

"The A-para Prakriti, about which I speak, is just a manifestation of My Shakti, My Glory, remember. Seen superficially, with the gross vision, the sthuladristi, the Universe might appear as many; but that is wrong. There is no many at all. The yearning of the Inner Consciousness, the Antahkarana, is towards the One; that is the real Drishti. When the Inner Vision is saturated with Jnana, the Jagat or Creation will be seen as Brahman and as nothing else. Therefore the Inner Consciousness must be educated to interest itself only in Jnana." The Jagat is saturated with the Jagad-isa. Creation is nothing but the Creation in that Form. Isavasyam idam sarvam, it is said.

Though there is only One, it appears as many. Let us remind ourselves of an example with reference to this statement of Krishna. We walk in the thick dusk of evening when things are seen but dimly; a rope lies higgledy-piggledy on the path; each one who sees it has his own idea of what it is, though it is really just a length of rope. One steps across it, taking it to be a garland. Another takes it to be a mark made by running water and treads on it. A third man imagines it to be a vine, a creeper plucked from a tree that has fallen on the path. Some others are scared that it is a snake; is it not?

Similarly, the One Parabrahman, without any change or transformation affecting It, being all the time It and It only, manifests as the Prapancha of manifold names and forms, the cause of all this seeming being the dusk of Maya. The rope might appear as many things; it might provoke various feelings and reactions on various people; it has become the basis for variety. But it never changes into the Many; it is ever One. The rope is ever the rope. It does not become the garland or the streak of water or the creeper or the snake. Brahman might be mis-interpreted in a variety of ways but it is ever Brahman only. For all the various interpretations, Brahman is the One Real Basis. Like the string for the garland, the foundation for the building, Brahman is the string that penetrates and holds together the garland of Jivis, it is the foundation for the structure of Prakriti. Note this. The string and the structure are not visible; only the flowers and the building are evident. That does not mean they are non-existent! In fact, they support the garland and the building. Well, you can know of their existence and their value by means of a little effort of reasoning. If you do not take that trouble, they escape your notice. Reason, examine and you can arrive at the string that holds the flowers together and the foundation, hidden in the earth. Do not be misled by the Aadheya (the Contained, the Thing held) into denying the Aadhaar, the Holder, the Container, the Basis, the Support. If you deny it, you miss the Truth and hold on to a Delusion. Reason and discriminate; then believe and experience.

For the Seen, there is an Unseen Basis; to grasp the Unseen, the best means, is Inquiry; and the best proof is Experience. For those who have experienced it no further description is needed.

The nature and qualification of individual beads are not important at all; they should not distract our attention. Concentrate rather on the inner Reality, the Basis of all the Beads, the Brahman; that is the Essential Quest. There may be many varieties of flowers in a garland, even trivial ones (Tamasic jivis) or flashy ones (Rajasic jivis) or nice pure ones

(Satwic jivis) but the string, the Basis, the Paramatma is independent of all of them. It is unaffected; it is Sathya, Nitya, Nirmala.

Flowers cannot become a garland without the string; so too, Brahman unites all Jivis. You cannot separate the two in all things and substances; Brahman fills everything. The Five Elements are but Its manifestations. It is the Inner Motive, unseen by those who look only at the surface. It is the Antaryamin, in other words. That is why Krishna said "I am Rasa in Water; I am Effulgence, Prabha in the Sun and Moon; I am the Pranava in the Vedas; I am Sound in the Akasa; I am Pourusham (Heroism, Adventure and Aspiration) in Man."

Let us just consider the topic of Pranava, which has been mentioned. Krishna said that the Pranava is the very Life of the Vedas, is it not? The Vedas are reputedly "An-adi" or "Beginning-less." When the Pranava is spoken of as the very life-breath of the Vedas, which are themselves beyond all beginning, intelligent persons can deduce for themselves how fundamentally important it is. Take it that the Pranava is the subtle essence, the underlying Form of every particle and substance in the Universe.

There are two parts in every single substance in the Universe: Name and Form, Nama and Rupa. Take away these two and there is no Prapancha or Universe any more. The Form is conceived and controlled by the Name. The Rupa is dependent on the Name; so if you reason out which is more lasting, you will find that the Name is Nityam and the Rupam is A-nityam. Consider the case of persons who have done various good works, achieved many meritorious deeds, constructed many hospitals or schools or temples or places of worship; now, even when their Form is absent from the world for men to see, their Names with all the associated fame are ever present in human memory, is it not? The Rupam lasts but for a brief time; but the Namam continues.

Names are countless, and so are Rupams. But there is one matter which you have to take into consideration here, a matter which is within the daily experience of all, from the pundit down to the ignoramus: Aksharas or letters. In Telugu, there are 52 letters; in English, there are just 26. Even if you pile up the entire literary output and the pile rises mountain high it is all composed of either the 52 Telugu letters or the 26 English ones, not a single letter more.

Similarly, in the human body there are six nerve centres, all in the form of the lotus-flower. All the six lotus-forms have one letter or sound attached to each petal. Like the reeds in the harmonium, when the petals are moved, each one emits a distinct sound. Those who follow this statement intelligently may get a doubt; if the petals are said to move, who or what is moving them? Yes, the Force that moves them is the Anahatadhwani, the Primeval Sound, the Undistinguished Indistinguishable Sound, emanating without Effort, irrespective of Conscious Will. That is the Pranava. As beads in the string, all letters and the sounds they represent are strung on the Pranava. That is the meaning of the statement that He is the "Pranava of the Vedas" as He is the Rasa on which water is based. Krishna's teaching is that you should merge your mind in the Pranava, which is the Universal Basis.

The mind has an innate tendency to merge in whatever it contacts; it craves for this. So, it is ever agitated and restless. But by constant practice and training, it can be directed towards the Pranava and taught to merge with it. It is also naturally drawn towards sound.

That is the reason why it is compared to a serpent. The serpent has two crude qualities; one, its crooked gait and two, its tendency to bite all that comes in its way. These two are also the characteristics of man. He too seeks to hold and possess all that he sets his eyes on. He too moves crookedly.

But there is in the serpent one praiseworthy trait; however poisonous and deadly its nature might be, when the strains of the charmer's music are played, it spreads its hood and merges itself in the sweetness of that sound, forgetting everything else. Similarly man too can, by practice, merge himself into the Bliss of Pranava. This Shabdopasana is a principal means of realising the Paramatma, who is "the Pranava of the Vedas." He is not other than Shabda. That is the reason why the Lord said that He is the "Pourusha of Man" Pourusha is the vitality, the Prana of Man. Without it, Man has no manliness. However strong may be the force of the accumulated drag of previous births, it has to yield to the strength of Adventure and Achievement emanating from Pourusha. Unaware of this potentiality in him foolish man is misled into cursing his fate; cursing the "inescapable" effects of what he dreads as 'Prarabdha!'

Every one has to exercise Pourusha: for without it life itself is impossible. Living is struggling, striving, achieving. God has created man so that he might wield the talent of 'Pourusha' and achieve victory. His purpose is not to make man a consumer of food, a burden upon the earth, an animal that is a slave to its senses. He does not aim at creating a horde of idlers and loungers, who shy at hard work, and accumulating fat, grow into monstrous shapes. He does not create man with the idea that he should, while alive, ignore his Creator and deny Atma and wander about like animals, allowing the gifts of intelligence and discrimination to go to waste, moving about without an iota of gratitude to the Giver of all the gifts which he consumes and enjoys!

Prakriti too punishes those who exploit it for self-aggrandizement, grabbing it with greed, saying, "This is mine, that too is mine, that belongs to those who belong to me." She punishes heavily those who break her code; that is the reason why Krishna describes to Arjuna the way of Upasana or Worship in great detail for, Upasana is using Prakriti to reach the Lord who transcends it.

"Arjuna! Many people anxious to offer uninterrupted worship to Me go into the thick forest. That is an insane step. There is no need to seek the jungle as if I am only there. There is no place where I am not; there is no Form which is not Mine. I am the Five Elements: Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Ether! Where can you find a place devoid of one or other of these Five? To experience My Presence and My Glory, there is no special place, for I am everything, everywhere, ever. The fiery nature of Fire is I Myself. I am Life in all living beings. I am the strength of the strong, the strength that is free from greed and lust. Mine is the nature of all beings which prompts them to desire along Dharmic lines.

"Of course, when I say "strength," I mean the strength of the intellect, Buddhibalam. For the world knows many varieties of balams: Dhanabalam, born of wealth; Vidya-balam, born of scholarship; Jnanabalam, coming from the consciousness that one has a large following; Manobalam, arising from one's determination, Dehabalam, which is just muscular force, etc. All these are to be considered as Mine for I am the Parameswara. Only, all forms of strength have to be free from Kama and Raga, Desire and Attachment.

If Kama and Raga adhere, then it becomes bestial strength, not Divine; it is Pasu-balam, not Pasu-pati-balam.

"Kama means, the desire to possess a thing which is so strong that, even when there is no chance of securing it, the mind hankers for it. Raga is the feeling that a thing must be in one's possession, even though it is evident that it cannot be there long, for it is after all an evanescent thing. Ranjana is the root of the word, Raga. Ranjana indicates the quality of giving pleasure. Any form of strength that is polluted by either of these two cannot claim the dignity of Divinity.

"Some forms of balam attain height or depth, according to the status they are allotted by the owners. For example, riches. If riches reach a wicked man, they create vanity, pride, cruelty and contempt. If they are with a good man, they are directed along the paths of charity and good work. Physical strength is used by the wicked to injure others while the good use it to protect others from harm."

Another point has to be noted here. Krishna said that even Krodha (Anger) and Lobha (Greed) which are not opposed to Dharma are Forms of Expression of the Divine. Therefore, why repeat it a thousand times, all feelings, all forms, all things and beings are born out of the Para and the A-para nature of the self-same Divine Essence. But, so that the seeker can have higher feelings and emotions, he must accustom himself to see My Form in the higher feelings, higher forms and higher beings. Still you must not get away with the idea that only the higher is Divine and the lower is not. That is not correct; the objective world with all its Satwic, Rajasic, Tamasic things, reactions, impulses ... all originate in God. This conviction can grow in one and get firmly fixed only by reasoning it out and getting its truth affirmed.

The Lord Himself declared: "Arjuna! All this originated from Me, all this exists in Me, but I am not dependent on all this, remember, I am unattached to all this." Here, there are two points of view; the Jivi point of view and the Lord's point of view. The Jivi has the dual experience of good and bad, the Lord has no duality at all. When all is God, when God is the inner Atma in all, how can there be two, one good and another bad?

Now ordinary folk may get some doubts on this point. The Lord says that all things both good and bad originated from Him and that He is the Prime Cause, but at the same time, He declares that He is neither bound nor affected by the effects or defects of all that has thus originated! He says He has no relationship with them and that He is above and beyond all for which He is the Cause.

You might infer that man is not in the least responsible for the good and the evil that is done through him by the Divine, that his real nature is beyond both good and evil, that his acts, however evil, were basically prompted by the Lord himself, for man has nothing he can claim as his act. True; but faith in this attitude that "nothing is done by you," that "It is all the Lord's will that is being worked through you," must be steady, sincere, deep and unshaken. There should be no trace of ego. If that is one, then certainly such a one has attained the highest goal of life. He is blessed to the uttermost. That reality has to be known; that knowledge has to be stabilised. Indeed he, who has the conviction that all this is God, that he has no sort of relationship or kinship with the objective world, and that he is above and beyond it, is the Sathya-jivi, the individual whose sojourn here has been worthwhile.

Words are futile; you may repeat like a parrot what has been taught for long certain set phrases like, "Every thing is the Lord's," "I am but a puppet; He pulls the strings and I dance as He wills," "Nothing is mine; I am just carrying out His Will." But, what do you usually do? When a praiseworthy act is done, you claim it to be your own; when a blameworthy act is done, you ascribe it to the prompting of the Lord! You shout from platforms till your throats get dry that you won by your own effort, honour, fame, status and standards authority and position, property and possessions, attainments and achievement; but when it comes to confessing your share in earning ill fame and defeat, evil and wrong, you conveniently transfer the responsibility on the Lord, saying, "I am but an instrument in His Hands; He is the Master, I am but a Tool." This has become the habit of man today. Nay, it has developed into a fashion. People swing from "I," to "He" like the pendulum of the clock. This is sheer deceit, hollow spiritual sham.

Mind, word and act, all three must be filled with the consciousness that all is His Play; that is the genuine path. It is a human frailty to separate things as good and as evil; to impute this to God is sacrilege. It might appear sometimes that the Lord too has that weakness, but it is a passing phase, a cloud that hides His Glory, not a blemish that adheres to Him.

For, though Gunas emanate from the Lord, He is unaffected: smoke arises from fire, but fire is unaffected. Clouds form in the sky and move about in the sky; but the sky is unaffected by them. All are attached to Him, like beads; but He is free, unattached. The Universe is based on Him but he has no need for the Universe as base.

Take the example of cloth; cloth is based on yarn, it is dependent on yarn; but yarn does not depend on cloth, it is unaffected, unattached to cloth. The pot depends on clay, but clay is independent. Again, cloth is yarn, pot is clay. Both of them have not become separate entities. Well, clay is Brahman; the pot is Prakriti. Yarn is Brahman, cloth is Prakriti, the Universe of Namarupa, of Manifold Variety. Ignore the shape, the form and the name—the pot is just clay. Ignore the form of the cloth and the name; observe the basic thing that stays in and through the cloth, then you know it is but yarn. Without clay you can have no pot; without yarn, there can be no cloth. So too, without Brahman, there can be no Prakriti. So it is truer to say that all is Brahman and it gives greater joy, than to say, "Brahman-is-in-everything." It is grander to picture Brahman as Sarva-adhaara, the basis of all, rather than to conceive It as Sarvabhuta-antaratma, the Inner Reality of all beings. That is Truth.

(To be continued)

Gopi's Prayer

"Oh Lord! My heart is a dark Kalindi with deep evil; so, I am unable to see You therein, for You too are dark and blue like the sky reflected in it. And my eye which seeks Thee there is also dark. I do not pray that You shed Your lovely hue for Your blue is a sign of depth and mystery. But, pray make my heart clear and white so that I can see You shine therein." Thus prayed a gopi the; You too should pray likewise.

Baba

Padmam

O Maya... to Thee
Sakthi gives Form: Splendour reveals;
Sound helps to visualise.
Where are you? In Form; how? as Glory.
As what? as Sound!... all three are Padma!

Sound is Ashanti. Glory is Shanti,
Shakti... is Prasanthi. For, the first is Manas
The second, Buddhi and the third, Chittam.
They all conspire to concentrate
All attention and joy in thyself, thyself alone.
That is the work of Maya.

When they subside and merge
The One remains... the merged, the merging Sadasiva.
The Ananta Sathya Anandam.
Kalam merges in Ananta, Karma in Sathya
And, Yoga in Anandam... and, the Zero dot
The Infinite Drop... remains... the Bindu,
Primeval Cause, the Eye of the Universe, the Witness.

From the Bindu emerge 64 petals, waves of Chit
Of Sat, of Ananda! 'Tis all Cosmic Sound,
Sivam, Sivam!
Om, Om, Om Namah Sivaaya! the Six-limbed Figure
I am that... is the base; that is Mine, is the built.
Forms, Forms, everywhere; Names Names. Names...
Unending,
The Brahmaandakosam... the Brahmapaasam! over all,
The eightfold, eight-petal led Om Namonaranaya!

The Vedas Four, the Siddhis Eight, the Yogas Eight,
Where Jnana and Karma co-operate, the Ananda-yoga.

In the innermost is Your Anandarupam,
The Aham Brahmasmi Rupam,
The Om, the Padma, the Tharanga. the Linga,
You are You... that is the Sathyam,
The Sathya Sayi, the Anandadayi.

Your Lotus-heart is for Us
My heart is for Your Lotus Feet
To grasp this, award thy Grace.

Save me, save me, O Sathya Sayi.

Prasnottra Vahini

12

- Q. Swami, you said that this same question about the importance of Nitya-karma observed with the ten conditions was asked by Arjuna; what was the reply that Krishna gave?
- A. Krishna said: “The highest stage of liberation that is attained by Sankhyayogis, adepts at Jnanayoga, is also attained by those who are adepts at Nishkama-karma-yoga; both yield the self-same result. Know that this is the Truth. There is no difference in this between the Grihastha and the Sanyasi. What is needed is unremitting practice and sincere endeavour. This requires the renouncing of desire; the giving up of egoism and the sense of possession, even the discarding of active thinking; and single-pointed contemplation of the Brahmatattwa. For one who has achieved this, there is no grief, for there is no shade of ignorance. The wise man who has won this height can never be deluded by the false and the temporary. Even if at the last moment of his life one is able to realise this Jnana, he is certain to be liberated from the cycle of birth and death.
- Q. Then why were these castes, these Varnas, established?
- A. They relate to the physical aspect of man; they cannot affect the spiritual aspect at all. They indicate Physical make-up. Of course, ‘physical’ includes the intellect, the mind, the Chitta, the Antahkarana etc. Unless these are trained and regulated, the Atma dharma cannot be understood. Jati, matha, dharma are all to help in regulating and sublimating the instincts and impulses of man. That is the reason why wise men accepted and honoured these. The Atma is Sat, Chit and Ananda; those are its nature, if somehow it has to be indicated. This can be realised only by purifying the heart, mind and intellect of man. Persons, who have that purity, whatever their Varna or Ashram, can attain Moksha; that is what the Sastras declare. When a person is beset by attachment to some and hatred towards others even in the solitude of the jungle, he will meet only evil. Even if one is leading the Grihastha life in the midst of the family, if he has achieved victory over the senses, he is a real Tapasvi. Engaged in Karma that is not condemned, he is entitled to become a Jnani. For one who is un-attached, the home is a hermitage. Then, even by means of progeny, of activity, of riches and of Yajna, Yaga and similar rituals, Liberation can be achieved. What is wanted for Liberation is just freedom from the impurity of attachment. Attachment is the bondage.

- Q. Swami, you say that one has to do some things; that one should not do certain other things. How are we to know which is which? What is the authority?
- A. The Sastras are the authority. The Manusmriti itself declares, for example, that Varnas and Ashrams are only for physical purification and that they do not affect the gaining or losing of the Highest.
- Q. If that is so, why all this bother of Varna and Ashram, and the rules and regulations binding them?
- A. Ah, they are required until you become free from attachment or Raga. Until then and for the sake of that the regulations, limits and rules have to be obeyed to the very letter. The medicine has to be taken, so long as the illness persists. Each type of illness has a special medicine for cure, is it not? And a different course of diet and a special regimen. After one has got rid of the illness, one can partake of a feast with the rest. Without accepting this, if the well and the ill both demand the same feast, it will lead to calamitous consequences. The Varnas and the Ashrams are as medicine prescribed for those who suffer from this Bhavaroga, the ills of worldliness and worldly attachment. Raga (attachment) is the roga (illness) and roga can disappear only by regimen, strictly observed. Unless you get well you cannot be liberated. This is the true meaning of Vedanta; he who knows this, whatever his Ashram, attains Mukti.

To put the whole thing in a nutshell, I have no Gunas at all. Then how can I be affected by Vyamoha? Or, be agitated? For Me, only My Sankalpa is important. My Sambandha is all Atmic. I will not feel a person Mine, simply because I am worshipped. All are Mine; I see no one, who is not Mine. That is My Nature. I do not exult when I am praised or droop when I am reviled. I am only happy that the revilers are thus led to pay attention to Me.

BABA (in a letter written in 1958)

A Garland From Ceylon

"Not to Love is not to Live" Develop Serenity through Control of the Senses and Detachment "Sathya is the very Breath of Life"... this simple Message of Sathya Sai Baba reached the people in Ceylon recently, in a miraculous way.

Babaji works "in mysterious ways, His miracles to perform." As one devotee said, "He works patiently and concisely in each devotee, from beginning to end." Each soul on earth is an "idea" of God, blossoming slowly into the purpose contained in it even as the seed has the full-grown tree within it. Babaji knows the purpose of each soul and He unfolds the perfection within each devotee

I went to Ceylon for a few days, as I thought, to visit a friend who was ill; but, Babaji, it seemed, had other plans. There was some delay in obtaining a return visa to India and what was to have been a few days' visit turned out into two months of Divine activity.

It all started on a very crowded bus, where I met a friend, Secretary of the Theosophical Society, Ceylon. I was carrying one of Babaji's books and felt impelled to show it to him... but, I couldn't; I was pushed forward by the crowd. He called out, loudly, "Come and give a lecture!" I responded by giving him my telephone number.

This started a chain of events. I cabled Babaji the time and the date of the proposed lecture, requesting His blessings. The day of the first lecture, as I stood up to talk, I uttered Babaji's Name when a current of Shakti surged within me, with such intensity that my body swayed and shook. With this, I had the assurance and confidence that Babaji was with me and I unfolded before the audience the wonder of Baba's Life, His Miracles, and His Message for the world today.

From that first talk, started a series—before Yoga Societies, Meditation Groups, Hindus, Buddhists, and Christians. Lectures in different parts of the Island were arranged in an amazingly short time, within 24 hours, in halls crowded to overflowing- all coming to hear of the New Sai Baba and His Message of Truth.

The phone rang incessantly and there was not a moment free from groups of inquirers and seekers. The world is hungry for the living Truth which Babaji imparts, His simple Message that Man is the Living Emblem of God, that the Paramatma is within us, to be re-discovered through Bhakti and the Discipline of the Senses. I taught the audiences Babaji's joyous song "Govinda Krishna Jai..." and it was a pleasure to see their happy faces while singing the song which opens the heart to His Prema. I told them I had come with a begging bowl and asked each one to give me three gifts to take back to Babaji at Prasanthi Nilayam. The three gifts I asked for were:

1. Control of the Tongue... for, God gave it to us so that we might use it with sweetness and moderation.
2. Control of Emotions... for, they have to be sublimated into Godly Thoughts, not lowered into lust and greed.
3. Love for others, seeing Him in every other, as in all beings.

I told them of Babaji's comforting assurance that those who stay close to the Lord will be safe in the midst of turbulence and chaotic chance. Babaji has said that the world is a train, each compartment being a separate country. India is one compartment, Ceylon another, U.S.A. yet another... But, there is only one engine driver, God. Babaji also says that we have to tune ourselves to the radio station—G. O. D. When the mind is filled with mundane thoughts, we are cut off from the station; by quick adjustment of the mind towards Divine thoughts, we get tuned with the Infinite. If this tuning is practised continuously, moment by moment, by constant awareness, life becomes One great Joy. One is filled with Prema, Bliss and Shanti. Then, the purpose of having taken the body is

fulfilled. Then, all Babaji's promises... Full Beauty, Wisdom, and Happiness become manifest.

The people of Ceylon were so enthused with Baba's Message that at one meeting I asked if any one felt in his heart that he would like Babaji to come to Ceylon, he should come forward. The whole audience surged forward like an ocean to sign their names. A garland of these names was brought to Prasanthi Nilayam with an invitation to Babaji to visit the Island. Babaji has accepted the same and devotees will have the joy and comfort of seeing and hearing Him in person.

We are seeing in all this the beginning of the March of Truth throughout the world, the gathering of the warriors of Sathya ready to conquer the enemy of the Senses, and to walk triumphant with Sathya Sai Baba into the Glory of Truth. Om.

Hilda Charlton

Baba's Hyderabad Discourses

Baba delivered three discourses at Hyderabad at the three-day session of the Vidwanmahasabha. On the opening day, Baba called on the devotees to make God a reality in their lives. God, He said, was not a being who dwelt apart, far-away and was inaccessible. He resided in the heart of every being and to know this fundamental fact and to regulate our conduct according to this realisation was the greatest need of the hour. This truth that God is everywhere and all of us are just sparks of His radiant Light formed the central message of our Sanathana dharma and our ancient culture.

Today, Baba said, this tradition was weakening under the impact of alien influence and the predominantly materialistic values which rule men's lives at the present time. Unless this degeneration is arrested and God was restored in the hearts of men, the world would pass through tremendous calamities, a foretaste of which we are already experiencing in all countries today, where greed, intolerance, hatred and immorality prevail on a greater scale than at any other time in human history.

Illustrating the point from the Mahabharata, Baba said that because the Pandavas chose Lord Krishna, victory was vouchsafed to them, while the Kauravas chose the vast armies of the Lord and were destroyed. Men are oppressed today, He said, by the burden of materialistic knowledge which, however, does not lead us anywhere. Such knowledge belongs to Death and not to Immortality. It is barren and dangerous. All the inventions and discoveries of which we seem to be so proud have produced nothing but greater and greater inner ashanti, inequalities and misery. Men had become more greedy, more violent and on many occasions in recent history had acted worse than wild beasts. To destroy and not to create, to multiply possessions and not to strive for harmony and peace, to make this world a veritable hell rather than to build it up as an earthly paradise... these seem to be the main objectives of our present-day civilisation. Baba said

He did not ignore science, for that was also another quest for Truth. But He pointed out that science without God was like the body without the "atma." Material progress should not overtake spiritual awareness.

The Vedas, to whose revival the Vidwanmahasabha was dedicated, embody the highest vision attainable by man of the Supreme Truth which sustained the universe, the Absolute Reality of God. Unless this truth prevailed, there can be no salvation for mankind. But this Reality did not exist somewhere, separate from us. God was in all creatures. Once we realised this truth life would become a miracle, not a futility which it is today for most people. The measuring standard of all things in the world is within us... our inner spirit which can never go wrong. This inner "atma" cannot be deceived, cheated or come under any form of illusion. It is pure, unshaken and unperturbed. To bring it up to the surface from the depths of our being and to make it our constant guide is the only way to 'moksha'. Baba then referred to what He called "bhava-shuddhi" purity of mind and heart. This was essential for a good life. Mere recital of "slokas" or performance of rituals did not mean much, unless there was what He called "Aacharana." It is not enough if we repeat constantly that God is "sarva bhutantaratma" (God is in all beings); we should clearly understand and accept the fullest implications of the words. If they do that, there can be no place in our hearts for jealousy, greed, selfishness pride or hatred. The entire world becomes then our home and all men our own kith and kin. This is real religion, and the only way to attain God.

God does not need your material offerings. He wants the "naivedya" of your heart, pure and unsullied by durgunas. Baba added, that the heritage of Vedic learning... which is the real "aadhaara" of our religion... is fast disappearing in this country and it was one of the main aims of the Mahasabha to preserve this heritage by giving encouragement to the learned pandits who are repositories of scholarship.

In the subsequent two discourses, Baba reiterated the importance of "antashuddhi"... inner purity without which all spiritual striving becomes an empty ordeal. He constantly harped on the transience of worldly things and the perishable nature of the body. Knowledge which confined itself to material phenomena cannot take us very far. What we need is "para-vidya," the knowledge of the Eternal. We should not make the mistake that what we cannot see does not exist. Today we need research, not into the nature of the physical world, but into the nature of the world beyond our senses, the World of the Supreme Reality.

Men are often discouraged by difficulties and sorrows; but Baba said that these difficulties are a blessing, because they strengthen the spirit and make men worthy of God-realisation. Men are not mere dust, but "Children, of Immortality." They should face all sorrows with courage. There is a veil of "ajnana" covering our lives and preventing us from the vision of Eternal Truth and this veil should be removed. Effort is necessary. That is why "karma" is regarded as an important duty of man. But this karma should be done with "detachment" as otherwise it will leave behind an unending trail of consequences. Such karma is free from "dosha."

When things do not happen according to our desire, we begin to blame God. We say that God is punishing us. But remember that God who is full of prema does not punish. It is our own durgunas that punish us. Therefore it is necessary that we discard these durgunas. Bhakti will (lower into fragrance only if we possess sadguna. It is not necessary that we should worship all the manifestations of God. One particular form, whatever it is, is enough. But we should be wholeheartedly devoted to this "ishthadevata." God is as eager to serve the bhaktas as the latter are anxious to realise Him. So God who is the "aadhaara" must be known and realised. It may be that God cannot be seen. He is like the foundation of a building which is under the ground and cannot be seen; but this foundation gives to the building its strength and stability.

Baba referred to the dangers of our times as a result of the many destructive weapons which we have invented. But He assured the audience that there is a power greater than these weapons, and that is, spiritual strength.

This "atma-shakti" is life giving and not life-destroying. Because India had throughout stressed the validity of this "atma-shakti" our culture has survived even today. We need not be afraid of all the violence which is now prevalent in the world God's "anugraha" will save us. There is no power stronger than this. The trouble is that we have forgotten the power of God. We have lost ourselves in the sea of "vishya-vasana" the temptations of the body. Unless the heart is cleansed of all these attachments, it is not possible to realise God.

Real freedom from sorrow (dukkha-nivritti) is possible only to those who dedicate themselves to God. Not that God needs elaborate rituals and offerings and all that. Purity of heart and unshaken faith are enough. Paramatma-chintana is our dharma. We have to constantly ask ourselves who we are, from where do we come and what is our ultimate goal. This striving is the chief characteristic of "manavatwa," the supreme quest of man. To know who we are in essence and spirit, to grasp fully the unlimited possibilities that lie before us in the realm of the spirit, to see our goal clearly... these constitute the true "Purushartha". The body is perishable and too much attachment to it will take us away from our quest.

Baba also spoke of the true nature of "himsa" and "ahimsa." If war is a manifestation of violence, why was the Mahabharata war fought? Answering this, Baba said that when adharma prevails, it needs to be destroyed. Adharma is like a carbuncle on the body of a diabetic. The surgeon has to cut off the infected limb; otherwise the person will die. This is not "himsa". But if the limb of the man is cut off by a robber, it is violence. The end is important. To destroy things becomes an imperative necessity when adharma prevails on a large scale in the world. The Kauravas were the carbuncle and the Lord had to destroy them to save the world from unrighteousness. Establishment of dharma involves "himsa," but we should distinguish between violence intended to injure others, and punishment whose aim is to purify the world and destroy evil. This is what is called dharma-sthapana which is the chief function of avatars. That is why the Mahabharata war was necessary and when Krishna asked Arjuna to fight, He took care to tell Arjuna that his fighting should be without any "moha." When the Kauravas performed a yajna, it ended, in a war

because their motives were not good; but when Arjuna fought the war with "detachment" the war became a yajna!

"In a world seething with ashanti, Baba said, paratattwa alone can give to men shanti and bliss. This pernicious "deha-tattwa" has caused disaster. Wealth and possessions cannot save a man. Attachment to "samsara" can only hinder us from the true path. Neither our riches nor our friends and relatives will save us. It is only our "punya" (good deeds) that will save us. We need today this outlook. We have had enough of the wonders and miracles of science. We need today, another miracle... the miracle of Inner Transformation. Like Alexander we have to realise that when we leave the world we take nothing with us. Lord Buddha underwent a tremendous inner transformation when he saw a dead body. This awareness of the perishable nature of the body made Buddha the Enlightened One. We have to realise that there is a world... a realm... far beyond this universe of "maya." To restore this vision to mankind is the supreme need of the hour. This should be the sacred mission of every one of us. We have realised today the colossal futility of our modern education which breeds only ahamkara and mamakara. We have ignored Truth and have become slaves to "illusion". Let us guard ourselves from this "visha" (poison) of an education which leads us only to death and accept that vision, which is certain to lead us to "Immortality" Baba said.

Make Religion Your Daily Guide

"The present ills of the country and the world and general deterioration in our moral standards today," said the Governor of Andhra Pradesh, H. E. Pattom Thanu Pillay "can be traced to the fact that men have lost faith in God and in the spiritual values which should guide and inspire our daily lives." Continuing, Sri Thanu Pillay laid that personalities like Sri Sathya Sai Baba were inexhaustible store-houses of spiritual power. There is an urgent need today to make religion our daily guide. The trouble was that many people regarded religion as something separate from life, something that can be worn like a coat on a particular occasion and then discarded. This separation between Truth and conduct has caused great mischief and filled the world with suspicion and hatred. This gulf should be bridged. It is a great mistake, said the Governor to think that science and religion are irreconcilable. On the contrary, it has been demonstrated today that things which were regarded as impossible some years ago are stark scientific facts. So also the miracles of today will become the truths of tomorrow. Spiritual values are not just imaginary, although they cannot be demonstrated and verified in our laboratories. But their validity and significance are for all time. Even morality and conduct, so necessary in our daily lives, will lose all their meaning if they are divorced from religion. Such morality becomes only an expedient and not an integral part of our lives. The heart must be responsive to the eternal truths of religion if we want our lives to be in tune with truth, beauty and goodness. For instance, all the hatreds and antagonisms which fill the world today will vanish the moment men act according to the truth that God is in all created things and there is, golden thread of unity that binds all beings together in the universe.

Referring to Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Pillay said that by his ennobling influence, He has brought together thousands of people in a common spiritual endeavour and by establishing the Vidwanmahasabha, He has done a unique service to our ancient culture and "dharma" by making this heritage available to the common man through talks, discussions and, more than all these things, through His own personal influence. His radiant personality has affected, the Governor was sure, the lives of thousands and brought them to a realization that life without God is a waste and futility.

This restoration of Dharma or religion in its highest sense was the chief function of an avatar. Religion should not become the occupation or monopoly of an elite, but become the property of everyone. Unless religion leaves its exclusive citadel and its truths become available to the common man, no moral regeneration of the nation or the world is possible. It was in this field that Sri Sathya Sai Baba's influence will make itself felt most. Particularly gratifying to him, said Sri Pillay, was the attempt made by the Mahasabha to encourage learned Pandits but for whose dedication to scholarship Our ancient heritage would have become practically extinct, and he hoped that as a result of the work of the Vidwanmahasabha then knowledge of the Vedas and other scriptures of our religion would spread among the people, and bring about a real spiritual revival in this country.

Living Inspiration

Sri. K. Brahmananda Reddy, Chief Minister Andhra Pradesh in his Presidential speech at the Inauguration of the Sessions of the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha said, a moral and spiritual renaissance was absolutely necessary in the world today. Man, he said, was a mixture of the good and the bad. The good in man must be strengthened and the evil must be destroyed. In this task, a revolutionary change must take place in men's hearts. The "brute" in man must be controlled and suppressed and this can be done only through the understanding of the great truths embodied in religion. Indian culture today needed a vital re-interpretation, especially at a time when spiritual values are on the wane throughout the world. India's heritage in the moral and spiritual fields goes back to thousands of years. But it is no use repeating this fact incessantly without trying to make this heritage a living inspiration in our daily lives. Throughout history, our nation has stressed the truth that beyond the material world, there is a higher power which guides and sustains everything. But this guidance and reality must be understood and made full use of. Otherwise it becomes empty and useless and will foster only spiritual arrogance. This message of basic unity and faith in God needs to be re-emphasised today and he was glad that the Vidwanmahasabha under Sri Baba's guidance had undertaken this mission. Only persons of Baba's spiritual stature can stem the tide of rank materialism which rules men's lives in our times. Referring to the present position of Sanskrit scholars and pandits, Mr. Reddy said that the government was also trying to do something to raise their status and improve their material condition. He appreciated this particular aim of the Vidwanmahasabha, because unless these learned pandits were encouraged, there was a danger that our spiritual tradition would disappear in course of time.

Worship Sai with good deed, good conduct good words; Sai is moved by these, rather than by fasts vigils vows archana abhisheka or processions. Sai likes most, simple sincere Love, for He is Premaswarupa.

BABA

Amrita Ekadasi

Vaikuntha Ekadasi (otherwise called Mukkoti Ekadasi, after the 33 crores of Gods who were restored to their n rural splendour on that day) is so railed because that is the day on which the Doors of Heaven are opened to all who seek to enter. Not that the doors open only on one day in the year; but, the story of the Amrita that was got and distributed that day, makes it a unique day when the doors were opened for the gods again!

India, who insulted the gift of flowers that was brought from the Lord by Durvasa, was punished for his pride (and the pride of the Gods which he personified); he and the Gods lost their splendour and were the victims of Asuras. They represented their plight to Vishnu and He offered to restore them to power through the Churning of the Ocean of Milk (the Mind) with the mountain of Mandara (Buddhi) with the Vasuki (Tapas) as the rope. The Lord Himself became a tortoise to bear up the Mandara peak while the churning process was on. Danavas and the Gods co-operated in the act and both good and bad emerged from the Ocean. The Lord had told the Gods not to dread the bad, not covet lesser things than Amrita, nor to feel envious if the Asuras get those things. They obeyed and at last, when the Poornakalsa of Amrita emerged, the Lord doled it, as Mohini, only to the Gods and not to the enemies of Godliness.

They fasted for a day, and sat on Kusa seats facing east, wearing new clothes after ceremonial bath japa, worship, homa and gifts to the cow and to those well versed in Sastras. When they drank tire Amrita which came from Narayana's own Hand, the Gods were invigorated and they won a great victory over the forces of death and destruction.

No wonder, Baba the Avatar of Narayana has made this day an "Amrita Ekadasi" for the thousands who gather to have His Darshan. On the 13th Jan, Baba materialised a Narayana Image from the sands of the Chitravati and blessed thousands with the Amrita He created, that will strengthen their Shraddha and confer Bhakti and Jnana, so that they can defeat the forces of Death.

Upanayanam

On 25-2-65, Magha Bahula Dashami Thursday between 7-40 A M. and 9-34 A M. (Moola) Mesha Lagna, Upanayanam of Brahmin boys will be celebrated free at the

Prasanthi Nilayam by Baba Himself. Parents who seek to share in this great opportunity are requested to write to the Editor, Sanathana Sarathi to reach not later than 15-2-65

Prasanthi Nilayam News

- 14 Dec: Poornahuthi of the Maharudrayagam at Venkatagiri in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.
Inauguration by Baba of the Primary Health Centre at Empedu, Kalahasti Panchayath Block. President: Hon'ble Sri Balarama Reddy, Minister for Agriculture
- 16th Dec: Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha at Nayudupet: Discourse by Baba.
- 17th Dec: Visit to Vyasasram, Erpedu by Baba.
Visit to Sri Sai Bhaktha Samajam, Kalahasti
Visit to the Training Centre of Gramasevaks, Kalahasti: Discourse by
Baba,
- 18-24 Dec: Baba at Madras
- 24th Dec
to 3 Jan: Baba at Brindavanam, Whitefield.
- 3 Jan: Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha, Madras. Discourse by Sri Vatsa Somadeva Sarma
- 4th Jan: Baba arrived at Prasanthi Nilayam accompanied by Mr. And Mrs. Jr. Raymer of Pacific Palisades, California, U S and Gabriela Steyer of Burgdorf, Switzerland.
- 13 Jan. Vaikuntha Ekadasi: Baba's Discourse; Amrithodbhavam
- 14 Jan: Uttarayana Punyakala: Speeches by Hilda Charlton and Dr. Pinakapani, M. D. Baba's Discourse.

This Universe itself is a superstructure, the basis being Paramatma, Godhead; this is apparent, the other is the Real. People ignore the basis and crave for the 'based.' They do not stop to inquire how the 'based' can exist without a base! This too is an example of faulty vision. When this Drishti-dosha is set right, Srishti-karta can be seen. When the defect in the vision is removed, the author of this Universe can be cognised.

This subject was raised by Arjuna before Krishna. He asked, "What exactly is faulty vision? Please tell me in detail, O Krishna." He also sought to know how the fault originates and develops. How Arjuna is not just an ordinary individual. He is not one to nod his head whatever is told him. He is bold enough to stop Krishna in the middle of a sentence if he feels a doubt rising in his mind. He had the courage and the steadfastness needed. He persisted until he got from Krishna an answer that was verifiable by experience, that was in accordance with the wisdom enshrined in the Sastras. So the Lord too provided the answers immediately, with a smile!

For this question, too, on faulty vision, Krishna had the answer. He said, "Listen, Arjuna! Between Me and this Universe there moves the Maya, called Delusion. It is indeed a hard task for man to see beyond Maya, for Maya too is Mine. It is of the same substance; you cannot deem it separate from Me. It is my creation and under My control. It will turn in a trice, even the mightiest among men, head over heels! Even you might wonder why it is so difficult to overcome. Of course, it is by no means easy job. Only those who are wholeheartedly attached to Me can conquer this, My Maya. Arjuna, do not take Maya to mean some ugly thing that has descended from somewhere else; it is an attribute of the mind that makes you ignore the True and the Eternal Paramatma and value instead the attributeful created manifold multiplicity of Name and Form. It causes the mistake of believing the Body as the Self, instead of the Embodied (the Deha instead of the Dehi). Maya is not something that was and will disappear; nor is it something that was not, but later came in and is. It never was, or is, or will be. Maya is a name for a non-existent phenomenon. But, this non-existent thing comes within view! It is like the mirage in the desert, a sheet of water that never was or is. He who knows the truth does not see it; only those ignorant with the ways of the desert are drawn by it. They run towards it and suffer grief, exhaustion and despair. Like darkness arising in the room hiding the room itself, like moss growing on the water hiding the water itself, like cataract growing in the eye hiding the vision itself, Maya too attaches itself to whoever helps it to grow. It overpowers the three Gunas and the three gods. That is to say, all who identify themselves with the limited, the named, the formed, the individualised, are affected by it. Jiva-bhranti (identification with Jiva) brings it about; Tattwa-bhranti (identification with the Tat-twa, That this entity) removes it. It hides the tattwa; it does not hold sway over those who have once known the tattwa.

"Arjuna, you might ask Me whether this Maya which pervades and injures the very place where it originates has not tarnished Me, in whom it has taken birth. It is natural that such a doubt should arise. But that is a baseless doubt. Maya is the cause of all this Jagat but it is not the cause of God. I am the authority that wields Maya. This Jagat which is the product of Maya moves and behaves according to My will. So whoever is attached to Me

and acts according to My Will cannot be harmed by Maya. Maya acknowledges their authority also. To overcome Maya, the only method is to acquire the Jnana of the Universal, and to re-discover your own Universal nature. For, you attribute the limit of life on that which is eternal and it is this which causes Maya. Hunger and thirst are the characteristics of life. Joy and grief, impulse and imagination, birth and death are all characteristics of the body. They are all an-Atma, un-Atmic. They are not the characteristics of the Universal, the Atma.

"To believe that the Universal which is you is limited and subject to all these un-Atmic characteristics, that is Maya. But remember, Maya dare not even approach anyone who has taken refuge in Me. For those who fix their attention on Maya, it operates as a vast oceanic obstacle. But for those who fix their attention on God. Maya will present itself as Madhava! The hurdle of Maya can be crossed either by developing the attitude of oneness with the Infinite God or the attitude of complete surrender to the Lord. The first is called Jnanayoga, the second is named Bhaktiyoga.

"All men do not get the inner prompting to conquer Maya, by surrendering their all to the Lord. It depends on the merit or demerit, accumulated during many births. Those who have only demerit as their earnings will be pursuing the fleeting pleasure of the senses. Like the birds and the beasts, they revel in food and frolic; they take these as the purpose of life; they do not entertain any thoughts of God; they dislike the company of the virtuous and the good; they stray away from good acts; thus they become outlaws from the realm of God.

"On the other hand, those who have earned merit, strive to grow in virtue, in uplifting thoughts, in the contemplation of the Divine Presence and they yearn for the fixed love in the Lord. Seekers such as these may be drawn to the Lord through suffering or want or the thirst for knowledge or keenness to acquire wisdom. But the fact that they turn towards the Lord for relief shows that they have grown into the higher path through many births."

The Gita does not approve Sa-kama karmas, acts done with intention to benefit therefrom or with the result as the prime motive. It is only Nishkama karma, acts done without being concerned with the benefit that may accrue, that will free you from delusion. Now a doubt may arise about the Aartha-bhakta, the one who turns to the Lord to relieve his suffering. The question may be raised whether such a person can be called a Bhakta. There is no single person on earth who is free from some want or other. Each depends on some one or other to fulfill his wants, is it not? Now, to have such wants, wants relating to objects, is itself wrong; and to lean on a man like oneself to fulfill them is an even greater wrong. The Aartha-bhakta turns, not to man, but to the Lord whom he trusts and reveres; He implores Him only to fulfill them. Though it is wrong to cultivate wants, he avoids the greater wrong of putting trust on inferior instruments. So he is superior, is it not? The superiority of his attitude can be seen when you know that it is not what you want that is important, but whom you ask for its fulfillment. The goal is the Lord; He is the Giver. His Grace alone can confer boons when this faith is fixed, you can be certain that the Aartha bhakta is really worthy.

The first three of the types of Bhaktas mentioned in the Gita—the Aartha, the Artha-arthi, and the Jijnasu—all adore the Lord in an implicit form, as Paroksha. They seek the Lord

as a means for the realisation of their desires or goals. Of course, they will always be in prayerful and worshipful mood and remembering the Lord at all times.

The Jnani the fourth type mentioned in the Gita has Ekabhakti, while the others have Anekabhakti; the others are attached to the objects or the states they desire and for their sake are attached to the Lord also. They are devoted not merely to the Lord, but to the objective world also. The Jnani will not raise his eyes towards anything other than the Lord. Even if he does, he sees the Lord wherever his eyes are cast. That is the reason why the Lord has declared that the Jnani is the dearest to Him. Of course, all are the same for the Lord; but among those who have reached His Presence and are present there, Prema is explicit, pratyaksha, immediate, directly cognisable and experienceable. Therefore, it can be inferred that the Jnani is nearest to the Lord and so, the dearest.

Of course, it is the nature of fire to warm you up when you shiver from cold. But, how can it help you to keep warm, if you do not approach it, but keep away at a distance? Similarly, those who are earnest to remove the chillness of worldly ills have to seek the fire of Jnana, which is won by the Grace of God, and be in the immediacy of God.

The Sadhakas in the midst of their efforts sometimes imagine God to be less glorious than He really is! They feel that the Lord differentiates between sinners and saints, good and bad, jnanis and a-jnanis. These are unsound inferences. The Lord does not separate men thus. If He really did so, no sinner can survive His anger on earth for even a minute. All are living on the earth, since the Lord has no such distinction. This truth is known only to the Jnani. Others are unaware of this. They grieve and suffer under the false belief that the Lord is somewhere far far away from them.

The Jnani is free from Maya, he is unaffected by the Gunas: Rajas, Tamas or even Satwa. The Jijnasu, the seeker of knowledge, however, is different. He uses his time for unbroken contemplation of the Divine, in pious deeds and holy thoughts. And the other two, the Artharthi and the Aartha, they gather elevating experience and ruminate over the real and the unreal and transform themselves into Jijnasus, seekers of knowledge. And later, they become Jnanis and are saved. The goal is reached thus, stage by stage. You cannot attain the goal in one leap. This can be better understood by an example: Jnana is like the "through train." That is to say, the passenger need not detrain and enter another train to reach the destination. The Jijnasu has entered the "through carriage;" he too need not detrain and board another train, but the carriage will be detained and attached to other trains en-route; and he reaches at last the place he wants to reach. The Aartha boards the ordinary train and since the carriage he is in is neither "through" nor one in a through train, he has to alight at a number of places enroute and wait until another train comes by, so that he can reach the goal by stages. It is a long and arduous journey. But, in spite of these difficulties, it can be accomplished by the Aartha, if he persists. The goal is attained by all; only, the process and the pace are different. No wonder the Lord has declared more than once that all these four types of Bhaktas are "My Own." Why has He so declared? Because they all seek the same High Goal.

"Therefore, yearn always for the Vast, the Immeasurable, Do not limit your desires to the little. They are misers who crave for little things. Those who yearn for the Lord are generous, large-hearted," said Krishna.

The Bhakti or Devotion of the Jnani is what is termed Sahajabhakti, direct bhakti. The Bhakti of the others can be called Gouna-bhakti or derived bhakti, indirect bhakti. The Jnani cognises the Lord as his own Atma; bhakti is anu-rakti, attachment towards or affection for God. 'Poojyaeshvanuraago bhakti,' it is said; affection towards the reverend is bhakti; said Krishna. The Jnani becomes so as the result of the merit accumulated through many lives. It is not a stage attainable on the spur of the moment; nor is it available ready-made in shops for a price. It is not a market commodity. It is the culmination of the spiritual endeavour practised in many lives. It is desired that many good doctors must be produced for ministering to the people. But years of study and experience alone can supply them; if those un-equipped are appointed as doctors in the hospitals and if they start prescribing and operating, they are bound to kill where they should cure. So too, if a person has become a Jnani today, you can imagine the years and years of Sadhana that won for him that height. That inheritance of spiritual impulses from previous births also helps to promote his endeavour.

All kinds of people now name themselves as Jnanis. They do not know, perhaps, that a Jnani is marked out by certain characteristics. The mark that proves him genuine is, of course, his declaration based on his own experience, that 'Vaasudevassarvamidam,' "Vaasudeva is all this." The steady assimilation of that experience is the true sign of the Jnani. By Vaasudeva is meant here not the son of Vasudeva, but He who has made all beings His Home, His Nivasa. It is only a person who perceives the Lord in all beings that deserves to be called a Jnani. Instead, if others name themselves as Jnanis, they are so only in name. They have no genuine experience of Jnana. What exactly is that Jnana? It is the possession of that knowledge which enables you to have knowledge of all; and so enables you to dispense with the knowledge of all else.

This is the height which the Jnani reaches. On the other hand, no one can claim to be a Jnani who has simply learnt a few slokas by heart, or skipped through a few books, or ascended platforms with ten others and lectured for hours in the full pride of scholarship, reeling off ponderous sentences (like a magician and his ball of thread) pouring out what has earlier been swallowed, or collected a bunch of disciples. We have large numbers of such self-styled Jnanis going about now. Their dress is ochre, but their hearts are ogre. Well, how can stones shine as gems? All stones are not precious stones. Who will assess a stone as equal to a gem? Only fools will be misled. For they know neither the one nor the other.

Sri Krishna declared the King of Mantras, "Vaasu-devassarvam" in the Gita, just to counteract such pseudo-Jnanis, whose emergence He anticipated. That one Mantra is sufficient to save all mankind. That is His Indirect Gift ... consider it as such and concentrate your consciousness on it and its meaning. That is the highest good; that is the highest goal. Those six letters can alone make human lives worthwhile. Without the inner ever-present experience of those letters, there are many who have named themselves Mahatma, Jagadguru, Bhagavan, Paramahansa, Jnani, Tyagi, Ananda, etc; and who, alas, though counterfeit, receive currency among people as genuine. No one conferred these titles on them; they were selected and assumed by their present owners and worn as plumage to catch the people's eye for just a few days. They are not genuine and so the glamour too wears out soon enough. The exterior is Sanyasa, but the interior is Athyaas, (too full of desires). Outwardly the form is Yoga, but inwardly they suffer from Roga,

(Disease). Their names all speak of Ananda but they roam around in the alleys. Their words are honey; their acts are spoony, and often zany. A householder who is immersed in the daily duties of his stage of life is far better spiritually than these dressed-up specimens of Tyaga and Yoga.

The chief reason for the decline of the culture of India, of its ancient way of life and its moral rectitude is this: the evil perpetrated by such fakes. Faith in God has declined for the same reason. They advise Tyaga and aspire for Bhoga; they glorify morality and operate through envy and hatred. This behaviour cuts at the very root of Sanyasa; they inevitably drag them to doom. When words and deeds are not coordinated, there is no trace of Truth.

Well, householders do hold on to truth, more or less tenaciously. There are among them many who are devoid of hate, of pure unsullied hearts, and who tread the path of morality and virtue. But we find that the Tyagis and Yogis who parade as such are full of all possible types of hatred and all the manifestations of desire. They fall into the pit which these dig for trapping them. Egoism, envy, exhibitionism... these endanger and bring to end all the efforts of the Sadhaka. Therefore, seekers and devotees must be ever vigilant; they must keep away from all these undesirable traits and they should try to grow in the contemplation of the Glory of God; and in the practice of morality, eagerly striving to experience the real Bliss of Attainment. This Bliss has then to be shared with the world. That will inaugurate World Peace and World Prosperity.

Krishna was referring to such real Jnanis when He said that the World will shine in splendour through the Jnanis. A man without Jnana is as a home without light, He said.

(To be continued)

Brahmpopadesam

The Upadesam of the Gayatri mantra is what is called Brahmopadesam in practice. The Gayatri is a metre containing three feet of 8 syllables each but the name is almost always used to indicate the mantra to Savita, found in all three Vedas and in both the Sukla and the Krishna rescissions of the Yajurveda, “Om thath Savithur varenyam bhragoadevsysa dheemahi, dhiyoyona prachodayaath” meaning (we meditate on or) may we attain the great glory of the God Savita, that he may inspire (or who inspires) our thoughts and works.” The Gayatri is a prayer for spiritual enlightenment, for reaching a plane of thought superior to ordinary material life. The Divinity that is appealed to is not one who can supply our wants; but it is Savita, the power behind the Cosmos, through whose force the wind blows, the sun moves, and Agni Indra and Death discharge their function. This power is symbolised as Effulgence and it is prayed to, so that one’s intelligence may be awakened purified and sharpened.

“Krithopanayano dwijah:” when Upanayanam is done, he become re-born.”

Upanayanam is known as Gayatri Diksha, for as the Sathapatha Brahmana says, “He is born as a Brahmana with the Savitri;” a name given to the Gayatri, because it is a prayer addressed to Savita. This rite is a re-birth, it makes the person Dwija, “re-born.” It is a

general consecration, a kind of matriculation for the Vedic Study. So, the Gayatri makes the recipient intellectually fit for Brahmacharya, the walking on the path of Brahmama, the Sadhana that will lead him on the realization of all this as Brahman. The Chhandogya Upanishad says, “Gayatri thrayathe” (protects) all who ‘gaayathi’ (sings or repeats). The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, while describing the Gayatri Vidya says “He who knows the first foot of the Gayatri is successful in the three worlds. He who knows the second foot is successful in the knowledge of the Vedas. He who knows the third foot is successful in the word of living beings.” It also speaks of a mysterious fourth foot, through the contemplation of which man can go beyond the realm contemplation of which man can go beyond the realm of Light (contemplated in the three feet of the Gayatri). It takes one on beyond even Light, into the region where there is no Nama and no Rupam. The Gayatri vidya takes the seeker above the transitory world of fleeting images; it makes him aware of the Unity in all this Diversity. The Unity that is all this Diversity; it elevates all thought beyond the realm of Name and Form; it endows one with the Supreme Realisation of his oneness with the One without a Second. No, Wonder the Lord who has taken Human Form as Sathya Sai Baba has decided to confer this Gayatri-diksha or Upanayana Samskaram on all candidates who come to Him. As part of His Task of Dharmasamsthapanam. It is the duty of every one who receives the Gayatri in His Divine Presence to use that ancient instrument for purifying and elevating oneself and for reaching, through His Grace, the Goal of Human Life, viz., Atma-Sakshatkara. “Upanayanam” means “leading near”. Baba leads the fortunate to Himself, through a course of spiritual and moral discipline into which they are initiated, along with the samskara of Gayatri disksha.

You need not escape into a forest to gain silence and the chance of uninterrupted Sadhana. You can make the Place where you are, a citadel of silence; shut off the senses, let them not run after objects; your home becomes an Asrama; your Sadhana will then move on, without any obstacle.

Prasanottara Vahini

Chapter XII

The Sastras and Sanyasa

- Q. Swami! Have any great souls achieved Moksha or Liberation while in the Grihasta Ashram, the Householder Stage?
- A. Janaka, Aswapathi, Dileepa—these are examples of persons who gained Moksha as Grihastas.
- Q. Swami! Is it not necessary to follow strictly the injunction of the Shruti, which enjoins on man the duty of completing the Brahmacharya stage and then, after passing through the next stage of the Grihasta, to enter Vanaprastha and observe all the limitations and regulations of that stage, before ultimately taking on

Sanyasa, the life of full renunciation? Or can one take Sanyasa even without going through the other steps?

A. Yes, whenever one gets detachment from objects, one can take Sanyasa. Unless such a chance is seized, man is bound to fall. Whatever may be the stage or Ashram you are in, when you get full renunciation, you can enter upon the Sanyasa stage from that very moment. There is no iron rule that you must live through the three earlier Ashrams or stages. This too is the injunction of the Shruti. The reason is: such a pure soul has undergone the training available in the other stages—the purification—in the crucible of life in previous births. His destructive tendencies have been rooted out and the progressive ones, the uplifting ones, have been developed in past births themselves.

Q. How are we to know that such transformation has already been earned in the past births? Are there any signs by which we can discover that such and such an Ashram or stage can be skipped? If there are, please tell me.

A. The fact that a person has no inclination for the three Ashrams, that he has no attachment or attraction towards them is a clear sign. If detachment has developed in the past birth, the inclination will be absent. Since awareness that the Atman alone is real has dawned, the person is unattached to the three earlier stages of life. When renunciation has appeared, one can give up worldly life, even though the series have to be over-stepped. This is approved by Shruti. But the person who confers Sanyasa must examine fully and convince himself that the person on whom he is conferring it is devoid of sensual impulses and attachments. Sanyasa should be given only to one who has no agitation in the mind, or Vrittis as they are called; only such can be said to be unattached. The candidate too should examine himself and see whether his inner consciousness is free from the Gunas, dull, active or even progressive. If it is not so free, he will not only break the vows of Sanyasa and be outcast, but he may even break down under the burden and meet a calamitous end.

