begin when we are young and our minds are malleable. These values have to be taught by example rather than words. "

In the afternoon Dr. Art-Ong Jumsai, from Bangkok, gave an exposition of "The Concept of Education in Human Values."

### **Teaching techniques**

On the first day there were plenary sessions in which the concept and methodology of EHV were explained and examined at length. On the second day (August 29) the Conference was split

into workshops—one for Primary education and the other for Secondary. The EHV teaching techniques such as Silent Sitting, Prayers, Group Singing, Story Telling and Group Activities and integration of values in curricular and co-curricular work were demonstrated. One full session was devoted to discussions. The teachers came out with thoughtful suggestions to make EHV more effective in Africa.

A beautiful exhibition on Service Activities and EHV was also arranged for the delegates. The exhibits and models were drawn from all parts of the world and tastefully displayed by at 9 a.m. from U.K. The delegates spent all their free time in seeing the exhibition and many were seen admiring and noting Bhagavan Baba's sayings on education.

Concurrent with the conference, medical camps were organised by doctors from all parts of the world in the far-flung rural areas of Ghana.

### **Deep impact**

The decisions session was preceded by an open hour at which delegates expressed their opinions and impressions about EHV and the Conference. The deep impact made by the Sai message on the minds and hearts of Africans was evident from the genuine sentiments expressed by the teachers.

The Conference decided to form Sri Sathya Sai Societies for Education in Human Values in the respective African countries to coordinate all aspects of the programme. It was decided to cover both government and private schools in the formal education network. The Conference also resolved to take steps to organise EHV classes for children in the community centres.

It was also decided that at least one village will be adopted in each African country for integrated development. The school in each of these villages will be developed as a model school.

Chief Michael Abiodun Akinyele, the first National Vice-President of the Nigerian Union of Teachers, representing half a million teachers in Nigeria, said he was happy to see teachers from all over Africa, "who will return home with a challenge, that the values, which have always been there in Africa and the methods of how they can be taught in schools, have now been made crystal clear, and the Sathya Sai Human Values Programme should be supported."

### **Chief Justice's call**

The valedictory address was given by Mr. Justice E.N.P. Sowah, Chief Justice of Ghana, who began by reading a letter from the Chief Justice of India recommending the EHV Programme. He said that the teaching of all academic subjects should bring out the basic Human Values of life. The basic Human Values are not a separate subject, but a common denominator. Human Values should not only be included in the curriculum, but they should be extended also to co-curricular areas. The five techniques of teaching values i.e., silent sitting, prayers and quotations, story telling, group singing and group activities, are powerful tools in the hands of a teacher and must be utilised.

Chief Justice Sowah concluded: "I am happy to note that the Government of Ghana has a keen interest in the Sathya Sai Programme and I am sure that other governments in Africa will work on similar lines in order to ensure the prosperity of their respective countries and of this great Continent of Africa."

## **"I am There"**

*James Irwin, who landed on the moon in 1971, had taken with him, along with equipment for collecting samples of the moon's crust a remarkable poem by Dillet Freeman, which reflects what Bhagavan Baba has been saying for years. The poem (which appears in the latest issue of the U. K. Sathya Sai Baba Magazine) is reproduced below to show how an American poet can be inspired to write such lines and how an American cosmonaut felt the need to have such an exhilarating poem to sustain him on his journey to the moon!*

Do you need Me? I am there.  
You cannot see Me, yet I am the light you see by.  
You cannot hear Me, yet I speak through your voice.  
You cannot feel Me, yet I am the power at work in your hands.  
I am at work, though you do not understand My ways,  
I am at work, though you do not recognise My works.  
I am not strange visions, I am not mysteries.

Only in absolute stillness, beyond self, can you know  
Me as I am, and then but as a feeling and a faith.  
Yet I am there. Yet I hear. Yet I answer  
When you need Me, I am there.  
Even if you deny Me, I am there,  
Even when you feel most alone, I am there,  
Even in your fears, I am there,  
Even in your pain, I am there.

I am there when you pray and when you do not pray.  
I am in you, and you are in Me.  
Only in your mind can you feel separate from Me,  
For only in your mind are the mists of 'yours' and 'mine'.  
Yet only with your mind can you know Me and experience Me.  
Empty your heart of empty fears.  
When you get yourself out of the way, I am there.  
You can of yourself do nothing, but I can do all. And I am all.  
Though you may not see the good, good is there for I am there,  
I am there because I have to be, because I am.  
Only in Me does the world have meaning;  
only out of Me does the world take form;  
only because of Me does the world go forward.  
I am the law on which the movements of the stars  
and the growth of living cells are founded.

I am the Love that is the law's fulfilling.  
I am the assurance. I am peace, I am oneness.  
I am the law that you can live by.  
I am the Love that you can cling to.  
I am your peace. I am one with you. I AM.

Though you fail to find Me, I do not fail you.  
Though your faith in Me is unsure,  
My faith in you never wavers because I know you,  
because I love you.  
Beloved, I am there.

### **Awareness of Human Values: 1**

A human being lives on five levels of awareness. From first to the last, they are of increasing refinement and comprehensiveness. As a person's awareness grows finer and more subtle, his or her understanding and practice of values of life grow deeper and wider. Therefore the scope and application of values vary from person to person. Conversely, as one applies the values in life, one understands them, and seeks to comprehend the experiences that arise out of such application, one's awareness grows to higher levels.

The five levels can be termed Physical, Vital, Mental (or imaginative), Archetypal, and Unitive. The first four terms have been used by Dr. Gokak in a talk about the five values. The first level is the basic creature level. At this stage understanding and application of the values are very much circumscribed. At the Vital (or Pranic) level of awareness a person shows some vigour, power, and dynamism in the application of values in life. He expresses greater conviction about them and greater willingness to go through trials for them. On the third level, that is the mental, one begins to visualise the inner import of the values and their related fields. At this stage one's understanding is more expansive and imaginative. Out of this new comprehension are born the Fine Arts which are a recreation of one's imaginative interaction with the world. On the fourth level, the archetypal, one is able to receive intimations from that source from which all values generate. Here the mental or the imaginative stage of visualising values is transcended and the individual consciousness is so open and unfettered that it gets in touch with the universal consciousness and all the different values, cognised through intuition and insight, not analysis, become a spontaneous expression of one's life. The fifth stage, the Unitive, is not exactly a stage. It is a synthesis of all other stages in their highest manifestation. It is the experience of the unity of all life, and so the unity of all values. At this level of awareness the values will have served their utility in one's life and disappeared into an all-comprehensive enlightenment. According to ancient Indian psychology, it is the experience of ineffable joy, Ananda.

The five levels of awareness correspond to the five sheaths described in Indian scriptures as Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vijnanamaya, and Anandamaya Kosas. They reveal the stages of human evolution on its gradual unfoldment until, at it's finest it is pure Bliss. These levels also can be grouped under the three stages of consciousness, the Bhutaakaasa, the Chittaakaasa, the Chidaakaasa, the cosmos of time and space, the cosmos of thought, and the cosmos of Spirit. The first level, the physical, can be under the bhutaakaasa; the second and third, the vital and mental, under chittaakaasa; and the last two, the archetypal and unitive, under chidaakaasa. As a person expands the extent of his consciousness, his understanding too expands, and he is able to see the meaning of life in greater and greater light. Unless that takes place, values and their significance remain stagnant.

At the physical creature level animals observe the five human values—Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love and Non-violence—far better than the humans. A tiger or an elephant or a fish is truthful to its own physical environment. A fish cannot live on land or a tiger in water. Their physical structure cannot survive unsuitable environments. They help preserve the natural balance, and, therefore, there is far less amount of disease among animals than among men. Animals never destroy their natural environment. This is truth at the physical level. Then comes Right living. By instinct, animals follow 'season and reason' in their living. A tiger never eats grass. A cow or a bull never preys on flesh. They mate at a particular period of the year. They rarely die of over-eating or indigestion! To a question whether God ever takes avatar among animals, Swami replied there was no need, as animals never overstep their animal dharma. They always have right-living. Only man does not. The third value is Peace. Animals are very much peace-loving. They live at peace with their surroundings. They do not have greed, jealousy, and hatred. They do not acquire property or fight except for food. They are satisfied with their minimum animal needs. Love among animals, though confined to a great extent to reproduction, also shows finer aspects. Their sense of hardship, obedience to their leader, working and fighting as a flock, protecting the younger ones are some of the finer shades of love found even among the higher species of animals. Ahimsa, or Non-Violence, is not entirely absent among them. They never kill for sport. They kill to eat and live.

If we examine human conduct at this very first level, we shall not arrive at encouraging results. Man is the only animal who destroys his physical environment for greed and power. Man alone can tell a lie for selfish ends. To be disloyal to the given word is a well-known trait among this highly intelligent species. There are hundreds of animal stories in all parts of the world to reveal the quality of treason among human beings. Man is the only animal who can be insincere and deceitful in his work. All this is not truth even in the crudest way. About right-living the less said the better. Mankind is the only species which has no specific food. There is nothing a human being does not eat in some form or other! Wasting the things he needs to live is only too apparent among them. Even at the physical level, peace is absent in cities or villages, in homes and nations. Noise-pollution is reducing life-span, and encroaching upon the little happiness we can muster in our already strained lives. We talk, shout, quarrel, and create all sorts of noise unnecessarily most of the time. Therefore Swami advises us to follow silence as the first step in sadhana, and He often reproves students of His schools and colleges for gossiping too much. Love, even at the physical level, is a great casualty among mankind. Ahimsa is just not there. We



consume more than we need. The rate at which nature is being exploited and destroyed for our comforts has already caused a lot of concern to the ecologists.

### **The vital level**

The Vital, as it suggests, is the source of all our life-force. It is the source of our zest for living, our enthusiasm, our conviction, our willingness and capacity to change for the better. From this also comes our power and patience, our sense of responsibility for all that we do, and an urge to social involvements. All of us share these things in varying degrees, but not all of us use these natural energies for promotion of human values. When this centre of power is activated, and values of living are associated with it, even our physical situations assume new dimensions. We generate a lot of willingness for doing what we think we should, are able to take risks and develop a capacity for sacrifice and try to take the unwilling and the obstructive elements along with us. When one's vitality, zest for living, and capacity to bear troubles willingly are transferred to Truth, Right living, Peace, Love and Non-Violence, they become much more meaningful for one. Here one comes face to face with a great challenge, the challenge of acting according to one's understanding.

So, instead of truth remaining a principle to be protected, it becomes a power in daily life. Right living ceases to be a mere conformity to certain accepted physical laws, for one begins to see that there is much more to it than one ever suspected. Peace is no more an external quiet; it is also found and experienced in a crowded bus, a busy office, a harmonious home. Peace is not lack of activity. It is balanced activity. Such peace is infectious, for a bored and stormy neighbour will wonder at the lively calm in the next house I Swami does not bear with a long face, and insists that a man aspiring for a spiritual life must learn to remain cheerful in all situations in life. The fourth value is Love. At this level love is identified with living. I love because that is how I express my living, I also practise self-restraint and demonstrate greater understanding of my loving interaction with my neighbour. This develops in me self-reliance, which is the first rung in the Sai-ladder to self-realisation. I sing, dance, shout, weep, and even get angry to express this love pulsating in my veins. When I love a friend because he is good and useful, when I love a tree as it gives me shade and fruit, when I love my dog as it protects my house, I express love at the physical level. But when I sacrifice some of my comforts for my friend, plant a tree on the road-side, build a kennel for my dog, I express love at the vital level. At the physical, I love for my own pleasure. At the vital, I share it with others and call it happiness. . It is less selfish and nearer to joy. It is more lasting than pleasure. Then comes Ahimsa, or Non-Violence. To refrain from killing or torturing is ahimsa at the first level; but to refrain even from dragging a chair on floor, breaking a twig from a roadside plant, to stop two children from calling names, to separate two fighting men at the cost of sharing a few blows, is expressing ahimsa at the vital level. When Emperor Ashoka decided to end all wars and take to Buddhism after the bloody Kalinga War, his awareness of ahimsa at the vital level was awakened and later climbed to the third level. To help grow beauty and order at the home and in society is ahimsa at the vital level.

In a value-education programme, one has to educate and awaken one's vital awareness to get rid of the fear of practising values. We know that our own values depend greatly on the level of

values practised in society. But absence of one cannot justify absence of the other. If society affects us negatively, we must try to affect it positively. A sense of values at the vital level prompts in us this wisdom. In a recent discourse Swami explained how praying only for one's own peace is selfishness. When the whole community, and consequently, the whole world enjoys peace, the individual can enjoy peace properly. Hence he must pray for world peace and the welfare of all.

—(*To be concluded*)

—*B. K. Misra*

### **Wealth and Wisdom**

*Once there was a long dispute between Wealth (Dhana) and Wisdom (Jnana) to decide who was more praiseworthy. Wealth said that it is wanted if you must travel from your place to Puttaparthi, for example; it is essential to spend some money for attending a cinema or for having a meal. The world cannot spin even a second, without the spin of a coin! Wisdom said no one can distinguish between a tenner or a single rupee note, unless he has intelligence; no one can discriminate between ruinous ways of spending money, and beneficial ways. Like the two cats that chose a monkey to arbitrate, they approached a Guru and laid before him their problem. The Guru said, both are good, equally good, provided each is used for a good purpose. It is the use that decides the good or bad of the two. Being a man is itself the great wealth you have. Use it to the best advantage. Have wisdom enough to recognise not only that you are a man, but also that you are no longer an animal, a beast or brute; that makes Wisdom complete, otherwise, it is only partial.*

—**Baba**

*EHV ON THE MARCH:*

### **Hawaii Hails Sai EHV Scheme**

On July 12, 1986, 46 public school teachers and 3 principals from 9 different public schools in the state of Hawaii attended a Sathya Sai Education in Human Values teacher-training workshop at the Hawaii Department of Education Annex Building in Hilo, Hawaii. The workshop was cosponsored by the Hawaii State Department of Education and the Sathya Sai EHV Foundation of America. The teachers who attended the workshop were awarded official academic credit by the State of Hawaii.

Dr. Michael Goldstein, Chairman of the Sathya Sai EHV Foundation of America, inaugurated the workshop with an overview of the Sathya Sai EHV Programme. He commented briefly on the history, philosophy, content, and methodology of EHV. Dr. Michael Dave, treasurer of the EHV Foundation of America, spoke on the historical and legal aspects of value education in

which he traced the evolution of current philosophical and political attitudes towards value education in the United States. Two senior American Sathya Sai EHV instructors, Mrs. Ronne Marantz and Mrs. Bea Flaig, gave a complete exposition of the programme to the teacher-students. They developed the programme in their lectures with great expertise and inspired the teacher-students with their delightful lesson demonstrations. The success of the presentation and the enthusiasm of the teacher-students were evident from the positive response to the evaluation questionnaires that were given to the participants at the end of the workshop.

### **Response in U.S.**

The Sathya Sai EHV Foundation of America has been invited to return to Hawaii on October 25 for a second presentation. Dr. Goldstein discussed with the principals the possibility of holding Sathya Sai EHV Workshops for the faculties of individual schools. He informed them that the Foundation was seeking to establish regular EHV Programmes in public schools and to accumulate data from these programmes that would serve as a basis for scientific evaluation studies of the Programme. The American Foundation is scheduled to give its next presentation to the faculty of an elementary school in the State of Nevada. This workshop is also cosponsored by the State Department of Education and the Sathya Sai EHV Foundation of America.

The World Council of Sathya Sai Organizations is actively engaged in the promotion of the Sathya Sai EHV Programme in every country. It will be adapted to the culture of each nation so that the children of every society have an opportunity to recognize and to realize real goals of human life in the context of their historic background and their cultural and spiritual heritage.

**—From the EHV Foundation of America**

*The secret of liberation lies, not in the mystic formula that is whispered in the ear and rotated on the rosary; it lies in the stepping out into action, the walking forward in practice the pious pilgrim route, and the triumphant reaching of the Goal. The best Guru is the Divine in you; yearn for hearing His Voice, His Upadesha. If you seek worldly Gurus, you will have to run from one to another, like a rat caught inside a drum, which flees to the right when the drummer beats on the left and to the left when he beats the right!*

**—Baba**

**VEDA PURUSHA VANI:**

### **Atma - Jnana**

*Embodiments of the Divine Atma!*

Of all categories of knowledge, the highest is the knowledge of the Self (Atma Jnana). You may acquire knowledge of the natural sciences, of all arts and crafts, of literature and music, dance and painting and every conceivable type of worldly knowledge but ail of it will not give

you peace or bliss if you do not have knowledge of the Self. Worldly knowledge may bring you fame and prosperity. But only Atma Jnana can confer the peace that passeth understanding.

Atma Jnana is that which reveals the unity in multiplicity, the eternal in the perishable. One who has attained Atma jnana is all-knowing. "Tarati sokam Atmavid" ("the knower of the Self overcomes sorrow," says the Upanishad.) All worldly knowledge is concerned with sustaining life. When knowledge of the Spirit—which is the basis of all other knowledge of the sciences and the arts is acquired, it is easy to get any kind of knowledge. When communion with the Divine, who is the source of all knowledge, power and wisdom, is established, one has access to every kind of knowledge. Hence each one should strive to attain Self-realisation through purity of mind and heart.

Yajnas and yagas, acts of charity and virtue, penances and ceremonial rituals are all designed to promote purity of heart. Purity of mind is achieved by association with noble personages and studying the writings of saintly persons. "Chittasya suddhaye karmah"—the purpose of suing karmas (the duly ordained duties) is to purify the consciousness. Purity of consciousness leads to realisation of the Self. Atma jnana can be got only by firm faith. Develop faith in yourself and faith in God. This is the secret of greatness. Self-confidence today is manifest only in matters relating to worldly achievements and self-centred pursuits. Faith and confidence are not in evidence in the spiritual field. Without unwavering faith, the Divine cannot be experienced. Because of the absence of firm faith, the formal observance of spiritual practices yields no results.

#### **Faith and love**

The primary requisite is unqualified and unshakable faith in God. One-pointed devotion promotes spiritual earnestness (Shraddha). The earnest seeker gets knowledge of the Self. The earnest devotee needs no other qualification except deep faith. He needs no other knowledge, no title to lineage or wealth. He may belong to any caste or community. He may be a child or even an animal like Gajendra (the Lord of the elephants). Valmiki, Nanda, Kuchela, Dhruva, Gajendra, Sabari, Vidura and Hanuman are examples of devotees who got God's grace through their deep devotion, without any other special qualification.

To realise God it is not necessary to have wealth, gold or other emblems of affluence. Nor is great scholarship necessary. All that is needed is pure, selfless devotion. Today men with selfish and impure minds attempt to worship the God. Without purity of thought, speech and action, it is impossible to experience the Divine. God cannot be realised through ostentation and self-conceit. The basic requisite is the shedding of selfishness and possessiveness so that one can engage oneself in actions in a disinterested spirit. Any person is entitled to embark on this quest without regard to sex, age, caste or community.

#### **Spiritual do's and don'ts**

The spiritual quest is open to everyone according to his or her capacity and aspirations. However, certain rules and obligations have been laid down for observance by everyone. These

are of four kinds: 1) Naimithika Karmas; 2) Kaamya Karmas; 3) Nishiddha Karmas; and 4) Prayaschitta Karmas. All the four are obligatory for all persons.

*Naimithika Karmas:* These are duties to be discharged as "nimithas" or instruments. These relate to the performance of certain vows or special ceremonies during certain periods or on special occasions. The ceremonies done for the manes fall in this category. Propitiatory ceremonies done during eclipses are also included in this. These are obligatory for those leading a family life.

*Kaamya Karmas:* These relate to karmas (rituals) performed for the achievement of specific objectives like seasonal rains, growth of crops, relief from famine, domestic happiness, peace in society, or attaining heaven. All karmas done for the sake of securing happiness here and hereafter are Kaamya Karmas. All the prayers that are offered for the good of one's family or the world are in this category. When the prayers are offered with a pure heart, Divine Grace manifests itself.

*Nishiddha Karmas:* These relate to acts which are to be eschewed. For instance, the spiritual aspirant has to observe certain regulations regarding food. He must totally eschew Rajasic food like alcoholic drinks and meat. The nature of the food determines the nature of one's thoughts, feelings and actions. If one's conduct is to be right and proper, one should carefully observe the disciplines regarding diet. To have pure thoughts one should take only Satwic food. It should be moderate and wholesome. Eschewing unwholesome and impure food is like clearing a field of weeds so that the crop can grow well. The taboos regarding food have to be observed strictly so that one's life may be cleansed of all impurities.

#### **Atonement**

*Prayaschitha Karmas:* These karmas have to be done purely by way of expiation for offences committed knowingly or unwittingly. The ancient sages prescribed these practices as a result of their experiences and the benefits and solace they derived there from. Experimenting with different practices they indicated those which were most efficacious and necessary. These include pilgrimages to holy shrines and bathing in sacred rivers. "Darsanam psapanaasanam. Sambhaashanam sankata naasanam." "Seeing sacred places destroys sin; conversing with the holy wipes out worries." Men should undertake pilgrimages to holy places from time to time to get mental peace and to purify the heart. Such journeys should be made with pure minds and genuine devotion without seeking any rewards. Some persons enter into curious bargains with the Lord. To make trivial offerings to the Divine to secure large benefits is a caricature of devotion. There is one very precious thing in every person. It is his heart. It is this which should be offered to the Lord.

