

The eighteenth virtue which helps to promote Jnana is mentioned as, absence of interest in the company of men, that is to say, absence of the desire to mix with` people engrossed in affairs that concern the objective world. One can attain equanimity even in the midst of wild animals; but, it is difficult to win it while among worldly minded men. Sadhana will be affected by the company one keeps. Good men keep you good; bad men drag you away into badness.

Of course it is hard to find out who are good and who are bad and then settle among the good, So, it is advisable to avoid common folk and concentrate on Sadhana. The human mind is like iron; if it falls on mud, it rusts and disintegrates. If it falls into fire, it loses dross and becomes pure. Therefore, if man joins the company of Jnanis it is better than being in solitude. Note how Narada who was the son of a maid became a Rishi because he fell in the company of good men; Rathnakara who was a cruel hunter got the company of the Seven Rishis and so he was transformed into the First among Poets, the Adikavi. Evil company is highly detrimental. A red-hot iron ball is capable of doing more damage than a flame of fire; a sinful man is more to be avoided than sin itself. Sadhakas have to be very vigilant about the company they keep.

The nineteenth virtue is the `awareness of the distinction between Atma and Anatma.' Fix your consciousness always on the Atmic Reality and discard the body and the senses as unreal and impermanent. Atma is the eternal and so establish yourself only in that and not in the transient non-Atmic illusions or objects. Life is a struggle to achieve victory over the illusion which haunts yore; I am the eternal Atma in you and in all. So, fix the mind on Me and engage yourself in the struggle, confident of victory.

The twentieth and the last qualification one has to earn is, "Thathwam nadaisanam", the vision of the true nature of "tatt" or "that" the universal principle of which the particular is but a shadow. It means that the Sadhaka should have a keen desire to visualise Me universal.

Of the above-mentioned twenty, if honest efforts are made to earn even two or three, the rest will come naturally to the seeker. No special effort is needed to earn them. As progress is made on the path, one acquires not only the twenty, but, even a large number of more virtues. The twenty are mentioned here because they are the outstanding ones, that is all. Based on these virtues, Sadhana takes one easily to the goal. That is why Krishna emphasised these.

Equipped with these, one can realise the Self; there need be no doubt on that. For, they lead to the knowledge that the body, the senses, the intelligence, the inner consciousness—all are affiliated to the Prakriti aspect. And, He who is distinct from all this is the Purusha. Purusha is He who is aware of the Kshetra the Kshetrajna. When one is able to distinguish between Purusha and Prakriti or which is the same thing, between Kshetra and Kshetrajna, he becomes the witness and is free from all touch of want or wish.

This awareness of one being just the witness of everything is the secret of self-realisation. Self-realisation is either the knowledge that `I am the truth of Me' or "I have known Myself" or "All

are one Atma" or "I have experienced that the individual and the universal are not distinct". This is what every person has to discover for himself; mere asceticism without this is sheer waste of time and energy. Man is not a mere animal. He has in him a spark of the Divine and he should not allow it to be quenched dead.

Why, even the senses operate for the reason that they are prompted by the presence of Atma. When the sun rises, birds take to wing, flowers bloom, the human community starts its varied activities. The sun does not directly engage in any of these: it is the prompter, that is all. The sun is not the cause; He is just the activator, the witness, the onlooker. He is above and beyond all this. He is not bound or based on man or beast or bird or flower.

Birds fly in the sky but they do not leave any trace behind, of their path of flight. So too, however many sensory impressions fly through the inner sky of the heart, no impression should be left thereon. The heart is not affected by their flying through.

But, man sees only the superstructure, not the basis. In the flower garland, no one observes the string that keeps the flowers together, the existence of the string can be known only by investigation and inquiry. The basis is the string; the flowers depend upon it and hang together on account of it, as a garland.

To understand this better, take another instance. Pots, pans, plates and pails are all made of clay; but though there is clay in all these, clay is only clay. It is not pot pan plate and pail. So too in the Atma, which is the basis, there are no Gunas (or, characteristics, like pot pan plate or pail); but, in the Gunas, the Atma exists as Guna-swarupa, it is the Atma which is mistaken as Gunas, because it is conceived as limited and as with name and form. The Atma is the only reality that persists through all names and forms, as the clay which is the only thing in all the pots and pans. By this kind of inquiry, the conviction that the basis and the substance of everything is Atma or Kshetrajna or Parabrahmam gets strengthened.

Then, Krishna was asked by Arjuna, thus: "It is indeed very difficult to know that basic Atma, that inner reality of all things. He is everywhere but is nowhere visible! He is the inner core of all, but, cannot be contacted at all! What is the cause of this mystery"?

Krishna replied: "Arjuna! You have not understood yet. The Atma is subtler than the subtlest and so it is difficult to cognise it. You know the five elements, don't you? Earth Water Fire Wind and Sky? Of these, each subsequent element is subtler than the previous one. Earth has five qualities, Sound Touch Form Taste and Smell; Water has all these, except smell. Fire has only three Sound Touch and Form; Wind has only two qualities, Sound and Touch and the last one, sky has only sound. That is why each of these is subtler than the previous one and also more widely spread. The sky is everywhere, penetrating in and through all, because it has only one characteristic. How much more subtle must be the Atma, which has no qualities or characteristics! Imagine how much more immanent and universal it must be! Those who are objectively minded cannot grasp this phenomenon; only the subjective minded can have the solution.

This faith can come only to those who can reason things out. It is a fatal thrust on those who bark, in season and out of season, that God cannot be immanent in everything because he is not

to be perceived at all. They do not believe that God is above and beyond the trivial qualities with which they seek to measure Him. It is a pity, indeed. They tend to be as low as their thoughts. That is the inexorable law. God is as near to you, as you are to Him; if you keep afar, He too remains afar.

There are some fine examples of this truth in the Puranas. Hiranyakasipu sought God in all things and came to the conclusion that He is nowhere. Prahlada on the other hand, believed that He can be found wherever He is sought and so, He appeared from out of the impenetrably hard iron pillar itself! Prahlada was close to God and so God was close to him.

The cow carries the sacred sustaining milk in its own udder; but, unaware of this, it runs after the water in which rice has been washed! So too man is unaware of Madhava who is in him as his own Atma nor does he make an effort to discover Him, who is his own reality, He runs after the much inferior joy obtainable from the fleeting objects by means of his defective and deceptive senses. What colossal ignorance! To revel in multiplicity is ignorance; to visualise the Unity is the sign of Wisdom, Jnana Savam or "those who are dead to reality" alone sees this as "many". Only "Savam" or the Divine sees the seeming many as "One". What is called Jneyam, Atma, Kshetrajna, and Parabrahmam is that "One" only. This was taught to Arjuna so that he might experience the Bliss thereof.

Readers! As the rivers have the sea as their goal, Jivas have Brahmam as their goal. Permanent joy can never be received by the "conscious" Jiva from "material" objects. Moksha is the acquisition of permanent joy; it is also called the attainment of Brahmam. Fixed exclusive devotion to Godhead can come only to those who have no attachment to the wild phantasmagoria of name and form, which is called the "World". That alone can win Atmajnana. The world is the instrument for the attainment of renunciation; that is the reason why it is so tempting and so treacherous. He is the real Vedantin who sees the world as an instrument for his escape from its coils.

Usually, the word "oordhwa" is taken to mean "above" "high" etc. But, if you consider the world to be a tree, then, it has its roots in Brahmam, that is the roots are above and the branches are below! This was taught to Arjuna by Krishna thus: "The tree of Samsara or Life is a very peculiar one. It is quite distinct from the trees of the world. The trees that you see in the world have their branches above and roots below. The Aswattha tree of Samsara however has roots above and branches below. It is a topsy-turvy tree."

Arjuna intercepted with a question. "How did it get the name, Aswattha? It means a banyan tree, is it not? Why was the tree of moving life, called so? Why was it not called by some other name?" A strange name for a strange tree! "Listen. Aswattha means Anitya, impermanent, transient; it also means the "banyan tree." Its flowers and fruits are no good for smelling or for eating. However, its leaves will be ceaselessly quivering in the wind. So it is called also Chaladala, meaning "quivering leaves". Worldly objects too are ever wavering, unsteady, changing positions ever. In order to make people understand this truth and strive to overcome it, it is called "Aswattha." This disquisition is to make man develop the higher vision and yearn for steady faith in Brahmam.

The objective world can be truly understood only by two types of examination: the outer and the inner. There is a reasoning that binds and a reasoning that liberates. He who sees the world as world sees wrong; he who sees it as Paramatma sees right. The world is the effect; it has a cause and it cannot be different from the cause. It is just a mutation of Brahman, which constitutes it. The millions of beings are the branches twigs and leaves; the seed is Brahman, in which all the tree is subsumed and summarised. He who knows this knows the Vedas.

(To be continued)

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

It is all His Grace

I was returning from a Bank Meeting at Madras on 7-2-65, by the Bombay Mail, having reserved a berth in the I class, up to Tadpatri, where I proposed to alight. I boarded the compartment at 10 P. M. at the Central Station, and when the train started, I prepared my bed and moved towards the lavatory preparatory to lying down for sleep. The compartment had a corridor into which the rooms opened and it had just one entrance door which took one into the corridor itself. That door was open. When I emerged from the lavatory, the train had passed Basin Bridge, where it did not halt. Somehow it happened that, instead of going through the corridor into my room, I went towards the open door and, so, I fell from the running train!

I felt as if some one suddenly pulled me towards him. That was all. I was not aware of anything that happened later. I only felt that I was seated, the very next moment, on a soft place. I wondered why I was there, whether it was all a dream.

Really speaking, I had fallen over from the Bombay Mail. The train had sped along. It was pitch dark all round. The station was about two furlongs away. It was a double track line, and trains were steaming up and down. If I had landed a few inches this side or that, I would have been crushed to death. Or I might easily have fallen under the bridge if the accident had happened a minute earlier.

I had suffered no injury. I felt it as a miracle worked by God that even my eyeglasses were unbroken my wristwatch was ticking as usual and the purse in my pocket was there itself. I must have sat in that position for about twenty minutes, when I was overcome by confusion as to where I was, why I was there, whither I have to go from there etc. So, I just called out loudly into the dark night. But, who was there to answer me? A light engine neared me and passed over the rails without heeding me.

Perhaps, Sathya Sai, the Saviour of the Distressed heard me; for, within a few minutes, the Station Master of Basin Bridge and a Police Constable came to where I was. From the ticket I had, they recognized me as a passenger from the Bombay Mail and they removed me to the General Hospital, Madras. Meanwhile, the Manager of my Bank hurried to my bedside, on receipt of a telephone call. The doctors examined me and declared that no damage had been done. They were surprised that a man who had fallen from a running train had suffered no injury at all.

and they attributed it to nothing less than a Divine Miracle. The Manager sent telegrams to my sons and to my house at Anantapur.

Meanwhile, at the same time, when every one at my house at Anantapur was asleep, a brilliant effulgence engulfed the entire house. My wife awoke and wondered whether it was a real experience or just a dream. She concluded it must be the glory and the grace of Sai; she laid herself down again, remembering the name of Sathya Sai Baba and went to sleep.

Since 1944, when Sathya Sai Baba first visited my house, such miraculous incidents happen off and on in my place and so, my wife lead no doubt in her mind that it was a sign given by Baba Himself. It was a natural and automatic inference for her.

When morning came, the telegram from Madras arrived. Immediately, one of my sons started for Madras and my wife left towards Puttaparthi with my grandson, to see Baba! As soon as Baba saw her, He said, "Instead of going to Madras, you have come here, is it? There is nothing the matter with your husband, do not worry. I have seen to that. Do you know what would have happened to him if I were not there?" He then told her in great detail all that had happened to me. He also declared that the light which engulfed the Anantapur house the previous night was His war of intimating to them the fact of His protecting Presence.

My son took me from Madras to Kurnool, where another of my sons is a doctor; I was with him far a week. I had informed the Railway authorities that my bed, box etc were in that First class compartment and, information was received at Kurnool that they were all intact at Madras and that I could take them back from them.

I and my family firmly believe that it was Sri Sathya Sai Baba who miraculously saved me from this calamity. Whatever others may believe or mot believe, we are his devotees for ever.

Thotapalli Chidambariah Lawyer
Anantapur

To the Rotarians

Baba addressed the Rotarians of Hindupur at their Club on 14-11-65 at 3-30 P. M. This is a summary of His valuable Discourse:

The Rotarians of India have a greater responsibility, for, this country is from very ancient times, famous as Karmabhumi, as Yogabhumi, and as Tyagabhumi—the land of dedicated activity, of self-control, of renunciation. The lesson that Sanathana Dharma has been emphasising is the unity of all created beings, of all sections of the human community. When man is suffering from acute stomach pain, his eyes exude tears, for, there is one consciousness activating all parts of the body. So too, the whole world is one body and pain anywhere must naturally affect other parts. You use the word, Anter-jateeya for International. Yes. There is an inter-connection, an anther or inner Motivator which moves every limb and organ, not only in the body. which is the

dwelling place of the individual, but, in the world which is the temple of God. Basing your enthusiasm for service on this awareness of unity, you can make your international ideal firmer.

Service can be made effective only when, the feelings "I" and "Mine" disappear. When you consider the body as the reality and its upkeep and well-being as the be-all and end-all, then, egoism will gain strength. Sadhana is needed for the gradual removal of this egoism. Institutions like this Club give opportunities for selfless work and thus help in the conquest of egoism. I asked your President what the ideal of the Rotary International was; he told me it was, in one word, Paropakaram, doing good to others, helping others. I would like to remind you that there are no "Pare" or 'others'; the `para' people whom you help are your own.

“Vaasudevasarvamidam”, say the Sastras; "All this is Vaasudeva". All are waves rising and falling on the self-same ocean. Isavaasyamidam... all this is Easwara, God. Therefore, who helps whom? Who receives help? All help is to oneself, from oneself. All are short-lived flowers, like this garland you offered Me when I came among you, strung on one indestructible Brahman thread Establish this Bhava-advaitam firmly in your mind; it will make your service more enjoyable and more beneficial. It is much better than imagining that help is being doled to lesser men and poorer folk, by people who are superior. But, remember it is Bhava-advaitam that you should cultivate; not Karma-advaitam. Do not treat all as equal; respect the limitations of their individuality, their Upadhi. Have the, same Prema towards all; but, serve each according to the need and the capacity. The knife should not be given into the hands of a mad man; nor is it wise to give gold to a child, though the Atmatattwam in both are the same, as in all others.

The aim, of Service should be to strengthen the faith of each in his unshakeable Atmic reality. That is the highest Upakaram; make a man aware of the source of undying Bliss in him; then, he is rendered strong, courageous, undefeatable. Just as you tone up declining digestion before you, give a man regular food, tone up, self-respect, self-knowledge, self-control, before conferring objective benefits, which might be misused or neglected. Do not feed the roots of attachment to worldly comforts, more than absolutely necessary for physical upkeep. They lead only to anxiety and worry: Emphasise the Universal Atmatattwam, encourage prayer, meditation, quiet contemplation, repetition of the Name of the Lord; encourage silence and solitude for the sake of introspection. Mental equanimity cannot be earned through a higher standard of life; the rich, the healthy, the strong, the powerful—all are afflicted with anxiety and worry; they have no peace. Peace comes from within; it has to be won through detachment, through discrimination. Try to foster these qualities among the people. Heart must meet heart, so that service easy be welcomed. Speak soft and sweet; speak kindly and with no pretence. Keep away from impure listening, impure acts, impure words, impure thoughts. Make all these wholesome and holy. You are all well educated men experienced in various fields of life equipped with various skills and capabilities animated by enthusiasm for service, encouraged to do good to the community, by brothers all over the world. These are great assets and I am sure you will feel the sorrow of others as your own, and strive to remove it, and the happiness of others as your own and strive to share it.