Q. Is Sanyasa of one kind or are there different kinds?

A. There are three types of Sanyasa. They are Dehasanyasa, Manosanyasa and Atmasanyasa.

Q. What does Dehasanyasa mean?

A. Sanyasa in appearance, so far as the outer body is concerned. He wears the ochre robe, assumes the name, appears in the form, but, he has no awareness of the Atma; he wanders amidst all the objective desires clinging to external things. He is like ordinary men, for all intents and purposes.

Q. And Manosanyasa?

A. In Manosanyasa, he gives up all decisions and desires; he has the mind under strict control; he is not guided by impulses or agitations; he is ever calm and collected.

Q. You mentioned Atmasanyasa as the third.

A. Here, he breaks through all thoughts about things that are unrelated to the Atma, for he is ever immersed in the contemplation of the true reality, “Aham Brahmaasmi”. He is steady in the consciousness of his being Atma. His Ananda is continuous, Akhanda. This is called Amritasanyasa. The thickest darkness can be destroyed only by the light that emanates from the splendid solar orb; similarly,

without the splendour of Atmasanyasa, ignorance cannot be dispersed—the encasements that hide the heart cannot be shattered and the Atma cannot shine in its own glory.

- Q. How are, these types attained? What are the signs that they have been attained?
- A. Dehasanyasa is attained by discrimination between the eternal and the temporary, the evanescent and the everlasting. Manosanyasa is reached by conquering the waywardness of speech, of the senses and of the mind. Atmasanyasa is won by filling oneself with the principles of Vedantic thought. When these educative influences become strong and you are well established in these virtue's and attitudes, then you can get liberated as a result of the combined effect of these stages.
- Q. Who among these are really fortunate, their lives being spent in a worthwhile way?
- A. Well, he who like the bee sucks in silence and in great bliss the honey in the flower, who is intent on uninterruptedly tasting the nectar of Atmic bliss; who ignores this world as but a 'scene', a drishya; he indeed is the most fortunate; his life is the most worth while.
- Q. Then, Swami, what is it that is spoken of by the elders as attaining Sathya, Nitya, Nirmala and Shanti? How are these—Truth, Indestructibility, Purity and Equanimity—to be attained?
- A. As I said already, he who does not attach himself to the "scene" but who is engrossed in his own Atmic bliss; it is he who attains Sathya, Nitya, Nirmala and Shanti. Or even if he attains one of them it is enough; for one includes all.

From Baba's Discourses

When the story of the Churning of the Ocean of Milk is related, reference is made to the Gods and Asuras, the Mandaraparvata which was used as the churning rod, the snake Vasuki which served as the churning rope, the Tortoise-incarnation of the Lord which was the base on which the Mandaraparvata was placed, the poison called Halahala that emerged, and the Nectar of Immortality called Amritha that was the final fruit of all this endeavour. Well. These are not something outside man, external to him, found in books and tales. It is a fine allegory, this episode mentioned in the Bhagavata. The heart filled with pure impulses arising from Satwic nature is the Ocean of Milk; beneficent and maleficent tendencies struggling for mastery are the Gods and Asuras, who together churned and fought for the emerging treasures; fixed faith is the Mandaraparvata that acted as the churning rod, based on Divine Grace indicated by the Tortoise-manifestation of the Lord; the serpent Vasuki is also the symbol of Grace; Dhyana, Japa, Vows and Austerities are all indicated by the process of churning; poison too emerges in the process, but it has to be offered to the Lord and sublimated; at last, one attains release from the bondage of birth and death, the consummation of all the struggle with one's own lower nature.

He who craves for visualising God must first break through all the sheaths that hide God, who is all this. The sheath is composed of Name and Form. Go behind the name and form: the nameless and the formless One appears as many, including yourself. All are waves of the same sea. Prahlada said that God will reveal Himself in the Pillar, provided the limitation of the Name Pillar and the Form Pillar are transcended. The act of cleaving the pillar is symbolic; it represents the breaking of the Upadhi, the sheath. Like butter in milk, he is in the pillar as in everything else, pervading it, filling it. Being all of it, to the exclusion of everything else.

The Vedas and the Sastras are repositories of truths that were revealed to Sages who experienced them in their lives. These sages are treated lightly and laughed at by people who comment on them as escapists and cowards who fled from the battle of life into the placid regions of the forest, as ignorant of practical life and its problems. Well; they did not go into the forest on account of fear or unable to bear the burdens of the householder life. They went in order to seek the remedy or human agony, and to discover it, they had to retire into quiet resorts. You do not condemn a young man who has joined a University to prosecute his studies, as a coward who has fled from home, and as running away from society, do you? On the other hand, you give him full support and encouragement so that he might win the fruit of his study, is it not? You believe that society and his kith and kin will benefit from pursuing studies in the calm atmosphere of the University laboratory and library. So too, the Rishis in the tapovanas seek and earn the knowledge that will save society and themselves from the consequences of ignorance and confusion. They will bring that knowledge into society and help mankind. The tapovanas are the most beneficial of all the universities.

Today is the day when the sacred Amrita is given. A-mrita means: 'without death', "that which confers immortality." Of course, the drinking of Amrita here today will not make you free from death. No. That which is not born can alone aspire for death-lessness. All things born must die. So, to be free from death, you should ensure that you are not born again. What have you to do for that? You should have no balance of Karma left when you die. Release yourself from the bondage of Karma in this Life itself; burn out all accumulated Karma in the flames of Jnana the Jnana that you are actually of immortal essence, eternal, unshakeable. That Jnana is the real A-mrita. But, if you must be firmly fixed in that Jnana. You must first defeat the six foes who try to foil you, Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada, and Matsarya. Doing Japam and Dhyanam with all the foes unsubdued is like preparing Sambar with tamarind and a lot of fine vegetable in a copper vessel that is not tinned. Sathya Dharma Shanti and Prema are the material, which tins the mind. You have a man's form. You must then have the real characteristics of man, too. That is to say, Sathchidanandam. Sat (the conviction that you are Sathyam, unchanging ever existent) Chit (the conviction that you can know everything) and Ananda (the conviction that you can have undisturbed joy) these are the basic equipments of every one. Only, one has to know of their existence and learn how to use them.

A traveller going through a thick jungle was overtaken by night and in the thick darkness that enclosed him, he fell into a well. But, luckily, even as he fell, he caught hold of the

root of a tree that was hanging loose a few feet above the water. He Clung on to it until daybreak, when some passer-by who sat near the well and began singing hymns was drawn to peep in and discover his plight. He then brought a rope and let it down for him to catch, so that he may be pulled up into safety. Now, the poor fellow had a problem: was he to hold on to the root or transfer his grip to the rope? So too, good deeds, Sadhana, Karma and Bhakti all have to be relied on until God is visualised until your Divinity is realised. Then the rope will pull you up into peace; the root can be given up.

They say, “Buddh Karmaanusaarinee”, “one’s outlook depends on the acts one does”. This is true. The activity you are engaged in, moulds your character, your attitude, your outlook, the bent of your mind. Buddha’s mind was transformed by the acts of a moment when he saw illness, age, death and renunciation, that day when after years of enforced hilarity and happiness, he went out into the city, One single event can revolutionise a character. A huge plate of sweets can be spoiled beyond hope of redemption by a drop of kerosene. Kamsa was himself driving the chariot in which his newly married sister and her husband were returning home. He was exalted and happy. But, suddenly, a voice spoke from the sky. This woman will bring forth as her eighth child the one destined to kill you. And, kamsa became a terrible ogre, a Rakshasa. So, one ought to be vigilant about the activity one involves himself into. Any deviation from rightful activity is to be avoided, because in that case Divine Grace cannot be won. If you do not get that grace you can take it that your activity is not correct. If the butter has not melted, it only means that the fire is not hot enough.

The mind should not get involved with the senses; it must seek the companionship of the intellect, the Buddhi. Keep the lamp burning in a room, but, if you have all the five windows open, the wind will soon blow it out. Your higher instincts and impulses will smothered by the sensual. The senses are like frogs that about the lotus, not aware of the sweet honey in it. They skip after lesser feed. So the mind too runs after lesser feed, which is hollow and worthless. It is like a camera which takes pictures of whatever is present before the lens. Click it before sensual objects; it gets pictures of these. Keep it before God, it gets the picture of God. Keep the mind facing the Intellect, it begins to discriminate, achieve detachment and seek the joy of self-realisation. Sita managed to survive amidst the evil tormentors in Lanka. How? By dwelling always in the thought of Rama. If you too live in the uninterrupted contemplation of Atmarama, you too can survive unscathed the onslaughts of the Samsara. Keep on, with a pure heart, the steady contemplation of the sacred truths of Soham and Sivoham...and Ravana and his brood can never do harm.

It seems one Sadhaka asked Ramanamaharshi once: Swami! I have been engaged in steady Dhyana since 18 years, but, I have not yet realised the Self; tell me, how long am I to continue?” Maharishi replied “My dear man, you have to continue Dhyana, until you are not aware that you are in Dhyana; that is the test.” Yes; one must forget that he is one. He must merge, he must be transformed by the awareness that he is the One on whom he meditates while dwelling on the Dehi, the Deha must be forgotten, transcended. You are not different from the Divine substance. Believe yourself separate, you are liable to decay, decline, and disease. Know that you are the same; then, you are eternal, blissful

and calm. Take a bottle of seawater and keep it apart; it becomes foul, in a few days. Let it be part of the sea; it is fresh, unsoiled. Be in the Atma-tattwa, you are fresh, unsoiled; keep apart, feel apart—you get foul, lose your glory and your greatness.

Ekam eva adwaitam: one only without a second. If it is said that it is without a second, it may be three; so, it is emphatically laid down that is One only. It is all pervading, it operates in and through all. The question may arise, why then is it not perceived in all? Well, take a rosary, of pearls, corals, tulasi beads, and sphatika beads; the string runs through each one of them, but, you can see it only in the sphatika beads. The rest are opaque and so, the Sutra or string cannot be seen. Therefore, your heart must become transparent, rid of things that keep out the light; then, Brahman will become evident, for it is the sutra which binds all beings together.

The water drops that fall from the sky are clear and pure; when they gather in a dirty pond, they get polluted. Evil deeds, wicked conduct, vices—these are the pollutions. Has the water in the pond no hope of redemption? Of course, there is hope. When the sun shines, his rays will convert it into vapour and raise it aloft into the sky and restore it once again to the original purity. The sun's rays, in the case of man, represent the Grace of God. Win that Grace through repentance that is sincere. Then, you will be awarded Holy company and through that, detachment and ultimately Realisation.

Now, you have no Trishna, or Thirst for either Sai or Rama or Krishna. If you have, you can have no rest, until it is quenched; you will be in dreadful agony. But, you are not feeling the pangs. Why? You are afflicted with loss of appetite, indigestion. This is caused not by overeating, but by eating the wrong things. You do not consume the health giving foods of Divine thoughts, love for all, sweetness of expression deeds of service etc. you consume Rajas and Tamas—producing foods, and cater to the whims of the senses. But, Rama and Kama cannot co-exist. So, keep your impulses under control, establish mastery over the senses and develop hunger for God.

Until the soul merges with the oversoul, that is until the illusion that you are an individual, (a limited being, subject to change and the buffetings of joy and grief progress and decline, youth and old age) disappears and you become aware of your native glory, until Atma-sakshatkara in fact, you must ascend step by step the ladder of Sadhana to break through the various veils of sheaths formed by ignorance. You put up scaffolding in order to build a wall; to stand upon and put brick on brick; when the wall is completed, the scaffolding is not cared for; it is pulled down and carted away. Temples idols puja vows fasts offerings study recitation meditation—all form the scaffolding to facilitate the construction of the Mansion of Moksha.

Forms of the Formless

The Linga is the most universal symbol of the Form of God as the Pranava is of the Name of the God. The Linga is variously described as a Flame or a sacrificial post, but, its meaning is simply, “A sign”: a sign which signifies the Supreme Godhead, into which all things merge and to which all things proceed. It is also interpreted as the sign of Full and Pure Jnana. It symbolises the philosophy and discipline needed for attaining that Jnana. Baba has given us in the design on the Prasanthi Flag the representation of the philosophy and discipline which He wishes to emphasise, the transcending by the Sadhaka of the dreary waste of Kama the conquest of the twin temptations of envy and hatred, the acquisition of the cool region of Prema and the steady Yogic contemplation which opens the lotus of the Heart and lights therein the Flame of Jnana. The Linga which He manifests on Mahasivaratri Day, a Day which he wants us to use for intensifying Sadhana, is also another exhortation for the same task.

The Satwa Rajas Tamoguna must be sublimated to the point of disappearance, becoming less and less, like an equilateral triangle rising to its topmost point. As soon as they disappear, or even before it, the divine attributes of Sat-Chit-Ananda will begin to manifest themselves more and more, and grow into full consciousness, like an inverted equilateral triangle, with the base on top. These two, the ascent and the descent make up the base of the Linga. Over this base is represented the Quality less Formless Absolute describable only by a Circle, a Poornam.

The Formless Absolute assumes many Forms, however, while reflected in the Will which is its first Act of awareness, otherwise called Maya. There are eight such Forms, also called Lingams. The Prithwilinga symbolises the earth and its material contents, and the physical components of the body of man, the animals, and all living things. The Appulingam comprises the hydrosphere and the fluid components of all things. The Jyotirlinga connotes the warmth in the heart of the ocean, the tree, the stone, and all living things, the light that shines in the eyes of all, in the words of sages, in the distant stars and firmament. The air that sustains life, that covers the earth and reduces heat and cold, is identified as Vayulinga. The sky that fills pots, huts, houses and heavens that envelops the three worlds, that forms the resting place for all planets and stars—that is pictured as the Akasalinga. Then, there is Manolinga which is all ideas put together, all ideas of thought speech and action. There is the Brahmalinga, the basic substance of the worlds and the Atmalinga, which is the same, considered as the eternal Witness of Time and Space. All these together are called Ashtalinga, or the eight lingas as reflected in the Primal will of the One.

There are also other forms of Linga, pictured by advanced mystics and aspirants, as Guides to reach the One. The conception of Ishthalinga Pranalinga and Bhavalinga is an example. Ishthalinga is a phenomenal linga, Pranalinga is a mystical Linga and Bhavalinga is the Philosophical Linga. The ishthalinga is individualised; the Pranalinga is the Universal; the Bhavalinga is what is referred to as “adyathishtatthadasaangulam”: that which is this, and beyond this, the Supra-universal. When the Ishthalinga is conceived as Activity it is Aacharalinga, and as Prompting it is Gurulinga. The Pranalinga too is both Sivalinga and Charalinga, just as the Bhavalinga is Prasadalinga and Mahalinga. The Bhavalinga is Bliss, without parallel, the highest beatification.

Thus, the Linga-tattwa is the final fruit of the Science of Cosmic Symbolism, encompassing all aspects of the Unit and Universe.

Dwelling in the Divine

It is indeed audacious to attempt to write on spiritual matters, along with Bhagavan Sathya Sai Baba. What can be written is at best the echo of the immortal message that I have at intervals culled from His Presence. We who are devoted to Him must ponder over the guidance that has been vouchsafed by Him and try to put it into practice in our daily lives. This is an essential task for every one of us. So, here are certain drops from the Nectar that He has conferred:

In this Iron Age, though there are many facilities to cultivate science and discrimination. People are without peace of mind and happiness. The reason is they are not living according to the sacred teaching of Sanathana Dharma; they have lost faith in those teaching. Holiness is the basis of a way of life which will make this exalted human birth worthwhile.

There are even today, just as there were in the past great sages who can inspire people. Pointing out the heights that man can attain and the vast potentiality that is embedded in the human body. Dwelling in the Divine is very foundation of a genuine human life. It is the fundamental right of a man. The statements, Soham (He-I), Tattwamasi (That-thou-Art), Aham Brahmasmi (I-Brahmam-am) which are unexcelled expressions of Truth do shine as Mantras in the Vedas. In the all too short period of his stay on earth, these Mantras can win for Man Divine Bliss. We must consider all acts done from dawn to dusk as worship offered to the Lord. Every single act must be saturated with devotion and love of God. Man should endeavour to cleanse the heart of all impurity through the discharge of his duties. It is possible to realise God by means of the purified heart, purified by pure activities. Mere scholarship is of no use. The teachings of the Vedas Upanishads and Sastras must be brought into the fields of action. Faith and steadfastness—without these, however intense or manifold the activity, knowledge of the Ultimate Truth cannot be won. The Name of Hari must be ever on the tongue; it should ever be in the ear. To earn the Grace of God, devotees have to be constantly engaged in the Sadhana and be ever vigilant.

It is no exaggeration to say that Prasanthi Nilayam is unfolding as Heaven on Earth. We Bhaktas must, by our Japa Tapas and Dhyana create here an atmosphere holier than that of the hermitages of the Krita Treta and Dwapara Yugas, extolled in our scriptures.

Through our good fortune, we have the supreme luck of being contemporaries of Bhagavan. He is for us the Visible God. The Sun who is the Manifestation of part of the

Glory of God is the Giver of this to all creatures, a Giver whom we can see and comprehend. So every day, we must remember these two with a sincere heart. We must frame a timetable that we can follow without much difficulty. As the sages have declared the night can be divided into four parts. During 6-9, restrained persons: 9-12 loose-livers, 12-3 thieves and 3-6, Yogis—these will be engaged in their diverse activities. For us who are Bhaktas, 3-6 is the holy period of the night. This period must be well utilised for one's uplift, according to the physical condition of each. One has to rise at least at 4-30 A.M. and after attending to essential physical needs, one must repeat the Name Sai Ram, until the splendor of the Sun illumines the eastern sky. Then, it is good to recite the Suryamantram.

The Name 'Sairam' can be repeated a hundred times each minute. O, the sweetness and the joy that can be derived from that Name are beyond my power of description. You will not be content, however long; you might be engaged in repeating it. It is possible to add to this to the Mahamantram. 'Hare Rama Hare Rama , Rama Rama Hare Hare, Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare'. There are 16 Names in this Manthram. In 3 minutes, we can repeat a thousand Names through this Mantra. In one hour 20000 Names can be uttered. Sri Namabari, a Bengali Bhakta, who lived at the same time as Sri Chaithanya Prabhu used, it is said, to recite the Name of the Lord 3 lakhs of times a day! If one does it with single-minded attention, it would take at least 15 hours to reach the total of 3 lakhs per day. But, this is not a task beyond our powers.

K. Kondala Rao

(Readers will remember the late Sri K Kondala Rao I.A.S. as an ardent devotee of Baba and as one who 'dwelt in the Divine.' This article was discovered recently among his writings. It reveals his deep conviction in and his steady Sadhana of Namasmara, which won for him the Grace of Baba.)

Linga-Tattwa

See the illustration on the cover page and ponder over its meaning. Inside, in the inner regions, it is all Atma and inquiry into its nature; outside, it is opening out into the regions of objective search. Outside there is an end to Ananda; it is enshrouded in darkness and doubt. It is the gloom of ignorance, the original sin. The darkness solidifies into six expressions, Kama Krodha Lobha Moha Mada and Matsarya. They make you limit yourself into an individual as against others a separate entity that loves and hates that is loved and hated etc. But, when all these emotions are sublimated and offered as worship to the Lord, they subserve the needs of Bhakti and become bright white spots in man's mental make-up. They are transformed into Sathya Prema, Dharma Nyaya Shanti and Ananda. They are the 'Shad-bindu; they constitute

The Prasanthi Nilayam atmosphere, wherever such men are, an in all such men's hearts. These lead man from Jiva-dhyasa to Atma-jijnasa. The paths that take the Sadhaka from one to other all converge on the inner consciousness. They purify the vision, they give him the Sudarshana. They free him from activity; they make him calm like a silent dynamo; they are aware of their unvanquishable power, their real Reality. They are in fact the Lingam, all Forms and all Names Underneath the umbrella of Time the Linga stays; above the eight-petalled lotus of Space it stands in the waveless sea of Milk, the sea of pure word thought and deed, it floats; untouched by the six gross qualities and their six sublime forms it rests; the One, the Independent, free from the need to have another apart from itself; the dimension-less Ananda. As Jiva it moves; as Atma it fills, pervades and is; jagam and jangam merging in Lingam is the genuine Anandam. Then, this that and that is this; all is Sai and Sai is all.

V. Bhaskar
Artist

Neither Yoga, nor Sankhya, nor Dharma, nor Japa nor austerity and renunciation nor works of public utility, nor gifts nor fasts can gain Me over as Satsang does capture Me. For, thanks to the fellow ship of saints, many possessed of Rajasic and Tamasic disposition have been saved and liberated. The gopis of Vraja and others ascended to My realm, although they had never studied the Sruthi texts and practised austerities; they attained my through Satsang alone.

(Krishna in Bhagavata—Book 11, dis. 12)

Prasanthi Nilayam News

13, 14, 15 Jan	Discourses of Baba at the Prasanthi Nilayam
20 Jan	Baba lays down a Daily Time Table for Nilayam Inmates.
21 Jan	Arrival at the Nilayam of Virginia Judkins, from Britain, for spiritual Sadhana.
29, 30 Jan	Discourses on Bhagavatham by Br. Narayana bhatla Krishnamurthy Sastry; Discourses by Baba.
7 Jan	Arrival at the Nilayam of Dr. James R Ombs of Salt Lake City, U.S.A.
9 Feb to 12 Feb	Baba at Brindavan, Whitefield.
13 Feb	Baba returned to Prasanthi Nilayam
14 Feb	Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha at Inamadugu Nellore District.

"Nahi Jnanena Sadrusam." There is nothing to equal Jnana or knowledge. And what is knowledge?" That which makes you cross this sea of change and flux, this samsara. Of course, Knowledge is of two kinds the first is objective knowledge (Vishayajnana) and the second, integral knowledge, or A-bhedajnana.

The first type is knowledge of the world; the second is the knowledge of the identity of Brahman and individual Atma, which is called A-bheda or undifferentiated or integral Jnana. This Jnana is not a function of the intellect or Buddhi; it is a feature of something beyond it, something which witnesses the activities of even the Buddhi. It destroys the beginningless delusion about this constant flux, mistaken to be a reality; it removes fear from the heart of man, it reveals to him the Brahman which he and all this, is. So it is called the Right Jnana or Samyak Jnana, the Sameepa Jnana or the Nearest Jnana.

There are two paths by which man can approach this A-bheda Jnana; the inner and the outer. The outer Sadhana is "Nishkama Karma", engaging in activity without attachment towards the result of those activities as purely dedicated offering to the Lord. The inner Sadhana is Dhyana and Samadhi. In Vedantic terminology, this is named Nididhyasana. Listen and meditate on what you have listened to—these two steps are the bases of this Nididhyasana or Inner Concentration. Dhyana has to be accomplished through this and no other channel. Without these, Dhyana is impossible of achievement.

This is the meaning of what is called, Atmasamyama, the control of the senses, detachment from the outer sensory world, the withdrawal of the mind from the outer world. This is the goal of all life knowing the Pramatman, attaining Liberation. There is no second aim for man. Man is endowed with life not as a means for the building of bungalows, the acquisition of estates, the accumulation of wealth, the addition of progeny, the earning of titles or the ascent into higher rungs of social status. His greatness does not depend on these. The chiefest success in life lies in the winning of permanent bliss, permanent escape from grief and agitation.

"Srnvanthu viswe amruthasya puthraah" is the call. "Listen, O ye children of immortality, all over the world!", that is the invitation. The heritage of immortality must be recognised and experienced; it must be won back. The bonds of name and form must be got rid off; they are simply bonds made of dream-stuff. They are changeful, and temporary. They are not genuine natural characteristics of the Jiva. Real wisdom consists in recognising that man is pure bliss, bliss that persists from the past, into the present and will continue in the future also. Escape from grief for a brief period of time, and the attainment of Joy for a short Period—these are not signs of real Liberation. If you seek this steady genuine pure state of bliss, you must be attached to Me, said Krishna.

"Arjuna! Whoever does spiritual practice attaching himself to Me with a view to liberate himself from old age and senility will know all that is to be known of Brahman, Karma, and Atma. I am master of Adibhuta, Adidaiva and Adiyajna and if I am thus worshipped, the worshipper will

develop full equanimity and control of the vagaries of the mind; besides, such a person will dwell on Me, without forgetting Me, in his last moments. For that reason, he will reach Me too. That is to stay, he will merge in Me.

"Arjuna! Every one is anxious to avoid old age and death; it is human nature so to be anxious. But, of what avail is mere anxiety? One's conduct and behaviour should be in accordance with that objective. If one has sincere yearning and if he places full trust and faithfully surrenders to the Lord, the fog of grief will be dispersed by the rays of His Grace. If on the other hand one places his trust on grief-ridden objects of this world, the consequent grief will never end; nor can they be ended by any other, than the Lord. Serve the Master of Maya, the Designer of all this Dreamland rather than the Dream itself. How can attachment to delusion yield anything but disappointment? How can joy be won by such pursuits? If joy is not won and grief avoided, how can liberation be achieved " Krishna asked.

Then, Arjuna intervened. "Krishna," he said "cannot such men attain you? You say that grief must be conquered before one can attain you. Well, what is the origin of that grief? How is it to be tackled? How does it arise? How can one try to overcome it without knowing its origins and course of development? Please tell me how this grief arises in the human mind?"

"Listen, Arjuna." Krishna condescended to reply. "The source of all types of sorrow is Ignorance, A-jnana. You might ask Me now what is the source of A-jnana? I shall tell you. It is the identification with the body, the delusion that you are the body. This can be removed only by the acquisition of right knowledge. To remove darkness, light is what is needed; you cannot frighten it away, nor can you make it yield by prayer or petition or protest. Unless light comes in, darkness won't disappear, however you may try. So too, A-jnana will not disappear, by merely wishing for disappearance to happen. Once you understand the nature and ramifications of this trait this A-jnana, the truth will be laid bare and grief will vanish.

When A-jnana goes, grief too goes. So, attach yourself to Me and earn the light of True Knowledge and tread the path of No-grief," Said Krishna.

Immediately, Arjuna interjected, "Krishna! You were saying till now of certain paths by which we can reach you. Now, at the end of it all, if you throw this cannon ball, how can I ever grasp its meaning? You did not even confer, as a preliminary, a little power to do so! Please therefore make me happy by describing this point in greater detail, so that I might follow You better and attain You."

Then, Krishna replied, "My dear brother-in-law! Listen. My mystery can be understood, once you are clear about the meaning of Brahman, Adhyatmam, Karma, Adibhootam, Adidaivam and Adiyajnam. And, let Me tell you this also. Whoever understands My Mystery attains Me."

"Then, O Lord, tell me about the first of these, Brahman," exclaimed Arjuna.

"Arjuna! Aksharam-Brahma Paramam"..... Brahman is referred to as the Akshara which is param. Akshara means: without kshara or destruction, indestructible. Brahman comes from a root which means big, vast, etc. How vast, you may ask. Vaster than whatever you call vast, that

is the answer. The word Akshara has another meaning also. It means, omnipresent, immanent everywhere. Brahman is not mere Aksharam, as you must have noticed. It is Param Aksharam. What does that mean? It is that type of Akshara, which is beyond the reach of Time and Space and knowability; it cannot be known by any or all the categories; it never declines or ends; it is Param Aksharam, the Highest Indestructible, Indescribable.

The Goal of Humanity is to attain that Brahman; A-ksharam and Brahman signify the same Goal. They indicate the Saguna and the Nirguna aspects of the same Truth. For, Akshara means also a letter, the Pranava, Om, which is a symbol of Brahman. That is why it is called Aksharaprabrahma Yoga. Brahman has two adjectives, Paramam and Aksharam. Akshara indicates the Pranava as well as Maya. Maya too is subsumed by Pranava. These two are "attribute-ful"; qualified; Sa-visesha. Brahman, however, is Nir-visesha, qualification-less, attribute-less, Pure, in its, own right. He who understands this attains Me.

Now for a second matter. It is Brahman that dwells in every body being in the form of "I", "I". In fact, every body hangs around this entity called 'I'. In that body, each part and organ in the organisation performs one chief task. Each sense contacts and informs about one particular set of impressions from the outer world. But, though related to the senses, there is an "I" shining in the body, above and behind all of them. If that relationship is broken, everything becomes sheer inert material!

When the 'I'-power flows through the senses, they are able to carry on their allotted tasks. That power is Aadhyatmam; it cannot be known without great effort. Use the sharpest discrimination and you know it to some small extent. Brahman is the "Tatt" entity; Aadhyatmam is the "Twam" entity. To make the matter clearer to you, take these two try appearance and character, form and substance. Brahman is the form, Aadhyatmam is substance." said Krishna.

Let us dwell on this matter a little. The Sastras describe Brahman as Sat-chit-ananda, is it not? This is a way of denoting it, in Vedantic vocabulary. What do they mean in Sanskrit? There it is described as Asti-bhiti-priyam. Are both the same? Or do they mean differently? Sat means that which persists in the past, present and future. The same meaning is conveyed by the word, Asti. Chit means that which is conscious of everything; the same meaning is conveyed by the word, Bhiti. Ananda means unending yearning for joy; priyam also means the same. These three are found in every human being, why, in every beast and bird.

Take the first of these—Sat—and this will become clearer. The body is subject to destruction, sooner or later. Every one is aware of this; no one is ignorant of this elementary fact. Nevertheless, every one is apprehensive of death! No one welcomes death, or is eager to meet it. Death is inevitable, you have to meet with it, even though you do not welcome it, or do try to avoid it. All that is born has to die some day, after slowly meeting with decline. Still, no one likes to die.

What is the key to this paradox? Pay attention to this: What is it that does not welcome death? What is it that meets with death? What is it that leaves and what is it that remains? The answer is, it is the body that dies; it is the body that falls. What does not die is the Atma. Only, you

delude yourselves into thinking that it is the Atman or "you" that dies. The Atma has nothing to do with death or birth. The body experiences death; the Atma which is Nitya, Sathya, and Nirmala, Eternal True and Pure does not die. You are the Atma, that does not like to die. That is to say, you are Sat; your nature is Sat. The Atma is the "Child of Immortality," not the Deha or the Body. The Atma is the Sat, not the Body.

You are the Sat; the Atma; the entity that has no death. It is this Atma that is in every casement and so, every being feels the force of that Sat—in the form of eternal unchanging Existence. This is so clear and unmistakable.

Now, take the second: Chit—the force that urges you on to know everything. Every one is eager to know about anything that is apparent to his consciousness; he asks the questions: What is this? How does this happen? The number who actually succeed in knowing may be only a few. Others may have the eagerness only and not the steady intelligence needed to persist and win. That makes no difference. The essential fact is the thirst, the urge. Take a little boy with you when you go to the market or the bazaar or an exhibition, you will note that the boy does not simply move along seeing the various things on both sides. He will be continuously asking the person who is leading him by the hand, what this is and what that is. It may be something he does not need or something that is beyond his power of understanding; but yet, the stream of questions will not get dry. This is the daily experience of every one, Just consider the inner significance of this hunger for knowledge. It is the Chit-shakti that expresses itself. It is not its nature to leave things alone. It cannot rest until knowledge is gained; so, the hunger emerges as a stream of questions.

The Chit-shakti is self-luminous; so, it has the power of illumining even inert things. That is why these qualities shine in man and make other things clearer to him. This is enough to make it plain to any one that man has in him the Principle of intelligence or Chit-shakti.

Now for the third: Aanandam. Even beasts and birds crave for joy and happiness, without any prompting or persuasion from others, and make every effort to win them. No one of them craves for grief or pain; they make every effort to escape from pain and grief and put an end to them soon, when they become unavoidable. As for man, no further elaboration is necessary. He seeks unbroken joy, at all times and in all acts and activities. At no time, at no place, at no stage of life, does he desire grief. He prays for the joy and happiness of himself and his kindred, whatever worship he offers or whatever Bhajan he shares in or whatever vows he fulfils or rites he performs, or pilgrimages he undertakes or gifts he makes for spiritual merit. Why say so much? When the body suffers from any illness and the doctor prescribes a medicine to cure it and make him whole, man wants even that to be sweet soothing and pleasant! What is at the root of this desire? Well, man is fundamentally "Happy natured", Sukha-svabhava. Bliss is his very Personality. He is not of the nature or personality of the body which he occupies. He is not to be identified with the body. He is the Atma. Happiness is the nature of the Atma. That is why no one is surprised when you are happy; they are not inquisitive about your happiness, for it is something natural to you. Surprise arises only when you observe something that was not there before. What you see every day does not arouse your curiosity. It comes only when something un-natural happens or is observed.

Take this instance. A child is in the cradle. It playfully laughs in bed at either the jingling of the bells hung upon it or some toy or perhaps some sensation which is pleasant enough to make it bloom into a broad smile; no one is surprised or worried at all this. No one loses his peace of mind as a result of this. Now, let the child that was playing and laughing, start shrieking and weeping—every one within earshot will run towards the cradle and frantically search the bed and bedclothes to discover the cause of all this commotion. This is the experience of all who have something to do with children. No one was worried to find out the reason why the child was happy; but, all sought for the cause when it wept. Why? Because, Ananda or Joy is its nature: grief is un-natural, against its inner composition.

This is not the entire point; there is something more. Let us take another example from experience. When some friend or kinsman of yours is happy and affluent, no one takes the trouble to inquire from him why he is so happy; they ignore him and do not harry him with questions regarding his welfare. But, when grief strikes him and he is unhappy, you start worrying him and yourselves. Why? Happiness is natural, it is to be expected, it is nothing surprising. For, it is the nature of the Atma, which every one is. That is why one is craving for constant happiness, Ananda.

The above three, Sat Chit and Anandam, we see in every being as the every core of its very existence, as their reality itself. So, it is the Lord Himself who has assumed the Jiva pose and plays as an individual, in that role. It is this inner meaning that Krishna elaborated upon, so that the relationship of the Brahman and Aadhyatmam, of the Swarupam, that is to say, the identity of both with Him could be understood by Arjuna.

Then, Arjuna prayed that the third subject, Karma, may be fully explained to him. Krishna was quite ready to oblige him. He began, "Arjuna! The renunciation that is necessary for the creation, fostering and destruction of beings is what is called Karma. The moveable and the immoveable—all are beings; why, the very act of the very resolution for Creation is Karma, the very first, which still activates all everywhere; this entire Universe and all the movements and agitations and activities in it are the direct consequence of Primal Karma, My Sankalpa. And, as long as My Resolution lasts, the stream of Karma will follow along. It can never go dry so long as I do not will so. All that you do is drawn into this flood; why, they are but the currents in this rush, or ripples or waves. His will has prompted all Karma and so, Karma done in consonance with His will, becomes part of Him.

(To be continued)

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

A person saw in the hollow of his hands the shadow of a lizard as he was doing his ceremonial rite in the river with water; and, he swallowed the sacred water, without seeing whether it was just a shadow or the real thing. Later, he was bothered by the fear that he had swallowed the poisonous thing. And, he developed all the symptoms of lizard poisoning, until a wise man came by and procuring a lizard, made it wriggle in the vomit that was induced in the unfortunate victim. When the poor man saw the lizard that presumably came out of his stomach, he was happy and he recovered. Man too suffers from a similar delusion, imagining himself to be afflicted by something, that is purely a creation of his own ignorance.

IN '44 and '64

We are all fortunate; we were born when we are able to have the Darshan, Blessings and Teachings of Bhagavan Ramanamaharshi, Sri Chandrasekharabharathi, Avatar Sri Sai Baba and Sri Sathya Sai Baba. God does everything for our good. He created a living for me in a big bank as an Inspector and so, I could tour the entire country and visit saints sages and yogis, and temples.

I could visit Sri Sathya Sai Baba in the year 1944. I learnt at Anantapur from my friend, Sri Gopala Iyer then Deputy Superintendent of Police, that Sri Sathya Sai Baba was expected at his residence any time and he desired me to stay with him, to have His Darshan. I was overwhelmed with joy and I was anxiously waiting every minute for two days. Then, Baba arrived one day at 8 A. M. with His Devotees. It so happened that I was the first person to fall at His Lotus Feet. I had the good fortune to spend five days in His company. Baba desired me to follow Him to Puttaparthi, which I simply obeyed. I prayed to Him then for two things. Baba was so kind to bless my pitru devatas, my ancestors who have gone beyond into the realms of the Pitrus, and He said they will have Sadgati (unbroken spiritual progress towards success). He also gave me the assurance that I will get Mukti (Liberation). When I was with Him, I was reminded of Lord Sri Krishna Bhagavan, who showed His Amanusha Prajna by revealing to His Mother the entire Brahmanandam in His mouth and who lifted the Govardhana Parvatam with His Little Finger and who destroyed the wicked Shishupala. On one of these five days, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba drew the plan of the Padmavyuha and explained how Abhimanyu could enter it but could not get out of that trap set by the Kauravas. We were aghast at the way He, a boy of about 16 years, could draw the Padmavyuham, the master plan of the Dwapara Yuga unless He Himself is an Avatar of the Divine Supreme.

Unfortunately, I could not again get the pleasure of meeting Him for about 20 years. After my retirement, I reached Puttaparthi in 1964. He gave me Darshan immediately and remembered my name. He took a most compassionate view of my long absence, when I craved for His pardon and His Grace.

Puttaparthi, which was a small hamlet in 1944, has now become the centre of a great pilgrimage, attracting daily thousands of devotees from all parts of India. Baba with His Apra Karuna grants the desires of all aspirants and His Discourses on Vedas Sastras and Smritis reveal Him as the Avatar of the Sakshat Easwara Himself. His Mission at present seems to me to be Vedoddharana, so badly needed now. I am sure He will send missionaries to other parts of the world to preach the Advaita philosophy and the value of the Smarana of the Name of the Lord. In due course, I think Puttaparthi will become the seat of a Parliament of Religions and Bhaktas from all over the world will congregate to have the benediction of Sri Sathya Sai Baba Darshan.

Y Rama Rao

A piece of wasteland is converted into a field by constant attention and great care, systematic Sadhana, in short, done with knowledge and discrimination, Viveka. So also, the realm of the heart has to be made ready for the cultivation of Ananda by proper care and systematic attention. The wild elephant roaming in the forest is tamed by systematic discipline into the obedient circus animal, doing all the tricks that the ringmaster orders it to do. So too, the impulses and instincts have to be educated by systematic Sadhana and made obedient to the higher call.

BABA

Prasnottara Vahini
Chapter XIII
Mantra and Japa

- Q. Is there any Mantra or Japa that will give us this Shanti state that you spoke about just now? If there is any, which is the important one?
- A. Mantra and Japa are essential for all types of men. What is a mantra? Ma means manana and thra means saving; so mantra means that which can save you if you meditate on it. Mantra will save you from being caught up in the coils of this worldly life which is infested with death, grief and pain. Of all mantras, the Pranava is the highest and the best. It is the very head and crown of all of them.
- Q. Suppose each one does the Japam of the name of the Ishtadevata according to his own light; I believe it is not wrong. Or is it?
- A. You mean that however savage or foolish a man may be, he cannot but call on the Lord! Well, if the name is recited along with the Pranava, it is bound to be beneficial. Just as the waters of the ocean are raised into the sky by the rays of the sun and then, falling as rain, they form rills and rivers and rush towards the ocean to become once again the waters of the ocean, all sounds and mantras that were once only Pranava, reach the Pranava through the Japa and other disciplines and rites. They all get merged in the Pranava, their source.
- Q. Swami! Some elders have said that the more bija aksharas a mantra has, the more effective it is. Are such mantras to be preferred to others which have only a few bija-aksharas?
- A. I don't agree with the view that when the number of bija-aksharas diminishes, there is less chance for concentration in Dhyana. Sadhakas would be benefitted more if they repeat the Panchakshari or Ashtakshari with the Pranava added in the beginning. When they have proceeded some distance thus, they can give up even the words and concentrate on the Form depicted through the sound and transform the Mantra into the Devata Himself. That is why the Shruti says, "Nisshabdo Brahma Uchyate—Brahma is Silence, absence of Sound."
- Q. How are we to create a vacuum of sound? How can that be Brahman?
- A. The Shrutis declare that this objective world, this Prakriti, is Maya; they also say that He who has all this Maya under His control is Easwara. So, try to have all this creation under control and become Easwara yourself. The stage when, so far as you are concerned, the objective world has come to naught, is the stage when you attain Brahman. Until that is

set at naught, you cannot attain Brahman; that is certain. Like the snake that discards its skin and assumes a new skin, the Sadhaka discards the old skin, puts on the skin of the Deity indicated by the mantra that he concentrates upon.

Q. Pardon me, Swami! I cannot understand all this. Make it clear through some more examples.

A. You have seen an egg, is it not? When the bird sits on the egg for some time, the chick grows inside it to its full stature and then, when the shell of the egg is broken, it emerges and assumes its real form. In the same way, when the Sadhaka, with purified consciousness dwells on the mantra and its meaning, and revolves its significance in his mind without break, the vision grows in his mind without break, the shell of Ajnana breaks and he shines in the splendour of the Divinity that he has formed in his consciousness.

Q. All things originate from Pranava and all things finally merge in Pranava, they say. Then why is it that the very elders who say this declare that some can pronounce this and some cannot?

A. What is Prakriti, except the commingling of the Five Elements? The Pranava is the very life of all the elements and so it is the life-breath of Prakriti itself. The roar of waters falling down a cliff, the beating of waves on a promontory of the shore, both repeat the Pranava only. The sound of inhaling and exhaling breath is itself the Pranava, is it not? Whether they know it or not, the heigh-ho of the men who carry along a palanquin on their shoulders, the heave of those who lift weights, the heehoy of those who beat clothes on slabs by the riverside; all resound with the Pranava. Repeat it with a full knowledge of its inner significance and you will soon be relieved of the burden of this world's worry. The Pranava of the breathing process is also the saviour from grief. It is meaningless to argue that some have the right to utter the Pranava and some have not. Those who do not breathe may not have the authority to utter it; but all who breathe are reciting it already in the process and so there is no sense in denying it to any one. When Arjuna asked how one should remember the Lord at the point of death, do you not know the reply that Krishna gave? He said that he should recall to his mind the Pranava which is un-differentiated from Him. Such a Bhakta will, He said, attain the highest goal. So every one has the right to this great mantra, the Pranava.

Q. How can the goal be reached through the Upasana of Pranava? How can the person who meditates become transformed into the thing meditated upon? Please make this unequalled mantra and the way it helps us clearer to me by means of easy illustrations.

A. Very good. Pranava is the bow; the Atma is the arrow; Parabrahman is the target. So the Sadhaka must, like the practitioner of the art of archery, be unaffected by things that agitate the mind. He should pay one-pointed attention to the target; then the Bowman is filled with the target; he becomes the thing meditated on. In the Kaivalyopanishad, the Mundakopanishad and in various parts of the Shruti, the Pranava is extolled in various ways. Therefore, this mantra which liberates man can be recited and meditated upon by all. All can practise the Pranava Upasana; you need have no doubts on this point.

(To be continued)

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

The Unseen Cause

You who are in reality, Atmaswarupa, here is My Blessing to every one of you. What exactly is Atmajnana? It is the understanding of the reality of Atma and of the absence of any distinction between you and that. The realisation of this basic fact is the only means of happiness for man. Not to realise it makes a man a fool, however learned he may be, even in spiritual lore. But, man is not unaware of his environment Or of the nature of the world, as beasts are. His goal is the Absolute that is the guarantor of all power and the grantor of all courage. To reach it, one has to make extra-ordinary effort. Every being and thing in nature has immeasurable power enclosed in it but it is only in man that it is revealed as Jnana. Man is not a lump of clay; neither is he a lump of flesh. He is truly a fountain of Ananda. The head hands and feet do not form his personality; his personality is his Atma. For, his Ananda is derived not through wealth and status, power and prestige, lands and laudation, but, through the realisation of the Atmic basis of personality. Ananda derived from the exterior world is short-lived and double-edged; unaware of this, man still seeks Ananda in the mirages and cloud-castles of cinemas, cigarettes, restaurants and radios, and a host of other flitting fancies. He flies about like a bird seeking a perch; he groans like a beggar before every door seeking the alms of Ananda, not realising that the residents are themselves empty-handed. Why has this disaster befallen man? Because he has not known that he himself is Ananda-swarupa.

Man comes into this world, holding a ticket to Death, for the length of the journey he has to make. During the journey, he might sing and dance, rise and fall, earn and spend, but, the train moves steadily to the destination, viz. the cemetery. The traveller might forget the destination but the train does not. Remembering this, man must learn how to avoid this recurring fate: Birth-Death, Death-Birth. To be caught in this wheel and plead helplessness is not worthy of man. Death for you must be for the end of death. That is to say, before death, one must learn the secret of Immortality. When one is born, one weeps through ignorance. But when he dies, he should not repeat the performance. If he does so, what is the tremendous achievement that one has to his credit, after years of life? Consuming tons of food, being a burden on the earth—are these the only achievements to his credit Food is for sustaining life; life is not for consuming food. If life is allotted, food will be available somehow. So, live so that he who was born with the query Koham, 'Who am I' on his lips should pass out of the world with the answer, Soham, "I am He" on his lips.

The end of sorrow is the consummation that every one hankers after. This is so not merely for man; it is so for birds and beasts, even insects and worms. This is not all. As soon as man achieves adulthood, he becomes nervous at the approach of old age and death which come with steady steps towards him, and he tries to avoid them, by all the means he can command. What a ridiculous ambition? No one can escape these; trying to avoid these two griefs, man falls into further grief. What is the reason?

Man takes refuge in things that are in Maya without taking refuge in the Master of Maya. He establishes himself in the belief that he is the body (in Dehatmabuddhi) and not in the belief that he is the Atma (Brahmatmabuddhi) To relieve the pain one feels in the dream, or to allay the fear one gets in the dream, no drug or magic formula can help. The only cure is "waking him up". Then, both fear and pain will vanish in a trice. So too, in the spiritual field, one has to awake and

become aware of the Atma, to get rid of the grief produced by the attachment to the delusions of the world.

Man has to know that his mind is the maker of his fortune and misfortune. For the ignorant, the mind is an evil genius; and for the wise, the mind is a ministering angel. When the mind is tainted he becomes a devil when the mind is pure, he becomes a saint. An impure mind makes an impure man. The Vedas and the Sastras have emerged just for this emergency. Their main purpose is to purify the mind and remove its imperfections.

Nothing will happen in the world without a Cause. For the seen effect, the unseen is the Cause. To reveal the unseen Cause is the task which the Veda and Sastras have taken upon themselves. The evil brood of ignorance, egoism hatred malice and the rest, has multiplied in the land because the Vedas and Sastras have been left behind and men have taken to crooked paths. Humanity is drawn into the filth of wickedness and sin, because the nobility of human heritage has been forgotten. Peace has fled from the heart of man and from the human community.

Today, therefore, this Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha is showering on all the knowledge of the Atman the reality behind all this illusion; it reminds all of the moral code; it makes all recognise the Sat Chit and Ananda as the Paramatma Himself. Recognise this as the very reason why this Sabha has been established. May Truth be installed in the hearts of all.

(Baba's Message sent to be read at the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha at Inamadugu Village,
Nellore Dt...on 4-2-65)

Sivaratri at Prasanthi Nilayam

Sivaratri is an important event at Puttaparthi when Baba's mission as an Avatar assumes a new dimension and acquires a fresh and vital significance, far on that day, Baba, as Siva Sai, reveals the tremendous mystery of "lingodbhava" before thousands of devotees. To a doubting world idled with unbelief, doubt, and ignorance, Sivaratri at Prasanthi Nilayam is in the nature of a Revelation, a challenge and a clarion-call to people to rekindle their faith in the supremacy of what Baba calls "Atma-tattwa". This year's Sivaratri drew an unprecedented crowd of devotees from all over the country and several from abroad- from Africa, U.S.A. and U. K. The spacious grounds of the Nilayam were a seething mass of humanity, people occupying every available inch of space, under the trees, on the verandahs of rooms, in the open spaces all around, on the roadside, everywhere. Scores of tents were erected. An endless stream of private cars and taxis brought hundreds, while special buses from different parts of South India poured large numbers of ardent pilgrims into the ever-hospitable lap of Baba's Prasanthi Nilayam. Undeterred by the rigours of a long and tedious journey eager, expectant and joyful, these thousands of men women and children revealed the strength of their faith and their prema for Baba. Prasanthi Nilayam itself looked magnificent—with flags and festoons everywhere and the "shed" had been transformed into a vast and beautifully-decorated Auditorium, thanks to the loving labour of scores of dedicated volunteers working day and night for the sake of Bhagavan. The crowd must certainly have exceeded 25000 on the 28th and 1st.

The morning is fresh and a gentle breeze is blowing. The Nilayam is filled with activity even at that early hour. The buzz of voices, speaking in whispers, is clearly audible. A vast crowd has already gathered in front of the Mandir waiting for Bhagavan's darshan. The melodious strains of nadaswaram soon fill the air. The door of the Mandir is opened. A long line of boys bathed and fresh, each wearing a saffron-dyed piece of cloth round the waist and an angavastram of the same colour, their foreheads adorned with the sacred ash, accompanied by their fathers or guardians, is waiting; to enter the Mandir. This is the morning of the Upanayanam ceremony when nearly 400 Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaisya boys are to be initiated into the sacred Gayatri mantra and enter into a new life of dedication to God. The Upanayanam is one of the most sacred samskaras (disciplines) of Hinduism. It marks an entry into a new status where the brahmachari is no longer an irresponsible lad, but an initiate, on whom rests the duty of fulfilling what the Gita calls one's "swadharma". Baba's love for His devotees and His keen desire to preserve the spirit of the Sanathana Dharma are responsible for His agreeing to have the Upanayana samskara performed at the Prasanthi Nilayam in His divine presence. Fortunate are the boys and their parents who are given this rare privilege to participate in this unique sacrament in the very presence of Baba and receive His blessings.

At 8 a.m. the preliminary ceremonies begin inside the Mandir. The sacrificial fire is lit and the Homa is performed. It is a ceremony of purification—to make the participants conscious of the sanctity of what they are to do. The invocation to Agni is essential in all such ceremonies. Agni stands for illumination and wisdom—burning out the dross and purifying the spirit. The Mandir is soon filled with the solemn chant of Vedic mantras recited by the Pundits many of whom have specially come here to take part in the ceremony and help the brahmacharis to receive the sacred Brahmopadesha. The Upanayana is meant to make the brahmachari tread the path of Dharma, and practise all the disciplines which his Dharma imposes on him. At 8-45 a.m. the brahmacharis come out of the Mandir and form into a procession. The music of the nadaswaram again fills the atmosphere. Everyone is waiting for Baba to come down and lead the lads. Lo! He comes—the familiar, beloved, resplendent figure with an enchanting smile playing on His lips, walking with quiet dignity to lead the procession which marches slowly to the Auditorium where thousands have already gathered to witness the unique ceremony. The boys and their fathers and guardians and the pundits take their appointed places in a series of rows—on the ground. Before each brahmachari is lit the sacrificial fire in which chips and scrapings of sandalwood are placed, filling the whole place with fragrance. It is a magnificent sight to see so many boys, now on the threshold of a new life, a rebirth into the kingdom of the spirit, affirming, as their ancestors did on the banks of India's sacred rivers, the ceaseless validity of dharma—which rules, preserves and sustains the universe. One of the most beautiful things in our Sanathana Dharma is the insistence that the individual is an integral part of the larger world—and that the individual dharma should merge harmoniously with the eternal, unchanging Law of God. The brahmachari is now, in this unique sense, a citizen of the universe, dedicating himself to the ideal of Lokasangraha or world-welfare. It is an inspiring sight to see these hundreds of eager lads being initiated into the most sacred of all our mantras—the Gayatri Mantra, for Gayatri is the Light of the World, the radiant principle that illumines the whole of creation, dispelling darkness, ignorance and evil. The culmination of this solemn ceremony is reached when each boy receives

the sacred upadesha from his father or guardian and the whole auditorium reverberates with the accents of the Gayatri led by Vedasamrat Brahmasri Kamavadhanulu in his characteristically solemn and clear tone. It is a uniquely sacred moment as hundreds of brahmacharis chant the Gayatri, Baba standing on the dais watching and listening. Then comes the "bhiksha"—offered by Baba Himself as He goes round and blesses each brahmachari, giving to each boy His benediction for which, to use the language of our Puranas, "the sages have struggled and agonised through ages of penance and austerities."

An interval of four days and the great Day arrives—Sivaratri, sacred to Siva. Crowds continue to pour in, thousands and thousands! Old residents have remarked that this mighty congregation of devotees was unprecedented. Was this perhaps a prelude to Baba's prophecy (which He repeated in the course of His discourse on the 3rd March) that the Nilayam auditorium will soon extend to the banks of the Chitravati? This year's Sivaratri at the Nilayam demonstrated once more the spell that Baba has cast in the hearts and minds of thousands of His devotees, far and near. And surely there must have been thousands and thousands more, in every part of the country, who could not make the trip to Puttaparthi, and yet whose minds and hearts were filled on this sacred day by the image of Siva Sai and the miracle of "Lingodbhava." "My favourite Abode" said the Baba of Shirdi, "is the heart of a true Bhakta." Even so, Sathya Sai dwells in the heart of those who love and worship Him—the eternal Atma-nivasi in every heart that pines for His grace.

The day dawns. It is a wonderful sight to watch the vast sea of humanity surging over the whole area. Yet no confusion or disorder of any kind, for every single individual who has come here knows that he or she is at Prasanthi Nilayam—the Abode of Peace, in the presence of Bhagavan. Even as the rosy dawn over the hills flickers out and the sun fills the world with his radiant presence, the Nilayam Bell rings out its sonorous peals. The crowds have waited in silence from the early hours, and to many it has been a nightlong vigil... It is 8 a.m.—time for the flag-hoisting ceremony by Baba. A ripple of expectation seems to spread over the vast sea of men, women and children. You can see them in front, even beyond the outer gate, in the streets outside, over, the entire area, overflowing the sheds, on the open grounds behind the Mandir and all around, everywhere, and yet so silent, vibrant with expectation to have darshan of Baba, and hear His divine message on this most sacred day dedicated to Siva... Baba appears on the balcony. He walks to the marble figure of Lord Krishna. He stands there in the morning light, his hair encircled, as it were, by a flaming halo of the sun's rays truly a resplendent figure. There is a moment of tumultuous applause as Baba raises His right Hand in benediction. The function begins with a Vedic chant by the boys of the Veda Pathashala, followed by a few speeches on the significance of the clay dedicated to Siva whom the Puranas describe as the Giver of Bliss, Prosperity and unlimited Auspiciousness (mangala)... the God who is creator, preserver and destroyer in ONE, who sits in deep meditation amidst the solitudes of the snow-clad Kailasa hiding the Ganga in His matted locks, the wearer of the Trisula, round whose neck, stained with the poison He drank to save the world, is coiled the dread serpent, Naga...the God of the cosmic of Dance of creation and destruction, dreaded and yet compassionate, for whose love the Divine Daughter of the Mountain-King, renounced all worldly pleasures to become Aparna (one who

gave up eating even the leaves of the forest) His body smeared with the ashes of the cremation-ground-symbolical of utter renunciation and "vairagya"...the Supreme Lord of the Universe whose Panchakshari Mantra, Namah Sivaya) is declared by the Puranas to bestow immortality and Bliss on those who utter it with true devotion. It is time for Baba to speak. He speaks words of beauty and power, sublime in their very simplicity. He describes, as only He can the significance of the Day, speaks of man's pilgrimage to the divinely-ordained goal, of the Sadhana and Samskara through which each individual has to pass before the goal is reached... of the transitory nature of the body and the eternity of the Atma, of the futility of Deha-tattwa and the splendour of Atma-tattwa. Only Baba can make even the profoundest things simple. Finishing His speech, Baba goes up to the terrace of the Mandir... pulls the string and the Prasanthi Nilayam flag flutters gaily in the morning sun, the symbol of Bhagavan's Four-fold Path, Sathya, Dharma, Shanti, and Prema, a perennial sign of hope and of Divine assurance or Abhaya to all those who labour and are heavy-laden.