Standing in the midst of the Ganga, the Krishna or Godavari, people make offerings of the water to Kesava, Krishna or Narayana as if they are offering something of their own to the Lord! The very idea that they are offering something is itself misconceived. When they cultivate purity of heart, the Lord will take care of everything like a mother who attends to every need of the infant.

### **Atma jnana**

It is the realisation of the unity that underlies the diversity which constitutes Atma jnana (knowledge of the Self). This is the import of the well-known Upanishadic pronouncements: Isaavasyam idam sarvam (All this is permeated by the Divine); Iswaras-sarvabhoothaanam (The Lord dwells in all beings). Many verbally accept these statements and even preach them. But in practice they promote divisions and differences. Some go to the extent of betraying the Divine. But it is not in fact the Divine that is betrayed. They are only betraying themselves and proving false to their real selves.

Yajnas and yagas are performed to invoke the blessings of the Divine for the peace and well-being of the universe. When the Divine responds with grace, the well-being of all is ensured. The yajnas have yet another significance. Offering to the Lord what He has given to man is a basic duty of the spiritual seeker. The offering is to be regarded not as sacrificing something but as an act of love and gratitude in which one rejoices.

The individual should cultivate broadmindedness and serve society regarding it as a manifestation of the Divine. Peace in the world depends upon peace among individuals. The individual, the community and the world are intimately interrelated. The individual has to discover within himself the secret of peace and joy. This joy must be extended to the community in which he lives. From the community, it should spread to the world.

"Adveshtaa sarvabhoothaanaam," declares the Gita. ("Bear no ill-will towards any living thing.") This should be the guiding principle for everyone. It is to promote this universal fellow-feeling that the sages of yore devised yagas and yajnas.

—*Bhagavan's discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium on 6-10-1986*

### **Memorable Jnana—Yajna Dasara**

Coming after the lapse of two years, this year's Dasara celebrations in Prasanthi Nilayam became memorable in many ways. While, as in 1984, the Veda Purusha Saptah Jnana Yajna was marked by conspicuous austerity, Bhagavan's discourses on all the seven days were profoundly inspiring for thousands of devotees who had gathered in Prasanthi Nilayam as pilgrims of the Spirit. Bhagavan led them stage-by-stage over every step in the spiritual journey, expatiating on different paths that lead to the one and only goal-the realisation of Unity in Divinity.

An unexpected but welcome finale to the Saptah Yajna was Bhagavan's announcement, before the Arati at the end of the jhoola function on Vijayadasami, that the Sri Sathya Sai Subrahmanya

Veda Shastra Parishad is being established in memory of the late Sri Gandikota Subrahmanya Sastry, who merged in the Lord on October 3.

#### **Subrahmanya Veda Shastra Parishad**

In a moving tribute to Sri Sastry, Bhagavan said that he was not only a great Vedic scholar but also a supreme exponent of our Shastras who lived his life according to Vedic ideals. Bhagavan said: "Today it is rare to find persons who have mastered the Vedas and Vedangas and who can teach them meaningfully to others. Whatever may be the future of Bharat, if allegiance to the Vedas declines, Bharat's reputation will wane. The culture of Bharat is based on the Vedas. Sathya Sai organisations are well set to promote Vedic culture. Sri Gandikota Subrahmanya Sastry, who was the Asthana Vidwan of the Vizianagaram estate, and who could expound in a masterly way the Vedas and Vedangas, is no more. He lived a full life completing nearly a century. He had great reverence for Swami. Venerating Swami as the embodiment of all Divine entities, he dedicated the closing years of his life to Swami, living in Swami's presence. In memory of such a great Vedic scholar, the Sri Sathya Sai Subrahmanya Veda Shastra Parishad is being set up. Subrahmanya Sastry is immortal. He had a heart filled with nectar. I bless the Parishad so that it may spread Vedic knowledge to the world and restore the ancient Vedic culture to its pristine glory. "

#### **Students to the fore**

Another significant feature of this year's celebrations was the involvement of a dozen junior and senior students of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning in the evening programmes. They had been specially chosen to address the gathering in the Poornachandra Auditorium on six days—from October 7 to 12—on the Sathya Sai ideals of Sathya, Dharma, Shanti, Prema and Ahimsa, in the light of their experiences with Swami and the impact of Sai education on them. Two students spoke each evening. They represented all parts of India, from Chandigarh to Assam and Delhi to the deep south. The speakers were: Gautam Dutt (III B.A.), Prabal Mail (Research scholar), Abhimanyu Kaul (II B.Com.) Ananta Vijaya (M.B.A. Student), Sanjeev Abbi (II B.Com.), Yuvaraj Suri (I M.Sc.), Sanjay Sahani (II M.Com.), Sanjeev Barbora (II B.Com.), Amar Vivek (M.B.A. Student), Sandeepan Chatterjee (II M.A.), T. Ravi Kumar (Research scholar), R. Gopichandran (Research scholar). The speeches revealed the deep devotion of the students to Bhagavan and their resolve to live up to Bhagavan's ideals in the years to come.

Other speakers in the evening programmes included Sri Bairagi Sastri, Swami Karunyananda, Sri Sistla Chandramouli Sastri, Prof. V. K. Gokak, and Prof. N. Kasturi.

The Dasara celebrations began on October 4, with Kalasa sthapanam in the Mandir. On October 5, Narayana Seva was organised in the vast Hill View Stadium. Besides feeding nearly twenty thousand men, women and children, Bhagavan distributed dhotis and saris to several thousands of handicapped persons. Scores of students of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute participated in the Narayana Seva, serving food to serried rows of men, women and children.

The Vedapurusha Saptah Yajna was inaugurated by Bhagavan in the appropriately decorated Poornachandra Hall, on October 6. Bhagavan came from the Mandir in a ceremonial procession to the Auditorium, to the accompaniment of Vedic chants and Nadaswaram music. Bhagavan, as Veda Purusha, initiated the Saptah Athirudra Homa at the specially prepared yajna kunda where three Ritwiks officiated. Recitation of the Vedas, Devi Pooja, reading from the Ramayana and Surya Namaskar formed part of the programme.

Bhagavan gave darshan during the morning at the Yajna Vedika and also went round among the devotees in the hall.

Harikatha kalakshepams on themes from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata had been arranged for some days. There was a musical concert by Srimathis P. Suseela and P. Leela one evening accompanied by the Institute students' orchestra.

The Yajna concluded on October 12th with Purnaahuti and the adoration of Bhagavan as Veda Purusha by the Ritwiks. Swami then went round the auditorium "showering" His blessings on the thousands of devotees who filled the Hall by sprinkling the sacred mantra-charged yajna theertham (holy water) on everyone.

The Dasara celebrations concluded with the jhoola festival in the evening after Bhagavan's valedictory discourse. Appearing in His immaculate white robe, reclining on the shining silver jhoola, Bhagavan gave blissful darshan to the devotees for half an hour, while bhajans were sung by the students.

***PRASANTHI SAMACHAR:***

### **Onam at Prasanthi Nilayam**

An unprecedented assemblage of Malayalees from all parts of Kerala converged at Prasanthi Nilayam last month for the Onam celebrations on September 15 in the presence of Bhagavan. The entire Nilayam complex looked like a miniature Kerala, with thousands of Keralites streaming in by buses and other means of transport from the 13th. While Keralites from all over the world go to their native State to celebrate this national festival with their kinsfolk and friends, it was significant that Sathya Sai devotees from Kerala chose to celebrate the festival in the presence of Bhagavan and receive His blessings. The Nilayam was given a Kerala face-lift by decorations with palm-leaf festoons and coconut bunches hanging from posts and railings.

The celebrations this year were spread over two days, with cultural programmes on the 14th and 15th and Bhagavan's divine discourse on Onam day. The programme on the first day consisted of group songs by Bal Vikas children from Quilon, a group dance by Bal Vikas



children from Calicut, "Thiruvathura Kali"—a traditional folk dance by women—by children from an adopted village near Trivandrum, and singing of devotional songs.

On September 15, Bhagavan witnessed in the morning "Thiruvathura Kali" by Bal Vikas children of Alleppey, with mridangam, maddalam and edakka by Sri Sailam Sathya Sai Vidyavihar students. In the evening, Bhagavan came in a procession from the Mandir to the auditorium, accompanied by band music provided by Ernakulam children, and tribal dance by Bal Vikas children from the adopted village in Quilon. A batch of boys reciting "Purusha Suktam" and girls holding lighted lamps, headed the procession.

The Poornachandra Auditorium overflowed with devotees from Kerala and various parts of India, besides quite a number of devotees from Australia, Scandinavia and other countries. Thus Onam at Prasanthi Nilayam became an international celebration.

Presidents of District Samitis in Kerala offered to Bhagavan bundles of "Likhita Japam" notebooks containing the "Nama Japam" done by devotees in the respective districts.

Bhagavan then released four books published in Kerala—"Arati" by Prof. Changa Radhakrishnan, "Kavya Pushpanjali" by T.D. Sadasivan, "Puttaparthiyile Avatara Moorti" by Vijayakumar, and "Against Alcoholism" (in English and Malayalam) brought out by the Sathya Sai Study Circle, Kerala.

Mr. Justice Eradi, Judge of the Supreme Court, and Mr. Justice P. C. Balakrishnan, of the Kerala High Court, spoke on the unique significance of celebrating Onam in the presence of Bhagavan Baba, who in an earlier incarnation as Vamana, had conferred Moksha on Emperor Bali who reigned over the earth from Kerala.

Mr. T. N. Natarajan, President of the Kerala State Sai Samiti requested Bhagavan to deliver His message and bless the assembled devotees (Bhagavan's discourse appears elsewhere in this issue).

The celebrations concluded with a programme of Bharat Natyam and Kathakali dances and a ballet on "Gitopadesam " by students of the Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Peeth, Srisailam, and a Kavadi group dance by Bal Vikas children from Wynaad.

## **Sai Jagat Samachar**

### **Bhajans in Prison**

Madras (Tamilnadu): The Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Madras district, conducted in the Central Prison in Madras, on August 9, Bhajans in which 700 prisoners participated. Mr. S. J.

Thomas, Superintendent of Jails, Madras, in thanking the Sai Sevak for organising the Bhajans, wrote: "It was heartening to see the prisoners evincing great interest in the Bhajans recently conducted by you. I thank you for the attempts that you have taken to reform them by putting them on the track of spirituality. When we were contemplating the means to enhance the moral standards of the prisoners, your programme came as the pioneer." Mr. Thomas expressed a hope that such programmes and other recreational activities would be conducted periodically to improve the mental and moral condition of the prisoners. Recalling the Herculean job done centuries ago to clean the Augean stables, Mr. Thomas said, that it was a greater task to cleanse the minds of thousands of criminals "by turning the waters of spirituality" towards the minds of prisoners in the penitentiary.

**Blood Donation**

A mass blood donation camp was organised at "Abbotsbury" on September 21 in connection with the Global Blood Donation Day observed by 7000 Sai Centres all over the world. In all 161 units of blood were donated by Sai Sevak and devotees in Madras. The blood bottles were distributed to four hospitals.

The Ahmedabad Sai Samithi donated 517 bottles of blood contributed by Sevak and devotees on September 21.

**Global PRAYERS FOR WORLD PEACE**

- 1. Date: November 22, 1986
- 2. Time: 11-30 p.m.-12-00 midnight (local time)
- 3. Where: In respective homes and places of residence of all devotees all over the world, with all members of family staying therein. We can pray wherever we are that night.
- 4. To do what: Silent silting with Jyoti (flame), meditation and silent prayer for World Peace at the end.
- 5. Why this: Prayers have an immense strength. When we meditate, good vibrations are generated. These vibrations have a good impact on our surroundings. Bhagavan Baba has said that the time between 11-00 p. m. and 12 midnight is most conducive for generating powerful spiritual vibrations. The sum total of these vibrations coming from millions of homes all over the globe will be very great and will promote Peace, Love and goodwill in the world. The idea is not to have a ritual but to join our brothers and sisters in all countries and Continents in our earnest prayer for Divine Grace for Peace in this world on the auspicious day of our Lord's birthday. This would also serve as one of the steps towards integration of the world community.

*—World Council of Sri Sathya Sai Organisations*

*ONAM SANDESH:*

### **Sanctified by Three Avatars**

*Heaven is not in some remote place.  
Where people are virtuous and of good character,  
You will find Paradise.*

Bharat's culture is rooted in the Vedas. Music and literature have come from the Vedas. The Sama Veda is the primal source of music. Rig Veda is the source of all literature.

Devotion, filled with music, is the form of the Divine. Hence, Lord Narayana declared: "I do not dwell in Vaikuntha or in the hearts of yogis. I am present wherever my devotees sing my praise, Oh Narada!"

The Lord resides not only in the hearts of devotees, but also in the hearts of the evil-minded. Once, the child Prahlada approached his mother, Lilavati, and told her. "Mother, there is only one difference between me, who is a devotee of Hari, and my father, who hates Hari. Ever contemplating on the nectarine sweetness of the Lord, repeating His name, and constantly remembering Him, I am immersed in the bliss of love of the Lord, like one intoxicated. My father, in his hatred of Narayana, has turned his heart into stone and installed Him in it."

The Lord, who dwelt in the heart of Prahlada, who loved Narayana, and the Lord who was in the heart of Hiranyakasipu, who hated Narayana, was one and the same. Drinking deep the nectar of Divine Love, Prahlada quenched his heart's thirst and found bliss. Installing the Lord in his stony heart, Hiranyakasipu was unable to allay his burning thirst and experienced endless worries.

Man has to live in faith to experience happiness. Where there is happiness there is peace. Realising that the Divine is omnipresent, the devotees make their lives sublime by singing the glories of the Lord and ever dwelling on His name.

The Divine is present everywhere and in everything. Prahlada declared in the Bhagavata: "There is no room for the suspicion that the Lord is here and not there. He can be found wherever He is sought, because He is immanent in everything in the universe." Saint Thyagaraja said the same thing when he sang: "Where is your dwelling place, Oh Lord? Wherever I turn I behold You. You are present everywhere. You are omnipotent and all-knowing."

The Divine is present not only in human beings, He dwells in birds and beasts and in all living things. So Thyagaraja sang: "Did not a woman devotee (Aparanji) teach a parrot to recite the name of Rama and enjoy Your glory?"

The knower of Brahman becomes Brahman Himself. Valmiki, who wrote the Ramayana, was so much immersed in the Rama principle that the inmates of his ashram noticed an effulgence in

his face reflective of the splendour of Rama Himself. The face is a reflection of the inner being. Whatever thoughts and emotions fill a man, they are reflected in his face. Moses, who was ever dwelling on the glories of God, reflected in his face the radiance and splendour of the Divine. This is revealed in the Bible. Darwin, who was a devoted student of Henslow, followed his teacher's exemplary life and became, in later years, a great scientist recognizing the inextricable relationship between man and God.

### **Danava devotees**

The devotee is inseparable from God. When he is filled with the love of God and, is totally forgetful of himself, he experiences oneness with God. Prahlada was such a supreme devotee. He was a Rakshasa by birth. His form was human. His heart was centred on God. Prahlada combined in himself these three elements. He adhered to the culture of Bharat and shone as an ideal to his people. In following the four Purusharthas—Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha—Prahlada combined the pursuit of Artha (worldly interests) with Dharma and linked them to Kama (desire) for the attainment of Moksha. Because of this, Moksha itself sought Prahlada.

Though born among Danavas (Asuras or Rakshasas), there are three notable figures who have achieved distinction in the pursuit of the Purusharthas and sanctified their lives. They are Prahlada, Bali and Vibhishana. As against these, there are countless persons, who, born as human beings, have forgotten Dharma and Moksha and, submerged in Artha and Kama, have wasted their lives.

Virochana was the son of the great devotee Prahlada. He was, however, different from his father. He was a staunch materialist. He followed the hedonistic philosophy of Charvaka. Emperor Bali, who was the soul of goodness and purity, was Virochana's son. He looked after the welfare of his people as if they were his own children. He earned the love and esteem of his citizens, whom he regarded as limbs of his own body: The people enshrined Bali in their hearts. There was complete harmony between the people and the ruler.

Bali once embarked upon the performance of a great sacrifice known, as Viswajit (conquest of the Universe). This provoked the apprehension of Indra and the Devas. There have always been in all ages men who are envious of or antagonistic to those who are prosperous, eminent or extremely good. The latter have had to face troubles from such envious persons. Rama was subject to many hardships from evil-minded persons. Harishchandra suffered many ordeals from a Rishi. The Pandavas, who were the very embodiment of Dharma, had to endure numerous troubles caused by the envious Kauravas. Jesus, who was the personification of self-sacrifice, was a victim of the hatred of those who were envious of his popularity and, resented his teachings. The Prophet Mohammed had to flee from Mecca because of the enmity of some people who were opposed to his message.

### **The Devas Propose: The Lord Disposes**

Bali wanted to ensure peace and prosperity for the entire world under his beneficent reign and commenced the Viswajit Yaga for this purpose. The Doves became apprehensive and jealous

when Bali was performing this yaga. They approached Lord Narayana and prayed to Him: "Bali, who is a Rakshasa by birth, is attempting to bring the whole Universe under his sway by performing the Viswajit Yaga. You must save the world from this danger (of the whole world coming under the rule of Rakshasas), by diverting his mind from this course."

Man proposes, but God disposes. The Lord, who knew the greatness of Bali, his noble qualities and his devotion to God, formally acceded to the Devas' prayers but decided to confer the highest blessings on Bali. For this purpose He incarnated in Siddhasrama as Vamana and went to Bali's yajnasala to ask for a gift. Pure-hearted as he was, Bali could instantly recognise the divine radiance on the face of the young Vamana. He asked Vamana: "Swami, what is it you seek at this yajna? I have decided to renounce everything I possess to redeem my life." Vamanamurti was short in stature, but the whole universe was immanent in Him. He asked for an apparently small gift from Bali—nothing more than three lengths of ground measured by his feet.

Bali felt that for a ruler of the vast earth, this was too small a gift and he agreed. That very moment, Vamana assumed the immeasurable form of Trivikrama, the Supreme Lord of the three worlds. With one step, He covered the entire earth. With the second step, He covered the whole of space and asked Bali where He should place his foot for the third step. Bali knelt before the Lord and said: "Oh Lord I What can I offer you except the body and heart which you have given to me! I pray to you to place your foot on my head." Bali was thus the supreme embodiment of self-sacrifice, who did not hesitate to offer everything he had to the Lord.

#### **Vamana's Boon to Bali**

Seeing the anguish of his loving people at this turn of events at the Yajna, Bali made one request to the Lord before he was sent to his heavenly abode by the Lord's third step. He said: "Oh Lord! I am indeed happy that I have been sanctified by your divine feet and achieved the bliss of liberation. I do not, however, wish to leave my loving people in the agony that they are feeling. Please allow me once a year, in the month of Shravana, during the constellation of Shravana, to visit my people." He asked for this boon out of his boundless love for his people. The Lord granted this boon.

The ONAM festival signifies the enormous love Bali had for the people of his realm. On Onam day, all the people of Kerala rise early in the morning, take a purificatory bath, put on new clothes, prepare a variety of delicious dishes, spread them on a plantain leaf and offer them first to Emperor Bali as a pious oblation.

Then they celebrate the Onam festival in the company of their kith and kin and friends with great rejoicing. The new clothes worn on Onam day are known as "Onakkodi". This name has a special significance. It refers not merely to the new clothes worn by Keralites, but to the new body which Emperor Bali acquired on that day. Bali, who appears on that day from the netherworld, is considered as appearing in the new garb of love of the people for whose sake he w a s coming.

### **Parasurama Kshetra**

Kerala is a land that has won the love of the Lord in a special way. In olden days, it was noted for its devotion and godliness. Kerala is also known as Parasurama Kshetra—the sacred land of Parasurama. How did it acquire that name? Parasurama is one of the avatars of Vishnu. When Parasurama's father (Jamadagni) was beheaded by a Kshatriya king, his mother Renuka, cried in anguish: "Rama! Rama!" Parasurama, who was away from the ashram, could ethereally hear the cries of his mother from afar and rushed home. He counted that his mother had called his name twenty one times. On reaching the ashram he saw his father's head severed from the body. The horrible crime had been committed by Kartavirya's sons. Parasurama took a vow to wage war against the vile Kshatriya rulers twenty one times and end their rule all over the earth. Parasurama accomplished his mission by defeating the Kshatriya kings twenty one times and came to his ashram to pray to his ancestors for restoring his father's life. The sage Bharadwaja, to whose gotra Jamadagni belonged, appeared before Parasurama and restored Jamadagni to life by placing the head and body together.

After this, Parasurama felt that the purpose of his advent had been achieved and as he had no desire to be a ruler, he made a gift of all the territories he had conquered to the Sage Kashyapa. He felt that having given away everything, it would not be right for him to remain on the land he had gifted. He decided to reclaim land from the sea and settle down on that territory for the rest of his life. It is this area that is known as Parasurama Kshetra—also known as Kerala. He performed penance on a mountain called Mahesa, which is situated in Kerala.