I am glad you gave Me this chance to share with you your Anandam and I am glad I got this chance to share My Anandam with you.

The Bag Full of Books

I regularly visit the local temple of Shirdi Sai Baba, every Thursday evening for Arati. On 4th November 1965, while at the temple, some one noticed some Hindi booklets on Sathya Sai Baba as well as some pictures of His which I had in my bag and asked for them. I had with me about 5 or 6 photographs of Bhagavan and about 6 booklets in Hindi and 6 or 7 pamphlets about Him in English. I gave him one picture and one Hindi booklet; but it was noticed by others and when they saw the picture and booklet, their eagerness increased and after Arati, almost all who were present (more than a hundred) surrounded me and asked for them. They wanted Hindi books only. I was at a loss what to do. I was about to tell them that I would bring more next week; but, when I put my hand into the bag for taking out the few copies I had, something wonderful had happened. I was surprised to find that a big bundle of Hindi books and another of photographs were there inside. I took them out and began distributing them, one each, to the gathering. There were enough to go round; there was not even a single picture or booklet extra. Every one there got both, one picture and one Hindi book. The wonder is, the number of English pamphlets which were not in demand remained the same, about 6 copies only.

I have been so thrilled by this miracle of Baba that I am communicating it to you so that other devotees may share the joy.

K. E. Kulkarni Poona 9-11-65

You say, "I have got fever". But, where did you get it from? Kasi? Gaya? It came from within you, not from anywhere outside you. When you have developed jaundice, everything appears yellow. Egoism too is a jaundice, which warps your vision and makes you see things wrong. It is due to inner impurity, inner defects. Get rid of that egoism and all will be Prema, Shanti, Unity, One.

BABA

"Baba is God"

The Lady with the Rosary:

It was a lovely cool morning in Prasanthi Nilayam, in the second week of May 1964. The time was about 6-40 A. M. The sun had risen and devotees were slowly proceeding towards Prasanthi Hall, one by one, for the morning Bhajan. Some were reverentially looking up to the balcony with folded hands, yearning written on their faces, for the sight of God they loved, and looked up to for help in their distress. A few were circumambulating Prasanthi Nilayam.

I was standing under a tree on the left side of the Yoga Kamala Circle. That was my first trip to Puttaparthi. My mind which was 'educated' was the mind of an enquirer. Devotion was not one of its attributes then. I watched keenly all those that happened to be there at that time. While I stood watching and wondering, two feet away from me quietly came and stood a graceful lady, tall, well built, aged about seventy. She was very fair with lovely blue eyes. Her grey hair was

tidily knotted at the back. Dressed in a spotless white sari and blouse, she was standing erect with a rosary of black beads in her right hand Her palms had crossed to touch her shoulders. Her expression of serene calmness, of the peace that reigned on that wrinkled yet beautiful and dignified face has been deeply engraved on my heart. Her thin lips—reddish, like sprouts—were whispering in a hushed tone "Baba is God; Baba is God!"

The Train of Thoughts

And a train of thoughts started in my doubting mind. For the first time I realised the necessity of fully understanding and determining what the concept of God meant. I felt that more `opinions' of great men should be gathered about what was styled "Divinity." Is God an infinitely strong Being who judges mankind, who has created men and matter, who punishes the wicked and rewards the good or is He some one sitting on a throne in Heaven as is propounded by Christianity and Islam to judge whether beings are to be sent to Heaven or Hell at the end of a certain period or at the end of eternity?" These thoughts also reminded me of my son's question at Kath-Godam when he had the first sight of the majestic Himalayas at the age of five "Who made this mountain, mum?" he asked. "God" was my automatic answer. "From where did He bring the cement and stones to make this mountain?" was his next query. Finding it impossible to satisfy his curiosity the only effort that could be made was to divert his attention to a beautiful stream which was flowing close by.

When we speak of A or B, I thought, it is not his body that we usually refer to. When a certain A or B is a good or a bad man, in our opinion, it is the `feeling and thinking being' behind the body of A or B that is referred to, in short, it is a part of his inner consciousness. So when one speaks of Baba as God it has reference not to His body but to His Consciousness, to the Inner Reality of which the outer is only a tabernacle.

In fact, all those who are not animals or "animal like" are aware of some power manifesting through not only every animate being but also through the in-animate molecules which sustain this visible World. They worship this power in awe and are ever anxious to try to understand the mystery which underlies this great universe. We Hindus are fortunate to inherit our knowledge through Upanishads and other Scriptures which make it clear that every manifested molecule is not without its "Atom" or `Atman', and thus indirectly teach us to see God in everything, may it be, inanimate stone or lump of earth. Hindu religion is not a collection of dogmas or tenets dictated by a single prophet. It is a philosophy of life, a history of experiments in Consciousness performed by High Minds. They have not forced us to accept the results reached by them, but have left it to posterity to examine their findings, to judge and to realise the truth.

I was fortunate in the next few days to get an interview with Baba. The first time He granted it, He precisely put down the definition of a Hindu. He said "He is a Hindu who believes in (i) the theory of Karma, (ii) the theory of reincarnation, and (iii) the theory of Avatar."

Thus we Hindus who are born and bred in this philosophy should not indeed find it difficult to understand the idea of God, which is Divine Consciousness descending on earth and taking a human form. We can then well believe that this power manifested itself through a pillar of stone for Prahlada. There are innumerable references to Avatars in the Tantra, Mantra, and Shakta books and Puranas in Sanskrit literature. Indeed there is not a single word in Sanskrit, that artistic

yet scientifically meticulous language, for God which cannot be etymologically explained, and therefore even satisfies the faculty of 'Reason' in a human being. The most common words out of these are Bhagavan or Deva. Bhagavan is one who possesses "Bhaga". In fact it is a degree which adorned many a great sage, e.g. Bhagavan Panini, or Bhagavan Vyasa. Bhaga is the collective mastery of six qualifications as it were: Aishwarya, Virya, Yash, Shri, Dhyana and Vairagya Deva is derived from the root Div to shine which connotes self-luminance and consequently absence of darkness, shade or illusion, that is, Maya.

Avatar is derived from the root "Tri" with prefix "Ava" which means descent. Bhagavad-Gita says "Yadayadahi Dharmasya glanirbhavati Bharata, Abhyuthanamadharm asya tadatmanam, srijamyaham." Apart from the authority of Bhagavad-Gita a modern English Yogi can be profitably quoted here: "Sometimes an advanced God-like Being from another planet has deliberately reincarnated himself on our earth so as to help its benighted humanity, before, during and after a critical time: this happens when human character sinks into deep materialism and has to endure its attendant sufferings. Such an act is necessarily wrapped in a mantle of mystery."

The Mystery that is Baba

The mystery that is Baba, or that was Srikrishna or Jesus Christ is before the World to perceive, examine, and see for itself. The Being who is a perfect Being can thus consciously manifest itself through a human form. The Yogi further says, "It represents a tremendous sacrifice, a veritable crucifixion of consciousness". If the sacrifice of limiting his own Consciousness and taking a body out of compassion for humanity is to be understood, Baba's own statement in Sathya Sai Speaks Vol. 1 can serve an excellent purpose. "The Lord cannot come down with His Mahashakti unimpaired. He has to come with diminished splendour and limited effulgence so that He can become the object of Bhakti and of dedicated service".

But to realise the truth of this statement or the statements in Bhagavad-Gita, a human being must possess some faculty higher than reason, the sixth sense, or faith. Recently an article written by a famous Western scientist appeared in a local newspaper explaining how a human being must develop intuition in order to rise higher than more intellect.

Turn Within

The flights of Reason and intellect are indeed majestic and the altitude that they can achieve is amply evident from the supersonic jets and atom bombs. But as man cannot live by bread alone he can neither live "without", only. There comes a moment in some one of his numerous lives when he yearns to turn 'within' and instead of 'expanse', he longs for depth. It is a turn-back of Consciousness from the empirical existence towards the source of all. Freud, Jung and other psychologists of the West have evidenced this yearning for turning within. Jacob has put forward this idea in his book "Western Psychiatry and Hindu Sadhana". Many Western Scholars and scientists have independently experimented in the laboratory of their 'within' and have expounded their own findings. Their attitude towards the subject of their investigation and discovery is strictly 'scientific' in the modern sense of the term. P. D. Auspinsky, Gurdjiff and several other known and unknown European Yogis are referred to here.

All these psychological and para-psychological experiments were performed by the great Upanishadic sages of this ancient land and their findings are noted in the scriptures. Unfortunately the knowledge remained locked us from us for a long period of two centuries of foreign rule. As Baba says "The aim and goal of the present educational system is Bhukti Enjoyment or earning of livelihood and not Bhakti or Mukti "Devotion" or "Salvation". While the knowledge of words and of material science way also given a place of due honour this information-cum-knowledge was put in the category of "Apara Vidya" and thus Swetaketu who knew not the Para vidya, was challenged by his father, when he came home after a 24 years course of Apara Vidya, whether he knew "that, by knowing which one knows all". "Sa vidya ya vimuktaye" proclaim the ancients.

A great set-back

Thus the children of this great land have suffered a great setback on the path of evolution. We have started walking hand in hand with westerners. It was not until the beginning of this century that westerners turned within and began to see that education was much more than inculcating habits of thought and behavior in a child. An example would be of interest here. Sir P. Nün in his book "Principles of Education" has devoted a whole chapter on Nature and Nurture, the share of heredity and environment in the building up of human personality. Yet the question of heredity was itself so puzzling. Experiments of glandular extracts and temperamental observation must necessarily have taken many words, and much time—while I as a student, wondered, whether Bhagavad-Gita which is supposed to be composed about 3000 years ago had not solved the question completely when it said "Tatra tam Buddhi samyogam labhate poorvadehikam."

All these experiments are performed scientifically by the sages but the difficulty is that one has to turn inward to test their authenticity. If one has not got the capacity of experimenting, "Faith" is of great help. It is a very arduous and difficult path; as Kathopanishad says "the razor's edge is sharp and difficult to cross; wise men say it is difficult to tread upon this path."

At this point, faith is of very great help. Faith is the companion of intuition and is placed beyond reason which in its turn has to be used to pierce intellect to go to the path of Intuition. Katha speaking about Nachiketas says "Shradha tam Avivesha' That is a reference to the moment when intuition is unfolded. Whether this is purely the outcome of the grace of God, or the ripening of that layer of consciousness as a result of 'Sanskaras,' from the past is for the Master to say. But there is some ultra voluntary or superamental condition involved in such a moment. This is the humble reading of the present writer from a sentence in the same "Upanishad", "Atma eva vrinute."

Reason and Tolerance

All this leads to only one conclusion that each individual has for himself a unique and personal point of consciousness and has it strictly reserved for himself in the infinitely great expanse of this comp. Thus all points of view Pantheism, Monotheism, Atheism as also the principles of Charvakas, Naiyayikas, Buddhists, Muslims and Christians were all generously accepted and tolerated by Hindu religion. Religion is a matter of inner consciousness of a man about the relationship between him and the ultimate reality. Any religion based on Reason cannot but point to tolerance and thus Baba always asks people to leave others to themselves and never ridicule those who think or feel differently.

Thousands of fortunate men and women have come under the protective wings of Baba. Many of them have a personal story to tell about their experience of "miraculous" that has come their way. To them Baba has come a veritable Divine Consciousness limited by the frame of a body made up of the five elements. It requires a divine eye to realise His Divinity, even as intellect is required to appreciate intellectual feats. Yet, reason can guide us to find out some fraction of the mystery that is Baba. If omnipotence, omnipresence omniscience are taken to be divine attributes, even, the few incidents described in Baba's life-story can give proof of Baba having them. Sathya, Dharma, Shanti and Prema are Baba's principles and Baba's Nature. His universal love is to be witnessed in order to be believed. Mahatma Gandhi in his article "God is" describes God as 'the greatest democrat'; Baba also receives all alike, rich and poor. Indeed, of the thousands that go to Puttapparthi each one feels Baba loves him the best and cares for him the most. He showers His grace on all alike as the sun sheds its light equally on all. However, even as we admit the light to the extent we keep the door open, our own individual distance from Him varies.

Physics and Metaphysics

Little do we realise that Baba is master of Metaphysics and Alchemy. It will be a great moment for the modern world when Physics joins hands with metaphysics. Yet the addicts of Physics are cynical and skeptical. This article is not a challenge; it is a humble request to go beyond mere intellect which can only analyse what science calls "matter." Despite all his discoveries, the scientist has found it impossible to substitute even two centimeters of this vast cosmos. Baba is the embodiment of love, peace and happiness and urges all to acquire them. He extols our ancient scriptures, profusely quotes from them while He speaks but warns us, that at the most, they are useful only as maps or guidebooks. They cannot substitute experience and in order to achieve it one must perform sadhana He awakens us spiritually and makes us realise our own divine nature.

The Avatar

It is easy for some to believe in Krishna as an Avatar because he lived in the hoary past, but they cannot believe in Baba as He came in 1926 and as they can see him in 1966 with their material eyes. If Baba is an "Avatar" why does He not solve the problems of India, some people ask; God solves all problems of well being, but as Baba explained to the present writer quoting the couplet from the Bhagavad-Gita "Ananyaschintayanto mam ye Janah paryupasate, tesham nityabhiyuktanam yogakshemam vabamyaham." We are apt to forget the condition precedent for the solution of problems, of contemplating upon God, and that too undeviatedly.

In fact such questions arise from the illiberal and illogical belief that God acts capriciously towards mankind, distributing favours to some and special misfortunes to others, or that God is temperamental and a contradictory mixture of likes and dislikes. Every human being is only a manifestation of consciousness at that particular point; so, no two human beings are at the same point; therefore they differ in thought, feeling, and action. To some Baba is God, but to others Baba is a mystery. Sadhana and disciplined penance are required to understand even a fraction of that mystery. Baba often says, "India has lost the spirit of Sadhana, and therefore her children are immersed in poverty and suffer starvation. To day the cry is "Savoham" "I am dead", instead of "Sivoham" "I am Siva" that once resounded in this great land.

The Double Spectrum

Those who have faith in the manifestation of Divine Consciousness through human form, necessarily believe in the infinite and the immutable. It has no form of its own but it can and does make token gestures to aspirants to indicate its existence and these gestures may take a personal form. It is true that such personal appearances are transient images. It is the mental attitude of the seeker which is of the utmost importance. Says Sri Bhagavad-Gita—"Ye Yatha man prapadyanto Tanstathniwa Bhajamyaham".

Mind alone is thus the double spectrum which gives the owner the view of the empirical World as well as the inner reality Chhandogya Upanishad says 'Mano Brahma iti upaseeta."