The flag-hoisting is over. There is no visible movement in the crowd. They are just there—rooted as it were to the spot, spellbound, enchanted by what they had seen and experienced. Some get out of the crowd—with great difficulty—and walk away for a little relaxation. But they too return—for the Vibhuti abhisheka ceremony at the Auditorium which is gaily decorated. The people wait for hours, silent and disciplined, a unique example of discipline willingly accepted, and dutifully carried out. It is nearly 10-30..... Baba now enters, takes His seat on the silver throne on the dais. On His left is the silver figure of His previous incarnation, the beloved Baba of Shirdi. It is time for the abhisheka... Baba steps down from His seat and stands on the right of the figure of Shirdi Baba. A small vessel is held up by Sri Kasturi with its mouth over the figure's head. Baba puts His right hand into the mouth of the vessel, rotates the hand, and vibhuti falls down, slowly at first, a thin line of grayish smoke. Baba continues to stir the inside and soon cascades of vibhuti pour out of the vessel and the whole place is filled with the fragrance of the vibhuti. This goes on for about 10 minutes. Vibhuti is heaped over the figure of Shirdi Baba. Pearls, beads of Rudraksha and Tulasi are found mixed with the vibhuti—a wonderful, breathtaking spectacle.

There is bhajan for a while and Baba returns to the Mandir and the morning functions are over.

Baba hardly misses an opportunity to spread the message of Sanathana Dharma—the perennial Atma-tattwa—to People. Discourses by learned Pundits are part of Baba's technique of Dharma-samsthapana—the establishment of Dharma, and the daily programme of religious discourses always ends with Baba's own illuminating talk, every talk a generous and even lavish offering of self-knowledge to each individual, a warning, an assurance, the talk of an intimate friend, heart speaking unto heart.

The programme of this particular evening has a significance of its own. It is the evening of Lingodbhava. Who can describe the solemnity of that rare occasion the 'Miracle of Miracles'? Thousands have seen Baba creating a variety of things—from vibhuti to gold and silver icons.

Nothing is beyond His sankalpa. On the Vaikuntha Ekadasi Day, thousands watched Him bringing out of a heap of sand the lovely silver figure of Lord Sathyanarayana, and creating Amrita in a small vessel out of which he poured drops of this sweet nectar into the mouths of thousands who had gathered. But on Sivaratri night, it is a miracle of a different kind. It is srishti of, "linga" which He brings out of His own Body. He is then Siva come down to the earth to create the "linga" the symbol of the imperishable and effulgent Atma, containing within itself the secret of the Universe in its multitudinous phases, an epitome, as it were, of the whole of Brahmanda. Thousands are waiting for this miracle. 7-30 p. m. Baba comes to the dais and sits on the throne.

It looks as though He is in the throes of creation, His chest heaving, His body swaying slightly and His mouth trying to eject something that is pressing up within Him... We watch breathlessly this unique and solemn process of Srishti—of "udbhava". It is difficult to describe in words the deep silence and tension that prevail among the people. Nothing like this has been seen before—a whole crowd watching the miracle of "srishti" by the Living God?... their eyes rivetted on the spare, resplendent figure on the platform, Paramatma showing one of His leelas.

There is a momentary hush, deep as the silence of the stars in a vast blue sky. The tension mounts to a climax, as a shining brilliantly transparent green "linga" comes out of Bhagavan's mouth. It is a lovely object, smooth, shining and transparent, its green sheen almost dazzling the eyes... a veritable symbol of Brahmanda, the universe over which Mahasiva keeps His eternal vigil through the ages, creating, destroying and resurrecting, a cosmic Drama of tremendous dimensions, comprising the destinies of millions of His creatures. Who knows the End? Only those who strive to know the Beginning. But the End is not total dissolution". The goal is the Ever-shining Light, not darkness. That Light can never be dimmed. It is within us—often smothered by our vishaya-vasanas, our lusts and Breeds and ambitions. The Linga that comes out of Bhagavan's mouth is a tremendous symbol of something too infinite, too stupendous, for our little minds to grasp. Its green glory that moved and dazzled thousands of us who sat watching Him on that sacred night, is part of the and beauty of His creation—the Beauty and light that reside in every thing, in the star-studded sky, in the human heart, in the wisdom of the sages and the love of the mother-heart, in the smallest particle that is ceaselessly wafted over vast spaces of the earth...Tena vina trinamapi nachalati. Blessed indeed are those who have seen the emanation of the Great Light from the Lord. May this Light be ever our guide. 'Tamsomaa Jyotirgamaya', from Darkness Lead us to Light!

H. S. R.

The Gayatri Mantram

When the Formless Immanent Absolute, which is describable only as Sat-chit-ananda and which evolves sustains and involves the Universe, wills to assume Form. It puts on as its dress any one of the five Elements, of which the Universe is composed. This has been declared thus:

Prakrithim Swaam adhishtaaya sambhavaami aathma maayayaa (I use My Prakriti as a base and with the help of My own Maya, I happen as Form-fu1.)

Aakaaasayaadhipo Vishnuh
Aganishaiva Maheswaree
Vaayossuryah Kshithir Eesah
Jeevanasya Ganadhipah

When the Absolute particularizes Itself with the Aakasa element, Vishnu appears; with Agni, Maheshwara is created; when It puts on the habiliment of Vayu, Surya is the Manifestation and when It uses the Earth element, the product is Easwara, and when the water element is clothing the Formless. Ganapati is he Divinity that emerges.

But, whatever Form It assumes. It has to carry on the task of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara, Creation Preservation and Destruction. So, the Vedas acclaim Vishnu as the Sole Divine Category and ascribed all forms of Power to Him. The Vaishnava path was thus established, The Soura path of Surya worshippers arose on account of the belief that the Absolute collaborated with Vayu. They said, "Thrimoorthascha Divaakarah" and allotted to Surya the Functions of the Trinity. The Vedas have a number of Stotras recognising this role of Surya. "Thaam Agnivarnaam Thapasaa jwalantheem, Vairochaneem Karma phaleshu jushtaam" is how Maheswaree, the Supreme Feminine Principle is praised in the Vedas. She has the colour of Agni, for She is but the Absolute, wearing the Apparel of Fire. She is all the three Shaktis (Srishti Sthithi and Laya); She is Shakti and so the path of getting liberation through Her Adoration is called the Saaktheya path. Ganapati, created when the Absolute wore the dress of the element Water, is praised as the Intangible indestructible Eternal. This is the basis of the Ganapatya cult, or Path. Lastly, the earth element when it was resorted to by the Absolute produced the Name and Forth of Siva and the Saiva path.

It is very necessary to point out that the entity is the same, in all the five. The Inner Reality in any of the five is identical with that in any of the rest. The aspirant can choose any one Form that appeals to him but he should not malign the rest. The Vataavriksha has roots dropping from all the spreading branches. You can hold on to any and climb on to the tree. Do not insist that the root you have chosen is the only one; see all Forms as the Form you adore. That, is why the Advaita conviction is to worship the Panchayathana, the Five Divinities: Aadithyam ambikaam Vishnum Gananaatham Maheswaram (!) the very Five we have noted above.

The Gayatri mantra has all these five Divinities! That is why it is said that it is the highest and the best. The Gayatri, pictured as a Goddess has five heads according to the Sastras. And each head represents one of the 5 gods of the panchayathana!

The heads are of five different colours: Muktha vidruna hema neela dhavala. Let us consider the meaning of each. Mukta (pearl) reminds us of water, the jala element, the sheen of pearl is a symbol of Ganapati whose image is made from mud and which is immersed in water later. Vidruma indicates red, the colour of fire; it is a symbol of Ambika, Maheswaree. The third colour is Hema, Golden, the colour of the Resplendent Sun. It is the central head of the five for the Gayatri deals with Savita devata, in the centre of the Solar splendour, which is invoked to

arouse the initiate's Intellect. The fourth head is neela, blue, the colour of Vishnu, the all-pervasive Aakasa tattwa. And the last head is of white colour, the colour of the earth and of Siva. So the Gayatri is dedicated to the Absolute, as seen through the 5 elements.

Those who worship according to the Mantra Sastra know that in Puja, the 5 elements are invoked and here, we have 5 heads to signify the 5! We offer "Scent" to the Earth-form-assumed-One; Flowers to the Aakasa-element-formed One; Dhoopa to the Vayuroopa-atma; Deepam to the Agni or Tejorupa-atma; and, Nectar or Amritam to the Jala-roopa-atma, which we conceive the Lord to be. The Five heads from the left (facing the worshipper) are therefore of Ganapati. Maheshwari, Surya, Vishnu and Siva—all forming a wonderful synthesis to awaken the intellect of the Initiate and confer on him the vision of Harmony and Unity.

(To be continued)

Sri Ramasaran Kundurthi Venkatanarasayya

Trisula

Three-eyed ,three petalled , three pronged,
The Bilva leaf—that is the weapon of the Siva.
Surya Chandra Agni- the three Energies and Fires
The 3 Ayanas, the 3 Nayananas, seeing Past
Present and Future, Back and Forward and Here;
The three Siva, Kesava, Brahma, make sustain and mar
Manobuddhi Chittam—all in one as Ego-play
When Bhava becomes A-bhava, agitations cease to move
This is the Puja with the Bilva leaf, the Triple leafed Guna
The single-stemmed Manas
That is the puja of the Trisula, the triple pronged trikala
Give all to Sai and you are free of all the three

Poet –artist:
V. Bhaskar

Prasanthi Nilayam News

- 20 Feb 65: Baba presided over the School day Celebrations of the Zilla Parishad Higher Secondary School, Penukoda
- 25 Feb 65: Upanayanam at Prasanthi Nilayam for over 400 boys from all parts of India.
- Discourse on Gayatri by Baba; also by Pandits Br: Ghandikota Subramanya Sastry, Jonnalagadda Sathyanarayana Murthy and Sri Ramsaran K. Venkatanarasayya

- 26 Feb 65: Discourse by Baba: also by Pandits including Br. Kuppa Bairagi Sastry
Harikatha by Br. Kuchi Veerabhadra Sarma
- 1 Mar 65: Mahasivaratri
Flag hoisting in the morning by Baba: discourse by Baba
Akhand vibhuti abhishekam
Evening Discourse by Baba: also by Pandits
Lingodbhavam
Akhandabhajana
- 2&3 March: Discourses by Baba ; also by Pandits
- 2 March: Uyyalothsavam: Kaavyapatana by poets
- 7 March: Arrival from Varanasi of Swami Dattatreya on behalf of the Sanskrit University of
Benares to invite Baba for the All India Tantrik sammelan.
- 11 March: Discourse by Baba at a gathering of the Inmates of the Nilayam

"Karma is of My Nature; I manifest Myself as Karma," said Krishna, to the great consternation of Arjuna. He made it clear that all Karma is Divine, of His Essence! "It is enough if you know that Brahman—the Universal Atma—the individual and Karma are all three in Me; knowledge of this will confer release. You need not worry about the rest," said Krishna, as if He wanted to avoid further discussion. Evidently, Krishna wanted to take the chariot into the ranks of the foes and start the conflict, for time was flying fast.

But, Arjuna was adamant; he was different. Ordinary men would not have argued even so long with Krishna. Arjuna would not accept that. When Krishna says, "Do not worry about the rest," he should stop worrying. He was the right interrogator for Krishna and Krishna was just the right teacher for Arjuna; in fact, they are Nara-Narayana, is it not? Hence, the appropriateness, the interest and value of this dialogue. Arjuna was not content to leave the matter at that; he did not accept Krishna's assurance. "Tell me about the remaining three also, O Lord," he pleaded. "Save me from the coils of doubt," he prayed. "Destroy the darkness and reveal to me Your Reality," he insisted. At this Krishna melted a little. He fondly stroked Arjuna's back and replied, "Do not grieve; I shall tell you all. Adi, bhutam, about which I mentioned, is not such a formidable tangle. It is something quite within the reach of all. Everything that declines and dies, everything that has Rupa and Nama, Form and Name, is included in Adibutam.

"To put it in other words, Adibutam is Apra-prakriti; all these embodied things, on this side and on the other and everywhere are Adibutam. In spite of this, they are not different from Me," said Krishna, pausing meaningfully. He did not continue the exposition!

The ways of the Lord are known only to Him. No one else can make out their meaning and purpose. Attempting to unravel them is a fruitless task.

"They are not different from Me!" At these words Arjuna was petrified with surprise. His head became heavy with doubt. His intelligence was befogged. His conviction was shaken. Doubts multiplied in his brain in frightening sequence. Why did he suffer like this? What was the reason for all this upset?

After declaring, "I am the Sat-Chit-Ananda, the Sathya-Nitya-Entity," "I am unaffected by Death, Decline or Destruction," Krishna made the devastating admission that He was the temporary, transitional, Destructible Deha also! This was the cause of all this confusion in Arjuna's brain! Anyone would be confounded by doubt at these conflicting statements. Krishna laughed as He saw Arjuna's plight.

Still, since He had no intention of causing further delay, and since He knew the source of Arjuna's dilemma, Krishna immediately set about resolving the doubt. "Arjuna! Why do you feel lost? You are confounded because I said I am the short-lived Deha too, is it? Common folk will be shocked on hearing this. Their reaction will be to reject the idea, for it is difficult to reconcile the two. This Deha, which is temporary, transitional, and transient, has affinity with Me; for I am

the base from which it springs. Without Me, the Deha or Body can never be. This will become clear to you, on a resume of its origin. Listen to the story of the origins of the body, which clarifies the mystery. The body is primarily indebted for its emergence to the food (Anna) that the parents consume, isn't it? Where did that Anna come from? From the Earth-element; the grains and other materials which grew on the earth. And the Earth? The Prithvi-element? It proceeded from Jalatatwam, the Water-element. Tracing back, we find that the Jalatatwam emerged from Agni or the Fire-element, the Agni from Vayu, the Vayu from Aakasa and the Aakasa from the Maya of Godhead! That Maya is merely My apparel.

"My apparel, which I willed and folded around Me became Aakasa, the Aakasa got transformed into Vayu, the Vayu changed into Agni, the Agni into Jala, the Jala became Prithvi or Earth, the Earth grew grains of food, the food developed into the Body! So, it is clear, is it not, that the Deha too is Myself? Why should you entertain any doubt on this point?

"Therefore, I am Adibhutam also, as much as I am as I said before, Brahman, Adhyatman and Karma. The cause is the same as the effect; I am the Primal Cause and so I am all these effects also. I am the Paramatma; the rest are all Adidaivam. In every physical citadel or bodies, the Divine Personality named Hiranyagarbha is immanent. Just as a man is served by his senses, the Hiranyagarbha is served by the Adidaivas.

"You might wonder what the role of these Adidaivas is! They are Deities that serve the Divine Purpose: that is to say, the eye is illumined by Surya, the ear by the Deities of the Quarters, and Indra motivates the hand; these and other presiding deities are the senses of Hiranyagarbha. However great a Sadhaka might be, whatever eminence he might have reached, he can attain the Highest only through Hiranyagarbha. Hiranyagarbha is indeed Godhead; there is no distinction between the two. Is this clear, Arjuna? I am as much Adidaivam as I am Adibhutam; as much these two, as I am Brahman, Adhyatman and Karma. They are all fully Divine."

"Now for the next entity—Adiyajnam. That is also Me! This is the entity that consumes joy and grief, the result of the multifarious Karmas they are engaged in. I am the recipient of the shabda, sparsha, rupa, rasa, and gandha; through the five senses in all beings, the Adiyajna principle! I am not only the Karta, the entity responsible for the Karma; I am also the Bhokta, the entity for which that Karma is gone through, the recipient of the fruits; I am the inspirer as well as the beneficiary."

Of course, Krishna was able to open the eyes of Arjuna and clarify this truth, this fact of His being the Adiyajna. But, ordinary intellects may not be able to grasp its implications. It will be easy if we take some illustrations from life. When you want breeze, you switch on the fan; when you want light, you switch on the lamp; when you want to cook, you light the stove; when you want to address a vast audience, you fix up a mike and loudspeakers and switch them on. Or if it is printing, you require, you operate the press with a switch. Consider these as separate operations and you will notice that they are unrelated to one another. Light and air, heat and sound, are unrelated; they are distinct in every way, it would seem. But for all these, the Karta, the motivator is the same, viz., the electric current. The expressions, the manifestations may be different; but the basis, the inspiration, the latency, the base is the same. Like the current, Godhead too operates through all instruments, and awards the consequences of all the activities

of all the instruments. He is the Data of Sarva-karma-phala. Like the current, He is the inner motivator of all beings, Sarva-bhutantara-atma. Since He is the activator of all Karmas, He is called Adiyajnam.

"The Seventh is Pranava, which, when pronounced at the moment of death, awards merger with the Akshara-parabrahmam Itself!" When Krishna said this, Arjuna immediately prayed to Him to elaborate the point a little more, so that he might grasp it clearly. Krishna was only too glad to do so. 'The moment of death' does not mean some 'future point of time.' It means, 'this very moment!' Any moment might turn out to be the 'moment of death,' So, every moment is the last. Every moment must be filled with Pranava, The fate of man after death is moulded by the thought that predominated at the moment of death. That thought is the foundation on which the next birth is built. "Whoever at that time remembers Me attains My Glory, reaches me in fact." So each Karma of man, every striving of his, every Sadhana, should be aimed at sanctifying that fateful moment: the years of life must be devoted to the discipline that will bring up at that moment the thought of Paramatma or Pranava."

"What has to be discarded is the Deha, this physical case; what has to be earned is Parabrahmam, the Universal Absolute. The Deha has your Reality, your Swarupam, the undiscardable, indestructible, undying Sathyam and Nityam. That Reality is the entity called Atma, or what is the same thing, Paramatma. Since you are that, you cannot cast it off. Casting off the body is akin to shifting from a house occupied for some years, and birth is your entry into a new one. Both these are physical acts, not affecting the Atma. Arjuna! The Atma does not come in, nor does it go out. Those who are toiling in the falsehood of Dehatattwa cannot have the Atma revealed to them. The Dehatattwa is liable to decay and death. Therefore, more than the six items mentioned by Me already, the Pranava which is such a potent instrument of liberation has to be understood clearly. All the long years of life are to be utilised for this consummation—the mind being fixed on Pranava when the body is being cast off. You belch the flavour of the food you have taken; your last thought indicates the food you have fed it on."

"Your Sadgati is in accordance with your Sadhana; progress is in accordance with practice. Be always aware of the need to fix the mind on holy thoughts, when the body is got rid of. That is to say, immerse yourself in holy thought every moment of your life."

Then Arjuna inquired, "O Lord! Has one to strive for it from now on, if one wishes to get holy thoughts at the last moment of life? Can one not get them at that time itself?" The Lord realised his doubt and replied, "Your intelligence seems to have been blunted a great deal! For you are hesitating to accept the need to develop holy thoughts from now on. Arjuna! The mind has to be educated into the habit, through what is called Abhyasayoga, the discipline of constant practice. It has to be trained to avoid other thoughts and concentrate on the Lord only. Then only can you reach the Paramapurusha, the Oversoul, the Supreme Spirit. Unless you systematically teach it and train it, it will not remember the Paramapurusha at the moment of death; it cannot so remember.

"You might ask me the reason. Well. Think of your own case. You are able to use these weapons of offence and defence in the battle that is imminent because you taught yourself the art of handling them since many years, is it not? Could you have used them with confidence, without preparation, on the spur of the moment? Is it ever possible? The Kshatriya will be called

upon to wield weapons some day, so he is taught the art from childhood so that he may be ready for the emergency.

"Similarly, whatever else a man may not meet with, during life, he is certain to meet with death. So each one must be trained to have at that time the attitude and thought that are most beneficial to him. Otherwise, life itself is a failure, a waste. A person untrained for this consummation has to suffer the fate that will befall him. No one enters a battlefield in order to suffer defeat. So too, no one voluntarily accepts a fall; he seeks only progress. Will it not be wise, therefore, to strive for the end you desire, in your own best interest? Hence, every man must take earnest steps to secure the thought of the seventh item, Pranava, at the last moment of life. Whoever dies in that thought attains Me," said Krishna.

This is the entire essence of the Gita. For the goal of all man's actions is to attain the acme of progress, isn't it? That is the urge which makes him engage himself in prayers, in Japam and Dhyanam, in Archana and Tapas. All those who have placed faith in these have to remember the Goal throughout. Krishna said that Om or Pranava has to be remembered at the moment of Death. There are certain points that require elucidation in connection with this for there are many who argue that the Pranava can be repeated only by some and that others are not entitled to it. This is wrong. This false conclusion has been arrived at since they do not know the truth. It springs from a mistaken belief.

The Gita does not mention this group or that group. Krishna declares "whoever" without any qualifying words, limiting it to this class or this sex. He has not even said, "who deserves or who does not deserve," "who is authorised or who is unauthorised." He has only said that for meditation on the Pranava, (mere 'calling it to memory' is of no use) some preliminary disciplines have to be gone through, like control of the senses, the concentration of the mind, etc. For, when the mind is flitting from one fancy to another, how can the production of a sound Om, Om, by the vocal organs be of any benefit? The sound will not help the attainment of Liberation. The senses have to be curbed, thoughts have to be one-pointed, the Glory must be apprehended. That is why the Lord advised that from birth to death, one must be persistently engaged in the search for Truth. Instead, if you start on that very day, if you postpone Sadhana until the last moment, you will be like the student who turns over the pages of his textbook for the first time, just before he enters the examination hall! If the student feels that he has before him one full year and if he neglects to learn from the teacher and from lecture-notes and from books, how can anything enter his brain when he opens the pages of his text that very morning? It will only add to his despair. He can be pronounced proficient only in indolence.

No tree will yield fruits the moment you plant the seedling in your backyard. To reach that stage, you have to foster it with care over a long period of time, isn't it? Similarly, whatever result you seek, you have to follow carefully, without break, the process of preparatory disciplines. No one can acquire the fruit without such vigilance and steadfastness.

Sadhakas must be always aware of this more than anything else. The yearning must be directed away from "how to be born" towards "how to die!" For birth depends on how death takes place. Death comes first, birth happens later. Folks believe that men are born to die and they die so that they may be born. This is wrong. You are born so that you may not be born again; you die, so that you may not die again. That is to say, the man who dies must so die that he is not born again.

When once you die, you should not be born again to meet another death. Death is inevitable, if you are born; so, avoid birth and avoid death.

So, the Sadhaka should not aspire for a good birth; he should seek a good death. You may be born well, in a good family or with many favourable circumstances; but subsequent Karma may not ensure a good death. So, if a good death is aimed at, the trouble of being born and becoming once again subject to death can be avoided.

Every man born into the world must have the end of life always in view and cultivate good habits of thought and action in order to make that end genuinely auspicious. Attaining such an end is the unmistakable sign of having won the Grace of the Lord.

(To be continued)

Come and be Reborn

To see Baba is to be reborn;
To be born into a new universe,
And breathe a new air,
To hear and speak anew language
And have new aims.
This miracle happens in an instant.

The contact made, a new life begins.
A new awareness, a new zest;
Immortal longings flood our hearts.
His form is manifested Truth, Beauty and Joy.
Let us imprint it in our hearts.
He will clear the unweeded gardens of our mind,
Breathe new life into decaying values
And rid us of leaden inertia.

To see Baba is to undergo a sea-change,
To become Ananda-oriented, from being
Children of despair.
To see Baba is to meet the Stranger in ourselves,
(The stranger, none other than our submerged self)
To glimpse new depths in our spirits,
To awaken to new dimensions to our being,
To discover hidden springs of joy in us and
Make a start on the road to Realisation.

Fellow-pilgrims! Come to the Lord of Puttaparthi,
To adore and be reborn.

Let us grow up under Baba's care
Let us take our lessons from him
In sathya, dharma, shanti and Prema
Hurry and come to Sathya Sai!
He will change the very quality of our lives,
(you will not recognise your old self)
He will set free the Divyatmaswaroopam
That we have crushed under ignorance
Or under our sophisticated posturings,
He will set new goals before us,
Open new vistas, new doors
Leading to eternal bliss
At His Feet

—D. Narendar

Prasnottara Vahini

15

Tapas

- Q. Can one realise the Atma and merge, as You say, in the Pranava with this material body composed of the five elements? Can the Atma be isolated from the body? How is that done?
- A. Man can, by Dhyana and other disciplines, by the recital of the Pranava mantra, discover the Atma and isolate it from the body. It is something like getting butter from curds, oil from sesame, water from the sub-soil, fire from wood. Churning, squeezing, crushing, boring, turning—these processes are needed, that is all. What happens is the separation of the Atma from the body, the disappearance of the belief that the body is the Atma or the Self.
- Q. Swami! Many elders and sages say that we should visualise the Jivatma as Paramatma; that we should cultivate that feeling, that conviction. How is that possible?
- A. Why do you think it is difficult? Is it not easier to speak the truth, than to speak falsehood? You are now declaring a falsehood as true and so all kinds of difficulties arise; accept the truth that the Jivatma and Paramatma are the same; then things become easy. First, recognise the Atma, the “Jivatma” unrelated to the body; you can do this by Dhyana, etc. As scent is separated from flowers, sugar from cane, gold from rock, thus separate the Atma from the physical body. Then by means of Nidhidhyasana, etc. single-pointed reflection and meditation, you can visualise the Jivatma as one with Paramatma. That is the consummation of Tapas, the final Nirvana.
- Q. What exactly is Tapas, Swami?
- A. It means the end of the activities of the senses; one must be the master of all of them. There should be no trace of craving or appetite. It involves effort to attain Brahman, incessant yearning for that end; it must be expressed through moderate food and sleep: it means agony to realise the Principle. Such Tapas is called Satwic.

- Q. What then is Rajasic Tapas?
- A. Those who simply starve the body and make it weak without curbing the senses and controlling the emotions are doing only Rajasic Tapas. They do not study or meditate upon the Atmatattwa; they lay emphasis on physical asceticism.
- Q. There must be Tamasic Tapas also.
- A. There is. To propitiate the Gods for favours and then, with the favours as instruments, to desire the exploitation of the world—that is Tamasic Tapas. Only that Tapas is proper which has as its aim the attainment of God, the realisation of Brahman, the achievement of the highest Wisdom. That type of Tapas alone is approved by the Sastras. All the rest will lead you astray, away from the Goal. Only the Tapas approved by the Sastras deserves that name. The others are Tamas, not Tapas. Tapas means ‘heat’; the heat burns out sin and reduces all Karma to ashes.
- Q. The Sastras say that the Rishis had in their Ashrams things like the Chintamani jewel, the Kalpavriksha and also the Kamadhenu, which gave them whatever they wished for. I cannot understand why they should do Tapas at all. Please make this clear to me.
- A. Think about it well. Then you will know that Chintamani is not a jewel, nor Kalpavriksha a tree, nor Kamadhenu a cow. They are all names for the fruits of Tapas. They are powers that automatically accrue to a person as a result of Tapas. He realises all that he wishes for. It is called Kalpavrikshasiddhi. When he subdues all desire, it is called Kamadhenusiddhi. What is the Chintamanisiddhi? It is the stage when you have no Chinta or worry or mental agitation, a stage when all sorrow is kept afar. When Chinta ends and the supreme Ananda is won, it is Chintamanisiddhi. Chinta must disappear from thought, word and deed.
- Q. They also speak of mental Tapas. What does that mean?
- A. Observe control of speech: cultivate purity of feeling; practise humility: let your thoughts be always on the Brahmatattwa. Then you can be said to be in mental Tapas.
- Q. And physical Tapas?
- A. That too is good, in its own way. Revering elders, spiritual teachers, saints and sages and God make for purity. Non-violence, sympathy with all beings, straightforwardness, all contribute to physical well-being, health and wholesomeness. Mental Tapas leads to the purity of the mind. Verbal control or Tapas leads to purity of speech. By these three, the precious possessions of Kamadhenu, Kalpavriksha and Chintamani are attained. They are attainments, not just cows, trees or jewels.
- Q. Are there any who have attained Brahmatattwa and Dharmatattwa with the help of their success in Tapas? Who are they? Please tell me.
- A. Kapilamahamuni attained Brahmatattwa, Jaimini-mahamuni attained Brahmatattwa, Narada became a Brahmarishi, Bhagiratha brought the Ganga down, Gouthama persuaded the Godavari to flow on earth, Valmiki realised the force of Ramamantram and was enabled to compose the Ramayana, Gargi was established in Brahmacharya and Sulabha in spiritual wisdom—all through Tapas alone. Why go on quoting examples one after the other? Through Tapas, even Brahma and Rudra become one’s collaborators.
- Q. Swami! In order to reach this high stage, do you say that birth in a high caste is necessary? Or is Sadhana of a high order enough?
- A. Caste without character is meaningless; it is just an empty label. Sadhana, without the base of character, is like the journey of a blind man. Morality, virtue, character—these are vital. On the basis of these, if Sadhana is done according to the scheme laid down for

the path one has selected, then there is no doubt of success. But you must take note of a caution that is essential. You must not give place to sloth, simply because jati or birth is not important. Neeti or moral standards accrue according to Jati also; and so, to foster them, the consciousness of Jati is helpful and important. But, if through the accumulated merit of past births, one has the treasure of goodness and virtue, then one need not attach much importance to Jati. Only those who practised Yoga in previous births and who could not complete the process will have that type of excellence. The main thing is to acquire the Neeti that is prescribed for the Jati, foster the Jati with Neeti, and make yourself fit and full, with al high status in life. For some distance on the path of Sadhana and spirituality, both Jati and Neeti will help. The Gunas will be sublimated through these two.

Q. Therefore, there must be some who, through the merit of previous lives, have attained Godhead. Give some instances please.

A. My dear man! You should not seek to discover the source of a river or the ancestry of a Rishi. They may be quite unimpressive. You should be satisfied with their services. Their experience is what is most valuable; be inspired by them, be led by them to similar efforts. If you go in search of the beginnings, you lose the vital core. Still, since you have raised the question, I shall tell you. Vyasa was born of the fisherman caste, Sounaka was of the Sunaka clan; Agasthya was born in a pot; Viswamitra was a Kshatriya, Sootha was born in: the fourth caste. In addition, we, have among those who were virtuous and good, who had their eyes always on the moral standards of their Jati and Neeti, who renounced all and stuck to the ideal of liberating themselves from the bondage of birth and death and the illusion of physical values: Sanjaya, Satyakama and many more. My dear man! Self-effort, Viveka, Tapas—these qualify man to attain the highest status. Without purity of the inner instruments, no man, however high his caste, can reach the Highest. If inferior copper is added to gold, the alloy loses in value. Just as pure gold becomes an alloy through contact with copper, the Universal, the Viraat-rupa, gets the inferior ego added to it in this Samsara. The Viraatrupa becomes transformed into the Jivi. Now, what has to be done to get back the real gold-tattwa? Through Tapas and Vrata, through polishing and cleansing the Buddhi, the original stage has to be regained. You wash the feet after walking through the mire; the mind too has to be washed of the mire of attachment to objects. Jnana alone can burn the seeds of attachment so that they may not sprout again. So, if a person has the treasure of Jnana, he gets liberated easily.

Harsha-Varsha

Baba left Brindavan at Whitefield on the 21st March and reached Madras that night; He proceeded to Sullurpet in Nellore District on the 22nd and there, He laid the foundation stone for the spacious Chhatram that is being established for the convenience of the pilgrims who come in large numbers to the famous temple of Chengalamma, which has made the place celebrated from very ancient times. Baba addressed the thousands of people from the surrounding villages who had gathered to have His Darsan. He then left for Gudur and then He journeyed to Manikonda, near Vijayawada, where He stayed on the 23rd, during the hours of daytime.

On the 23rd, Baba left Manikonda about dusk and reached Kakinada about midnight. There, the members of the Sai Bhakta Mandali welcomed Him most enthusiastically. They had made elaborate arrangements for the Opening by Him of the Sai Baba Temple at the Rangayya Naidu Street in the Old Town. On the 24th, Baba inaugurated the Temple and also the three-day session of the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha at Kakinada. About thirty thousand citizens had the Darshan of Baba that day and they heard His Divine Message calling upon them to realise themselves as repositories of Divinity itself. Since the narrow road space in front of the Temple afforded very little accommodation for the immense gathering that flooded the area, the sessions on the 25th and the 26th were shifted to the Sports Stadium of Engineering College, where the enthusiastic cooperation and devotion of the Principal, the members of the Staff and the student workers created in a very short time, all the facilities for the seating in comfort of more than fifty thousand men, women and children, who had collected from all the surrounding villages to have Baba's Darshan and to be inspired by His Message. The whole area was lit beautifully, and decorated charmingly; an elevated platform was put up, the wide drains were bridged over; the area was divided into sections, and fenced from each other. Student volunteers and volunteers from the City provided drinking water for the devotees who had gathered from the morning hours at the site of the meeting.

On the 25th, Sri Dantu Bhaskara Rao, M.L.A., presided over the meeting and welcomed Baba's Missions of the rejuvenation of the ancient Dharma of this land. Baba spoke of the essentials of Sanathana Dharma and exhorted all to follow the strengthening ideals of our religion, which emphasises the Divinity that is embedded in Man. On the 26th Baba left for the village of Sampara, 12 miles away from Kakinada, a village that is saturated with Sai Bhakti, where from hundreds of people have come to Puttaparthi on pilgrimage. He was accompanied by Br. Varanasi Subramanya Sastry and Br Bulusu Appana Sastry; Baba was accorded a most sincere welcome by the simple rural folk, who gathered on both sides of the road all along the route. At the village, there were scenes of enthusiastic devotion and Baba responded by a Divine Discourse on the need for a greater flow of love among the people and a greater spirit of service which knows no faction or misunderstanding.

In the evening, the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha Sessions was presided over by Sri Lakkaraju Subbarao, formerly Vice Chancellor of the Andhra Pradesh University. He stressed on the need to live up to the principles of the Hindu Way of Life and called upon all to listen to and follow the Message of the Religious Leaders of the Modern Age in India.

After the meeting at Kakinada was over, Baba left for Pithapuram, with Br Varanasi Subramanya Sastry, a respected resident of the place. Baba addressed a huge gathering inside the fort. The audience even at that late hour, was about thirty thousands Baba said that the ancient Fort which was the scene of generous gifts for the promotion of Vedic and Sastric learning and for the fostering of temples and religious institutions had, in spite of the bad days into which it had fallen through age and non-use, realised itself that day, when such an unprecedented gathering of devotees had assembled under its shadow and listened to the voice of the Divine Message. Baba then left for Yelamanchile, in the Vizag Dt., about 65 miles off. He reached the place after midnight.

It was quite a surprise for even the organisers of Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha there to find next day that about a lakh of people had collected in that little town. From all parts of the district and even from Orissa. The local Committee had made excellent arrangements and the huge gathering listened to the Divine Voice in calm comfort. Baba left for Amalapuram, in the Central Godavari Delta the same night, Via Dhowliswaram.

At Amalapuram, where Baba was to inaugurate and preside over the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha during a stay of two days, there were more than lakh of eager expectant faces, lit with joy to welcome Him. They had come from all the quarters by car and bus, by boat and launch, in cycle and bullock cart, trudging along the canal banks, all drawn by the rare chance of seeing Baba and hearing His voice.

The local committee had made elaborate arrangements for the reception and stay of the vast masses that poured into The Town. The meetings were held in the Playing Grounds of the Zilla parishad Higher Secondary School, where excellent arrangements were made for the seating of all the many thousands that had come. Every house was alight with joy, every face was beaming with a strange satisfaction. Many learned Pundits like Br. Remilla Suryaprakasa sastry, Aravalli Venkatanarasimhacharyulu, and others spoke on the essentials of Vedanta and Dharma.

On the 29th, Baba unveiled at the Main Hall of the Higher Secondary School, the portraits of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda.

At Kakinada, Yelamanchile and at Amalapuram, the people were so thirsty for the Darshan of Baba that they collected in huge groups before the bungalows where He Stayed. They waited in the hot sun or in the darkness of night for His arrival or departure from the building or for His presenting Himself before them at the portico or on the terrace. Baba felt the depth of that yearning; he melted for the suffering they underwent, the long miles they had waited for this chance. So, He came out once every ten or fifteen minutes and gave the coveted Darshan and sent the groups away, full of joy. At Amalapuram, it did not stop with Darshan even. On the 29th, Baba not only gave darshan to the waiting groups but he quenched their thirst by discourses from the Portico of the Bungalow where He stayed! It can safely be said that between the 24th, and the 29th March, Baba had given more than 6 lakhs of people unique chances of Darshan and of Shravana of his Voice. All were impressed and thrilled by Baba's Grace and Universal Love.

On the 30th, at 9 A.M., Baba inaugurated at the Kasi Visweswara Temple at Innespet, Rajahmundry, the 3-day Rudrayaga arranged by the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha Committee of the place. In the evening the meeting was attended by at least thirty thousand devotees. Hon'ble Sri P. V. Narasimha Rao, Minister for Law, Andhra Pradesh presided. He said: This is a day which I shall never forget in my life; it will be written in letters of gold in my memory, for I have today, through the Grace of Baba, this unique chance of presiding over a meeting where He is present. I have no credentials for this honour, for, this, is not political meeting or election gathering or the inauguration of something like a Public Health Centre, for all of which I am invited. Here, I do not preside at all; I only sit for sometime in the splendour cast by Baba all around Him, in a kind of reflected glory and get caught with Him in the snaps that these camera men take. India has a vast heritage of truths discovered by sages who have seen discovered by sages who have seen God face to face and who have had direct contact with

Reality. But, the pity is that most of that heritage is not put into daily practice by the people at large. They are at best individual possessions, they have not percolated into habits and modes and elevated the tone of social life. That is why prophets like Baba, who is the foremost of such powerful Personalities in the land today, have to spread the teachings among the common people of the country and win their hearts back into these ancient Ideals and Sadhanas.

“There is a moral order which man obeys by his very nature. There is a harmony and sense of proportion in Nature which man can disturb only with great difficulty. But, on account of the artificiality of civilisation, man has a warped sense of duty and obligation and a distorted set of rights on which he insists. This situation is worse than having no sense of values at all. What is wanted now is to redirect man along the path of Harmony and Order from which he has strayed. Baba is engaged in this task and all of us must, not merely worship Him, and fall at His feet, but also follow His teachings to the best of our ability. Mere material prosperity without spiritual discipline is fraught with great danger. I remember now the words spoken to me by an officer of high status in one of the States of India. An irrigation project had brought sudden prosperity to a region which until then was waste-land, but, in its wake, the improvement in the economic condition brought a harvest of crimes and a rapid downfall of all standards. He said that he saw this phenomenon with His own eyes, and had to deal with it. So, it is very necessary that people have to be trained to meet prosperity bravely without yielding to its ruinous temptations. Even in the West where nations have all the equipment for the highest standard of life and are putting it to full use, thinkers have felt that the ground is falling away under their very feet and that they are threatened by a general breakdown of the moral foundations of society. Baba has incarnated in order to save mankind from this downfall, and our duty, therefore, is to listen reverentially to His message and endeavour to realise it in our daily lives.”

Baba elaborated on the same theme and spoke the need for drawing inspiration from the experiences of Sages which are treasured in the Vedas and Sastras. Man is deluded into believing that he is limited and subject to the blasts of grief and defeat. He is by nature immortal; he is Sat, chit and Ananda, Baba declared. If only man realised this, Baba said, man can be calm and unaffected; all His activities will be of the highest benefit for all. On the 31st march, Sri V. K. Rao, I.C.S presided over the Sessions of the sabha. He referred to the dramatic achievements of science in the West and quoted from the great scientists themselves to emphasise the failure of science and technology to realise the Reality of Nature. Eddington and Einstein confessed that there was something beyond the reach of the intellect, that could be grasped only by spiritual practice and discipline. Baba said that man could do more good to himself and the world by exploring His inner consciousness and inner reality than by rocketing round the globe or nosing about the skies among the many stars. Man seeks to know all about others, but remains ignorant about himself! This is the fundamental tragedy of modern man. It has led Him to discontent and despair divisions and death, said Baba.

On the 1st April, the third and final day of the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha Baba reviewed the activities of the Sabha since its Inauguration. He said that it had brought in to the lives of people a greater awareness of the great and creative role which our Pandits, who are repositories of our culture, can play in the revival of our ancient dharma and our sense of spiritual values. It has also made the Pandits themselves more conscious of their responsibilities in guiding and helping the common people to realise true spiritual knowledge. “A few years ago,” Baba said, “people who

attended the meetings of Adhyatmic societies could be counted on the fingers of one's hand. Now these meetings are attracting lakhs. We see true signs of moral and spiritual revolution. That itself is something that should really gratify all of us. The great truths which are placed before them by the learned speakers and the knowledge of our Dharma which they acquire at these gatherings will certainly transform their outlook and conduct—slowly no doubt, but steadily.”

On the 2nd April at 10 A.M. Poornahuthi was offered at the Rudrayagam in Baba's presence. As mentioned in the Sastras, the Yaga proved its efficacy for, on all the three days, Rajahmundry experienced mild showers which cooled the air and on the 2nd April within an hour after the Poornahuthi, the rain came down in torrents, to the thankful admiration of all.

On the 1st April, the last day of Rajahmundry session of the sabha, Br. Mallavajjula Subbaraya Sastri spoke on the “Yoga-vasishta.” Br. Vemparala Suryanarayana Sastri explained the meaning of the Upadesa Panchankam, composed by Sri Sankaracharya for the guidance of Sadhakas and Br. Kalluri Veerabhadra Sastri described the yearning of Thyagaraja for a vision of Rama, with quotations from the kirtanas of the saint-singer. Baba elaborated on the concept of Bhakti. He pointed out from the experiences of the Gopis, of Hanuman and other Bhaktas how Bhakti fills the entire being with the vision of the One who is adored. Speaking of the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha, Baba said, “If you are curious to know what this Sabha has achieved during these two years, look at this gathering and at the lakhs of people who gathered at all the other places, people who gladly bore all discomforts in order to listen to the message of Dharmic Revival. Formerly, meetings where religion or ethics or philosophy was expounded attracted only a handful of listeners, but now the number had increased a thousand-fold. The hunger for spiritual knowledge, the yearning for sadhana has increased. The ideas implanted in your hearts will grow into fruit yielding trees. Foster them carefully. My Grace will strengthen your efforts.”

On the 2nd April at 10 A.M. amidst a large gathering of devotees, the poornahuthi of the yagam was offered in the Divine Presence of Baba, the Yajna-Purusha Himself. Sastras declare that Rudra yagam, like all yajnas, pleases the gods, who send down rain in thankfulness to keep humanity prosperous. Well, on all the three days of the yajna, there were showers during the hottest hours of the day at Rajahmundry and on the 2nd, within an hour of the poornahuthi, there was torrential rain, flooding the town. Baba said that this declared the validity of the Sastras

In the evening, Baba presided over a mammoth gathering at the Hindu Samaj where the Gita committee honoured three revered Sanskrit Scholars of renown: 1) Bulusu Appanna Sastri, famous as “Tarkarathna” and “Nyayavedantavidya pravina” 2) Varanasi Subrahmanya Sastri known throughout India as “Bala Vyasa” and a gifted scholar in Nyaya, Vyakarana and Vedanta, and 3) Kolluri Somasekhara Sastri, famous as “Darsana Bhushana” and Chathusthantiri. These three doyens of Sanskrit learning are also members of the central committee (the Kendra Parishad) of the Prasanthi vidwan mahasabha. Remilla Suryaprakasa Sastri extolled their achievements and services. He drew attention to a number of significances: the New Year Day, the advent of the Spring Festival, the approach of Ramanavami, (the Nine Day festival associated with Sri Rama the Embodiment and Promoter of Dharma) and the presence of Sai Rama whose Advent also is for promoting Dharma. The three Pandits in their thanks giving addresses emphasised the value of Gita, on which all of them have spent years of study and Sadhana. Br

Appanna Sastry described it as the “Essence of the Vedas”; Br Subramanya Sastry declared that the Gita could calm all the hesitations of modern inquirers and Br Somasekhara Sastry described how the Gita came to be characterised as an Upanishad, a Yoga and as Brahma Vidya. Baba said that the Gita which emanated from Madhava must touch a chord in every Manava heart, because Madhava is installed therein, whether man is aware of His presence or not! He explained the word “Yoga” which is used after the words Bhakti, Karma, Jnana and in the title of every chapter of the Gita Yoga means “Karmasu Kousalam,” skill in action and He said that only actions done without sensual desire and in a spirit of surrender can be skilful. He declared that, when each one is aware of Atma, the supreme Reality, he will shine as a pillar of Light, spreading Prema.

On the 3rd April, Baba visited kadali and Razole in the East Godavari Dt. and thence He motored to Sathyavada, near tanuku in West Godavari Dt. Reaching the village at about 3 A.M. About 30000 people had assemble in that place before day-break and Baba satisfied their yearning for Darshan, climbing with the help of a ladder on to a flat slab over the door-way of a neighbour’s gate, and standing there in the sun so that all could fill their eyes with the Divine Splendour of His Form. By 4 P.M. the gathering had increased to over 50000 and they filled every bit of blank space in the village including the terraces roofs and treetops. Baba addressed the gathering for about an hour, on the purification of instincts and impulses by the yearning for God-realisation. He then left via tanuku for Repalle in the Guntur Dt. spending a few minutes with devotees at Chebrole and at Eluru on the way.

At Repalle, where Baba had installed the image of Sai Baba some years ago, the people gathered in lakhs for His darshan. On the 5th April, Baba moved amidst the Bhaktas during Bhajan in the vast Pandal, which was magnificently decorated and in the evening. He gave a short discourse. On the 6th, he spoke for a longer time from 10 A.M. and gave Darshan to a far larger gathering than on the previous day. He left Repalle at 2 p.m. for Madras via Manikonda and Venkatagiri.

These fifteen days of Digvijaya was a veritable season of Harshavarsha (Shower of Joy) for the thirsty populace of the regions which he blessed.

God-Man, Man-God

Valmiki asked Narada, “At the present time, is there a man who is full of virtues, possessed of heroic prowess, who knows the principles of righteousness, who is aware of the service rendered to Him and is grateful for the same, who is truthful in speech, who adheres to His resolutions without being agitated, who is established in moral conduct, who is friendly to all beings, who is full of knowledge, who is capable of undertaking any task, whose form is pleasing to all who see Him, who has subdued His senses and is conscious of His Atmic reality, who has conquered anger, who is endowed with spiritual splendour, who is free from envy and fault-finding, who causes even the gods to dread His fury when he is provoked into battle?” The question apparently is about a *man*, a Nara but, all the traits are found only in God! Narada responds in the same language.

He says, “I shall tell you of a *man* (Nara) who has all these qualities. He is born in the Ikshvaku line as the son of Dasaratha, as the promoter of the joy of Kausalya. He then gives Valmiki a short resume of the story of Rama. Thus, Rama is introduced as a Nara, and seldom in the Ramayana is he explicitly spoken of as God. Rama himself declares “Aatmaanam maanusham manye, Ramam Dasarathaathmajam” “Know that I am a man, Rama the son of Dasaratha.”

This play-acting by God as man, of Narayana as Nara is based on the very need that brought about the advent of Rama. Brahma who led the gods to the seat of Vishnu prayed that he should incarnate himself as *man*, because Ravana, the Rakshasa leader who by His ascetic achievements and spiritual loot had kept the Sun and Moon in bondage, the Five Elements in dread of His displeasure and all morality at bay, could be killed only by a man!.

Thena Gandharva yakshaanaam
Devathaanaam cha rakshasaam
Avadhyo/smeethi vaagukthaa
Thathethyuktham cha thanmayaa.

“He prayed, let me prove incapable of being killed by the Gandharvas, the Yakshas, the devatas or the gods, and the rakshashas. I uttered the words, “So be it.” Therefore, Ravana has become so proud and overbearing; he is casting off all respect for virtue and spiritual attainments. But, there is one method of destroying Him and one only. For,

Naa keerthayad avajnaanaath
Thad raksho maanushaamsthadaa
Thasmaad Sa Maanushaadvadhyo
Mrythurnaanyo/sya vidyathe

He did not mention human being in that list, because he was full of contempt for them. Therefore, Ravana is capable of being killed by a man, and only by a man. Otherwise, there is no death for Him!”

Therefore, Vishnu agreed to be born as man and Rama played the role very consistently, declaring, “Aathmaanam maanusham manye.” In spite of this, however, the Divinity of Rama is apparent at every step to any one who watches for deeper meanings and significances. To take just one example: the Ahalya episode.

The curse that was pronounced by Gouthama on his unfaithful spouse, Ahalya was:

Iha varsha sahasraani
Bahooni thwam nivasishyasi;
Vaathabhakshaa niraahaaraa
Thapyanthee bhasmasayinee
Adrayaa sarvabhoothanam
Aasramesmin vasisshyasi

“You will reside here for many thousands of years, without food, living on air alone, lying on ashes, full of remorse, unperceived by all created beings.” Nirahara, means as used in the Bhagavad-Gita, “without any of the senses being fed with what they crave for” and the Gita says that those who follow that discipline, will be rid of even the least trace of desire, only when “they see Paramatma.”—“Paramdrshthaa.” (II-59)

So, whom must Ahalya see for her Nirahara discipline to bear fruit? Let Gouthama who dictated the discipline, give the Answer.

Yadaa chethadwanam ghoram
Ramo dasarathaathmajam
Aagamishyathi durdharshah
Thada poothaa bhavishyasi

When Rama, the son of Dasaratha comes into this dread forest, you will be rendered pure. So, Rama is the Param. That is the self-evident. But, what does Rama do, when Ahalya is freed from the curse and became visible? Since she is a holy Rishipatni, he “bowed to her feet in great joy” and she in turn, remembering Gauthama’s words, offered Padyam, Argyam, etc according to the tradition of hospitality. Thus the play-acting is continued throughout the entire Ramayana, God as man, man as God

Prasanthi Nilayam News

March 21 to April 12: Baba toured Nellore Krishna E & W Godavari Vizag and Guntur Dist.

April 13 to 16: Baba at Madras

Ordinary folk do not get the mind fixed on Madhava so easily, at the point of death. It presupposes long training, previous achievement of certain accomplishments, what is called Purva samskara. The mind must have gone through a certain course of discipline; it has to be Yogayukta, possessed of Yoga. Even that is not enough. The mind must discard all other thoughts as low and inferior, defiling even. This disgust towards all other objects should grow in strength. When these two are present, the thought of Madhava will certainly emerge and be steady during the last moments. So, your mind is the important thing; when the mind rots, all else rots; man is rendered rotten. Man moves as fast as his mind, in the direction that the mind takes. To tame and train the mind, good habits and disciplines have to be sought. Therefore, Krishna began describing how the Lord has to be pictured in the mind during the Sadhana stages and with what feelings and emotions He has to be fixed in the mind.

"Arjuna! People describe Me in three different ways: (1) as Nirguna Nirakara (2) as Saguna Nirakara and (3) as Saguna Sakara. I shall tell you about the second, the Saguna Nirakara first, and how you have to picture the Lord in this aspect. Listen He is described as Kavi, Puranam, Anusaasitha, Subtler than the Subtle, the Sustenance and Basis of All, having Unpicturable Form, with the Splendour of the Sun as His Complexion, beyond all trace of Ignorance and Darkness."

At this point, Arjuna interrupted Krishna He asked, "Lord! You said, He is a Kavi! There are Kavis among ordinary mortals too. How then can you call the Lord too a Kavi and discredit Him? Or, does Kavi denote something special when applied to Him? Make that point a little clearer." Krishna agreed. He said, "Kavi" does not mean merely a poet; it means also one who is aware of the past, present and future and so it is a description of the Lord. He knows all; He sees all. Hence, the derivation of Kavi is mentioned as 'Sarvajna, Kranta-darsi', He who sees the next step. It is the Lord who revolves in every heart and effects changes from step to step. Why dilate on this long? For all creation, Kavi is the motivator, the prime basis. He is the Immortal Poet; His Poem is all this." Arjuna again inquired, "Lord, secondly, you said 'Purana', that He is Purana, or Ancient; what is the significance of that?" Krishna replied, "Of course the Lord is the most ancient, but, He is as moderns as He is ancient. He is Sanathana, primeval, beyond the beginning; He is also Nootana, new every moment. Purana, means, puraa navamiti, formerly new, new every minute of the past, and the present."

"And, then, the word, Anusaasitha?"

"Independent, unchecked, Master. He lays down the conduct of all. The Five Elements execute His orders. They cannot overstep the limits laid down for them by Him. His laws govern also the inner world of all beings, as no human law can. He operates in the regions of the mind."

"The fourth expression you used is that He is Anoraneeyan, Subtler than the Subtle."

" Subtle...? Perhaps, you thought that subtle indicates a diminutive microscopic body! No, no. The expression, 'Subtler than the subtle' means, nirguna, characteristic-less, devoid of qualities; something that you cannot fathom with the help of the eye and the ear and the rest of the senses. A thing becomes subtler with the reduction of its characteristics; if it has more it is less subtle. Shabda sparsha rupa rasa gandha—these are the characteristics of the five elements: Aakasa, Agni, Jala, and Prithvi. Prithvi has all the five: jala has only four; Agni has three: Rupa Sparsha and Shabda; Vayu has just Sparsha and Shabda; Aakasa has only one, Shabda. That is to say, each of these is subtler than the rest and Aakasa is the subtlest of all. This is self-evident. Prithvi or the earth is just stationary, water or Jala is subtler and so, it flows. Agni or fire is subtler than water and so, it rises up and Vayu or air which is even more subtle can sweep on all sides. Aakasa has just one characteristic, Shabda; it has no 'touch', or 'form' or taste or scent. The Lord who is beyond these five elements has none of these characteristics; so He is subtler than the subtlest! He is all-pervasive, immanent in all. It is the characteristic that makes the thing heavy. The Lord has no such burden; so, He is subtler than everything else.

Next, about the fifth expression: Sarvadhara. There are two categories: Aadhar and Aadheya. All that is seen by the eye or heard by the ear, (why the entire Creation) is Aadheya, the based; they are all composed of the Five elements. Well. The five elements all Aadheya; for, they are based on the Basis-Brahmam. Brahmam is the Only Basis; It is not based on another entity, for, there is no Second. Therefore, He is Sarvadhara, the Basis of All.

The sixth too, I shall make clew to you; listen. Achintya rupam, with an Un-picturable Form, a Form that cannot be delineated or imagined. For, He is beyond the reach of the Mind and it is the mind that pictures delineates or imagines. So, His rupam or Form is Achintya or incapable of being imagined by the mind. You might hesitate to accept this. But, listen. The mind is matter: it is inert. It is fleeting. But, Brahmam or Paramatma is pure 'Consciousness'; It is eternal everlasting, imperishable. It and Mind are at opposite poles; the fleeting and the fixed—they are totally unrelated. One dies the other remains! The inert and the active: they are unrelated qualities.

The question may rise in your mind: what then is the Sadhaka to do? Oh, he is not deprived of hope. Let him picture the Paramatma as unpicturable, that is enough. Dwell on such thoughts as this and the fruit will be vouchsafed unto you. Let the Sadhaka first learn the channels along which his thoughts should run."

At this, Arjuna pleaded with Krishna thus: Lord, let us proceed; time is running fast. We cannot be stationary in this battlefield, without assuming any responsibility or making any decision. War is facing us with open jaw, ready to swallow and overwhelm. I am ready to obey the instruction you might be pleased to give me; only, let there be no delay. So quickly enlighten me about the seventh attribute of the Saguna-nirakara. "Yes; the seventh is: Adityavarnam, with the Splendour of the Sun, as His complexion." This means, "He is self-effulgent, as the Sun; He is independent; He is the Source of the Light He shines with." He is the effulgence of the Sun, remember. He makes the Sun shine. So, He is named Aditya. I shall tell you about the eighth too, straightaway. "Thamasah Parasthaath"—"Beyond Darkness"—He is the Witness of Darkness or Ajnana. For, Para means Witness, one unaffected; and, no darkness can compare with Ajnana, it

is so deep and so dangerous. Now, Maya is another word for this Ajnana and so, Tamasah parasthaat, means, "beyond Maya."

"Arjuna! Just close your eyes for a moment; what is it that you experience? Complete Darkness, isn't it? How did you know that it is dark? You cannot see Darkness; then, how did you announce that there was darkness there? So, there are two entities there—darkness and he who sees the darkness, isn't it so? If you are yourself darkness, how can you see the darkness? No; you are the Seer and so, you are not darkness. Darkness is that which is seen: the Seer is you; you are the witness.

Just think of another fact: Man very often condemns himself as an ignoramus, but, if he were really an ignoramus or a fool, how is he able to recognise his own ignorance? Where did he get that knowledge from? When did that Jnana enter him? And how?

A-jnana is the "seen"; Jnana is the "seer". You are the Drk which sees the Drishya, A-jnana. In the same way, all the eight descriptions above have to be contemplated upon. That is the correct meditation of the form of the Lord."

Arjuna asked, "Krishna! Is such meditation alone enough or has it to be supplemented by something else?"

"Of course, when this meditation is practised, care should be taken to see that the mind is concentrated on that thing only. It should not pursue diverse objectives. It must attach itself to that One Supreme, Love and Devotion, Prema and Bhakti. Usually, man's love gets fastened on trifling temporary things and gets entangled in many set-backs and sorrows. So the love has to be withdrawn from such objects and centered on the Lord. That is real Bhakti.