Kerala is thus a land with sacred traditions. The Onam festival occurs in an auspicious period. Kerala goes through three months of heavy rains before Onam. Nature wears a somber look. The skies are overcast and the sun is hardly visible during these months. After the rains, the sun shines in all its glory and it is green everywhere. Nature rejoices at the time of Onam. The entire population is filled with joy, sharing the glory of Nature and enjoying its fruits in abundance. The natural beauty of Kerala cannot be described in words. It has to be seen and enjoyed. Kerala has been uniquely blessed by Providence.

In such a sacred and well-endowed country, the whirling of time has wrought some changes. The passage of time and the vicissitudes of circumstance have affected the minds of people. Differences have arisen between man and man and hatred has grown among various sections. In spite of these changes, however, the spirit of devotion among the people has remained.

### **Onam in Kerala**

Kerala is regarded as a communist ridden country. But this is not wholly true. Even today the mass of the people are filled with deep devotion. On Onam day there is no Keralite who does not celebrate the festival with enthusiasm and joy. The temples are jam-packed with devotees on Onam day. Although political differences figure prominently on the surface, deep down there is a sense of unity in the hearts of the people.

"What is the difference between man and God," it is asked. The answer is the individual jiva is a changing entity. God is unchanging and eternal. Faith in God has remained unchanged in Kerala despite the passage of centuries. This is the unique greatness of the Onam festival.

Prahlada was a great devotee of God. Bali, his grandson, was a great emperor and devotee. In between, the father of Bali, Virochana, was a materialist and atheist. In the world, there are any number of persons who derive inspiration from Prahlada and Bali. There are also many who take the cue from Virochana. The world (Jagat) will not be what it is, if such variations did not exist.

All through history, the devotees of God have had to endure many ordeals and privations, but they never lost their faith in God. They have stood out as ideals and examples to mankind. Bali was one such great exemplar. Onam is celebrated as the sacred day when Bali achieved liberation. It is also the day when Vamana was born. It is also the day when each year Bali visits the earth to experience the love of the people and participate in their rejoicings. Hence, people should not be content with enjoying food and raiment but should try to experience the bliss of the Spirit.

The people of Kerala should be proud of the fact that their land is sacred in many ways. It was created by an Avatar of the Divine. It is the land where Prahlada and Bali were born. It witnessed the advent of the Vamana Avatar. Because of these sacred associations, I desire that the people of Kerala should lead pious and virtuous lives and I bless them on this sacred occasion.

*—Bhagavan's discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium on 15-9-1986*

## **Seva Sadhana**

To identify oneself with Sathya Sai Baba's teachings and be willing to accept the practical consequences of one's own deep conviction and the full personal responsibility for this means that we are guided into becoming instruments in His divine mission. When these prerequisites are fulfilled by the individual it means uninterrupted work with oneself. A process which never seems to end. Although we may intellectually know the answers to spiritual questions such as, "Who am I?" "Where do I come from?" "Why am I here?" and "Where am I going?", we are faced with the necessity of an actual realisation. The path to this involves acceptance and understanding of our selves, such as we actually are, self-important, hiding behind masks, full of frustrations (inhibitions), upholding preconceived opinions, causing us to judge others and to be intolerant towards others etc.

How have we become like this? Have these things been caused by disappointments, grief, fear? Do they originate from earlier lives and/or are they childhood experiences now governing me from my own sub-consciousness? Is it possible for me to break the illusion (Maya), the false

identification with the body, which is the cause of my disharmony, isolation and egoism, and instead become spiritual, so that the isolation is broken and I then approach unity and love on an unselfish level? How do I really turn inwards and upwards? Am I willing to change myself radically? And can I accept that all resistance, anger, fear etc., which I encounter during this process originates from my self? Do I understand that everything that I have emanated/created necessarily must return to me as its source/creator. This is the same irresistible force which as a natural law forces man to seek unity with the great cosmic Creator. If I deny that which I myself have created, I seek to deny part of my self, and thus I only create increased conflict and disharmony within myself and my relationship to cosmos. I therefore have to accept it as my own, to receive it again and transform it into love. This is like the Phoenix that burns to death in its own nest to be born again in a changed quality. Am I willing to do my best, always to focus on the positive with the eyes of Love and if I am to point at errors, then only to point at my own? These are the ones and the only ones that I am to take care of, to change. And am I willing only to criticise another, when I can do it in Love, only from the depth of my heart in order to help.

Are these demands hard to meet? Maybe, but those who want to be His instruments only want it as a step on the path to realising themselves as one with Him. And that path is not always easy. All the activities of the Sai organisation serve only one purpose: the removal of all the obstacles which stand between the individual and God. The total realization, which the spiritual seeker is striving for includes a willingness to give up everything, to die on the level of the body and the material world, in order to be born-made conscious-in a spiritual sense. Do we have a longing, which is sufficiently profound and great, which is indeed all-embracing and eternal, so that we can make such demands on ourselves? Can we enter the process with joy and expectancy, knowing that we shall be "undone" bit by bit in order for the illusion to be broken and a new, conscious, and harmonic person to be created? Are we ready to make the priorities in our lives in accordance with this? Each one must answer for himself. No one else can I No one else can walk the path for me!

In our contact with other people—and especially when we are doing Seva Sadhana (serving unselfishly as a spiritual discipline) we shall meet apprehension, fear, grief, depression, anger and possibly physical pain too, and we shall be aware that the only thing we can give is LOVE. In our hearts there is no doubt about unselfish love being the main key to the solution of all our problems. But we can only really give unselfish love when we are willing and able to put our own small self completely aside (overcome it or "sacrifice it"). It is not difficult to understand that we must accept and love ourselves in order to be able to really accept and love others. Self-acceptance requires understanding of one self and one's situation. In this way the necessary self-confidence is achieved. This includes taking responsibility for one's self, one's actions, and one's own shortcomings.

*—Dr. Thobjorn Meyer, Denmark*



## THE WARNING AGAIN

*Reports reaching us from Sathya Sai Centres in Holland about the activities of a person, wearing the orange robe, calling himself "SAI KRISHNA" and claiming to effect cures through Vibhuti "produced" by him, have obliged us once again to remind devotees that Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has no agent, intermediary, or representative or any one authorised to act or speak on His behalf. Devotees should not allow themselves to be misled by persons masquerading as nominees, deriving powers from Bhagavan Baba, and seeking to exploit the growing reverence for Bhagavan Baba for their selfish ends. We desire to remind our readers, and through them all devotees, that they should dissociate themselves from the fakes and rescue the gullible from being led astray.*

—*The Editor*

**DASARA SANDESH:**

### The Five Yajnas

*Birth occurs owing to Karma  
Karma is the cause of pleasure and pain  
It is the cause of good and evil  
The world is made of Karma stuff.*

The world is permeated by Brahman. It is equally permeated by Karma. Creation itself is the outcome of action. Man as a part of creation is also a product of the process.

Man represents the vital force (Jiva shakti) encased in the body. The body is the result of Karma (deeds in one's previous life). All activities associated with the body, speech and mind are Karma. In the performance of karma, five factors are involved. One is the body. The second is the doer. The third comprise the sensory organs. The fourth covers the varied actions. The fifth is the common factor in all beings, the Divine Principle.

The Divine underlies all things. Forgetting this fact, and attributing all activities to the sense organs, man is engaged in actions for achieving desired results. Man is reborn to reap the fruits of his actions. He is thus caught up in the cycle of birth and rebirth.

So, man should aim at performing actions without concern for the fruits thereof. There are two types of actions—described in the Gita as "Swadharma" and "Paradharma." "Swadharma" is generally regarded as duties related to one's caste, vocation or stage in life and it is considered meritorious to perform these duties. But "Swadharma" is not related to community, caste or creed. "Swa" refers to Atma (the Self) and "Swadharma" means duties relating to the Atma. It is

not liable to change in character or form. It is based on the eternal verities. It is unchanging. "Swadharma" enjoins man to perform the duties relating to the Atma as the primary obligation.

"Paradharma" refers to actions related to the physical entity. Such actions are based on likes and dislikes, on ideas of "Mine" and "thine". They are fraught with danger and hence the Gita has cautioned against them. We are continually worried about what may happen in the future. All that we do in the present have their consequences in due course. Hence we must engage ourselves in good actions to ensure good results later.

In all these actions, there are three categories—Satwic Karma, Rajasic Karma and Tamasic Karma. Satwic actions are those which are done without any selfish or egoistic motives, with no concern for the fruits and as an offering to the Divine. Satwic deeds serve the Divine and win the Grace of God. All actions done out of self-interest and conceit for the sake of the rewards there from are Rajasic. Most actions done by common people in ordinary daily life belong to this category. Almost everyone in the world indulges in Rajasic actions. One must strive to convert them into Satwic actions.

The third type of actions is Tamasic in nature. They are deeds done out of selfish motives, causing harm to others and inflicting pain on them. They lack compassion and are impelled by narrow mindedness, stemming wholly from self-interest. They are pregnant with evil.

In the ordinary course of life, man does many actions which, wittingly or unwittingly, cause harm to other beings. To atone for such actions, five Yajnas propitiatory rites-have been prescribed by the Shastras. These are: Deva yajna, Pitru yajna, Bhoota yajna, Manushya yajna and Rishi yajna or Brahma yajna. The inner significance of each of these Yajnas should be clearly understood by everyone.

**Deva yajna:** In numerous daily activities like walking, breathing, and others, unconsciously people cause the death of many creatures like ants, insects and micro-organisms. To atone for these sins committed unknowingly, Dave Yajnas, to propitiate various deities, have been prescribed. Moreover, in our body, In every organ and limb, the presiding deities are present in the form of rasa (a subtle fluid). Hence these deities are called Angirasas (the presiding deities of the Angas or limbs). Because these deities in the subtle form protect the organs concerned, gratitude has to be expressed to them in the form of Deva Yajnas. During the states like sleep, these deities take care of the body. As the body has been given to man for the performance of his duties man should be grateful to the deities who protect it. "The body is essential for the fulfillment of Dharma." To meditate on the Anga Devas, to worship them and express gratitude to them is man's first duty.

**Pitru yajnas:** When a branch is broken, a flower is plucked or a tree is cut down, many small creatures may be losing their lives. Recognising one's responsibility for this loss of lives, one should perform Pitru yajna (sacrifice to the manes) by way of atonement. In addition, one should remember that he owes his body and all that it contains, as well as the food that has nourished him in childhood, to his parents. As long as they are alive, it is one's duty to serve them and keep

them happy. The obsequies and ceremonies that are performed after their death are laid down to honour their memory. By performing Pitru Yajnas, the ancestors are propitiated.

**Bhoota yajnas:** When we take a bath, or wash our clothes, or sweep the house, many living creatures may be losing their lives. To atone for the death of such creatures, Bhoota Yajnas or offerings to the Bhootas have to be made. This practice has come down from the times of ancient sages. The Rishis used to maintain deer, cows, and other animals in their ashrams and look after them with loving care as an expression of their love for all living beings. Following their example, other people used to scatter sugar or flour near anthills for feeding the ants. To offer the remains of one's food after a meal to cows or dogs or other creatures is also a form of Bhoota Yajna. Even today many people keep dogs, parrots or other pets at home. By showing love towards living things in this way, some atonement is made for the unconscious harm done to various creatures in daily life.

**Manava or manushya yajna:** These Yajnas or rituals are done to atone for many offences committed against various beings in the course of daily life, in actions done during work or play.

**Rishi or Brahma yajna:** Considering human birth as a precious gift, the ancient sages provided through the scriptures, the Upanishads, the Dharma Shastras a body of principles for guiding man's life so that he may strive to attain the true goal of life—namely Self-realisation. They laid down the four Purusharthas—Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha—as guidelines for humanity. These regulations, which are not applicable to animals or birds, have been prescribed for man alone because he alone is endowed with powers of enquiry and discrimination to choose between right and wrong. All laws and Shastras are intended only for man. Sins, laws, Shastras and curses (shapam) are designed only for man. The Rishis laid down the royal road of righteous life, for all humanity. It is our duty to show our gratitude to them by meditating on them and offering worship to them through Rishi Yajnas.

### **Worship of trinity**

The practice of absolute non-violence—that is, causing no harm to any living thing—is impossible in daily life, because unconsciously many micro-organisms are being destroyed even in the processes of breathing, walking, talking or eating. What should be avoided is consciously causing harm. The price has to be paid for conscious offences by suffering and retribution. There is no escape from the rule. As you sow, so shall you reap. The results of your past deeds, good or bad, will bind you like a chain. It is to atone for all such actions that worship of the three principal deities during dawn, noon and evening has been prescribed. At dawn the Sun represents the form of Brahma. At noon he has the form of Ishwara. In the evening he represents Vishnu. The performance of Sandhya worship (of the sun) in the morning, noon and evening thus becomes worship of the Trimurtis (Brahma, Siva and Vishnu). Very few are aware of the significance of these rituals.

These five types of yajnas have to be performed every day to atone for the sins committed in the course of daily activities. There is no need to have elaborate arrangements for performing these yajnas. If you carry out the behests of your parents, meditate on the deities, offer food to

the animals in the house or outside or at least give alms to a beggar, you can propitiate the divine and redeem your life. You would do well to remember that there is no greater gift than the gift of food to the hungry, there are no greater gods than one's parents, there is no higher dharma than compassion, no more profitable acquisition than the company of the good, no worse enemy than anger, no worse disease than debt, no worse death than infamy, no higher merit than remembering the Lord.

It is futile to expect that merely by reciting a few mantras one can atone for one's sins. Only through right action can expiation take place. Without a clean heart, all worship is useless. Without spiritual purity, religious observances are valueless. How can you have pure food, if the cooking utensils are unclean?

People indulge in high-sounding talk about spiritual matters. But without application in practice, such talk has no meaning.

***—Bhagavan's Discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium on 7-10-1986***

*PRASANTHI SAMACHAR:*

### **Bhagavan Blesses Italian Prime Minister**

Mr. Bettino Craxi, Prime Minister of Italy, and his wife and children, arrived in Prasanthi Nilayam on November 4th to have darshan of Bhagavan Baba and meet his younger brother Mr. Antonio Craxi and his family, who are residing in Prasanthi Nilayam.

The Italian Prime Minister, who was on his way back from China to Italy, broke his journey at Bangalore for a private visit to Prasanthi Nilayam. His party flew from Bangalore by helicopter arriving at Prasanthi Nilayam on the 4th afternoon.

Bhagavan gave a private interview to Mr. Bettino Craxi and his wife, son and daughter in the evening.

After the interview, the Prime Minister visited the administrative building of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning on the top of Vidyagiri and went round the Primary School in which Mr. Antonio Craxi's four children are studying. He went through the bazaar, where the villagers had lined up to greet him. Mr. Bettino Craxi spent the night in the guestrooms attached to the Poornachandra Auditorium.

The next morning, the Italian P. M. and party were given another interview by Bhagavan Baba at which Mr. Antonio Craxi and family and some Italian officials were present. Bhagavan spoke on the moral issues facing mankind today. At the end of the interview, Mr. Bettino Craxi invited Swami to visit Italy. Swami blessed Mr. Craxi.

On coming out of the interview room the Italian P. M. was asked about his impressions. He declared: "in this world, one never stops learning."

Mr. Bettino Craxi and party left for Bangalore, en route to Delhi, where he had a meeting with the Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi.

*Resort to the recitation of the Name when your mind is agitated by fear, anxiety or grief. To make a cup of coffee, it is not enough to have decoction in one cup and milk in another. You have to pour one into the other and mix well. Mix the decoction of Vairagya (Sense control, detachment) with the milk of Bhakti-Sraddha (Devotion-steadfastness). And you get the drink that satisfies.*

—Baba

### **Awareness of Human Values: II**

When we approach the five human values imaginatively, we become more Inward-looking, contemplative, and open to higher impulses. At this level there is much more interaction between the five values, and the power, zest, enthusiasm overflowing at the earlier stage become a little soft to touch deeper levels of our being. Our words and deeds become a little more thoughtful, our earlier enthusiasm to convert people to our faiths, and our fights with those who do not accept ours, sink down to a more humane approach of tolerating their opinions and ways, for we accept that they too have equal rights to stand by their own.

At this level, one begins to ask fundamental questions, such as, what is truth? Is this world true? What is the purpose of my life here on earth? Is there anything behind the ever-changing faces of Nature? A poet, a sculptor, a teacher, a scientist most have his or her imaginative level of values awakened to be really useful to society. A poet's truth is not only what he sees, but also what he feels, visualises, what he wants to contact. We know that the burden of the Unknown is far greater than that of the known. That is also true to a scientist who believes that all that he has gathered are like shells on the sea-shore. In front of him lies the vast ocean of the Unknown. This capacity to recognise the infiniteness of truth teaches an individual humility and love of God. This teaches a political leader to be less arrogant about his work, and be more relevant to the actual problems of society. At this level right-living is recognised as the only true living. Here might ceases to be right, and the brotherhood of mankind becomes a tangible faith. So we understand the necessity of living for others, that stupidity of living only to fulfill our rightful claims. Right-living at this stage is not merely living according to the laws of the land, or the laws of one's own faith: at this stage an individual seeks to live up to a universal human code.

### **Peace and Love**

Then comes Peace. It is an undisturbed mental equipoise. Even in the face of great physical disorder and misery a person is able to keep his peace. To keep peace is not the same as remaining inactive. One who fulfils one's Dharma alone receives the gift of this peace. One who is established in mental peace is tuned in to the omnipresent field of energy all around him, and is rarely defeated by life's problems. The peace he touches in the blue sky, in a snow-clad peak, he also finds in saying a comforting word to a lonely neighbour. The peace he gets in a forest retreat he finds in a harmonious home. At this level one is far better equipped to make a right judgement at the right time, which is so very rare in homes and nations today. Peace for him is not merely a state; it is a means of doing things. And love is for him far more than loving his family and friends. Love rises to the level of a disposition. He will love beauty, goodness, sacrifice, selflessness, simplicity wherever he will find them, even among people who bring suffering to him. Differences and distinctions based on colour, creed, faith and language shall have no appeal for him, as he will have awakened in his heart a love that accepts oneness more naturally than differences. He will instinctively shrink from acts of cruelty and selfishness. Closely follows this ahimsa, non-violence. His contact with the neighbours, friends, colleagues, members of his family, and even strangers shall be pleasant and human. At the imaginative level ahimsa is love in action. A person at this level will not merely refrain from harming anyone physically, he will refrain from negative thoughts as well. Today the world is filled with

negative thoughts, which makes any well-meaning attempt at the well-being of the community impossible. To fill the heart with loving thoughts for everyone is true ahimsa.

One must expand from the vital to the mental level of awareness to grasp the greater import of human values. Values are our understanding and practice of our relationship with the known and the unknown. Unless we expand our mental and emotional horizons, values remain a mere husk, and husk is, after all, only husk.

### **The archetypal level**

That brings us to the fourth level of awareness. At this level the divine torch in man, the intuition, is switched on and we are able to get a glimpse of the world of values that lies beyond the mind. Intellectual tangles melt away, mental deficiencies are made up, and in a moment's experience a life-time of struggles, and failures and questions are redeemed. What is this archetypal level? When we trace one particular idea back to its very source, where the idea remains utterly pure and timeless, we arrive at the archetypal level. For instance, a rose may die, but the idea of Rose shall not. A truthful man may apparently fail, but the idea of Truth will not. The idea is also the Experience. Therefore, one who, through intuition or divine grace, touches that idea, comes to know all about it. Here again knowledge is one with experience of it. Truth, in its various ramifications, and Dharma, in its numerous compartments confuse the ablest minds. The Gita says, to walk on the path of highest Dharma is like walking on the edge of a sharp knife, and even the wisest may falter and fall. Then what to say about the beginner? A beginner cannot remain a beginner all the time, nor can he for the fear of fall excuse himself from learning more. The only way to a comprehensive understanding and experience of values lies through intuition. Revelations from the world beyond the mind add meaning and justification to the earlier levels of our perception.

All the quarrels and bloodshed in the name of religion only reveal how very few among the mass of humanity could even rise to the mental level of perception, not to talk of the archetypal. Yet mankind can still be proud of a great number of poets, philosophers, and seers, even scientists who have touched the archetypal level of their particular works, and shaken the sloth of the common man. They have left behind their footprints on the tablets of time for the rest of us to contemplate and follow. Truth at this level is Reality, and right-living is reflecting that Reality in daily living. One who sees this as one's true Dharma, may break away from the blind flock like Jonathan Seagull of Richard Bach, but propelled by greater love and compassion comes back to the flock to revolutionise their concept of right-living. Dharma at this stage is synonymous with Freedom, and as Jonathan puts it, the only law to obey and follow is the law to Freedom. Without cognising that right-living is essentially the right to live the eternal life, it remains merely an ethical living which wears away too soon. But one has to remember that Freedom is not non-ethical, while a life of no ethics is not Freedom. It is said that better is the enemy of best. That is to say, unless we have the highest in our minds to strive for, even the better, in time, may corrupt. To explore the meaning of life at source we have to make use of intuition which is awakened by two things—purity and Grace.