When Baba sanctified this great city of Bombay last June, His visit invoked different reactions. One went so far as to warn the "intellectuals of Maharashtra" to 'awake' and not follow like blind sheep this 'man of miracles'! Yet, strange is the diversity in this unity! The same incident struck a different note in thousands of others: "Baba is God" "Baba is God!"

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Bombay

The Churning of the Ocean

The story of the churning of the Ocean of Milk as given in the Bhagavata is, as Baba has often told us, a parable about the churning of the mind of man, by the forces of good and evil and the creation of the nectar of universal Prema therefrom.

The story has a number of other lessons as well, as Baba points out. Durvasa cursed the Devas and Indra that they would lose their Divinity because Indra had turned too proud; he treated even God irreverently! Pride goeth before the Fall.

The very God whom he had insulted had to come to the rescue; He did it, out of His Infinite Mercy. He could have restored the splendour they had lost, by His mere Will; but, He chose to advise them to churn the Ocean, recover Nectar and drink it, for, He loved to demonstrate His Glory.

That Glory was demonstrated in the truce He brought about between the Devas and the Asuras, in the safe transport of the Mandara mountain, in the allotment of positions for the two parties who held the serpent Vasuki which was the rope round the churning rod and in the Form of the Tortoise which He adopted: in order that the Mandara mountain be placed on its broad back, so that it may not sink during the churning operations. The Bhagavata says that God blessed the serpent Vasuki with the Tamoguna which He has subsumed within Himself. This made the serpent forget; the agony of being wound round the mountain and dragged by the Devas and Asuras who held the Tail and the Head. He filled the Asuras with the Rajoguna, which animated them and filled them with energy. He granted the Devas, who had lost the splendour of divinity

as a result of the curse of the Sage, the Satwaguna which is the highest reward; with this, they got the confidence and courage to share in the colossal task of the Churning of the Ocean of milk. God also had to press down the Mandara mountain with "His thousand hands" so that when it revolved fast, it was not lifted, out of the Milk up into the sky. Thus, the Churning became from beginning, to end, in all its aspects, with all its instruments and materials—suffused and saturated with God, His Grace, His Glory and His Leela.

When the churning proceeded, the very first emergence was of Poison, which spread like a hot simoom over all the-quarters. God, in the Form of Siva, was overcome with Pity and He collected it all in His Palm and swallowed it, for only He could survive its deadly consequence. A variety of other invaluable Articles and Beings emerged later, culminating in the appearance of the Goddess of Wealth and Welfare, Mahalakshmi Herself, who joined Her Spouse, the Goal of all Efforts, God Himself.

Amrita, or Nectar, for which the long travail was undergone by the Devas, did not appear for long and they lost all hope. But, God put faith in them and Himself visibly held the serpent-rope; then, the Divine Dhanvantari, the Deity presiding over the Curative Faculty rose from the waves with a casket of the Precious Drug.

The wicked and greedy Asuras lifted the Casket from his grasp and ran away with it, plunging the Devas in inconsolable grief. But, God's Will prevailed. He assured them that He would win it back and bestow it only on them. He assumed the form of an enticing entrancing Damsel and with sweet words and captivating looks, recovered the Casket and started distributing the Nectar, after getting an assurance from the Asuras that they would not dispute His freedom to give it to whomsoever He liked. The sensuous ungodly Asuras did not deserve Amrita; so, they did not get it. The Devas would make the best use of the Vitality that it would grant; so, they shared it.

The lesson of the story is: Churn the Mind with Faith as the Rod and the Senses as the Rope; cast off the poison; detach yourself from all sensory objects; and, revel in your native Glory, which is Immortality, Amrita.

Why Fear? He is Here!

I was called out to search for two missing Air Force pilots who were overdue near San Diego, California. Our trip for our small plane was over mountains and our search was confined to the desert. We took off from a small airfield named National City. We were just airborne, when oil came against our window in the front! The top of the oil chamber had not been put on. We returned safe, cleaned the engine etc. and one hour later took off. Later returning over treacherous mountains we ran into a storm of hail; the plane, which I was flying, accelerated its speed far above normal. BUT during all this, I felt no anxiety, no fear, for I had Sai Baba's Presence with me.

Charles Penn

Baba at Madras

The First Anniversary Celebrations of the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha (Madras) were held at then spacious grounds of the bungalow of the Rajasaheb of Venkatagiri on 12, 13 and 14th December last, in the immediate Presence of Bhagavan Himself. Justice P. Ramakrishna Iyer I.C.S presided over the gathering on the 12th, Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, M.A., Ph D, on the 13th and Justice K. S. Venkataraman I.C.S. on the 14th. Learned Pundits, who are members of the Vidwanmahasabha, spoke on the message of the Vedas and Sastras. Cr. P. K. Sundaram, M. A., Ph. D., Sri la Sri Dharmapuri Adheenam Sri Somasundaram Thambiran and Justice K. S. Ramamurthy addressed the gatherings on spiritual subjects. Bhagavan gave Darshan every day and blessed the thousands present with His Divine Discourses. On the 16th, Baba addressed a vast gathering of about 20 thousands and' exhorted them to cleanse the mind by means of Namasmarana.

Swami Chinmayanandaji, who was at Madras in connection with the Gita Yajna, called upon Baba and had long talks with Him. The Swami invited Baba to meet the workers of the Chinmaya Mission and Baba graciously agreed. Baba as reverentially welcomed there and He gave a valuable discourse on methods of spiritual uplift. Baba also met and blessed workers of the Ramanasram and of the Ramakrishna Mission, Madras. Baba graced the homes of Hon'ble Ministers, Sri R. Venkataraman, Sri Jothi Venkatachalam and Sri Mannadiar, at Madras. When He graced "Sankara Yihar" the residence of Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, He discoursed for some time on the implications of Advaita experience.

Baba was for two days at Venkatagiri with the Raja Saheb. He reached Brindavan on the 30th. On New Year Day He gave Darshan to thousands there. Hon'ble Ministers Sri B. D. Jatti and R. M. Patil as well as Justices Gopivallabha Iyengar and Sadasiviah had the opportunity of interviews with Baba during his stay. On 3rd Jan. Baba graced the residence of the Maharana the ex-Prime Minister of Nepal as well as of the Elayaraja of Travancore, at Bangalore, where Air Vice Marshal S. N. Goyal also had the opportunity of Sambhashan with Him.

Baba returned to Prasanthi Nilayam on 4th January.

"Krishna! You say that those who recognise the world as mere world cannot claim to know the Vedas; they must recognise it as God, Paramatma. The world is an effect; so, it cannot be different from the Cause. How is this possible? The world that is seen by us is subject to growth and decay. God or Paramatma is, on the other hand, eternal, true, unaffected by change. There can be no affinity between water and fire is it not? How can these two be one? Please tell me; I shall be most happy to hear you" said Arjuna.

"Well, Arjuna! In the cognisable world, every single thing displays its characteristic, Guna. The Guna depends upon the owner, the possessor. There is a basis, an Adhara, for the characteristics possessed by every thing and being in the World. That Adhara is the Atma. Fix your attention on the unchanging Basis—not on the fluctuating manifestations. Or else, you flounder in the flux. Just as the seed is the basis for the trunk boughs branches twigs leaves and flowers of a tree, the Prakriti or Prapancha or world is the tree that emanates from the seed, Atma; Prapancha is the permutation and combination of the five elements which are latent in the basis, the Atma. Consider the Atma, which is the base, as essential, for it is as its manifestation, that the world is expressed. He who has grasped this truth through steady discipline deserves the name, Vedavid, be who has mastered the Vedas. But, without deep inquiry, without discriminating about the real and the unreal, if one mistakes the seen alone to be the lasting, and argues so, he is losing his way. How can he reach the goal? How can he attain the reality? The yearning to know this Reality comes of Daivi sampathi, God-ward attributes. The Aasuri sampathi is the opposite tendency, which makes a man argue that he has known when he has not, which keeps him away from all attempts to know, which induces him to establish untruth as truth."

As soon as the Lord finished saying this, Arjuna raised his head in astonishment and said. 'Gopala! You were declaring so far that the Atma is the basis for all characteristics and for all beings; that is to say You were declaring that You were that Basis. Meanwhile, you have started talking about the two distinct natures, Daivisampathi and Aasurisampathi! I am getting confused. I am at a loss to decide which to accept and which to reject.'

"Arjuna! Your question is even stranger. You say that I never speak a word that has no meaning or do a deed, that has no significance; yet you worry over the problem which among my statements you have to accept and which you have to reject! This is senseless anxiety and hesitation. My dear brother-in-law, the Devas and the Asuras are not two separate distinct groups; they are so divided on the basis of the distinction in characteristics Well. The characteristics or Gunas are artificial; they are not of the, essence of consciousness I have already told you about them. The potter makes pots pans and plates. These latter are not essentially parts of the clay out of which they were shaped. The pot pan and plate are artificial forms of the clay. The names too are artificial; these names and forms are the Gunas or characteristics. The substance or Adhara or basis is clay; the shapes-names-forms, the manifestation, the expressions are pots pans and plates. Clay is natural pots pans and plates are artificial. Take it that the clay, the basic the Sahaja, is My swa-rupa, reality. In the names-forms, the expressions, the pots etc are not in Me; but, I am, in them. I have no Gunas but I am in the gunas, note this. Therefore, do

not try to keep clay and pots apart, as two distinct entities. That cannot be correct. It is not possible either."

"Krishna! Tell me, what is the relationship between your Swabhava Reality Truth and the Swarupa of Prakriti the objective world?"

"I have told you already that the Five Elements, Earth Water Fire Air and Sky are My Swabhava, My Attributes. What is this objective world except the combination of the Five Elements? What else can you call it?"

"Krishna! without the Five, nothing can exist in this world, is it not? Then, how can I deny them? Existence is bound with them."

When you accept the five elements, you have to agree to the five-fold proliferation of each element, making in all 25 tattwas or principles. Only four elements, Earth Water Fire and Air are evident and perceptible; but, Ether or Sky is the basis for all. So too, Manas Buddhi Chittam Ahamkaram are all four cognised by experience, but, the Antahkarana which is their base can only be inferred. All things of which we are aware are but manifestations of a Thing, of which we are unaware. They derive their strength and support from the Unseen. That Unseen Basis of which you are unaware is I Myself, the Atma. All are based on Me.

That which is *based* is subject to change: growth decline and modification. But, the base or Adhara should not therefore be taken as subject to change. For example, consider the moon and its reflection in water. The image of the moon in the water is not steady; it shakes and quivers. It is the water that shakes and quivers, not the moon above. Ignorant people who are like children infer that the moon is itself shaking. The transference of the characteristics of the Aadheya on the Aadhara is the fundamental Aasuric quality. The recognition of the eternality and truth of the Aadhara even in the Aadheya—that is the real Daivi sampath, God directed nature."

Arjuna listened intently and with steady attention, to all this. Then he queried: "Madhava! You said that it is the inherent quality of nature that distinguishes these two. Which qualities make for Asuric and which for Daivi natures? Please clarify." Krishna replied: "Arjuna! I am ever willing to clarify. I only need listeners who are steady and intent." Hear this with unwavering attention: (1) Fearlessness (2) Purity of emotions (3) Awareness of the unity of all creation (4) Charity (5) Control of the senses (6) Sacrifice (7) Study (8) Asceticism (9) Straightforwardness (10) Non-violence (11) Integrity (12) Equanimity, absence of anger or resentment (13) Detachment (14) Inner peace (15) Refraining from scandal-mongering and talking ill of others (16) Sympathy (17) Absence of greed (18) Sweetness and softness of speech (19) Fear of adharmic acts (20) Absence of fluctuation in the mind (21) Courage during disaster, Patience and Fortitude (22) Steadiness (23) Cleanliness (24) Harmlessness (25) Humility: these twenty five holy qualities are the traits of Daivi sampath, the Divine endowment.

Pride, pomp, vanity anger harshness and absence of discrimination are the components of the Aasuric endowment of man. Persons having these qualities are infused with the Aasuric character. Though for all outward appearance they may be humans, they do not deserve that

name. Those who have the aforesaid qualities are known as men with divine parts; those who have the Asuric attributes, are known as Danava-manavas, demonic humans.

Some men esteem themselves as part-divine but, have they all the attributes that should characterise them? or have they at least Daya (Sympathy) Dharma (Morality) Paropakara (Service of others) and Santham (Equanimity)? If they have these at least in a small measure, they can be regarded as divine. Instead, if the full battery of Asuric equipment is evident in them, how can their declaration be taken at its face value? It is sheer vanity to pretend so or claim as such. Vanity and pomp can never be classed as divine they are unquestionably demonic.

Each one can easily analyse himself and decide to which class he belongs. The class is not decided by physical appearance, possessions, status or authority, for example, consider Ravana. He had the human form, he was an Emperor, he was greater than Kubera the Lord of Wealth; but, can he be considered part-divine for these reasons? No. He is declared a demon, on the basis of the Gunas he had.

Three qualities form the fundamental basis of all Asuric or demonic natures. They are Kama Krodha and Lobha, Lust Anger and Greed. They destroy the self and foster the demon in man. They have to be overwhelmed and overcome by the divine qualities of Vairagyam, Santham and Tyagam, Detachment equanimity and Renunciation. They are the warriors to rely on, in this fight. Foster and encourage these warriors and they will, in a trice, wipe out the forces of demonic influence. Any trace of the foes, Kama Krodha and Lobha, left unsuppressed anywhere is a potential danger; so they must be reduced to ashes. That leads to real success to the struggle for the goal.

Desires and attachments are as roots to the tree of life. When the roots are cut asunder, the tree dies; the rate of decline depends upon the speed and effectiveness of the cutting asunder. It will keep sprouting even if a single root is intact. It will not go dry or die. Remove every single root; then the tree perishes and becomes deadwood. The boast of men that they have destroyed all roots is vain if the tree is green and growing! so too, the Maya that has possessed the Jivi will perish in proportion to the uprooting of Desire, the desire that binds.

Some engage themselves in Dhyana, after reducing, to some extent only, a few urges and desires. They do not achieve full concentration. Nor are they tossed by uncontrolled agitations. They are caught in the intermediate level What is the reason for this state of things? Full concentration can come only from full control of desire. Failure to effect full concentration is the result of not fully overcoming desire.

Hence, it is declared that Kama Krodha and Lobha are demons that harass man. You may say that demons possess fearful and ugly forms.

But, it is not a calamity to have ugly faces or frightful forms. At the worst, he may be called 'repulsive' that is all. It is the repulsive character, the ugly nature that marks the calamity. A person may be beautiful in appearance; he may have a parrot-like chatter that is sweet to the ear; but, for these reasons, he can not be regarded as divinely endowed, born with Divine Parts, Daiva-amsa. If demonic nature simmers in them, even their physical beauty and sweetness of

voice cannot entitle them for Divinity. The words that emanate from them are vulgarised into hammer-strokes and dagger-thrusts ! Thus, Asurisampath and Daivisampath are related to the qualities that compose the nature and behaviour of the individual and not to the physical form and appearance.

(To be continued)

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

An empty iron box gets value when it contains jewels and valuables; then, it is carefully guarded. The body too is honoured when it contains the jewel of an awakened consciousness and the valuables called virtues.