I shall tell you briefly what Bhakti consists in, listen! Bhakti is the complete identification of one's mental activities with those of the Ideal on which attachment is centred."

Here, Arjuna intercepted and asked; "How is that ever possible, O Lord?" "It is possible, Arjuna. Control the senses, let the mind be effaced as much as possible and let the heart be purified, let the vital airs be uplifted into the highest region of the Seersha, let the individual be established in the Atmic truth, and let the Pranava be the only point of attention at the moment of the Prana leaving the body—such a one comes to Me and joins with Me; His mental activities become the same as Mine," said Krishna.

Here, readers should fix their attention on what the Lord told Arjuna. The Lord spoke of the control of the senses, not their destruction. Control means: under one's behests, obedient to the will. Destruction means: denial of activity, full inaction. The Lord also said of *all* the senses, not of any one or two only. Man must keep all senses under his control and use them only when the purposes for which they have been devised are to be fulfilled. They should not be let loose, just because one has them. Give them the functions they are designed for, but, do not allow them to overmaster you and ruin you. Let them work strictly on regulated lines. That is the Lord's intention.

There is another thing too. You must reason out and discover what exactly will expand your heart and what will breed disquiet; then, hold fast to the former and give up the latter. Or else, straying in devious paths like an insane ape, you will have to twist and turn in confusion. What is the cause of all the troubles and discontent to which many are subjected nowadays? It is the improper use they make of the senses. Believe in this, for there is no other reason for them to suffer so.

Who are the proper exits and entrances through each door—you must decide and carefully watch. What must enter by one door should not use for that purpose some other door; if it does, then, that house will have only discontent, confusion, disorder. It is wiser to take precautions against such disorder before entrance is effected, rather than deal with the intruder after he has come in, through the wrong door. You may excuse the trespass, for the first time; but certainly, you must take enough care to see that it is not repeated. That is the better method, though not the best.

Again, Arjuna felt a doubt arising in him: If the senses are bound, how can the Om be pronounced? Krishna understood this. He took up the matter Himself. "Arjuna! Om has to be pronounced in the mind not through the mouth only as a sensory organ! " Arjuna raised another question to relieve himself of another doubt. "You said, Japathonaasthi pathkam, he who does Japam has no sin; but, if Japam cures one's sins only, what happens to Liberation, Moksha? Evidently, Japam is powerless to bring that about Japam will not enable one to concretise the Lord."

The Lord was happy when Arjuna mentioned this doubt. "Partha! Of course, your question is a very important one; but, let Me tell you, Moksha need not be sought after separately or specially, apart from other objectives. If the Om is recited and the significance of the Om, that is to say, the Lord, is meditated upon, then the Lord is attained by you; in other words you are liberated." Arjuna insisted on his point; he asked, "Lord! Is it ever be possible for Japam to bring about both results? Of course it is easy for You to describe all this so quickly, but, trouble starts when we follow the path of Japam and Dhyanam."

Krishna replied, "It is just for this purpose that I mentioned at the very start about Abhyasa-yoga, the worth of Practice or Abhyasa. Practice, steady Practice will ensure you both results, Freedom from Sin and Liberation. Probably, you do not realise the importance of Practice. O foolish one, don't you see how practice makes the mere animal execute difficult tasks? Why should I elaborate on this now? Look at these horses yoked to your chariot, these elephants arranged on the field, they render assistance in battle which even man with the superior equipment of reason cannot give! Just consider how this was made possible. Where have elephants dwelling in the forest observed the tactics of battle? Or, do you hold that fighting on the battle-field is their nature? No, their present skill is proof of the value of Practice, Abhyasa.

Similarly, practice the withdrawal of the mind from the senses, steadily for a long time; then it will develop useful skills which will release you from bondage. Let Me tell you, those who repeat with their last breath the sacred Pranava do attain the Lord." Krishna said this with great emphasis.

Arjuna did not sit quiet; he made bold to put another query. "Lord! It is good that those who repeat the Pranava with their last breath attain the Lord. But, what about those who do not? Their number is certainly much larger. Have they no chance release? In the Court of the Almighty, are only some superiors to be honoured with seats? Have the miserable and the poor no accommodation at all? Let it be so. Tell me, where they can go, where they will be admitted."

"Arjuna! You are falling into a great error beware. The Lord does not discriminate between the weak and the strong or the high and the low. Such outlook will never warp His Vision. All are entitled to His Grace; all are entitled to enter His Durbar Hall. Its doors are ever open. No guards are there to bar the entrance of any one. No one is prevented; no one is invited. All are welcome to enter. What can any one do if some do not approach the door? Those who desire warmth have to go near enough to the fireside and sit there. Those who stand afar can know only the light that emerges from that fireside. What do you say of that man who, standing afar, declares that the fire has no warmth? He certainly is not sane. All who yearn for the Presence, all who desire to enter the Durbar of the Lord and who strive in their mind constantly for the fruition of that desire, all have admission and accommodation there. It is not every one that can repeat the Pranava at the last moment; that is reason why, constant remembrance of the Lord is said to have the power of inducing the Lord to bear burden of your Yogakshema, happiness here and hereafter. Of course, this too has to be practised long. Practice means Sadhana; Sadhana gains everything, sadhana, steady and strong. Fixing attention on Me to the exclusion of all else—that is the me attaining Me."

(To be continued)

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Flags And Festoons

"He comes" "He comes" "He comes" they dreamed
They pined and prayed for years.
At last, he came, the lord they loved
The God they gladly served, adored!

O, 'twas flags and festoons all the way
Sixteen miles of soulful Joy and Jai,
Flowers, and arches of fragrant faith.

With folded hands, they flanked the road;
Their eyes did feast on Baba's form
From furrowed field and farm and fence
From sick-bed, shop, cowshed and pen
They raced to reach the road:

Stalwart youth and shivering age
Toddlers, children, boys and girls,
Maids and mothers, grandpas, grannies—

They beamed in bliss, from head to foot (!)
As they glimpsed their God inside the car;
The God who dwelt inside their heart!

They lined the roofs, they climbed the trees,
(Every branch had a bunch of heads!)
They stood on crumbling walls for hours;
They braved the gasping run, the thorny bough,
The ache in the knee, thirst on the tongue.
All faces bloomed all throats got hoarse;
Content was carved on every breast,
When the red-robed Lord was seen

'Twas once again the sacred scene
Of cows and cowherds converging on the Lord!
Baba saw Brindaban, in every eye that gleamed.

(Inspired by the devoted enthusiasm of the villagers of Sampara, when Baba went there on 26-4-65)

N. K.

Prasnottara Vahini

16

- Q. To get the fortune of escaping birth and death, elders say that Yoga is very important. What is that Yoga of which they speak?
- A. Yoga Sastra declares that certain Asanas have to be utilised in order to remove the ever widening circles of mental agitations and purify the mind; also to steady faith, to establish Jnana and arouse the Kundalini Shakti latent in man.
- Q. It is said that Yoga has certain Angas or auxiliaries. How many are they and what are their names?
- A. They are eight in all, Ashtanga, in fact—Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, Samadhi—these are the names of the eight.
- Q. If Mukti is to be attained, have all these to be practised to perfection, or is any one of them enough?
- A. Oh, Mukti can be won if the first two, Yama and Niyama, are mastered. Why, the universe is maintained by just these two, Yama and Niyama!
- Q. When we speak of Yoga, do we mean only this particular Yoga with the Ashtanga, or have we many other Yogas too?
- A. Yoga is not just this one; there are four in all.
- Q. Which are they? What are their names?
- A. Their names are popularly given as Mantrayoga, Rajayoga, Layayoga and Hatayoga.
- Q. What Angas or auxiliaries have these four, in their turn?

- A. Silly fellow! For all the millions of humans, the two eyes are the instruments of vision, are they not? So too, for all the yogas, Yama and Niyama are the eyes; without them, nothing can be visualised. Purity of mind is essential for every Yogi. And for that, Yama and Niyama are indispensable.
- Q. What do you mean by Yama and Niyama? Have these also, by any chance, auxiliaries, Angas, or characteristics which mark them out?
- A. Of course. Each of them has ten such. It is only when you are well established in all these that you are liberated.
- Q. Tell me the ten included under Yama.
- A. Ahimsa, Sathya, Astheya, Brahmacharya, Daya, Aarjavam, Kshama, Dhrti, Mithaharam, Soucham; all these ten are included in Yama.
- Q. May I know the ten included in Niyama?
- A. Tapas, Santosha, Aasthiyabuddhi, Dana, Easwarapuja, Vedantavakyasravana, Lajja, Mathi, Japam, Vratam, —these ten form Niyama. These are the very foundations of the Mansion of Moksha; all Yogis must be well established in these; in Yama as well as Niyama.
- Q. Yoga insists on aasana also, you said. What exactly does that mean?
- A. They are very helpful for Atmajnanis and Yogis.
- Q. Aasana too must have many varieties, is it not?
- A. Yes, they too are many. But the chief are Sidhaasana, baddhapadmaasana, Sarva-angaasana. Besides, there are Aasanas like Mayura and Paschimothaasana.
- Q. What are the benefits that result from these Aasanas?
- A. They give hardihood to the body and enable the mind to concentrate for long.
- Q. Swami! Now tell me about Pranayama also. How many types of Pranayama are there?
- A. There are many types but since in this present world most types are impossible in practice, only those that help Dhyana have to be adopted. They are Laghu-pranayama or simplified Systems of Breath Control.
- Q. Simplified Systems? How are they beneficial?
- A. Like metals purified over fire in the crucible, the slag of Karma is removed by Pranayama and the Mind is freed from contamination. This and Kayashuddhi are both brought about; the mind and the body are both rendered pure. There are two types of Pranayama: the one with Mantra and the other without it. Without mantra, it can at best transform the body only, but with Mantra, it transforms the mind also.
- Q. Swami! How are we to practise it?
- A. Two seconds long Purakam (inhaling), four seconds long Rechakam (exhaling), eight seconds long Kumbhakam (holding the breath). Pranayama has to be practiced carefully for three months: later, the duration of Purakam, Rechakam and Kumbhakam can be doubled. When six months are spent in this steady practice, the activities of the senses are laid low. If practised with faith and feeling, Pranayama will tame the agitations of the mind; otherwise, it becomes mere physical exercise, improving just physical health. Pure food, Brahmacharya, living in solitude, moderate speech—these conditions too have to be strictly observed.
- Q. Swami! The next one you mentioned is Pratyahara. How many are the methods of Pratyahara?
- A. Three: Sakara, Nirakara and Atmabhava, depending on the purpose for which the senses are controlled and the mind concentrated. If it is for Saguna upasana, it is Sakara; if for

Nirguna upasana, it is Nirakara; if for realising the Sathyam-Jnanam-Anantham Paramatma, then, it is Atmabhava.

- Q. And, Dharana? Swami! What is meant by that? How many types of Dharana are there?
- A. My boy, Dharana is of only one type. The wise man steadily established in the awareness of his Ishthadevata or Brahma-consciousness, like the earth carrying a mountain—that is Dharana.
- Q. The next one is Dhyana, I believe. That must be of many varieties.
- A. No, no. This also is one and only one. Whether of the Formful or the Formless, if it is one-pointed, devoid of deviations, it is entitled to be called Dhyana.
- Q. Lastly, there is Samadhi. What does that mean?
- A. Samadhi means the fixing of the mind, free from all impulses and agitations, on the Lord, or on one's own Reality. It indicates the state in which one is in one's own real nature. Samadhi is when one is free from all duality. The mind will be unshaken by dual experiences; it will shine like a flame in a wind-less room. It is nish-chala, unmoved, unmovable.
- Q. Swami! That type of mind, how will it behave? Make it clearer, please, by some examples.
- A. My dear fellow, when you have to thread a needle, you have to be intent on the job and the end of the thread has to be kept straight and pointed, is it not? Similarly, to enter the Grace of God, Which is subtler than the subtlest, the mind has to be steady and the eye and the senses have to be concentrated on the same process.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Jagannath Viswanath

Though in the image of Gayatri, the gods symbolising the five Elements are incorporated, the main Tattwas are just two: (1) the Formless two, viz. Aakasa and Vayu, represented by Vishnu and Surya and (2) the Form-ful three, viz., Prithvi, Jala and Agni, represented by Siva Ganapati and Shakti. That is why we speak of Suryanarayana, combining the two Vishnu and Surya; that is the reason why we speak of Siva Ganapati and Shakti as belonging to one Divine Family. The first is the hari-tattwa and the second is the Hara-tattwa.

Now, what are these two tattwas? They are the same, not two at all. “Hr, harine”; that which seizes, captures, robs that is the meaning of the root that is common to both. What do Hara and Hari rob us of? Hari or Narayana is known as the insufferable thief, who robs us of the accumulated sins of many births.

Narayano naama nara naraanaam
Prasahya chorah kathitha prthivyaam
Aneka janmaarjitha papasanchitham
Harathyasesham smrtha maathra eva

Siva too is addressed as the chief of thieves who robs the devotee of His sins, without His knowledge (thaskaraanam pathaye namo namah!) or with His knowledge. After confronting Him (sthenaanaam pathaye namo namah!)

Again, Vishnu is armed with the Wheel Discus, symbolising Time and Siva has the Trisula symbolising the Past Present and the Future aspects of Time, the aspects which, like three parallel lines, meet only in Eternity. Vishnu has the Shankha or Conch representing Nada or Sound; music emerged from the Conch, it is said. Siva has the Drum or Damaruka from which Dance emanated and was perfected. Thus the Sivatatwa and the Vishnutatwa or Hari—Hara are just distinctions without a difference. In Form, Vishnu is reputed as of the Satwic nature, and so, should be white and Siva, as of Tamasic nature and so has to be dark. But, Vishnu is dark and Siva is fair!—a transposition which reveals the absence of difference. Narayana resides in Nara or the Waters and Siva too revels in the Floods of Pralaya.

Or, let us consider the Seven Holy Places reputed in the Puranas as of highest efficacy. They are: Ayodhya, Mathura, Maya, Kasi, Kanchi; Avanthika, Puridwaravathi chaiva sapthaithe moksha dayakah: Of these, Ayodhya Mathura Maya and half of Kanchi (Vishnu Kanchi) a total of three and a half out of the seven are Vaishnavite shrines. (Maya is Haridwar.) And the rest including Siva Kanchi, the three and a half, are Saivite shrines. Consider again, the two holy shrines all Hindus revere equally, the shrine of Jagannath at Puri, and of Viswanath at Kasi. In Puri, food offered to Jagannath can be passed from Hindu to Hindu and taken without question; at Kasi, Theertha offered to Viswanath is also treated as unaffected by the touch of any one. Vishnu is known as Jagannath, Master of the Universe and Siva too is known as Viswanath, Master of the Universe! How can there be two Masters for the Universe? The two Names indicate precisely One Entity.

That is why the Upanishads also insist that one should consider all Names as the Names of one's own God. In fact, for those who constantly repeat the name of Rama and breathe their last in Kasi, Siva Himself is said to whisper the mantra of liberation in the ear at the moment of death. Vaishna-vanaam yatha Sambhuh, it is said. So too, the statement runs, Saivanaam cha Ramaapathih. That is why we have the declaration of Narayana that His Devotees carping at Siva and devotees of Siva carping at Him, both fall into Perdition.

Sri Ramasaran K. Venkatanarasaiah

Baba Speaks To Volunteers

I have called all of you this evening so that I may tell you something about the kind of work you are to be entrusted with, as volunteers, during the Upanayanam and Sivaratri Festivals that are bringing thousands of people to this place. Volunteership is not just a momentary spurt of service; it comes out of long training, deep discipline. You cannot be ready for that role, all of a sudden, as soon as the badge is pinned your shirt.

First, you must become conscious of the value of Aajna, the Order, the Command, which, so far as I am concerned, is in the form of a Direction. The Gita was the Aajna of Krishna, though Krishna supplemented that Aajna with copious explanation of the why and the wherefore. Arjuna confessed that he had surrendered, that he was a prapanna; so, he was bound by the Aajna. Krishna too knew it, but, in order that Arjuna might carry out His Command with a full heart, He gave him the arguments which will support the course of action He laid down. I am also doing likewise, for, I want you to know the reasons why I require you to stick to certain lines of conduct. The truest sign of Bhakti is unquestioning obedience of the Will of the Master. You must all support each other, supplement each other and strengthen each other and act as an ideal Satsang, infusing enthusiasm and energy.

Next, you must cultivate Prema for all. If you have prema towards Me, you will have Prema for all, since Sai is in everyone. You sing, "Antha Sai mayam, Ee Jagam antha Baba mayam... All is Sai-full, this world is all Baba-full." So, how can you have Love for Me alone? Prema if it is wide and deep will have no place for envy or malice or even competition. You will do nothing to disturb the calm of another, because you know the value of calm in your own case. You must behave towards others as you want them to behave towards you. That is the measure of your love. Therefore, you should not claim any preference to the detriment of others, in the Bhajan Hall or in the Auditorium. Those who come first have the first chance; don't argue and create a scene. Sit down quietly, wherever seats are available at the time you arrive. Earn your place and claim it in the heart of the Lord; do not claim it in the gatherings here. You have come here, to this Prasanthi Nilayam, away from kith and kin, eager to uplift yourself; why then should you revel again in the habits that breed egoism and hatred? In the rules of discipline of this Nilayam, it is laid down that those who come after the Bhajan starts, must not disturb the concentration of others by walking up to the front lines, across those who are there already. This must be noted by all, in all assemblies.

If you crave for comfort, and are not prepared for a strenuous routine, you cannot serve others satisfactorily. Reduce your wants to the minimum. Examine your room, your table, your wardrobe, your box, and then you will find many things not quite necessary. You have got them because some one else was found using them and you felt that unless you too did likewise you would be laughed at. Imitation, unthinking pursuit of fashion, vanity, a foolish desire to be considered up-to-date, these are the reasons that prompt you to needlessly complicate your daily life. Man can lead a happy healthy life with much less equipment than is found with each one of you. And, when some article remains for some time, you start developing an attachment to it and begin to feel that you cannot get on without it any longer. Reduce your attachments, as well as wants. Do not allow costly habits to grow. Watch your likes and dislikes with an eagle eye and discard in time any attitude that comes in the way of your Sadhana.

Detachment is usually called Vairagyam or the absence of Raga. But, Vairagyam is a precious spiritual possession. You find here a silver image of Shirdi Sai Baba before you, isn't it? When you think of the silver, there is no Sai; when you think of the Sai, there is no silver. At Tirupati, when you stand before Venkateswara if you examine the type of stone and its properties and age, then there can be no idol in your vision. Fill yourself with holy thoughts of the Lord, Venkateswara—and, then what is seen is the Lord only; there is no stone. Vairagyam for the: silver or the stone is established when you think of the Sai or the Lord Venkateswara. So also, see

the basic Brahman, the entity Brahman, which is the real truth of this carpet this towel, this wall, and, you will be free from all Attachment. That is the climax of Vairagya, reached by sages at the very end of their Sadhana, the Sarvam Brahmanam finale. People ask you to see all as equal, to treat equally, to serve all as equals. That is possible only when you have at least an inkling of this true Vairagya, based on the Immanent Brahmatattvam.

Volunteers must not wait for chances of service come to them; they must seek such chances themselves. That is why I have directed that the inmates of this Colony should, every morning, visit their, neighbours and find out whether they are well or ill. Look out for the aged, the sick, the lame, the blind and the maimed, the children among the crowds around the Nilayam; look out for such at the river-side and on the roads leading to the Nilayam; speak to them gently and offer to be of use to them. When I speak so soft and sweet to all, you must also avoid harshness and rudeness. Let them return to their homes, happy with the knowledge that there is one place in the world where they are respected and loved, where they have gained a new kinship. You may have your worries, but, don't pour them into others' ears; carry always a smile on your face so that all who see you, may draw the breath of joy. Most of your time is now wasted in telling each other tales of woe; occasionally, you may relate stories of your success, but, that is only to enhance your pride and humble the listener. Try always to console, encourage, strengthen others who are in misery or down-hearted, or weak, or uninformed. Get yourselves equipped for this role. This chance, I am now giving you, to move about as a volunteer is a challenge which you must accept as a call for personal improvement. When so many hundreds are thirsty for this chance, imagine how lucky you are to be selected by Me! Use this chance for your eternal good.

Remember that when you assist some eager Sadhaka to do his or her Dhyana undisturbed, you earn not only gratitude, but, also a share of the merit acquired by the party you have helped. For example, a mother may hasten into the Hall to recite the Pranava when the bell strikes at 4-30 A. M., leaving her sleeping child in the shed, where she was. If the child awakens meanwhile and starts wailing, a lady volunteer can without shouting at the mother, take the child on her lap and rock it back into sleep. Serve others gladly; do not give the impression that you are conferring a big boon by being of help. Let them infer that you are genuinely glad at the chance you get to be of assistance. Do not patronise or pretend. Another point: It is not enough you tell people, "Do not talk aloud" "Speak low" or even, "It is Baba's Order that you should not speak loud." Do not quote Me for every act of yours. Tell them why they should speak low, or avoid shouting. Tell them that silence is the very first step in Sadhana, that they must learn to make every place a Prasanthi Nilayam, that loud talk disturbs others' Japam or Dhyanam, that noise provokes more noise, that calmness and quiet are the distinguishing marks of spiritual kshetras etc. Above all, give reasons for every prohibition or direction, as far as possible, as succinctly as feasible. That is one way of giving respect to the individual you seek to correct.

(Prasanthi Nilayam: 24-2-65)

Vibhuti of Vibhuti

Vibhuti means besides the sacred ashes or udhi, which Sai Baba of Shirdi used to give or which Sathya Sai Baba, His Present Manifestation creates and gives— but, also, might power greatness

magnificence splendour etc. This article deals with the Vibhutis of the Vibhuti of Sathya Sai Baba.

Naanthosthi mama divyaanaam
vibhuteenaam, Paranthapa!
Esha thooddesathah proktho
Vibhuther vistharo mayaa.

said Krishna to Arjuna in the Bhagavad-Gita. "There is no end to My Divine Vibhutis, O Slayer of Foes! I have now described to you only a portion of My Vibhutis!" Yes; the Vibhutis of the Kaliyuga Avatar of the Lord, too, are without end; even the Vibhutis of His Vibhuti are endless. But, we know that bhaktas are ever on the look-out for further examples of the Lord's Glory and Grace. Through these examples, we can picture to ourselves the immeasurable vastness of that Glory. Therefore, dear readers, peruse these letters about the Vibhuti and be thrilled with grateful joy. Read and instal Baba in your hearts the more firmly.

A. SHOWERS OF VIBHUTI

Letter No. 1:-

I am yearning long to have a Darshan of Bhagavan Sri Sri Sathya Sai Baba. I am worshipping a picture of Baba in which He is represented as Blessing Bhaktas. Nothing strange happened so far, but, from yesterday, vibhuti (sacred ash) is showered from the raised palm of Baba in the picture. My joy is unlimited; my house has become Heaven. As a human being, I am full of wickedness and evil and I have been struggling to get rid of them. I believe that the Lord will grant me strength to overcome them. This assures me that He has not ignored me, that He will never desert me.

P V Natarajan,
Kugaluru, Coimbatore Dt. 19-3-65

Letter No. 2:-

How am I to describe to you the inexhaustible grace of Baba! Since two months, you know, Vibhuti is being showered by Him from 3 big Pictures of His in this poor man's Shrine Room. Since this house is in the colony of workers of the Sugar Factory here, people gather in large numbers and carry away with them the precious Vibhuti. I am writing this letter to inform you that since yesterday, the Vibhuti that falls in large quantities from the pictures is tasting extraordinarily sweet! As you wrote about Baba once, this is another proof to show that everything about the Lord of Mathura is Madhuram.

Halagappa
Sugar Colony, Pandavapuram 10-8-64

Letter No. 3:

On 12-4-65, when Baburao Mamdaapur, of Sampgaon was as usual, engaged in Bhajan in his house before the picture of Bhagavan Sri Sri Sathya Sai Baba with all members of his family, his

six year old son, Revanasiddappa called out that Vibhuti was falling in a shower from Baba's Photo. They turned towards the picture and were wonderstruck by what they saw. Neighbours and friends and relatives all flocked round and experienced delight.

In the same village, on 15-4-65, Vibhuti showers were observed in the houses of Sri Adivappa, Sri Mahadevappa Budihala and the Kannada School Teacher, Sri Bhimappa Phakirappa. In the latter's house, the shower from Baba's Picture continued for full four days! The people of Sampgaon, Sigihalli and nearby villages gathered in these houses and were struck by Baba's Mahima.

Seeing all this excitement, Sri Dandayyaswami Rachayyaswami Salamath spoke challengingly, "All this must be false and faked. How can Bhasma or Vibhuti fall like this of its own accord? I too have a photo of Baba in my shrine room; why does Vibhuti not fall from that?" And, on the 15th, the same day, Vibhuti was all over that photo, sticking to it, and showering from it! This continued until the 18th April. One person, a long acquaintance of the above mentioned Dandayyaswamy came to his house and said, "How is this Vibhuti produced on this glass? The whole village is being misled by some kind of mischief." He wiped the photo clean with a wet towel and squatting before it he declared, "Now, let me see what you call the Glory of this Baba of yours; let the shower of Vibhuti fall." Within 15 minutes, the shower poured from the picture, the quantity sticking on the picture being doubled! The critic fell prostrate and was overpowered with joy.

S. B. Kadakola,
Bailhongal, Dharwar Dt. 20-4-65

B. VIBHUTI-THE DIVINE HEALER

(The following Four Letters from Sri H. N. Banerji reveals the story of a CURE)

Letter No. 1:

Gwalior: 6-2-65

I am writing to you for His Holiness's Blessings in a dire calamity that has befallen our family. My eldest brother's eldest daughter, aged 38 years, mother of seven children, has got cancer. She has been operated upon by Dr. B. N. B. Rao, Prof. of Surgery at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi. The pathological report of the removed tissue shows most virulent type of cancer-aplastic carcinoma. Dr. Ramalingaswami, the renowned Pathologist of the same Institute has himself examined the tissue. This type of carcinoma is most fatal; she has now hardly eight months or so of life. My eldest brother lost his eldest son, a very brilliant boy, when the boy was only 14. His second son is now District Medical Officer, Patna. He has two daughters, the elder one is the one facing death. Her husband, an Electrical Engineer, has taken to long leave and is ready to resign from a very lucrative position to give his company to his dying wife. We have many faults and blemishes, but, yet, I feel, He may take pity on my eldest brother and save the life of his daughter from this virulent type of carcinoma. She is in Surgical special ward, Room No. 367. I pray I may be kindly pardoned for making this prayer. I pray that my

prayer at the Holy Feet of Baba will help us to save the life of this girl, the first girl in the next generation of our family. With prayers and with tears...

H. N. Banarji.

Letter No: 2:

New Delhi: 20-2-65

I brought the Vibhuti packets from Baba which were sent to me, to Delhi, this morning, by Pathankot and ran to my niece's special ward from Nizamuddin and was able to give her the prasadi. Vibhuti as the first thing in the morning, and a tilak on forehead. By the Grace of His Holiness, the temperature which was tormenting her for last ten days, rising with severe rigor up to 106.7F with unbearable burning sensation and a severe sinking feeling, has disappeared today and all the painful symptoms remained away. What a miracle this alone is. How grateful I feel for the extra-ordinary clemency done me and on my brother's daughter by the Great Reverend Bhagavan Sri Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Please tender my Sashtanga pranams to His Holiness...

H. N. Banerji

Letter No. 3

Gwalior: 10-3-65

My niece is now much better. She has got over the anaemia, moves about, and is practically taking normal diet. Further, Cobalt 60, that caused so much of setback is now being taken very satisfactorily. Cancer is most unpredictable, according to medical science, but I am sure she would have a flourishing life with the blessings of Bhagavan Sri Sri Sathya Sai Baba. I am leaving next month to take up the appointment of the Head of the Bio-Chemistry Division at Rajendra Memorial Research Institute for Medical Sciences; I am to devote all my abilities to bring about some benefit with the Grace of Bhagavan Sri Sri Sathya Sai Baba for suffering mankind....

H. N. Baneerji

Letter No. 4.

Patna: 23-4-65

My niece is, by the Grace of Bhagavan Sri Sri Sathya Sai Baba, doing well. She was to undergo an operation, ovariectomy, as a precautionary measure. But, the Calcutta doctors have dropped the idea, as the same is not warranted. I am very sure, in my mind, that my niece has been saved by the Grace of Bhagavan Sai Baba. She was discharged a month ago and left for Calcutta the same day, with her husband. I offer my heart-felt thanks and Sashtanga pranams and Dandabat.

H. N. Banerji

Sai Sankara

Sankara Acharya was born in the village of Kaladi on the bank of the Purna River in Kerala. Before he was five years old, he had mastered all the gems of Sanskrit literature and by his 8th year, he had learnt the Vedas and Upanishads. On his Upanayanam day, when he went for Bhiksha to a Brahmin house, they were too poor to give him anything; so, they gave him an

Amalaka fruit. Moved by pity, Sankara prayed on their behalf and brought down a shower of gold. In order to help man to liberate himself and in order to carry out the purpose of his own incarnation, Sankara persuaded his mother to permit him to take up Sanyasa and even as a boy of 8, he moved on to the banks of the Narmada, where Sri Govinda Bhagavathnada was performing Tapas in a cave. To the question, "Who are your parents?" the young aspirant is said to have replied, "I have neither father, nor mother, nor birth!" When the Mahavakya was imparted to him by the Guru he experienced Nirvikalpasamadhi and got merged in the Universal consciousness. But, the Guru reminded him of the task for which he had taken human form and Sankara interpreted in his simple inimitable style the Vedanta texts so that their inherent message of Unity could be understood by all. This work was completed by the time he was 16. Then for 16 years Sankara travelled all over India, challenging all the leading savants and visiting all centres of learning, before he merged in the Infinite.

He exposed the hollowness of Kshanikavada, Sunyavada and Syadvada; he overcame the doubts and objections of the Jains and Buddhists; he reformed and re-established on the basis of the Shrutis the cults that had gone astray, like the Saktheya, the Saiva, the Viashnava, the Kapalika, the Ganapathya, and the Soura; he composed and popularised a large number of Stotras of Gods, indicating in each that the particular God addressed is but the One Nirguna Nirakara tattwa, appearing with Form and with Name. Thus he harmonised and integrated the Hindu Religion made it firm on the foundation of the Vedanta Philosophy.

Sankara is known as Jagadguru, not as an act of courtesy, but, because, more than anybody else, he deserves the Name. The Advaita is an illumination that all who pray, "From the Unreal lead me to the real, from Darkness, lead me unto Light; from Death lead me unto Immortality" can attain.

Fear is to be feared, wherever there are two entities: when the truth that there is only One is forgotten and man deludes himself into the belief that there are many, fear is inevitable; and with fear, all its poisonous brood (envy, hatred, avarice, greed) begins to undermine peace and happiness. Ignorance of the fact that there is only One can be cured only by knowledge; knowledge can arise only in a clear mind; the mind can be cleared only by hard discipline. At the present time the world needs once again the Message of Unity, of Advaita, Non-duality, the Message of Fearlessness. As the Katha-Upanishad says, "Dwelling in the midst of Ignorance, but beguiling themselves as very wise, these self-deluded men puffed up with vain knowledge go round and round, staggering about, to escape a fall like blind men leading the blind. Befooled by wealth, (Viththamohena ntoodham) these "children" never care for the "Hereafter"; they declare, "Ayam loko, naasthi para ithi". (This is the world; there is no other) Therefore, their fate is—announces Yama, the Lord of Death—to be born again and again, to die over and over again." This the malady of the world at the present time.

Man is afflicted by fear, hatred, envy and suspicion. Hence, the Lord has come again to teach man the lessons embedded in the Vedanta. Let us take refuge in Sai Sankara and liberate ourselves from the bonds of ignorance.

Atma Swarajya

Why do people think of the immediate?
Why are they fast forgetting the ultimate?
Is it due to their ignorance of indwelling Soul
Which is ever free, and life's final goal?

The immediate is the body and senses
Which rebel, by raising so many fences
Of barbed wire of selfishness and narrowness
Confining the life, to the lot of sordidness.

Baba has come to release the life
From all kinds of bonds and strife;
His only aim is to save the Soul
And make it rule over life, as Master sole.

—K. Vaidyanathan

Prasanthi Nilayam News

April 29: Baba's Discourse at the Sai Baba Temple at Guindy, Madras.
May 2: Baba returned to Brindavan, Whitefield.
May 16: Prasanthividwanmahasabha at Peramhur, "Sathya Sai Nivas"; Discourse by Br:
Angari Kalayanarama Sastry.

Baba's Program

Baba returns to Prasanthi Nilayam from his present tour in the first week of July, 1965.

Gita Vahini

17

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

"Whoever is busy with no other thoughts than those about Me, whoever is ever remembering Me, releasing his dying breath through the centre on the head; or not, he will attain Me. I am as near him, as he is near Me. My dear Arjuna! How can I forget him, who never forgets Me? Forgetting is a human frailty, not a characteristic of God. Let Me tell you! There is no need for Yoga or Tapas, or even Jnana whether you give these up since you are too weak or whether, in spite of having the strength, you do not feel like struggling to master these, it does not matter I do not ask for Yoga or Tapas; I only ask, that your mind be fixed on Me. Devote your mind to Me, dedicate it to Me, that is all I ask for.

If a Sadhaka cannot do at least this act of dedication to the Lord, I wonder what his Sadhana is capable of! If you plead that you have not the strength of mind I ask where the strength comes from to dedicate yourself as you do now to hollow ideals, the vain fantasies of family, fortune and fame. Can you not direct this strength for that supreme dedication? Man easily offers his all to the poisonous objective pleasures; but, squirms and protests as if a mountain is tumbling on him, when the call is made to dedicate his thoughts feelings and acts to the Almighty! Perhaps, salvation in his eyes is as cheap and as easy to attain, as greens in the vegetable market! He seeks to escape from bondage as easily as that. He does not yearn much; but, he desires to earn much in the spiritual field! He is sunk more in Tamas than in Tapas. But, he wishes for the fruits that Tapas alone can offer.

Those, who are prompted by genuine desire for the fruit, must overcome all obstacles and temptation, doubts and disappointments, and ever dwell on the thoughts of the Lord. Then, the Lord will not be apart; he will confer on that Sadhaka the status of Sameness described as Aham Brahmasmi (I am you, You are I, we are one.) And the Sadhaka will be contemplating this unity without break, every moment. This is referred to as Ananyabhaava.

Then Arjuna asked, "You say that this Ananyabhaava, this Ananya-bhakti is quite easy and that that there is no need to take any greater trouble; you also declare that for those who have acquired it, You are readily attainable! Well, what exactly is the benefit of attaining you? What is the real nature of the fruit that the Sadhaka is able to enjoy? Please tell me."

Krishna smiled at this and replied, "Arjuna! There is no meaning in asking of the benefits that accrue, when the Lord is attained. What greater benefit is there than that? That holy victory makes mortal man a Mahatma; of course, you may still pose a question: Of what benefit is it, to become a Mahatma? Listen. The Mahatma is far superior to ordinary man. The latter is established in the body and the Jiva; is identifies himself with the body and with breath; with the particular, 'the wave'. So, he is tossed about by joy and grief; he rises or falls with each experience between snatches of calm and storm, he reels under many a blow. The Mahatma is free from all such dual experiences. He is above and beyond. He has released Himself from all identity with the body and with particularised; he is in the Universal, the Eternal, the changeless, the Brahmanbhava, not the Jivabhava. He knows that the Atma is not a limited entity; he feels that it extends beyond all limits; he is free from the blemish of Tamas and Rajas; he is neither dull

nor driven about by desire; he has a pure consciousness, unaffected by attachment or hate. Many who style themselves as such, nowadays, have no purity in their hearts; their consciousness is soiled by all types of foulness. Indeed, the pure in heart have no further birth and death. They are under no obligation to appear again on earth. Without attaining that purity, you cannot escape the round of birth and death, however many your meritorious deeds, however high your spiritual status, however glorious the heaven you have secured! Only those who are perpetually in that Brahmanbhava can attain this Timeless Me, and be freed from the chains of birth and death, by merging in Me."

At this, Arjuna gave expression to a doubt that worried him; he asked, "if that is so, why do the Upanishads declare that those who reach the heaven, called Brahmaloka, need not be born again? Please make that clear. Who exactly are those that are freed from this cycle of birth of death?"

"Arjuna! There are two types of Liberation mentioned in the Upanishads: Sadyomukti, and Kramamukti. Sadyomukti is also referred to as Kaivalyamukti. For earning this, no one need aspire for any heaven. They get this, on the spot, and not by stages, step by step. Liberation secured thus is a possession for ever. The rest are all liable to change. When the effect of the merit acquired wears out, the heaven has to be given up, and life on earth is started anew. Such souls know no merging; only, those who attain Kaivalya, merge and become One with the Eternal, the Universal."

"That is to say," intercepted Arjuna, "the souls that attain Kaivalya are destroyed, isn't it? Or, is there any difference between merging and destruction, laya and Nasham?"

"No, Partha! Layam is not Nasham, merging is not destruction. Layam happens when it becomes invisible."

"That is what happens, when a thing is destroyed; becomes invisible, we cannot see it any more."

"But, just because a thing is gone out of sight, how can you pronounce it 'destroyed'? No. A lump of sugar or salt when placed in water disappears. You can see it no more; but, can you say, it has been destroyed? Or, do you say, it has merged? It is there, the taste declares it; it has lost the form, but, is present as its characteristic, its Guna. The Jiva also merges like this Brahman. It is not destroyed at all. When the Jiva is not merged like this, it can at best only wander between heaven and earth, deserving life in heaven for some time and descending again to earth for further efforts towards salvation."

Arjuna was still afflicted with doubts. He asked "Krishna! you say that no heaven, even the highest Brahmaloka, can save man from the cycle of birth and death; then, what is his royal road to Salvation?" Do you mean, to say, that those who strive for the heavens have to satisfy themselves with just that and no more?"

Krishna answered, "Partha! There is a State that knows no decline, beyond all these heavens. There are many roads by which that State can be won. Unaware of these roads or of the joy of that State, man is taking to others that are before him, roads that are crooked or comfortable. He does not know how to distinguish between the right road and the wrong. I may tell you that there

are four roads which are now used by mankind: 1) Karma-atheetha, beyond Karma unaffected by Karma 2) Nishkama-karma, Karma without any desire for the fruit thereof, Karma unaffected by any craving for the result therefrom 3) Sakama karma, Karma with the ambition to reap and enjoy its fruit and 4) Karma-bhrashtha, Karma that knows no restraint or control.

The Karma-atheethas are the divan-muktas, all their Karmas have been burnt up by the Fire of Jnana; their impulses for action have been scorched by the wisdom they have gained. They have no further need for injunctions and prohibitions, Vidhi and Nishedha. They need no Sadhana, like Dana, or Charity, Dharma or Virtuous Living, Tapas or Austerity. All that they do or feel or think will be Divine, holy, virtuous, beneficial to mankind. The very earth they tread on, will be rendered sacrosanct; every word they utter will be the word of God; their breath need not take them on death to realms that are heavenly; they merge, on the falling away of the bodily raiment without delay, in Brahman. Such are the Jivis who were described by Me now as having Kaivalyamukti, Brahma-prapti or Sadyomukti.

Next, the second group: the adepts at Nish-kama-karma. These are the Mumukshus, alert on the path of liberation, who are intent on attaining it. They perform each act, as a step in the realisation of the Lord. So, they can never do anything bad; they do not look forward to the result; they leave it to the Lord to give it, or with-hold it. They are not prompted by worldly motives or even by the desire to gain heavenly pleasures. Their aim is just this: Liberation from the bondage of the objective world. They win the Grace of the Lord in proportion to the steadiness of their faith and practice.

The third group, which believes in Sa-kama-karma, perform all acts through the desire for the fruit thereof. Since they have an eye on the successful earning of the fruit, they will engage themselves only in acts that are approved by the Sastras; they will not do any sinful or prohibited act. They will equate each act with the merit it will confer, the happiness it will ensure, the heaven it will win and then, enter upon its execution. Such men, when they depart from this world will enter the Lokas (Supra-mundane worlds) they have sought and worked for, and having stayed there for as long as their merit entitles them, they have to return back to earth.

The fourth group is not guided by any rules of conduct. They have no norms, no discrimination between virtue and vice, right and wrong, proper and improper. They have no horror of hell, no conception of heaven, no dread of the devil, no reverence for God, no respect for the Sastras, no vision of Dharma! They are best pictured as beasts in human form. The majority of humans are members of this unfortunate group. They strive for momentary pleasure, short-lived happiness temporary joy, and evanescent comfort. To call them monkeys with human physique will be a big mistake; for, the monkey only jumps from branch to branch or, from tree to tree. It releases itself from one branch or one tree before landing on other. Men are more like the caterpillars, which move from leaf to leaf, fixing their foreparts on a new leaf, before releasing their hind parts from the leaf on which they were resting till then. That is to say, man by his acts in this life decides on his next birth, where and how it will be, even before leaving this world. The new place is ready for him, his foreparts are already there; it is only after settling that, that he relieves himself of this world! Men of this category move round in the wheel of birth and death. To be born and to die, one must have auspicious moments, which will guarantee a wise life and a worthwhile end, Arjuna!" Yogis, for example, give up life only when auspicious moments are

available, not at other times. That is why people say, "Death is the Witness on behalf of the Good." An auspicious moment is to be chosen even for the act of death."

Arjuna was worried about this and so he asked, "Krishna! Tell me when the body has to be yielded to death, so that one can escape the cycle of birth and death; tell me also which period of time one should avoid." Krishna replied, "Partha! your question is very timely, and urgent. Sometimes, you make Me wonder at your intelligence, and you make Me very happy. And, at other times, you make Me laugh at Your ignorance. Your egoism and sense of attachment are the reasons. They are the signs of your ignorance. Let that pass. Let us come to your question.

The Yogis who practise Nish-kama-karma pass away in Tejas, during day, while there is light, in the bright half of the month, and the six-month period of Uttarayana. They have as their first state, Agni or Fire. Hence, their Path is known as Devayana, or since Agni is known also as Archi in the Vedas, Archiradi-marga. Such Yogis emerge from Prakasha (Effulgence) and travelling through Prakasha, they merge in Prakasha itself. They attain Brahman and are not born again.

The Yogis who practise Sa-kama-karma pass away in Dhuma (Smoke) at night, during the dark half of the month, during the six months of Dakshinayana; they pass along Dhumadi-marga and reach Swarga or Heaven and there enjoy the pleasures they have yearned and worked for; when the stock of merit is exhausted they get born again.

Both these categories of men are called Yogis; these two paths are recognised, since the beginning of time; they will exist so long as aspirants and active progressive individuals exist in the world.

Here, a doubt may reasonably arise: How is it that the bright half of the month is auspicious, while the dark half is not? What, again, is to happen to those who die, when it is neither bright nor dark, neither day nor night? This is a legitimate doubt and every one has a right to know the answer. Now, you must first understand what is meant by Sukla Paksha or the Bright Fortnight. It is the half-month when the light of the moon increases day by day. But, what is the relationship of the light of the moon with man and his death? The moon is the symbol of the mind of man. "Chandramaa manaso jaatah; out of the moon was the manas (mind) born." The bright half of the moon, therefore, signifies the progress of the mind spiritually, in Divine discipline; the full-moon signifies the fullness of that achievement. The bright half is thus the period when spiritual progress is attained. For the body, the visible moon; for the mind, the symbolic moon-deity presiding over the mind! The increasing splendour of the mind due to the increasing realisation of one's own Divinity is what is meant by the word, 'Suklapaksha'.

And, what of Uttarayana? You must know about that also, and be free from doubt on that score. For, worship offered with the full knowledge of the meaning and significance of every rite, sadhana practised with the full knowledge of the implications of every step, these cleanse the heart more effectively, and loosen the chains of doubt. Uttarayana means 'cloudless sky', the period when no dot of cloud or whiff of fog contaminates the vast dome, and the Sun shines in all His Glory. This is the gross meaning; but, there is a subtle one, too. The heart is the inner sky in man. There, the Sun that shines is Buddhi or intelligence. When the clouds of ignorance, the

fog of egoism and the smoke of attachment hover in that inner sky, the Sun of Intelligence is hidden and things are murky and mistaken. Uttarayana of the heart is when the inner sky is clear of all these, and when the Sun shines in full splendour. You must have heard the expression, 'Jnana-bhaskara', 'The Sun of Wisdom.' The Sun is always associated with Wisdom and Intelligence.

When a person passes away with this equipment of the effulgent Sun of Wisdom in his clear heart, he can certainly escape re-birth! He takes the path of Agni, the Archiradi path, as said already, and merges its Brahman!

Those who pass away in the other half of the year, the Dakshinayana, have the opposite destiny, for then, the heart is beset with smoke and fog and cloud. The Sun is hidden and His effulgence is robbed of splendour. And, in the dark half of the month, the moon wanes, symbolising the waning of the divine Godward thoughts of the mind. The new moon night is enveloped in complete darkness, all spiritual impulses have suffered defeat. The thick smoke of Ajnana lies heavily on the mind. This is the meaning of the expression, Krishnapaksha. Those who die at such an inauspicious time reap an inauspicious result.

(To be continued)

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

A Jinn once possessed a man; it wanted him to give it some work to do and threatened to eat him up if left with no work on hand! The poor fellow devised all kinds of tasks but, it finished it in a trice and asked for another. At last, he asked it to move up and down a slippery pole; this kept it ever engaged. Your mind too is like the jinn; it will destroy you if left idle; so, order it to move up and down the pillar of Soham, "He-I," "I am He" "I am that". Make that the Japam of the Mind and you will be saved. "I" will merge in the Universal. Continuously recite Soham Soham Soham with every breath, inhaling and exhaling.

BABA

Baba at Brindavan

A quietness fills the place; a Shanti indescribable reigns over Brindavan. It is sweetened by the Master's Voice, as He gaily, softly hums a song or speaks to us of the Wisdom of the Ages, in His own simple understandable way, understandable to all those whose Grace it is to listen and receive.

Surely, these warm and wonderful days are filled not only with the warmth of the tropical summer sun, but, what is greater; the warmth of the Lord's Presence.

A soft swish; a rustle of silk; and, He is beside you, with a penetrating glance, or a freshening smile, or even a gay laugh. Here at Whitefield, we know the Joyous little Krishna of our soul's memory. There at the Prasanthi Nilayam, we experience Krishna, the Ruler, who commands a spiritual Kingdom; we sit at His feet in awe and wonder. But, here it is the mischievous Krishna

of Brindavan, playing the music of the spheres through His Flute, calling all hearts and filling them with joy and with a deep yearning for God.

Yesterday, He spoke for hours on Sathya. He told us of the purity of Radha. Babaji said, "Radha saw Krishna after the lapse of many years, during which Krishna had grown into a handsome Man. Yet, her heart was so pure that she did not recognise Him or spend a thought on Him. She said, "This is not my Krishna." For, she was longing for the Child-Krishna, the little Krishna whom she had fondled and caressed. Though Krishna stood before her in all His Glory, she was not satisfied; she was satisfied only when Krishna gave her darshan as the Boy whom she remembered, as the little Cowherd whom she cherished in her heart. Radha was a woman, a wife, when Krishna was a child and when He left Brindavan at the age of eleven years. Such was her purity that she saw her Krishna always as a little Child and loved Him as such, while realising Him at the same time, as the Lord Incarnate. Radha is, really, the creation of Krishna's own Anandam and Prema, the projection of His own Self.

Babaji said, "You are all Radha, if you have the following characteristics: They are indicated by the name, Radha itself. RADHA is the name: ADHAR, indicates that you must have the Lord as your Adhar or support; depend on God fully. completely; DHARA, means, unceasing flow, your mind must flow towards God unceasingly: ARADH, is worship; have always the attitude of worship, of surrender to the Lord. One who has these qualities is Radha; she is a symbol of perfect womanhood, of Godliness."

When Baba speaks of Krishna, hearts respond with over-flowing joy; the earth fades; only Krishna remains; the call is heard, "Come! Come!" We are lost in Aanandam. When Krishna dances on the Lotus of the Heart, earth and all its manifestations become a dream; what need for anything when Krishna calls?

But, there are times when He hides. Then, as Babaji said yesterday, as we sat at His Feet, "A war goes on, the war between the Good and the evil within you. The six good qualities, Sathya dharma, Shanti Prema Ahimsa and Kshama are lined up on the battlefield within, against the evil characteristics of Kama Krodha Lobha Moha Mada Matsarya. If you fight the battle as heroes, not zeroes, with Krishna as your Charioteer, you will win and gain the Goal. You have taken human form for just this; for this, you live and breathe; so, some day, the battle must be won. Start now, don't delay, for tomorrow may be too late and none knows what the next moment may bring; take advantage of the moment, for the Lord is with you now, on your side, ready to help. Live this day, as if it were the last. Live it, with thought word and deed concentrated on the glorious Victory, that is your Birthright. Win the battle of life, here and now."

Dusk slowly envelopes us and with Bhajan, the day comes to a close. We retire with a renewed determination to correct ourselves so that we may deserve and achieve the Anandam of which our Guru is speaking forever. We would hold on to these precious days and wish they would never end. We hum a melody softly to Him, the Krishna, to whom our minds flee. Peace and Bliss fill us; silence enfolds Brindavan. Not a human sound is heard, there is no mar to the beauty of God's Peace. Another day ends.

Our last thoughts are: "Are we truly worthy? Do we deserve to receive so much?" As we drift into dreams, we think, "Yes! The battle must be won. Lust anger pride greed attachment envy must be crushed, so that with His Grace, our True Nature may emerge triumphant."

—Hilda Charlton.

"I Will not let go the Grasp"

(This letter written by Swami to a great Vedic Scholar, who had, in the distress caused by neglect, started deploring his fate and losing strength even to pray to Baba, whom he adored, is a Divine Tonic to the downhearted and a Revelation of the overflowing Grace of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the Refuge of all who are stricken and suffering.)

Prasanthi Nilayam

21-1-62

My dear.....,

When life flows merrily on, without any obstruction, people exult that it is all the result of their own effort and they even forget the Lord; when at every step trouble and defeat resist the flow, people start deploring their fate and lose heart. This is the weakness of mankind; and, so, you too are subject to this failing. Since you are now meeting with obstacles at every step, it is no wonder you are also despairing.

My dear fellow, grief is something that *men* get, and not trees. Though trees have to encounter it, they have no power to voice it forth. Nevertheless, the Life of Man is but a chapter of the Saga of Immortality and Bliss, unbroken Bliss. Yet, overcome by the storm and stress of the mind the intelligence and the ego, Man reduces himself to the status of a slave to the objective world, and to the needs of the senses; the glory of the Atma is hidden from his Consciousness; he plunges into the foul stream of sense-pleasure; he is caught in the twin torrent of calmness-confusion, joy-grief etc. He sways helplessly in this transient world from one false hope to another. This is human nature; and you must be aware of it. Nevertheless, if you grow as desperate as you have become, you are insulting the Atmatattwa, which you really are.

Carrying the Vedas Sastras Puranas Itihasas and Upanishads stuffed in your brain, these thoughts, this grieving, this wailing, do not become you; they are appropriate only in the ignorant. You ought to be a commentary of the great ideas which fill your head. Why is it that you get so downhearted when troubled by the want of money? The most effective specific for all anxiety, for all mental agitations, is the Name of the Lord; you do not allow that Name to lilt on your tongue. Why do you repeat continuously and lament instead, over grief, loss, fear, and pain?

You have earned much learning in many subjects of study, but, in spite of that, you do not keep before you its purpose and value, nor do you try to experience the joy of putting it into practice. You spend your days full contented, feeling that what is important is to display that learning in discourses and discussions and to impress on others by external signs, your great scholarship. That is the reason why, you are *thinking* that you are suffering in so many ways, that you are actually suffering in so many ways. Really speaking these are all objective experiences, not those

of your real Self. O, if only you have the strong faith that 'nothing can hinder the Atmananda which is the live spring in every heart,' if you live in the constant memory of that Ananda, how happy you can be! Just imagine how elevated will be your feelings, how deep the calm in your mind.

It is so easy to advise others; when it comes to practising what you recommend to others, you feel it as awful trouble. You go about declaring in ringing word: "Swami knows everything. Swami is present everywhere. Swami is *all* the Gods in one single Form" but, you forget those very things, when events occur in your own experience revealing those very truths!

Do I not know? The other day, when you were just about to start to the village of your parents, when your wife said, "We shall write to Swami about our worries and troubles", why did you tell her "You have no permission; do not write"? Do I not know? Do I know only when I read what she writes? Silly fellow! Do I not know that you went to Rama..... puram and returned incurring more expense than what you earned there? And, you started condemning yourselves saying, all my learning is a waste, all my experience is of no value. No, do not be depressed so much over that.

For Me who is nourishing all this World, surely it is no burden to nourish you and your family. I am placing all these handicaps in your path, in order to teach you a few lessons. "Learning is not the major thing; practice is essential": this lesson I want to inculcate in you, through your own experience.

He who plants a sapling will not desist from watering it. If He has no inclination to provide it with water, He would not have planted it. This is the inseparable relationship between the Atma and the Jiva, isn't it?

"My Swami's Name is resounding in home after home; my Swami's Form is before every eye," you write. My dear man, why revel so much in Ananda for just this? This is not all. Know this: Swami's Name will fill not merely every home, but every inch of the World. The song, "Everything everywhere is Sai, Everything everywhere is Baba" will not fail; it will be realised in actuality.

For your part, engage yourself in that which is your duty, courageously and gladly. Strive to gain the Purushartha and you can experience the Paramartha. This "Partheesa" will be your "Paramesa". He will hold you by the hand and raise you; He will not let go the grasp.

Do not talk lightly of the rich. Not of the rich only; do not talk lightly of any one, in any way. For Sai is in every person; therefore, you would be slighting Sai Himself. Vanity will injure only those who have it; it will not injure you. So, be engaged in contemplating the Truth. I shall not give you up; I shall not forge you.

I am neither angry nor pained; I wrote all this only through Daya and Prema. Practise; and earn, the rapture of Bliss.

He who resides in your heart,

The First Anniversary

Celebrations in connection with the First Anniversary of the Akhila Bharat Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha (Karnataka Branch) were held on May 22 and 23 at Malleswaram, Bangalore, under the auspices of the Sri Sathya Sai Bhajan Mandali, in the Presence of the Founder-President, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba Himself. The Secretary of the Mandali expressed in his report, gratefulness at having been allotted the pleasant task. Dr. B. Ramakrishna Rao, the President of the Sabha, welcomed the 30 thousand citizens of Bangalore who had assembled in the spacious stadium; he said that the Sabha is one of the instruments that Baba has forged for the task of reviving Dharma in a world that is fast losing all sense of values. He announced that branches of the Sabha will be formed in Kerala Maharashtra and Saurashtra; that even distant countries like East Africa, Britain and America were eager to have its activities extended to their people.

Hon'ble Sri. B. D Jatti, the Finance Minister, Mysore State, who presided over the Meeting, declared that his being invited to be present that day was one more proof of the Grace that Baba always extended to him. "India is the fountain-head of all inquiry and all spiritual investigation, of all moral codes and social norms; a series of holy men, saints, sages, Divine personalities, and Avatars culminating in Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba have been active in restoring the ancient Dharma of this land to its pristine purity, so that mankind may be liberated from thralldom thereby. I have faith that Baba will succeed in the task He has set before Himself: the restoration of Dharma in the world. Dr. B. Ramakrishna Rao is a revered friend and I have great admiration for him as an ardent supporter of Dharma, as a great scholar in many languages, including Sanskrit. 'Faith will win Grace; call on the Lord with faith, and He will respond immediately,' is what a Sarana sang. Faith and steady Sadhana will win for all of us the Grace of Baba" said Sri Jatti.

It may be mentioned here that a tremendous downpour of rain which was approaching the place where the assembly had gathered was averted miraculously, the dark clouds drifting sullenly away without disturbing the proceedings.

Baba in His Discourse wanted people to put what they learnt at Adhyatmic gatherings into practice and derive benefit therefrom. "Mankind is now trekking upward through paths full of avalanches and glaciers, ignoring the warnings of those who made the ascent before. The Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha is designed to guide all, along the path laid down in the Vedas and Sastras."

On the 23rd, Sri Vaikunta Baliga, the Speaker of the Mysore Legislative Assembly presided. He said " Bhagavan Sathya Sai Baba is being worshipped by lakhs of people of all classes and professions and creeds and He has transformed many into earnest Sadhakas." Br. Varanasi Subramanya Sastry of Pithapuram, a member of the Central Committee of the

Vidwanmahasabha, discoursed on "Dharma," analysing all the implications of that complex ideal. Baba called upon all those who profess to preach about the Gita or other sacred texts, to be examples of what they advocate for others. He warned people against those who adopt dubious means to collect money and fame, using His Name and masquerading themselves as His Bhaktas. "If a person comes to you for funds to build a temple for the Lord, it only means he has no faith in the Lord; it is for the Donor of the Fund that he intends building a temple."