Peace at this level is the state of Sthitaprajna, described in the Gita. He is fully stabilised in that mental equilibrium which stands the stress of greatest of challenges in life. This peace is not mental it is spiritual. King Janaka demonstrated this kind of peace when his guru dramatised before his other disciples the burning of the whole of Mithila. Swami, by way of pointing out this state of peace, says, "The man who remains unshaken when everything goes topsy-turvy is the true man." It is this peace that passeth understanding, but makes our understanding of all other values more comprehensive. It may descend on a man during meditation, while he gazes at a flower, when he has passed through a very powerful temptation, or even when he has met with a great failure. In fact, it may come to a person at any moment of life, provided his archetypal level has been touched.

Love at this stage is simple and all pervading. When one is filled with this love the hold of body and senses on one is so weak that one feels utterly light and knows that the affections of the body are ludicrous. Love at this level is not love for something; it is the experience of great self-expansion, of feeling oneness with everything. The subjective and the objective merge with each other. Swami Ramatirtha, in one such moment of love for the spiritual India, saw himself as India and identified the parts of Mother India with his own body. When Bhagavan Baba declared, "I can turn the sky into earth and the earth into sky, but it is nothing before the power of Love that creates and governs the world." He pointed at this love which is always there, coeval with the Creator, Eternal, Everlasting and ever dynamic.

Ahimsa at this level merges with love. One feels a great affinity with all creation, human, beasts, and even the plants. He lives in complete peace with the world. He sees that all is well, there is no evil, no Satan, and no death. His heart is always filled with fellow-feeling for all creatures, He alone knows the true implication of the Upanishadic prayer: Let everyone be happy, let everyone be free from all evil, let all see the nobility of life, and let no deprivation affect anyone.

The archetypal level is the consummation of all values. Here the plurality of values is only a shadow, for they are all like shining discs surrounding a central experience. But so long as a person doesn't achieve this level of insight, there will always be deficiencies in application of the five values. One cannot remain long on either the physical, vital, or mental levels of awareness and feel fulfilled. The constant urge to go higher must take a man to the next level of awareness where he spontaneously knows everything about them.

The last, the Unitive stage, is a grand synthesis. This is the land where all values originate, and experience of this Unity, which is the destiny of all individual souls, brings us Ultimate Freedom, from values and no values. The practice of values, with the awareness climbing higher and higher steadily, takes us through individual and social to universal fulfillment. This journey can be likened to a journey from I to WE to I . Values give us a cause to live for, an opportunity to learn and practise what we learn, till the channel of God in man is opened, after which, as all good guides, they leave us at the doorstep of our own Being and merge in us.



Practice of values should be an intellectual, emotional, and spiritual experience. At each level the implications differ, but each is part of a wholesome living. Intellectual understanding is of no use without emotional acceptance, and both won't last long without spiritual experience. At each stage the practice of values brings us fresh problems as well as new insights to be worked on. This takes us higher and higher in our comprehension of ourselves. This unceasing self-exploration, according to Swami, is the greatest adventure in human life.

Therefore, in our value-orientation workshops we can have graded programmes which may help the participants to work on their own awareness levels. Values, after all, cannot be taught. The purpose of all our programmes is to awaken an awareness in every individual that would help him to explore and examine the correspondence between the inner and outer worlds in the light of that which endures.

**—Bejoy K. Misra, Prasanthi Nilayam**

## **A Test of Faith**

My wife and I were passengers on the Pan American Flight No. 73 airplane that was hijacked by terrorists in Karachi, Pakistan, on September 5, 1986. We were returning from India after a very happy time at Prasanthi Nilayam with our beloved Swamiji.

Swami's words sustained us through our tribulation. He said: (I am paraphrasing) "The mind is the key and the heart is the lock. Turn the key outward to the world and there are endless desires and chaos. Turn the key inward to God and there is detachment and serenity. Remember, God gives bad experiences as well as good experiences. There is a purpose for both. Your equanimity should be constant with both good and bad experiences."

My wife and a stewardess were the first two people to encounter the terrorists when they entered the airplane. First there was angry shouting and a gunshot outside. Then two of the terrorists entered the airplane. One of them put his arm around the neck of the stewardess and pressed a pistol to her head. The other terrorist pointed a machine gun at my wife. Despite these ominous events, my wife raised her hands together to pray and said aloud OM SAI RAM five times with a dignity and calmness that was incongruous with the situation. The terrorist was disconcerted for an instant. Then he said, "Hands up; move back!"

During the 17 hours of captivity, I contemplated Swami's words and prayed to Him many times—always the same prayer: Lord, intercede in this tragedy. Fill the hearts of our captors with Love and Peace. Protect my wife and the other good and gentle people on this airplane. If I am to die then grant me the courage and strength to die with honor, doing my duty faithfully and effectively, and thinking of Thee to the end.

From my contemplation of Swami's words and my prayers to Him, I derived detachment. Instead of being controlled by my own fear, I became a witness to it. This enabled me to think clearly and act effectively. The stewardesses and our fellow passengers were a valiant group. They remained calm and courageous until the end. The lights in the airplane went out. The terrorists opened fire with machine guns and exploded grenades. They viciously and randomly killed and injured innocent men, women, and children. By the Grace of God, my wife and I escaped unharmed. We mourn and pray for those who were not as fortunate. This dark ordeal has strengthened our faith in the Lord, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba!

—*Michael and Gloria Goldstein*

*VEDA PURUSHA VANI:*

### **Duty of Resistance to Adharma**

*When the Truth of the Self is known,  
Bliss is experienced;  
Without This truth, only anxiety remains.  
To know Brahman is to be Brahman.  
Know ye, this truth.*

Clay is one, but pots are varied. Gold is one. Ornaments are many. Milk is white, though the cows may be of different colours. The Omni-Self is one; but it assumes innumerable bodies. The Divine is one, who is hidden in all selves. He is the embodiment of Truth. His glory is infinite. Though Truth is one, it is experienced in many forms.

There are innumerable persons who cannot understand God. There are quite a few who claim to comprehend God. But no one can at anytime, anywhere completely grasp the nature of the Divine. "Wherefrom speech and mind turn-back without reaching it," says the Upanishad. How can any one describe what is beyond thought and words.

### **Conversion: not creation**

God has created all that is needed for man. The earth, fire, water, air and sunlight are the gifts of God. An individual or a scientist produces out of these elements got by the grace of God numerous objects with different forms and names. The scientist may imagine that he is creating these objects. No one can create anything out of nothing. What is being done is to change the form of what exists and give it different shapes. For instance, electricity is generated through waterpower. But the energy is not the creation of the scientist. What is potential is made usable.

There are today numerous scientists and technologists who can harness the energy and potentialities of various natural products. These discoveries are impressive evidence of the advance of science. But it is a mark of ignorance to consider them as examples of man's creative power. Technology is employed to raise to the surface water from subterranean sources. This

only means that water which is already there is being taken out and not newly created. Nor can man destroy the basic stuff of matter. Man is incapable of either creating or destroying the primary material. It is only when one realises this truth that he can understand the subtle omnipresent nature of the Divine.

The all-pervasive power of the Divine has been ever present. The earth, for instance, has the natural quality of gravitational attraction. Newton enquired into this phenomenon and found how it operates. Gravity existed long before Newton discovered the laws governing it. Similarly, although the power of the Divine has been always present in its subtle but all-pervasive form, only the spiritually minded aspirants could experience It according to the intensity of their efforts.

### **The one and the many**

There are numerous faiths, sects, beliefs and practices prevalent among mankind. All these are products of human fancies. The Truth, however, is one. It does not differ from caste to caste or nation to nation or from time to time. It is not governed by time or place. Likewise the basic elements—fire, air, water, etc.,—are universal in their nature—not varying according to community or place. They belong to all. Likewise, Divinity is One and universal, but men are fragmenting It and experiencing It diversely. It is wrong to limit the Divine in terms of nation, caste, creed, place or time.

Take, for instance, the example of Krishna. He was not the titular deity of Brahmins. Nor did he belong to the Kshatriyas. He was not the Lord of the Vaishyas. He was an incarnation who appeared for the protection of the world. To claim that Krishna belonged to one or other group is only an index of petty possessiveness. Because the Yadavas boasted that Krishna belonged to their community, they ultimately destroyed themselves.

The Divine belongs to every one and is not the sole preserve of any one. There is only one God, but He manifests Himself in many forms to please different people. Sadhana alone is not enough to enable one to understand this truth. The spirit of enquiry is also necessary. Today numerous divisive forces are at work. What is essentially one is being regarded as many. In this process, the true concept of Divinity is lost. In the pursuit of worldly interests and out of commercial considerations, the Divine is being split up. As a result, men are unable to grasp the true nature of the Divine. This leads to a failure to distinguish between what is true and what is false.

### **Abettors of adharma**

Only the nation in which the goddesses of Dharma (Righteousness) and Santhi (Peace) are adored will genuine prosperity and happiness exist. Today many are indulging in actions opposed to Dharma and truth and, on the basis of their caste or community, are promoting strife and conflict in the country. Elders in the nation are remaining mere spectators of all the unrighteous and violent actions that are being done by the evil elements. Even the scholars and intellectuals are remaining silent. Persons holding high office are merely watching what goes on. No one, however, is making any effort to stop this menace. They are not resisting the evil

elements. It appears as if all their knowledge, position and influence have been reduced to nothing. Such persons, though they may not be indulging in unrighteous acts, are giving encouragement to them.

Here is an example from the Mahabharata: Considering that war would be a great universal calamity, Dharmaja (the eldest of the Pandavas) appealed to Krishna to go as an ambassador of peace to the Kauravas. Entering the audience hall of Duryodhana, Krishna described at length the disastrous consequences of war. The great Acharyas, Bhishma, Drona, Kripa and Ashwathama, who were present in the court, were intently listening to Krishna's words. But Krishna's appeal was of no use to them. Because of their long association with the wicked Kauravas, they became abettors in the crimes of Duryodhana and others. Vidura, who was a witness to the evil that was being committed, resolved to oppose it. He pleaded with the Kauravas in many ways to listen to the wise words of Krishna. His appeal fell on deaf ears. Rather than stay amongst such evil-minded persons, Vidura felt that it was better to go on a pilgrimage, and left the country immediately. Bhishma, Drona and others, having been beneficiaries of the sustenance provided by the wicked Kauravas, chose to be loyal to them and stayed on. All of them were great preceptors. They knew well the distinction between righteousness and evil. They had enquired into the nature of the eternal and the permanent. Of what avail was all that knowledge? When it came to practising what they knew, all their knowledge was of no use. In the final outcome, all of them met with the same end in the great war as the evil-minded Kauravas.

#### **When silence is a crime**

Krishna looked upon those who, even if they were good in themselves, did not oppose unrighteousness and injustice committed in their presence when they had the capacity to do so, as actual participants in the crimes. When evil and injustice and violence are being perpetrated, if individuals look on unconcerned, they must be regarded as accomplices in the crimes. In the end they also suffer as much as the criminals. By their passive association, they provide encouragement to the evil-doers.

When the good are associated with the wicked and do not oppose them, they share the responsibility for the deeds of the evil doers. The Divine destroys even those who either do not oppose or remain passive while injustice and wrong-doing are perpetrated. The Divine will not consider whether they are learned or ignorant, wise or unwise. If they are learned or wise, why did they not stand up for truth and justice? Why did they remain silent? It means they are tainted by the same guilt. The failure to resist evil is their offence. It is only when we resist acts of unrighteousness and injustice and try to put down malpractices in society that we can claim to be assisting in the task of restoring Dharma.

In Treta Yuga, Ravana's brother, Vibhishana, could not put up with the wrong deeds being done by Ravana. Opposing these actions, he tried to correct Ravana in all possible ways. But when his efforts failed and he had no alternative, he sought refuge at the feet of the embodiment of Dharma, Sri Rama. The prime offender was Ravana alone. But in the war with Rama, all the Rakshasas who supported him or sided him, perished with him. They paid the penalty for their abetment of his crime.

Whoever may commit an offence, whether a son, a relation or a close associate, one will be free from the taint of being accessory to the crime only if he opposes the wrong action and tries to correct the offender. If, on the contrary, he allows it or encourages it to be done, he will be guilty of abetment.

Today we see numerous devotees who may appear to be good persons. But in their daily conduct, do they really behave like devotees? Their devotion should be judged by what they do. Only then will the omnipresence of God be demonstrated. Their actions should show that they believe in the oneness of God. Wherever they are, their faith should be evident. But today this kind of devotion is not to be seen. What we find are self-centred and selfish persons, who are filled with egoism and acquisitiveness. With such attitudes, there is no limit to the evil propensities they can develop.

The foremost task today is to make men realise their inherent divinity. How far are materialists or scientists qualified to make pronouncements about spiritual matters? Even in the sphere of natural sciences, the expert in chemistry cannot speak with authority on matters relating to physics. A highly qualified doctor has no title to speak about engineering. That being the case regarding the physical sciences, how can those who have confined their studies to these sciences claim to pronounce opinions on matters of the Spirit?

#### **Yantras and mantras**

For instance, thanks to modern technology, thousands of persons scattered all over the country are able to listen to radio broadcasts, or see television programmes broadcast from Delhi. The simultaneous listening or viewing of the singing of a musician in Delhi in thousands of homes is rendered possible by technology. But when we read in the Bhagavata that Sri Krishna appeared simultaneously to the Gopikas in thousands of homes, questions are asked whether this is credible. People who question this power of mantras, are prepared to believe in the power of Yantras, (machines). If man-made machines can be so powerful, why doubt the power of mantras?

How is the music produced in one place carried in space to different places? The sound waves are converted into electrical waves and transmitted through the ether. The waves in the ether have a permanence in space and can be recalled by one who is pure-hearted and can attune himself to receiving the etheric vibrations. A particular radio broadcast cannot be heard by one who has no receiver and who has not tuned in to the particular station. Likewise, it the all-pervasive Divine is received in the radio receiver of the heart by tuning in with one-pointed devotion, the bliss of that experience will reveal the nature of the Divine. All the sound vibrations that are sent out into space remain in the ether. These sound waves have to be converted into waves of light. Then they become Jnana Shakti (power of knowledge) and Yoga shakti (yogic power). It is because the Gopikas had acquired these capacities, they could experience the omnipresence of Krishna. Their hearts were filled with the form and name of Krishna. Manifestations of such devotion are beyond investigation and explanation. Such experiences are beyond reason. There cannot be demonstrative proof for every phenomenon.

When such proofs are not readily available even for ordinary things in life, how can you have such proofs for the Divine? One who is earnest about spiritual matters will not seek such proofs. Each one knows the workings of his mind and the calibre of his devotion. One cannot understand how another's devotion to God finds expression.

### **Mystic experiences**

From ancient times, sages and saints enjoyed the experience of communion with the Divine and gave expression to their experiences in different ways. Such experiences are common to people of all faiths. In Christianity, there are records of such spiritual experiences. Similar experiences are to be found among Muslims. The principles and rituals of different religions may vary. But the experience of union with the Divine is common to believers in any faith. If persons are not able to attain to this state, it is due to their inadequacy and not because the grace of the Divine is lacking or partial. The Lord's grace is available in abundance everywhere. But people are not making their hearts fit receptacles for receiving the grace. Their hearts are not pure. They are racked with constant doubts. Man has lost confidence in himself. One who cannot trust another human being for a few minutes, how can he develop faith in God?

Firm faith is the primary need. We must be steadfast in our beliefs. God's grace cannot be had by one who is wavering from moment to moment and whose heart is not pure. The Lord judges the devotee by the purity of his heart and not by the kind of worship or Japa he performs. Even if you practise no worship or meditation, it is enough if you have cleansed your heart. The Divine will then enter it.

As one of the students said yesterday the first stage in sadhana is to declare, "You (God) are mine." The second stage is to realise: "This is not correct. If I claim, 'you are mine', my ego is likely to get inflated. 'I am yours' is the proper attitude." The Gopikas declared to Krishna: "We are yours." The Yadavas boasted: "Krishna is our kinsman." This egoistic pride led to the complete self-destruction of the Yadavas. Because of the gopikas' attitude of surrender, they could experience Krishna always in their hearts.

### **"Walk beside me"**

In this context I shall recall what I told the students the other day. "Do not walk in front of Me. I may not follow you. Don't walk behind Me. I may not lead you. Walk beside me and be my friend." If you attempt to walk in front of me, you may be taking the wrong path. If you walk behind me, you may possibly desert me. Walk abreast of me. Then there is no chance of your going astray or away from me, because I am with you. The inner meaning of this is: "You and I are one." Divinity is omnipresent. The Divinity is the Indweller in every being. That being the case, there is no need for you to go in front or walk behind. Take the Divine with you, wherever you go. This is the true mark of the Sadhaka.

Some may say, "We shall worship Swami wherever we may be." Do they have the spiritual competence to make such a claim? If they are true to their claim, they will have no desires of any kind. Till they have reached that state of desireless devotion, they have to follow some kind of spiritual discipline. Even Rama and Krishna went through a period of discipline under gurus and

tried to earn their benediction. Hence they proclaimed the importance of the Guru-Shishya relationship.

Today because of the proliferation of improper desires, the deep involvement with worldly pursuits and a materialist approach to life, many evil tendencies have grown in the social system. When evil thoughts fill the minds of men, no knowledge or skill is of any avail. The failure to correct such evil-minded persons is a blot on the life of the devout. As a result, they also get tainted by the same evil. It is the duty of all god-minded persons to plunge into society, protest against the evils rampant in it, and try to reform it to the extent possible. Only the person who is competent to undertake such a task is fit for social service. You must acquire this competence. You must be prepared to face any kind of crisis and meet any type of calumny. Calumny and abuse should not affect one who has firm faith in God. The man who experiences the bliss of union with the Divine has the strength of a thousand elephants. He has boundless courage and knows no fear. The God-centred person has three qualities: Purity, Perseverance and Patience. Without these qualities, a man is a weakling. But with them, he has all the strength and courage he needs to face any challenge.

—*Bhagavan's Discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium, 11-10-86*

*The name "Rama" means who pleases or causes delight. "Krishna" means He who attracts, draws towards Himself. This attribute of attraction is characteristic of Divinity. Why does the Divine attract? Is it to deceive or mislead? No. It is to transform, reconstruct, reform-a process called samskar. What is the purpose of the reconstruction? To make the person useful to society, to efface his ego, and to affirm in him the unity of all beings in God. Samskar makes man a humble humane servant of those who need help and involve himself in paropakai. Service done with reverence and selflessness leads man to Sakshatkara (Realisation of the Divine).*

—Baba

AKHANDA BHAJAN SANDESH:

Glorify the Lord's Name

*Embodiments of Love!*

Only when we realise the preciousness of the diamond will we take care to safeguard it. Likewise, only when we are aware of the value of chanting the Lord's name will we make the effort to practise it and benefit from it.

Devotees recite or sing the names of the Lord in two ways. One is Kirtanam and the other is Sankirtanam. Kirtanam is done individually and benefits only the devotee concerned. Sankirtanam is done collectively for the good of the world as a whole.

Kirtanam is of various kinds. First is "Guna Kirtan"—praising the qualities and attributes of God through song. Second is "Bhava Kirtan"—expressing the inner feelings and emotions of the devotee. Reflecting the feelings of peace, companionship, yearning, filial love, or sweetness experienced by the devotee, these songs give vent to the emotional outpouring of the devotee. The third is "Leela Sankirtanam"—praising in song the spurts and divine play of the Lord. This is done through singing the "Ashtapadi" (of Jayadeva) or describing the sports and miraculous deeds of the Lord. The "Rasa Krida" is also in this category. The fourth is "Nama-Sankirtanam"—singing the names of the Lord. This is the most efficacious of all forms of devotional singing. But in actual practice the devotees derive joy from singing all types of devotional songs.

What is the special significance of "Nama-Sankirtan"—singing the names of the Lord? "Nama" is made up of three letters: "Na" "as", "ma" All music is based on the seven swaras—the seven notes. According to the science of numerology, the letters "Na", "as" and "Ma" have the numerical values 0, 2 and 5, making up seven in all. The seven notes are Sa, ri, ga, ma, pa, da, ni. The Gopikas made use of these seven notes to combine music, rhythm and devotion in the Rasa Krida dance with Krishna. In this group dance, the Gopis were so completely lost in devotion and song that they experienced oneness with the Divine.

In this way, community singing (Sankirtan) in praise of Krishna became popular and helped to develop devotion and promote collective prayers for the welfare of the world.

Similarly community singing in the name of Rama also came into vogue. Numerologically, the letters in the name of Rama (Ra+aa+ma) add up to seven. Besides the seven notes, the mystic number seven is associated with many sacred things like the seven islands, the seven oceans, the seven sages and soon. In accordance with this concept, seven-day festivals end yajnas are held.

### **Threefold purity essential**

Not all realise the potency and efficacy of reciting the Lord's name. The first requisite is purity of thought, word and deed. The name that is uttered by the tongue should be meditated upon by the mind. What is uttered and dwelt upon should be hailed by clapping the hands. This threefold concentration on the Divine name—unity of mind, speech and action—purifies the heart and nourishes the feeling of devotion.