BABA

A Garland of Sai Rama Nama

On His birthday (1964) Baba received garlands of flowers from and distributed Asheervadam and sweets to no less than ten thousand devotees, the whole event lasting about ten hours. I took my seat close to ten in the morning at the furthest end of the huge auditorium from where Baba was seated on the dais. Although I felt an urge to approach Him with an offering on this occasion, the floral tribute did not appeal to me. Long before I met Baba, I had read about the greatness of Namasmarana, but was never attracted by it. Baba, as you are well aware, dealt with Namasmarana several times during His public discourses. After listening to Him, not long before this occasion, I took to mental Namasmarana, which appeared easiest for me just out of curiosity. The Nama of my choice was Sai Rama. On the spot, I decided to offer Him the garland of Sai Rama Nama which I considered as a recent gift from Him to me. I was conscious that it was beyond my capacity to offer an unbroken garland of Nama, as a consequence of intermittent diversion of my attention.

But, my resolution to offer the garland, even if it were a multi-knotted one, remained unshaken. While persisting in my effort, I was moving forward along with others in spurts towards the dais. At one time, this movement came to a halt when Baba started receiving garlands from ladies. It was then I got completely immersed in Namasmarana and the outside world faded away, followed by the disappearance of even Nama.

A general forward movement brought back my consciousness of the environment and I found that I was seated far behind the group with whom I was moving along and Baba was again receiving garlands from our side. As I moved forward I noticed that, instead of feeling any stiffness, which might be expected to result from being seated in a single posture for a long time I felt extraordinarily light and my body appeared to be a glowing system of fluid. I could twist my limbs, fairly hefty ones, as if those were boneless. A pleasant feeling pervaded my being and there was a longing for the continuity of the whole affair. At one time, a prayer arose in my mind that I should be able to offer my Pranams to Baba, with Sai Rama Nama in my heart.

Close to five in the afternoon, my turn came to get up and proceeded towards the dais. Somehow, I forgot all about Namasmarana at that time and I became curious to know whether Baba was feeling tired after seven hours of continuous strain; when His Face became visible, I found Him as fresh as ever. Then came the moment to approach Him.

I did it oblivious of everything and placed my forehead on the bed of flowers in front of Him. And there appeared to me, inside, Rama Nama which had no end. On raising my head, I saw the Laddu rolling out of His Hand on to my involuntarily extended palm.

I turned and blindly walked out of the auditorium with tears in my eyes and fulfillment in my head. I felt that thousand of devotees in general had enjoyed this fulfillment, each to his own way on that day.

D. K. BANERJEE

Truth or God can flash only in a mind clear of blemish. Envy is the foulest of blemishes. Vanity, envy, egoism—these three are kin. They cut at the root of man's progress. To feel proud that you are a Bhakta, that you are nearing God, is also a blot. Though you may be a mountain, you must feel you are a mound; you should not pretend to be a mountain.

BABA

Holy Sivaratri

(From the Skand is Purana)

Long long ago, there lived a huntsman in a thick forest. He lived on the wild animals he killed by the skilful use of his bow. One day, he wended his way to a village on the outskirts of the jungle to repay a loan he had taken from the money-lender. It was Sivaratri Day and the man had gone to the Siva Temple where the huntman sought him out. Incidentally, he too had the Darsan of the Lord's Image and he heard the songs in praise of the Lord. But, the money-lender refused to accept the money that day, since it was a holy day which he had decided to spend in the Temple itself. It was evening by the time he returned hungry and tired, to his hut. Unknowingly, he had observed the Sivaratri Fast! Finding his wife and children exhausted through hunger, he set out at dusk to bring home some animal for food. He had to wander far, but had no success.

At last, spying a small water-hole, he climbed a bilva-tree on its edge, waiting some animal that might chance to come to slake thirst. He had sharp eyes, but to help him see, he plucked off the boughs and leaves of that sacred tree; they fell on a Siva Linga underneath! What a piece of luck, to visit a Siva Temple and to fast and now, to place bilva leaves on a Siva Linga!

When the first quarter of the holy night was drawing to a close, a fat grown up deer came slowly to the water-hole. The huntsman set his aim, but, he was surprised to hear the deer pray to him! His heart had softened a bit as a result of the happenings above mentioned. So he listened without anger. "O merciful man, I am enceinte; I am already feeling the pains; allow me to go

into my herd and I shall come back to this very place, after entrusting the baby to some sisier's care, so that you can kill me and feed your fill". How could the huntsman believe her words? She was obviously trying to escape his arrow. So, he asked her, "How can I trust you and let you go? Whoever will come towards death after escaping it?" Then, the deer said, "Listen, I shall take an oath, for there is nothing higher than the plighted word. If I do not return as promised, way I suffer like the Brahmin who does not perform Sandhya, the person who derides the Vedas, who barter his Vedic scholarship, the man of crooked mind, the creator of village factions, the thief who robs others, the man who defames the goof, who ill treats his parents, who resumes what he has once given, who revels in carrying a swollen head, who has foul habits, the slave of his senses, the person who bears false witness against the innocent, who twists and turns the meaning of scriptural texts, the self-centred fellow who eats a good meal while his wife and children have no share in it, the poisonous man who wounds with sharp abuse, the usurer who fattens on another's misery, and all such who practise unrighteous acts. May I suffer the agony into which these fall, if I do not come to be killed by you, when dawn breaks" she said.

The huntsman allowed it to go unharmed. He heard distant sounds of conches blown in the Siva Temple of the villages on the edge of the jungle. He felt a warmth within himself. He plucked a few leaves more he kept vigil, lest another deer comes and goes unnoticed.

Towards the end of the second quarter of the night another deer came down to the water and the huntsman strung his bow. She spoke sweetly in a plaintive voice "Listen to me for a moment, dear huntsman! You must have killed already my sister who is pregnant and who usually comes to drink water at this place; she started earlier than I did. Tell me the truth: has she met with death at your hands?" The huntsman replied that he had allowed her to go and return for being killed, under strict oath. My wife and children are dying through hunger and I cannot dally any longer. Get ready to meet your end " said the huntsman, in evident hurry to go home with his kill.

The deer did not agree. "Another deer, fatter and sleeker is coming along behind me; it will be here any moment. You can kill it but please release me on oath. I shall bid farewell to my husband and return at dawn." "Declare it on oath" said the man, whose heart melted at her plight. "May I suffer the calamities that visa the four castes when they overstep the limits of conduct prescribed for them" she declared and left.

The third quarter of the sacred night drew towards its end. He spent it in vigil, listening to temple bells and dropping bilva leaves. He was being transmuted internally by the declarations and oaths of the doers. Suddenly, a deer came into view in the starry light. When he aimed his deadly arrow, it said, "Stay! You have killed my two consorts and yet need me?" The man said, "No; I let them go; they come at dawn, if what they swore is true". "I too shall come at dawn for, we have, children and they have to be entrusted to kinsmen in the herd . . I shall take an oath: May I get on my head the suffering that is reserved for the wife who cheats the husband, the son who cheats the parents, the servant who cheats the master, the pupil who cheats the teacher, the friend who cheats another, and the lord who cheats his dependent." The huntsman felt that the oath was sufficiently binding. "If I fail to return at dawn" the deer continued, "may I suffer the sorrow of the sinner who willfully damages the bund of a tank, of a Vaishnava who slanders a worshipper of Siva, of a Saivite who slanders a devotee of Vishnu." So, the man let her go, for he was sure a

person who takes such terrible oaths will certainly keep his word. The deer stayed for some more time and took a few more oaths, in order to instill greater confidence. "May I, if I do not keep my word, suffer the grief of the sinner who sleeps even after sunrise, who recites the four Vedas wrong, who betrays trust, who ridicules the sick the defectives, the maimed and the poor, who do not worship the Lord on such holy days as Sivaratri and Krishnashtami."

The fourth quarter too came and was about to end. He continued with the involuntary vigil, puja and smarana, which millions voluntarily do that night. The clouds on the eastern horizon were fringed with silver splendour. A fourth deer appeared with a baby deer skipping behind. When the huntsman fitted his arrow to the bow, she pleaded, "Is it moral to kill a mother, with a suckling child? Stay, I shall give this kid to be nursed by some sister and then I shall come back." "Are you too saying it on oath?" asked the man. "May I suffer the torture reserved for those who refuse to help others when they have the chance and the resources, who inflict pain on others, if I break my word" the deer declared and left, with the child.

The oaths made by the deer made a profound effect on the mind of the huntsman; it softened his heart and elevated his outlook. He became a moral being, a Satwic Personality.

In a few minutes, all the four deer presented themselves under the bilva tree, by the side of the Sivalinga, for being killed. "Kill me first; then, these two consorts and this sister whose child has found another mother" prayed the male. The huntsman shed tears of repentance; he condemned himself for his wickedness and fell at the feet of the amazed deer. "You have saved me" he exclaimed. "Pardon me" he pleaded. "You have rescued me from hell; you have wiped off my ignorance. I take this oath in your presence", he said breaking his bow; "I shall not kill." Then he heard voice from Heaven, proclaim:

"O huntsman! you have become pure by repentance and renunciation, and the faith you placed in the sincere vows of these sacred deer. You have fasted you have observed vigil on the holy day of Sivaratri, have placed bilva leaves on the Linga, you have granted a lease of life to these animals. So, the Gods have conferred a boon on you: you shall shine as the star, 'Sirius' in the firmament as a lesson from which all men shall learn your virtues. And these deer; shall also shine in the sky in a group, as they are standing here before you, known as Mrigasira, the constellation, Orion. You can see them looking down upon all mankind, exhorting them to pity, to non-violence, to keep the plighted word, and knowingly, or unknowingly worship God with whatever you happen to do. That is the Sathyam, the Sundaram and the Sivam of Sivaratri.

The Godward Marga

The Uttarayana Punyakala or the Makara Sankranti is a holy occasion to pray to the Lord, as the Vedas instruct you to pray: Asatho maa sath gamaya; Thamaso maa jyothirgamaya; mruthyor maa amrithatn gamaya. Use this day to address this prayer, sincerely to your Ishthadevata, your Aaradhya-devata, the Form of the Lord you like most. Festivals connected with the Moon and the Sun are celebrated in our country, in order to drive into the minds of men the importance of

mind control (Chandra or moon is the Deity of the Mind) and of clarifying the Intelligence (Surya or the Sun is the Deity of the Intelligence). When the Sun moves Northward—that is 'Godward' the Intelligence too must proceed Godward. That is the significance of the Uttarayana. Putting your faith in the machines and machine-made things, faith in power of the controlled mind and in the potentialities of the clarified and purified intelligence has declined. Yantra has eclipsed the Mantra; but, this is a passing phase.

Mantra alone can guarantee Shanti or peace. A king became insane; he imagined he was a beggar, that he was ill, that he had become decrepit—and he wept. Now, how is he to realise that he is a king? You have to restore his reason; that is the only way. So too, the Immortal, Blissful Invincible imagines himself to be limited, and little. He blames himself and calls himself a sinner, born in sin and revelling in sin, praying on his knees to be saved. Of course, if he knows he is divine, he will never stoop to sin or vice or weakness. The tree of life is a tree of delusion, with all its branches and leaves and flowers of Maya. You can realise it as such, when you do all acts as dedicated offerings for God. See him as the sap through every cell as the Sun warming and building every part. See Him in all; worship Him through all, for He is all. Engage in activity, but, fill the activity with devotion: it is the devotion that sanctifies. A piece of paper is almost trash; but, if a certificate is written on it you value it and treasure it; it becomes a passport for promotion in life. It is the bhava that matters, not the bahya; the feeling, not the activity that is performed. At Tirupati or at Bhadrachalam, you find only a stone shaped as an idol, as stone; it is of little value. But, when feeling permeates it, when devotion transmutes it, the stone becomes the Supreme Treasure of the human mind. Man does not know this secret of transmuting every act of his into sacred worship and so, he suffers from disappointment, and grief.

There is a lot of wasteful discussion as to the superiority of one Marga or Path over another, especially between the partisans of Karma Bhakti and Jnana margas but these three paths, Work Worship and Wisdom, are supplementary, not contradictory. Work is like the feet, Worship, the hands and Wisdom, the head. The three must co-operate and complete life.

Worship or Upasana or Bhakti marga is the name given to the path of Sharanagati or Surrender to the Lord's Will, the merging of the Individual Will in the Will of the Universal. Lakshmana is the classic example of this spirit of surrender that saves. Once during his exile in the forest, Rama asked Lakshmana to put up a leaf-hut on a site of his choice. Lakshmana was shocked; he was struck down with grief. He pleaded with Rama: "Why do you ask me to select the site? Have I any individuality left? Can I choose? Will I select? Don't you know that I have no will of my own. You decide and I obey; you command, I carry out the order." That is real Sharanagati, real Bhakti. This can be acquired by constant practice of detachment.

The Lord is so full of Grace that he will willingly guide and guard all who surrender to Him. When the battle with Ravana was over, one glance from His merciful Eye was enough to revive the Vanara hordes which had fallen on the ground and to heal the wounds they had earned during the fight. There were some Rakshasas who had penetrated into the camp in Vanara disguise; when they were brought before Rama for summary punishment, Rama smiled and pardoned them, for they had assumed the monkey form so dear to Him; He sent them away, unharmed to the enemy's camp. That was the measure of His mercy.

To win that Grace, you must become permeated with Dharma so that every act is God-worthy. With the sharp chisel of Intellect or Buddhi, shape the Manas or Mind into a perfect image of Dharmamurti, the embodiment of Dharma. Then, the rough-hewn idol of humanity that you now are, will shine with the splendour of Divinity itself. That is the task to which you should dedicate yourself today.

From Baba's Discourse on Uttarayana Day 14-1-66

Vigrahavaan Dharmah

Rama is the very embodiment of Dharma. Ramo Vigrahavaan Dharmah, this, is how Maricha characterised Rama to Ravana. This, from one Rakshasa to another, is highly revealing, indeed.

When Sita Rama and Lakshmana were at Ja-nastana in the Dandakaranya during their exile, Surpanakha, sister of the Rakshasa Emperor Ravana chanced to come across them; she fell in love with Rama and when he discarded her parrying her prayers with the obvious excuse that he was married and had Sita with him, she threatened to eat Sita alive and thus make him a widower! When she moved menacingly towards Sita, Rama signed to Lakshmana to give her appropriate punishment; he sliced off her ears and nose and sent her roaring in rage to her kinsmen, Khara Dushana and others. Fourteen thousands of them died fighting against Rama who faced them alone. So, Surpanakha ran in hot haste to Ravana himself and poured out her hate and grief.

"I attempted to kidnap Sita for your harem for, she is the loveliest object on earth; see what has happened to me during that laudable endeavour! Rama, her husband has killed 14,000 Rakshasas who challenged him to battle on my behalf" she said. Ravana fell into the trap set by his sister; he longed to bring Sita to Lanka, but he knew that Rama was a redoubtable warrior. So, he decided to kidnap her, while Rama was away from her side.