Vedasamrat Br. Kameswara Ghanapati recited the Veda on both days, before the speeches commenced. There was a record gathering of about 30 thousands on the 22nd as well as the 23rd. The Karnataka Branch has a busy time table before it for the coming months.

Origin, Purpose and Meaning

Baba's recent discourses have, in many ways, been remarkable. His diagnosis of the human "predicament" has been penetrating. The Upadesha itself, the core of His message, has the vitality and simplicity which characterise eternal Truth. It is direct and imperative in its earnestness and sense of urgency. "Hence and now," He has said on more than one occasion, "You have to take complete charge of yourselves, to understand life in its fullest sense and be totally aware of what you are. There is no time to lose, not a second to be wasted. Each moment is precious. It has to be fully utilised for understanding your true Self. When that self-knowledge comes, life becomes *Ananda*. The veil of darkness is rent asunder and the light of Truth will flood your being and you become truly 'children of Immortality', not particles of dust to be constantly whirled about by every passing gust of wind. " On another occasion, Baba declared that Arjuna's *hridaya-dourlabhaya* (inward weakness) is a universal human symptom ... symptom of a sickness which today has brought mankind to the verge of annihilation. This inward weakness arises from lack of faith, mental uncertainty and hesitation. We create barriers to understanding because of this, shut out light and continue to dwell in darkness and feel desperate and lost. Baba asks, "How long can man be a weary traveller in the realm of darkness ignorance and unwisdom?" Man's destiny, on the contrary, is Divine. His journey must be towards Light, towards Truth and towards immortality. The dark corridor which we call life, must end. The longer one remains in this corridor, the greater is the misery and the stronger is the bondage to the recurring cycle of birth and death.

The *Upanishads* which constitute the essence of the Vedas make it perfectly clear that the universe is an act of God's creation. It does not exist by itself, but by God's will. This truth is affirmed in varying degrees of clarity by all the great religions of the world. This world is sometimes compared to a stage on which God performs His *Leela*. Yet the "stage" is not something different. It is also part of this divine *Leela*. Baba once said that God is not like a distant "producer" issuing directions, but keeping Himself away from the play itself. He is immanent and all-pervasive. The transcendent is also the intimate. In one sense, He is far away... above and beyond; but in another and deeper sense, He is everywhere, part and parcel of all things. He is both personal and impersonal. He is not "somebody else", but present everywhere and in all beings, *sarvbhutantaratma*, deeply involved and "implicated" in the destiny of the

universe. No part of this vast, mysterious universe is insulated from His energy (*chaitanya*) and power. He is not merely the *Sutradhara*, but lives, moves and has His being in the lives, and destinies of all creatures. As Baba so frequently says, the Infinite dwells in the individual. The one Infinite Self is also the inner self of each created being. Every one of us, however small, is a *swarupa* of this *Divyatma*, the Supreme Self. With this "awareness," life becomes full of wonder, and bliss, *ananda*. One of the phrases most frequently used by Baba is *Ananda-swarupa*. God is a Being of Bliss. In *ananda*, both Truth (*Sat*) and Intellect (*Chit*) are merged. Bliss is the highest state of awareness. Even the trivial becomes significant when one is filled with Bliss. The world wears a gorgeous apparel of beauty. Once this awareness of universal kinship fills us, this world which is often a *Kurukshetra* becomes a *Dharmakshetra*. All sense of separateness is lost to one who is filled with this *ananda*. Really, separation is painful and isolation is stark misery. When we separate ourselves from God, we separate ourselves from everything. We are like plants whose roots are torn away from the soil. We wither and die. Most men, says Baba, are spiritually lonely, although they live amidst crowds and all the glitter and luxury of our modern civilisation and surrounded by a multiplicity of things.

This truth of "the indwelling God" is the bedrock of Baba's teaching or *Upadesh*. From this is derived the dignity of life ... its meaning and "values." That life is sacred, that we must be constantly aware of what it means, that we should not be indifferent to our high destiny ... these are some of the basic truths that Baba is never tired of emphasizing. Baba has no patience with those who constantly dwell on the 'unreality' of this world. A world-denying philosophy is barren and futile. It is true that the world has all the characteristics of destructibility. Prakriti is subject to change, flux and death. But Prakriti is as real as anything else. It is a question of "relativity"...of degree and comparison, though it is possible to mistake the doctrine of comparative reality for one of total *maya* or illusion. This misunderstanding about *maya*, Baba said in the course of one of His talks at Brindavan last year, has been the cause of so much of confusion and futile argument. The Eternal can only be One. It alone is changeless, because it has no "gunas" or qualities which accompany the process of change, decay and de God is *ekamevadvitiyam*. One without a Second. Everything else is non-eternal. But the non-eternal is not necessarily non-real or unreal or *maya*. Baba once gave the analogy of a play. As long as the play is in progress it is a reality and to the actors it is indeed a gruelling reality. The actors must be earnest. The incidents in which they are involved must be real to them. Even play-acting therefore is an earnest occupation. No one can deny its reality. How much more real should be the world which God has created out of His *sankalpa*, and in which He participates and in which He is so deeply involved! Life is an infinitely grander drama than a stage performance. To deny reality to this is foolish. In the Gita, Bhagavan declares to Arjuna that the battle of Kurukshetra is really a play... preordained and already 'enacted'. Its issue has already been decided by the Lord. But still the play has to be enacted on the world-stage and as long as it is in progress, its reality is undeniable. All that Baba means when He constantly refers to the transitory nature of the world and the futility of what He calls *Dehatattwa* is that preoccupation with the world and its affairs is wrong. The world should not be "too much with us". In the spiritual "equilibrium" which one has to achieve, the body's desires, longings and problems should not occupy too important a place. But the body itself... this world, its duties and responsibilities... has to be reckoned with. Proper care should be bestowed upon the body which is the temple of God. The world is the only field of "action" and hence to deny its importance is to deny our high destiny. The tool with which we produce a beautiful thing is also important.

Baba's emphasis on the high destiny of man is really very significant. Most of us, He says, are fatalists because we have no idea of the immense potentialities of our destiny. Fatalism is the product of "denial," of moral and spiritual sloth. To avoid a difficulty and run away from it seems to be easier than to face it and overcome it. Renunciation is often a cloak for total "escapism." Cowardice does not acquire the halo of virtue by masquerading under the guise of a philosophy. Life offers a challenge; it offers "battle," a struggle and even suffering. "Wake Up" (Uttishtha) should be the supreme motto of life. Courage, faith and dedication are the three weapons with which we can face life's problems with success. To such men, God is not merely a charioteer (*Sarathi*) but a constant companion, the dweller in their hearts, *antaryami*. Failures and sorrows are meant to test our faith, to expel the dross within us. There should be no faltering, falling aside on our path to reach the goal. This is the true "manavatwa" of which Baba constantly speaks. Only man can act in freedom. Only he is a self-directed being. He can manipulate and modify circumstances. He can create and achieve and he has vision. He has freedom to choose, to think, to act, to decide. This freedom gives to man a dignity that makes him almost divine. God is the embodiment of absolute freedom and man shares with God a portion of this freedom. In this man is supremely blessed. But freedom is useless to a man who is passive—like music to a deaf man. Freedom imposes action; for it is only in the field of action that truth can be tested and freedom won. What the Gita calls *Nishkama karma* is action done in freedom, that is to say, action which does not bind us to recurring effects. A free man is one who is "unbound" not only to desire or "fruit," but even to the action itself. Baba is careful to point out that free action does not necessarily mean unrestrained or chaotic action. It is a question of attitude, of the mental state of the doer. Even a "free" actor is restrained by truth and morality. This restraint is self-imposed; it comes from within. Dharma is the guiding principle and once Dharma is the power behind our actions and the action is done without desire or "moha," then such action becomes (even without our knowing) a tremendous releasing or liberating power. This is the true "manavatwa" which we have to attain. We establish our kinship with that Supreme only through this. It is the highest pinnacle which man can ascend—by becoming a sharer with the Supreme Creator.

(To be continued)

H. S. R.

Prasanthi Nilayam News

- May 22, 23: Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha (Karnataka Branch) First Anniversary: Baba's Discourses.
- May 26 - 28: Baba at Ootacamund, Nilgiris Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha Meeting: Baba's Discourse.
- June: From the 7th, Programme at Bombay.
- June: 7: Inauguration of the Maharashtra Branch of the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha, under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble P. K. Sawant, Minister for Agriculture, Maharashtra, at the Shanmukhananda Auditorium Baba's Discourse.

"Since the Uttarayana Marga is lit by the holy splendour of Jnana, it is praised as the Shukla marga or the White Path. The Dakshinayana Marga is dark, filled with Tamas and Ajnana; so it is called the Dark Path or the Krishna Marga. Those who discard the body and journey on during the Uttarayana, move along the White Path and reach the Stage of Liberation or Moksha, which is devoid of delusion, which is the Seat and Source of Brahmananda, from which there is no return to this world of Name and Form, this arena of embodied beings. Those who leave the body during the Dakshinayana and move along the Dark Path, have to bear again the physical encasement called Deha, subject to birth and death.

"Uttarayana is not so much a period of time; it is a state of mind. Those who discard the body with the glory of Self-knowledge move along the Uttarayana Marga and those who die in ignorance of their Atmic reality move along the Pitryana, or Dakshinayana or the Dark Path. "Of the Gunas, Satwaguna is pure and effulgent; the Tamoguna is dark and so they are distinguished by the opposite colours of White and Black.

Again there are two Nadis, Ida and Pingala by name, subtle nerves; Ida to the left and Pingala to the right of the Sushumna. The Ida-nadimarga is the Lunar Path and the Pingala-nadi-marga is the Solar Path. The Yogis proceed along the Solar and the others along the Lunar path. This is another of the unobserved mysteries.

"The end of everything that is born is death; Samyoga leads to Viyoga; construction must result in the destruction of that which is constructed. It is the law of nature that birth ends in death and death leads to birth. The stage which knows no coming and going is the stage when the Universal Brahman is visualized. Since Brahman is all-pervasive, where is the other place from which the 'coming' can be effected and to which the 'going' can be performed?

"There is no need to doubt whether such a stage is within the reach of all, whether all can achieve this victory. Nor is any special effort, or peculiar good fortune or a specially designed act necessary. It is enough if the mind is always fixed on Paramatma, if the Lord is meditated upon without break. That will cleanse the mind; the delusion that is now clogging it, will disappear. That by itself comprises Moksha, for what is Moksha but Moha-kshaya, the decline of delusion? A person who has achieved this Moha-kshaya will attain Brahmatwa, the stage of Brahman, howsoever he might die. Such a person is called a 'Jnani'."

At this, Arjuna put in a query. He said, "Krishna! I do not quite understand the meaning of what you call Jnana. Is it the knowledge learnt through the ear from the teacher? Or is it the knowledge culled from the Sastras? Or is it the knowledge imparted by those rich in actual experience? Which among these liberates man from bondage?"

Krishna replied: "Listen, Arjuna! The types of knowledge you mentioned now are all useful at some stage or the other of one's spiritual development; but, by none of them can you escape the cycle of birth and death! That which releases you from the cycle is known as Anubhavajñana, the knowledge that you yourself experience; that alone can help you to be free. The teacher can be of some help in the process; but he cannot show you your real Self. You have to visualise it yourself; besides, you have to be free from vices, like envy. Then only can you be called a Poorna Jnani, one who has attained full Jnana. He who has faith in this Jnana, who is devoted in acquiring it, and who is full of yearning to earn it, only such a person can really Me.

"He must be free from envy; besides, he must be earnest, steeped in Shraddha. Earnestness is essential even for the performance of the smallest act by man. Not man alone! But bird and beast, worm and virus, all have to be earnest to succeed. When you have no earnestness or Shraddha in the act, you can be certain you cannot gather the fruit. Or, if you have got it, you would find it of no value whatever.

"Arjuna! I am the Witness; through Me, this Prakriti, this conglomeration of the Five Elements called Prapancha, all these moveable and immoveable objects, are formed. Through Me as the Cause, the Prapancha behaves in various ways. Fools who cannot understand Me as the Highest Principle and as the Master of all the Elements whose Will they have to obey, take Me to be just a man. Some great men reverently meditate on Me as Brahman; others worship Me under various Names and in various Forms; some other worship Me through Jnanayajna and Atmayajna.

"Whatever the name used in worship, whatever the form of worship, I am the Recipient; for I am the goal of all. I am the only One; there is no Other. I Myself become the worshipped, with My many Names and Forms. Not this only; I am the Fruit of all actions, the Bestower of the Fruit, the Basis, The Prompter, the Promoter of all. Why recount and repeat? I am the Force behind the Birth, Existence and Death of everything and of every life. I am the Birthless, Deathless Cause.

"Realise Me, the Primal Cause; that is indeed Moksha. He is the Jivanmukta (liberated even while alive) who attains that Moksha. Therefore, Arjuna, if one yearns to become a Jivanmukta, to attain Moksha, he must accomplish some disciplines, some sadhanas. That is to say, He has to eradicate fully the attachment to the body."

Hearing this, Arjuna intercepted, "Krishna! Do you speak of this Sadhana of complete detachment as a simple discipline? Is it so easy to practise? Even accomplished ascetics find it difficult and you recommend it so easily to people like me! You speak of it as if it is a very simple task; but it is a formidable endeavour. I feel you are putting me on trial with such suggestions. Can I ever attain that state? Can I win Liberation, can I attain Moksha?" "I have no hope," he said and sat dispirited.

Krishna was watching him losing courage; He neared him and patted his back in a reassuring manner. He said, "Arjuna! There is no need to get startled and desperate for just this. That is the mystery behind this. No, no one will get faith as soon as one hears of

it. One must delve into it with the help of reason; then it will be realised that this discipline is not as hard as it is imagined to be. To become completely detached, it is not necessary to grow matted hair, wear ochre robes and torture the body into skin and bone. It is enough if you do all acts as dedicatory offerings to the Lord, without any desire for the benefits therefrom! This is the truth, this is the secret of Liberation.

"Performing all activities in this manner does not cause any difficult. Only, one should have steady faith and earnestness. Of course, these are essential for every type of activity and so, you can realise that they are indispensable for spiritual activity too, to succeed. I need not declare, they are.

"Whoever among devotees dedicates all acts to Me with no other disturbing thought, whoever meditates on Me, serves Me, worships Me, remembers Me, knows that I am always with him and ever providing for him in this world and the next; I bear the burden of his Yogakshema. Did you hear Me?" asked Krishna, patting Arjuna again on his back and imparting courage to his drooping heart.

Now this statement about the Lord guaranteeing the Yoga-kshema of the devotee has given rise to a great deal of misunderstanding. From the pundits down to the poorest in intelligence, persons have failed to grasp its real import. The commentators on the Gita to propagate this declaration in manifold ways, but they lack the experience needed to realize its significance.

This most sacred sentence is as the navel to the Gita-body. The navel of Vishnu was the place where Brahma took birth; this sloka is the navel or place of birth for those who thirst for Brahmajnana, or attempt to do sadhana or expound the Gita. If this Sloka is followed in practice, the entire Gita can be understood.

There are a number of interesting stories current about this Sloka. I shall give one example: A learned pundit was once giving discourses on the Gita in the presence of a Maharaja. One day, the turn of this Sloka came, the sloka, viz.

*Ananyaaschinthayantho maam
Ye janaah paryupaasathe
Theshaam nithyaabhiyukthaanaam
Yogakshemam vahamyaham.*

The pundit was explaining enthusiastically the many-sided implications of this Sloka, but the Maharaja shook his head and said, "This meaning is not correct." He continued to dispute the correctness of every one of the explanations the pundit gave. The poor pundit had won meritorious distinctions at the court of many a Maharaja and was honoured by them all with pompous titles. He felt as if he was stabbed when the Maharaja in the presence of the entire band of courtiers condemned his explanation of this Sloka as 'wrong.' He smarted under the insult; but plucking up courage, he again set upon his task, and marshalling all his scholarship, he plunged into an eloquent discourse on the multiple meanings of the words, "Yoga" and "Kshema." The Maharaja did not approve of even

this; he ordered: "Find out the meaning of this Sloka and having understood it well, come to me again tomorrow." With this, the Maharaja rose from his throne and went into the inner apartments.

The pundit lost even the few grains of courage left in him. He was weighed down by anxiety; he tottered under the insult; he reached home and, placing the copy of the Gita aside, he fell on the cot. Surprised at this, the pundit's wife said, "Tell me why you came home from the Palace today in such grief? What exactly did happen?" She rained one anxious question after another, so that the pundit was obliged to describe to her all that had happened, the insults heaped on his head, the command with which the Maharaja sent him home, etc. The wife listened to the account of what had happened and after pondering deeply over the incident, she said, "Yes; it is true. What the Maharaja said is right. The explanation you gave for that Sloka is not the correct one. How could the Maharaja approve it? The fault is yours." At this, the pundit rose in anger from the cot, like a cobra whose tail is trodden hard. "What do you know, you silly woman? Am I inferior in intelligence to you? Do you, who are engaged in the kitchen all the time, cooking and serving, do you claim to know more than this famous pundit? Shut your mouth and quit my presence," he roared. But the lady stood her ground. She replied, "Lord! Why do you fly into such a rage at a statement of mere truth? Repeat the sloka once again to yourself and ponder over its meaning. You will then arrive at the right answer yourself." Thus, by her soft words the wife brought calmness into the mind of the Pundit.

The pundit started analysing the meaning of each individual word in the sloka. *Ananvaaschinthayantho maam*, he began, deliberately and slowly, repeating aloud the various meanings. The wife intervened and said, "What benefit is it to learn and expound the meanings of *words*? Tell me what your intention was when you approached this Maharaja. What was the purpose?"

At this, the pundit got wild. "Should I not run this family, this home? How am I to meet the cost of food and drink, of clothes and things, for you and all the rest? It is for the sake of these that I went to him, of course; or else, what business have I with him?" he shouted. The wife then replied, "Lord! If you had only understood what Lord Krishna has declared in this Sloka, the urge to go to this Maharaja would not have arisen in you! If He is worshipped without any other thought, if one but surrenders to Him, if at all times the mind is fixed on him, the Lord has declared in this Sloka that He would provide everything for the devotee. You have not done these three; you approach the Maharaja, believing that *he* would provide everything! That is where you have gone against the meaning of this verse. That is the reason why he did not accept your explanation."

Hearing this, that reputed scholar sat awhile, ruminating on her remarks; He realised his fault; He did not proceed to the Palace the next day. Instead, he got immersed in the worship of Krishna at home. When the king inquired why the pundit had not appeared, courtiers said that he was staying at home and had not started out. The king sent a messenger, but the pundit declined to move out. He said, "There is no need for me to go to any one; my Krishna will provide me with everything; He will bear my Yoga-kshema

Himself. I suffered insult because I did not realise this so long, being blinded by eagerness to know the manifold meanings of mere words. Surrendering to Him, if I am ceaselessly engaged in worshipping Him, He will Himself provide me with all I need." When the messenger took this message to the Palace, the Maharaja proceeded to the dwelling of the pundit, on foot, he fell at the feet of the pundit, saying "I thank you sincerely for explaining to me this day, out of your own experience, the meaning of the Sloka which you took up yesterday." Thus, the King taught the pundit that any propagation of spiritual matters which does not come out of the crucible of experience is mere glitter and show, without value. Have you grasped the point?

Even today, many learned men who go about discoursing on the Gita and doing propaganda for it, do not observe its principles in practice; they are engaged in simply expounding to the world the valueless rind, the textual meaning, the *sense* of the words and nothing more. Trying to spread the Gita, without actually practising it, is tantamount to ruining the cause and insulting the sacred book. They extol the Gita as the very breath of their life, as the Crown of all scriptures, and as having emanated from the Lips of the Lord Himself.

They show so much reverence for the Book that their eyes overflow with tears at the very mention of its Name; they place it on their heads; they press it on their eyes; they keep it in their shrines and offer Puja to it with great bursts of demonstrative devotion. All the respect, all the worship is only for the paper, the book! Only for just that. If indeed they have reverence for the Words of the Lord, the contents of the book, they would have striven to put them into practice, isn't it? No; they do not strive, they have no iota of experience. If they have the experience, none of them would barter the spread of that experience for money. They would yearn only for Grace. Not even one in a million among the Gita-pracharaks today, among those who talk about their mission of spreading the Gita, has the yearning for the Grace of the Lord. No; if they only have that yearning, they would not have thought of income or of money.

(To be continued)

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Origin, Purpose and Meaning

Baba often refers to the apparent mystery of the Divine Being. No logical process can ever reveal this mystery even partially. Intuition and grace are most essential. In the course of His own mission as an avatar Baba has demonstrated on innumerable occasions this mystery of the Godhead. He works in a mysterious way "His wonders to perform". His Grace comes to us only when we ardently pine for it, often in a most unexpected way. How and in what manner this grace descends on us is difficult to describe. But there it is when we most need it, unmistakably and clearly. It comes as an anodyne to the bleeding heart to soothe and tranquillise, as a flash of understanding to one who has lost His way in the dreary desert-sand of frustration or ignorance, as a bright ray of hope to one who is filled with despair and broken in spirit, as a rush of the cool waters of ananda

flooding and revivifying the wasteland of sorrow. This is the central mystery of the Supreme Being. Yet Baba assures us that this mystery need not worry us. Once He said: “Why do you worry about God’s mystery? Your business is to try to bring Him close to your heart and install Him there. But remember to keep this abode of God, your heart and mind, clean and pure.” To the pure in heart, the gate of Heaven is always open. God is unattainable only to those who have no faith. But to those who deserve His Grace, he is so close, so intimate, so accessible. Mere effort without inner purity is of no use. It is more important to have inner faith than to toil endlessly in outward ritual and worship. Yet Sadhana is necessary. Meditation (*dhyana*) and *namasmarana* help us to focus the mind on God. They serve as an inner discipline, a means to strengthen the spirit. But to get lost in these outward rituals and do nothing to serve the world and our fellow creatures is only colossal self-deception. This is the real *maya*, according to Baba. To liberate ourselves from this is to undergo a radical transformation. That which is the core of our being—our real self—is more important than the outward “show” we put on. We are constantly in need of this inner realization. So as to become “whole” men and women, rather than live as “divided” beings. A person who is fully integrated, whose thoughts, words and deeds are fully in harmony, is a happy person. He suffers from no doubt or hesitation. Right action becomes natural to Him. The Lord’s exhortation to Arjuna in the Gita was a call to this inner harmony or integrity. The essence of the Gita really consists in propounding the technique of this inner “wholeness”. Moha is maya. Arjuna’s redemption was really redemption from this “moha” which broke up and shattered His inner being reducing Him to a creature frightened at His own self.

Baba is often impatient with those who blame God for their difficulties and sorrows. How often has Baba declared that the Supreme Being is a being of love and compassion! Sorrows and failures arise, not because of God’s anger, but because of our own actions. Man is free in nothing more than in the field of action. In one of the most thrilling discourses delivered by Baba during the recent Dasara festivities, He said: “Do not blame God for your ills. Thank Him that he still responds to your prayer in mercy and compassion. Otherwise the burden and pain you have to bear will be unendurable. You are the architects of your own lives in a true sense. You are no doubt baffled at the apparent injustice of things. But God knows more than you do. His vision ranges over the unlimited expanse of Eternity—past, present, future. He can mitigate and often destroy the evil that one has accumulated through one’s recurring births. His grace can tear off the web of Karma into shreds. Man’s greatest duty is to earn this grace by true bhakti and service to one’s fellow creatures.” In other words, it is only through real Bhakti that the Karmic bondage can be torn asunder. It is not God that fails man, but we who disown him in our pride. When we are pure in heart, God accepts us. The key to Mukti is with us. For man is a self-directed being capable of infinite self-development. He can attain self-realisation. Only man can create values and attain inner transformation. This is the true meaning of life that it gives us endless scope for God attainment.

H. S. R

Vedavyasa

O Teacher Compassionate, Suka's Sire
Hero, who conquered the realm of Desire!
Sage, who dwelt in wisdom's Abode!
You caught and kept a *Breath* of God.

It made alive the progeny of your brain,
Each so charming, a magnificent train!
It spread in time as an epic grand
That tells of Kurukshetra's crucial stand
It flowed as music through Murali reed
Melody, that melted all bonds and freed

Holy Nilgiris

We were thrilled with joy when Bhagavan sent word on the morning of the 26th May, that He would be arriving that very evening at Ootacamund; the long expected and eagerly awaited visit was to materialise. Surely, a happy day had dawned.

By evening, Geetha Bhavanam was decorated with festoons and flowers, a big Pandal rose in front of the building, and streams of devotees from far and near gathered and started singing Bhajan, in anticipation of Baba's arrival. When Baba arrived at 7 P.M., He was welcomed with Vedic chants and Poornakumbha. He graciously gave Darshan to the assembled Bhaktas till far into the night.

On the 27th, Baba laid the foundation for a Nilayam, among the lovely blue peaks. He created a plate with the figure of Badrinarayana on it and asked that it be kept in the Nilayam. Returning to the Geetha Bhavanam, Baba gave Darshan during Bhajan to the vast gathering and Himself taught a few Namavalis, which evoked waves of devotion, by their divine Inspiration. In the evening, Baba blessed the devotees who gathered in thousands for Bhajan in His presence.

On the 28th, in the morning, Br. Varanasi Subramanya Sastry, famous as Balavyasa, a member of the Central Committee of the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha, addressed the large gathering of Bhaktas on "Dharma"; His speech, which was in Sanskrit was translated by Vidwan br. Sethumadhavachar, M.A., B.O.L., Baba gave a discourse, in which He analysed the four Purusharthas of Dharma Artha Kama and Moksha, and emphasised how they have to be realised by man. He advised all to seek the company of the good, to be occupied with good thoughts, to be engaged in good deeds, so that viveka and vairagya might increase; and rid the mind of the dust of worldly desires that now prevent the clear reflection of God therein. Baba left for Brindavan, Whitefield, the same evening. We had thus about 45 hours of Bliss with beloved Baba, in the midst of what He Himself named when he last visited Nilgiris, "the Holy Hills".

Dr. T. B. Mathan

Baba's Grace

Have faith and you will never fail. Baba says, for success, one must have the Grace of the Lord as well as earned merit. My daughter Sowbhagyavati Saraswathi is an illustration of the truth of this statement. For years she was suffering from an agonising abdominal pain; though many doctors advised an operation and warned her against delay, she refused to follow their advice, since Baba, in whom she had full faith, had assured her that the operation was not necessary and that she would be well soon. He had also given her a Raksha to wear. I have given in the Introduction to the Telugu "Satyam Sivam Sundaram" an account of her complete recovery through the grace of Baba

That was sixteen long years ago, now, her earned merit, perhaps, has borne fruit through His grace. I feel it is His blessing that has given her this joy. This is something which none had hoped for, but His grace is overflowing. She delivered a male child on 27-5-65, Thursday.

Friends, Baba's grace and its manifold sakthi which makes the impossible possible, are surely beyond human understanding.

D. Thirumalacharulu
Venkatagiri town

Magnificent Week in Maharashtra

Truly, it was a magnificent week. During the seven days, Baba blessed lakhs of people in Maharashtra, the scene of His Previous Avatar. Baba started from 'Brindavan' at dawn on the 3rd July, and reached Hyderabad by car, late at night, halting at Penukonda on the way for a few hours, to bless the devotees gathered there and on the bank of the Tungabhadra River for some little time, during the hottest hour of the day.

On the 4th, Baba gave Darshan to thousands of people, devotees who had gathered since the small hours of the night to get the precious chance. Later, five Women Members of the American Peace Corps, secured an hour-long interview with Him, in spite of His heavy schedule of engagements. When Baba put them the question, "What exactly do you want from me?" One Peace Worker said, "Spiritual Development." Baba answered, "I shall bless you and presently give you some advice on this matter, since I know that You are sincerely eager to know. One must feed the hungry, not the rest." Then He gave a simple exposition, full of illustrative stories and examples, of the very first steps in Sadhana, detailing the methods of divesting the mind of its impulses and tendencies and of denying it any chance to block the manifestation of the Inner Light.

On the 5th, Baba left for Maharashtra and was welcomed at Sholapur, inside the border of that state, by the Hon'ble Sri P. K. Savant, Minister for Agriculture, Food, and Civil Supplies, Government of Maharashtra, as well as by Members of the Committee and other Bhaktas. Baba left Sholapur next morning and reached Poona by 1 P. M. There, devotees had gathered even from Kirkee, Deolali and neighbouring villages and Baba gave Darshan to all. Resuming the journey, Baba reached Bombay at 9 P. M.

Banners of Welcome and Homage streamed across the roads leading to Malabar Hill and the Residence of Hon'ble Sri Savant, where Baba was to stay. When Baba's car drove up, thousands of devotees waiting there since morning raised joyous cheers of welcome. As Sri D. M. Parulekar, Advocate, Supreme Court writes, "Ever since the news of Baba's arrival reached the ears of the populace of Maharashtra, thousands and thousands of people rallied round the bungalow of our beloved Minister. It was a sight to see how devotees from the farthest corners of the State were rushing towards the Residence of the Lord to have a glimpse, a Darshan." They stood in long queues regardless of sun and rain, hunger and strain. Baba too came out on the balcony of the bungalow, whatever the hour, every few minutes, breaking off a conversation in the middle, or coming away from music recitals offered before Him by famous musician devotees or interrupting a discussion with a group of pundits and Scholars, responding to the call, "Bhagavan! Awo" rising from hundreds of yearning hearts. He slaked their thirst with His Divine Smile and His reassuring Abhayastham.

On 7th inst. the Maharashtra Branch, of the Akhila Bharat Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha, founded by Baba for the revival of Sanathana Dharma, was inaugurated at the Shanmukhananda Auditorium, Kings Circle. The Auditorium is reputed to be the most spacious in India, but, it could not hold the vast numbers which thronged to attend the Function. The Hall was so thickly packed that persons high up in the balconies could not get a good view of Baba on the dais; so, Baba graciously climbed up into their midst, and fulfilled their intense desire.

Hon'ble Sri P K Savant, the President of the Maharashtra Branch of the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha welcomed the gathering and offered in feeling terms the grateful homage of Bombay. Dr. B. Ramakrishna Rao, the President of the Mahasabha explained the aims of the Sabha, and spoke of the activities of the Andhra Karnataka and Tamil Branches, since its establishment two years ago. Sri. V. S. Page, the Chairman of the Legislative Council, widely respected for his vast learning in Adhyatma Vidya, who presided over the Meeting, spoke on the urgent need to revive spiritual values in modern times. The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Sri Balasaheb Bharde reputed as the "Philosopher-Speaker of Bombay," spoke in thankful appreciation of the efforts of Baba to re-establish Dharma.

Baba, in His Discourse, explained that Sadhana, without Chitta-Shuddhi, is sheer waste of time. Life, He said, is a precious gift which should be utilised in full for the realisation of God, through Sadhana, which achieves and maintains purity of mind. Namasmara is the simplest and the most effective discipline for this task. Baba said, the present crisis in human history can be averted by propagating the eternal values for which this country has

stood for generations. His thrilling Call for spiritualising every thought word and deed created a profound impression on the vast audience. The Telugu discourse was meticulously rendered into Hindi by Dr. B. Ramakrishna Rao.

On the 8th, in the morning, Baba met at His Residence, the members of the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha, Maharashtra Branch. Baba gave them an inspiring discourse on how they should earn credentials for the task of inspiring others to follow Dharma. Replying to questions, He explained the role of Karma Prarabdha and Anugraha, the steps in the process of Upasana, the value of Dhyana, the significance of the term 'Yoga' used in the title of each of the chapters of the Bhagavad-Gita etc. One of the members recited a 'Garland of Nine Gems,' a 'Navarathnamala' which he had composed on Baba. Baba stressed on the name of one of the gems, Vajra, Diamond and as if summing up the discussion with the group, He declared, "Diamond? When the mind dies, becomes ineffective through Sadhana, it becomes a better gem, Die-mind. Die-mind is to be coveted, not Diamond."

That evening, Baba addressed another mammoth meeting, this time, at Dadar, under the auspices of the Andhra Maha Sabha, Bombay. When the dark monsoon clouds which threatened to overwhelm the area held back the torrent until after the end of Baba's Discourse, the citizens of Bombay had another glimpse into Baba's Divine Power. Baba impressed on the minds of the people the need to achieve inward integration to get peace and joy. Emphasising the efficacy of Namasmarana, He persuaded the vast audience to sing with Him a few Bhajan songs, which He taught in His sweet melodious Voice. The atmosphere was charged with the fragrance of devotion when the Bhajans were sung by that multitude.

On the 9th, Baba visited the Aarey Milk Colony on the outskirts of Bombay. Recollecting, perhaps, the Years spent on the banks of the Jumna, Baba was drawn to the Colony, where thousands of cows are fed and fostered with loving care in perfectly hygienic conditions. Baba went round the stalls and also witnessed the pasteurisation process, the bottling of the milk for dispatch to the distributing centres in the City of Bombay. Later, the officers and workers gathered around Him on the Roof garden of the Factory and Baba gave them a discourse, which was an inspiring lesson for seekers and Sadhakas.

On the 10th and 11th, Baba was busy at His Residence, meeting Ministers, and other leading citizens of Bombay. The Religious Heads of many Sects and Faiths met Him and drew inspiration from Him. Swami Sai Saranananda, who was for many years at Shirdi, in the Holy Company of Sai Baba, spent some time with Baba. He is now among those working for the Inauguration of the Saurashtra Branch of the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha, for, as he writes: "I feel I am in duty bound to render such service to Him, as I can, in the great task which Sri Sai Baba likes. I take Sri Sathya Sai Baba as the duly constituted attorney appointed by Shirdi Sai Baba for this purpose and so, he is an object of my love admiration and reverence."

On the 12th, Baba left Bombay for Pandharpur, a shrine which has become the spiritual home of Maharashtrians, not to speak of the crores of men and women, who inspired, by the long line of saints associated with it, seek relief and redress, from the worship of Panduranga Vitthal, the Form of Vishnu manifested there. Panduranga is the invisible Member of millions of households in Maharashtra; for He has manifested Himself in many roles to save His devotees, who have turned to Him for succour. Princes and potters, weavers and warriors, scholars and semi-literates, Rajas and ryots, men women children—all have been drawn into the stream of devotion to Panduranga and all have been the recipients of His Grace. "Jai Jai Vitthal, Panduranga Vitthal" they sang with every breath. Jnanadev, Namdev, Ekanath, Gorakumbar, Tukaram, Sakkubai—these names are engraved in the hearts of all good persons, who seek to attain God; they are names of persons blessed by God, as Panduranga at Pandharpur.

Readers must have realised that Baba's visit to the Pandharpur shrine is a unique occasion, for, Baba as a Boy, had collected the boys of Puttaparthi village into a Pandari Bhajan Group (!) and planted in their hearts the yearning to go on a pilgrimage to Panduranga's shrine on the sacred Chandrabhaga. Again, Baba has declared, as Panduranga did, (when as the servant of Damajipanth, He appeared before the Raja of Mangalavatam, in reply to questions put to Him about His identity.) "I have no village which I can name as mine; all places and all villages are mine. I have no one name, all names are Mine." Baba has manifested Himself as Panduranga to an aged couple, who could not proceed to Pandharpur on account of the dislocation of railway services and who had to turn back in sorrow. He too pays no heed to the distinctions of caste or creed, poverty or wealth; His Grace is showered on all. Those who had the Darsan of Baba at the shrine will cherish the memory of that Vision; for, they saw, et that time, Reality face to face with Itself!

On the 13th, Baba visited the temple; Bhaktas sang Bhajans in their ecstasy. When Baba went to the shrine of Rukmabai, the Consort, He created quite suddenly an exquisite gemset Mangala Sutra and placed it on the neck of the idol.

From the Vitthal Mandir, where a large gathering of people had Baba's Darshan, Baba went to the Circuit House, where the President of the Municipality and the Trustees of the Temple, who had earlier welcomed Him on His entrance to the Town were waiting to have further conversation with Him. In spite of the urgency for departing on the long journey back to Bangalore, Baba very graciously spent over an hour discussing with them Adhyatmic problems.

Later in the day, Baba left Pandharpur. While some members of His party went to Hyderabad, Baba turned towards Bangalore, and reached Belgaum in the night. On the 14th July, Baba started at dawn from Belgaum and arrived at 'Brindavan' the same evening. Those who were with Him could imbibe, every moment, His invaluable instructions on spiritual Sadhana; they could also witness the ceaseless flow of His Prema towards all beings. A cow-herd tending cattle on a hillock by the road got from Him fruits and Blessings; a half blind woman tottering under the weight of a basket got from Him sweets and money, with Blessings. The blind, the lame, the aged, who had the

fortunate chance to be on the road when His Car went past, all received from Baba some token of His Grace. Baba is never too busy for the little ones of this Earth.

Thus, Baba in a short but magnificent week spent in Maharashtra, amply revealed that He is gracious towards the holy region where in the "previous body" He had spent many years. The Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha is an instrument for carrying out the task of Vedadharmabodha, which He had announced as early as 1940, as the Avatar's Mission when as a boy of fourteen, He had declared Himself as Sai Baba. The members of the Maharashtra Committee; of the Sabha, (Sri. V. S. Page, Chairman, Maharashtra Legislative Council, Sri T. S. Bharde, Speaker, Maharashtra Legislative Assembly, Sri B. S C. Swamy, Srimathi Leela J. Purandare, Dr. B. P. Divgi, Ex-Mayor of Bombay, Dr. S. S. Ugrankar, Councillor, Bombay Corporation and Sri. Gangadas Parekh) under the able and enthusiastic guidance of the Chairman, Honourable Sri P. K. Savant and with the active assistance of the Secretary, Sri D. M. Parulekar, Advocate, Supreme Court of India have already set about the task of propagating the ancient ideals and teachings of our land, for which humanity is thirsting today. Baba's Blessings will certainly crown such efforts with success.

Sainathan is Vaidyanathan

Our homage to Bhagavan. Please permit me to state the following facts, facts which are true to every body's knowledge in our town and in remote villages—facts which bebove us for ever pray in seeking *His* blessings in our daily life although we are quite aware of His *Presence* in all our actions. He is ever present and a silent watcher guiding, our courses to a way where we could reach *Him*. This letter should have been written long ago, but I presume, I needed Bhagavan's command to write this. And so, with a view to reach the innumerable Bhaktas of Bhagavan in and out of India. I hasten to write this. If I have exceeded my limit, I request I might be pardoned.

It was in the year 1956, that my brother-in-law by name, Chidambaram had His eye troubles. Treatment was started by the local eye specialist and after a year and a half he was advised to seek medical aid at the Egmore eye hospital in Madras, where he was very kindly seen by almost all eminent eye-specialists and treatment was continued for over a year. But it met with very little encouragement and there was no improvement. At long last even hopes of recovery of the eyesight was given up by the doctors. They only said that only miracles could cure this and in as many words they said they suspected it might be "Cancer" in the eye cavity. It was a shock to the sufferer the chief breadwinner and to the family.

Then without knowing as to who Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba was, we were advised to seek His Blessings. We were quite unaware where His ABODE was and we started praying, continuing at the same time to find out the way to reach Him personally. A cousin of my family took Him to Puttaparthi via Penukonda and my brother in law prayed to Bhagavan. Bhagavan was gracious in granting the coveted interview and he

answered the prayer by rubbing both the eyes with Pannir (Rose Water) and Lo! By the time he reached Penukonda on His way back His eyesight. This is how a father got back his eyesight. He was taken back in His service (Government) although we wondered how (!)—after two and a half years of leave though he was not eligible for it.

Now coming to the miraculous escape from the claws of death of His son, Balsundaram, we are amazed and inwardly feel how Bhagavan acts and answers our prayer. As usual on 11th July 1963 His son went out to purchase flowers and other articles for the Thursday Bhajan. There, a rusted nail ‘pinched’ Him and he came away caring little. Next day as usual he went to His school, had His lunch and returned in the evening. By 6 P.M., he vomited all of a sudden the whole meal he had taken at 1 P.M. His parents were perplexed and they called out their family doctor. He felt the pulse and he was alarmed at the critical stage and therefore he advised immediate removal of the patient to the Head Quarters Hospital where three doctors hurried up to see the patient. The District Medical Officer also was called up from His rest and he tried all kinds of treatment. At about 10 P.M the patients pulse was very weak and one of the doctors asked my brother in law to sign the ‘death warrant’ as they had lost hope of curing the patient. We all called out, in anxiety at the hopeless situation, for Bhagavan’s grace and help at this hour. My mother in law started praying Bhagavan “Saranam Namavali” and “Skanda Kavacham” alternatively throughout the night. Minute by minute, hour by hour we silently watched the trials and tribulations, pinning our faith in Bhagavan—the Kaliyug-avatar and our vaidyanathan, Sathya Sai.

11-25 A.M.! The patients pulse improved and doctors wondered at the miraculous escape of the patient. After 5 days stay in the hospital the boy, aged 17 years, fully, recovered, and returned home. He is now studying His final school year.

So our Siva shakti swarupa Bhagavan Sainathan is our Vaidyanathan. He is All in All.

**T. P. Vadivelu,
Ootacamund 12-4-65**

Guru Poornima

Though our minds naturally turn to the sacredness of Gurupoornima. Baba has been telling us, “Every day is Guru Poornima; every day is Thursday, the Day of the Guru.” We should contemplate this Truth with devotion and make this Day a Day of Dedication, so that it may open for us the door leading to God-Realisation.

The word Guru means, he who enlightens, he who removes the darkness; it means, a person who has transcended the three gunas, who has realised the ruparahitha (the Formless Absolute) a person who can open your eyes to the perfection which you really are. No person who is afflicted with avarice, short temper, jealousy, self-esteem and other worldly traits can be honoured by that appellation. He should be able to come to the

rescue of the seeker whom he has taken under His care, whenever spiritual difficulties arise. He must watch over Him, at all times, whether he is far or near; he must be loving but, firm; not hesitating to correct the pupil by reprimand, if necessary. He should be a good doctor, who has with Him the correct antidote, ready to be administered, when any reaction sets in during the observance of His advice. In short, he must have realised the Goal.

The guru does not confer upon you something new, Baba says. He only reveals to you your own reality. He takes away the veil which conceals from you the truth. He is like the man to whom you go for a loan of ten rupees, but who reminds you of a ten rupee note which you have placed between the leaves of the Gita which you daily read, rupees about which you have no recollection. He directs your attention to the treasure hidden in you.

The guru is a gift from God; sometimes when no human guru is available or needed, God himself takes on that role, and leads you on, from within or from without. He tests the disciple for discrimination and detachment, Viveka and Vairagyam. He implants within the consciousness of the pupil an alarm, which warns Him as soon as he strays from the straight path. His loving care can make the disciple climb to the height, provided he has developed one-pointed intensity of faith. He shows the way; he gives a clear map of the road. The seeker, Baba says, has to tread the path himself. Of course the guru will exhort and encourage, until the final stage of Nirvikalpa samadhi is reached and the Particular is merged in the Universal.

The disciple must possess a healthy body, a strong mind and a benevolent heart. For success in meditation, according to Baba, all three are essential. Word and deed should be coordinated or else, A-shanti will ensue. If both are in harmony, Shanti is ensured. Baba says, "Instruction of a pupil who has not got these three is as futile as trying to keep water in a leaky receptacle". In order to obtain the Grace of the Guru, he must adhere to His dharma in the right spirit and keep cheerful under all conditions, and in the midst of the varied activities of life. The heart has to be cleansed of the qualities that clog it and the vagaries of the mind have to be controlled.

Without concentration, the seeker cannot absorb the lessons which the guru is earnest to give. One with a wandering mind, unable to concentrate on the wisdom which the Guru imparts and apply it in daily practice, is not worthy of being accepted as a disciple. While speaking on this point, Baba once gave an interesting story. A pupil was sitting at His Guru's feet, while the master was expounding profound truths. Though pretending to be listening reverentially, the young man's attention was centered on a hole, at the bottom of the wall of the hermitage which a rat was struggling to enter in search of prey. When almost the entire rat had affected entrance, the Guru who was unaware of the pupil's lack of attention, asked the class, "Now let me know how much has gone in." The pupil who was watching the rat blurted out, absent-mindedly, "All but the tail, Guruji."

And Baba asks, "are not most men inclined to be like that pupil?" To keep the mind on God, not letting it wander into the rat holes of the world requires tremendous will power

and perseverance. “The monkeys,” Baba once said at Brindavan, pointing to the capering groups on the trees, “are good teachers; they teach you what not to do!” Jumping from tree to tree, their attention is not focused on any single object; like monkeys, people gambol and caper through life, the mind wandering behind the senses into the jungle of sense objects.

With the Guru’s help, the mind can be stilled. He is the supreme Doctor. He can help us to get rid of unrest, anger, desire, vanity and avarice. He administers the medicines of meditation, prayer, recital and remembrance of the Name of the Lord, and He restores the pupil to the state of Ananda, which is native to Him.

When Guru Poornima nears, these words from Baba divine Discourses at Brindavan to the group of Sadhakas there, come to mind and one would like to share them with all fellow pilgrims. Why drink the drugs of life; when Bhagavan offers us the sparkling clear living waters of Truth?

Hilda Charlton

Prasanthi Nilayam News

“Akhand Bhajan, for 24 hours, from 8 A.M. on the 24th June was performed by the Bhaktas of Bangalore, In the immediate presence of Baba, at the Gayana Sabha Hall (Baba Himself lighted the Akhand Jyoti to inaugurate the Bhajan) Hon’ble J. Alva, Health Minister, Government of Mysore, presided over the Public meeting on the 25th, when Baba gave a Discourse on the Disciplines required for spiritual Progress.

The Gurupoornima sacred to all Sadhakas and Bhaktas was celebrated at the Prasanthi Nilayam on the 13th July. Baba blessed the thousands who had gathered. Detailed report next month.

Sathya Sai Study Circles to study the writings of Baba and to provide Satsang for Bhaktas and develop the Sadhana recommended by Baba are now active at Hong Kong, Kampala (East Africa), Liverpool (England) as well as in many places in India, specially Dadar Tardeo Thana (Bombay) Okha Dwaraka Jamnagar, Rajkot, Bhavanagar, Junagadh, Porbander, Ahmedabad, Baroda, Surat, Navsari and Jambusan (Gujarat)

Their Holinesses the Pithadhipathis of Palimar Mutt (Udipi) and of Edaneer (Kerala) visited the Nilayam on 3-7-65 and had long talks with Baba

The Mysore State Branch of the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha had arranged a lecture on the Ramayana by the National research Professor of Library Science, Dr. S. R. Ranganathan , who disclosed at the lecture that the Ramayana had come to His rescue when confronted with the most crucial problems of life

The Pontiac Car (Model 1965) sent by the Sathya Sai Mandali, Kampala (East Africa) for Swami Seva arrived at the Nilayam.

Dr. N. Jayalakshmi M.B.B.S, who has worked in various Hospitals in Mysore State, including the Bowring and Lady Curzon Hospitals, as well as Hospitals in England, Scotland, Wales and Canada, is rendering service at the Sathya Sai Hospital, Prasanthi Nilayam from the 15th July. The committee is grateful to her for this.

IMPORTANT

Baba invariably keeps all engagements, once they are fixed, whatever may intervene. He has been answering the prayers and awarding them this singular Grace. But, when Bhaktas invite Him without any specific date, Baba generally answers, "I shall gladly come;" no engagement is mentioned or accepted. When a date is suggested He either agrees or declares He is unable .to come and acts accordingly. Such is the way of Baba.

Some irresponsible persons, however, hoping to secure Baba's acceptance or for establishing their own importance, announce that Baba is coming to their places and collect money from the public, using the name of Baba. Recently, at Rishivandyam in Madras State, posters were printed and great show was made announcing that Baba was arriving, when actually, Baba was at Bombay since the 3rd June and He had informed that He would not be coming! Thousands of people suffered grief and loss.

Baba will not shower His Grace on places where Dhanam is preferred to Dharma. How can we expect Him where tickets are sold for money, more for the rows nearer His Presence and less for the back rows. Where money is master, the Master will not manifest. The gems of the spirit can be secured only in exchange for Daya and Dharma. Baba will not arrive at any place, where money is collected using His Name. Bhaktas must ponder over this truth, and be guided by it.

(Ed.)

Speakers who are out to spread the Gita have multiplied nowadays and as a consequence, a variety of interpretations, most of them far removed from the genuine one, has emanated, clouding the true significance. Interpretations follow the nature and character of each exponent. Once an opinion is formed, he tries to buttress it with appropriate arguments and prove all others wrong. It is then repeated parrot-like on every occasion; no attempt is made to practise the Gita and make it part of one's actual life. Such persons pretend to be great Gita Pracharaks and go about, heavy with the burden of credentials and titles. They ruin themselves by this deception and undermine the trust placed on the Gita.

The words of God are, each one, fit for translation into actual life; not, for scattering into the ears of men to reap fame. But, the times have gone so awry, that they are today, misused for acquiring publicity and praise! Those who listen to the expositions of these Pracharaks are also neglecting to question the bona fides; they do not care to examine whether the persons who extol the Gita to the skies have tasted the sweetness of its teachings. Words and deeds are far apart; they exhort others but those who are exhorted find that the teachers do not themselves follow the lesson! No, not even one in a million.

There are some who boast that they have the entire Gita on the tip of the tongue, that they can roll out, on the spot, any sloka from the Gita which you want to hear, if only the chapter and number are given; or, they can quote chapter and number for any phrase or word you give. I am inclined to laugh when such scholarship is exhibited. Poor tongue, that it should carry so much on its tip, without any of it being absorbed in actual life or daily practice! A gramophone record can repeat as well as they; and, with equal benefit to itself. Practising one verse certainly yields more benefit than learning all the verses by rote and retaining them in memory. Arjuna proved every word of Krishna true, by practising it. His sincerity won him the Grace of Krishna.

It is a pity that even extremely learned Pundits at the present time are unaware of the thrill of putting into practice a single word of the Gita. What then are we to say of the unlearned, the ignorant? In short, even some very reputed exponents of the Gita are playing false to its teaching, acting contrary to the message. To the Song of the Lord, each one adds a fancy note of his own, to demonstrate his special twist in scholarship, or his favourite predilection. Let us consider one example of this type: The 10th verse of the 6th chapter of the Gita declares that "Parigraha" is a great sin.

Now, those who accept the Gita as authority should act accordingly, avoiding Parigraha, isn't it? Parigraha means "accepting" even for the upkeep of the body and the maintenance of Dharma! These Pracharaks however, *do* accept, 99 per cent of them! The condemnation of Parigraha applies to all forms; there are no modifying circumstances or exceptions. Yet, collections and contributions are asked for Gitayajnas, as 'offerings' during Arati, as expenses for the Gita Pracharaka Sanghas, as Nazar or Kanuka for the Guru; lectures are 'sold' for tickets, as entertainment (like the drama and cinema) is sold. People who do these have no faith in the words of Krishna; for, had they the faith, they would not have behaved in such contrary ways. If

they were convinced that it is wrong, they would not be tempted to act so. They explain the sloka to others and feel that their duty is done; they don't feel the need to follow the advice themselves. That is the spirit of the times, for, this is the age of hypocrisy. . People who watch this type of Gita Prachar lose faith first in the Pracharak and later, in the Gita itself. The publicity dissolves into mere pomp and vanity.

The teachings of the Gita do not get the respect that the book gets. Thousands of people, when they see the sacred books, Gita, Ramayana, Bhagavata, Bharatha, etc., bow their heads, press them to their eyes, place them on their heads, keep them on a special Seat in the shrine and reverentially placing a few flowers on them, they sit with closed eyes and, with teardrops rolling down their cheeks, fall prostrate before the books and rise very much satisfied with themselves! All that reverence is for the stack of paper, really; not for the contents of the books, the subjects they deal with.

What the head must carry is not the weight of the paper, but, the message explained thereon. Attach value not to the book, but to the subject; revere, not the volume, but the matter expounded therein. Install it not on the altar, but, in the heart. For, it is only then that the authority of the Gita will be honoured steadily, at all times. The mind will not be cleansed of egoism or the like evils by all these outward forms of reverence: learning by rote, offering worship in the shrine room, holding on the head, pressing on the eyes, etc. Let the message enter the heart; put it into actual practice and taste the joy that comes therefrom. That is the way of honouring the Gita.

The tastiest dish can never e n d your hunger, if you place it on the head or press it to your eye or fall prostrate before it. The Gita too is on a par with this. The Gita is a tasty dish, full of the sweet ingredients of Bhakti, Jnana, Karma and Vairagya. Eat it; drink it. One mouthful is enough. The hungry man does not need all the grain that is harvested; a handful of rice suffices. The thirsty man need not drink the Godavari dry; a glass of water is enough.

He who has hunger for God need not consume the entire Gita; it can be quenched by practising even one sloka. A box of matches has many sticks; if you want to light a fire, you need strike only one; you can grow the little flame into a huge fire, with care and diligence. The entire stock of sticks need not be struck. There are 700 sticks in the Gita, each one, a stick from which you can light the flame of Jnana. Strike one on the stone of experience, that is enough.

The Gita has to be used thus for self-realisation; that is the holy task for which it is designed. It is a great wrong to misuse it; all attempts to use it for fame and fortune, for titles and display are but symptoms of egoism; they are acts of sacrilege. The 'gandha' must be extracted from this 'grantha'; that is the test of scholarship; the fragrance (gandha) is the essence of the book (grantha). Do not on the other hand transform the mastaka into a pustaka, the brain into a book.

See God in the stone; do not change God into stone. That is the vision, which is highly desirable. The stone must be visualised as Divine, suffused with God, which it really is. This vision is the precious gift that God has given the people of this land. Pearls do not float on the waves of the ocean; dive deep into the silent caverns at the bottom if you yearn of them. The people of this land have sought for God in this manner since ages.

The practice of Dharma is the body; the realisation of God is the heart; this is the truth that has urged the people here to march forward and save themselves. They are not slaves to mere outward polish, external embroidery, or material comfort. They search for the basic Atma with the inner eye and cultivate detachment from everything which hampers that search. The people of Bharat, who have this grand nature, are, however, attracted today by material progress and outward pomp! This is a tragedy much to be regretted.

Those who go about expounding the Gita with the object of earning money are thereby keeping God far. They may find out and give various justifications for their behaviour, no doubt; but, no, one who has real faith in the Gita or who is a real adherent of its teaching can accept their explanations.

The Gita is spoken, in order to foster Dharma, not Dhanam; it serves to promote goodness, not "goodsness." Collecting money in the name of a temple for Krishna or for Rama, or a Mandir for the Gita is another means of reducing faith in God; building a house for the Lord who is immanent and all-pervading is absurd. The heart is the proper temple where Krishna or the Gita is to be installed. To put up an artificial structure that is certain to be ravaged by time, for the eternal Absolute, the indestructible Godhead is very improper. Of course, until a stage is reached, these may be necessary, but, in that case, it is wiser to make the best use of the ancient temples that already exist. Building new ones and ruining the old ones is as foolish as killing the cow and donating footwear made out of its, hide! The welfare of the world can be promoted by the renovation of old temples, and not by the creation of new ones. The installation of God in those ancient days was done by strict Sastraic ritual and so, they are holier. The power radiated from them confers upon this land whatever little welfare it enjoys now.

The Rishis of the past suffered hardships, detached themselves from the world and even disintegrated their physiques in the search for the secrets of individual salvation and social uplift. They have handed down certain codes of conduct and rules of living which are practicable and simple. Even these are now neglected or misunderstood; new codes and rules are imposed so that these precious ones have gone under. When elders, Gurus and Pundits accept and honour these newfangled modes of behaviour, how can Bharat continue to be Dharmakshetra, Yogakshetra and Tyagakshetra? This downfall in ideals explains why the land which verily was Annapurna, feeding all her children full, has to wail today for food. The holy experience—Sivoham, I am Siva—was resounding from every mountain valley, every cave, every temple and each sacred riverbank; but, now, the cry is, Savoham, Savoham, I am dead! The land has lost its ancient joy; it is infested with anxiety; it is the home of self-aggrandizement; it is pursuing empty pomp. To counteract these tendencies, the spread of spiritual knowledge by persons who have actually experienced the joy of Sadhana and Success has become very necessary. Every one from the simple unlettered man to the Paramahansa must recognise this need. All must cultivate faith in the Gita and take it as the authentic word of the Lord. Mere reading and repeating are of no avail.