Better than recounting the qualities of the Lord, singing His glories or relating His exploits and teachings, the chanting of the name is supremely edifying. If merely the Lord is described as "Dayamaya" (the embodiment of kindness) there maybe many who qualify for that description. If the term "Leelamanusha vighradu " (one who has assumed the human form as a sport) is used, it may apply to any number of persons.



Guru Nanak was the initiator of the practice of community singing of devotional songs. He believed that through such community singing the common man can ennoble his life and experience the presence of the Divine in everyone. Through that experience, one can become a knower of the Brahman (a Jnani). Ratnakara, who led the life of a highwayman, became the sage Valmiki after prolonged meditation on the name of Rama. He got the illumination out of which the Ramayana was born. Moses was another great figure of old times who achieved God-realisation by continuously dwelling on the name of God.

### **Community singing**

When the chanting of the Name is done in community singing, it should be in a form in which the entire group can participate easily. The tune, the rhythm, etc. should be such that all can follow the bhajan. If the lead singer takes up a song that is not familiar to others, the response from the group will be poor. There will be no enthusiasm or genuine participation. Their minds will be distracted. When all the devotees participate in the bhajan, the vibrations that are produced will generate joy and harmony.

Many who organise mass singing on special occasions are not aware what kind of bhajans should be sung then. A person who has an individual style of his own may sing as he likes in private, but he is not suitable for community singing.

There are some rules to be observed in conducting community bhajans. Alapana (elaboration of a raga) may be done in kirtan (individual singing), but it is wholly out of place in community bhajans. Hence, in such bhajans the accent should be entirely on the Name.

Today we are having the Akhanda Bhajan (non-stop twenty four hour global bhajan by Sai devotees all over the world.) This is being done not for the sake of one individual, one nation or one community. It is for the welfare of humanity as a whole.

The bhajans that are sung permeate the ether in the form of sound waves and fill the entire atmosphere. Thereby the whole environment gets purified. Breathing in this purified atmosphere, our hearts get purified. Reciting the Lord's name is a process of give and take. Singing the Lord's name should become an exercise in mutual sharing of joy and holiness. It should; be remembered that the sounds we produce reverberate in the atmosphere. They remain permanently in the ether as waves and outlast the individual uttering the sounds.

Today the atmosphere is polluted by unholy and vicious sounds. This results in the growth of evil thoughts and feelings, which lead to evil deeds. If the atmosphere has to be purified, it has to be filled with pure and sacred sounds. Hence the need to cultivate unity in thought, word and deed.

Community bhajans should not be treated as a pastime. When thousands of persons join in singing bhajans, they should be fully absorbed in the devotional process and the ecstasy of that experience. The singing should be vibrant and soulful and not mechanical or drawling and uninspiring. It should combine feeling (Bhava), melody (raga) and rhythm (tala). What delight

can be experienced when all sing in chorus, with the same feeling, in the same tune and to the same timing! When there is such unity the Divine can be experienced.

The songs should glorify the Name rather than describe the attributes of the Lord. When attributes are praised, some may develop doubts. If, for instance, the Lord is described as "Karunamaya" (the embodiment of compassion), some ailing devotee may ask why the Lord is showing no compassion towards him and offer relief. Similar doubts may arise when the sports or exploits of the Lord are glorified. But when the song is confined to the Name alone, these doubts don't arise. Hence, the devotee should install the Name firmly in his heart and sing with fervour. "Samyag kirtanam=Sankirtanam." Sankirtanam means singing extremely well. This means that in community singing, the participant should sing with full-throated joy and deep feeling. He should not bother about his voice or his musical ability. Purity of feeling will make up for everything. Picture the Lord in your heart and utter the Name—then you will feel the joy of singing the Name. You will also evoke joy in others.

The name Rama is made up of three “bija-aksharas" (root letters) associated with Fire, Sun and Moon. Symbolically, this means that by uttering the name of Rama, the fire principle will burn away one's sins, the sun principle will dispel the darkness of ignorance, and the moon principle will cool the fevers arising out of desires.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the singing of the bhajan, "*Harey Rama! Harey Rama! Rama Rama! Harey Harey!*"

—*Bhagavan's discourse at the Prasanthi Mandir, 8-11-86*

## "Likhita Japam" offering to Bhagavan

On the eve of Bhagavan's shashtiabdapoorthi (completion of sixty years), a reverential offering of "Likhita Japam" books—containing sixty crores of names of Bhagavan written by 3620 devotees—was made to Bhagavan Baba in the Prasanthi Mandir on November 12.

The initiative for the "Likhita Japam" had been taken by a committee headed by Mr. P.S.A. Subramanian Chettiar, an old devotee of Bhagavan from Madurai. Thousands of devotees in Tamil Nadu and other states participated in the "Japam" by writing "Sri Sai Ram" or other names of the Lord as many times as they could. One devotee had written as many as 44 lakhs of names. All the notebooks were collected in Madurai and given to the devotees concerned in specially wrapped yellow cloth bundles.

The participating devotees started arriving in Prasanthi Nilayam from 11th November. Several busloads of them came from Madurai.

On the 12th morning, all the devotees concerned gathered in a specially allotted shed and performed "Laksharchana" to Bhagavan. After the Archana, the devotees—800 men and 700 women—came in separate processions to the Mandir, carrying the yellow bundles. The long, silent procession entering the Mandir was a moving sight. The devotees came in two's and placed the bundles reverentially at the feet of Bhagavan. The bundles were neatly piled up in front of the Ganesha idol. Bhagavan blessed the unique devotional offering by materialising Vibhuti over the books.

Bhagavan blessed the devotees assembled in the Mandir as well as those who had to sit outside for lack of space. Mr. Subramanian Chettiar offered Arati to Bhagavan on behalf of all the participating devotees.

The next day Bhagavan visited the shed in which all the devotees had gathered and unveiled a plaque on which Bhagavan's name had been inscribed in gilt letters, mounted on a silver lotus pedestal for each letter. Mr. Subramanian Chettiar welcomed Bhagavan on behalf of the devotees and said that all of them had been immensely blessed by Bhagavan's acceptance of their humble devotional offering.

Bhagavan then addressed the gathering on the importance of "Nama Japa" as the simplest and most efficacious form of devotional expression. Bhagavan's discourse was a spiritual feast for the devotees.

Bhagavan then went round the hall giving Padanamaskar to all the devotees who had participated in the Japa. Vibhuti prasadam was distributed to all of them.

*It is vital that every one should inquire into the true, the pure and the permanent. For, there is at present a delusion about values. Even the leaders of people are hugging the false hypothesis that happiness can be got by means of wealth or health, or housing, or clothing, or the cultivation of skills in handicraft and manufacture! The bird sits upon the bough that sways in the storm, confident of its wings, not confident of the bough whereon it sits! So, you too should feel strong because of the wings, the wings of Shraddha and Shakti, not because of the bough of the objective world, whereon you have perched.*

—Baba

## Sai Jagat Samachar

### Deepavali at Brindavan

Deepavali is celebrated with rejoicings as the day on which the forces of evil represented by the demon Narakasura were destroyed by Sri Krishna. Bhagavan Baba, addressing a large

gathering at "Trayee Brindavan" on November 1, said each individual should observe Deepavali as the day on which the demoniac qualities in him, such as envy, hatred and anger, are weeded out and divine qualities like Truth, Righteousness, Love, Compassion and Peace are cultivated. Selfishness is the root of all evil in man and it should be eliminated.

Narakasura, though a demon, was a devotee of Siva. He had immense strength and power. He indulged in many wicked acts because of his hatred towards Krishna. Hatred is the parent of many sins. It is the gateway to hell.

Anger weakens a person. One moment's anger may consume the energy acquired in three months, Krishna sought to weaken Narakasura by provoking his anger and making him waste his strength. He resorted to the strategy of challenging Narakasura to battle, rousing his anger, and then withdrawing from the fray. Those who did not understand Krishna's strategy, attributed his withdrawals to cowardice. But this was not so. By staging provocative encounters twelve times, Krishna weakened Narakasura so much that in the final encounter he could be destroyed by Sathyabhama (a woman) whom Krishna took with him for the fray.

The burning of crackers on Deepavali day is done by way of expressing joy at the victory of the Divine over the evil forces. The lamps that are lit on that day signify the lighting of the inner lamps in all beings from the one supreme source of all light, the Divine. It is this unity of the individual with the Divine that should be realised by everyone

Besides a fireworks display at night, Narayana Seva had been arranged during the day in Brindavan in connection with Deepavali.

### **Akhanda Bhajan at Prasanthi Nilayam**

Bhagavan, who returned to Prasanthi Nilayam from Brindavan on November 2, inaugurated the Global Akhanda Bhajan (lasting from 6 p.m. on November 8, to 6 p.m. on November 9) by lighting the Akhanda Jyoti in the Mandir at 6 p.m. on Saturday. Prior to the lighting of the jyoti, Bhagavan delivered a scintillating discourse on the significance of Kirtanam and Sankirtanam as expressions of the spiritual aspirant's bhakti and elaborated on how bhajans should be conducted and the importance that should be attached to reciting the names of the Lord in preference even to extolling the glories, attributes and Leelas of the Lord.

*VEDA PURUSHA VANI:*

### **The Immortal Bhaktas**

Among all forms of Sadhana, Bhakti (devotion to the Lord) is the easiest and holiest. "Bhakti" is derived from the root "Bhaj", with the suffix "the". It means "Seva" (Service). It denotes a feeling of friendship coupled with awe.

For one who is a creature of the gunas (Satwa, Rajas, Tamas), to understand what transcends the gunas, an attitude of humility and reverence is required. "Bhaja Sevayam" ("Worship the Divine through Seva"). Bhakti calls for utilising the mind, speech and body to worship the Lord. It represents total love. Devotion and love are inseparable and interdependent. Bhakti is the means to salvation. Love is the expression of Bhakti.

Narada declared that worshipping the Lord with boundless love is Shakti. Vyasa held that performing worship with love and adoration is Bhakti. Garga Rishi declared that serving the Lord with purity of mind, speech and body is Bhakti. Yagnavalkya held that true Bhakti consists in controlling the mind, turning it inwards and enjoying the bliss of communion with the Divine. Another view of Bhakti is concentration of the mind on God and experiencing oneness with the Divine.

### **Win love through love**

Although many sages have expressed different views about the nature of Bhakti, the basic characteristic of devotion is Love. Love is present in every human being in however small a measure. The individual (Jiva) is an aspect of the Divine, who is the supreme embodiment of Love. Man also is an embodiment of Love, but because his love is directed towards worldly objects, it gets tainted and he is unable to get a vision of God in all His beauty.

Ordinarily people regard offering worship to God, reciting His name and meditating on Him as constituting Bhakti. True devotion really means installing the Divine in the heart and enjoying the bliss of that experience. It is the mystic union of the individual soul and the Universal. When the devotee prays ardently from the depths of the heart and his love gushes forth, Bhakti is manifested. Winning love through love is the vital aspect of devotion.

Prayer does not mean merely appealing to God for favours. It is a means of conveying to God one's troubles, desires and aspirations and offering all ones merits and the fruits of ones actions to God. The basic quality of devotion is the yearning for realising oneness with the Divine.

### **Two kinds of devotion**

Devotion is of two kinds. One is acquiring Knowledge about God and transforming oneself thereby. This is a natural process by which one starts with the physical, proceeds to the mental and ultimately attains the spiritual goal of mergence in the Divine. But in taking to this path of knowledge, only the individual concerned can benefit. In the second type of devotion, the devotee not only benefits himself, but shares his experience with others and benefits them also. Such a devotee not only saves himself but helps others to save themselves.

Love is flowing in an endless stream through humanity all the time. By turning this love towards worldly objects and fleeting pleasures man is missing the opportunity to make life

purposeful and to secure enduring bliss. Man should direct this love towards God to attain the true goal of life. Love of the Divine is not developed by secular education or scriptural studies. It springs from the heart. One who is filled with love of the Divine will not be attracted by anything else in the world. Nor will he submit to anything demeaning or unworthy.

Love is selflessness. The devotee filled with love of the Lord welcomes what may appear as punishment, as something for his good. Even when the Lord appears to be angry, His compassion is evident. Even in punishment, God's kindness will be seen. Hence, no one should cherish a grievance that he is being singled out for punishment. Even punishment is a means of leading one to God. The display of anger is for safeguarding the devotee. The true devotee is one who recognises this truth and welcomes whatever happens to him as intended for his good. Eschewing interest in worldly concerns, he should concentrate on means to realise the Divine.

### **Nine ways of devotion**

Nine ways of expressing devotion to God and attaining Him have been described by the sages. They are: Shravanam (listening to God's glories), Kirtanam (singing the glories of God), Vishnusmaranam (ever remembering the Lord), Padasevanam (Worshipping the Lord's feet), Archanam (offering daily worship), Vandanam (prostration), Dasyam (dedicated service), Sneham (friendliness) and Atmanivedanam (total surrender). Many devotees who have pursued one or other of these methods have been high-souled persons, some of whom have been great emperors.

*Shravanam:* King Parikshit, the moment he learnt that he had been cursed by Shringi to meet with death in seven days, summoned all the sages to ascertain how best he could utilise every moment of the remaining life span given to him. He felt that waste of time is waste of life. He appealed to the sages to advise him how best he could use the seven days left for him. When the Sage Suka entered the assemblage, the king requested him to redeem his life by converting what was a curse into a blessing. Suka taught the king continuously night and day all about the Supreme Lord and His incarnations and glories. Listening to Suka's words, Parikshit was immersed in an ocean of bliss. All the sages present felt equally ecstatic and were lost in contemplation and love of the Lord by enjoying the stories about the Lord. Parikshit was filled with devotion and experienced the Lord within him. He exemplifies how devotion can find the highest expression in merely listening to the glories of the Lord.

*Kirtanam:* Sage Suka taught how by listening to the exploits of the Lord, singing His glories and constantly reciting His name, the supreme goal of God-realisation can be achieved. Suka experienced the bliss of union with the Brahman by revelling in singing His glories.

*Vishnusmaranam:* Prahlada is the supreme example of the devotee who always centred his thoughts on Vishnu regardless of whether he was subject to pain or pleasure. "Namo Narayanaya" was his response to every ordeal. He was ceaselessly repeating the names of the Lord without any concern for the tortures to which he was subjected by the demons deputed by Hiranyakasipu. He was neither afraid nor distressed. Prahlada was fully conscious that the body

composed of the five elements was perishable while the Indweller was eternal. Hence he did not care what happened to the body. All his thoughts were ever concentrated on God.

*Padasevanam:* Not all devotees get the opportunity to worship the feet of the Lord. Even when the opportunity is available most people use it for material purposes. Goddess Lakshmi, the consort of Vishnu, is the supreme example of one who dedicated herself totally to the worship of the Lord's feet, regarding the Feet as the source of the entire creation, holding them supremely sacred owing to their being washed by Brahma himself, wondering at them as feet which had measured the whole cosmos, and venerating them as all-pervading.

*Archanam:* Emperor Prithu stands out as the exemplar of this type of devotion. In all circumstances, Prithu adhered to the worship of Hari as his primary occupation. He saw the Lord in everything in the universe. Hence, he dedicated every thought, word and deed to the Divine.

*Vandanam:* Akrura is an illustrious example of a devotee who sanctified his life by constantly prostrating before the Lord and offering obeisance to Him with humility and purity. "Vandanam" does not mean merely folding the palms together and offering salutations. It means offering to the Lord all that the Jnanindriyas and Karmandriyas (the sense organs and the organs of action) do in a spirit of total surrender. Akrura worshipped the Lord in this spirit of total submission to the Divine will. Hence he could get a vision of Vishnu everywhere.

*Dasyam (Service):* Hanuman is the great exemplar of this type of devotion. Concentrating on the name of Rama and rendering service to Rama were Hanuman's sole preoccupation all the time. He was no ordinary being. He was a master of the 64 sciences and arts. Rama described him as a hero of peace, who possessed immense strength and wisdom in everything he handled, Hanuman would examine whether it had Rama's name on it. It was not there, he would discard even a precious gem as a useless piece of stone. While building the bridge to Lanka, Hanuman hurled rocks into the sea uttering the name of Rama and they rose to the surface. The letters "Ra" and "Ma" were written on separate stones and when they were thrown into the sea they joined together on the surface and thus the bridge was formed. Each hair of Hanuman was echoing the name of Rama. He was a devotee who remembered Rama at all times, whether in joy or sorrow. He had no sense of ego. He had given up all feeling of "mine" and "thine". When the rakshasas asked him in Lanka who he was, he firmly declared: "I am a dasa of the Lord of Kosala (Rama)." In all situations he described himself as a servant of Rama.

Those who call themselves devotees these days put on the sacred ash on their foreheads while going to a temple and rub it off on their return. When they are near Swami they behave like devotees. But when they go to a place where religion is in disfavour, they explain away their visits to Puttaparthi in a casual manner and declare that they are not devotees of Swami. What value is to be attached to the devotion of such pusillanimous persons? Real devotion consists in courageously standing up for your faith anywhere at any time. Hanuman was such a courageous and steadfast devotee. By his devoted service to the Lord he redeemed his life and became immortal.

*Maitri (friendship):* The great exemplar of this kind of devotion is Arjuna. Arjuna and Krishna lived together closely. Arjuna accompanied Krishna like a shadow. He experienced innumerable troubles and was subjected to calumny and abuse. But through all these experiences, he did not allow his faith in Krishna to waver. He always prayed: "Krishna! You are my sole hope and refuge. There is none other to protect me." In this way, looking upon Krishna as friend, kinsman and alter ego, Arjuna relied on Krishna for everything. Krishna, for his part, was even ready to act as Arjuna's charioteer in battle. Arjuna made Krishna the charioteer of his life. Krishna thereby acquired the appellation Parthasarathy—the charioteer of Partha (Arjuna).

*Atmanivedanam (or Atmarpanam) (Surrender of the self):* Emperor Bali, the grandson of Prahlada, was an example of a devotee who completely surrendered to the Lord, offered everything he possessed to the Lord and thereby sanctified his life. He was totally dedicated in his devotion to the Lord. He was prepared to offer his head to the Lord and go down to the nether-world. No sacrifice was too great for him to win the Lord's grace. When his guru, Shukracharya, advised him to go back on the gift he had promised to Vamana, Bali rejected the advice, declaring that his life, his body and all that he had belonged to the Lord.

Many high-souled men and great rulers practised these different ways of devotion in the past and held themselves forth as examples to the world.

### **Devotion and society**

Devotion, the sages felt, should not be solely for achieving individual salvation. It should find expression in some kind of collective action. Offering worship or prayer in seclusion and for one's own sake savours of some kind of selfishness. The ancients felt that the Divine cannot be attained by one who is self-centred. Even among Christians and Muslims, there is the practice of some one reading passages from the scriptures which are repeated by the congregation that is present. The Indian sages valued community prayers for the welfare of the world as good for the individual and the world.

In the year 1459 A.D., Guru Nanak, the first Sikh guru, started the practice of community singing or bhajans. This practice gathered momentum over the years and in 1798, the great South Indian saint-composer Thyagaraja invested Bhajans with *raga* and *tala* (musical form and rhythm). Since then bhajans have acquired national vogue in all parts of the country.

### **Bhajans**

Bhajans should not be treated as one way of spending time. They are intended to harmonise the feelings, the singing, and the rhythmic beats of the participants so that they experience in unison the oneness of the Divine. Such bhajans are considered spiritually efficacious. Bhakti (devotion) should be given pride of place in Bhajans. They should be surcharged with love. When bhajans were first introduced in villages, Thyagaraja began with the song: "Come, all ye blessed ones, come, and let us join in singing the glory of Sri Rama." He also said that when they have Kodandapani (Rama with the Kodanda bow) on their side, they need not fear Dandapani (Yama, the Lord of Death). It was in this spirit of intense love for the Lord and pure devotion that bhajans were started in the past. But in bhajans today this spirit of holiness is absent. More



importance is given to raga and tala (the tune and the rhythm) than to Bhava (the feeling) and raga (the melody). The attempt is more to please the hearers by sweet singing than to promote in them finer feelings of devotion. The feelings expressed in the bhajans should melt the hearts of the participants and move them to their depths.

The essence of Bhakti is Love and not formal exercises in jape or worship of various kinds. Worship should be offered to the Divine who resides in all beings. Love is God: live in love. Love is the means of realising the bliss of the Self, which is centred in ourselves. It need not be sought elsewhere. It can be found within one's self when all thoughts are controlled and the mind is turned inwards. Dedicate all actions to the Lord. This is the highest knowledge. It is the summum bonum of existence. Love should become a way of life. That alone is true devotion."

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the singing of "*Hari Bhajan bina sukha santhi nahi*" in which the entire audience fervently joined in full-throated rapture.

**—*Bhagavan a discourse at the Poornachandra Auditorium, 8-10-86***

### **Sai Literature at Frankfurt Book Fair**

For the first time, books on Bhagavan Baba in German and other languages were presented to the public at the International Book Fair held in Frankfurt in the first week of October.

The theme of this year's Book Fair was: "India: Change in Continuity." The Frankfurt Fair is an international event in which new publications from all over the world are exhibited. This year 7000 publishers exhibited about 90,000 titles. An Indian Centre presented more than 8000 books on India. Eighty Indian publishers participated.