"Rama inflicted injuries on innocent Surpanakha; he slaughtered Rakshasas; I desire to kidnap his wife; you must help me in this," said Ravana, to Maricha the son of Thataka, whom Rama had slain while a boy, on his way to the Ashram of Viswamitra. But, what did that Maricha reply? Did he agree to be an accomplice? Did he join in the condemnation of Rama? Listen:

He said, "Rama is the embodiment of Dharma. What he declares becomes by that declaration, Dharma; what he does, becomes by that very deed, Dharma; for, he never deviates from the strait path of Dharma. Surpanakha suffered for her wickedness; Khara Dushana and others died because He exercised the Dharmic right of self-defence; how can you condemn him for these acts?"

Again, Rama is no ordinary mortal. He has invincible prowess. Years ago when he was a little boy, He aimed such deadly arrows at me that I was thrown in agonising pain far into the sea, for the reason that I disturbed the Yaga which he boarded, while being performed by Viswamitra. On another occasion, I went in the guise of a wild animal of the forest and was crunching a few

Rishis in my maw when Rama espied me and let fly his arrow, that pursued me through hill and dale. I have given up my habits and am now doing penance for the past. Now, do you know how I feel when I think of him? In every tree of the forest, I see him as racy killer, holding the fatal bow and wearing the deerskin of the hermit, Take my advice. Do not foster hatred towards him in your Heart. You will fall into untold misery if you stick to this nefarious plan."

Maricha spoke so of Rama because he had exercised discrimination. Ravana had no corrective factor. He could not discriminate. He was a blind self-willed autocrat. So, he brought disaster on himself, his people and his empire.

Judging from the true praise that Maricha showered on Rama, it is clear that it requires clear intellect to learn from experience and to benefit by experience, so that one may better one's chances of spiritual progress.

(Translated from the article by Brahasri Varanasi Subrahmanya Sastry)

The Atmarama in every one prompts him to stick to Truth and Dharma. He has only to listen, obey and get saved. But, some are deaf; some listen only when it protests loudly; some hear even its slightest whisper. Many are determined not to hear its Voice, forgetting that all have to heed it sooner or later.

Baba

The Divine Mother

I saw Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba for barely a few minutes at Whitefield; He did not notice me or talk to me. But, long before I saw the Sthula, the Sukshma had influenced me. I was used to meditate on Him and get tremendous inspiration. The subtle force He is exerting is unimaginable.

Baba always keeps us in mental union with Him. The attraction He binds us with is irresistible, for, it is the pull of the Paramatma on the Jivatma. It is far more powerful than the attraction binding the child to its mother.

The subtle or Sukshma Sathya Sai is supersensitive. It is a mighty force. It is an infinite complex of spiritual currents. The only description with which we can satisfy our ever-inquisitive intellect is to characterise Him as the Divine Mother, as pictured by Sri Ramakrishna. Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is none other than the Divine Mother of Sri Ramakrishna's loftiest conception. We are most fortunate to have the supreme Parashakti with us. If we transcend His Form, we enter into a vast region of perennial Bliss, peace, holiness, courage and love.

Sri Ramakrishna conveyed to Narendra his spiritual treasure and with it the bliss of non-dual consciousness. Mathur Babu and Hriday had also glimpses of the Divine ecstasy from Sri Ramakrishna. But, they could not contain the spring of bliss, that enveloped them, and filled

them. These experiences in the spiritual realm are of extreme subtlety. One must have subtle consciousness to receive them and benefit by them.

Bhagavan awakens our spiritual consciousness and intuitive wisdom. He is full of Premam, Karunyam, Santham, Anandam, and Madburyam. (Love, Grace Peace, Joy and Sweetness), He assures supreme Abhayam (protection) and Kshemam (welfare) and confers conviction and courage. He dwells in our hearts as Sanathana Sarathi and guides us in the battlefield of life. He illumines our intellect and purifies our minds. He brings about marvelous transformations in habit and character. He makes us realise our divinity, our essential imperishable nature. He allows us to make maximum use of His Daya, Preman and Anandam.

He tolerates our importunities; he yields to our wishes; He condones our defects and lapses. He encourages us and makes us heroes; He moulds each one of us into a Vivekananda! He loves us as Sri Ramakrishna loved Narendra and Rakhai. He serves us as a fond mother serves her most beloved child.

All these are available to us when we meditate on Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and when we immerse ourselves in His thoughts and ideas and when we enter into the consideration of His divinity and leela. When we become fit enough to transcend even this subtle Form and Name, Baba withdraws from us our attraction to His Name and Form. He fixes our attention on the unmanifested State of Divine-hood, call it Parashakti, Hiranyagarbha or by any other name. His aim from the very first lesson He teaches us, is to make us completely unconditioned by dogmas, creeds, texts, sects, Name and Form. He wants us to reach the unconditional pure State of Divinity—the Supreme God-force controlling all the activities of the Universe—the Siva-Shakti State, or the Purusha-Prakriti state.

Baba always tells us that He is residing in our hearts; He wants us to realise Him as Sai in our hearts. Realising the impracticalities and difficulties and sufferings people undergo while seeking His physical Darshan, the infinitely compassionate Bhagavan—the supreme Prema Swarupa—is always exhorting us to seek Him as Sukshma Sai in our hearts. His guidance and protection, His upadesam and premam are available for us in inexhaustible measure, if we seek Him as subtle Sai in the chambers of our hearts.

Baba has said often that we should not deride others because it would be deriding Sai who is in them. This means, He resides in every one, as Sukshma Sai; He is the In-dweller.

May every one realise the Sukshma Sai in their hearts and attain God-consciousness and perennial Peace and Bliss. May every one lead a care-free misery-free life, enshrining the subtle Form of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba in their hearts. May peace and prosperity reign in the World.

H.N.S.R.K., Poona

Boons From Siva

In the Rudradhyaya of the Taittiriya there are two parts: Namaka and Chamaka. After praising Siva as the Source Sustenance and Goal of Creation as evidenced by multifarious manifestations of activity equilibrium and destruction, the Chamaka hyenas, pray for boons from the Siva thus propitiated.

As is to be expected, these boons which Siva confers are all suspicious for the individual. Sustenance for the gross, the subtle and the causal bodies in which the individual is encased; control of the senses and of the impulses; clarity of intellect; ability to withstand the prison of the five sheaths; capacity to protect the body from illness; merit derived from the attainment of perfect equanimity or Samadhi; identity with the pranava; fame that spreads throughout the worlds; ability to teach, to distinguish the good from the bad while listening; the effulgence attached to Satwic characteristics; splendour of character and conduct----- these are asked for through these Mantras.

Siva is asked to purify the vital airs, to grant the power to remember, to study, and to speak the truth without fear or favour, to decide on omission and commission with pure intentions, to see far and to listen deep, to bless man with strength to direct the senses into beneficial channels, to confer conviction of mind on elevating faiths, to give strength to endure the unpleasant and the pleasant, to live a full life, with a quiet period of old age. He is asked to give a touch of ego which will help in tasting the glory of Siva. Man wants to be a master of both Vidya and Avidya Siva is requested to confer the boon of Brahmanandam and Brahmavijnanam, and a strong frame which will contain the tremendous onrush of Joy derived therefrom.

From this Chamaka mantra, one can easily discover what things were considered desirable by our ancestors in this land. They extol Siva and ask Him to give them the highest status among the people who seek Him, the status reserved for the Jnani. They ask him to bestow upon them mastery over the mind, detachment from objective pleasures and more physical temptations; they seek a life far from public gaze; they desire the capacity to confer boons themselves; they aim at becoming famous through service to others. They pray that Siva may give them vast intellect, vast development of virtue, vast wisdom and vast faith. They believe that His Grace will reveal to them the mystery of the inner sky of the heart, that it will bestow upon them the wealth of splendour that ultimate merger with God will ensure, Dhanam as it is called or Thwishih. They love to play unconcerned in the waves of Atmananda and they seek His Blessing for that.

They pray for super-knowledge, eternal knowledge, true knowledge. They want that their actions should result in merit; they seek Brahmaloaka, liberation here and now, the ability to burn off the effect of past Karma, the understanding of the working of the intellect, and the final fruit of all inquiry, namely, the revelation of Tatt twam asi, the realisation that they are that ... and nothing less.

They pray that Siva may confer upon them the Joy described as priya (the head) moha (the right wing) and pramoda (the left wing) of the Bird of Liberation. They ask for Shanti, for the unagitated mind, the steady undiminishable bliss in childhood, in boyhood, youth, middle age, old age and in death, a bliss that permeates the yanta (Ananda-nayakosam) Dharta (Vijnatramayakosam) Kshema (Manomayakosam) Dhriti (Pranamayakosam) Viswam (Annamayakosam).

They know that Siva can vouchsafe to the all the essential boons and we too should resolve in our minds on this auspicious Sivaratri Day, when Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is revealing himself, what we have to pray to Him for. In the Chamakam, they ask Siva to give them the vision to see themselves in all beings; they ask Him to reveal to them Himself in all beings, they seek His Grace to over-rule. Sooh and Prasoo (Avidya and Maya) through Seeram (Sastra) and to attain Laya Rtham and Amrtham.

Of course, they pray also for A-yakshma or absence rot illness, Anamayam or freedom from fevers Anamithram, a State when there are no enemies eager to harm them, Abhayam or the state when there is no need to fear, Sooshma or the state when no unpleasant face is confronted by them, and Sudinam, when no unpleasant news is heard by them. They want repose in the Swaswarupa asthanam, or the State of Realisation of One's own Reality, the State called Sayanam in the Mantra.

In the Sixth Anuvaka of the Chamaka, Siva is asked to bless man with the vision of the Atma as comprising all the various gods. Ekam santham bahudhaa kalpayanthi. The One that exists alone is treated as many. So, Agni Soma Savitha Pooshaa Brhaspath Mithra Varuna Thwashtaa Dhaathaa Vishnu the Aswins the Maruths the Viswedevaah all are subsumed under the One Name, Indra in the Charnaka Mantra. Siva is asked also to confer bliss during the waking dreaming and sleeping stages as well as in the fourth stage of Super-conscious Awareness. May my body be the faggot, hair the kusa grass breast the altar, senses the vessels bones the stones desires the offerings and may I after the sacrifice bathe in the Triven of Susbumna (Ganga) Pingala (Saraswati) and Ida (Yamuna) . That is the climax of life.

Ananda on the Rock of Viveka

Let the fury of the fierce waves burst all around, let dread and desire, greed and grief, beat on the rock of Faith; I do not care, for, Thou the impregnable, the Invincible art in me and I am safe.

Let the monsters of the deep howl and hiss, let the scorching sun and the shivering cold endeavour to shake my steadiness, I do not care, for, Thou art in me giving me solace and strength.

Let elemental urges, deep rooted impulses, diabolic currents one-ness in my confidence in Thee and Me; I do not care for I am in inexpressible Bliss.

I am Ananda on the Viveka Rock.

(Vide Picture on Cover Page)

Prasanthi Nilayam News

- Jan 19: Sri G. Subbarao, from Unicef (U.N.O.) and Sri Premanath Gupta, Punjab arrived at the Nilayam.
- 22: Mr Harding from London arrived for a short stay
- 24: The Maharaja of Patiala and the Maharani arrived at the Nilayam. Sri Mathur, Member, Railway Board also arrived.
- 25: Sri Prabhakarji, Secretary, Sarvodaya Sangha Hyderabad, arrived.
- 29: Eleven Members of the Mysore State Legislature arrived and had a long discussion with Baba on the spiritual foundations of human progress.
- Feb 5: Mr. Bruno Kueazi from Switzerland arrived for a short stay at the Nilayam.
- 6: Mr. Pfaus, a German Engineer, arrived from Bangalore, on the eve of his departure for home
- 9: Sri Shah, Income Tax Commissioner, Hyderabad, arrived with family and friends.
- 10: Mr. Howard Murphet from the Theosophical Society, Madras, arrived for a short stay.

"Krishna! You say that the Daiva and Asuric natures of man are the consequences of acts and feelings that had impact on the individual in previous births. Since it is impossible to escape from such impacts, what is the fate of those who are condemned to carry with them this burden? Are there any means by which this can be avoided? Or can their consequences be mitigated? If such exist, please tell me those, for, I could save myself thereby " Arjuna asked thus, in order to draw out from the Lord the remedy for all mankind.

Krishna gave an immediate answer. "There is no paucity of means. Listen. There are three types of Gunas: Satwic, Rajasic and Tamasic. They are based on the Antahkarana, the Inner Consciousness. That too is dependent on the intake of food. You are what you feed on: your activities shape your nature. So at least now, in this birth, by regulating food and activity (ahara and vihara) man can overcome the Asuric tendencies that tend to prevail upon him. He can promote Satwic tendencies through planned self effort. This advice full of hope was tendered lovingly by the Lord to the eager inquirer, Arjuna.

Arjuna was thrilled with joy when he heard that man has the means of saving himself, he longed to inform himself further. Krishna showered Grace through His enchanting smile and condescended to reply. "Arjuna! Food is the chief formative force. The soiled mind dulls the brilliance of moral excellence; how can a muddy lake reflect clear? The Divine cannot be reflected in the wicked or vicious mind. Food makes man strong in body; the body is intimately connected with the mind. Strength of mind depends upon strength of body, too. Moral conduct, good habits, spiritual effort—all depend upon the quality of the food; disease mental weakness, spiritual slackness—all are produced by faulty food." "Krishna!" asked Arjuna, "Pray tell me the constituents of Satwic, Rajasic and Tamasic food."

"Arjuna! Satwic food must be capable of strengthening the mind as well as the body. It should not be too saltish, too hot, too bitter, too sweet or too sour. It is not to be taken while steaming hot. Food which fans the flames of thirst should be avoided. The general principle is that there should be a limit, a restraint. Food cooked in boiling water should not be used the next day; it becomes harmful. Even fried articles must be consumed before they develop unpleasant odours.

Rajasic food is the opposite of the Satwic. It is too saltish, too sweet, too hot, too sour, too odorous. Such food excites and intoxicates."

"Lord, excuse me if I appear impertinent; I ask with the desire to know, that is all. By mere change in food habits, can character be changed from one Guna to another? Or, has something more to be done to supplement the purification process? Tell me, if there is anything more.

"My dear brother-in-law! If transformation of character were so easy, wickedness and vice, marking the Danava nature, could have been wiped off the surface of the earth in a trice. Of course, there are some things more to be done. Listen. There are three "purities" to be observed:

Purity of the provisions; purity of the vessels in which food is prepared; and, purity of the persons who serve the prepared food.

It is not enough if the provisions are pure and of good quality. They should have been procured by fair means: no unfair unjust untrue earnings should be used for one's maintenance. These latter are fouled at the very source. The source as well as the course and the goal must all be equally pure. The vessel must be clean, free from tarnish. The person who serves must be, not only clean in dress, he must be clean in habits, character and conduct. He should be free from hate anger worry and indifference while serving the dishes; he has to be cheerful and fresh. And, he must be humble and full of love. While attending on those who are dining, he should not allow his mind to dwell on wicked or vicious ideas. Mere physical cleanliness or charm is no compensation for evil thoughts and habits. The Sadhaka who has to secure concentration has to be careful about these restrictions. Otherwise during Dhyanam, the subtle influences of the wicked thoughts of the cook and the servers will haunt the Sadhaka. Care should be taken to have only such harmless individuals around. Outer charm, professional excellence, reduced wages—these should not be allowed to prejudice you in favour of such dangerous cooks and attendants. Examine carefully their habits and their character and prefer them. The food you eat is such an important constituent of the physical and mental stuff with which you have to struggle on, in the spiritual field. The purity of the mind can be and has to be supplemented by the purity of the body as well as of its important function, speech. That is the real Tapas: physical, mental, and vocal.