The Lord has given the assurance: "Yoga kshemam vahaamyaham," "I shall bear the burden of your welfare, here and hereafter"; He has undertaken this task voluntarily. But, for mortals and aspirants to benefit from this, they have to live as ordained; they have to adhere to the lines laid down. When they feel that they are not so helped, they have only to examine their own lives and discover how far they have kept up the commands of God regarding the regulation of life. They

fail to examine this. They do not consider the past and future; they complain only about the grief of the moment, not knowing that it is caused by neglect of the past and ignorance of the future. This is the root of their suffering.

While considering this assurance, the condition precedent contained in the same sloka, "Ananyaaschinthayantho maam, ye janaah paryupaasathe" has to be remembered. "Yogakshemam vahaamyaham" is the crown of this condition, the final fruit. The assurance is the head; but, no head can function independently of limbs. Holding fast to the head only, apart from neck and shoulders, and the rest of the body, is like putting faith in the key in one's hand after the iron safe has been stolen by thieves! Of what use is the key, after the treasure is burgled?

What are the conditions for the fulfillment of that assurance? Ananyachinta and Upasana, Meditation on the Lord unhampered by any other thought and Steady Worship. If unbroken meditation is absent, when worship is not offered, without unconditional surrender, what justification is there for you to complain that *He* is not bearing the burden? You surrender to others; you praise and extol others; you are immersed in other thoughts. How then can *He* assume the burden? If those others are visualised as Divine, and all acts done in the spirit of dedication to the Lord, that is enough to win the Grace of God. Now, you serve others; and press the Lord for reward! How can this be Ananya chinta, undivided loyalty? If a man is the servant of the King, he must serve him wholeheartedly; if he serves the King and loves his family, that cannot be termed unswerving loyalty. Serve whom you love, love whom you serve. That is the secret of Sharanagati, surrender.

The Gita has this sloka, beginning with "Ananyaas-chintayantho maam," as its navel, its Nabhi. Vyasa made a lovely garland using the words of Krishna as flowers; of that garland, this sloka is the crest. It is the central jewel of that garland of gems.

The words "Yoga" and "Kshema" used by the Lord here, mean, "Yoga" acquisition of something desirable and "Kshema," the preservation of what is thus acquired. The discipline by which you can preserve it, is: Ananya chinta, exclusive meditation on the Lord. That will cleanse the mind; it will make you a Bhakta. The Bhakta is recognised by these things: he talks of the Lord; he sings of the Lord, he sees only the Lord; he works and spends his leisure, with the Lord.

Such persons have no need to perform Yajna or Yaga; they need not busy themselves with meritorious acts of charity; they need not go from one holy place to another. Why should they be sad if they miss these things, and complain that the Lord did not give them the chance or the wherewithal for these? He does not insist on these or crave for these. Offer whatever arises in the mind, made pure by Sadhana; He gladly accepts all. You may engage yourselves in what are termed "good deeds," but, if the mind is unclean, if the vessel is not 'tinned' with the thought of God, they are all polluted into poison. He is particular that the vessel should be clean.

Note how the handful of parched rice that Kuchela offered the Lord with a pure mind pleased Him. Read the experiences of Vidura and Draupadi, in the epics and Puranas. What did they offer the Lord Vidura gave a cup of gruel; Draupadi had only a wee bit of leaf to offer.; on the face of it, they are valueless, unable to fetch even half a paisa as price. But, consider how much

the Lord gave in return! He does not calculate the value of *things*. He calculates the *feeling* that prompted the act. So, purify the feeling in order to win His Grace.

(To be continued)

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

The person devoted to God knows no failure. The Name of the Lord, if taken sincerely, overcomes all obstacles. It is saturated with sweetness; it has no iota of the bitterness of defeat in it. When the Saviour is by your side, why doubt whether you will be saved?

BABA

Swa-Swarupa

Gurupoornima is a sacred day; it is the day that commemorates Vyasa, who taught man the secret of materialising the non-material Divinity, of realising the Universal through the Particular. By studying the vast literature that he has composed and following the disciplines he has laid down, man can transmute himself into Madhava, Nara can realise he is Narayana, and the Jivi can realise his identity with Brahman. This is service done to humanity for all times and so, Vyasa is acclaimed as Lokaguru, the World Teacher. Man is not the body, he is the embodied One; he is not the scabbard, but, the sword. He is not Jada but Chit. This truth has been expounded by Vyasa; through, rites and formulae, story and parable, exhortation and example dialogues and dialectic, contained in the sacred books he composed.

Vyaso Narayana Harih; Vyasa is revered as an incarnation of Narayana Himself. For, as Guru he is Gu (sans Guna) and ru (sans Rupa) like Narayana, the Supreme Godhead. That is the reason why he was able to mark out the path of liberation for mankind; in such universal terms and in so simple a style. He is specially worshipped on this Full Moon Day, because all his teachings are directed to the control and conquest of the mind and the deity presiding over the Mind is the Moon. On the Full Moon Day, the Moon is clear, cool and bright. The mind of man too must be clear of vulgar desire, refreshingly cool for those who are scorched by the heat of worldly struggle, and bright with the realisation of the effulgence of the Self.

Vyasa lights the ray of hope in man groping in the dark. He is the Guru who counsels the disciple and promotes his real welfare. The disciple must, therefore treasure his teaching, observe it strictly after understanding its implications and experience the bliss of the merging of the 'river' with the 'sea'. Vyasa has elaborated the duties and obligations of both the Guru and the Shishya and nothing will please him more than their observance by both. So, this Day is celebrated as both Vyasapoornima and Gurupoornima. All aspirants must this day ruminate over what their Guru has taught them and resolve to follow the path laid down by him, with greater loyalty and steadiness.

The Guru is the Guide because he is Divine. In fact, it is the Divine in him that prompts others to take to the path of liberation. You should pray today that you may be blessed to overcome this

world and attain the Highest. Of Course, there is no Name which is not His; no heart where He does not reside. So, He will respond to your call, wherever and whenever made.

The Lord's Name is the lotus blooming in the Manasa-sarovar, the limpid pool of the mind. You must be like the bee, that discards all else and rushes towards the lotus to drink the honey. Leave off the foul things of the world and sensing the sweetness of the Divine, fly towards the Lotus and settle down on it imbibing the honey.

There are some who question the value of prayer demanding to know what benefits it confers on those who pray. Well, even tiny acts have their consequences and so, why doubt the value of this highly important act? Have full loyalty to God; do not try to serve two masters. Be not like the labourer who works merely for the wages; be, like kith and kin, anxious to help, waiting for the chance to be of service. If you count on the wages, your service will not be perfect, and unselfish. When a man is the servant of the King, if his mind is fixed on the clothes and comforts that he can command by his earnings through that service, he is not the servant of the King; he is the servant of "clothes and comforts." Worship performed with one eye on material things, like the family and fortune, cannot be the act of a servant of God; they are acts of a servant of "family and fortune." That will not be treated as surrender to God. Death is crouching like a tiger behind the bush to pounce on you, but, you pass along, unaware of the danger. The thread of life may snap any moment. So, while life lasts, use every moment for the Sadhana which will lead you Godwards. One day a poor Brahmin arrived at the court of Dharmaraja, the eldest of the Pandavas pleading for wherewithal for the celebration of 'his daughter's marriage. Dharmaraja promised to give him all that he needed, but, he asked him to come the next day. At this, Bhima was so elated that he ordered the event to be celebrated with the beating of drums and hoisting of flags all over the kingdom. When the King inquired the reason for this sudden spurt of joy, Bhima replied, "You have now announced that you *will* live one more day; is that not enough cause for joy, when everyone else is uncertain of even the next moment?"

Be convinced that family and fortune have to be given up, some day, sooner or later. The materials that a nature supplies are not yours; they are given to you on trust, by the Lord. What a tragedy! Acquiring this precious human career, you do not use it for rising up to the heights of Madhava-hood, ascending the steps of Viveka, Vairagya and Vichakshana. It is as pitiable as using the Wish-fulfilling Cow, the Kamadhenu, for ploughing fields, and not for sustaining yourself with the nectarine milk she offers.

Endure joy and grief, with equanimity. When you are every one else, against whom are you angry? Who causes you trouble? Whom can you hate? When your tongue is bitten by your teeth, you do not develop anger against the erring teeth and pluck them off, do you? Why? Because teeth are as much yours as the tongue. Cultivate the universal outlook that all are you; that is your Swa-swarupa, your real self. You are as universal as God Himself; only, you are deluded into the belief that you are limited.

God is a Power-house; if you desire that He should illumine your Body, (the Temple where your Self is installed) then, erect the poles of Discipline, at regular intervals of time, according to a prepared plan, well and truly straight; Dedicated Activity is the cable that these poles should

carry. Fix the bulb, Shuddha-manas (pure mind) and turn on the switch of Sharanagati or Surrender. Then, in the illumination of Jnana, the Self can be realised in all its Glory.

That Power will not reach you, if you merely close eye or nose and yearn; the discipline has to be followed, as laid down. A lump of steel may be worth less than five rupees; but, by skilful observance of certain rules and measurements, if the steel is converted into springs nuts bolts screws etc, they can be put together as a watch worth five hundred rupees. So too, the crude mind of an ignoramus can, by Sadhana, be transformed into that of a Paramahansa, a realised Soul.

The mind is the means for bondage and liberation. Now, it has rendered man a slave of the senses but, if Reason holds sway, it will soon discover that the joy derived through the senses is a mere fiction. Foster the spark of intelligence already in you and grow it into a big lamp, which will reveal you as the Self, the Brahman, that you always are.

If the inquiry, "Who am I?" is pursued rigorously, you will reach the conclusion: "I am Brahman" "Aham Brahmasmi." You proceed from one negation to another, until you arrive at that affirmation. "Am I this gross Annamaya kosa? Or, am I the subtle Pranamaya, Manomaya, or Vijnanamaya kosas? Am I the causal Anandamaya Kosa?" you ask. There are many who declare that you are fundamentally, Anandam. But, I do not agree with this view. The Atma is above and beyond all these five sheaths, all these Kosas, including the Anandamaya.

This is the core of the Teaching, imparted by the Guru. But, among the disciples who listen, there are many types, Shravanam or reception through the ear, is of many kinds: Mud listening (after a little time, the water evaporates and the mud becomes hard again; when the teaching is listened to, the heart becomes soft, but, it is soon forgotten and the heart turns hard again) kokil listening (repeating the same sound, in spite of the manifold tunes it listens to; the teacher may teach many points of view and suggest better attitudes, but, the pupil's mind is fixed; he repeats the same opinion ad nauseum and is not prepared to change or modify it) crow listening (where the fixed opinion is cawed ceaselessly, whether people are anxious to hear or not) mosquito listening (where, though your opinion is positively hateful, you go on filling others' ears with it.) One should avoid these methods of hearing and talking; listen to good things in good company and ruminate over the things heard, in silence, and make it part of your life.

When asked which is your parent land, you proudly reply, "Bharatavarsha." But, you do not care to cultivate the traditions of this land, enshrined in the Vedas Sastras Ithihasas of this land, traditions which ensure happiness contentment and equanimity. Butter in hand, you beg for ghee! This is indeed ludicrous to say the least. As a reward for the merit acquired by you with great toil, you have earned this human birth. You do not realise the cost, but, you fritter away the precious chance. Every moment is a wonderful opportunity, which will not come again.

Your body is the field; take the pickaxe of Reason and excavate the rocks of Mind so that you may collect the spiritual gems embedded in them. Do not believe that there is joy in external objects; the joy is in you, not outside you. A dog runs away with bone, and secure in a lonely place, it gnaws the dry bone till its mouth begins to bleed; it laps up the blood, mistaking it to be from the bone; really, the joy it derives is from its own blood. So too, when a baby sucks its

thumb and derives pleasure therefrom, it imagines the thumb to be something separate from itself!

The Guru is needed to implant such obvious, but, easily neglected Truths. But, the best of Gurus cannot help, unless one has the Guri, that is to say, the yearning to reach the Goal. What can the most intelligent gardener do, if even the seed is not supplied?

The Guru just discloses what is already existent; he urges you to ask: "Kasthwam?" (Who are You?) "Koham?" (Who am I?) and "Kutha aayaathah?" (Where have all this come from?) and he directs you until you get the answers. That is the service he gladly does for your uplift.

From Baba's Discourses: 13, 14-7-65

Tanjore and Tanuku

He is everywhere!

On 17-6-65 Thursday, just before sunrise, at 5 A. M. to be exact, I awoke from bed and as usual, went to the cattle shed to feed the cows. Then, I came back and laid myself on the bed again. Some one knocked at the door. I got up and opened it. There was a stranger there holding out a picture for me. I received it; but, before I could look in the face, he had disappeared! I tried to search for him but with no success. It was a picture of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba that was given to me!

I mentioned this incident to a friend; but, he did not believe that it was a Divine Miracle. He said, "If it was the Lord, why should He get the door opened by you? He could have given you the picture, by some other means." That night when I was sleeping, another picture was placed on my bed; I discovered it when I awoke.

Now, I am worshipping these two pictures and, through His Grace, Vibhuti and Kumkum are falling in showers from them! I am a chronic diabetic invalid, and my limbs also are defective. I had heard about Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and I yearned long, to go over to Puttaparthi to fall at his feet. But, now, He has Himself come to me. May His Name and His Glory shine forever.

**K. Kunjappa Sadhu, Durga Asramam
Vijayapuram, Tanjore Dt. 26-6-65**

On Sunday, 20th June, I had been to Eluru; many devotees, including Sri Podila Viswanadha Sarma of Somaraju Illindalaparru came to my place, expecting me to be at home. They stayed in the house, in spite of my being away. In the afternoon, Sri Viswanadha Sarma was reading "Sathya Sai Speaks," (Telugu Translation, Mss) and every one was listening with rapt attention. At 4 P. M. my third son, Chy. Lakshminarasimhaswamy, aged 4 years, fell from the top of the terrace to the ground, a fall of nearly 15 feet. Sri Sarma saw the boy falling; the friends heard some big noise. My wife cried aloud, "Baba." Sarmagaru also cried, "Baba." To the surprise of all, the boy fell right on the flower plant called 'ground lotus' and, he was found sitting cross-

legged, in a kind of sleepy mood! Sri Sarma touched the boy, lifted him to his shoulders and called him by name. The boy responded and Baba's Udi was put into his mouth. After a short time, Bhajan was started and the boy, who had not even a slight scratch on the skin, joined enthusiastically.

On Sunday, 11th July, some friends myself went to the local Hanuman Temple to perform Laksharchana for the Deity. While I and my wife were engaged in the "Hundred-thousand-worship", my friends, Sri Viswanatha Sarma and Sri Dronamraju Padmanabha Rao, were offering Puja in that same place to the idol of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba., which they lead specially brought for that purpose from our Bhajan centre. There were Many others, who were keenly sharing the holy atmosphere. During the Puja, we were all surprised when Vibhuti fell in showers from the Feet of Baba's Idol! Sri Sarma gave me some quantity and I applied it to my forehead. In a short time, it fell from the folded knee-joints; and then, from the right palm, held in the Abhaya pose, it fell in showers! Many devotees saw it fall and many of them applied the precious Gift on their foreheads. Definitely, we felt that Bhagavan's Grace was on us all.

M. Suryanarayana Murthy
Tanuku. 13-7-65

The Vow That Saved

Be alert to keep good company always; engage yourself in good deeds; develop virtues—at least, one: for, the single virtue, rigorously pursued, will transform the entire character and rid you of even unrecognised faults.

There was once a Guru at Kasi, who was approached by an aspirant for discipleship. He asked the young man, "What is your daily routine?" He replied "I gamble during the day; I break into a few houses at night; I utter falsehood all the time." The Guru was shocked at this disclosure; he said that, unless he gave up these, he could not take him on. The aspirant said, "I know no other profession to earn my livelihood and maintain my wife and children; I know no other recreation than a game of dice; lying has become my second nature." But, the Guru said, "You must give up at least one vice, before I accept you."

At this, he said, "Well; I shall give up lying; I vow I shall speak the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, hereafter." The Guru was delighted. He felt happy that the fellow had succumbed to the stratagem. "Now, I shall see that you are liberated from bondage and that you attain God-realisation."

That night, he broke into the Palace and climbed up to the terrace; there; he saw the king himself; who was strolling in the dark, to while away a sleepless hour. The King asked, "Who goes there?" and the thief, (under a vow of truth-speaking) answered, "A thief." He too accosted the king and put the same question "Who are you" to him, and the King answered, "I am also a thief. Come, we shall go shares; I'll bring the keys of the treasury, for I have just discovered where the

king keeps them, when you emerged from the darkness. Then, we will both loot to our heart's content and divide the spoils, half and half."

The keys were brought and the treasury locks were opened easily. Two bags were filled with silver and gold coins and vessels and bars; then they found a casket containing three big diamonds, each worth millions. The thief said, "You take one; I shall carry away another; let the poor king have the third; we should not make him a pitiable pauper." The king agreed and when they both parted, with a bag on the shoulder, he asked the thief where he lived. The vow! So, he gave the correct address and left.

The next day, it was announced that the treasury was burgled at night and the king sent his minister to check the contents and tell him the extent of the loss. The minister found the diamond left behind by the thieves! His greed was aroused; he appropriated it himself for, he argued, no one would believe that thieves would leave behind such a gem as that. He returned and reported that all was lost. The King said that perhaps the crime was committed by a robber from the jungle near by and sent the police to bring the thief he had taken the address of. He was found at the address; he came to the Palace and described how he had met a companion on the terrace and looted the treasury with his help. "We left a diamond in the casket for the King," he said. When the Minister was searched, the gem that he had stolen was discovered and his lie was exposed. So, the king dismissed him from office and he appointed the honest thief in his stead.

Honesty paid him rich dividends. His wife and children were now well provided for and so, he had no worry on that score. His official duties gave him no time for wicked recreations. He earned name and fame, as a great administrator.

One day, his Guru came into the city and was happy to learn how the vow had transmuted his personality into gold. The Minister too honoured him much and desired to go with him to earn the much greater treasure of Self-realisation. The King too felt the urge and putting his son in charge of the kingdom, he also went with the Guru to Kasi and there, both of them were engaged in rigorous Tapas until they realised their Oneness with the Infinite.

From Baba's Discourse: 14-7-65

The Divine Touch

This boat, tossed from shore to shore
Has reached the haven, safe and sure;
It is in the middle of the voyage
And already weather-beaten;
Now anchored on the steadfast rock of faith.
"Live and Love" "Love and Live"
The motto inscribed on it;
Kindly repair and cleanse it of the dross—
Baba! Thou alone canst do it,

Thou art the boatman,
Thy oars are unseen,
Thine the boat, Thine the voyager,
And Thyself the destination.
And, Thou shalt make
The haven, a Heaven; the Earth, a Paradise.

—Prof. P. V. Suryanarayana

He Appeared Exactly the Same

When the Lord was having His earthly sojourn as Krishna, there were detractors and enemies like Shishupala and Danthavakthra; there was also a peculiar person, named Poundraka.

Vyasa describes him in the Bhagavata as the King of Karusha and a thick friend of the ruler of Kasi. He was an ignoramus, a man who, though grown to middle age, still behaved like a foolish boy. His head was swollen with pride and megalomania. His courtiers catered to his vanity and ruined him still further. He was not content by being addressed in open Durbar as Indra Chandra Mahaprabhu etc. He sought to know who among his contemporaries was the highest in fame and when he was told that Krishna, the son of Vasudeva was acclaimed by the world as Purushottama he insisted on every one addressing him as another Purushottama and another Vasudeva. "I am as much a Purushottama, as he", he asserted.

His mania became worse in a short time. He believed and forced his subjects to believe that he was the only Purushottama! Vyasa describes his antics as "Yathaa natam ranga gatham": like an actor on the stage! He came to know that Krishna wore Pithambara and so he secured similar yellow silk and wore it exactly in the style of Krishna.

He learnt that Krishna had Garuda on His flag; so, he removed his family insignia from his flag and got a picture of that bird drawn upon it. The subjects laughed at his stupidity, but, he marched blindly on towards his doom. He had the same type of jewels made that Krishna wore; in fact, he had two extra hands fitted to his shoulders, so that he could, when required show himself as Vishnu with Shankha Chakra Gada and Padma in each hand. He punished any one who revealed that the two extra hands were wooden.

He attended to, the minutest detail, to make himself an exact counterpart of Krishna: hair style, dress, gait, gestures, even the whorl on the chest, Srivatsa being artificially produced by skilful hands!

As Vyasa says, the "thulya vesham" was attained; he appeared exactly the same, at the end of all this foolish effort. But, what of things more valuable than external appearance?... the Glory, the Power the Wisdom, the Grace, the Splendour? They are unattainable for the Gods. How then can this bloated fool attain them?

His mania did not stop at this. He sent a messenger to the court of Sri Krishna Himself, demanding that since Purushottama has appeared in his genuine form in the Karusha country, Krishna should throw away His chakra, and other Divine weapons. Ugrasena and others who heard the vapourings of the messenger laughed at the audacity of the upstart. Krishna too felt that the drama had been allowed to go on a bit too long. He said, "Yes, I shall throw them, at him." and the fellow's head was swished off in a trice.

Thus says the Bhagavata. Such characters persist at all times, in, the history of all Avatars. But, Sai Krishna's reaction is different; He makes them realise their own absurdity, forces them to repent for their impertinence, and induces them to cleanse their minds of the evil of uncontrolled egoism. Baba's Mission is to restore every one to the pristine Glory which he forgets in his delusion.

—Sathyadasan

Success comes when your effort and His Grace both complement each other. How can Grace enter when you do not seek it? Open the door of endeavour; the Merciful Lord will then come in, with the Crown of Success.

—BABA

Aanando Nandano Nandah

Narayana is Ananda; He is Bliss, personified. He is Nandana: it is the consciousness that Narayana is in you, of you and for you that makes you seek it in every object and through every sense. Whatever joy you derive from this search is but a pale reflection of the Bliss, that is latent in you, in the spring of Divinity lying hidden and unrecognised in the very core of your being. He is called Nanda, because He has all that is required to confer bliss on you.

Lord Krishna is the Poornavatar of Narayana the manifestation of His Completeness. Therefore He gave the highest joy to all, when in the mortal form under that Name, for, He is Ananda Himself. In the Mahabharata, Vyasa has interpreted the word Krishna to mean Sat-Chit-ananda; the word has also another meaning akin to Aa-karshana, or attraction. Krishna has the unique power of attracting all towards Him, be they birds or beasts, fools or pundits, cowherds or scholars, sadhakas or saints. It was not merely the Form, the physical beauty, the natural effulgence and divine splendour, the halo of magnificence, the aroma of Grace, the sheen of perfect health... it was some indescribable influence; that emanated from Him and drew you to Him.

Leela Suka says that when the cows saw Him, they felt as if He was the Yamuna which slaked their thirst; He quenched the thirst of all the thirst for tasting His Supreme Majesty. The Child of Nanda could satisfy the innermost cravings of man.

He is called the Easwara of Yogiswaras though, He played on a Flute while tending cattle! O what a Murali it was! Lucky reed, that could transform the nature of all who heard the tune; that was privileged to receive the breath of God, the soft touch of His lovely fingers... imagine the attraction exercised by that Flute! Its tune was balm to distracted minds; it made the cattle stand

and stare with mouths full of uneaten grass like pictures on canvas. Even the Yamuna slowed down to hear it longer; when it knew the taste, it stopped and would not move. All the worlds forgot their avocations and activities. Birds on the trees, fish in the lakes all were fixed in that one single purpose. Even thunder dared not roll aloud, lest the music gets interrupted.

When the flute, which He held up to His lips, had such profound attraction to all beings, what is to be said of the Player Himself! When He raised aloft the Govardhana peak to, save the Gopas and Gopis, Yasoda the Mother was filled with exultation; the Gopis were overwhelmed with admiration and, love; the Siddhas were struck by the evidence of His miraculous powers for, they fell at His Feet as a mark of, homage; the friends and playmates of Krishna were astounded with amazement; the people were happy beyond description and could not find words to express their gratitude. Men recognised Him as the greatest among men; yogis saw in Him the Goal they were after... the Universal Absolute Itself.

When this Changeless, Ever-content Ever-full entity decided upon the Rasalila to destroy the egoism of the Gopis and to bless them with the vision of His Glory, He also decided to become invisible after a time. It was then that the agony of the Soul seeking God reached its climax; each Gopi mistook the other to be Krishna Himself, the external world took on for them the appearance and characteristics of Krishna who had filled their entire being.

*Than manaskaasthadaalaapa sthaddhicheshtaasthadeathmikaah
Thad-gunaaneva gsayanthyo naathmaagaaraani sasmaruh*

Their minds refused to entertain any one other than Krishna; their tongues spoke only of the Gopa gopiswaro yogi; they even imitated automatically Krishna's gait and gestures, for, they were so full of love and admiration for Krishna. They sang of Krishna and praised Him and His exploits only. They forgot their bodies, the senses, the mind, the intelligence, everything that they regarded as constituting them! They forgot all that they cherished, fostered, guarded, and developed as their own.

Pothana describes in the Andhra Bhagavata the spiritual yearning of the Gopis: "Our feet do not stir away from Your presence; our hands refuse to busy themselves with any activity unconnected with Your worship; our eyes yearn for the pleasure of seeing Your beautiful form. Our tongues seek only to speak with you, about You. You have, O Krishna, made us forget and ignore everything else, every one else." That is the measure of the attraction of the Name and Form of Krishna. For, really, what else is there anywhere, except Krishna? Bhishma characterised Krishna as Pushpahaasa; the word means, He whose laugh is as a flower blossom. It also means, He, whose blossoming is this flower, named Nature. All the worlds are but the blossoming of the bud, which is HE.

Contemplate Krishna as an Infant, as a Boy, as a Youth, as a Hero, as a Charioteer, as the Teacher, Guru, God.... you are overpowered with the sweetest flood of Joy. Even the man whose heart is rock will become soft and sweet, with the utterance of His Name and the imbibing of His Story. For, He is an expert in stealing Hearts. There are some who deal with the Saguna aspect of God as something inferior, secondary, a concession to undeveloped intelligences; they argue that the Reality is One without a Second, attributeless, impersonal, beyond the reach of words. They

are the Advaitic Acharyas. Sukabrahma, the greatest of these Rishis had to accept defeat, when it came to the contemplation of Krishna! He was so captivated, he says, by the taste of the story of Krishna, that he approached his father, Vyasa, to teach Him the Bhagavata. The confession of Leelasuka is even more meaningful. He says, "We are traditionally attached to the worship of Siva for generations. The Panchakshari: Namassivaaya, has been for us the panacea, all through." But, he admits, "My mind is ever fixed on the dark blue Child of Gokula!"

The great master of Advaita, and commentator on Advaitic texts, Madhusudana Saraswathi writes, "I know of no Principle higher than Krishna." Another famous scholar and commentator writes; "Let yogis revel at the vision of a Supreme Effulgence, after cleansing their minds by means of prolonged discipline. I do not object to their getting that experience. For my part, I am quite content with the Blue Effulgence that flitted about among men and cattle on the sands of the Yamuna." The "Knishna- trishna" of these supermen was so intense; Krishna creates that healthy thirst in all. That is why He is called, 'Krishna', and praised as "Aanando nandano nandah."

Sripada Renu

Your consciousness is a lamp. Pour into it the oil of Grace; trim the wick of self-control. Keep in position the chimney of Namasmara; so that the gusts of Joy and Grief may not put out the flame. Light the lamp with a Mahavakya, like "Aham Brahmasmi" (I am Brahman). Then you will have Light and you will shed Light.

—BABA

A Letter From Kabul

I have travelled far, but, Prasanthi Nilayam seems to grow as I go, for, I never leave It! The scene outside changes; but, within, I am dwelling there, with all of you. Babaji has kept His Promise and is ever near. My sister-in-law, Mabelee, who lives in California, wrote to Me recently about her joy and I want to share it with you. She writes:

"I found a tiny sachet bag and emptied the contents and put Baba's precious Vibhuti and so, it is constantly with me, pinned on me, over my heart, day and night.

Yes; I know that Baba Beloved is my Guru. In my last letter there were so many questions and perplexities about religion in my mind. Well, lo and behold, when the May issue of Sanathana Sarathi came there, in it, was every question and perplexity answered in every detail.

There! Isn't He a glorious Guru, our Baba-Rama? I know He will keep us comforted every moment."

Her letter is sure to warm your heart, as much as it has warmed mine.

**Yours in our, Lord,
H. Charlton**

Sathya Sai Bhakta Mandali

(Activities)

Uganda is one of the great independent States of the Interior of Easy Africa. Its Capital Kampala has an active Sathya Sai Bhakta Mandali, where about 300 persons assemble every Thursday for Bhajan and the study of Bhagavan's Life and Writings, Many aspirants gather at the Mandir for Japam and Dhyanam also.

Besides Kampala, there are Sathya Sai Bhakta Mandalis engaged in similar programmes at various moffussil towns like Jinja, Mabala, Soroni, Tororo, Masaka, Kabale, and Mbarara.*****

Guru Poornima celebrations were arranged by the Sathya Sai Study Circles in Saurashtra, the Sathya Sai Bhakta Samajams in various towns of Andhra, Kerala, Madras, Bombay, and many other States.

A Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha meeting was arranged by the Madras Branch at Sri Sathya Sai Nivas, when Dr. Sundaram spoke on the Kathopinishad and Br. P. Ganapathi Sastry spoke on the Harivamsa.

At Robertsonpet, Kolar Gold Fields, Mysore State, Akhanda Bhajan was arranged by the Bhakta Mandali on the 1st day of August.

At Manjakuppam, the Mandali celebrated its First Anniversary on the 1st day of August; bhaktas at Trichinopoly celebrated the local Mandali's Second Anniversary on the 15th day of August.

Sai Geetha—Anjali

I wake to the Gong; I echo the Om!
I am the lucky elephant babe
That came on wheels to this heavenly place!
I bathe; I pray; I go the sacred round;
I bow with bended knees to the Presence here.
These humans help me place
A garland round His neck
Each day, twixt light and dark.
O how I wish I had my mother here!...
She is hauling timber on Top-slip slope.

O; Pardon me; I *have* a Mother here
Who mothers all the worlds.
The Mother's touch is soft as silken moss!
The Mother's voice is sweet as gurgling brook!

The Mother wafts fragrance like lotus blooms!
The Mother's robe is bright as sunrise sky!
The Foot-fall is like petal-drop
In silent sylvan deep!
The fruits, my Mother places on my tongue,
Are all so tasty; no bud has known the like!

Have you seen The Mother,
With the garland round she Neck?
Did you see the Mother's Hand above my brow
When I knelt and prayed, at the Lotus Feet?

Let me be blessed each day,
With the Hand above my brow;
O pray for me!
Let the cool comforting palm
Be my shield from harm,
And yours too
For ever
And ever!!

Prasanthi Nilayam News

July 13: Guru Poornima-Speeches by Swami Srinivasananda and Prof: A. V. Suryanarayana, M.A., B. Ed

Discourse by the Baba

July 14: Speeches by Hilda Charlton and H. Sunder Rao, M.A

Discourse by Baba

July 23: Hon'ble Sri P. K. Savant, Minister for Agriculture, Food and Civil supplies, Maharashtra, Arrived at the Nilayam for Darsan of Baba.

July 27: The Maharani of Kutch and the Princess of Kutch arrived for a short stay at the Nilayam.

August 9: Dr. Hernando de la Cuesta from the United States and Mr. Marek Tollik from the University of Paris arrived at the Nilayam and had discussions with Baba on spiritual problems.

For Your Attention

The Dasara Festival will be celebrated at the Prasanthi Nilayam from the 25th of next month. The work of constructing buildings etc. for accommodating the thousands of bhaktas who will gather, as well as related activities of whitewashing, painting etc. are bound to impede visitors and be, in turn, impeded by them. Baba will not be granting individual interviews from 16th August until after Dasara.

Bhaktas are hereby requested to take note of this, and arrive only in time to share in the celebration of the Dasara Festival.

Dasara Celebrations

26-9-65 to 5-10-65

From Aswija I to X, Dasara will be celebrated at the Prasanthi Nilayam, with the special features of Vedasapthaha Yajna and the Anniversary Celebrations of the All-India Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha. Every day of the Festival will begin with Swasthi and Pranavakeerthana, followed by Homa, Ekadasa Rudrabhisheka Veda Parayana, and the Reading of the Ramayana, the Bhagavata and the Devibhagavatha. All are invited to attend these Functions and to benefit by listening to the Divine Discourses of Baba and the discourses of Pundits and Scholars, and earn the Blessings of Baba, imbibing the Discipline of the Nilayam and the Spiritual Atmosphere of Prasanthi.

Programme

- 25-9--65 Ninth Anniversary Celebrations of the Sri Sathya Sai Hospital: Maharani Rajendrakumari of Kutch State presides.
- 26-9-65 Annadanam
- Every day from 4 P M. to 7 P.M.: Spiritual Discourses 8 P.M. Music and other items of spiritual interest like Harikatha, Puranic Dramas, Burrakatha etc. (Details of the Day's programme will be announced at Prasanthi Nilayam.)

Gita Vahini

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Sri Sathya Sai Baba

The Gita clearly declares that only the Hrudyapushpa, (Heart-blossom) free from impurities, that grows in the Manasa-sarovar, the pellucid waters of the Mind, is worthy to be offered to God. That is the reason why Krishna told Arjuna, "My dear brother-in-law, whatever activity you are engaged in, whatever gift you give, whatever food you take, do it as a dedicated offering to Me; do everything in the dedicatory spirit, as a tribute to God, for, only such acts reach Me. I have no special preference for any one Name; all Names are Mine. I know neither friend nor foe. I am the unaffected Witness. I reside with all who serve Me and derive joy from that service".

This raised some doubts in Arjuna's mind. He asked, "Krishna! You say that you do not make any distinction, that you have neither friend nor foe; how then does it happen that some are happy and others are unhappy, some are strong in body and mind, some are weak and sickly, some are poor and some rich? What is the reason behind all this? When you yourself are above any distinction of such type, why can you not keep all in the same condition? Observing facts as they are, it is difficult to believe that you look upon all without any partiality."

Krishna laughed at this 'doubt' which worried Arjuna! "I give expression only to truth. I do not adjust My speech to your approval or disapproval; I am not elated when you approve or depressed, when you disapprove. I am the same in all. But, all are not the same in Me. You have observed that during the cold months, villagers sit round a fire at night; but, only those who sit near the fire get refreshed by the warmth. Those squatting far away have also to suffer in the darkness. If people stay afar and complain that they do not receive the warmth and that they have

to suffer darkness, can you ascribe it to the partiality of Fire? It is meaningless to argue from this, that fire treats different people differently; it is sheer foolishness.

The splendour of Divine Vision is akin to this. If you seek to earn it, you have to approach near and stay there. Everyone has equal right to do so and to feed the fire, so that it might illumine and warm even more. Fire is impartial; in deriving its benefit and in making it grow into greater and greater capacity, there are differences. I am splendour; I have no partiality at all. To experience Me and derive Bliss from Me, all have equal chance and opportunity, and authority. Distinctions and differences arise as a result of the faults of the Sadhakas. They are not blemishes in Me."

Did you notice the loving words of Krishna? The shower of His Grace? How true are His words? Really, the people of this world are birds of prey. They do not understand the faults in themselves; they seek faults in others. Sheer foolishness! If the Lord has faults, how can the world exist or survive? The Lord sees all as equal; His Heart embraces all in Love; that is the reason why the world has at least this much of peace and prosperity. The doctor may declare that the patient has no fever, just to console the sick man; but, the thermometer cannot lie. God knows and reacts to the inner feeling, not to the outer appearance; He can never go wrong, nor can He be deceived. The world considers only the outward appearance; it is guided by that alone. Wade in the river; then only can you know the depth of the water. Eat, if you must know the taste. When people pronounce judgements on the depth or the taste, without wading or tasting, how can their declarations be taken as true? If the Lord Himself was affected by partiality, how could He award the Bliss of Sayujya to the cowherd maids of Brindavan? Would He have partaken of fruits partly eaten by Sabari? Could Janaka have become a Brahmajñani? Could Nandanar have achieved the success of getting the Grand Vision of the Lord? Could Prahlada and Vibhishana have approached the Lord? Would the monkey called Hanuman been accepted as the messenger of Rama? Could Valmiki have written the great epic, Ramayana? Do these indicate any partiality in the composition of the Lord? Or, do they prove that He has no such trait? These are all examples of the Lord's Prema and His uniform kindness to all.

"Manmanaa bhava, madhvakatho, mad yajee, maam namaskuru": this command of the Lord means just this. Keep your mind steadily on Me, be devoted sincerely to Me, prostrate before Me offering all your thoughts words and deeds to Me, Love Me steadfastly—He has commanded. He has thus indicated that what He most desires in you are a 'pure mind' and untarnished Love.

Immersed in Manava-tattwa, (Human-ness) you cannot attain Madhava-tattwa (Madhava-ness). You have to attain Madhava-tattwa to get Madhava-hood. To see darkness, you must have darkness only; to see light, you should have light. To understand Intelligence you have to be intelligent. If you are constantly active about human things how can you realise the Glory of Divinity? To become Divine, you have to dwell in the memory of the Divine, act Divinely, behave Divinely. The state, the environment and the feeling—all must be coordinated for that one purpose. Then only can the principle be grasped.

It is on the basis of this truth that Krishna continued thus: "Arjuna! Jñanis are superior even to the gods who are in their turn superior to men; but, these Jñanis too are unable to grasp the full import of God. How then can ordinary men like you ever understand it?" At this sly dig, Arjuna,

bent his head in shame. He said, "Yes, I agree. Krishna, You are beyond the grasp of any one, however intelligent he may be. You are of endless manifoldness, I am convinced. You are the Universal Absolute, I know.

I believe that you have created the entire Universe and that you are fostering it and presiding over both the evolution and involution of the worlds, that you are the Master of Srishti, Sthithi and Laya. You too have told Me this yourself. I am ever grateful for this and I am happy that I was considered worthy.

But how, in what forms, are You immanent in the Universe You have brought into being? I long to hear it from You and make myself worthier to be alive" asked Arjuna. "And, which among these various forms am I to meditate upon? Tell me, so that I can meditate likewise, and save myself", he pleaded.

"A pretty small question, that!" said Krishna, with a smile. "Perhaps, you felt that you can easily understand the answer; if given! Right. Since the question has been put, I shall melt a little and give the answer. Listen carefully. I am the Inner Atma in the Lotus Heart of each and every Being. So, if you believe and direct your life on the basis of the belief, that the Inner Atma in every being is My Paramatma, that is enough Dhyana for you. See that this belief is not shaken or overthrown; stick to it steadily, practise that belief, apply it in your deeds words and thoughts. Then the experience of One-ness, of your being Me and I being you, can be achieved.

The Five Elements, Earth Water Fire Wind and Sky are also My Forms. I am the activity in the Sun Moon and Stars. When the Great Destruction comes, I am the Force of Destruction and I am the Force which constructs again. I am everything from the microscopic to the macroscopic; I am the Past, the Present and the Future. I am the three Regions and the three Gunas which have saturated man and nature. There is no object which is not I; no name which is not Mine. Blood taken from any part of the body is the same as from any other part; so too, the Divine is everywhere the same.

Then, Arjuna joined both his palms and with uplifted hands, he asked, "Krishna! The whole of Creation is your Form, is it not? Knowledge, Wealth, Power, Strength, Energy, Splendour—all these are expressions of Your Glory, are they not? Well. Will You not give me the sacred chance to fulfill my life's desire to experience You as all this Creation, as Viswarupa, of the Form of Creation Itself? I plead with you, I pray at Your Feet."

Knowing the anguish of his heart, Krishna replied, "Arjuna! I shall certainly satisfy you. But, your physical eyes cannot see that Glory. The Viswarupa cannot be perceived by the limited vision, which sees only nature. Therefore, I shall confer on you the supernatural eye. Now, see! "He said and manifested Himself before Him as Creation and beyond! What great Mercy! What superb experience!

While at this point, there is one subtle detail which seekers have to note. The Vedas, Sastras and Puranas, besides many scholars and saints and others who have a right to speak about such matters—all describe God as Sarva-vyapi and Sarva-bhoothantaratma, that is, as present everywhere and as the Inner Reality in every being. On the basis of this some people argue, "If

He is so present everywhere and in everything why is He not seen by everyone?" For all such, the reply is: how can the physical eye composed of the Five Elements see beyond the Five? Nothing can illumine an object that does not reflect light; but, a flame illumines itself and sheds light all around. God is self-luminous; He illumines all, He is beyond Nature, which is but a manifestation of His Glory. So, He can be seen only by the Eye of Wisdom, an eye that can be won only by His Grace. Hence, worship of God is an essential part of Sadhana. If that is absent, nothing can be earned. For, he who fails in seeing himself can never succeed in seeing others, in seeing anything outside him. Engage yourself in Sadhana that will secure the Grace of God; through that Grace, the Jnananetra the Eye of Wisdom will be granted. He is easily reachable by the path of Devotion. While experiencing the Vision of God in the Universe, God as the Universe, Arjuna was shedding tears of Joy. "O Almighty God! All the gods, Brahma the Creator, all the sages and saints, all the manifold beings and objects, moveable and immoveable: O I see every one of these . . I see all . . O . . from Your terror-creating Face, Flames of Splendour emerge and spread to farthest distances. How I wish I could know the meaning and purport of this formidable Form!" Arjuna exclaimed.

"Did you see, Arjuna? Have you known by this that I am the Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer of all Activity and of all Beings and Objects? Have you realised that you cannot save any one on this battlefield, nor can you kill any one? You have no power to kill, nor have they the power to die. Living and dying are both directed by My Will. I bear the burden of the Earth; I create the burden; I relieve it," said Krishna, fondly patting Arjuna on the back and speaking softly to assuage his ecstatic excitement.

This incident is a fine example to illustrate how God is bound by sincerity of devotion and how He bends to console and encourage His devotees. Just imagine! How could this Arjuna who was hesitating and nervous until he got ocular demonstration like an ordinary mortal, face and conquer mighty heroes and masters of all arts like Bhishma Drona and Karna?

Arjuna wiped the tears from his eyes; he folded his hands in prayer. "O Lord, I saw the Viswaswarupa which I had never before seen or heard about, or even conceived. I have realised that it is a Factual Truth. Those terrific flames of splendour are scorching me, My body is sizzling under the impact of that Glory. Present Yourself before me, once again, with the sweet smiling Form of Yours as before; I can no longer bear this awesome Vision. O, Father! Resume Your former Form, I cannot continue seeing this." pleaded Arjuna.

Krishna melted; His Grace made Him agree. He said, "Arjuna! You have just seen this Universeful Form of Mine, a Vision which no height of Vedic scholarship or ritual asceticism or austerity can ever hope to win. This is achieved only by the Bhakta who is devoted to Me, without any other thought. This is called Ananya-bhakti, devotion which does not admit of the least distraction. Therefore, their hearts are rendered very pure too. Whatever they see, they see only the Lord; whatever they do, they do as an act of sincere worship to the Lord. They have no other form before their eyes; no other thought in their minds; no other act for their hands to do. At all times and places, they see only My Form, they utter only My Name; they think only about Me; they feel only for Me or about Me; they are active only for My sake. It is such, O Arjuna that attain this Vision. I too ask for only this: Ananya-bhakti.

Arjuna asked with a smile and a little tremor of the lips, "Lord! I realise that You are pleased with undeviating single-pointed devotion. But, I have this further doubt. Are you pleased with the worship of You-with-form or You-without-form? Do you prefer Sakara Upasana or Nirakara Upasana? Which melts You more and contributes to success in getting Your Blessings? Which is easier for the Sadhaka and more welcomed by You? Please tell me."

Krishna was happy that this question was asked. He said, "Arjuna! I do not make any distinction between the two. Both have to be unified. I am pleased, however I am worshipped, provided the mind is saturated with Me and there is steady Faith in every act word and thought." Arjuna intercepted with the query, "Krishna! Are mere purity of heart and steady Faith enough? Do not sex or status as fixed by caste or the stage of life form obstacles to success?" Krishna abided Arjuna and replied, "Arjuna! I am surprised that you should ask such questions, after going through all this experience. Don't you realise that for those who have fixed their minds on God, who have reposed in Me, the Personification of Truth, eternal and pure, there will not be an iota of "identification of the self with the body", (Deha-bhranti)... If however they have the awareness of sex or caste or stage of life with all the attendant pride humility etc, it only reveals they have not completely surrendered their minds to God. For those who have rid themselves of attachment to the body there will not be the distraction of caste, status etc.

But, the Asrama dharma and the Varna dharma (the codes of moral conduct prescribed for the castes and for those in the Four Stages of Life—Student Householder Recluse and Monk) do not hinder in any way the discipline of fixing the mind on God or of purifying the mind of evil or worshipping the Lord through all one's actions words and thoughts. The distinctions of sex or caste or status or stage of life affect only those who live in the awareness of the body as their Reality and who act as if the world is absolute and eternal. Therefore, you shall not worry about these being handicaps or hindrances."

At this, Arjuna, said, "Krishna! The contemplation of the Formless Characteristic-less Nirguna-nirakara is very difficult, is it not, for those with Deha-bhranti or Identification of the Self with the body? The worship of the Form-ful aspect of God which is within the reach of the ordinary man, can this yield purity of mind, of the inner Instruments of Consciousness? Please enlighten me."

(To be continued)

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Ganapati

Kavim Kaveenaam, the very First, poet, sage
Intelligent Mercy, clever, wise,
Omniscient Over-soul, filling Voids with Om,
Master of masters of Brahman-science
Teacher, guiding seekers of Yogic Bliss,

Resplendent on the Mooladhara throne!

Your Grace, if won, Man climbs soon apace
To Santhi Summit, sweet, secure;
No hurdle dare delay,
No vighna dare distract,
No obstacle, disturb.

The Cowherds of Gokula

It is really unfortunate that the Ashtami and Navami thithis, the 8th and 9th days of the white half of the Lunar month are considered by people to be inauspicious, when the facts are quite the contrary! For, both these days mark the auspicious advent into this World of Incarnations, the Formless Eternal Timeless Absolute in the Formful Temporary Time-bound Particular Human Body, Sri Krishna being born on the 8th day, Ashtami and Sri Rama on the 9th day, Navami. It is sheer ignorance that has warped the attitude of man to discard these holy days as fraught with unseen danger.

When the godliness that is inherent in man is clouded out, when the moral code and the spiritual discipline which cleanse man in the crucible of Sadhana are neglected, God takes human form. Krishna, the Yogiswara, who has no attachment to the fruits of His labours, appeared before human eyes as a babe in the prison where Vasudeva and Devaki were incarcerated, on this day which is called Janmashtami. Sri Rama came to correct man by example; He taught man the Dharma of the son the husband the ruler the friend the brother etc. The stars under which these incarnations began their earthly careers have also their significance Rohini, under which Krishna was born is related to the achievement of Yogic powers and Punarvasu, under which Rama was born has a special influence on the Sharanagata-rakshana trait, that is, people born under that star will melt easily and give succour to the best of their ability to whosoever takes refuge in them. Use these days for starting Sadhana, for propitiating the Form of Godhead which you have selected for honouring and offering homage. Do not ascribe evil to these days or stars; but, revere them and devote them for your uplift. That is My advice to you, this day.

Men are eager to get un-diminishable happiness; they run about frantically for this purpose; they do not stop to inquire where it can be got and how. Every one wants much fruit for little effort. But, the path to real and lasting happiness cannot be won without undergoing rigorous discipline. It cannot be secured by mere scholarship or by merely listening to the discourses of elders. Control of the senses and of the waywardness of the mind are essential to discover it and to stick to it when once it is discovered and adopted.

The reality will reveal itself in a flash, provided you have a sharp intellect, capable of reducing a problem into its basic essence. Once a very learned Pundit was holding forth in grand style, in the Durbar of a Maharajah on the subject of Gajendra-moksha, from the Bhagavata. He described how the Lord, on hearing the agonised call of the elephant in mortal distress hurried from

Vaikuntha, without taking His weapons and symbols and without even taking leave of His Consort. Suddenly, the Maharajah interrupted him and queried, "Tell me, how far is this Vaikuntha? Where is it exactly?" The Pundit was non-plussed; he did not know the distance! Nor did any of the others.

But, just then, the servant who has fanning the Maharajah from behind the throne offered to furnish the information, if given permission! The Pundits were shocked at his effrontery, but, the Maharajah allowed him to speak. "Your Majesty, Vaikuntha is as far as the cry of the elephant could reach" said the servant! Yes; when the anguish of a devotee's heart is expressed in a cry, the Lord hears it and rushes to the rescue, for, His Residence, Vaikuntha, is within the reach of the cry, from every anguished heart. All the pundits assembled there realised the truth of this, when that illiterate servant spoke in a flash, about the Omnipresence of God.

The Lord is devoid of attachment. It is His nature to support the Right and correct the Wrong-doer, even when He has come down in human Form in order to restore morality and spiritual discipline. He acts as charioteer and washes the steeds of Arjuna. He is Himself the supreme exemplar of His teachings in the Gita. The Mahabharata war is not an event belonging to ancient history; it is taking place in every human breast, between the forces of evil and the forces of good. He who recognises the value of installing Krishna as the charioteer can win; He who pins his faith on one's own resources is sure to meet with disaster. Accept Him as your Master. He assures you, 'Mokshayishyami' He assuages you: 'Maa sucha'.

Arjuna knew the secret of Krishna's advent; he was aware all the time of Krishna's mystery. He is to be identified as a priya-namra-sakha (a loved and close friend). Bhishma, Uddhava, Bhima, Draupadi all belong to this category. Then, there are some who are priya-sakhas (loved friends) with whom Krishna played and joked and kept joyful company. Others are delighted with His Company and with the chances they got to serve Him. Such cowherd boys are 'sakhas' (friends). Then there is a group of friends or suhrids who because they are older in age have a parental affection towards Krishna and who are happy when they can fondle Him or serve Him and make Him happy.

These Gopis are very unique, as devotees. They had no consciousness of the body at all; they were all the while attached only to the principle that is embodied in It. They were eager to know the 'other', not to experience 'this'. As a matter of fact, it is the identification with the gross body that lies at the root of all the cruelty injustice greed violence and falsehood that parade all over the world. It is this that breeds desire, that multiplies wants, that makes man ride on the waves of whim and fancy. When he is not able to catch up with his ambition, man becomes a prey to disappointment and grief, hate and avarice.

If you ask God to fulfill your wishes, your worship is degraded into an act of bargaining; your reverence is equated with what you receive; you are selling homage for so much of satisfaction. You become a paid servant, a hired labourer, insisting on wages and calculating how much is got for the work done. Be on the other hand, a member of the family, feel that you are the Lord's own, do every task as 'my work' 'my task' without any idea of the return therefor; then the work does not tire, it is done well. When this attitude is taken up by you, you need not clamour for wages at all. The Master will maintain you and your people as He feels you deserve.

This secret of happiness the Gopis knew; you must also live out your lives on these lines.

(From Baba's Discourse 19-8-65)

He is our Charioteer

In my essays on "Dakshinamurthy and His Teachings", I stated categorically that He prayed to no one and yet showed mankind by His omnipotence omnipresence and omniscience that He is God. The dictum that the former Avatars prayed in order to set no example to their followers is indeed unacceptable to the modern mind. Sathya Sai Baba tells plainly and unequivocally that He does not worship at all. This Avatar has come, because the good men of the world, the saintly and the wise panted for it. That is why He spends all the twenty-four hours of the day and night in ministering to us.

Baba shows Siddhis even as a father would give sweets to his children; His aim is to give strength and encouragement to the Bhaktas. He tells us that Prema is His best gift; the devotee must cultivate Viveka and Vairagya. Says He, "I shall give you these, if you know how to take them from Me." Prema Viveka and Vairagya are greater gifts than miracles, He advises us. He tells us openly that we cannot hope to be His disciples if we do not cultivate Vairagya.

In the Mahanirvana Tantra, it is stated that a Avatar preserves His Sukshma Sarira for the whole of that Cycle; it is this Sarira that He utilises to create new physical bodies, as Baba has done so often. We can only watch and admire the ways of God, how He comes down to earth as Man, periodically to help us out of the worldly mire into His Kingdom. The ways and methods God Almighty adopts to bless us are mysterious. Ours is to receive Him wholeheartedly and exert our utmost to follow His Teachings. Bhagavan Sathya Sai Baba has promised to give us the strength necessary to fulfill our attempts. Bhagavan wants us to cultivate the hunger for God, by regular Sadhana. Just as the rays of the Sun burn cotton placed at the focus of the convex lens facing the sun, so should we pray for the Grace of God, which when concentrated in us will burn and destroy the mind and shed lustre on the buddhi. It is mind that makes man miserable. It pretends to be chaitanya or consciousness whereas it is Jada, asat, unconsciousness.

Baba wants people to place at His Feet their sorrows and griefs and it is up to them to take back eternal Joy, Health and Energy, to the extent they can. A genuine effort is incumbent on all in this direction. Sri Sathya Sai Baba wants to be our Charioteer, even as Sri Krishna was the Sarathi of Arjuna. Only, He wants each of us to invite Him to do so. A group of His Devotees have prayed and written to Him for a visit to us and we learn with pleasure that He will bless us with His Presence in Ceylon soon.

**—Dr. T. Nallainathan L. R. C. P., M. R. C. S.
Colombo**

The Supreme Benediction

We waited, hushed and expectant,
Our eyes rivetted on the portico beyond the gates.
The trees spread shade
On a thousand yearning hearts.
We knew our Lord was here,
Within those walls, so near
And yet so far.

Suddenly Baba is before us
Time stands still; He comes nearer;
Infinite compassion rains from His eyes
Infinite love pours from His smile...
We drown blissfully in this flood of Grace.
Breathless we gaze, adore
And quench our thirst
For the Supreme Benediction
Of Baba's Darshan.

Fellow-pilgrim! even as you gaze at Him
And His timeless face, under the mop of hair
With its awesome majesty of a thundercloud.....
Realise that you are face to face
With the Formless One, the Eternal One,
The One without Attributes, who has now taken
A Form and a Name, to re-establish Dharma
And dissolve the giant agony of man.

Realise again when you touch His Feet
That your fingers hold for a fleeting second
The Ultimate Sanctuary sought by sages and saints
The Abode of all Atmas, the Seat of Mukti
And the manifest Portals of Moksha.
Recognise, therefore, in your yearning for His Feet
Your soul's homesickness.

Darshan is over; we begin to disperse.
The trees spread shade now
On a thousand brimming hearts.
A hum of talk rises with the dust.
Hush! Let us ponder over this Vision of Glory.....
Do we deserve so much ?
O Bhagavan! O Sri Parthi Nilaya! O Sai Guru!
Help us become worthy of your Grace.

—D. Narendar

In all Beings

Every year during the Navaratri Festival, the Primal Wish, that disturbed the Equilibrium and led, through Will and Activity and Act, to the Manifestation of the 'Divine Delusion' called the Universe is worshipped in every Hindu home. The Sapthasathi, or "Seven Hundred" is the Holy book that describes the glory of that 'Original Prompting', that produced the vast 'Agitation' called Jagat, which is struggling ever since to attain the Equanimity that was then lost. It is spoken of in various ways, in order that the conception may be made clear. In the Fifth Chapter, the gods praise that Primal Energy as of Feminine Form and they detail a large number of different expressions under which She is found motivating the activities of beings everywhere.

She is known as 'Vishnumaya', the Deluding Power of the Lord, which takes up the three characteristics of Satwa Rajas and Tamas, and through these makes the unmanifested, manifested.

Avyaktham vyaktharupena rajassathwathamo gunaih
Vibhajyartham kuruthe Vishnumayethi sochyathe

It is this Maya that produces the ideas of 'past' 'present' and 'future,' that creates the illusion of 'permanence' in impermanent things, that instills the idea of 'manifoldness' where unity is the reality!

In all beings, the gods say, She is evident as Chetana or Consciousness, for, every being, whatever else it may not be aware of, is aware of itself! She is also the intelligence that moves them into activity along lines they feel congenial. She appears as sleep, too, for during sleep, beings are free from the clamour of the senses and the vagaries of the mind; they are then able to recoup their physical health and their mental alertness. She prods them in the form of hunger; for, hunger activates them and makes them eager to take in sustenance and to struggle for acquiring it and preserving it and assimilating it. She is the shadow, as well as the material substance.

In all beings, She is the energy and enthusiasm, the capacity and special nature; the characteristic quality and behaviour; the Shakti, of the individual and of the species. She is the 'trishna' in all beings, the thirst, which the Buddha identified as the root of all desire and so, of all suffering, the desire to possess, to acquire, to claim as one's own. Trishna is the urge which makes beings restless until they get what their senses seek. All traits that are laudable are due to Her being the inmost reality of beings. For example, Kshaanti. This is the name for the virtue by which, though one may have the strength to avenge a wrong, one withholds the urge and exercises restraint gladly. It is due to Her that the idea of kinship arises in the consciousness of beings, that many are subsumed under a single category.