The German "Sathya Sai Vereinigung" (association) was represented for tree fist time at the Book Fair. This Association is responsible in Germany for the translation of Sai literature into German and their publication. It had a separate stall at the Fair, assisted by the Austrian "Sathya Sai Philosophische Vereinigung." All Sai literature in the German language and also a selection of English books were available for public view.

The Centre of the stall carried the SARVA DHARMA symbol. Two boards under the headline "My Life is My Message" cited quotations from Sri Sathya Sai Baba on Faith, Seva and Education in Human Values.

The "SATHYA SAI Vereinigung" runs the German Book Centre near Frankfurt, the Media centre in Nuremberg and publishes also a quarterly periodical called "SAI BRIEFE" (SAI Newsletter).

There are now 30 titles of Sai literature available in the German language. In 1985 the German association sold 10,000 books in the German speaking parts of Europe. This year more than 12,000 books are expected to be sold.

—**B. G**

## The Thought and the Hope

Sir Arthur Eddington writes, "The world seems to be more a thought than a machine." The word "seems" is, in tact, a daring understatement. God said "Let there be light" and "there was light" declared the Old Testament over twenty-five centuries ago. Until the 'Word' became 'flesh', until the thought emerged, the Upanishad declared over twenty seven centuries ago, "there was no time or space, past or future, in or out, thrill or throb", no word, no flesh. "There was no one to understand me," Swami reminisces! There was no consciousness which could be aware of even Being. The pervasive 'I am' had not arisen at all, "Asaa vaa, idam agra aaseet", announces the Taittiriya Upanishad. "Unawareness alone was, at first." Imagination is powerless to peer into that serene silence, for imagination needs images for manipulation and images are produced only by objects.

"To understand me?" *"No one to understand me?"* That was the primal idea, the inaugural sensation, the first faint ripple on the vast horizonless Isness! *"Me!!! No one* else! Ekoham. I am *al-one*. I shall become *many*, so that I can understand myself, so that understanding might lead to love." "I separated myself, so that I can love myself," declares Swami, for when the I (Aham) feeling sprouted, He was the only One and there was no Second. So, the wish, the Maya, the sense of want which is represented by the second half of the statement, Ekoham, namely, bahunyaam (I'll become many) could be realised only by repeating himself under many names and in many forms. A 'thousand' means, one, repeated a thousand times. This meant: "thath aetmaanam swayam eve akrtha" (He himself became all this). When Swami says, 'I am God; you are also God', He is reminding us that *each of us is a repetition of "Himself"*. He asks us to assert Soham, Sivoham. (I am He, I am God).

As soon as the Thought to become many, arose, "Time started ticking. Space started stretching. Effects emanated from causes" Swami says, "Immediately, mountains rose up. Immediately rivers started running. Earth below; sky overhead! Oceans, seas, moon, desert sands sprang from nowhere *to prove my existence.*"

Since He is aware of Himself as the personalised Impersonal, "I am all that is, all that can be known, all that seeks fulfillment." He announces, as the human embodiment of the integer that lends validity and value to the zeros parading after it. What exactly are the zeros, in, say, 100,000,000? They represent so many ones, not nothings. And, He is the One.

He can delve under the tantalising tangle of the bahu (many). He has designed and revels in ecstasy as one with the ONE. Swami assures us, "*I and You are not we; I and You are I only.*" There is no attempt at appropriation. It is the affirmation of the One in the many, the wave in the sea. When it loses its form, it loses its I-ness and is the One it always was.

### **The Divine Advent**

When the wave loses awareness of the sea, that is to say, when man devalues, dismisses or distorts 'My knowledge' gifted to him as a life-belt, God assumes human form, undergoes the human career, and establishes Himself as guide, guardian and goal. The aged monk, Swami Abhedananda, wrote to me from the ashram of Bhagavan Ramana Maharishi, (after intimate interviews he had with Swami at Venkatagiri, Arunachalam, and Prasanthi Nilayam), "Swami is the Brahman (the Cosmic Consciousness) Itself come in human form. It would be gross understatement if He is designated as an Avatar engaged in an adventure undertaken to fulfil some particular project."

In a Message to students, Swami announced: "See in Me yourselves; for I see Myself in you." Even as He stepped out of teenage, Swami announced to the world, through a letter to his elder brother, "I am resolved to confer on *all mankind* the supreme ecstasy of self-awareness. I am determined to hold the wayward and the vagrant who stray into wrong and lead them along the righteous path. I shall remove the pain of the lonely and the penury of the weak and fill the void in the heart of the unfortunate with what they lack. I shall shield with My blessings those who adore Me with loving thoughts, soft speech and selfless service." "Came all forms of beasts; birds flying. All kinds of beings. Mankind speaking, learning. And, all powers were bestowed upon them, under my orders." He mentioned in the same message (written by Him in English) His most precious gift to you and me. "The first place was given to man and My *knowledge was placed in his mind.*" So, this is the reason why man has an inborn urge to journey back to his source. He has in him the agony of the exile, the suffocation of the cage, the scar of the manacle, the wounds of crucifixion and the hope of Resurrection.

—*N. Kasturi*

### **VALUE OF SATSANG**

*Attitudes of tolerance and reverence can be cultivated only along the spiritual path. That is the one path for attaining peace and harmony in this world of ceaseless striving and never-ending despair. The satsang, the gathering of godward-bound seekers, is a must for the sprouting of spiritual desire and its fulfillment.*

—**Baba**

*SAI SEVA SAMACHAR:*

### **Winds of change in the West Indies**

With the establishment of a Central Council for the Sai Organisations in the West Indies after the sixtieth birthday celebrations in November 1985, Sai service activities in the Caribbean islands have gathered momentum and magnitude.

As bhajans are the foundation of Sai spiritual programmes, a series of devotional sessions were held throughout Trinidad. The programme at each of these sessions included devotional singing by the national Sai choir, a discourse on Bhagavan's life and teachings, exhibition of a Sai film and sale of Sai literature. The response from the public is very encouraging. A weekly half hour radio programme on Bhagavan's teachings, is well received by a wide spectrum of listeners in this multi-racial, multi-religious region.

New bhajan groups and Sai service centres have come up all over the West Indies - in the Bahamas, Jamaica, Dominica, Barbados, Curacao, Guyana and Surinam. Bal Vikas classes are being conducted in all the centres. In April this year, 120 teachers attended a training course in which all aspects of education in human values were covered, including lesson planning and methodology of teaching. A group of specialists is engaged in preparing a textbook of 30 lessons designed to meet the needs of children in West Indian society. The Government in Trinidad and Tobago has called upon experts in the Ministry of Education to study the Sai EHV scheme with a view to adapting it for introduction in all public schools as a course in moral instruction.

The Seva wing of the Sai Organisation has conducted a number of medical camps for the benefit of the weaker sections of society. Training camps for Seva Dal members have been held. The women's wing, apart from taking part in service activities, has been running study circles and centres for feeding the poor.

A Bhajan Training Committee set up by the Council has organised a national choir and conducts training classes for singers.

All in all, the Sai wind of change is blowing through the West Indies, transforming in its wake the moral tone of West Indian society. The change is evident at various levels and in almost all activities of this multi-religious society. Quotations from Bhagavan Baba's speeches have been used by speakers in the Trinidad Parliament.

—**T. H.**

**Mr. S. B. Chavan's Address**

Mr. Chavan said, "During every visit to this pious and sacred place I have an experience of distinct gain in my life. With all humility I must also say that because of Baba's blessings one gets an abiding feeling of having become morally stronger."

“This place of learning,” he said, "is unique in the sense that it has carved out a place of its own in the academic and educational map of our country" because of its greater emphasis on moral and spiritual instruction, social work and activities creating a sense of self-reliance.

Education should help to liberate us, he said, from narrow considerations of castes, communities, religions, languages and even nations. Education is a means to broaden the vision and see national issues in a broader perspective. "The whole world is One Family" was the dream of our ancient Rishis. This vision is reflected in the thoughts of all great thinkers and philosophers from Buddha to Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi. Today under the guidance of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, this Institute has been endeavouring to foster the same thought which is so essential to nurture the secular foundations of our national policy.

### **National integration**

Referring to the New National Education Policy that is being implemented by the Government of India, Mr. Chavan said: "I am happy to note that Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning believes in spontaneous national integration and has an open admission policy with the result that about 50 percent of its students are from States other than Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka."

Alluding to the problem of drop-outs in schools and the need for non-formal education for the large number who are unable to receive regular school education, Mr. Chavan referred to an example of people's voluntary participation in respect of girls' education in Maharashtra. "This experiment is known as Savitribai Phule Foster Parent Scheme. About 1,40,000 girls, who could not complete their education because of poverty have been helped to receive education with contributions from foster parents."

Mr. Chavan stressed the need to plan realistic projects to make vocationalised education an integral part of education at all levels. "The New Education Policy aimed at nurturing talent from an early age through a large number of ‘Navodaya Vidyalayas’ for talented children, particularly from rural areas."

### **Value education**

"The New Policy has also laid emphasis on value orientation for the educational system, having regard to the demands of a culturally pluralist society like ours. Such value education should help to eliminate obscurantism, religious fanaticism, violence, superstition and fatalism. It should enable students to search for unity in diversity in our country and its culture.

The Maharashtra State Council of Educational Research and Training has already undertaken a project which aims at trying out values to be imbibed by the students such as: self-reliance, dutifulness, punctuality, dignity of labour, scientific outlook, purity, cleanliness, equality, fraternity, respect for mother, father and teachers, love for nature, fearlessness and

sportsmanship. This project, which is being conducted in 58 secondary schools all over the state, will be evaluated at the end of this academic year.

The New Education Policy has laid stress on research and development, especially inter-disciplinary research. It has also stressed the need for delving into India's ancient fund of knowledge and to relate it to contemporary reality. I am glad that recognising this need of the times, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning has already planned its Research and Development Programme with this new perspective."

### **People's expectations**

The Sathya Sai Institute, Mr. Chavan observed, "is a novel experiment in the field of education and people all over the country are looking up to it with great expectations. I am sure that the students of this Institute will always live up to these expectations through their devotion and hard work under the inspiring guidance of Sri Sathya Sai Baba."

Mr. Chavan concluded his address with a quotation from Mahatma Gandhi, which he said should be taken to heart by every youth and citizen of this country.

*"Lord of humanity, dwelling in the little pariah hut,  
Help us to search for Thee throughout that fair land  
Watered by the Ganges, Bramhaputra and Jamuna,  
Give us receptiveness,  
Give us open-heartedness,  
Give us humility,  
Give us the ability and willingness*

*To identify ourselves with the masses of India,  
O God, who does help only when man feels utterly humble,  
Grant that we may not be isolated from the people  
We would serve as servants and friends,  
Let us be embodiments of self-sacrifice,  
Embodiments of Godliness,  
Humility personified, that we may  
know the land better and love it more."*

### **Equipment for Service**

Indulging in flimsy gossip and watching scenes of violence and cruelty, men today are wasting and missing a big portion of their precious lives. Time is condemned, because it is too little, or because it runs too fast to fulfill galloping greed. Men are not aware that time sanctified by service offers high rewards to themselves as well as those whom they serve.

All acts of service are not equally sanctifying or uniform in the benefits they confer. When service is undertaken by power-hungry people or under compulsion or by imitative urges, it results in more harm than good. Self-aggrandizement or competition or ostentation are motives that will pollute the sacred Sadhana of Service. The candidate for this Sadhana has to avoid Ahamkara (Egotism), Adambara (Exhibitionism) and Abhimana (favouritism).

Before embarking on a service project one must introspect and examine his equipment for the Sadhana—whether his heart is full of selfless Love, humility, compassion, whether his head is full of intelligent understanding and knowledge of the problem and its solution, whether his hands are eager to offer the healing touch, whether he can gladly spare and share time, energy and skill to help others in dire need.

These qualities can sprout and grow only when the Reality of Unity is implanted in the consciousness. All men, all living beings, are cells in the Body of God. Their origin, continued existence, and progress are all in God, by God, for God. The individual is a unit in this unity. There are no other aliens. When one is ill, all suffer. When one is happy, all are partners of that happiness. Faith in this Truth is the fundamental equipment the Sevak must acquire. Leaders and guides of Seva organisations and institutions and activities are offering charity, claiming that they are motivated by generosity and accepting homage from recipients. This is the reason why such service all over the world does not yield lasting results.

In order to deserve the sacred name, Seva, the activity must be freed from all attachment to the Self and based on firm faith in the Divine resident in every being. Seva has to be considered as worshipping the form that God has assumed to give the Sevak the chance of worship. When a hungry Nara is served a hearty meal, what is being done is Narayana Seva, for, Nara (man) is only "a form and a name" projected by human ignorance (Maya) on Narayana (God).

This is a gathering of members of the Seva Dal who are engaged in service among the rural population in this country. You are here busy with what is called a workshop. Do not allow your service activities turn into shops which concentrate on window dressing, in order to attract attention and patronage. Service rendered to villagers, who are denied the ways and means of decent lives, draws Divine Grace, more than service elsewhere. Give a helping hand to the helpless, who are afflicted with many ailments and handicaps.

But, before attempting to advise them, you must endeavour to advise yourselves; before venturing to reform them, reform yourselves. Care must be taken to avoid boasting before them about your superiority. It will hurt them and keep them away. Do not indulge in lectures. Action alone can inspire action. Example alone can instruct. Tall talk is a barren exercise.

Service activities in all lands can thrive only through selfless dedication. Fanfare is a sign of insincerity. Silent, unsullied work alone can appeal. The villager has enough common sense to see through the show. Remember that, though illiterate, he is aware of the ideals propounded by the scriptures, saints and sages of this land, of the core of Bharatiya Culture. Clever propaganda

may achieve some temporary results but, in the long run, it will bring disappointment and disillusion. Like the 'rockets' lit by children on Deepavali night, it will flare up and fizzle down.

Today, we are confronted everywhere by statistics parading quantities and reports in glowing terms. Do not bother about adding to the number or achieving a target. I value quality, not quantity. Genuine, intensive devoted service offered in a few villages is more fruitful than casual contacts and superficial service offered to a large number.

Convince yourselves that life cannot continue long without others serving you and your serving others. Master-servant, ruler-ruled, guru-disciple, employer-employee, parents-children, all these are bound by mutual service. Every one is a sevak. The farmer and labourer whom you serve produce by their toil your food and clothing as their service to you. Remember that the body, with its senses-mind-brain complex has been awarded to you to be used for helping the helpless. (Paropakartham idam sareeram) Seva is the highest of paths of Devotion which wins the Grace of God. It promotes mental purity, diminishes egoism and enables one to experience, through sympathetic understanding, the unity of mankind. Therefore, I bless your Seva activities in the villages of your motherland.

*—Divine Discourse, Poornachandra Auditorium, 21-11-86*

### **Facing the Future: as Victim or Master?**

Much of the pain, suffering, misery and tragedy that overtakes a person, an entire community, nation or humanity may ultimately be traced to the persistence and pervasiveness of certain residual animalistic instinctual tendencies and egoistic drives, identified since ancient times by saints and sages as the principal impediments to the pursuit of peace and happiness in freedom and security. In the present Sai Era both Sri Shirdi Sai Baba and Sri Sathya Sai Baba have spoken with the same voice and affirmed the ancient wisdom: the elimination or sublimation of Kama (desires, lust), Krodha (anger, hatred), Lobha, (greed), Moha (attachment, fixation), Mada (pride, arrogance, vanity), Matsarya (envy, jealousy), and Bhaya (fear, timidity).

These tendencies and drives structure our character and personality, influence thinking and behaviour, from which flow evil or undesired consequences. Suffering and tragedy are avoidable, preventable and correctable. We are creatures of habit, habits that die-hard. We pay the price of ignorance, lack of insight, rigidity of attitudes and inertia.

We have been indoctrinated by contemporary psychology to believe that the aforementioned seven deadly 'sins' or traits are natural and normal to the human species, implying that they cannot be changed or need not be changed. Such a belief runs counter to the teachings and spiritual traditions of most cultures, whose deepest and highest experience of the Reality of Man is that he is essentially Divine Spirit, Immortal Soul, functioning temporarily through



changeable, perishable mental and physical structures. The belief runs counter to an optimistic philosophy of life that conscious evolution, self-controlled evolution of consciousness, expansion of awareness is possible, and is the way of the future for mankind.

If one does not accept that human consciousness could be nurtured and raised to the heights of Divine Consciousness, or to vibrate in resonance to the melodies of Divine Consciousness, then all the spiritual experience of mankind may just as well be regarded as nonexistent, illusory, not valid, or of no consequence. We shall then be left without a motive force for civilised behaviour, respect for fundamental human rights and obligations, and meaning to existence. Fortunately for mankind the evidence of history runs to the contrary, and even if men fail to live by the truths of their spiritual traditions faithfully, nevertheless they hang on hopefully to the slender threads of their Divine Connection.

The way out for the victim of the constraints of his own lower nature is to recognize the constraints, work at removing them or re-directing their energies, and eventually assert mastery over them. The goal is Moksha (liberation, freedom) from bondage to Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada, Matsarya and Bhaya, and the emergence of the latent divine qualities, potencies and splendour of Man. This is also known as the Way of Perfection, Jivan Mukti. Perfection is a state of consciousness, in which the individual Atma (Jivatman) is merged with or resonates in harmony with Universal Consciousness, the Paramatman. The human begins to function as the eternally free, independent, creative Spirit, motivated only by the sheer joy of existence and boundless love.

There might appear to be an unbridgeable gap between the present level of consciousness in which the generality of mankind is locked and that of the liberated, enlightened, perfected Man. We are assured, however, that a quantum leap in consciousness is not time-related but to its own laws, on the Will to be free, self-illuminated, self-realized: on the willingness to jettison the irrelevant, the superfluous "luggage" that Sri Sathya Baba often hints at. To use another analogy of Baba, getting on the right train is more important than how fast the train travels. It is a question of making the right choice, of breaking away from old habits and old associations, from the seduction and corruption of a hedonistic-mentalistic-egoistic state of existence, in the darkness of nescience, or of marching inwards into the liberating, exhilarating peak experience of Cosmic Consciousness. The choice itself generates the appropriate energy and momentum.

To help us make the right choice and sustain us in our endeavour and commitment, the present generation of humans is exceedingly blessed for they have for their spiritual guide no less a Being than an Avatar, an Incarnation of God, in the Person of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, in our midst, at this historic time. It is a good chance that should not be missed, says Baba Himself. Baba provides the role model of Human-Spiritual Perfection. By the example of His life of unceasing outpouring of love and wisdom, and creative activity for the upliftment of humanity to its Divine, Masterful Destiny, the imagination of hesitant humans is fired, the Will to achieve is reinforced, all doubts are dispelled. Human destiny is removed from the realm of metaphysical speculation and revealed in flesh and blood, in the here and now, by the gracious Presence of a

living Avatar. We face the future as Masters of our Destiny when we choose to identify ourselves with Sri Sathya Sai Baba in thought, word and deed.

—*Dr. S. Cooppan, U.S.A.*

## **His "Play within the Play"**

### **The Divine Director**

The vacation had just begun and students of the Brindavan campus were homeward bound. A few remained whose train reservations were unconfirmed. The campus was beginning to wear the deserted "vacation" look. Then came Bhagavan! And the complexion of the campus changed instantly. It began humming with life. Reservations were cancelled by the delighted students. Many others came flocking back when they heard the news.

The very first morning after his arrival, Bhagavan directed us to stage a short play on the day of the Institute's Convocation, 22nd November, giving barely twenty days' time for all the preparations that go with the production of a play. To begin with, the casting alone would take some days, we thought, as we may have to test a number of students for the lead role and other roles.

The play that Bhagavan had directed us to stage was a musical adaptation of ten verses from Adi Sankara's "Bhaja Govindam". The structure of the play was such that the lead role player had about 90 percent of the play's dialogue as his lines and practically all the songs in it. It required an actor with extraordinary memory, diction and musical skill, not to mention the necessary stage presence to play the role of Sri Sankara. We were at a loss to find the right actor for such a difficult role. Bhagavan solved our problem in a trice. With his insight into individual talent, ability and personality, Bhagavan picked the student not only for the lead role, but also those for all other roles within five minutes. He spoke to them about the nature of each role helping them to understand their different roles in depth and enabling them to portray those characters convincingly. He gave them hints on the personal mannerisms, individual eccentricities and subtle aspects of gait, stance and posture which make the characters come alive on the stage.

Music plays a great part in the appeal of this play. The verses from "Bhaja Govindam" are sung in pure Karnatic style. This was where Bhagavan acted as a music teacher par excellence. It was a most wonderful experience to hear and witness the pure melody that flowed from Him as He taught the leading actor how to sing, enunciate, pause, and enrich the flavour of the classical strains with special vocal effects. He who is Nadabrahmam incarnate gave lessons in singing to the students, which revealed His great compassion.

When it came to the listing of costumes and accessories for the entire cast of actors, we were faced with the problem of ordering a long list of odds and ends from local dealers, who were fully booked because of the large-scale cultural festival that was to take place in Bangalore for the SAARC conference. We were in a quandary over this and Bhagavan solved this problem too! He had everything we needed. The costumes, rudraksha-malas, antique jewellery, furniture, deerskins, silks, shawls and what not! Even lighting crew and stage backdrop men were all available in no time. As regards the instruments for the orchestra, Bhagavan provided all the instruments, an excellent music director and very competent players on string, wind and percussion instruments.