The mind must be free from anxiety and worry, hate and fear, greed and pride. It must be saturated with love for all beings. It has to dwell in God. It has to be restrained from pursuing objective pleasures. No lower thoughts should be allowed to creep in; all thoughts must be directed towards the elevation of the individual to higher planes. This is the proper Tapas of the mind or manas.

Now for the physical tapas. Use the body and its strength and capabilities for the service of others for the worship of Lord, for the singing of His Glory, for visiting places hallowed by His Name, for regulated exercises in breath control; for holding the senses away from deleterious paths and for treading the path of God. The service of the sick and the distressed, the observance of moral codes and such beneficial acts must enable the body and make it sacrosanct.

Vocal Tapas too has to be engaged in. Avoid talking too much; desist from false statements; do not take delight in backbiting and in scandal mongering; never speak harshly; speak soft and sweet; speak with the memory of Madhava ever in the background of the mind.

Of these three, physical tapas, mental tapas and vocal tapas, even if one is absent, the Atmic effulgence (Atmajyoti) will not radiate. The lamp the wick and oil are all essential for a light; the body is the lamp; the mind is the oil and the tongue is the wick. They must all three be in good trim.

Some pious people consider that acts of charity are also physical tapas. It is good they think so. But, when doing charity, one has to do so, after pondering over the place, the time and the nature of the recipient. For example, charities for schools should be given at places where there are no

schools until then; hospitals have to be established in areas where diseases are rampant; the hunger of people has to be appeased where famine conditions have been caused by floods or drought. The nature and condition of the recipient has to be considered while imparting teaching of Dharma and of Brahmavidya, and while doing service of various kinds. The charitable act that removes from a person the deficiency that is most harmful to his progress is called Satwic."

"Krishna", interrupted Arjuna, "May I ask a question, here? Charity however done, is charity, isn't it? Why do you distinguish between Satwic Rajasic and Tamasic even in this? Is there any need for these distinctions? Are there any such?"

Krishna answered, "Of course there is. Among those who donate for charities, most are anxious to get name and fame; that is the motive for the act. They are after something in return for what they offer. Very few desire just the Grace of the Lord, and nothing else. Gifts made with that end in view, to receive the Grace of the Lord are Satwic. Gifts made expecting something in return like fame and publicity, public esteem and power, or made in a huff or made reluctantly under pressure—these are to be classed as Rajasic.

Charity should be given with reverence and faith. It should not be just thrown at the face of the recipient. Nor should it be given to the undeserving person or at the inopportune moment. Food for the overfed, is a burden, not a boon. Hospitals in places that are inaccessible are as good as charity thrown away. Such benefitless and wasteful charity is called Tamasic.

While engaged in Dana or charity, one has to be very vigilant. You should not scatter it to whomsoever pleads for it; nor, can you shower it on all kinds of places. Be careful that you remember the three types mentioned by Me already and then, do as seems most proper. The gift you make must not be for name or fame; it should have no motive of pomp or publicity; it should be purposeful and useful in all acts, the Satwic attitude is best. This attitude must permeate all things seen, heard and spoken."

Arjuna who was listening with head bent and with great concentration to all this, drinking in the sweetness of the Lord's countenance, asked Him thus, "What exactly is true listening, true seeing—please tell me this in some detail. I can then follow the instructions." He prayed to Krishna in such a pleading tone that the Lord beamed with joy.

Krishna patted Arjuna on the bark. He said, Satwic listening is: listening to the Stories experiences and messages of sages and saints who aspired after God and realised Him. "Satwic seeing is: seeing the worshippers of the Lord, seeing the portraits of saints and sages, attending festivals in temples etc. Rajasic seeing: scenes of luxury, pictures of sensuous joy, of pompous pageantry of the exhibition of power and status, and display of egoistic authority. Taking delight in the description of sensuous scenes and incidents, of the demonstration of power and authority, of the assertion of might and prowess—these are to be classified as Rajasic listening. Others take delight in listening to gruesome adventures, stories of wicked ogres and vicious deeds. Such are Tamasic individuals. They admire cruelty and terrifying tactics and they have pleasure in keeping such pictures before them. They worship demonic bloodthirsty Gods and they revel in the lore of ghosts and eerie forces."

Dear Readers! This is the heart of the teaching of the Bhagavad-Gita. The body and life in it are based on food and they are sustained by food, anna. So, food decides the level of attainment, high or low. Nowadays, emphasis is being laid on discipline and regulated behaviour (Nishtha) without reference to the Nashta (food)! However great a person might be, however learned, he pays attention to the teaching of the Vedanta and takes care to spread them; but, he neglects the strict code laid down for the food that is the very basis of the body and its functions. The purity of the provisions, of the cook and of those who serve what has been prepared and these are not attended to. They feel content when their stomachs are filled, when hunger is appeased. The first temple they visit when dawn breaks is the restaurant where idli and sambar are offered to the Atmarama! How can such gourmards get concentration? Purity in cooking, purity of provisions, and purity of service ... how can these be guaranteed in restaurants? Who pays attention to these? Without doing this, people complain aloud that they do not get success in concentration, and suffer greater confusion! The effect will be secured only when the proper causes function well. When bitter things are cooked, how can the final dish be sweet?

Ahara and Vihara (Food and recreation) are both very carefully regulated in the Gita, but, little heed is paid to its teaching. Nor is it considered so essential. There are people everywhere who swear by the Gita, who expound it for hours together and who preach about it...but, very few put its teachings into practice. The verses fill their heads but they are powerless to meet reverses, with philosophical cheer. Ananda and Shanti can be secured only when food and recreation are cleansed and purified.

Darkness and light cannot co-exist: Kama and Rama cannot be in the same place together; they are like fire and water. How can one escape evil reaction if the Gita is held in one hand and hot tea or coffee or a lighted cigarette or beedi or a pinch of snuff is held in the other? Some even justify their unregulated lives, by declaring that whatever is eaten, however eaten, wherever eaten, the stuff is rendered pure and acceptable on account of the raging fire of Jnana which they have in them! How can a bitter fruit be transformed into a sweet one, when it is dipped in series of holy rivers? How can persons who simply speak on the Gita get saturated with the sweetness of its message? What really happens is that those who listen to such hypocrisies lose even the little faith they have in our scriptures and become hardened disbelievers.

How can a person who feels helpless to restrict and regulate his food habits, be trusted to restrict and regulate his senses? If he cannot limit and control his feeding, how can he limit and control the senses? If he cannot exercise control over his feeding habits, he cannot control the more terrific senses. Can the nose which falls down for a cough survive a sneeze? How can one who is too weak to climb a stair climb to heaven's heights? When a man is a helpless victim of coffee or cigarettes or snuff, how can he muster strength and courage to overcome the more powerful foes: anger lust and greed? When he cannot renounce dirt, how can he renounce desire? Become master of the tongue and then, you can master sex. They are firmly interconnected, as closely as the eye and the feet.

(To be continued)

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

*A car is for going on a journey, not for merely decorating the garage, washed, oiled and painted!
Man too must journey towards trod, not simply feed and have fun.*

Baba

Pathri—Parthi

In Sri N. Kasturi's "Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram" a few important details of the early life of the Baba of Shirdi, as narrated by Sri V. C. Kondappa in his Telugu book Sree Sayeesuni Charithram are given. According to this account, based on Bhagavan's own authority, Shirdi Baba was born of Brahmin parents at Pathri, a village on the banks of the Godavari. The parents were Gangabhava and Devagiramma. Sri Kondappa's account has cleared a number of doubts and guesses which had puzzled the devotees of both the Babas. The child was a gift of Lord Siva and His consort, Parvati in answer to the prayers of the devout couple who were childless. The account in the Telugu book confirms the statement made by Shirdi Baba himself about his having been abandoned as a baby and being brought up by a Muslim fakir and his wife with whom he remained for several years. Sri Kondappa's narrative throws light on the circumstances which led to the boy's leaving his foster-parents and his subsequent wanderings over the region where the village of Shirdi is situated. The incident that made the lad leave the Fakir's household was this. The boy had swallowed a Sivalinga and was in the habit of taking it out from time to time for worship. This proved embarrassing to his Muslim foster-parents and the boy left the house. The incident of the Muslim "nawab" who met the wandering lad and asked him about his missing horse is also mentioned. By some strange power, the boy was able to find the horse and the Muslim gentleman struck by the boy's extraordinary capacity first used the word "Sai" in addressing the lad. Soon the boy found his way to the village of Shirdi where he stayed for nearly sixty years in a ruined masjid, and people began to call him Sai Baba.

Shirdi Sai Baba attained mahasamadhi in October 1918. Eight years later, in 1926 (November 23) the present Avatar took birth, this time at Parthi (Puttaparthi). Twice in 1940, Bhagavan announced that he was Sai Baba and that he had taken birth again to continue the work of His previous Sharira. No one then had heard of this strange Shirdi Baba in that region. People were puzzled and mystified at this announcement. All that they knew was that this strange lad possessed unusual powers. He could create anything he wanted by merely waving his hand. To a few doubters who questioned him about Shirdi Baba, He gave a vision of the old Saint. Many times Baba has travelled to Shirdi even while remaining in his room at Prasanthi Nilayam, and when in trance He has uttered strange names and words the true import of which could be understood only by those who have known the life and mission of Shirdi Baba. Startlingly, Baba spoke with familiarity of the well known landmarks of Shirdi and of several intimate devotees of the Baba there. Once, when Bhagavan Sathya Sai was at Mercara, He suddenly recognised an old devotee of Shirdi Baba. In innumerable other ways, Baba has established beyond doubt, His identity with the old beloved Saint of Shirdi. The discovery by the Rani of Chincholi of an old brass Kamandalu (drinking vessel) in her palace storeroom and its being subsequently identified by Bhagavan as His drinking vase, in His previous Avatar are well-known incidents.

There are three things which I should like to emphasise in this connection. The First is the subject of "miracles". The pattern of these miracles performed by both the Babas is similar,

although there is a greater profusion of there in the case of Sri Sathya Sai Baba—a more lavish display of the divine power which is certainly behind these miracles. Sri Sathya Sai can create anything by the power of His sankalpa and we are amazed at the variety of these "creations". Explaining this power to a couple of foreign visitors in July 1965, Baba told them that divine srishti (creation) is the result of God's Sankalpa (will) as well as the act of exercising this will or Kriya. The processes are simultaneous. In other respects (that is, apart from creating things) Baba's powers are as marvellous as those of His previous Avatar. He Is a Trikalajnani like the Shirdi saint and seems to have a thorough knowledge of events, present, past and future. He can read the inmost thoughts of the devotees. He can manifest Himself, like the Baba of Shirdi, in His own form or in other forms at great distances, without moving from the place where He is. When devotees think of Him and pray to Him in love and faith, He protects them from danger, difficulties and even from death, Baba's touch has healed hundreds of sick people and many of the "cures" have astounded even eminent medical men. His soft spoken words of compassion have soothed many an anguished heart. A word of cheer from Shirdi Baba could infuse courage and faith in a person filled with doubt and despair. So also when Baba speaks to those who come to him, He radiates not only love and understanding, but in a subtle and yet powerful manner, He seems to give them a new faith. It was said that the Shirdi saint took upon Himself the troubles and sufferings of others to save there. There have been several remarkable instances when Baba has done the same—even undergoing a series of heart attacks in June 1963—to save a devotee.

Secondly, there is the uniqueness of the relationship between the devotes and the two Babas. This relationship is intimately personal. Devotees went to Shirdi because they found there a Guru who was full of compassion and eager solicitude towards them. There was nothing remote about Him. He was so easily accessible, so simple and laving. They found nothing like this in any other place or in any other Guru. The assurance of Shirdi Baba was the loving assurance of a father or mother. He would forgive His erring children with a benevolence which surpassed anything they bad known before. He answered their prayers. Here was a Guru who seemed to have taken birth to live with them, to help them and guide them. He was, sometimes, a hard taskmaster, but the victims knew that his anger and even abuse were meant to teach them and show them the right path. "Cast your burdens upon me and I will bear them for your sake". He declared. The power of this assurance was irresistible. "My voice," He said, "shall continue to speak to you even from my tomb." These were not empty words. The assurance has never been broken. Shirdi Baba's influence, writes a well-known devotee, has been as strong after his death as when he was alive. Those, who have turned to Shirdi for grace and protection, have never been disappointed. In some form or other, subtle, mysterious and yet patent, the old beloved Baba of Shirdi has held out a hand to lift someone who was sinking, some one who felt lonely and abandoned through the journey of life.

The same "abhaya" or reassurance is given by Sri Sathya Sai Baba. "When you are in trouble, remember me. I will be by your side," He has declared hundreds of times. This tremendous reassurance has always been fulfilled. The divine power is ever ready to, come to the rescue of the devotees. This is the "secret" as Baba says, of God's nature. Once, playfully, He said that if there are no devotees, God would be the idlest being in the universe. So thousands come to Puttaparthi to seek a Guru, who is God Himself, who is close to them, a part of themselves, who can give them, like a father or mother, the solace and courage which they sorely need. In His presence, there is no secrecy, no hesitation, no faltering, no fear. It is heart speaking to heart. The

deep calls unto the deep. There is an intimacy which uplifts, heals and inspires. The divine utterance vibrates with compassion. The words that come out distil the purest essence of wisdom. There is no restraint in His presence. "Ask me anything you want," Baba often says, "I am Kalpavriksha—the fulfiller of all your needs." "He is the saviour—the divine counsellor, the loving guide whose words of truth warn even when they fortify and inspire. This intimate personal relationship is something unparalleled. The pilgrimage to Prasanthi Nilayam is not like any other pilgrimage to a temple or Math, where, in spite of all the sanctity of the place, this intimate rapport between the devotees and the deity is not possible. To millions Shirdi has been a Lighthouse of the Spirit—a place where the strife and sorrow of the world are left far behind. So, too, is Prasanthi Nilayam today. A trip to Prasanthi Nilayam is a sweet home-coming and to many it has been a shelter, a haven where the storms of life cannot touch them.