Her presence in every being can be recognised when reluctance is exhibited to seize the chance of doing wrong. She is the Shakti which is the core of every being; the state, when the six storms of Desire Anger Greed Attachment Pride and Hate are silent and quiet. She is also Shraddha, the steadiness of faith that prompts all to stick to the good, in spite of obstacles and even initial failure and calamity. It is She who appears as Splendour, either physical or social. She is the Vritti, the slight dis-equilibrium that upsets the peace and starts the whole series of activity which involves beings, deeper and deeper in the process of earning and spending. Wherever a tiny wave of courage is noticed pushing a project along, take it as the manifestation of the same Devi.

Need it be said Contentment and Fullness of Satisfaction are also She? She is Daya, the quality of mercy, of charity, of sympathy that melts the hard egoism of beings. She is memory, Smriti, that enables beings to store up experience and progress along useful roads, discarding those which lead astray. The desire to follow the moral codes and earn happiness thereby is another form in which the Great Mother-sustainer manifests Herself. Why, she is praised by the Gods as the mother-urge in all beings.

Yaa devi sarva bhutheshu maathr rupena samsthitha
Namasthasyai namasthasyai namasthasyai namo namah

"Prostrations, prostrations, prostrations to the Devi who is established as the mother in all beings." (Every verse in this Stotra mentions 'namasthasyai'" thrice, that is to say, prostrations are offered once by word, a second time by the body and a third time, by the mind: The Devi is also offered prostrations as Mahakali in the Tamoguna aspect, Mahalakshmi in the Rajoguna aspect and Mahasaraswati in the Satwaguna aspect.)

The gods also extol Her as manifesting Herself in all beings as Bhranti, the Principle of Delusion, which has unfolded Itself into this manifold multiplicity, whereas fundamentally there is just One, the Brahman, the One without a Second.

The Concrete Om

The Puranas declare that Siva Himself announced that Ganapati should be worshipped, at the start of every rite ritual festival or other auspicious event, whether laid down by scriptures or by sacred custom. He said that this should be done, whether the participants are Saivites or Vaishnavites or Shakti worshippers. He blessed those who do so with quick consummation of the rite, as well as with the achievement of victory, in the undertaking they have set their hearts upon.

In the famous song about Ganapati, composed by Dikshithar, He is described as Pranava-swarupa, as 'Concretised Om,' as the Image of the Formless Pranava Itself. This description has the sanction of the Scriptures. Therefore, Ganapati has won all the honours that are due to Pranava. Just as Om or the Pranava is obligatory in the beginning of every Mantra, the worship

of its concrete Form is recommended as an auspicious beginning for every holy act. In the Gita, for example, it is said that Yajna Dana and Tapas are begun after the pronouncement of Om, in order to draw upon the undertaking the blessing of God. It is no wonder that the worship of Pranava-swarupa Ganapati was also accepted as obligatory, by the Saguna school of thought.

There are many versions in the Puranas of the story of the birth of Ganapati. Some of them refer to His intimate relationship with the Pranava. For example, in the Skandapurana, there is a story which says that Parvati one day visited the pavilion named Mantrashala, in the gardens of Kailasa; she saw there the Pranava written on the wall; she looked intensely at it for some time; suddenly from out of the Pranava, Ganapati emerged! This lends support to the belief that Ganapati represents the Pranava or the sacred syllable, Om.

When the sage Vyasa decided to compose the Mahabharata, he was searching for a scribe who could quickly write down the stanzas, as they came rolling out of his tongue; he asked Ganapati and he readily agreed by simply pronouncing, Om.

"Om ithyukthwaa Ganesopi babhuva kila lekhakah!"

The word 'Gana' also means 'a group of letters'; the Pratisakhya deals with Shabdaganas and the king of such letter-groups is Om, certainly; for, Om, consists of A U and M. The letter or sound A is according to the Gita, the Lord Himself. "Aksharaanaam akaarosmi" That is why the gana or group of sounds which starts with A and which has many other mystic significances has achieved such a crucial place in Hindu religion and spiritual discipline. Ganapati is both the formless and the formful Pranava.

Ganapati is extolled as Vidyaganapati; He is the patron, not of the secular Vidya, which deals with time-space bound temporary matters, but, of the Atmavidya, the Brahavidya. Thasya vaachakah pranava: the Brahman is known as Pranava; thajjapasthadarthabhaiavaanam, repeat it and dwell upon its significance; that is the direction given by the sages. Om is the most appropriate symbol of the basis of all creation, Brahman. The Brahman can be attained only by means of clarified Intellect, Buddhi. The achievement of Brahman is called Siddhi.

Note that the two Shaktis which invariably accompany Ganapati are called Buddhi and Siddhi, the means and the end, of all spiritual endeavour. The Upanishad says "I shall tell you in one word the goal described in all the Vedas, the fruit of all spiritual discipline, the end of all the years of austerity, it is Om." For, as the Gita declares, "Om ithi ekaakshram Brahma," the one sound, Om, is Brahman. Meditate on it and discover for yourself the vast depths of meaning it reveals. Then, you will realise that all this is Om and nought else. Om was in the beginning and Om will be in the end; for, it has no beginning and no end. That is the ultimate gain of Vidya and since Om gives it, the Pranava as well as its Concretised Form, Ganapati, are both to be revered as Vidya Itself.

Ganapati is also praised as Vighneshwara, He who masters all obstacles. Whoever enters upon "the Atmavidya that Ganapati is" can certainly overcome all obstacles, for, the Lord's Grace will be showered upon all sincere Sadhana. Krishna has assured in the Gita, "Nahi kalyaana krith kaschid durgatham thaatha gachchathi"; he who does acts which conduce to the good of himself

and others will never come to grief. Therefore, there need be no doubt in the heart of the aspirant; he can confidently march on, for, Pranava, the armour against all obstruction is with him. The nature of Om is like that; it carries a man irresistibly upwards!

Sakriduccharitha maathrena Oordhwam unnayamayathi ithi om kaarah; the sound Om carries a man who repeats it once, to the higher regions. It is called Pranava, because, as a commentator writes, Praanaan sarvaan paramaathmanipranaamayathi ithi pranavah; since it dedicates all the vital airs to the Paramatma, it is called Pranava. The Pranava does this, irrespective of things that come in the way; the concretised Pranava, Ganapati, also does the same; he guards the aspirant and guides him along to success.

The Pranava, as well as Ganapati, have both an important place in the science of Yoga; for, the Pranava is said to be the voice of the Hamsa that is the Kundalini Shakti, which is the prime Energy that is sublimated and transformed into the very Principle of Godhead. Kundalee hamsa nisswanaah, it is called. This Energy resides in six chakras or centres in the spinal column of man and by Yogic discipline, under an expert Guru, it is released from one centre to another, until at last, when it rises up to the very crest of the head, the seeker reaches the very Goal of God-realisation! The lowest of these Chakras, the very first, is the Mooladhara, a triangular area, which is symbolised as a four petalled lotus, forming the seat of Ganapati!

Ganapati is praised as 'Moolaadhaara kshethra sthitham,' He who is established in the Mooladhara chakra, the very first stage of the arduous Yogic pilgrimage. No wonder He is honoured first. Without His Grace, no progress is possible. Even a thousand mile journey has to begin with the first step and Ganapati has to be propitiated for the success of that first step. Dikshithar sings of Him as "Chathwaari vaag aathmakam" "of the four petalled lotus, with a voice on each Petal;" as "thrikona madhya gatham" "as having entered the centre of the triangle," the form of the first of the Six chakras. It is the first step that is fraught with the greatest difficulty; the second is easier, because of the momentum already achieved. The Grace of Ganapati will ward off all obstacles in the further progress of the aspirant. That is why He, is asked to help the devotee to overcome all obstacles; as Vinayaka.

Ganapati has a unique place in Yogasastra, since He is Pranava-swarupa. He is extolled by a poet as:

Yogaaroodho yoga pattaabhi ramo
Baalaarkaabhaschandra neelaamsukaabhyah
Paasekshwakshaan yoga dandam dadhaano
Paayaan nithyam yoga vighneswaro nah.

"He is the remover of all obstacles in the path of the Yogi; He is the master of Yoga, the most pleasing ruler of the realm of Yoga; bright as the rising sun, with a blue vesture; having the Yogi's armrest, the rosary sugar cane and rope in the hands. May He guard us and guide us every moment of our lives."

An Electrifying Moment

Prasanthi Nilayam, which at all times of the day conveys a sense of calm and peace, is looking radiantly beautiful in the morning hour. The lovely trees near the portico and around the symbolic lotus of Self-realization sway their branches gently, and the earth watered by loving devotees in the morning and decorated with flour patterns is fragrant.

The devotees in their ones and twos are gathering before the peaceful abode of the Lord. Their adoring eyes greet the beautiful idol of Krishna on the balcony. The idol has a grace and rhythm that get so imprinted in memory, that it remains vivid, months after having returned home. The idol is freshly garlanded. They have a way of making garlands at the Nilayam. Simple in design and made, with the freshest of flowers, these garlands capture one's heart, with their simple beauty and freshness.

Some devotees are silently seated and meditating, some are circumambulating the main building reverentially, some are garlanding the symbolic Lotus. All minds are on the Lord. Even the Lord's elephant is restless and sways her majestic head from side to side, giving a rhythmic jingle of the bell till she is brought in front of the Nilayam, where she quietens and patiently awaits the Lord.

The sun rising from across the Chitravati casts its golden rays on the Nilayam, and the stage is all set for the coming of the Lord. As the moment for His coming nears, all eyes are on the door at the top right. The air of reverent expectancy so permeates the ether that it can almost be perceived by one's senses. The multitude awaits, agog and alive to the Lord's appearance. Even the elements seem stilled.

The curtain is gently waved aside and the Lord Sai Ram emerges from the door so gently and slowly, that in that dream atmosphere one hardly realises it, and is nearly jerked out into one world from another. In a moment of joint and united salute the multitude joins palms and does pranams, and murmurs of prayers and adoration escape from many lips.

It takes less than a moment to recover from the emergence of so divinely beautiful a picture, and then all are submerged in the flood of love and compassion that pour out of the Lord's eyes and smile. In His own supremely gracious way, He moves His expressive fingers and hand, and blesses all.

It is indeed an electrifying moment.

V. R. Raghavan

This Love

O the kinship bond that binds You to me,
'Tis strange, this Love You bear me.

Caught in floods, You dragged me.
Stuck in mud, grounded me;
Scorched in fire, You cooled me,
Drowned in slush, You saved me.

Broken, You mended me
Orphaned, You tended me
Helpless, You fended me
Friendless, befriended me!

Prostrate, You lifted me,
Dejected, uplifted me;
Asleep, You wakened me;
Afraid, You toughened me.

Lost in jungle, You led me,
Tired in search, You held me;
Parched in thirst, restored me,
Dead (though live),... revived me!

O the kinship bond that binds You to me!
'Tis strange! this Love You bear me.

His Darshan at the Last Moment

Myself and my wife, Smt. Saroja Bai had the first Darshan of Baba in 1947. We were reverentially fascinated; we were making frequent visits to Puttaparthi and received His Grace. She became a great devotee.

In 1948, the doctors found that my wife had a little high blood pressure and advised avoidance of exertion. In 1952, April, she got a stroke; one side and speech were affected. Swami was gracing my residence. His Blessings and Vibhuti made her recover within a fortnight, as foretold by Him.

After two years, she got another stroke at 8 P. M. when we were at Puttaparthi. Mouth and eyes were badly twisted. My neighbour and friend, late Dr. Subbaraman said it was serious. Baba visited within half an hour and set right the twists by three-fourths, by merely playing His torch on her face.

We returned to Bangalore after she got a little better. Within a week, she became normal, stammering almost disappearing. When I asked Baba, how was it that she got the stroke even when He was near, His reply was, "Otherwise it would have been more serious."

There was a third attack a year later, preceded by fits. The effects were more severe. She had to be helped in walking. She got fairly all right, gradually, through Baba's Grace and personal Blessings.

A fourth stroke came a year later. Again, Baba's Grace alone saved her. My consultant was a retired Director of Medical Services. She would not take any medicine. Some vitamins and dietary restrictions were prescribed.

I was taking her out every day in my car for drives. We used to visit Whitefield, when Baba would be there. We attended the sacred Vedapurusha Saptaha Jnana Yajna at Puttaparthi.

As usual, we went out on 8th January 1964. On the 9th morning, she got all of a sudden violent fits, repeatedly, almost continuously. She went off into a coma; there was no intake of food, even liquids. She expired to my great sorrow on 14th Jan, on the Makara Sankranti Day, after Uttarayana set in. Baba announced her death, at the same time, at Puttaparthi to those around Him, including Sri Kasturi.

The previous day when she was in coma, a lot of Vibhuti appeared on her head, in the presence of the nurse and other attendants!

Swami sent me a letter of condolence, saying that my wife did Bhishma Panjara Vasa and left her mortal body. Later He told me He had blessed her with His Darshan in her last moments. She has reached a higher stage, no doubt.

In the annals of medical history, no one has survived a third attack.

B. S. K. Vittal

Prasanthi Nilayam News

- 5 August: Conclusion of the Akhanda Saptaha Bhajan, under the auspices of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba Study Circle, Jamnagar, guided by Sri Sridhara Swami, for the happiness of humanity.
- 9 August: Jamnagar Sathya Sai Baba Study Circle: Speech by Sri Babubhai Oza, about his experiences at Puttaparthi.
- 16 August: Sri. Anilbhai's Programme of Bhajans and Vyakhyana, at the same Study Circle.
- 19 August: Gokulashtami at the Prasanthi Nilayam: Speech by N. Kasturi; Discourse by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.
- 24 August: Inauguration of the Sathya Sai Bhajan, Samajam, at Salem.
- 25 August: Baba left for Brindavan, Whitefield.
- 27 August: Baba at Madras
- 28 August: Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha (Mysore Branch): Meeting at Malleswaram
- 30 August: Baba gave Darsan to devotees at Guindy and Perambur
- 31 August: Baba at Hyderabad
- 2 Sep: Baba returned to Prasanthi Nilayam

"Arjuna! People think that the worship of God with Form and with Attributes is quite easy! But, this is not an unmixed truth. This kind of discipline will be of some help, until the control of the senses is well established; it will guide the person along the road, a little while.

But, the Lord will not condescend to grant Liberation for just this! For, he who aims at Liberation must first give up attachment to the body. Without that, the Atmic stage cannot be attained. The identification with the body is the expression of Ignorance. The Atma must be recognised as distinct from the Prakriti. The craving for objective pleasure which is based on the unreal value attached to Prakriti can be removed by Dhyanam and Tapas. When that craving is lost, the individual becomes like the dry nut inside the coconut shell which becomes loose and unattached to the shell and the fibre outside it; it does not germinate or sprout again; it will remain for ever without being spoiled; the individual has no more birth, and consequent death. That is to say, he will be liberated. Becoming like that dry nut inside the shell is the stage called Jivan-mukta, of Liberation while alive.

The contemplation of the Godhead as above and beyond all attributes is necessary for the attainment of this Jivan-mukti. If that is difficult, and beyond your capacity, you can do another thing. Dedicate all worship, all adoration, all Vedic rituals and other vows and vigils with all the fruits that may accrue, to Me. Take Me as the Ultimate Goal, as the Final Aim which transforms all acts into worship; fix your mind on Me, meditate on Me; I shall then shower My Grace and take you across the Ocean of Change, of Samsara; I shall favour you with the Goal you sought. Arjuna! It is not an easy task to fix your mind steadily on Me. Not every one can succeed in this. However long the practice, it is hard to keep the mind on Me without deflecting it towards other things or ideas.

You might therefore ask. "Have we no other means?" My reply is, "Yes; there is." Even those who show steady eagerness to engage themselves in acts that please Me can get established in the Atmic Consciousness and gain liberation. By means of prayer, recitation of the Name, adoration of the glory, worship etc., the sins of the past can be destroyed, the inner consciousness purified of evil impulses and urges, and the light of wisdom will dawn, leading to liberation from darkness.

There is great need for readers to ponder over this matter. It is through such serious weighing of pros and cons that reasonable conclusions are reached. Consider for example the difference between Bhakti, as described in popular usage and Bhakti as declared by the Lord. Popularly, Bhakti is described as genuine devotion of the Lord. But, it connotes much more than this. Devotion to the Lord is only a form of discipline to reach the Goal. The seeker should not stop with the acquisition of devotion; he should pay attention not so much to the devotion or love that he has towards the Lord, but, to the Love and Grace that the Lord bestows on him! He must be always eager to find out which behaviour of his, what acts will be most pleasing to the Lord, will fill the Lord with Anandam. Inquire about that, yearn for that, carry out the things that will secure that objective—be engaged ever in acts conducive to gain it—that is real Bhakti.

But, generally, people do not follow this ideal of Bhakti, nor do they think about the implications of that ideal. They pay attention only to the love that the devotee has to the Lord; and, in the process, they do not pay much attention to the dharma and the Karma which the Lord approves or appreciates! This is the reason why Krishna says, Karma which pleases the Lord is superior to the Karma which fulfils the yearnings of the devotee. Whatever the devotee does or thinks or plans or observes, they should be capable of drawing down the Grace of God. They should not be subject to his will; they should be in accordance with His Will. If his idea is the deciding factor, all acts and thoughts and plans are simply waste and trash. The chief duty of the devotee is to test every thought and feeling on the touchstone of the Lord's declared preferences.

The Gita declares that though a person may have deep devotion to the Lord, he cannot be called a Bhakta if he lives without regard to the commands of the Lord, that is, the Dharma laid down in the Sastras, which embody His orders revealed to saints and seers. It is in this sense that Krishna uses the word, Bhaktimaan, when He declares in the Gita, "Bhaktimaan yah sa me priyah."

Again, whatever act a Bhakta does, he should not feel that it is, "mama Karma" or "My Karma;" Krishna says that it must be conceived as "Karma for the Lord, by the Lord", "Easwareeya Karma." Usually people feel that some acts are "theirs" and others are "the Lord's." This is not the mark of the true Bhakta. If all acts are felt as the Lord's, they will not be tarnished by egoism or the taint of "mine." Bhakti is to be identified as the discipline which removes egoism and the limitations of "I" and "mine". That is the reason why the Bhakta is defined by those who know, as one who is A-vibhakta with God, "non-separate" from God. At all times and under all conditions, acts and feelings must be God-centred. Instead, if you pray when overwhelmed by misery worry and loss, "O God! Save me, rescue me from these", and when they pass, once again plunge into objective affairs enslaved by worldly aims, such conduct is most reprehensible for Bhaktas.

This is the teaching of the Gita. You should not worship the Lord, as an emergency measure. When the tongue is affected and does not relish food, you seek hot pickles; so too, when grief afflicts, people seek God! This kind of demonstrative devotion is rampant today, perhaps due to the influence of the fundamental hypocrisy of this age. This hollow type of devotion which seeks to exhibit the strength of one's attachment to the Lord is unfortunately evident even among 'great' Sadhakas and persons who have renounced 'everything' for the sake of Him, whom they consider to be their 'All'! For many, Bhakti is a 'burkha', a veil, which is worn when on pilgrimage or when approaching elders or when visiting temples. Once they come home, they discard the veil and with it, all ideas and feelings of reverence for the Lord. These cannot be discovered in them, even after the most diligent search.

These are but exhibitionist stunts. Bhakti, however, is steady and full; it is the establishment of the mind in the Lord under all situations, at all times. Many assent that all their acts are dedicated to Deva; but, their attitude shows that they are dedicating them to Deha only. Instead of dedicating them to God, they dedicate them to themselves, meaning by themselves, the bodies with which they ignorantly identify themselves. They assert, "This I offer to Krishna", but, really, it is an offering to their son! "This" is an offering to "Rama", they declare; but, their urge

reveals that it is an offering to their "Raga", "sense of attachment, passion!" How can these be dignified by the word, dedication or offering?

Dedication has to inspire the body mind and speech. If what you speak is not approved by the mind, if what is felt in the mind is not whole-heartedly put into action, then, it becomes sheer hypocrisy. Be convinced that the doer the deed and the doing are all based on Him; be devoted to Him, rather than to riches wife and children. Where your mind attaches itself, there your Bhakti also stays. Bhakti is pure as the waters of Ganga; Karma is as the water of the Yamuna. And, Jnana is as the Saraswati, flowing secretly mysteriously, underground and sanctifying itself, by merging with the other two. It is the commingling of these three that is called Triveni. It means the disappearance of the mind, unison, the "becoming-one" of the three Gunas; it brings about the destruction of egoism too.

However, there are many who are ignorant of these basic needs, they dip in water twice a day and go through the morning noon and evening rituals, worship the household gods, draw lines of ash or sandal paste on their brows arms and chest, put dots of saffron on their faces and wear strings of beads and rosaries round their necks and roam about from temple to temple or from one spiritual teacher to another. They circumambulate holy shrines. They attend many discourses Puranic recitals and readings of scriptures. The best that we can say about such persons is that they are engaged in good activities; we cannot say they are entitled to be called Bhaktas.

Bhakti has no relationship with dress and speech. On the basis of mere raiment and religiosity of expression, we cannot call a person "a devotee of the Lord". Bhakti is a matter of the inner consciousness, of feeling rather than external behaviour or conduct. You can infer that where there is smoke, there must be fire. But, there are some types of fire which do not emit smoke, though there is no smoke which does not originate from fire. There is a possibility that acts will be done without feeling; but, you can't say that all feeling must be expressed through outer show. Even without pomp and outer show, it is possible to have sincere feeling. The pure feeling, is the important thing Mere pompous outer activity is positively harmful to the progress of the aspirant, if he aspires at all for progress!

The question that Arjuna asked was further answered: Of course there are two different types of Bhaktas, the Saguna Bhakta and the Nirguna Bhakta the Votary of the Formful One and the Votary of the Formless. Among the devotees, the Aartha (distressed) the Artharthi (the poor) and the Jijnasu (the inquirer) are all eager about the Name-ful and the Formful aspects of Godhead. Just as for every auspicious act, the right foot is placed first, the right foot of Nirguna Bhakti must be used for the attainment of Liberation. That is "all-auspicious." That is to say, for the winning of moksha, the Sadhana of the Formless Godhead alone gives illumination. After this, the Saguna can be practised; of course, both aspects have value and are indispensable. For, how long can any one, have one foot inside and another outside? Even if that were possible, of what avail is it? So, Saguna Bhakti has to be adopted as Sadhana and the Nirguna Bhakti as the goal to be reached.

You can either see the whole universe as God, the whole Viswa as Visweswara or, you can see Viswa and Visweswara as separate and distinct. But, the two are the same. You may see the cloth as yarn or you may see 'yarn and cloth' as separate entities. But, whether you realise it or not,

yarn is cloth; cloth is yarn. To see yarn and cloth as distinct, is the Saguna Upasana, the worship of God with attributes. To see yarn as included in the cloth, and the cloth as a collection of yarn, and the two as identical, is to worship the Nirguna aspect.

This Bhakti is not something that is imported from somewhere; it is not something that is supplied by someone. It does not grow from the ground or shower from the skies. It wells up from oneself, it is selfless attachment to the Lord. The attachment, the love that is inherent in man should not flow wildly in diverse channels; it should flow uninterruptedly in the direction of God; then, it becomes Bhakti. This love is in every living being; birds and beasts, insects and worms ... all have love, inspiring them, filling them, to the extent that is appropriate to each. Why elaborate? Life is love; love is life.

Each member of all living species has many-sided love towards offspring, parents, comforts and guards, its food and drink, its joys and plays. Each of these types of love or attachment has a distinct name suited to the objects on which it is fixed. Every one of these types is not called Bhakti. It is called affection, when directed towards offspring; it is named infatuation when it is directed to the mate; charity when directed towards persons who are less fortunate; comradeship when flowing towards equals, attachment when extended to good; or places; it becomes fascination in some cases, friendship in others. When it is directed towards elders and teachers and parents, it becomes the elevated attitude of reverence, humility, respect etc.

But, Bhakti is a word that is used only with reference to love as directed to the Lord only. When this love is broken up into many streams flowing in many directions and towards many points, it causes only grief, for, it gets fixed on mortal things of the moment. Instead, allow the Love to flow single-pointed to the Ocean of the Lord's Grace; this is the Sadhana called Bhakti. Why waste life in the attempt to reach the salty marsh of Samsara? Strive to reach the vast Ocean of Grace. There you realise yourself; you attain Sat-chit-anandam. How holy is that consummation; how filled with Bliss!

The Gopikas strove and succeeded in this Sadhana. Every moment, under every condition, every thought word and deed of the Gopikas were dedicated to the Lotus Feet of Sri Krishna. That is why the Gopikas are called, "Yogis." When Lord Krishna Himself addresses the Gopis as Yogis, you can gauge the height of spiritual success they had achieved.

(To be continued)

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

The Governor's Speech

I am really very happy to be with you today and participate in the functions that took place here. It was really a great pleasure for me to come here, as it has been to you all. This institution and the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha that has been established by Sri Sathya Sai Baba with a great and noble purpose are doing a great service to the nation. The necessity for and usefulness of

what Swamiji has been doing are quite apparent from the large gathering of people that is here today, and that comes on similar occasions from various parts of the country. I am told that many of you have come from distant places, and not merely from Andhra Pradesh. You have come with a desire to benefit from the great work that is being done here for the regeneration of Man. Spirituality and spiritual training have great charm as far as we, the people of India, are concerned; but, I will normally be reluctant to talk about spiritual matters in the presence of this Great Soul and these great scholars.

Our country is faced with great dangers today. We have to use our time very profitably; all of us, men and women, have to labour hard, and produce as much as possible, in order to make the country prosperous, strong and great. We should not forget that all activities yield profit only when we attend to the spiritual aspect of our lives. Dr. B. Ramakrishna Rao said just now that the spiritual aspect of our lives is not receiving our attention. I believe that statement is tinged with a little exaggeration, for, what does this large gathering demonstrate? If we forget spiritual matters, if we consider that material things alone count, I am sure such a large gathering will not come here, from all parts of the country. The size of this gathering is proof, that people take great interest and want to profit themselves by listening to those who give spiritual knowledge and to the Swami who imparts spiritual inspiration.

If there is any serious defect in the life of the Indian people today it lies in the great gap between knowledge and practice. There should not be this difference between the two. Knowledge by itself is of no value. Put it into use; exhibit qualities that are the result of your knowledge; put into practice the great truths that you have known to be true. I am glad to be told that these great scholars whom we are honouring today are also great examples of the good qualities that result from that knowledge, that grow from that knowledge.

I am glad this same message is being taught here. I saw in the Exhibition of Pictures that is arranged here, how philosophical truths are taught in a very simple manner; the lessons conveyed in the Vedas the Gita and the Puranas are codified and simplified so that every one can grasp them. That Exhibition impressed me much. Life can be made valuable if you only put into practice the great truths that are illustrated there.

You must always remember that even the most common thought, even the smallest deed, gives ample scope for the valuable spiritual knowledge and attainment of man. If only this is done with the purity and sincerity of a spiritual aspirant, India has no need to apprehend about her progress. Spirituality is not a part-time affair. Do not believe that you can do anything any way you like for 23 1/2 hours, provided you stick to a mere half-hour devoted to formal worship or formal recital of the Lord's Name. Spiritual effort should be taken on, seriously, during all the moments of your life.

I am all admiration and gratitude for the four Pundits whom I am required to honour on behalf of the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha. I congratulate them on being thus selected. What we call our culture is the body of noble thoughts that has been preserved for as by such great Scholars, thoughts of the great seers of our ancient past. These Pundits keep aloft the flame of the Truth of Life. I congratulate the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha on their idea, of honouring these great scholars. Of course they do not crave for presents car gifts or things of that kind. The

encouragement is for the others, for it will prompt others to work harder and earn recognition by their merit. To be honoured at this Centre of Spirituality which influences not only all parts of India but even countries outside and in other continents is a great inspiration.

Take it from me—I am speaking on the basis of experience of many years—success depends upon purity of the mind. There can be no better guide than, your Conscience, which is the Inner Voice. No one can defeat you, no one can ignore you, when you act always according to the dictates of your Conscience.

Swamiji said that the "Santhi Vedika" which I opened here a short while ago will be used for Yajnas and as a Platform for Discourses. I am very glad that great gatherings will be addressed from there by these scholars and others as well as by Swamiji. I am glad I got the opportunity to inaugurate that Mantapa. I am thankful to Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the great Spiritual Leader, for this chance and I am glad I was able to address a few words to you all. I owe this chance mainly to the Swamiji and to my old friend, Sri Ramakrishna Rao but for whose insistence, I am afraid, I might not have been present here.

Maharani's Speech

I am most grateful to be here with you by the Grace of Sri Swami. I am not used to making speeches, but, since it is the Divine Order of Sri Swami, I am venturing to do so.

When Sri Ramana Maharishi and Aurobindo attained Mahasamadhi, I was grieved that I had not been fortunate enough to get their Darshan. But, the inner Voice told me that there was no need for regrets, as our country is never without Great Masters and that one-day, my wish to see a great personage would be fulfilled. And, today, I find myself fortunate to be sitting at the Feet of the Greatest One.

In Prasanthi Nilayam we find a happy blending, of physical and spiritual treatment.

Man has two varieties of troubles—one, of the physical body and the other of a spiritual nature. The first we are told is caused when the humours Pitta Vata and Sleshma are imbalanced. At such times, we go to doctors and seek their advice and very often, a few pills will do the needful. Spiritual troubles are a little more difficult to cure and then need much more than a few pills. Sri Swami tells us that these ills are caused by the imbalance of the 3 gunas—Satwa Rajas and Tamas.

Time and again the doctor advises the negligent patient that prevention is better than cure and this is as true of spiritual as of physical ills. We spend our entire time and energy in the care of the body and its comforts—but, at the cost of Shanti.

The greatest disease is the absence of Shanti. When the mind gets Shanti, the body also will have health. Every one of us who craves good health must pay attention to the emotions and motives

that animate our lives. Falsehood injustice indiscipline cruelty and hate are evils which eat away the peace one has in life.

Sathya dharma Shanti and Prema form the clear elements which help health; if we inhale this pure air the mind will be free from ashanti.

If we win the grace of the Lord, even destiny can be changed; destiny will be rendered ineffective, as certain drugs which lose their potency after a certain period. The drug is in the bottle; but, it is no longer effective. So too our Prarabdha will be there, but, the Lord's Grace will make it powerless.

It is in Love that Religion exists. Siva is more pleased with a man who serves Man, seeing Siva in him, than those who see Siva only in temples. The great Vivekananda has told us that this is one of the many roads open to us, to win Swami's Grace.

The Grihasta Ashram is a path through which everyone, especially women, can achieve their Goal. Neglect of the duties of the household, towards husband and children, is not the way of God. Through the difficulties that women experience in the Grihasta Ashram, they will find liberation. Women have a special duty towards their children and their upbringing and, at no cost, should they be neglected.

The Grihasta Ashram helps all the other three and so we must not think twit by neglecting it, we are nearing God.

Among some sects of Hindu religion, women are treated with no respect, as men of those sects believe that women will lead them straight to hell. I am sorry to say that we women have given them some cause to foster that belief. But, now it is up to us to behave in a way that will bring respect and understanding to womanhood.

At present, the status of woman has improved and we stand a better chance of proving our ability and devotion. We must make ourselves like a boat which, carries our families across the turbulent sea of life called Bhavasagar.

But, nowadays, much emphasis is being placed on material things; the desires of women are hard to satisfy and so women are responsible for the present day corruption. Man, who is powerless to satisfy their ever-increasing desire for material things, is driven to corrupt practices in order to ensure peace at home.

There is the story of a milkmaid who wanted to have a beautiful nose-ring. Every day she crossed a river to go to the town to sell milk. Each day when she reached the river, she would add water to the milk so as to make more money for the nose-ring! She would keep aside the extra money she made and give the rest to her husband. When she finally collected enough money, she had a very large gold nose-ring made for herself. But, she had no mirror in which to see how beautiful she looked, when she wore the nose-ring. So she went to the river and tried to see her reflection in the water. But as soon as she bent down to see her reflection, the heavy nose-ring slipped off her nose and fell into the river and got lost.

So it is pointless to accumulate money and other material goods which can be similarly lost. The emphasis must be on the inward qualities of character, which are Sathya Dharma Shanti and Prema. This is the only way to realize God.

The Message in Pictures

The Sarla Charity Trust, Bombay has prepared a Pictorial Exhibition of Sri Sathya Sai Baba's Message of Sathya Dharma Shanti and Prema. It is being shown in various towns under the auspices of the Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samiti, Bombay. During Dasara, it was inaugurated by Baba, in the Prayer Hall of the Prasanthi Nilayam and tens of thousands saw it and realised the simplicity sweetness and efficacy of the Message, as depicted in pictures. A Handbook was also printed and supplied, containing reproductions of the pictures and the letterpress. H E the Governor of Andhra Pradesh had many words of appreciation to say in his Address on 5-10-65 about the value of Exhibition.

Besides a large number of fine paintings of the great seers and the sages of our land, the Exhibition has finely drawn pictorial representations of the great truths which Baba explains in his discourses by apt similes or parables or stories.

Statements of Baba like, "Sathya is the current, Dharma is the wire, Shanti the bulb and Prema, the light" and "Prema is the seed, Bhakti the sprout, faith the manure, Satsang the rain, Surrender the shower and Sakshatkara the fruit" are all brought home by apt illustrations.

There are also many photographs to give the visitor an idea of the Divine Personality of Baba.

The organisers are willing and even anxious that the Exhibition should be seen by as many as possible and so they are prepared to draw up an itinerary and send the Exhibition Van to places where Bhaktas of Baba are willing to undertake the responsibility of arranging it.

Already about 11 Bhakta Mandalis and Samajas have registered their names and more requests are coming in. All correspondence may be addressed to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Sera Samiti, 107, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Fort, Bombay-1.

Saurashtra or Sairashtra

The Sri Sathya Sai Study Circle Navsari hat a new function added to its activities since 28th August, that of regulating the rush of visitors to the house of a poor Jain family, where Vibhuti has been showering from the photo of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba! When the husband and the father-in-law reprimanded the women of the household, and said, as the Secretary of the Study Circle writes in his report, "Why do you worship another God when our God is in the house?" they were surprised to see yellow colour kumkum which usually Jain Dharma people apply on

their forehead showering from their Ishtadeva photo of Sri Mahavira Swami and Kumkum from the photo of Devi Ambaji. Thousands of people from around Navsari are coming for Darshan and they are all being given the sacred Vibhuti and Kumkum Prasad. "Our study Circle" writes Sri N. D. Desai from Navsari "is assisting the family with volunteer help."

At Bhavnagar on 24th July, Kumkum was seen on the photos of both Shirdi Baba and Sathya Sai Baba. At Surat, "sacred Udi began to drop from the blessed photo of Sathya Sai Baba, which was brought from Prasanthi Nilayam and which has been signed by Baba with the words, Blessings, from 14-9-65. On 15th, Kumkum began to shower from another photo of Sri Sri Sathya Sai Baba. This was in the Puja Room of Somabhai G Patel in the Railway Colony. On 24-9-65, sacred Udi began to come down from the photos of Sathya Sai Baba and Shirdi Baba, as well as from those of Rameswaram and Amarnath. Also, "kumkum from the forehead of Sri Dhansukhram Vinayasankar Vyas, our revered Guru". Sri S. G. Patel has himself described these miracles to us in his letter dated 29-9-65.

At Jamnagar, during the air raids that happened recently, the morale of the members of the Study Circle was very high and the Vision of Baba's physical Presence was seen by the pilots who prayed to Him, or by the members of their families. Baba Himself sent a Message that He would guard them and this infused great confidence and courage.

The wife of an Air Force officer saw beloved Bhagavan clearly in flesh and blood before her and when she was stunned by the good fortune, Baba told her, 'Don't worry; I have come here to bless all of you.' 'Soon after this, the bombing started' writes Dr. D. J. Gadhia; "You will be surprised to hear that the bomb fell only a hundred yards away from where her husband was, digging for protection. He told me about this miraculous escape and exclaimed, 'Who else can save, except Baba?' At present all people in the Air Force here believe that it was Baba who has saved not only the airport but the whole of Jamnagar. He proved it by sending that encouraging Message of Blessings."

Baba is Sarvantaryami; He is the Inner Motivator in all. This truth is being demonstrated in a thousand different ways throughout Saurashtra, as in other areas. Saurashtra is fast becoming Saurashtra.

(Ed.)

You may derive satisfaction and even joy by the process of Puja; but, the Lord is not pleased by these exercises; He insists on a life of detachment and self-sacrifice. There was a courtier once who reported to the King that a camel had climbed up to the terrace of the palace. When the King inquired how this could ever be possible, he replied, "You desire to reach the Lord in spite of your crookedness, attachment and wickedness. If you can attain that height, then a camel can also reach the terrace, climbing up the five stairs and the 100 steps."

Baba

The Body as the Boat

We are celebrating today the Ninth Anniversary of our Hospital. The Maharani of Kutch has already told you how the three humours and the three Gunas are responsible for physical and mental ills of mankind. You must first understand clearly why this human body has been given, for what purpose? It is for the realisation of the unity of all this multiplicity, the Prime Motive Power of all this Change, the Truth in short of your Self and of this Universe. Until you realise this you will have to wear the body again and again, undergo the ordeal of carrying it about with you. You escape the burden of birth and death only after the realisation of the Truth. That is the destiny, the goal, the consummation of all this struggle. The body is the boat which will take you across the sea of time and space and change. Keep it in good trim; see that it is in good repair. Do not attach yourself to the boat but try to see the boatman. That is the Atmatattwa. If this object is not attained, it is a misuse of the body, as reprehensible as using Kamadhenu for the plough.

The body is a sublime instrument for Sadhana; use it for that high purpose. The eye sees, the ear hears the hand holds, the legs move, the heart beats... all due to the Inner Motivator, the Atma. The same current operates through the fan the bulb the mike and makes them perform their distinct duties; so also the Atma. Do not put your faith in the temporary habiliment that you wear; trust rather in the eternal, the never-changing. It is the height of folly to waste life, pursuing objective pleasures, sensory enjoyment.

If you have sincere yearning to realise the Atmic basis, then the Lord Himself will provide health and mental peace for you. Keep that faith untarnished, that is your only duty. You might ask me "If the body is subject to inevitable decay and if one must give up the attachment to the body, why then have a hospital at all?"

To those who have surrendered to the Lord and who take everything that happens as His Will, He will ensure the best condition for the success of the Sadhana. For such a little Vibhuti is enough to cure all maladies. Some desire drugs; some find satisfaction in God. For those who desire drugs, the hospital caters; and through the hospital, they are led to God. That too is My Plan. But, take it from Me: Illness is not cured by drug or hospital or doctor; It is cured by Grace. So try to acquire that Grace; try to understand the Heart the Power the Mercy the Mystery the Grace of the Lord For this, practise gentleness, moderation, self-control, and Sadhana of Japam and Dhyanam.

Baba: Hospital Day Discourse 26-9-65

Navaratri

"Prasanthi Nilayam, which is the abode of perfect Peace, is today witnessing not the rise of the physical Sure, but it is bathed in the rays of Joy," declared Baba, when He hoisted the Prasanthi Flag as the signal for the Celebration of the Navaratri Festival, at 8 A.M. on the 26th September. He then inaugurated the "Pictorial Exhibition" of the Message of Baba as well as the "Yogesh

Institute Social Service Van" of the Sarla Charity Trust from Bombay. That evening, the Ninth Anniversary Celebrations of the Sri Sathya Sai Hospital was celebrated under the Presidentship of the Maharani of Kutch.

The Krishna-Guntur Bhagavata Bhakta Samajam had the privilege of sharing in the cultural programmes and their members entertained the thousands who had gathered with Tharanga Ganam, Ashtapadi Ganam, Katha kalakshenams on Parvati Kalyanam, Sita Swayamvaram, Janaki Sapatham, Ramanamamahima and Bhakta Pothana. Their President Sri Sishtla Chandramouli Sastri dedicated to Baba his work on "Sundara Hanumadvaibhava" and addressed the gathering on the Sundara Kanda of the Ramayana. Br. Kasibhatta Gowripathi Sastry recited poems from his work, "Venkateswara Tharaahaaram." The Vedapurausha Yajna was inaugurated by Baba and it was conducted for seven days on strict Sastraic lines, until Vijayadasami, on the 5th October, when Purnahuthi, the Final Sacrificial Offering was done in the Sacred Fire, in the Presence of Baba and the Governor of Andhra Pradesh, who arrived just that morning.

The Third Anniversary of the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha was celebrated on the evening of the 29th under the distinguished Presidentship of the Chairman of the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council, Hon'ble Sri G. Brahmayya, and it was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Minister for Panchayath Raj, Dr. N. Lakshminarasiah. Meetings of the Mahasabha were held every evening thereafter, and they were addressed by the learned Pundits: Br. Remilla Suryaprakasa Sastry, Br. Varanasi Subrabmany Sastry, Br. Pidaparthi Krishnamurthi Sastry, Br. Narayanabhatla Krishnamurthi Sastry, Br Vemparala Suryanarayana Sastry, Dr. B. Ramakrishna Rao, the President of the Mahasabha, and Br. Deepala Pichayya Sastry.

On Vijayadasami Day, H E The Governor of Andhra Pradesh, Sri Pattom Thanu Pillay inaugurated the "Santhi Vedika" a majestic and magnificent new Mantap constructed for the purposes of holding open air gatherings and celebrating Yajnas; he then presided over a Special Sessions of the All India Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha, where four revered Pundits were honoured for their meritorious services for the preservation and promotion of Sanathana Dharma: Br. Bulusu Appana Sastry, Br. Varanasi Subrahmanya Sastry, Br. Kollur Somasekhara Sastry and the distinguished Poet, Doopati Thirumalacharyulu. All these aged scholars were given golden bracelets, which H. E. graciously fitted on their wrists. The Governor then addressed the vast gathering counting to more than twenty thousands that had assembled from all parts of India and even from continents beyond the sea.

Sri P. S Dixit and Mrs. Dixit, famous musicians of Bombay entertained the gathering of Bhaktas with their exquisite rendering of Bhajan Songs; the Madras Brothers, B. V. Raman and B. V. Lakshman gave an excellent music recital of Karnataka Music; the Sembanarkoil Brothers and Vidwan Shanmugasundaram from Tanjore gave Nadaswaram Recitals which were highly appreciated. The renowned Burrakatha Artistes, Nidadavaole Achyutharamaiah and Party gave two inspiring and scholarly performances on Veera Abhimanyu and Maharathi Karna.

The students of the Sathya Sai Veda Sastra Pathashala, Prasanthi Nilayam had the unique honour and privilege to enact in the presence of Baba and tens of thousands of His Devotees a Telugu Musical Play written by Bhagavan Himself, named 'Sathi Sakku Bai'. They acted the play

realistically with correct costumes and in an attractive style. This enabled them to bring out the Divine Message that Baba had implanted in the style and language of the play. Truly it was a moving experience to witness the drama.

Altogether, this year's Navaratri was a very exhilarating period during which apart from the brilliant galaxy of scholars and Pundits and Vedic savants that assembled, Prasanthi Nilayam was the meeting ground of aspirants from all States of India; they exchanged their experiences and returned more confident of themselves and more determined to spread Baba's Message of Sathya Dharma Shanti and Prema in their lives and thereby in the lives of others. Baba too in the Discourses He gave on almost all the days spoke on the need for moral effort, for a deeper faith in the basic Divinity of every Being, for a clearer understanding of the fundamental tenets of Sanathana Dharma. He moved among the thousands who assembled and graciously gave them all the coveted opportunity of Darshan. On the 7th 8th and 9th Oct, He distributed the Sacred Vibhuti Himself to every one of thousands who had come seeking the Grace.

Prasanthi Nilayam News

- Sep 22: Arrival of Frank C. Becker from Western Australia.
- Sep 25: Hon'ble Sri G. Brahmayya, Chairman, Legislative Council, A. P. arrived at the Nilayam.
- Sep 26 Oct 5: Navaratri Celebrations.
- Sep 29: Hon'ble Dr. M. N. Lakshminarasiah, Minister for Panchayath Raj, Andhra Pradesh arrived at the Nilayam.
- Oct 5: H. E. Sri Pattom Thanu Pillay, Governor of Andhra Pradesh inaugurated the "Santhi Vedika" at the Prasanthi Nilayam and presided over the Punditha Sanmaanam Sessions of the All India Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha.
The Princess of Nepal arrived at the Nilayam for the Darshan of Baba.
- 12: The Maharaja and the Maharani of Sandur State arrived.
- 15: Ann Richmond and Peter Wright of England arrived at the Nilayam, from Ramanasram, Thiruvannamalai
- 16: The Yuvaraja Saheb of Idar and Party arrived at the Nilayam for the Darshan of Baba.
- 18: Hon'ble Dr. Nagappa Alva, Minister for Health, Mysore State, arrived at the Nilayam.

Arjuna questioned further, on the basis of Krishna's answers "O Gopala!" he said, "you described the characteristics of the votary of the Saguna aspect of Godhead. You said that persons with such characteristics are yogis. I am indeed full of joy that I came to know all this. But, just as the Saguna votaries have these characteristics, the votaries of the attribute-less Godhead, the Nirguna aspect, they too must have certain characteristics by which they can be recognised, is it not? Please tell me about them; I would like to know."

At this, the Nandakumara of lovely form replied, "Arjuna! The votaries of the Nirguna aspect must first acquire full control of their senses. Next, they must be unaffected by circumstance. Third, they must be of service to others in distress. Such will be the qualities of the Upasakas of A-kshara, the Imperishable."

Readers might therefore infer that the characteristics of the votaries of the Saguna and the Nirguna or A kshara aspects of Godhead are all identical. Arjuna was overjoyed at Krishna's reply. He exclaimed, "I have now clearly understood this point. But, I want you now to tell me, how I ought to proceed, how I must act to win the Lord's Grace," and fell at the Feet of Krishna. At this, Narayana lifted Nara (Arjuna) and helped him to rise. "Arjuna!" he said, "You have no need now for acquiring the characteristics of either of these. They are not within easy reach. I shall tell you of a path that is easier than these two. That path will surely confer on you My Grace.

This is that path: Establish your mind and intelligence in Me. If you cannot accomplish this and find it difficult, give up your egoism and carry on activities that are moral and holy. If even this is too difficult for you, give up all attachment to the fruits, the consequences of all your acts.. offer them to Me as Krishna-arpanam. Offering the fruits of all your acts to Me should be not a mere vocal exercise. Take care that you do so by word by deed and by thought, mano-vaak-kaya-karma, as they say.

Do you feel that even these are beyond you? Then, you yourself will be made aware of the aftermath." After saying this much, Krishna sat silent for a while. Take note of this most significant teaching. It follows that the aspirant for Grace must have, before his mind's attention, only the act and not its consequence, beneficial or otherwise. That is the reason why Gopala said that Jnana is superior to Abhyasa, Dhyana is superior to Jnana, and the giving up of attachment to the consequences of your acts is superior to Dhyana. Such non-attachment, Krishna said, will confer Shanti.

"Bhakti and Dwesha are as fire and water; devotion and hate cannot dwell together. I love those who feel no difference between grief and joy, affection and dislike, good and bad. Hate, in whatever form in howsoever slight a quantity, if it resides in the heart. that person cannot be a Bhakta. The Bhakta must be convinced that all this is Vasudeva, 'Vasudeva-sarvam-idam.' That is to say, one's own Atma is everywhere in everything; this truth must be realised, acted upon

and experienced. Hating another is hating oneself; scorning another is but scorning oneself; finding fault with another is finding fault with oneself," Krishna continued.

Readers might be troubled by a doubt on this point. Can the mere absence of hatred or contempt of another, endow one with the full consciousness of the truth of "Vasudevassarvamidam"? No; the mere absence of hate etc cannot secure for you the "Dweller within", and the Ananda of recognising Him. That will not give him the Grace of the Lord. The task of the ryot who cultivates the crop is a good example of this; if you pay attention to this, the truth will be known and doubts will vanish. Before sowing the seed on a plot of land, the ryot removes all the wild growth, the bush the scrub etc from it. He destroys the grass and other small growths. But, that is not enough for bringing the harvest home. Besides this, the plot has to be ploughed and partitioned by bunds, watered and made ready for the sowing, and then, the sprouts have to be fostered and guarded into maturity, until the crop ripens and can be collected and garnered, in the granary.

Similarly, the thorny bushes of affection hate envy pride etc have to be uprooted from the region of the heart, and the field has to be ploughed by means of "good deeds." Then, the saplings of Ananda have to be planted therein; the growing crop has to be fostered attentively by discipline and Shraddha; at last, as a result of all this effort, the harvest of Ananda will fill one's granary. The mere removal of hate from the heart will not ensure Ananda. Love too should be cultivated. That is to say, uproot hate and plant love. If the absence of hate ensures Bhakti, hill and anthill, tree and twig, mud and mountain—what do these hate? They have no dislikes at all. But, for that reason, do we ascribe Bhakti to them all? We do not, for that would be absurd. The Bhakta must first be free from hate; then, he must be full of Love. Besides, his Love must express itself as Service of the distressed and the grieving, declared Gopala.

Arjuna was listening to all this with great attention. Then, he asked, "Krishna! Are these three enough? Or, are there any more to be followed and practised? Please tell me." Krishna replied, "The mere planting of the saplings is not enough; the field has to be watered and manured. The removal of hate and the planting of love have achieved only the first stage. As soon as the sprouts have appeared, the two processes of Nirmama and Nirahamkara have to be followed. They are like watering and manuring. These two are essential for successful crop of Ananda.

That is to say, you will have to rid yourself of the feelings of "mine" and "I." They are not distinct; the first springs from the second and both arise from Ajnana, the ignorance of the fundamental Truth. For, once rid of Ajnana, the sense of "I" and "mine" will not give trouble; they have no place in him. Hence, it is laid down that the aspirant for Bhakti must possess (Sathatham Samthushti) contentment always. What does this mean? It implies contentment under all conditions, well-ness or ill-ness, loss or profit, grief or joy. Whether one's wish is fulfilled or not, the mind should not lose equanimity, or poise."

The mind will lose balance, if the slightest obstacle arises in the path of the wish it frames for itself. It is so fickle. Why, if the cup of coffee is not forthcoming in time, if you miss seeing two films in one week, if you could not squat before the radio both in the morning and in the evening for long hours, if many such trifles are denied or disturbed, you feel overshadowed by discontent the whole time. This condition is far from peaceful or happy. Samthushti is the state of mind

which is unaffected by the achievement or non-achievement of any wish, the happening or non-happening of any event; the mind must be undisturbed, even, without excitement or disappointment.

Arjuna then asked, "O Lord, you mention often of Prakriti and Purusha; I am eager to know what exactly is Prakriti, what are its characteristics, what exactly is its nature?" Krishna replied to this question, in a simple easily understandable manner. "Arjuna! Prakriti has another name, too. It is called Kshetra, also. Prakriti means this Prapancha, this Composite of the Five Elements. There are two entities in this Prapancha or Prakriti or Nature: one is inert and the other active (the jada and the chaitanya); that is to say, one is the seen, the other is the see-er; the knower is the aham, the known is the idam, the 'I' and the 'this.'

Prakriti or nature is the sum of attributes or characteristics. The Gunas, Tamas (delusion) Rajas (grief) and Satwa (joy) are all the attributes of Prakriti. Nature is but the per mutation and combination of these Gunas. So also are the attributes of doer and enjoyer, Karthrtwa and Bhokthrtwa."

Arjuna liked to continue his questions. So, Krishna said, "My dear brother-in-law! You are eager to question again". Seizing the chance, Arjuna put in his query. "Krishna! You have explained clearly the Prakriti tattwa or Nature Principle. Now, I wish very much to know what is meant by Purusha, what are the characteristics, what is the nature etc."

"Arjuna!" Krishna said, "Whether you call It Purusha or Kshetrajna or Jneya it is the same. Kshetrajna is the knower of the Kshetra or Field. Jneya is that which is known. Purusha is the Jiva and Prakriti is the Deha or the Body. The embodied is the Purusha, the person who knows the body. The Deha or body has also a number of names, each having a significant meaning. It is Sarira, because it wastes away; deha, because it is liable to be burnt. The Jiva is that which activates the body and becomes aware of its limitations."

Arjuna was pestered by doubt at this answer and so, he started another series of questions. "Krishna how came this wasting and destructible body to be called Kshetra or Field?" Arjuna was indeed a clever listener. Krishna answered him with a great deal of patience.

Krishna replied: "It is through this body that merit can be acquired by engaging in various beneficent activities; the body is the vehicle for earning Jnana or the Universal Vision; it is the body that leads you on to Liberation itself It is the repository of such great achievements and so it is called Kshetra. Kshetra means an armour, for it protects and guards the Jivi from harm. Another meaning is "Field", a meaning that is full of significance. Whatever seeds are sown or saplings are planted in the field, the harvest depends on their nature and quality. The body is the field, the Jivi is the Kshetra-palaka the protector of the field, and the crop. Sowing the seeds of meritorious deeds, one can reap joy and happiness. Sowing the seeds of sin, he can reap the harvest of grief and worry. Sowing the seeds of Jnana, he can garner the harvest of Moksha or Liberation from the bondage to Birth and Death.

Just as the ryot knows the nature and characteristics of the field, the Kshetrajna or the Jivi must know the nature and qualities of his body. The only difference between Kshetra and Kshetrajna

is the syllable jna. It means jnana, he who knows, the knower. So, he who knows the field or the body, its excellences and deficiencies, he is the kshetrajna. That which has no such knowledge, the inert material thing, that is the Kshetra."

"Krishna!" Arjuna asked, "Of what benefit is it to know these two entities: Kshetra and Kshetrajna?" Krishna laughed; He said, "What a foolish question to ask? By inquiring and knowing about the nature of the Kshetra, one's grief is destroyed. By knowing about the nature of the Kshetrajna, Ananda or Bliss is acquired. This Ananda is also designated as Moksha."

Krishna then relapsed into silence. But, Arjuna who is the representative of all mankind on the battlefield between the higher and the lower impulses, prodded Him further. "Krishna! Who are those who experience both these, the destruction of grief and the attainment of bliss? Is it the Jivi or the Deha? Please elucidate."

Krishna replied, "Arjuna! The Kshetra or body is associated with the Gunas or attributes, Tamas Rajas and Satwa; so, the Jivi when in contact with it and when it identifies itself with the body, imagines that it is experiencing grief and joy which are the consequences of those Gunas. The Purusha or the Kshetrajna has no real relationship with the Gunas; he is just a witness. When iron is in contact with fire, then, it has the power of burning; but, it is not iron that burns, it is the fire. Through contact with Prakriti, Purusha appears as the doer and experiencer.

Therefore it is not proper to infer that the Jivi is having grief and joy, by the very fact of its occupying the body which is the vehicle of the Gunas. The earth sustains and helps the seed to grow into a tree or to decline. It is the Guna of the earth that pauses these two. So also, the seed of Jivatattvam grows and blossoms into Brahmatattvam in the body which is the Earth-principle. Just as manure and water are essential for the tree to bloom and bear fruit, Sathyam Saantham Samam and Damam are essential for the blossoming of the Spirit or of Atmic wisdom.

The attributes or Gunas which Prakriti has makes it assume multifarious forms. Think of this one point; then, the whole problem will become clear. Man is happy at one time, miserable at another time, he is afraid one moment and courageous at another. Why? Because he is shaped so by the Gunas. Do you say no? "Then, how can you explain these changes? They alone can transform man from one phase to another like this.

If the three Gunas, Satwa Rajas and Tamas in man are equally balanced, then, there will be no change in him. This can never happen; it is always out of balance. When one is dominant and the others are dormant, then, Prakriti makes him assume many roles. The three Gums represent three aspects of human nature. Rajoguna is the attachment that brings about desires; it creates eagerness to enjoy the objective world that is "seen;" it breeds desire for physical and heavenly pleasures. The Tamoguna cannot grasp the reality; so, it misunderstands easily and takes the false to be the true. It lands persons into negligence and error. It binds, instead of releasing. The Satwaguna controls the causes for grief and sorrow; encourages people to follow the path of real joy and happiness. Therefore, being single-pointed and not being affected by either of these three is the basis for Purity and Steadfastness.

Keep a lamp in a glass that is clear; its light will shine clear and bright. But, have a glass that is multicoloured; its light will be dimmed and poor. On the other hand, if it is kept inside a mud pot, the darkness will continue as it was. The lamp is the same but the container affects its expression. Satwaguna is the lamp that shines clear through the clear white glass chimney; Rajoguna is the many-coloured glass chimney that makes the light dim and poor; and Tamoguna is the mud pot inside which the lamp is totally ineffective.