It was a liberal education for all of us who were involved in the production. Bhagavan enriched the script of the play by adding sublime truths and gems of Vedantic teaching couched in beautiful, simple language. What would have been a crude Morality Play was transformed by Him into a stirring, inspiring and deeply enjoyable mixture of music and spirituality.

Through "Bhaja Govindam" Sri Sankara wanted to drive home into the hearts of men the truth that devotion to God, detachment from the illusory charms of worldly objects and sincere effort to follow the Guru's teachings, will save man from perpetual misery.

### **The Play**

The first scene shows the Acharya and his disciples meditating in the morning near Benares. The next scene depicts how Sri Sankara pricks the bubble of intellectual pride in a learned pundit. The scholar is engrossed in his subject and hankers after the rewards that scholarship bestows. Sankara makes him realise that without devotion to God, achievements of man in the arts and sciences lead him nowhere.

The next scene portrays the emptiness of human vanity. A wealthy young man, proud and arrogant, imagines that he is the master of the world. Sankara gives a jolt to his vanity by opening his eyes to the instability of worldly grandeur and advises him to turn his thoughts towards God.

The next scene portrays the vanity of the self-righteous orthodox man who returns from a pilgrimage full of smug satisfaction and a holier than thou attitude. Sankara makes him realise the futility of such pilgrimages when they don't result in the cultivation of humility, detachment and true piety.

The fifth scene depicts a quiet moment in the life of the disciples of the Master. Some are performing their daily duties and others are engaged in study and meditation. The senior most disciple Thotaka reflects on their experience as sanyasis following the Great Master. The Master comes presently and discourses to them on the bliss of renunciation.

The next scene presents the picture of the terrible fate that awaits man in his old age. Sri Sankara advises such men to start meditating on God before it is too late.

The next scene shows how Sankara teaches a group of proud pundits the futility of learning without developing faith in Oneness with all.

The eighth scene portrays how man is caught up in the endless cycle of birth and death. Sankara exhorts man to surrender to God and seek His grace to snap the ties of human bondage.

The last scene shows the Master teaching his disciples and answering their questions on spiritual problems. Even householders are drawn to the great compassionate Master. He guides them in their attempts to understand the goal of life.

—*D. N.*

*JANMADINA SANDESH:*

**Inherit Sai Wealth: LOVE**

*This great Motherland of ours, which produced high-souled  
men who spread its glory across the continents;  
This heroic land which won its freedom from occidental  
adventurers;  
This sacred land which achieved eminence in music, literature  
and the fine arts;  
Being born in this land of beauty resplendent with artistic  
achievements,  
It is the supreme duty of all ye devotees  
To protect the treasure of Dharma bequeathed to you by  
Bharat Mata!*

*Embodiments of the Divine!*

The land of Bharat resembles an orange fruit. The religions and communities are the pieces in it. The numerous occupations pursued by the people are like the seeds. To be born in a country with such rich variety is itself a blessing. It is a land which should shine in all its glory by manifesting unity.

From very early times Bharat has been proclaiming to the world its faith in God and the godly life. "Let all the worlds be happy" has been the avowed ideal of Hindu society. The good fortune of those who are born in such a country is beyond praise.

Man is essentially divine in nature. Owing to various factors man tends to forget his inherent divinity (Sat-Chit-Ananda). The veil of ignorance which conceals the divinity in him cannot be removed easily. Neither wealth, position nor scholarship can rid him of this malaise. Atmajnana (knowledge of the Self) alone can provide the remedy.

You should not be misled by the pleasures derived from possessions, position or prosperity. Those are transient things, which come and go. Pain and pleasure are incidental to human existence like kith and kin. Man should endeavour to realise his true nature, experience his inherent divinity, and not yield to the temptations of the moment. Both pain and pleasure are impostors. Man should not allow himself to be led astray by them.

The Self transcends time and space. It is eternal and unchanging. Enquiry into the nature of the Self is the message of the perennial philosophy. It is also the primary duty of man.

The sages declared that the body is a perishable rag-bag, teeming with ills. Giving up attachment to it, man should seek refuge in God. The five elements can affect only the body but can have no effect on the Spirit.

### **Purity and Divinity**

The body, mind and spirit (Atma) constitute a human being. The three demonstrate the nature of man and enable him to grow to his true stature. They represent the three concepts of Action, Awareness and Realisation. The body is the instrument for practising Dharma. It is the means of discharging all one's duties. The mind is the source of good and bad thoughts. The world is understood only through the mind. It is the Instrument for judging between right and wrong, the impermanent and the everlasting. It represents Awareness or understanding. The Atma represents the pure, effulgent, eternal and unchanging Consciousness. It shines within man as illuminating flame. The Shastras have characterised it as Divine. The Upanishads have declared that God dwells in the cave of the heart. The Bible has declared that the Divine can be experienced only through purity of the heart. The Quran also declares that purity of heart is essential for experiencing God. Guru Nanak declared that only through good thoughts, good speech and good actions can one realise the Divine. All faiths are one in proclaiming the supreme importance of purity of heart.

### **Atma-dharma and Paradharma**

Man, however, has forgotten his true divine nature and is immersed in the vain pursuit of material pleasures. In the process he has ignored right conduct and is prey to many ills. Men regard Dharma as merely ethical conduct in daily life. But this is not so. Dharma really means recognition of the universal consciousness that is in each individual and act on the basis of the unity of that consciousness. When this consciousness in man is enveloped in the ego, it assumes the form of three gunas (Satwa, Rajas, Tamas). When the Divine nature of this consciousness is realised, it is transformed into Atmadharma—the Dharma of the Self. True Dharma is the realisation of the unity of the Omni-Self. All worldly duties and activities bear the imprint of three gunas. "Swa-dharma" refers to Atma-dharma (the Dharma of the Spirit). Paradharma is Dharma (duties) relating to the world. The worldly duties are ephemeral and subject to change. They have been changing all through the ages. These should not be treated on a par with Atma-dharma. Among these worldly duties, there are duties like Varna-dharma (functional duties), Ashram-dharma (duties relating to one's stage in life), and others. These duties have been laid down to help man in leading his worldly life. But beyond them is the Atma Dharma, which has to be observed for Self-realisation. By solely adhering to worldly duties, man remains

at the animal level. Through the discipline of the mind, man may rise to the human level. But it is only when the physical and mental duties are linked to the spiritual discipline that Atma-dharma is observed. The body performs actions, the mind distinguishes between right and wrong. The Atma functions as the Witness. Although these three appear to differ from each other, they are inter-related. It is only when the three are Integrated and harmonised that man can achieve self-fulfillment.

Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha-the four Purusharthas-are the aims of life. It is only when Artha (the acquisition of wealth) and Kama (the fulfillment of desires) are linked to Dharma (righteousness) that Moksha (Liberation) can be easily achieved. But if Artha and Kama are divorced from Dharma, there can be no peace or happiness. Moksha is freedom from delusion.

The word "Manava" (man) means one who is not new. Man has been taking many births and is caught up in the endless cycle of desires, differences and discord. He must get out of this vicious circle by recognising that the Divine is immanent in everything. Society itself should be regarded as a manifestation of the Divine. The Upanishad has declared: "Isavasyam idam Sarvam" ("All this is permeated by the Divine").

*The stars are Brahman; The Sun is Brahman.  
The Moon is Brahman; Water is Brahman.  
Heaven is Brahman; Vaikuntha is Brahman.  
Father is Brahman; Mother is Brahman.  
All wealth is Brahman; Brahman is the creator,  
the protector and the destroyer.  
Time is Brahman; The body is Brahman.  
Nature is Brahman. Life is Brahman,  
This assemblage is Brahman. Truth is Brahman.  
The Sai who is declaring this is also Brahman.*

Brahman permeates everything in the Cosmos. There is nothing other than Brahman. When Brahman is immanent in everything, how can we search for Him? Where is He to be found? When the entire universe is His abode, how can you locate the road or the entrance to it? The Lord of the universe is the Lord enshrined in your heart. If you play on your heart-strings with ecstasy, the heart will be Vaikuntha itself.

### **The Divine Wealth of Love**

The Lord has endowed you with all his wealth and Divine potentialities. You are inheritors of this wealth. You have to discover what that wealth is.

*Sai's wealth is pure, selfless and boundless Love. This is the truth.*

It is not the edifices you see here that are Sai's wealth. It is pure, selfless Love alone. You must inherit this Love, fill yourselves with it and offer it to the world. This is your supreme responsibility as Sai devotees.

What is it that you can offer to the Lord who is omnipotent, omnipresent and all-knowing?  
The various things you offer to God are given out of delusion.

*Can the Lord who permeates the Universe be confined in a temple?  
To one who has the effulgence of a billion suns, what lamp can you fight  
His truth is beyond the comprehension of Brahma and Hara,  
How can others comprehend Him?  
What name can be given to One who is all things?  
What food can you offer to one who holds the cosmos in His stomach?*

You become devoted for your own sake.

Whatever the name or form in which you worship the Lord, He will respond. He is the provider of everything, who fulfils every wish. Whether the devotee is one in distress or craving for some object, or a seeker or a Jnani, God responds according to the measure of his devotion.

Embodiments of the Divine! To realise the Divine, Love is the easiest path. Just as you can see the moon only with the light of the moon, God, who is the Embodiment of Love, can be reached through Love. Regard Love as your life-breath. Love was the first quality to emerge in the creative process. All other qualities came after it. Therefore, fill your hearts with love and base your life on it.

Man's thoughts are filled with various types of attachments and aversions. Attachment and hatred are dominant qualities in man. They are the evil planets that bedevil man's life.

Once, Thotaka, a disciple of Sri Sankaracharya, asked the guru: "Master, in this world, who can be regarded as the greatest conqueror?" Sri Sankaracharya replied: "Only the person who has acquired mastery over his senses is the greatest conqueror—not those who may conquer kingdoms, scale the Himalayas or master ail knowledge."

Prahlada told his father Hiranyakasipu, "You want to conquer the three worlds, but you are failing to conquer your senses." One who has not mastered his internal enemies like anger, hatred etc., how can he hope to conquer his external enemies? The inner enemies can be conquered only by one means-love. It is essential to make our life worthwhile by practising love, by subduing the six internal enemies (anger, envy etc.,) and dedicating all our actions to God.

The world is in turmoil. At this juncture, it is the duty of devotees to realise the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man and counteract the evil forces which are inflicting innumerable troubles on mankind. Resorting to the potent weapon of love, they should try to serve humanity and to eradicate the forces of violence and unrighteousness which are rampant today.

Even if you cannot perform any other kind of worship or sadhana, service to society will help you to sanctify your life. Of the nine forms of devotion, Seva (service) is most important. Through service, complete surrender of the self can be achieved.

—Bhagavan's Discourse, Poornachandra Auditorium, 23-11-86

### **The Bountiful Lord**

Swami's Love is so comprehensive that it shines inside the lowliest hovel as well as the loftiest mansion. It is so pervasive and penetrative that it brooks no barriers, no bolts or locks, no walls or 'won'ts'. When He wills to heal the grief of a Negro woman in Kampala, His words are moulded in Swahili for she can be soothed only in the language she understands. When surrounded by tribals from the North East Frontier of India, He speaks in solace-soaked Adi which is their only tongue. His Love crystallises into Sai forms, for consoling anguished hearts that call for succour from all over the globe.

Though the Divine is, according to texts, only a Witness, neither coldly distant nor warmly involved, the Sai Avatar is so concerned with humanity—its delusions, diseases and diversions—that He is present beside the tottering and the stumbling in order to correct, comfort and counsel.

—N. K.

### **Learn to use Love**

Tuesday, 21st August 1984 was a very hot sultry day as I toiled up the hill by Nuffield College, Oxford, on my way to the West Gate Library. When I was near the top I could see that quite a crowd had gathered on the edge of Bornn Square with more people joining it all the time. As I drew level I saw that in the centre of the crowd there were two lads fighting each other hard.

These two were really slugging it out so my first thought was "I am sure Sathya Sai Baba would not approve of this." Then I remembered the line of the prayer He has directed us to do 'O Lord take my everything and let me be as an instrument to work for Thee', so I said to Swami telepathically "What ever can I do?" Immediately I received the reply, just one word "LOVE."

I was puzzled for a moment as I did not see how I could give love to the two young men, when I realised that I would not have enough anyway. This triggered the idea that only Sathya Sai Baba would have enough love—then, I knew what to do. I would ask Him to use me as a channel to pour His love over them. As I had continued walking I was just beyond the fight and had



turned right onto the broad pavement, so they were behind me. I took a deep breath to try to raise my vibrations, so making me a better channel, and asked Baba to pour His love through me.

After three short paces curiosity overcame me, so I turned round and was amazed at what I saw—the young men's hands had dropped to their sides. My astonishment had stopped me acting as a good channel, so I redoubled my efforts to clear my mind of all thoughts, except that of love. Both young men shuffled in a self-conscious way, then turned from each other, one going off along Queen's Street, and the other down the hill I had come up. The crowd looked disappointed, then quickly dispersed.

I thanked Sathya Sai Baba before going into the Library feeling rather stunned. Now you could say this was a coincidence, but I doubt it! Just think what would have happened if all the others in the crowd had been channelling love too—the figth would never have started.

This August (1986) I have read Phyllis Krystal's book with the account of how she channelled Sathya Sai Baba's love to stop the hijackers, which confirms my feelings that it was no coincidence.

Remember—however dangerous or frightening the situation you find yourself in you have the strongest weapon of all, LOVE; it is a much underused commodity in our present world. Start using it now.

—*Paulette, Hatfield (U.K.)*

## Love for All

The most efficient principle of success is love which may be described as harmony with the universe, or as adaptation to circumstances. Love means realising your oneness and identity with your neighbours, with all those who come in contact with you. If you are a teacher, unless you know the difficulties and deficiencies of students by identifying yourself with them, you won't succeed in your profession. Similarly, if you are a businessman, unless you realise the interests of your customers to be one with your own, you will make no progress.

Prema (Love) is the basic element of the other four Human Values—Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Ahimsa. Without Love, the other four Human Values do not stand. It is Love which sustains them. In the same manner, in the Ten fold Path to Divinity, it is Love and Love alone that connects all these paths to one another. Prema is the only solution to the present day socio-economic chaos, misery, suffering around. Whatever problem may be there—whether in the family or in a society—it can be solved only through Love and understanding.

S. T. Coleridge, a romantic poet, brings out this truth very beautifully in his Ancient Mariner. When man falls out of harmony with nature, he suffers. The

moment you realise your unity with fellow beings, all prosperity is yours.

He prayeth best who loveth best  
Both man, bird and beast  
He prayeth well who loveth well  
All things both great and small.

As long as our mind is in tune with the universe and we are feeling and realising our oneness with each and all, all the circumstances and surroundings will be in our favour. The very moment we are at discord with all, that very moment, our friends and relatives will turn against us, that very moment the whole world will stand up against us. This is the law of love.

The ultimate aim of life, it is said, is to realise one's true self which is called the Atman. It is part and parcel of the eternal truth which is called Brahman by some, and Paramatma by others. This eternal truth is all-pervasive. It may be asked as to how we can realise this eternal truth. In the first place, we should learn that there is one life which runs through so may human beings, living creatures, such as plants and vegetables, and birds and beasts. There is one current force which is all-pervading.

This love for humanity has been regarded as the highest ideal in all religions because love is God who is our own reality. Jesus the Christ taught this truth when he said, "Love thy neighbour as thyself". One may ask this question. "Why should we love our neighbours as ourselves?" Vedas say: "You should love your neighbour not because your neighbour has done you some good, not because he has given you some rich gifts or presents or status in society, but because the spirit in you is the same as the spirit of the neighbour, Tat Twam Asi—Thou Art That". Because there is only one spirit which is all-pervasive. This is realisation of love. Love is that expression of oneness, the feeling of oneness that binds us together.

"My Life is My Message", says Bhagavan Baba. What is His life? Loving service to mankind twenty four hours a day, seven days a week, on a scale the magnitude of which has never been and cannot be measured, in terms of performing miracles, healing the sick, transforming souls, educating the youth and promoting the welfare of humanity at large. No Avatar or God-man in history has risen to this glory. When Baba was asked whether He needed rest, He replied "If I needed rest I would not have incarnated."

Baba is the very embodiment of this supreme love. It is the essence of all His teachings. Baba says: "There are those who preach short-cuts to liberation. But love alone can give liberation. The grace of God cannot be won through the gymnastics of reason, the contortions of Yoga, or the denials of asceticism. Love alone can win it; love that needs no requital, love that knows no bargaining; love that is paid gladly as tribute to the All-loving, love that is unwavering." Love

alone can overcome obstacles, however many and mighty. There is no strength more effective, no bliss more satisfying, no joy more restoring, because God is love.

Bhagavan Baba has said that He has come to repair the ancient highway to God. "I have not come on behalf of any sect or creed or religion. I have come to light the Lamp of Love in the hearts of all humanity."

"I am the embodiment of love", He says without any modesty or pride. "Love is my instrument. My message is Prema, my activity is Prema, my teaching is Prema, my way of life is Prema." There is nothing more precious within human grasp than love.

The purpose of life, Bhagavan says, is to grow in love, expand that love and to merge with God in love and this is best done through service. "Hands that help are holier than the lips that pray".

—*S. Lyyampillai, Brindavan.*

*Do not proclaim that this name of God is superior or more efficacious than the other. To assert that Rama is superior or that Siva is superior, or even that Sai Baba is the Avatar that is the fullest of all-all this only reveals that you have not understood what Divinity is. Rama is a Name that combines the ra of Narayana and the ma of Namah-shivaya, the mantras of the Vaisnavas and that of the Saivites. So, Rama means, the quality of Siva and Vishnu. Or, Rama has the ra of Hara (Siva) and the ma of Uma (the Shakti aspect of Siva); so, Rama is the name of Shivashakti! How can faction arise when each name is so resonant with the lesson of the unity of all Names?*

—**Baba**

**SAI SEVA SAMACHAR:**

### **Medical Check-up for School Children**

A comprehensive programme of medical examination of school children in Sathya Sai Taluk was carried out by a large team of 135 doctors (men and women) during November 18 20 in connection with Bhagavan Baba's sixty-first birthday celebrations.

The doctors who belonged to the Medical Wing of the Sri Sathya Sai Save organisation of Andhra Pradesh, took up the work In Sathya Sai Taluk as part of the project of examining school children all over Andhra Pradesh which they had been implementing from the beginning of this year. Already over 1,47,000 children have been examined in 20 districts of the State.

The team of doctors assembled in the Hill View Stadium on the morning of November 18th to leave for their respective contras in the villages where medical camps were to be set up. Ten High Schools had been chosen as the centres covering 55 villages. Besides a general physical examination, specialists were included in the teams for examining E. N. T., Eye and Dental ailments. A mobile X-ray unit was also used for screening the children where necessary. Six or seven villages near each centre were also visited by the doctors for examining the children of Primary Schools.

In all, 11,700 children were examined in 10 High Schools and 58 Primary Schools. Treatment was given to 8551 children with medicines and dental attention like scaling and filling.

Each child was given a card-carrying particulars about his or her physical condition and the results of the medical check-up. All these cards were handed over to the respective school authorities for follow-up action. Where action had to be taken by the parents, special slips were issued indicating the course of treatment

Fluorosis is a major ailment in the villages and 95 percent of the children showed minor or major symptoms of the disease. Diseases resulting from malnutrition, avitaminosis and anaemia are in great number, besides worm Infection, skin diseases, pus from the ear and dental caries.

Protein food vitamin tablets and Iron tablets were distributed liberally among the children. Many children with defective eye vision were also identified and will be given treatment later. The school authorities cooperated with enthusiasm and appreciated the service rendered by Sathya Sai Seva organisation.

A team of veterinary doctors from Chittoor district carried out examination and treatment of cattle in a number of villages.

A large number of Sai Save Dal volunteers helped the doctors in conducting the medical examination and organising the centres in the various schools.

## **Changing the Disc**

It is hard to believe that fifteen years have passed since that morning in 1971 when I first found myself in the physical presence of Sai, a 24-year old infant and "refugee" from Western culture wondering what to do with my life. As one takes a phonograph needle and lifts it, removing the disc and replacing it with a new one, I felt the hand of Sai lift the weight of my past and set the needle of my heart on a new track.

Certainly the "tune" I now heard was different from what I had learned in the first 24 years. It was as though life began again, only now there was the chance—perhaps opportunity is the right

word—to learn to live the life of a human being, to accept Divinity as the basis of my experience and to live up to values Swami teaches. How great was the Love that could give me this opportunity; how great were the expectations I had of myself at that time: how wonderful was that new "doorway" that He showed me, and challenged me to walk through!

And now fifteen years have passed. I lived two of those years in His presence, and have returned for short visits many times. Over those years I have had a career in the business world, a wonderful family, eleven years as a participant and part in the Sai Organizations, opportunities to serve my community in various capacities. I have met and talked with groups of Sai devotees throughout the US and abroad, presented Sai teachings to many types of spiritual-oriented groups, and learned more than I could ever explain from the many experiences that have come my way. In all areas of life, I have known great successes and failures and endured some of life's disasters and tragedies. There have been times when Swami seemed more than thousands of miles away and when I felt little energy in my spiritual heart. And there have been many moments, when Sai presence within and about my life was so strong that I could not imagine how anything else in life could have any importance, when it was impossible not to experience Sai in everything around me.