Thirdly, there is the abundant flow of divine grace at Puttaparthi as there was, and still is, at Shirdi. It is a thing of tremendous transforming power which chastens and subdues, uplifts and ennobles. "When I was in the presence of Baba," said a devotee of Shirdi years ago, "I felt so strangely moved as if God Himself was before me and speaking to me." Another said, "When Shirdi Baba looked at me, it seemed as though His eyes burnt all the evil and hatred in my heart." This was nothing but the power of divine grace. Thousands who have come to Puttaparthi and been in the presence of Baba even for a few minutes, have borne testimony to the working of the same power of "grace". A high government officer once told me that when he was in Baba's presence, he seemed to sense that he was in a totally different world, full of light, wisdom and peace. An instance of how divine grace can transform a person was seen when a friend of mine oppressed by numerous problems, to which he could find no solution went into Baba's presence in the Interview Room and suddenly the right solution flashed into his mind, as Baba's hand touched him. The marvel was that when Baba spoke to him in a moment, He suggested to my friend the same solution. The important point to be noted here was that the solution was quite in accordance with Truth and Justice, and in normal circumstances my friend would hardly have accepted it. This "transforming power" has been displayed with amazing lavishness by both the Babas. The interview Room at Puttaparthi (like the chavadi of the masjid at Shirdi) has been a silent witness to thousands of these "heart-transformations". The power or shakti at both these places has been the same. Thousands have emerged from these places to lead a new life, to bear unflinchingly the burdens which life has cast upon them, and to face their destiny with greater courage and self-awareness. Baba once said significantly, "The bondage to Karma cannot be broken completely. But the fight to overcome it must be there and the three great weapons in this fight are self-awareness, inner courage and staunch faith in the Supreme Reality." It is these weapons that Baba gives to those who have to fight the battle of life and death. And in this scission, Baba's main concern is the individual, on whose total inner transformation depends his capacity to cope with life's burdens and the compelling bondage to Karma.

So Pathri and Parthi are the two Points which a single miracle of divine manifestation has spanned, thus releasing into the world in our times a power at once unique, potent and irresistible.

H. Sunder Rao

From Baba's Discourses

Service of man is more needed than service of the Lord Himself. In fact, such service is equal to service of the Lord. That is the path of real Bhakti. For, what greater means can there be to please God than pleasing His children? The Purusha Suktha speaks of the Purusha or God as having a thousand heads, a thousand eyes and a thousand feet. That is to say, all are He. Though there are a thousand heads, there is no mention of a thousand hearts, there is only one heart. The same blood circulates through all the heads, eyes, feet and limbs. When you tend the limb, you tend the individual; when you serve man, you serve God.

Dharmaraja, the eldest of the Pandavas, was responsible for a white lie, a subterfuge, during the Mahabharata war; in order to force Drona to lay down arms so that he could be overpowered, they named an elephant after his son. It was called Ashwatthama and killed. Then, the soldiers around shouted in glee, "Ashwatthama is dead, the elephant," making the latter half of the sentence purposely low, so that the first impression that it was his son that died might not be wiped out by the disclosure that it was only an elephant of the same name! Drona was heavily upset with sorrow for a moment and at that moment, he was overwhelmed and slain! For this sin, Dharmaraja had to spend a few minutes in Hell on his way to Heaven, which he had earned by a lifetime of adherence to Dharma.

When the emissaries of the other world were escorting Dharmaraja to Hell for this short sojourn, the denizens felt a coolness and a fragrance, a thrill of joy and exhilaration which they could not explain. That was the consequence of the sacred soul approaching the region of pain and grief. The unfortunate sinners were soothed and comforted beyond words and they gathered round Dharmaraja to be as near as possible to this welcome source of solace. When the time came for Dharmaraja to depart to Heaven (the term of his sentence was soon over) the emissaries signed to him to move out with them. But, the populace of Hell cried out to him asking that he stay there longer, for, they could scarce go back to the heat and pain. Listening to their appeal, Dharmaraja declared that he was conferring on them the merit of all his acts which won for him, residence in heaven. He preferred to remain in Hell, if he could keep those people in comfort.

Now, this great act of renunciation not only benefited the denizens of Hell, it also gave Dharmaraja a longer lease of life in Heaven, as reward! Life is best spent when it is utilised for alleviating distress, assuaging pain, and promoting joy; that is the lesson you have to learn.

So many thousands of you have come here to the Prasanthi Nilayam for the festival. In most homes, guests and relatives are welcomed only when it is known that their stay will be short. But, here, however often you come, however long you stay, the joy you derive is undiminished; for, the kinship is not worldly, it is Atmic. And, Atmic Bliss knows no decline or change. When your goal is the service of the Lord, the adoration of God, every step is a spring of joy; every moment is a valuable chance. Perhaps you think that the Bhajan and Sankirtan which you partake in here is all that is required of a Bhakta; no. These are only sanctifying acts which purify the

mind; they are Karma which elevate you and help to pass time purposefully. They promote detachment from the body and from objective pleasures. It is because you are encouraged to cultivate this attitude and taste the joy of renunciation that you feel happy while here.

Praise and blame are the obverse and reverse of reaction to the great and the sublime. The Cinema screen is not affected by the volcanic eruption pictured in the films or by the turbulent sea with mountain high waves. It is neither singed nor does it get wet. A city has under its streets two varieties of pipes, one carrying drinking water and the other, sewage. The human body has veins for good blood and bad. The intake of food has to result in the discharge of offal. Once, a certain Nastika approached Buddha in great anger and used the foulest language in deriding him. Buddha sat through the performance calmly without being least affected. At last, when his venom and vocabulary were both exhausted, the poor fellow had to stop. Ananda asked Buddha later why he was so silent in spite of the most hateful provocation. Buddha replied, "When some one comes to your doorstep, if you so much as inquire, 'Hallo, when did you come?' or say a simple 'Hallo', the man will come in treating it as a "welcome" and squat with you! Ignore him; he gets away. That is the way such men have to be dealt with." When some one takes delight in scandalising you, be happy that you are the cause of his joy. When it is the duty of man to give others joy, this traducer derives joy by making you his target and so you must feel glad that the poor fool is happy with his trumpeting of lies. Do not allow your peace of mind to be disturbed by the antics of any perverse crook.

The relationship with the Lord is described as developing from Saalokya to Saameepya, and from Sameepya to Sarupya and then on to Sayujya. You can understand this clearly, if you take Saalokya to mean being in the kingdom ruled by the Lord as monarch or as a servant in the Palace where He dwells. You are under His Pari-palana, fostering care; you are aware that it is He who sustains you. In the Saameepya, stage, you feel you are a personal attendant on the Lord, in His entourage, privileged to be near Him and to be called upon by Him when occasion arises, for some personal service. You have neared the principle of Godhead, intellectually; you feel His presence ever, emotionally—that is Sameepyam. Then, the Saroopyam stage is reached when the devotee is so near, so kin, that he wears the "royal robes"—a brother, for example, can wear the same robes. So, he has the same rupa, he has the splendour, the glory that bespeaks the full blossoming of the Divine that is latent in him. Lastly, when you are the son, the Heir Apparent, the Kumara Raja, you approximate as much as possible to the Royal Power and so, you can say, "I and My Father are One." That is Sayujya, Becoming One. Retainer, Attendant, Kinsman, Heir—these are the stages of the soul's journey to Realisation of the Oversoul.

There are many among you, I know, mostly women, who practise fasts. But, there is a limit to austerity, which they do not respect! There is a meaning in fasting which they do not understand! They fast on Monday for it is the day of Siva, on Tuesday for it is sacred to Lakshmi, on Wednesday for some other God, on Thursday for Me (!) on Friday again for Lakshmi, on

Saturday, to propitiate Sani and on Sunday, for the Sun! Lal Bahadur Sastry, that good and simple man, pleaded that you miss a meal on Monday nights, but, these misdirected aspirants spoil their health and well-being by overdoing the vow of fasting. Periodical Fasting is prescribed in order to help the system overhaul itself and to give much needed rest to the processes. Again during the fast, you must not be aware of hunger at all! Are you sure that it is so? You must free yourself from all thought of food and concentrate on the thought of God. If thoughts of food bother you, if pangs of hunger disturb you, then, it is much better to eat and then start Sadhana. Upa-vasa, the Word for the vow of fasting, means "living in the proximity of God" (Upa-near; vasa-living) and so, the vow is meant to liberate you from the worry and bother of preparing and eating food, so that you might dwell more intimately with God. Remember that the purpose of Fast is spending time in the contemplation of God and not simply punishing the body by cutting a meal or a series of meals.

Vows vigils fasts etc. along with all kinds of voluntarily imposed or involuntarily suffered hardships are to be looked upon as promoting spiritual strength, not as weakening physical stamina. They dig around the roots and make the plant grow fast. They clip the wayward twigs and make the tree tall and truly trim.

(Sivaratri Festival, '66)

Share Your Talents

Sathya Sai Baba Teaches Me

In the November 1965, issue of "Sanathana Sarathi" His Grace the Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, blessed me by letting me express to you Lessons, received by me from Him during Dhyana. To share more of these blessings with you is a privilege I deeply respect. The purpose of mortals is to spiritually up-lift or lift-up fellow creatures, at every turn, along the path. Sathya Sai Baba, as I will now express in my words, has given me His Wisdom through His Universal Upadesh. This prajna, may I now relate to you, fellow pilgrims.

I was desperately trying to understand the meaning of a situation that had saddened me. I felt that I had been set adrift. Very soon, I realised that I was having a test, an examination, to see whether I had really learnt my spiritual lessons.

Attention, consideration, warmth, attitude and feelings and such-like are gifts bestowed upon us by the Almighty, by Siva. These are our 'talents' to be gracefully given by us to all people. Do not fall into the habit, through ignorance, of bestowing these God-given talents upon a limited few. Do not feel that you are expected to confine your inner-self. Does He restrict His Prema to but a few? Remember that sharing yourself is paramartha-dharma.

I asked Sai Baba to give me a sweeter example. One that would be better understood by all of us. He said, "Charles, see there, a field of daisies. The elements, the wind and running rain-water carried their birth-seeds to the places where they became "attached" to the earth. The plants did not choose the exact spot of their stay, but the great Horticulturist of the Universe did. Now He 'gave' His attention, consideration, and warmth to the seeds. He gave each the Universal

Vibration, the heat of the Sun by day and the cool of the night. These seeds were in the blissful state of dhyana. Those which placed themselves in My Hands received the Divine Touch. They began to stir and all the glories wonders held within came to life.'

"Now, Charles the plants grew in that field and matured but each flower that blossomed forth found itself firmly facing in one direction or another. The beauty of each blossom was enjoyed by the blossom that faced it. Because of the beauty that each saw in the other's petals, they complimented each other. They explored in each other the mysterious exotic perfumes they were gifted with. They gave attention to the touching leaves. They were showering each other with their joyousness and each felt uplifted.

"But now take a look at that field of flowers, Charles, see the winds have come. The winds have their special work to do. Look! the blossoms are now being literally turned around. They are finding themselves face to face with other blossoms, never seen by them before. But should those flowers of Mine look upon the newly discovered ones with anything other than Love, Peace, Happiness, Friendship, Regard and Understanding? That is Life, is it not?

You are the blossoms of My garden; become not too attached to the place where you alighted the last time. Become not a 'hot-house' plant that has to have but one 'clime.' Discard the petals of confinement. Let your blossom share its Nectar, its delicate perfume, all along that Path to Me. Release yourself from your own selfish-mind-made walls of confinement. I have given you intelligence, understanding and discrimination to transplant, transform; but, a word of warning! Do not become transient! Just as the daisies of the field have their roots attached to earth, so must yours be attached to unchanging, indestructible roots of Sathya. Turn the leaves but hold to the bough!

"Viveka, as you know, means both Wisdom and Discrimination. Many words have double meanings, many actions have two-fold purposes. So let me give you a clearer understanding of Discrimination. You should understand this word, for it too, has more than one meaning. I am not going into the meaning of this word but I want more to explain its purpose. To discriminate does not at all mean, that you think less of another by preferring not to associate. Not at all! Some daisy plants enjoy being with a thorn-covered cactus while others find their equanimity with other daisies...find your Path of Petals to Me!

"All are Mine; all are Yours, so we do not discriminate one from another, all are loved equally.

But, Charles, could you mix tar with water to let it work?"

Charles Penn
1st Jan. '66, U.S.A.

Marakata Linga

The Sivaratri Festival celebrated all over India especially in places hallowed by Saivite tradition and sanctified by Siva shrines, is nowhere so alive with splendour and meaning as at Puttapparthi, where that day, during the auspicious hour of Lingodbhava, the actual Linga emerges from the physical body of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, who is Siva-Shakti Swarupa Himself.

No wonder, therefore, that about 20 to 30 thousand eager pilgrims assembled here to fill their eyes with the thrilling scene and to listen to the inspiring Teachings of Bhagavan. At 7-30 A. M. on that holy day, Baba hoisted the Prasanthi Flag, over the Nilayam, after a short discourse, in which He exhorted every one to transform his own body into an abode of peace, that is to say, a Prasanthi Nilayam. He asked that the Prasanthi Flag, which summarised and symbolised the successful Sadhaka who achieves Sakshatkara through the conquest of Kama Krodha Dwesha etc, and through the expansion of Love and the practice of Yoga, be hoisted over every heart, simultaneously with the Hoisting on the Nilayam. By 5 P. M., the vast open space in front of the Santhi Vedita (the newly constructed hexagonal Mantapa, with friezes of Gitopadesa and of Sita-Rama with Lakshmana and Hanuman, and with the Sivalinga represented on every pillar) was a sea of expectant faith. The Principal of the Markandeya Sanskrit College Aukiripalle, Brahmasri Deepala Pichayya Sastry and Sri Paturi Madhusudan Rao addressed the gathering. Bhagavan, in His Divine Discourse, described the inner significance of Upavasa, Jagarana and Puja that are laid down by the Sastras as obligatory on Sivaratri Day. He spoke on the methods by which man has to sanctify his senses, his intellect and his life.

Then, when the 30 thousand devotees were singing exultantly, "Om Sivaya; Om Sivaya" an emerald linga, (three inches high and five inches broad, complete with base) that had been forming, since days, in Him, emerged from His mouth, to the supreme delight of every one! Every year, since 1940 when Baba declared that He was Sai Baba, come to restore Dharma and foster His Bhaktas, this indisputably Divine Emergence of the Linga, (one or many, emerald or crystal or silver) has happened on Mahasivaratri Night, about 9 P. M. giving immense joy to all.

Exhilarated beyond words by this Divine Event the vast assemblage spent the entire night in Bhajan and on the 19th at 7 A. M., before Mahamangalarathi, Baba spoke for some time, calling upon the people to cherish the Message of Sivaratri—the message of sense-control and mind-control of the conquest of the ego.

On the 20th, Prof. P. V Suryanarayana of Narasaraopet addressed the gathering and spoke on Bhakti. Baba referred to the handicaps which the Bhakta has to overcome, the chief of them being the cynical opposition from unbelievers, who revel in falsehood and vicious scandal. He wanted that they should not calculate the time spent in Namajapam etc, and demand results in proportion. They should on the other hand try to sanctify every moment of their lives by acts of service to themselves and to others. They serve themselves best, if that approach nearer and nearer Gods with every breath. They can approach God only through detachment to the world and service with no thought of reward.

On the 27th, Baba presided over the School Day Celebrations of the Sri Sathya Sai Baba Zilla Parishad High School at Bukkapatnam. He spoke of the need to supplement the present curriculum of studies in schools giving the students training in spiritual discipline also, so that they may acquire equanimity and peace of mind, to face the travails of life. He called upon the

elders to provide good examples to the younger generation, examples of good conduct, sweet speech, reverence to parents, faith in God, fear of vice, etc. He called for full co-operation between the home, the school and society, in shaping the children into useful citizens and good individuals.

On the 2nd March, Baba left for Hyderabad, on the first lap of a long tour.