Satwaguna is Atmajnana; Rajoguna is sullied to some extent, as smoke sullies the chimney and dims the light, it also agitates the flame of the lamp so that it is not straight and steady; Tamoguna is the suppression of the light or Jnana that is the very nature of Man.

(To be continued)

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

When you go for a bath in any holy river, the priest asks you to take three dips; do not think that it is simply conventional. They are for cleansing the Sthula Sukhsma and Karana Sariras. They are for cleansing the outer the inner and the innermost, the Bahya the Bhava and the Chitta; they are for consecrating Karma, Upasana and Jnana.

BABA

My Guru Gives Me Lessons Around The World

Whenever I Am Ready He Teaches

By Charles Penn

[A devotee of His Grace Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, who lives in Pacific Palisades, California. He is preparing an American—English Edition of the Biography of Sai Baba as written by the Editor, Mr. N. Kasturi, M. A., B. L.]

Whether it be at Sunrise or Sunset, it seems that before my Dhyana is completed I have received answers to any particular subject that I would like to have explained. Recently during a very deep Dhyana I had the glorious experience of a question and answer session. I was able to ask anything I wished concerning myself my work on the Book, and why I should be allowed to perform such a wonderful period of helpfulness. I was reluctant to 'return to this world' that I always knew was here. My return was pleasantly alright.

"We are the Instrument"

My first 'experience' was in the third week of July, of this year, and so I wrote to His Grace, Sri Sathya Sai Baba and thanked Him for the Lesson. Let me tell you about this and other Glorious Lessons, so that you, too, may enjoy the experience of this Knowledge.

I had a minor skin infection, in the toes of each of my feet. During Dhyana they both began to burn. I asked my Guru what I should do and He told me to grasp both areas of the feet and count to one hundred, 'saying My Name with each Number.' This I did and it seemed my grasp

tightened and tightened and finally I came to the end of my 'Sai-Baba-Count.' of one hundred and released the feet to find that the burning had stopped. It was then that I received my first Lesson. Sai Baba said "Remember, it was not you that did that. You were only the Instrument. Do not forget, ever, you are ONLY the Instrument." This last statement was repeated strongly, over and over again. "You are only the instrument!" On this subject I wrote to His Grace. In His letter of 11th August, 1965 to me, He confirmed my lesson giving a clearer understanding. He wrote:

"Remember you are but an instrument in the hands of the Lord, but, you are not Jada or inert. You have Intelligence, Discrimination and the power to detach yourself from the world. These three are called Viveka, Vichakshana and Vairagyam. The more you develop these, the better instrument you will be. Intelligence must be able to subdue the senses; discrimination must show the path to attain the eternal and the absolute; Vairagyam must attach you only to the higher goals."

Story of the Shadow

Another Lesson concerns the Knowledge of the Shadow. In my letter to my Guru dated 25th July, 1965 I wrote. "The other lesson was about the importance of seeking the Presence and yet crying not too loudly, for the Form. During my Dhyana Sai Baba said, "When you are overwhelmed by the beauty of the Shadow of the Leaves, do you have to find the Leaves?" In His letter, dated 11th August, 1965, He continued the Lesson when He wrote:

When a person walks along the road, his shadow falls on the heaps and hollows, the thorns and dirt that happen to be by the side of the road, but, he is not affected, by what happens to his shadow. You are the substance, not the shadow. You are the Divine Spark that is encased in the body, not the body.

Imagine a palm tree standing on the ground; its shadow stretches along the ground. The shadow is the world; the tree is the Reality. Climb the tree and reach the fruits on top; your shadow, too, reaches the shadow fruits. That is to say, do Sadhana; attain the goal; you will thereby attain worldly happiness and peace also."

Lift The Hand For Him

A third lesson, has inspired me greatly; in fact it has lightened my life, made everything joyously easier. During another Meditation My Teacher, Sai Baba, said to me. "Every time the Hand is lifted, lift it for Him." I wrote my Guru and thanked him for the Lesson and in a letter to me He more fully explained the meaning, for, He wrote:

"If you lift the hand to serve, to help, to console, to encourage another man-you are lifting it for God. Because, in every man, there is God. The body is the temple of the Universal Soul. Use all your talents for serving others; that is the best way of serving yourself. For, they and you are one entity."

In addition to these wondrous lessons received during meditations, I also learn my lessons from all the things I hear about, or read about or see.

Raiments not to Wear

This morning, 20th September, 1965, I learnt yet another lesson. I was asking just how one should be 'dressed' or 'prepared' for Brahmanmarga, He said, "Before starting on Brahmanmarga and commencing your Sadhana, disrobe, undress. But not in the usual manner. The clothes you cast off may vary in number. Some may be more heavily garmented. Some may have already discarded most of their unwanted apparel! In whatever order you choose, cast off the clothings of Jealousy, Hate, Anger, Pride, Greed, Desire and you know, all the others." Then I was told, "But you shall not be cold, for there is one garment you leave on and that is the raiment of Love. This one piece, has many thicknesses to keep you warm and protected on the coldest nights. It will let you survive the greatest storms; for what is this Love? It is the Love of Joy, the Love of Giving, the Love of Survival, the Love of Living; yes my Bhakta, this one raiment is all you need when you come to Me in the quietude and stillness of your Dhyana, although you do not have to wait until then to come, for I am always near."

In concluding this my first contribution to your Blessed Publication I would love to quote you another treasure from Sai Baba's letter to me dated 16th July, 1965, as it concerns the last few words of the last Lesson just quoted. He wrote:

How My Guru Comes

"The Guru need not always come in actual concrete form; he prompts higher impulses and urges through a friend or a book or an event which reveals the reality in a flash. After this awakening, the rest is mostly in the hands of the aspirant. The Guru can, at best, watch and guide. Do not get agitated or lose heart. You will be guided, however far you may be geographically. I am as near you, as you are near me. Be steady, dear Charles, in your Sadhana and you can certainly attain Shanti."

And so dear readers, on this Blessed eventful Day of Bliss when we all join in thanking Him for our Day of Birth, may I finish this by quoting one final paragraph written to me by His Grace?

"When the Name is remembered, the Form is evoked; when the Form is recollected, the Name is evoked. The Name and the Form are inseparable. That is the meaning of PRESENCE."

Concept of the Motherhood of God

The quintessence of the Navaratri Festival is obeisance to God, as the Mother of the Universe; and this basic Truth has been stressed again and again by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba who has awakened India to an intimate knowledge of her precious spiritual heritage and awakened the World at large to an intimate knowledge of India's spiritual Message during countless centuries and whose spiritual personality has evolved the reverential attachment and devotion of innumerable ardent devotees. I had the great good fortune of the sight of and communion with

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, when he was at Madras some time ago. I heard his discourses and count myself as one of his innumerable disciples and devotees.

Sri Sooktam and Durga Sooktam are Vedic passages devoted to the exaltation of God, as the Mother of the Universe. Devi in her triple aspects of Saraswati, Lakshmi and Uma (Parvati) is worshipped during Navaratri. Goddess Saraswati is described as clad in a white cloth and seated on a white lotus flower and as bearing a Vina (musical instrument) and playing on it. Goddess Lakshmi is described as seated on a red lotus flower and wearing a red cloth and as holding a red lotus flower in each hand and as being bathed by two elephants, holding vessels containing milk from the Milky Ocean. Goddess Parvati is described as seated on a Sri Chakra and as having in her hands a noose and a hook and as riding on a bull.

Sri Sankaracharya says in his famous Sanskrit poem, Devyaparadha-kshamapana-stotra (a poem praying to Devi to forgive all faults and sins). "I am immersed in dangers and troubles and I remember Thee and bow to Thee and pray to. Thee. Do not regard my action as a pretence. A child oppressed by hunger and thirst naturally turns to its mother. What wonder is there, if you turn to me with loving affection? No mother will turn away her child because the child has faults. There is no sinner like me and no saviour like Thee. Knowing this, treat me in an appropriate manner."

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa says; " It is Maya that reveals Brahman Without Maya, who could have known Brahman? Without knowing Shakti or the Manifested Power of God, there is no means of knowing Him."

K. S. Ramaswami Sastri

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

It is categorically said in our scriptures like Gita that God appears as an incarnation on the face of earth whenever there is distress and righteousness is in danger. In the light of this metaphysical dictum we can say, fixing our gaze on the present global predicament, that Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is such an incarnation. The great Savants of the world defined 'incarnation' as one that lives for others and for the uplift of the humanity. Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Varu has been spending his glorious life for the realisation of this, great aspiration. He is totally selfless He is perfectly pure. He radiates goodwill, love and commiseration on all people. He does not take any gift from anybody. He saves people stationed in dire distress. We hear of illustrations which indicate how he brought to, life, some people who are dead. By virtue of his divine look, he understands the calamities of people and rescues them immediately. His heart is full of the milk of human kindness. He is an incarnation of toleration and affection.

In the present context of the history of our country, when sufficient sympathetic thought is not paid to Sanathana Dharma, he took upon Himself the sacred task of renovating our ancient culture and encouraging great scholars who could speak with authority on our religion. Millions of people gather round him to listen to his sage counsel wherever he moves in our country. His place known as Prasanthi Nilayam attracts millions of devotees from all parts of India at all times

specially during the Dasara festivals, Sivaratri festival and His Birthday celebrations. I saw how He takes SIVALINGA from his mouth at the Lingodbhava moment on that day. Like other incarnations he performs miracles not for any selfish purpose but for helping others. His life is always guided by the principle of discipline. His smile radiates, peace and joy.

It is not difficult to prove that He has averted many crises in our society. The great devotees of the world are attracted to Him. We hope his great message will reach the four corners of the world, instill hope in drooping hearts and disseminate joy and peace everywhere.

—Prof Jonnalagadda Satyanarayana Moorti, M. A. B. L.

Three Mystic Footprints

In October 1947, myself and my family were blessed with the sublime Darshan of Swamiji, at late Smt. Sakamma's house, Bangalore. Second or third visit, He graciously remarked that He would visit my house even uninvited. Our hearts swelled with extreme joy and happiness. He told me one day that He would be coming that evening but we were disappointed. Next morning I went to my car shed (locked) to take out my car to go to Him. Wonder!... As I was putting petrol I saw three clear small footprints of about 5 year-old child, on the sloping back portion of the top right of the car. All the three prints were of the right foot only, as if it was a case of hopping on one foot. The whole family, including my Doctor Brother-in-law, who was then staying with me on leave, looked and looked with wonder. Even a coin placed at the spot would have slipped down. We all thought that it had something to do with the Leela of Swamiji.

During my visit to Him next day, when I remarked that He did not come as promised, He said with His beaming smile, "I did. Did you not see any indication?" We were overjoyed.

This Oct, 1965 end, when I tried to seek His permission at Prasanthi Nilayam, to write about it and began recounting the incident, saying "foot-print of one foot only, right one....." and wanted to add '3 such,' but came the remark of Swamiji, "No; 3 footprints all of the right." Divinity, indeed!

B. S. K. Vittal Rao Bangalore 5-11-65

When Dharmaraja, the eldest of the Pandavas, had to make the difficult choice of whom to save, when the Yaksha said, he could select one among his four brothers, who lay dead on the ground, he stuck to the Highest Principle of Dharma. He did not select Bhima or Arjuna, though war was imminent and they were indispensable. He selected Nakula, because he was the son of his stepmother and he did not want her to feel that she had no live son. That is the way in which people in the past upheld Dharma.

BABA

The Sai Incarnation

God is Immanent in the Universe; He is Transcendent, too. He knows all, does all, pervades all, is bound by no law or rule. Yet, He is bound by the Bhakta, the devotee. So, in His unlimited Mercy, He comes down from the Eminence. It is His Need as much as the need of the hankering individual below.

He has another task also. He seeks to prevent obstacles in the path of the Bhakta. So, He removes the enmity of those who oppose him or sometimes as in the past ages, even removes the enemy from the field. Now, He reforms these persons and transmutes their character.

His third task is to save and strengthen the moral code and discipline that He has established through the Shruti and the Smriti. He has said, "The Shruti and the Smriti are My commands and he who transgresses them are disobeying My commands."

Sri Rama was the incarnation to the Treta Yuga. Then, people followed the footsteps of the great so, Rama and others acted Dharma in their own lives. In the Dwapara Yuga, there was a decline and so, Krishna had to teach Dharma clearly, through Arjuna. In this Kali Yuga, both these ways have to be followed by the Incarnation: actual practice and direct teaching. The teaching has to be done on a vaster scale, in a more simple form, to reach scholars and others alike.

Just as the sun's rays when drawn through a magnifying glass become a point of fire and raises a flame, God fills Prakriti and through it, He becomes a Tejobindu, which is the Incarnation. The rays of the Sun are not in the least affected or diminished thereby; so too, the Universal God does not suffer diminution when the Avatar takes place.

God has now taken Avatar as Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He is engaged in the three tasks of all Avatars: the Parithrana of those who are Sadhu in nature, the destruction of evil doers, and the establishment of Dharma. He transmutes the minds of persons inclined to evil, by means of His Glory and His Upadesh. He saves Bhaktas from all troubles and obstacles. He is reviving and restoring Veda-dharma and Sanathana Culture.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba is verily the Hari that dwells in every heart; that is to say, He is the Oversoul in which every soul has to merge.

Sri Ramasaran

"Swamiji in Bombay"

In the middle of the year of Grace Nineteen Hundred and Sixty-two I had a pleasant surprise in a letter by Sri M. S. Dixit from Mangalore. Sri Dixit narrated his fortunate meeting and Darshan of Sri Sathya Sai Baba of Puttaparthi. He further stated in the letter that he was convinced that He was Avatar of Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi. Being connected with Shirdi Sansthan for a long time, he suggested, I should meet Swamiji and request him to come to Shirdi. I immediately replied him in the affirmative and was anxiously waiting for the opportunity of Swamiji's Darshan. In June

1963 I got the coveted opportunity to have His Darshan at Whitefield. My heart was full of joy as my long cherished desire was fulfilled. It was an unique experience of my life. I felt as if I was meeting God Himself face to face. Fortunately enough, it was a "Thursday—a very auspicious day in my life. We joined the evening Bhajan and had the Blessings from Baba. I again went to Him the next day and requested Baba to come to Bombay with a view to visiting Shirdi...His one time Abode. On 13th of April 1964 when I was at Whitefield again on the auspicious occasion of the renaming of the place as Brindavan, I publicly announced this when I was commanded to speak in the function by Swamiji. Again in October 1964 when I had the fortune to have Baba's darshan at Puttaparthi and in May 1965 at Bangalore I repeated the same request and every time Swamiji smiled and said yes.

On 26th May 1965 at night I got a trunk call from Sri Ramakrishna Rao from Brindavan intimating to me that Swamiji had decided to come to Bombay in the first week of June. Our joy knew no bounds and we were all thrilled with the news. That auspicious day dawned on 6th of June 1965 and at night Swamiji was in Bombay. Oh, really, He was in Bombay! I have no words to describe the occasion.

On 7th June 1965 in the evening Swamiji inaugurated the Maharashtra Branch of the 'Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha' in the magnificent Shanmukhananda Hall in a magnificent way. Five thousand devotees inside the Hall and fifty-thousand outside watched the ceremony with their hearts full of love and devotion. It was a sight for Gods to see. It was the proudest day in my life. Swamiji stayed in Bombay till 12th of June 1965 and then He left for Bangalore via Pandharpur. Lakhs of people had His Darshan. Several of them met Him and got their personal problems solved. The devotees included rich and poor, old and young, highest persons in authority and the lowest on the ladder, without any distinction of religion, caste and creed, standing hours together in rain and sun with devotion and love, for his Darshan which quenched the thirst of their eyes for His long awaited Darshan in Bombay. Shirdi still remains. Swamiji is sure to visit it as per His assurance.

I was the most happy and fortunate person to have Swamiji's Blessings. Swamiji's visit to Bombay was memorable from all points of view. Whenever I recollect those days and moments, I am full of emotion and thrilled. The figure of Baba in red robes stands before my eyes, always trying to share the joys and sorrows of the bhaktas, listening to their problems and ailments with love and affection. God-chosen are those who got these opportunities. As for myself, I have been feeling that Baba is with me wherever I go and whatever I do. This realization gives me strength to do my duty, to face the problems that arise and get their right solution. Believe me, readers, however difficult the problem or the situation, remember Him with devotion and everything is alright. This is my experience and that must be yours also. Let us surrender ourselves to Him and then the Lord has given us the assurance 'Yoga Kshemam Vahamyaham!' But as Baba says "For mortals and aspirants to benefit from this, they have to live as ordained, they have to adhere to the lines laid down." From the day I had the fortune to be with Baba at close quarters, I feel I should be always with Baba, continuously looking at Swamiji with devotion, listening to those gentle precious words of God and prostrate myself at His Lotus Feet. Suddenly I was reminded of the valuable advice Swamiji has given to me: 'Duty is God and Work is Worship.' I pray to Swamiji to give me strength to follow His advice and be blessed for ever.

—P. K. Savant

Consider first things first. Then only can the true culture of India be restored to its old vitality. Bharat has known how to exploit the mine of Ananda which lies in the heart of man. The seers had said that if the Bhoomata, Gomata Nijamata and Vedamata are revered and used as best as one can, then one would have happiness here and liberation from the cycle of birth and death. It is because the people of this country followed this path that India has remained India.

BABA

The Hospital Unique

As Dr. B Sitharamiah said on 26-9-65, when the 9th Anniversary of the Sri Sathya Sai Hospital was celebrated with the Maharani of Kutch as President this grand Hospital building was raised by the devoted hands of Bhaktas and work therein is carried on by a self-less band of doctors. Dr. Sitharamiah himself has been associated with the Hospital from the day when it was inaugurated by Dr. B. Gopala Reddy, then Chief Minister, Andhra.

Drs. V. Brahmam, P. S. Sarma, and B G. Krishnamurthy have given long and loving service to build up the reputation of the Hospital. Dr. N. Jayalakshmi, who has a distinguished record of service in the hospitals of Mysore, and of Great Britain and Canada has dedicated herself for work in the Hospital.

Dr. B. Janakiramiah of Razole and Dr. G. Ramji of Biccavole (Eye Specialists), Dr A. Krishna Rao of Kurnool (Dental Surgeon) and Drs. Venkappa and Bhanu of Madras State, and Dr. M. V. Krishna Reddy of Nellore often share the task at the Hospital of tending the sick and the suffering. Dr. S. Lakshmi from Madras, Dr. G. Saraswati from Amalapuram, Dr. P. Sridevi from Tumkur, Dr. H. S. Sarojamma from Bhadravathi, Dr. Kousalya from Cuddalore, and Dr. Krishna Atal from Delhi are helping their sisters with skill and tenderness, whenever they come to Prasanthi Nilayam and stay. The Matron who leads the Nursing Staff Sri. Thankamma is a devotee with years of experience in the hospitals of Mysore.

Above all, this 12-bed Hospital with 100's of outpatients from miles around visiting daily is blessed with the Grace of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, who has come in human Form to heal mankind. No wonder the Hospital has a unique record of cures of obstinate illnesses which have proved the despair of experts. The doctors, the drugs, the surgical equipment, the x-ray... all these are subsidiary here, to the marvellous Grace of Baba, the Divine Physician.

The Secretary of the Hospital Sri B. S. K. Vittala Rao humbly offered reverential Homage to Baba on 26-9-65 and rendered grateful thanks to the doctors and others for the love and care they bestow on all patients.

Prasanthi Nilayam News

- Oct 23: Deepavali: Speech by Principal Dharwadkar Discourse by Baba.
24: Speech by Sri V. Nagaiah ; Discourse by Baba
Nov 7: Arrival at the Nilayam of Sri Savoor, Member, P & T Board Delhi. R. A. Nariman from Bombay and Supreme Court Advocate Venkatavarada Iyengar, from Bangalore.
Arrival of the Maharaja Jamsaheb of Jamnagar H. H. The Rajkumar of Limbdi, H. H. The Maharaja of Jetpur
Nov 8: Arrival of Members of the Kollengode Royal Family.
Nov 12: The District Judge of Chittoor, and the Principal Munsiff of Ongole and the Director, District Gazetteers, Andhra Pradesh arrived.
Nov 13: Hon'ble Justice Sadasivayya, of the High Court of Mysore arrived at the Nilayam.
Nov 14: Baba presided over the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations of the M. G. Municipal Higher Secondary School, Hindupur.

Birthday Celebrations

On account of the Solar Eclipse on 23rd inst., the Celebrations have to start in the late forenoon; hence Bhaktas are informed that there will be no time, this year, for them to offer Garlands to Baba. Last year, as they know, it took nearly 12 continuous hours for this item to be gone through.

"The three Gunas, Satwa Rajas and Tamas, undergo various permutations and combinations and modifications and become manifested as all this Creation, this Universe, this Prakriti. Therefore, this Prakriti is subject to changes; it is not fixed, True. But, the Atma is Chaitanya which is Tejorupam, sheer effulgence; and so, it is not subject to blemishes, or modifications. The body is Prakriti; Buddhi and Manas are also Prakriti; for this reason, they too differ according to the degree of excess or deficiency of one or other of the Gunas.

Satwaguna is steady, pure, unselfish, 'light; so those who have this characteristic will have no wish or want; they will be fit for the knowledge of Atma. Those with Rajoguna will be engaged in acts tarnished with a tinge of ego. They may have the urge to do service to others, but, that, urge will drive them on, to win fame and fame and take pride in their achievements. They will yearn for their own good, along with the good of others. Those who are endowed with Tamoguna are overcome by the darkness of ignorance and so, they grope about, not knowing what is right and what is wrong.

Any one of these three Gunas makes the person unfit for the realisation of the highest Reality, which liberates the individual and merges him in the Universal. Since the person is embedded in Prakriti, he fondly believes himself to be experiencing the Gunas, which form Prakriti. But, this is an illusion. To destroy this illusion, inquiry into the nature and characteristics of the Kshetra or Prakriti has become necessary. For the beginner, the Sadhaka, inquiry into Knowledge and the, Known are essential; but, the Jnani has to pay more, attention to these Gunas. The Known is the Reality, the experience of the Divine Basis of All.

Arjuna listened attentively to all this and at the end, he, asked, "O Lord! What are the qualities that a Jnani should possess?" Krishna replied, "Partha! He must have full 20 virtues in ample measure. You might ask, what they are. I shall tell you about them, listen. But, do not conclude that the goal can be reached, when you have them all. The goal is Immortality, Amritatwam. That can be reached only by Brahma-sakshatkara, experiencing Brahman, as Sarvam Khalvidam, Brahman. When Knowledge is full, the Knower becomes the Known. For this consummation, one has to be purified by virtues. Then, the Known can be experienced and Realisation reached. I shall therefore first tell you about this. Virtue first, then victory. What a splendid path! To talk about Brahman without first ensuring a moral and virtuous life is like desiring a flame, without lamp or wick or oil! Acquire all these three, then, you light and get light. So it is with the light of Brahmajnana, or Realisation of Brahman."

There is one point here which Sadhakas have to note carefully. The lamp the wick and the oil must be proportionate. If the, wick is too big for the lamp or too small, if the oil is too much or too little for the wick, if the lamp is too small or too huge for the oil or wick, the flame will not burn bright, and give light. Clear steady light can be secured only when all three are in proper proportion. The three Gunas too must be in equilibrium, to yield maximum result, the result of Liberation. The three Gunas are bonds; man is bound by them, like a cow whose forelegs are tied together, whose hind legs too are bound together whose neck and horns are bound by a third

bond. The three-fold Gunas are three-fold bonds. How can the poor beast move freely when it is bound so? The Satwa guna is a golden rope the Rajoguna a copper rope and the Tamoguna, an iron rope; all three bind effectively in spite of the difference in the cost of material. As bonds, all three are obstacles to freedom of movement."

Arjuna was eager to know more and he asked Krishna, "O Lord! You said that twenty virtues are essential for becoming entitled to Jnana and for being known as Jnani. Which are they? Please describe them to me in some detail." Krishna said, "Arjuna! I am delighted at your earnestness. Listen.

The first virtue is A-manitwam, Pridelessness, humility. So long as you have Maanam or Pride, you cannot earn Jnanam. Man's behaviour should be like the behaviour of water; whatever colour you pour into water, it absorbs it and it never asserts its own colour. It is humble, without conceit. But, now, the behaviour of man is quite contrary to this. When he does the smallest service or donates the slightest amount he is anxious that many people should know about it. For this, he himself goes about prattling about it or arranges to get it published in some paper. The absence of such pride and ambition is what is recommended as A-manitwam.

Now for the second: A-dambhitwam, vanityless-ness. This is a very great virtue in man. It means the absence of pretence, pompousness, boasting that one is great when one is not, claiming that one has power when one has nothing, that one has authority when one has no such title. Here, readers will note one point. The world today is full of this false pretence, this hypocrisy. Whichever field of activity you watch, whomsoever you observe, you discover this dire defect. The governments of nations are in the hands of people who are pretenders to power and authority and capacity. Those who have no knowledge claim to know everything. Those who have no one to help them at home claim that they have a huge following.

In every activity, this hypocrisy is the very first step. This ruins man in every field, like a pest that destroys the crop. If this is wiped off, the world will be saved from disaster. Pretence will make you lose this world and the next. It is harmful at all times and places. It does not suit ordinary men; how can it then be beneficial to the Sadhaka?

The third virtue is Ahimsa. This also is an important virtue. Himsa is not simply physical, it means even more, the mental pain that is inflicted, the anxiety and worry that are caused to others by your actions and words. If you desist from causing physical pain to others, you cannot claim to have A-himsa. Your activities must not cause pain, must be unselfish; your thoughts words and deeds must all be free from any motive to cause such pain.

Then, we have Kshama as the fourth. This is called Kshanti, as well as Sahana. It means that you should consider as unreal the evil that others do unto you, the loss that you suffer through them, the hatred they evince towards you. Treat these as you treat the mirage. That is to say, you must develop that degree of patience or fortitude. It is not the helpless putting up with the evil that others do because you are powerless to retaliate. It is the expression of the Peace that reigns in the heart, this outer behaviour or Kshanti."

True. Many people put up with the injury that others inflict because they lack physical economic or popular support; their suffering cannot be honoured as real Kshama.

Next, let us consider the fifth: Rjutwam, Straight-forward-ness, Integrity, Sincerity. It means the agreement of action speech and thought; this applies to secular and spiritual activity. This is a facet of the fourth virtue, A-dambhitwam.

The sixth is A-acharyopasana; the reverential service rendered to the spiritual teacher. This will promote affection for the pupil and so he will benefit a great deal. But, the Guru who has no goal will only mislead the disciple into perdition. The Guru must shower Grace on the disciple as freely and as spontaneously as the mother cow feeds the young calf with milk. The teaching of the Guru is the source and sustenance for attaining God and acquiring Liberation.

The seventh virtue is Soucham, or cleanliness—not outer cleanliness merely, but inner cleanliness, more. And what is inner cleanliness? The absence of affection and hatred, of desire and discontent, lust and anger, and the presence of Daivi (good i. e., godly) qualities. Water cleans the body; truth cleans the mind; knowledge cleans the reasoning faculty; the individual is cleaned by penance and discipline.

The eighth virtue is called Sthairyam, steadfastness, fixity of Faith, the absence of fickleness or waywardness. The Sadhaka must hold fast to what he has once fixed his faith upon, as conducive to his spiritual progress. He should not flit from one ideal to another, changing the goal from day to day. This is also referred to as Deeksha. Fickleness is the product of weakness, a weakness that has to be scrupulously avoided.

The ninth in the list is Indriyanigraha: the control of the senses. Be convinced that the senses have to subserve your best interests, not that you should subserve the interests of the senses. Do not be the slave of the senses; make them rather your slaves.

Next: the tenth virtue, Vairagya, detachment, renunciation, loss of appetite for sound touch form taste smell etc. The senses run after these, for, they titillate them and give them temporary joy. But, the senses are not interested in Dharma-artha-kama-moksha of the sublime type. The Atma can be discovered only through the pursuit of the sublime.

The eleventh virtue is Anahamkara, absence of egoism. Egoism is the breeding ground of all vices and faults. The ego-centred individual pays no regard to right and wrong, good and bad, godly or wicked; he does not care for them, nor does he know about them. He is completely ignorant of Dharma and morals. He will not conform to justice. To be devoid of this poisonous quality is to be endowed with Anahamkaram. Egoism is a foe in the guise of a friend.

The next virtue is called: Janma-mrtyu jaraa-vyaadhi-dukha-doshaanudarsanam, which means only this ... the awareness of the inevitable cycle of birth and death, of senility and disease, of grief and evil and other signs of the temporariness of this created world and life in it. Though people see these things happening to them as well as others, they do not investigate the reasons for these and the methods of escaping from them. That is the greatest mystery, the wonder.

If only you go to the root of the problem, you will realise that whatever else you may escape, you cannot escape Death. What man conceives as happiness now is, in reality, only misery in the guise of happiness. So, understand the truth of these things; reflect upon the flaws in the reasoning, which delude you. Then, as a result, detachment is strengthened and through that, you attain Jnana. Therefore, O Arjuna, liberate yourself from Janma (birth) mrtyu (death) jara (senility) vyadhi (illness) and dukha (grief)." Thus spoke Krishna exhorting Arjuna, with a great deal of affection.

Then He spoke of Ashakti, or Anashakti, the withdrawal of desire from objects, the absence of yearning. The greed to possess things that you see is caused by egoism. "I must have this", "I trust be the proud owner of this valuable thing", this is how egoism prompts. It is a strong cord that binds you to objects. Withdraw the mind and treat all as manifestations of the Lord's Glory. Love all things as expressions of His Glory, but, do not delude yourself into the belief that possessing them will make you happy. That is an illusion. Do not dedicate your entire life for their sake; use them for your needs, as and when necessary, that is all. That kind of impulse activating you will be a great handicap in your progress towards liberation. Whatever you may acquire as property will have to be given up some day. You cannot take with you on that last journey even a blade of grass or a pinch of dust. Keep this fact ever before the mind's eye and then, you can realise the Reality: Before one's birth, one has no relationship with this world and its material objects. After death, they and all the relatives disappear, and become non-existent. This sojourn is just a game played in the interval. Getting fascinated with this three-day-fair is foolish, indeed. Desire tarnishes the mind, and makes man unfit for higher pursuits. The Sadhakas who seek Liberation and Realisation must rid themselves of desire, for, like grease, it sticks and is difficult to remove, once it is contacted.

After this, attention has to be paid also to another virtue: Samatwashithi, the state of equanimity, of undisturbed peace during joy and grief, prosperity and adversity, happiness and misery. This is the fifteenth virtue of a Jnani. Being elevated or depressed by success or defeat, profit and loss, honour and dishonour, is an activity that is futile. Accept all equally as from the Grace of God, His Prasada. As you wear shoes to tread over thorny places, or hold an umbrella to escape getting wet in rain or sleep inside a mosquito curtain to escape the stings of insects, so too arm yourself with an unshaken mind that is confident of the Lord's Grace and bear praise or blame defeat or victory, pleasure or pain. To live bravely through life, this Sama-chitta-twam is declared essential.

Next is Bhakti without any other thought or feeling, Ananya-bhakti. When grief overtakes you, you run to God. When Sankata overpowers, you take refuge in the Lord of Venkata. When joy is restored, you throw Him overboard. When you are down with fever and your taste is ruined and your tongue is bitter, you crave for some hot pickle; but, when the fever subsides you are normal again, you do not relish the same pickle. Bhakti is not a temporary salve. It is the unbroken contemplation of God, without any other interposing thought or feeling. Whatever the activity, or recreation or talk, it must be saturated with the Love of God. That is Ananya-bhakti. Thereafter, comes Ekantavasam, dwelling in Solitude. One must be fond of being alone. This does not mean keeping the body alone in some solitary place, far from the haunts of men. There must be solitude and silence in the mind; all its occupants must be forced or persuaded to quit. The mind should be nir-vishaya, contentless, turned away from the objective world.

(To be continued)

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

A Human Tribute From a Grateful Devotee

Twenty third day in November is regarded as the birthday of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. It is only natural that a large number of devotees desire to celebrate the same with silent adoration and visible pleasure. For Him, I venture to suggest that an event of this nature is likely to be trivial in the eternity of a Time and the vastness of Creation.

The first occasion when I had the privilege of close contact with Bhagavan was during the early hours of a night on the sands of the river Chitravati. Moon was shining with all her splendour and Baba drew me into conversing about what scientists generally think of Divinity and of Scriptures. In a long-drawn-out and tiring narration which was mostly by way of self-defence, I mentioned that a distinguished scientist when asked to express his feelings on an important occasion contented himself by quoting the following verse from Gita;

Divi surya sahasrasya bhaved yugapaduthithaa
Yadi bhaassadrse saasyaath bhaaasthasya mahaathanah

That many senior and older men of science believe in God and His ways as far beyond the comprehension of ordinary mortals and their mundane methods; that it is only the half educated that are generally devoid of respect for the large number of things we see in this wide world that science cannot explain and so on. He listened intently, took a handful of sand from the riverbed, produced a printed text of the Gita from within the sand and put it into my hands. He did and said other things on that occasion which I need not recount now. It is enough to say that I was stunned and enthralled beyond all description. I reminded my self that what had happened was something which no science can explain. Was He simply furnishing a practical demonstration in support of my tiring theory?

Many incidents happened thereafter. I had the privilege of participating in devotional festivities and unique occasions, with Baba as the presiding deity. I saw Him whenever he permitted me to do so. He did several things in my presence with the result that after a few years, I concluded that I must not even attempt to explain or unravel what I had seen with my eyes, for I think it is not possible to do so with the help of the usually understood methodology of logic or of science. Neither the language we use nor the techniques we know and adopt are adequate for this purpose. I do not know what conclusion Baba has come to, in regard to my mental thinking. I am afraid I cannot and should not attempt to assess this either.

I have often repeated to myself the following injunctions which are contained in the text which He gave me on that moon-lit night.

"The deeper one's learning is, greater should be his humility. After all, man knows mighty little and may some day learn enough about his own ignorance, that he will be compelled to kneel down and pray."

The Lord's injunction is this: "Perform your actions without egoism, with no attachment for the fruits thereof, in a spirit of dedication to the Lord."

I only pray that He may give me the strength of mind, so as to enable me to do my duty in the above manner and with greater humility, as I grow older and older.

S. Bhagavantham

Baba as I Have Seen

In these troublous times Baba alone can deliver the goods. The whole world is in a ferment. No one knows what the world is going to be. Will aggressive powers come to power? Will the innocent and righteous be saved? Definitely the latter will be saved and an era of prosperity, goodwill and harmony will prevail everywhere. The righteous will sing praises of God. The world will be cleansed of all wickedness as in days of old. The golden age will dawn. What is the proof, one may ask. How can the wickedness be destroyed? Is it possible to destroy the demons of aggression without proper weapons? We Hindus, know that God appeared in the world time and often to destroy wicked demons and exalt the pious and innocent. Durga, another phase of God had actually crushed the Demon of Wickedness, Mahishasura. Nothing is impossible for God. He appeared as Kumara a young boy and destroyed Sura, a great demon who could turn the world this side and that side and who made the Devas tremble and run to the help of the Divine Boy. Kumara destroyed the Sura and his giant brothers. Lord Siva destroyed Tripura-rakshasas who had control over Gold, Silver and Copper, of which they built their forts and fortresses. With His faint smile, Siva destroyed them all. Mahavishnu took several forms and all these ten forms called Dasavataram destroyed the demons of different denominations. Ganapati destroyed Gajamukhasura as easily as a boy would pluck a tender leaf from a plant. Surya, the ever shining Sun removes all poison by His heat. So God can take any form to destroy evil and protect the good, the true and the beautiful. It is not at all difficult for Him.

Now, in India, one of these forms has appeared in Puttaparthi. This form has been visualised by devotees as Ganapati, Kumara, Vishnu, Siva, Kali and as ever resplendent Surya (the Sun). Now this form is called Baba. He is full of 'Prema' or intense love. Baba has come into the world at a time when there is so much of unrest and sorrow. Baba says that He has come to restore Dharma. He has come to destroy Ashanti (restlessness), Akrama (dishonesty), Adharma (wickedness or unrighteousness), Anyaya (injustice) and Anachara (ill-behaviour towards elders, parents, and God and indiscrimination in eating and in other regular activities).

His abode is Prasanthi Nilayam—the glowing goal of suffering humanity, the abode of peace and happiness, the quest of all sages and saints, and the seat of God Himself on earth. I say these things from my own experience and not from hearsay. He cannot be understood by materialists.

Unless one has spiritual vision Baba cannot be known as God. He is Baba to one and all but God to His devotees. Be a devotee and save yourself before long, if not at once.

Dr. K. Vaidyanathan, M. A., Ph. D.

Christ said, "Father, pardon them, for they know not what they do", when He was tortured by crucifixion. "I" and "they" are not different; they are we ourselves, appearing in different roles, with different names and forms. Harp on the difference, it breeds hatred and jealousy; harp on the sameness, love spreads; concord is established.

BABA

Beyond Reason's Limits

"All progress in discovery and invention evolves at last to a fatal result, unless we keep control over it by a corresponding progress in our spirituality," wrote Albert Schweitzer, the Sage of Lambarene, whose ministry on earth ended the other day in Africa. This statement would have been laughed at, in the 19th and the earlier part of the 20th centuries. But the position has been completely and kaleidoscopically changed since 1945. Today the greatest scientists and the fire eating worshippers of endless progress in the West are having second thoughts on the way the world is going, or rather made to go, in the wake of advancing science and technology. Progress, and for that matter knowledge itself; is no substitute for virtue and happiness is not a necessary outcome of progress. Man today is caught up in a situation where he has become the greatest threat to himself. He encounters himself everywhere; not only in the world outside, where the spectre of Malthus stares at him in towns and cities, villages and highways, but also in the mental sphere and in the world of thought. Having posed Man and Nature as Metaphysical opposites and after pushing their investigation of material phenomena to the farthest limit, scientists have learnt to their dismay that it is not the secrets of Nature that they are discovering, but only the bidden aspects of their own concepts and postulates. "..... it turns out that the constituents of matter, originally thought to be the last objective reality, can no longer be observed by us *per se*, that they defy any objective fixation in time and space, that basically it is only our knowledge of these particles that we can make the subject of our research." (Professor Werner Heisenberg, Munich)

In the face of these experiences it is but natural that mankind should lose faith in the efficacy of the rational approach, in finding a solution to the riddle of existence. For a whole century and more the world had pinned its hope on the capacity of the discursive, analytical intellect to blaze the straight and shining road that will take it from sorrow to happiness and from darkness to the land of light and freedom; but that hope has not been fulfilled. If anything the riddle has become wrapped in an enigma and with it the tension and tragedy of life as experienced by the individual human being have reached unbearable proportions. Even the universally acclaimed benefits that modern technological civilization has vouchsafed to humanity are being viewed in a new light. It is realized that most of them are benefits only in a superficial and short-term evaluation and that they have invariably a darker side and are not, at any rate, unmixed blessings. Even the undis-

puted advances in medicine and public health, which have done so much for the alleviation of human suffering, are not free from this blemish. The perils of the "population bomb", far more frightening than any nuclear weapon, are the direct result of these advances. And so, as our tiny planet twirls on its tilted axis, we poor creatures stand confounded by all that we see and the tyranny of time grinds on relentlessly. We do not know what is going to happen tomorrow and driven by this consuming anxiety we become frantic and stoop to adopt any means, however ignoble and unrighteous, that would ensure for us a measure of safety for the future. All this deluge of greed and selfishness that we see today is the result of this anxiety.

It now looks as though the answers to the questions that matter most to us can be found only beyond reason's limits, if they can be found at all. I would argue that many of our problems today arise because of our attempts to short-circuit the long and painful process of gaining real knowledge and of adjusting that knowledge to the human situation. It is here that religion sums to be staging a come-back, not in the form of rituals and superstition, nor of the church militant, but as pure spirituality. The conviction is growing among thinking men all over the world that our highest aspirations can be fulfilled and the tensions of everyday life resolved, only by the apprehension, intuitive in character, of the vast body of mystery which lies behind the phenomenal world and of which we are ourselves a part. This mystery is function of the spiritual manifold, embedded in the godhead which is the Ultimate Reality. It is being increasingly realised that Man in the course of this pilgrimage through life on earth can, if he wills, gain insight into this Reality and gain contact with it by spiritual endeavour. It is, no doubt, recognized that the transfiguring illumination that results from this mystical process is primarily a private and personal experience that cannot be verified by the test of public demonstration and experiment. But who is interested in this public test? In the last analysis all experience is private and personal and the ultimate solution of the mystery of existence can be sought only within the sanctum sanctorum of the individual's soul.

It is in the context of this world-crisis that the Manifestation at Puttaparthi has to be viewed and its overwhelming significance grasped. It is in the fitness of things that it should have occurred in India. This ancient land has witnessed recurrent epiphanies of the spirit in human form and its very soil is hallowed by the immemorial tradition. They have appeared when we needed them most and, who knows, we may be in such a situation at the moment. We see the decline of Dharma on a colossal scale and life, bereft of meaning and noble motivations, has become steeped in iniquity and illusion. It may be that the sufferings that result from all this are the price we have to pay for receiving grace and winning the enlightenment for which we aspire and which alone, we are convinced, would redeem the world. In the presence that pervades Prasanthi Nilayam and which we can perceive from the far corners of the earth too, the deafness of our soul is cured and the heavenly harmony is again audible to the ear of faith. The humblest life is lifted to the skies and acquires an aura of eternity. It is enabled to make sense of the chaos of experience and invest a divine order, meaning and a measure of permanence on the incomprehensible flux of perpetual perishing which we call time. All sorrows disappear and the soul finds its refuge which is Sat, Chit and Ananda. We repeat with Bhartruhari.

Dikkaalaadyanavacchinnaananda Chinmatra Murthaye
Svaalubhutyekamaanaaya Namah Saantaaya Tejase

Faith in Providence

There was a princess who was very pious, immersed in the contemplation of the glory of God; her father sought in all the quarters for a suitable partner for her, but, could not find one. Of course, many princes competed for her hand, but, they were all worldly minded and fond of royal luxury and the father knew that his daughter will not be happy with such a partner. At last, the king heard of a young mendicant, a devoted servant of the Lord, whose face shone with inner joy.

When the king met him he pleaded that he was too poor to confer any happiness on the princess, that he lived in a little hut, that he had barely three paise with him and that he would not receive anything from others. The king was overjoyed at his piety and the marriage was celebrated with three paise only, to the satisfaction of the groom and the bride and the king.

When the princess went into the hut to share her life with the mendicant, she was surprised to find on an earthen plate a bit of bread! She asked her husband why it was kept there and he promptly replied, "I felt it could be put to use today and so, I kept it on that plate yesterday." On hearing this, the princess said, "Then, I have no place in this hut with you. I shall return to the palace where I came from." The husband was very much confused at her behaviour, which appeared strange. He asked why the bit of bread should so upset her. She replied, "That bit of bread proves that your faith in providence is not rooted deep; the Lord who provided for you so far, will He not feed for you this day too? Why this doubt, this hesitation about His Mercy, His Love and His Care? Either this bit of bread that is kept for another day must go or I must go out of this hut," she said.

The husband had his eyes opened by her remarks; he caught hold of her hands and pleaded her to remain as his Guru, teaching him lessons on Faith and Devotion. He thanked her for her advice and promised to mend his ways. They lived together happily, encouraging each other in the path of Sadhana, until they realised the limitless Glory of God of which they were themselves minute expressions.

From Baba's Discourse

The Mantle of the God

With the forthcoming day of joy, the anniversary of the coming to earth of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the mind flies to India. Through the open window, the noise of sirens, crowds, shrieks of car brakes, and fire engines of the big city of New York is heard, and I think of Prasanthi Nilayam

with its quietness; then, a peace enfolds me with delight. Tuning into its spiritual beauty, I am reminded that God is Ever-Present.

Prasanthi Nilayam, dedicated to the Lord's work, is a symbol to which the whole world can look, in these times of fear and chaos. As the air-raid-testing siren fills the air with its unearthly screeching sound, it brings home more fully the frailty of this life which can be snuffed out in a fraction of a second. It makes us think carefully whether we have lived as fully as possible the Life loaned us by God, to realise Him and in so doing realise ourselves. How much time has been wasted in foolish unnecessary actions, only leading to blind alleys, cul-de-sacs, that never go anywhere. All this makes us even more aware of the preciousness of Life, and spurs us on to realise the goal, through obeying the laws of God placed before us so lovingly and patiently by Sathya Sai Baba over and over again in His interviews, writings and lectures. He has not demanded great things of us, knowing our human frailties, but has simply requested us to choose one law, one sloka or one commandment and live it fully in this life, knowing full well, that small beginnings will lead to broad avenues of Truth.

Looking out of the window, I see in place of the of the rolling hills of Puttaparthi, only man-made peaks or skyscrapers, buildings towering above man as high as 102 storeys. In place of the gentle Chitravati River, with its white sands, there, far below, are the streets of New York with the river of Humanity rushing past.

Though the outer difference, between New York and Puttaparthi is so apparent, still that mystical power, the unfathomable, which we call Sai Baba fills this western world with its Splendour. His power or Activity is not limited by Time or Distance, by East or West, by Race, Colour or Creed, He is Ever-Present, Everywhere filling all space. This awareness of the Absolute, is as Beautiful as is the lovable Krishna, whose Spirit can be felt. For has not Baba promised us all, "you think of me and I shall think of you?"

One cannot look anywhere and not be reminded of His Omniscience, His Omnipresence and Omnipotence made manifest as man's world. "Purushottamya Namah", we are as nothing beside that effulgent power that is filling all space, including us. Yes, His miracle-of-being, is going on secretly and sacredly in and around us. We have but to look and see.

At this special time of the year when we commemorate Sathya Sai Baba's birthday, (though in reality the Lord has never been born), we should scrutinize ourselves and see what gift we have to offer Him. Would not the gift of loving our neighbour, holding back a hasty word, controlling anger, denying self, be wonderful offerings for our Lord on this Holyday. This day which reminds us that He so loved humanity he came to earth and took form. These gifts are within our means and far better than garlands which fade. How joyous would be our Baba, if every one who steps before Him would silently make a vow to control the lower self and offer that as a Spiritual Garland. Let us take an inventory of ourselves and with true dedication offer something worthwhile to our Lord.

Everyone who has been touched by the Spiritual Splendour of Baba at Prasanthi Nilayam who has lived there, visited there, or had Baba's Darshan has the responsibility of the Lord's Mantle descending upon His shoulders, for it is our duty to live to the best of our ability the teachings

and live the way he taught, so that His message can spread throughout all nations and peace and harmony rule the world, and Shanti and Anandam fill the hearts of all mankind.

Hilda Charlton, New York

Sai Baba is My Harbour

My Guru, Sai Baba, I can't say I've not "seen,"
For His Presence is all around me; 'tis no dream.

His Beautiful Lessons so Deep, Loud and Clear—
Perhaps a Discourse I'm Blessed to Hear

On being but the Instrument in the Hands of the Lord.
Or on Viveka, Vichakshana Vairagyam! (I'm awed,)

Cross vast Continents and Heaving Seas,
Words of Wisdom pour with Loving Ease!

'Twas one quiet morn, my eyes were aglow,
For I was hearing His story, on "shadow"

Yes, from Puttaparthi, in distant India,
Sambhashanas I enjoy here in sunny California.

And when I hear those Silvern bells sing
I open my ears for jiva-full words to ring,

Now my full heart can be likened to a cool Harbour,
Awaiting the Easterly breeze to waft in My Guru,
SATHYA SAI BABA

—Charles Penn

The Day of Thanksgiving

The 23rd day of November is celebrated by all Bhaktas as a day of Thanksgiving, for the unique good fortune of their being alive, when the Lord has come in Human form as Sathya Sai Baba. The incense of adoration encircles the globe that day, for He is worshipped in a thousand shrines in every continent, from pacific Palisades in California to Atlantic City. From London Prague Crimea to Casablanca Kampala Nairobi and Aden, Kuala Lumpur Singapore Hong Kong Tokyo and Perth. We have received descriptions of the devotion with which the advent of Baba is

gratefully remembered by the members of the dozens of Sathya Sai Study Circles in Gujarat, and Bombay, the many Sathya Sai Bhakta Mandalis, Sathya Sai Bhajan Madalis, Sathya Sai Seva Samitis, Sathya Sai Nilayams and Sathya Sai Nivasams now enthusiastically enthusing people all over the county. They celebrated the birthday with the reading and exposition of the sacred texts, ritual worship, akhanda bhajan, the feeding of the poor, the portrait of Baba being taken in procession through the town, individual garlanding of the portrait by all, lectures on the teachings of Baba, etc. This spontaneous demonstration of devotion and fervour evoked interest all over the country; periodicals in all languages published special articles on Baba and His uniqueness among spiritual leaders.

Prasanthi Nilayam was filled to overflowing, long before the 23rd November, the Birthday Festival, for dozens of special buses, scores of cars, and fleets of omnibuses and loaded trains brought devotees, eager to share in the unique experience of the Darshan of Baba from places as far as Kampala Aden Hong Kong and Fiji, and from all the States of India from the Cape to the Himalayas.

Speaking before the hoisting of the Prasanthi Flag on the Nilayam, Baba referred to the Solar Eclipse that happened on that New Moon Day. He said that His work would suffer no eclipse and that He had come to remove the Darkness that had affected the Sun (meaning the Vision of man, or his intelligence which trains that vision) and the Moon, (meaning the Manas or the mind or the wishing feeling and imagining faculty of man), the effulgence of the Lord cannot suffer diminution, once it illumines the heart of man.

It was announced at the Flag Hoisting Ceremony that the 1966 Model Car that was being sent as Birthday Offering by the Bhaktas of America was being shipped that very day—an announcement that was confirmed by a telegram received an hour *later*! Needless to say, the news linked the hearts of East and West in a common love and loyalty to the majesty of Baba.

Since there was no time for the programmes of anointment and Garlanding, Baba conferred the rare honours on a handful of old couples from Lucknow, Navasri, Bombay Venkatagiri and Mangalore. He then moved along the long lines of happy devotees, who numbered about 20 thousands, giving each with His own hand “laddu” as His Birthday Prasadam, as well as the coveted chance to touch His Feet. It took more than five hours for Baba to finish this Gracious Round of Love.

In the morning Baba gave the Darshan at the newly constructed “Santhi Vedika”, a Mandapam which reminded people of the description of the Audience Hall of Sri Krishna as given in the Bhagavata, the Hall named Sudarsana. Brahmāsri Kuppa Bairagi Sastry spoke on the role of Baba as the Restorer of Dharma in a world that is fast declining in morals and religion. Baba took as the main point of His Discourse for the day, the Sanathana ideal of “Lokaassamasthaah sukhino bhavanthu,” which every Hindu places before himself while engaged in prayer. He analysed the ideal and showed how it can be practised only by the realisation of the Atmic unity of all beings. He pointed out that egoism, fanaticism and jingoism are all manifestations of hatred caused by the sense of difference between one being and another, which itself is due to either faultily understanding or willful closure of eyes. Just as all limbs and organs are interconnected by consciousness, so that when thorn pricks the foot, the eyes, start

shedding tears, so too, all countries of the world are interconnected. So that no country or community can suffer pain, without affecting all others. That is why the Indian prayed, “make all the countries, all the worlds, happy, contented and prosperous.” Baba then dwelt on the secrets of such happiness and contentment and explained them with many an unforgettable parable, stories and simile.

On the 24th, Brahamasari Ramsarana spoke on the avatars, their characteristics and modus operandi, as described in the ancient scriptures and demonstrated to the most learned as well as the least. The fact of the Divine Advent that is Baba. Baba dwelt on the same theme and said that just as the mother stoops low to take the baby on to her shoulder, God too has to come down as an avatar (incarnation) to save humanity from downfall; just as an aeroplane lands at some places to take on those who have purchased tickets and entitling them to board it, God too has ‘come down’ (avatar means coming down) in order to give the chance of service, of contact, of personal worship, of obedience, to those who have won these by their meritorious deeds.

That night, Baba gave Darshan to all in the flower, bedecked Jhoola, which was arranged in the exquisitely built Yajna Vedika. It was tastefully decorated and illumined for the occasion; the reliefs that have been carved therein by the master artistes, reliefs of Gitopdesha etc. stood out in their loveliness, drawing out the devotion of all. ‘Clarinet Everest’ Sri A. K. C. Natarajan, of Trichinopoly gave a recital which was very highly appreciated.

On the 25th Baba gave another Divine Discourse in which He exhorted all to adopt a life of intense Sadhana, so that they may manifest the Divinity latent in them. Baba then presented to the vast gathering of Bhaktas the group of devoted artists who, under their Guru, Sri Annamalai Achari, have made the Yajna Vedika Mantapam a rare artistic gem, with lovely friezes of Githopadesam, Ramayanam etc. Baba ‘created’ a necklace with a pendant having His own picture and Himself put it on the neck of the aged master-crafts-man. Later, the students of the Sathya Sai Vedasastra Pathashala staged the musical play “Sati Sakku Bai” written by Baba. Baba Himself had lovingly blessed each boy with His personal care during the rehearsals and so the boys were able to bring out the profound meanings and significances of the dialogues songs and situations when they acted the roles. The drama stirred the minds of the thousands who witnessed it and made them aware of the overwhelming Love of God. After the play, a film of the Dasara Festivities (1965) at Prasanthi Nilayam was shown; technique and coverage made the film highly informative and inspiring.

Prayer is a very forceful weapon, much more effective than any bomb. The word is an effective instrument; it can move mountains. In these critical times, every one of you should pray deeply and sincerely, for the peace and prosperity of Bharat mata.

BABA

Siva And Sivashakti

Sivakumar, aged 14 years, son of Sri Subramanian, of the Military Engineering Stores at Secunderabad stays with his uncle. Dr. M D. V. Raman at Ramanagar, Dombivli, Bombay. He was attending school and playing with his friends, until about three years ago, when he was taken seriously ill and the doctors declared him to be suffering from endocarditis (heart trouble).

On 20th November last, Siva developed cerebral meningitis, followed by partial paralysis of the left side. He lost sight and speech. The boy was in great misery, on account of severe pain in the head, almost every half hour. Siva's father arrived in haste from Secunderabad.

On Tuesday, 30th November, the boy became unconscious, after repeated attacks, every ten or fifteen minutes. At 11-45 A.M. cyanosis intervened. Doctors gave him only a few hours more of life. He had turned blue. The family waited grimly for the worst.

About 12 noon, people around him saw that Siva was talking to 'himself' by signs! He set up in bed and indicated by signs that he wanted a bath and some Vibhuti. The family members around him were dazed with amazement; but, they carried him to the bathroom and gave him a bath and applied Vibhuti, that was brought just that morning by a friend.

Then, he asked by signs for the copy of the Illustrated Weekly of India of the 21st November, and when this was given, he opened the pages and held in front of him, the portrait of Sathya Sai Baba and meditated on it for some time. While doing so, he was rubbing his left leg and left hand with his right hand. Then, suddenly, to the wonder of all, Siva stood up and walked into the Puja room, faltering a little carrying the Weekly with him! He kept it, with Baba's portrait page open, near the altar and sat, meditating for over two hours. He then WALKED OUT OF THE PUJA ROOM without any assistance and sat in a chair.

He SPOKE; he explained that Bhagavan Sathya Sai Baba had come and told him that he would not die. Baba told him that he would give him both sight and speech, when he came to see Him during His visit to Bombay, shortly, but, Siva said, he had insisted that sight and speech should be given immediately or else he would not take any food, for, he wanted to continue his studies; Bhagavan granted his prayer, he said.

Now, Sivakumar walks, talks, and sees, like a completely normal boy. Great indeed is his fortune, for, he has experienced Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's Mahima and Karuna, at such young age itself.

S. Sumithra Rao, Bombay 3-12-65

Prasanthi Nilayam News

Nov 23:	Birthday of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba Flag Hoisting at Prasanthi Nilayam Evening: Discourses.
Nov 24:	Uyyalothsavam

Arrival of the Maharani of Kolhapur
Nov 25: Drama: Sati Sakkubai, by Students of the Vedasastrapatasala
Nov 27: Baba presided over the School Day of the Z.P.H.School, Dharmavaram
Nov 29 & 30: pictorial Exhibition of Baba's message at Chembur.
Dec 2: Arrival of the Maharaja and Maharani of Korea (Saurashtra) and the Maharani of Wadhwal.
Dec 6: Departure of Baba from Prasanthi Nilayam to Brindavanam Whitefield.
Dec 10: Baba lives for Madras.
Dec 12 & 13 & 14: Anniversary Celebration of the all India Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha. Madras. Baba's Discourses and speeches by Pundits.