After all these years, so much has changed in my life, and will continue to change. The more we accept that learning is all we have to do in life, the more we learn to respond to all that comes our way as our teacher, the reminder of who we really are and what we are really here for. 15 years ago I was overwhelmed by the Love, the expectations, the new "doorway" and challenge that was presented to me. I still am I As the years go by, I seem to know less and learn more. Our connection to Sai knows no limits or bounds, and as life teaches us to let go of the weight of our accumulated physical, emotional and mental burdens, He is there to guide us as we breathe in the more vital lessons and teachings that give our lives real meaning.

When I first met Sai it was easy for me to tell others how to practise his teachings and to describe Him and his work and mission. I still do this when it is appropriate but over the years something else has grown that I cannot explain or describe. I can feel it and share it but only by living it and expressing it through what I do. It is this same feeling, this same presence, that I experience in others who have had the chance—and the opportunity—to know Sathya Sai Baba in this lifetime.

I offer a prayer of thanks for all that has come my way; yet there are no words for the "thanks" one offers to the Divine for manifesting in our lives. It would be too easy to fill a page with gratitude, when all He wants is to see us take up the challenge and step through the Doorway, and to try to live the Love that was life's greatest gift to us.

**—Richard Bayer, Santa Cruz, California**

*SRI SATHYA SAI INSTITUTE:*

## **The Fifth Convocation**

"Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning is a unique experiment in the field of education, and people all over the country are looking upto it with great expectations," observed Mr. S. B. Chavan, Chief Minister of Maharashtra, in his address to the Fifth Convocation of the Institute held in the Poornachandra Auditorium on November 22.

Besides the large number of candidates who were to receive the degrees at the Convocation and the students and staff of the Institute, the hall was filled with devotees, who had come from all parts of the world for Bhagavan's sixty-first birthday.

The academic procession started from the Prasanthi Mandir at 2.25 p.m. with the Registrar holding the Macs and two students carrying the emblem of the Institute.

The Chancellor, Bhagavan Baba, the Chief Guest Mr. S. B. Chavan, and the Vice-chancellor Dr. S. N. Saraf, members of the Institute Trust, the Governing Body,' the Academic Council and the Deans of Faculties entered the decorated Auditorium.

The Students' Band of the Institute played throughout.

The proceedings began with invocatory Vedic chant by students, of the Convocation passage in the Taitiriya Upanishad.

Dr. S. N. Saraf, while welcoming the Chief Guest and others reviewed the progress of the Institute during the past year and announced a historic decision taken by the institute, at the instance of the Chancellor, to give education in the Campuses totally free and to throw open admissions to students from all over the country on the basis of merit. "We are happy to have students from Kashmir and Kanyakumari, from Kutch and Kamarup," he said.

The enrolment in various courses in the three Campuses, taken together, has increased 40 percent in one year. The number of post-graduate and research students in various faculties has increased from 95 to 200. Two new Faculties, Business Management and Education, with an emphasis on achieving excellence and an accent on value-orientation, were established at Prasanthi Nilayam and Whitefield Campus respectively. A programme for doctoral research in areas of national significance and local relevance has been taken up. There are now 31 Ph.D. scholars pursuing highly significant programmes of scientific and social research. Students in all the Campuses are encouraged to share their thoughts and experiences regarding the implications and relevance of Education in Human Values.

Then the Chancellor declared the Convocation open. Candidates for the degrees wore presented to the Chancellor by the Dean of the Science Faculty. All the candidates stood in their seats and bowed with folded hands when the Chancellor conferred his benediction on them. The Vice Chancellor then administered the pledge, (which the candidates repeated) whereby they

undertook to conduct themselves in daily life and in thought, word and deed as befits a member of then Sathya Sai Institute, to support the cause of sound learning, humanity, morality and spirituality and uphold and advance the all-round welfare of their countrymen and fellowmen.

The Registrar then read out the names of candidates who had been awarded medals for all-round excellence and for their performance in specific subjects. The medals, awarded to candidates for their achievements in study, discipline, attendance at prayers, participation in social work and proficiency in sports, were given to Sandipin Chatterjee (M. A. II Year) and Sai Giridhar (M.Com. II Year) and Kumari Swarupa Gauri (M.A. II Year). The Good Behaviour Award went to Katta Prasad (M.B.A Ist Year).

For academic excellence, the following candidates, who secured the first rank in their overall academic performance, were awarded Gold Medals:

Kum. Sohini Son, S.A. Sridhar Venkataraman, B.Com. Kum. Nutan Mudbidri, M.A. (Philosophy) R. Ramakrishnan, M.Sc. (Maths) R. Krishna Mohan, M.Sc. (Physics) Desai Ruchir Kishoro, M.Com.

The Chancellor presented the medal himself and blessed the candidates.

Mr. S. B. Chavan then delivered his Convocation Address.

Bhagavan then delivered His benedictory address as Chancellor.

The Convocation came to a close with the playing of the National Anthem by the Institute band.

Bhagavan Baba, Mr. Chavan and others returned in procession to the Mandir.

Later in the evening students from the Brindavan campus of the Institute presented a memorable educational play based on ten verses from Adi Sankaracharys's "Bhaja Govindam". Poornachandra Hall was filled to capacity. Bhagavan Baba, who was intent on selecting the cast, designing the costumes and the stage settings and training the actors with meticulous attention to the music, the rendering of the dialogues and the acting, watched the play from the aisle in the Auditorium, with students around Him. The entire performance was an unforgettable experience for everyone. At the end of the play, Bhagavan congratulated the actors and the student orchestra group.

**GURUDEVA VANI:**

### **The Fourfold Exhortation**

*Students, Teachers, Persons interested and involved in Education!*

Education has to make a person the concrete embodiment of the higher Reality, that is the basis of the material universe, of life in the world, of the expanding dominions of the mind, and of the human community. He is the mirror which reflects the Divinity inherent in man, evident in every expression of his Character. The process of education has to inspire man to discover the Truth seeking it through the study of the objective world. Fulfillment lies in the awareness of that Truth which, when once known, does not need correction or modification or revision. Education aims at this consummation in a life lived in the atmosphere of unity, devoid of the varied demands of diversity. The educated person knows the inter-relation between what appears as distinct.

Education must reveal the path which enables man to tap the dormant spring of divinity within, without getting entangled with the mass of created objects. It has to lay stress on spiritual transformation as more fundamental than even moral uplift. The real sign of an educated person is his attitude of sameness towards all. He sees in society the manifestation of divinity. Education does not lead man from nature to the all-pervading Alma. It leads man to study nature, with the unifying Atmic outlook. When the powers of Nature are harnessed to narrow selfishness, they recoil on him as plagues. When they are revered as revelations of the Alma, they become beneficial. Education equips man with this insight. The process by which man forgoes his freedom and is bound in the net of desire can never be education. It has to aim at ensuring peace and stability in each country by continuous precept and practice of the basic unity.

After acquiring this sacred vision and inspiration, Brahmacharis moved into the next stage of life, into society for founding and fostering families. The occasion was marked by a Convocation where they were provided with holy guidelines and reminded of their duties. When the young are at the Gurukul, with fellow students and teachers, engaged in study, one had to strive ceaselessly to cultivate serenity, purity and detachment, and try to identify their truth. For, the sage of studentship (Brahmacharya) sets the pace and decides the fate of three subsequent stages of householder, recluse and monk.

Students! When you lag behind and fail to achieve success in study and the practice of ideals, your mothers are steeped in agony. The motherland, Bharat-mata, too suffers the same agony a thousand times more, when you lag behind in acquiring moral and spiritual excellence. Students have the responsibility to save both mother and motherland from the agony and to confer Ananda instead. He alone can be considered a real student, who has realised this obligation.

Every one of the leaders and elders you know, administrators and officers, in political and other fields has been, while young, students like you. You have to take their roles later. Do not ignore this fact. You have to help the progress of the motherland by work among fellow citizens with sincere effort and patent example.

What is the meaning of the expression "human progress"? It means raising the level of moral life and brightening daily lives with goodness and godliness. Life has to be an incessant process of repair and reconstruction, of discarding evil and developing goodness. Paddy grains have to



discard the husk in order to become consumable rice. Cotton has to be reformed as yarn to become wearable cloth. Even gold nuggets have to undergo the crucible and get rid of alloys. Man too must purify his instincts, impulses, passions, emotions and desires so that he can progress in good thoughts, deeds and words. The individual is valued only on the basis of the level of transformation he has attained. But, today, the rulers have no capacity to transform the people, nor have the people the urge to transform the rulers. The absence of spiritual vision is the cause for this situation. So, efforts must be directed now to cultivate that vision among students who will be forming the citizens and rulers of tomorrow. Students of today must be encouraged to follow disciplined and devoted habits of thinking and living.

Students form the foundation of a nation; they are the roots that hold it firm. Their moral stamina ensures a home of peace and an era of joy and happiness. Science and technology have expanded vastly today. Their gifts have made life more comfortable and pleasant. But they have brought with them grief and fear, loss and calamity in far greater degree. More than all, they have bred domination and concentration of authority. The reason is absence of proper discrimination while accepting and utilising these gifts. This is the age of a novel civilisation. The emergence of discordant notes has silenced the call of the divine from within man. He is eager to make his life a merry-go-round but it is turning into a painful tangle of troubles. He does not try to discover the cause of this contradiction. Instead, he wastes his years in empty ephemeral pomp and pretence. He is unaware of the value of each passing day. He is caught in the coils of speed and splash-films, planes, radio, video, television etc. He is restless and has to encounter countless worries. Fear of imminent war or famine has gripped man. Fear, while alone at home, fear while on the street! When insecurity prevails, how can man be happy?

The basic reason for this pathetic situation is the spending spree for satisfying sensual desires. To get his child admitted, a middle class employee pays thousands of rupees to the school. He pays lakhs of rupees to secure a seat in a professional college for his son or daughter. He competes with his neighbours in the purchase of gadgets which they parade, with the help of loans or corrupt practices. Technology ruins step by step the character of men. The son secures an LL.B. involving the sacrifice by his parents of their income. He gets no job. So, he decides on a career as lawyer. He has to own a car, though hungry and poor.

Thus, truth, justice and morality have eroded everywhere and in every field. Man is no more human. Students! I exhort you to recognise this tragic situation and dedicate yourselves to the task of promoting the happiness and welfare of the people, and presenting shining examples of truth, sincerity and integrity. Give up the notion that you are undergoing education in order to grab jobs. Convince yourselves that you are earning knowledge leading to wisdom, in order to serve others all your lives.

The advice given by gurus during Convocations in hermitages is the same." Mother and Motherland are more worthy of reverence than Heaven. Your parents are sacrificing their comforts and even necessities in order to ensure your progress. It is your duty to revere them and make them happy. Engage yourselves in acts that others will respect and not in acts of which you feel ashamed. Honour the elders. Love your native land." After receiving such directions from

the Gurus, students returned home, with hearts heavy with gratitude and sorrow at the departure from the hermitages. The Convocation marked the close of a sweet chapter in life when true ideals to be pursued in later years were implanted. So the leave taking was fraught with humility and hope. They realised then that life involves both coming together and separation from each other. They engraved in their hearth in golden letters the advice imparted to them on the occasion of departure.

But today, in the very same land, Convocations are polluted by noisy interruptions, disgusting behaviour and demonstrations of disbelief. Man has become so stupid that he has neither fear of sin nor love for God. How then can he be secure in peace and escape from catastrophe? These two are two eyes of mankind without them, man has to totter in darkness, however learned and scholarly he may be. Where can we find students with compassion in their hearts, spreading peace all around, straight and true in behaviour, righteous and virtuous? Individuals who have illumined their innate good nature with such holy qualities and who are eager to be helpful to others are not visible, to the eye. So, you have to acquire and develop the practice of Truth, Righteousness and Serenity.

Do not crave to acquire cultures foreign to ours. We have a treasure of gold in our Bharat. Why seek it outside? The culture of Bharat is sublime, splendorous, sacred, and divine. It can fulfill all your high desires, quench your deepest thirst.

*I am on the search, I am on the search  
For one who ever clings to moral path  
Can tree cotton fruit ever mango be  
Can any stout cane claim sugar within?  
Can pebbles that shine ever candy become?  
Let not form deceive; see the nature and judge.*

So, students have to cultivate character. That is what I am searching for.

Students! You must be aware of the implications of studentship. You have to translate that awareness into actual practice. You have to enshrine the experience in your hearts. You must, then, share the joy of that experience with others. Do not allow your minds to get agitated with limitless desires.

First, render your homes bright by pleasing your parents. If you cause grief to them your entire life will be soaked in grief and your children, in turn, are sure to sink you in sorrow. Do not be arrogant towards your parents because you have studied a few things. "Consider the Mother as God; consider the Father as God; consider the Teacher as God; consider the Guest as God." Follow this fourfold exhortation with full faith in its validity, derive Ananda there from and inspire others by your example, so that the Motherland may progress and prosper. Fulfill this desire of mine, with my blessings.

**—Bhagavan's Benedictory Discourse, 22-11-1986**

## **The Persuasive Call**

It seems to me now, in retrospect, that over the past two years Sathya Sai Baba has become an integral part of my own consciousness. He has been integrated into my own regular pray life, in much the same way that specific prophets, saints, and angels are remembered and invoked by Christians.

I have perceived Sathya Sai Baba to be a realised being from another religious tradition who is one with God, and as with the saints in the Christian tradition, both an exemplar of Divine virtues and a manifestor of God's Holy Spirit, as well as an embodiment of our perfected universal manhood or human nature.

This is, after all, what the whole human race has been created to eventually become.

This truth was well expressed by St. Paul who wrote that the Christ (the Eternal Christ or "Logos" in the human form of Jesus of history) has become the "first fruits" (or first example) of a new race (type) of humanity (i.e., the collective New Adam).

The reality of this process of incarnation, or embodiment of the Divine Being In human terms, can be seen in varying degrees and forms in the face of the Christ, the prophets, saints, martyrs and masters of many traditions throughout history.

It is also seen today by his followers, in the face of Sathya Sai Baba, indeed, very few persons alive today have been privileged to know or conceive of the real power of God, in as "high intensity" as we may see it in the life and work of Sathya Sai Baba.

The need for such a "high intensity" of incarnate Divine Power (Shakti) is urgent in our world today. That is why, in the words of his Indian devotees, Sathya Sai Baba has come, as an "Avatar of God" to give light and witness, help and encouragement to the forces of good in the world.

Many good souls have struggled to witness in many ways, and in many areas of life, to light the flame of the Spirit in the darkness of our confused and often purposeless modern society.

The civilisation which we have created is even now on the brink of self-destruction.

Nothing less than the power of God entering into this world in every personal way can possibly save the " workers of God" from many traditions from inevitable defeat.

I feel that I have been given the grace to be able to recognise in Sathya Sai Baba the universal notes of the Presence of God. He is, I believe, such a concentration of God's Being, power and

love that I have been able to respond to it from across the miles, across cultures and the religions of mankind.

This has been made possible in spite of the lack of comparable concepts, religious symbols, or language between the Christian and the Hindu traditions for recognising fully the implications of his claims.

Sathya Sai Baba's being and mode of operation within the reality structures of Indian religious concepts need not be fully comprehended by Westerners but this will in no way prevent us from recognising the presence of God with and in him.

Jesus taught that the "Kingdom of God" is "within you", and that its signs and characteristics are the universal qualities of love, truth, and peace.

This heavenly "Prasanthi Nilayam" or "Peace of God which passes all human understanding", gives the only true "health" or "wholeness" in mind, body and spirit, and the only true joy and ecstasy of fulfillment.

This is Baba's teaching, as well as the teaching of Jesus in the Gospels.

—*The Rev Canon John Rossner, Montreal*

### **Copyright in Sathya Sai Trust Publications**

The copyright in all publications brought out by the Sathya Sai Books & Publications Trust, Prasanthi Nilayam, Andhra Pradesh, has been assigned so far as publications outside India by way of reproduction or translation, to the Foundation Sathya Sai Seva, Switzerland, 6535, Roveredo GR.CR. The administrative office of the Foundation is located at 10, Via C. Modeina, 6901, Lugano CH, Switzerland.

All enquiries from outside India regarding permit to print translations, etc. of the Sai Trust Publications, including the writings and speeches of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, should be addressed to Dr. Antonio Craxi, Chairman of the Foundation, to either of the following addresses:

1. 20013 Pontevecchio, Magenta, Milano, Italy.
2. B-6, Sathya Sai Sadan, Prasanthi Nilayam, Andhra Pradesh, India, 515134.

### **The two Trees**

"And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food; the *Tree of Life* also in the midst of garden and the *Tree of Knowledge* of good and evil. ("Genesis 2-9.") "And the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying "Of every tree of the garden, thou mayest freely eat. But, of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." (Genesis 2-15, 16, 17).

The first tree is the tree of immortal life. The second deludes man into raga (attachment) and dwesha (hatred) by separating things and beings, sensations and feelings, deeds and happenings into opposing groups as good and evil. It urges man into the trap of Time and Space, for the same thing is projected by his senses and mind as good now and as evil later, as good here and as evil there.

In fact, the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil is what is designated as Maya. The Kathopanishad declares, "Mrthyo sa mrthyumapnothi ya iha naaneva pasyathi" (3-1-11) and "Neha naasthi kinchana". "There is no diversity whatsoever. He who sees as though there is difference goes from death to death."

That is to say, he involves himself in Maya and the cycle of birth and death. He is ignorant of the Truth "Poornam adah, Poornam idam. That is full and (therefore) This (too is full)." Swami has announced that Maya is the Leela or pastime of God, a pastime expressed also as Birth and Death, Karma and Janma.

Swami has come to remind us of the Unity which we have missed in our deadly concern with the Diversity—flying towards what we have labelled "good" and fleeing from what we have labelled as "evil". Swami has defined 'devotion to Him' as "treating manchi (good) and chedda (evil) samamuga (as the same)." No wonder, the Lord God, according to Genesis, warned man, "When thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." The Karma (activity) that is prompted by desire and disgust lead to Janma (birth) which inevitably leads to mrityu (death).

Frithjof Schuon, the French Philosopher, in his book on Esoterism (1981) has tackled the problem of the two Trees. He writes: "The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil represents the manifesting, or cosmogonic and thus *exteriorising Power*, along with the isolating and contrasting knowledge that exteriorisation demands. The Tree of Life, on the contrary, represents the reintegrating, and thus *interiorising Power*, along with the participative or unitive knowledge that interiorisation demands." Turn your eye inwards, if you desire to attain immortality, says the Upanishad. "Aavrttha chakshuh amrthathwam ichchan." Turn the eye outwards—you are caught in the world of duality. Turn it inward—you are on the path of the discovery of Unity.

The Upanishads integrate the two trees. They describe and define it as having "its roots above", since it derives sustenance, support and strength from God. Its branches are the dual throng—"space, wind, fire, water, earth and the like" (Maitri Upanishad 6-5). The Katha Upanishad gives an equally sublime account of the One all-encompassing tree. "Its root is Brahma" (the Cosmic Consciousness, the Sat-Chit-Ananda. "The branches below" (Diversity

manifested by Unity). "The root indeed is pure, for it is Pure. It is called Immortal. On it all the worlds do rest and no one goes beyond it."

The Tree which represents Knowledge of Good and Evil, which is only relative truth, is not the journey's end. He who mistakes it to be absolute Truth has to journey to the root, the Brahman. Swami is perpetually reminding us of the goal, the consummation, the climax, the One of which we are faint repetitions. Let us liberate ourselves from the branches. Let us seek His Grace to reach the Root.

—*N. Kasturi*

### **Learn to Serve**

In your Seva be like the sun  
That gives the whole world light and fun,  
And every day on time sets sail  
Across the heavens without fail.

In your Seva like rivers be  
That water and wash from source to sea,  
And in return never take a thing  
Even from world's wealthiest king.

In your Seva be like the cow  
That's ever willing to allow  
So much of her calf's milk feed,  
To be given to those in need.

In your Seva be like the tree  
That gives fruit, wood and shelter free,  
Alike to insect, bird and beast,  
As well as man from West to East.

From misery raise the poor above,  
More with seva than words of love;  
That is the way for joy that's true;  
Smile, and let the world smile with you.

As everywhere God, you will find,  
Bear intense love for all mankind;  
Take calmly both pleasure and pain;  
In others' welfare lies your gain.

And Sai Baba has set the norm,  
For worship in its highest form;  
Remove the misery of others  
And treat all beings as brothers.

—*Chandrabhan Singh, South Africa*

*CHILDREN'S CORNER:*

**Another Day**

You are ushering in another day—  
Untouched and freshly new.

So here I come to ask you, God,  
If You'll renew me too?

Forgive the many errors  
That I made yesterday.

And let me try again, dear God,  
To walk closer in Thy way.

But Father, I am well aware  
I can't make it on my own.

So take my hand and hold it tight  
For I can't walk alone.

—*Kanya K. Sonti, Agoura Hills, California*