Prasanthi Nilayam News

Feb 16:	Baba addressed a meeting of Volunteers, at the Prasanthi Nilayam.
18:	Mahasivaratri Festival Flag Hoisting Ceremony Installation of Kalasa on Santhi Vedika Discourse by Baba Lingodbhava Akhandabhajan
19:	Mahamangalarathi, 7-30 A. M. Baba's Discourse Evening: Uyyalothsavam; Discourse by Baba
20:	Discourse by Baba
27:	Baba presided over the High School Day Celebrations, at Bukkapatnam.
March 2:	Baba left for Hyderabad.
5,6	Three Day Session of Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha, Hyderabad Centre, at the Exhibition
7	Ground, Nampally, Hyderabad. Discourses by Pundits and Scholars. Discourse by Baba every day.

Dharmakshetra for All

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba left Prasanthi Nilayam on 2nd March and passing through Anantapur and Kurnool reached the Capital of Andhra Pradesh the same night. The Anniversary Meetings of the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha, (Hyderabad), an instrument devised by Baba for the uplift of the Vedas and Sastras and the revival of Sanathana Dharma as part of his Task of Dharmasamsthapana were held in the Exhibition Grounds on 5,6 and 7 March. The Hon'ble Law Minister and the Hon'ble Minister for Panchayat Raj Govt. of Andhra Pradesh as well as the Chairman of the Law Commission presided each day over the mammoth gatherings of 50 to 60 thousand citizens who eagerly listened to the Adhyatmic Discourses of pundits and scholars and the divine Upadesh of Baba Himself each day.

Prof. V. K. Gokak the famous Kannada writer, Director of the Institute of English run by the British Council, Prof. D. Venkatavadhani of the Osmania University, Hon'ble Sri Gottipati Brahmayya, Chairman, Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council, Sri V. K Rao, I C S, Dr. S Bhagavantham, D Sc, Sri Anantaraman. Chief Secretary to the Government of Andhra Pradesh, Sri. P. Satyanarayana. Retd. Judge, Supreme Court, Hon'ble P. K. Savant, Bombay all took part in the proceedings of the Vidwanmahasabha. They were all welcomed introduced and thanked by Dr. B Ramakrishna Rao Ex Governor of Kerala and U. P. States, the President of the Mahasabha.

Baba emphasised the chief goal of life as self-realisation, which alone can endow one with prasanthi, the highest peace. While appreciating the phenomenal victories of science in the exploration of outer space and in enabling man to zoom around the earth, Baba exhorted man to probe ever so little into his inner consciousness and become master of the instincts and impulses which lead him into hate and greed, vanity and envy.

On the 12th March, Baba visited the Heavy Electricals Factory at Ramachandrapuram and blessed the workers and others responsible for production and left for Bombay, via Sholapur and Poona. He reached Bombay on the night of the 13th, and He took residence with the President of the Maharashtra Branch of the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha, Sri P. K. Savant, Minister of Agriculture in the Government of Bombay.

The Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samiti, Bombay had made elaborate arrangements at the spacious Gwalior Palace on Worli Beach, right on the seashore, for tens of thousands of devotees to receive His Darshan at the Bhajan Sessions held twice a day under the leadership of Bhaktas like Principal Nagarkar of the Bharatiya Sangitha Kalasala of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Andheri. From the 14th to the 25th March, all Bombay appeared to stream into the Palace Grounds to have Darshan of Baba and to share in the thrill of singing the Name of the Lord Baba walked among the vast gathering which novas disciplined and devout. Hundreds of trained volunteers, both ladies and gentlemen, served the visitors with humility and loving regard. They received their footwear on trust and returned them while they left, with care and speed. They provided drinking water and first aid; they led the sick and the old to protected areas; they kept the grounds clean and charming, fragrant with devotion and love. They also served the vast sea of humanity that surged into the Vallabhai Stadium on 16th and 17th March to hear Baba's Divine Discourses and on the 20th, (Sunday) when in anticipation of unprecedented gathering (Sunday Evening) the

Bhajan Session was held at the Stadium instead of the vast open spaces around the Gwalior Palace.

The lighting and decoration of the premises of the Palace rendered it an abode of Divinity. Baba took residence there on the 19th and thereafter, it attained a Halo of Holiness which attracted hundreds of thousands towards it. With the sea on one side murmuring an incessant Pranava and the sea of humanity on the other, exulting in incessant Jai, the Palace shone resplendent like a gem of Godliness. It is an experience which can never be wiped from memory.

Hon'ble Sri P. K. Savant received Baba at the Stadium on the evening of the 16th and offered Him the homage of Maharashtra, to which He had come again, on the great task of moral regeneration. Hon'ble Bharde, Speaker of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly presided. Baba's Telugu Discourse was translated in lucid and impressive Hindi by Dr. B. Ramakrishna Rao; Bombay thanked him from her heart for this signal service. In fact, no one else could have successfully carried out this assignment, for it required one who is closely associated with the mission of Baba and who is saturated with devotion to Him and His Message. Dr. Ramakrishna Rao very kindly stayed on, until 26th and so, was available for translating further discourses by Baba at Bombay. On the 17th, the gathering was presided over by Hon'ble Sri Page, Chairman, Legislative Council, Bombay. The members of the Sathya Sai Seva Samiti and of the Maharashtra Branch of the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha prayed to Baba to bless them and the citizens of Bombay on Gudi Padua Day, the New Year Day, 23rd March. Baba graciously agreed.

More than two hundred thousand people filled the galleries and central lawns of the Vallabhai Patel Stadium on the auspicious Gudi Padua day, in the evening, for the Darshan of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, who had during the ten days of His Stay planted Himself securely in the altars of their hearts. Hon'ble Sri P. K. Savant said, "We will cherish the New Year Message that he gives us now, for many years. This is the proudest day in the lives of all who are present here. Each petal, in the flowers that make up this garland which I am now privileged to offer Him, represents the wholehearted devotion and prayers of thousands and lakhs of minds and hearts." Hon'ble Sri Page called upon all to take Baba's precious message to heart and remind themselves of it every moment of their lives, for it will sweeten and lighten the burdens of life for each one.

Baba said, "Every moment is new, every hour is new, every day is new, every month is new; and, so, there is no need to wait for one whole year to pass, in order to make resolutions about Sadhana or attempts to improve oneself. Utilise every moment and draw benefit therefrom, for the realisation of the main purpose of human life, viz., the rediscovery of the Divinity that has been neglected, in the confusion of worldly life. Man is simply being tossed about by every wave and wind for he has no knowledge of the direction or the goal or even of the place from which he has come. Fundamentally, man is not a flame flickering on a windy peak, he is not a monkey that has taken a few steps forward or a cat or some other animal. He is the child of Immortality, the heir of great heritage, a candidate for the highest honour of Divinity.

He can know his nature, by a study of the Vedanta, which is an armour that will guard him against grief and travail. Then, he will know that God is immanent in the Universe as butter is immanent in milk, or as milk itself is immanent in the cow, though He can be secured only by

selective effort, as milk is got from the udder or butter is got by churning the milk. That effort is called Sadhana, which is both moral and intellectual. God is as Light which illumines all around, provided there is no shade for the lamp preventing its spreading in any one direction. If you hide the light by means of a shade from illumining your direction, then, there is no use blaming God for partiality.

Sadhana is very necessary for spiritual development and for moral improvement. It is like the iron box in which you keep gold, so that it may be safe. You cannot keep gold in a golden box, with a gold lock, can you? Then, it becomes an even greater source of temptation for the thief. So, hard penance becomes necessary to preserve the gain in spiritual development.

The wisest Sadhana is that which is aimed at wiping off the egoistic attachment towards objects and persons. Know that all that is earned and secured have to be given up by you when death calls; do not develop attachment, lest your last moments will be haunted by fear and grief. Keep all your earnings on trust, as if you are a temporary custodian. Then there will be no grief, when you have to leave them aside and go."

Baba called upon the rulers of the land to take their share in the propagation of the ideals of Sanathana Dharma and sow the seeds of Bhakti and reverence among the children so that they may lead happy and peaceful, lives. He was happy that Ministers and Legislators were members of the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha at Bombay and he expected them to so shape the curriculum in schools, that children will get a glimpse of the strength-giving principles of Vedanta and of the elementary rules of Sadhana.

Rejecting the floral jeep with a floral umbrella that the organisers had prepared for His Going round the stadium to give Darshan to all, Baba graciously walked towards the enclosures and blessed the cheering thousands.

On the 24th March, Thursday, Baba presided over the Bhumipuja on a three and half acre plot near Powai, Bombay, for what He most significantly named "Dharmakshetra," a Centre for the spiritual regeneration for which He has come. A Large number of devotees had gathered there and they celebrated the event with Bhajan and Sankirtan. Baba planted on the site the Name Board carrying the assurance for the world soon coming under His Guidance, the Realm of Dharma, the Dharmakshetra which the Bhagavad-Gita envisaged.

During His stay at Bombay, Baba discussed with the members of the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha committee as well as other seekers various problems of individual and social spiritual uplift. He visited the homes of as many earnest devotees (Eastern and Western) as His thickly packed timetable would allow, and He blessed many more at the Gwalior Palace with personal interviews. In fact He stepped into the hearts of all with His great Message of Universal Love.

Baba addressed the volunteers on the 25th March, appreciating their tireless service for the lakhs of people who attended the Bhajan sessions and the Public Meetings. He blessed them all, assuring them of success to all endeavours towards bettering the lot of their brothers and sisters.

On the 26th, Baba left Bombay, bearing with Him, the allegiance of the countless number of persons whom He had contacted. He reached Poona (Kirkee) at night and gave darshan to about 2000 people doing Bhajan in a specially erected Pandal. He stayed with a devotee at Kirkee itself and on the 27th, another Two hours of Darshan at a Bhajan session was given.

He arrived at the Andhra Association where He was welcomed with devoted enthusiasm by about 3000 Andhras and their friends and families. Baba exhorted them to sustain themselves with spiritual food, like Japam Dhyanam and Namasankirtan so that the real purpose of human existence can be realised.

Later in the day, He left Poona and motored all the way to Sholapur and from thence to Gulbarga, in the State of Mysore, which He reached in the early hours of 28th March, that day. Sunrise saw thousands of eager aspirants sitting in long files, in the garden of the 'Ivanshahi' Palace where Baba stayed awaiting His Darshan and blessings. Baba moved among them, distributing the precious Vibhuti Prasadam and He had a kind word or a benedictory glance of the eye for every sick or suffering person in that vast gathering. The students of the medical College were there in a group and Baba had a few minutes with them, during which He blessed them all. Then Baba arrived at the Public Gardens where the citizens had gathered in several thousands for Bhajan and Darshan. Gulbarga was long awaiting this precious chance and so the people turned up early enough and joined enthusiastically in the bhajan. Baba Himself taught them a few Bhajan songs and they responded with wholehearted joy.

Baba left for Hyderabad about 11 A M and reached the place in the evening. On Sri Rama Navami Day Baba inaugurated the monthly meetings of the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha, planned by the Hyderabad Branch and after staying on for a few more days in the capital city of, Andhra, Baba returned to Prasanthi Nilayam on the 4th April.

A large number of devotees was awaiting Him here since weeks and so, Baba graciously started the coveted "interviews" with them the very next day; in spite of the intensity of summer, Baba is staying on until about the third week of April, in order to quench the thirst of the hundreds of pilgrims who are coming every day. Thus, from 2nd March to 4th April, when Baba was on tour in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Mysore, lakhs of people were inspired towards the higher life by His Teachings and lakhs more were blessed by the Darshan that He vouchsafed.

Besides the gatherings which He addressed and inspired, Baba blessed many a home in Hyderabad, Bombay and Poona—homes where His Worship is performed by sincere aspirants and which have been the centres of manifestation of His Divinity. The Defence Minister to the Government of India, Hon'ble Y. B. Chavan had a long talk with Baba at Bombay in the bungalow of Hon'ble P. K. Savant. In Bombay, He blessed by His visit the homes of many members of the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha Committee and of the Sathya Sai Seva Samithi, and of many devotees from the West as well as religious leaders and leaders of social uplift.

The month of March witnessed a Grand Digvijaya for the Sathya Sai Avatar since it filled so many hearts with an urge to take up a life of sadhana and Detachment and culminated in the inauguration of Dharmakshetra on the sacred soil of India. That was an experience that thrilled the hearts of all who have the future of Humanity in view; it assured us that the soul of India is in

the spiritual realm that Divinity has not given up humanity, and that man is not destined to whiz off in atomic dust. The bliss of being in Baba's Company during glorious days cannot be expressed in words, but an attempt has been made here to share with readers little of that immeasurable joy.

Editor

Maharashtra is holy land, where the stream of bhakti has flowed in floods for centuries; Kabir Tukaram Ramadas Jnaneswar have all filled the hearts of the people of this land with devotion; this will again be a great Centre of Dharmic Revival. Do not doubt this. Maharashtra will soon deserve the name and come into great fame in the spiritual field, which is the native field of Bharatbhumi.

Baba

"It is Done; You can go"

I joined Baba on 6th December 1965, at Whitefield and accompanied Him during His tour in, Madras etc. Dr. B. R. joined at Madras, at the last part. We all accompanied Him to Whitefield in the last week of December. We had an exhilarating elevating and glorious time throughout the Tour with Him.

On the New Year Day at Whitefield, He received Pranams from about a dozen persons collected in the hall there. He suddenly approached me and said, "Happy New Year, Happy New Year", striking me at the same time twice on my back. I was thrilled and felt supremely happy. I was moved at His Prema. I knelt at His Feet. We accompanied Him on the 6th January to Prasanthi Nilayam. Throughout the journey, we were treated to gladdening and elevating talks and melody, which quite often touched the inner chord.

His Grace it was that I was to stay till my birthday on the 8th January. I was blessed indeed to receive on that day His Ashirwadam, with "Nayanome premadhar, Vachanome Amruthadhar". He brought out by a wave of His Palm, as usual, a curved thin small shell with Vishnu, Shirdi Baba, our Baba and Shivalinga on it in bright colours and bestowed it on me.

I had to go to Tinnevely to perform a ceremony on the 21st January and so. I approached Baba to let me go. "How do you go?" he asked; "By bus to Penukonda and from there, by train" was my answer. "No; you are aged; you should avoid bus journey etc. You stay till Sankramana, January 14th and I shall send you by some Bangalore car" He said.

The Kumara Raja of Sendur arrived on the 14th and Baba told me that I could go in his car, when he returned. We could leave with His Prasadam only on the 17th. I told Baba that unless ten to twelve days notice was given to the railways, a First Class berth cannot ordinarily be secured and implored that He alone should help me, by guaranteeing a berth. He raised the palm and said, "It is done; you can go."

As soon as I reached Bangalore, I rushed up to the Railway Station. I was shown the Register of Reservations. "There were already seven persons on the Waiting List. The official said to me that there was no chance, unless another bogie came along, attached from Jalarpet. Else, I would have to go by the Second Class. I dreaded to go by Second Class on that long journey, which involved also travel by night. ...However, I bought a first Class Ticket.

No additional bogie came along, the next day, attached from Jalarpet. I was advised to get into a Second, and if by chance, some one of the two or three that were to board from the Cantonment Railway Station did not turn up, I could get into the First Class. A certain Mr. Das who wanted four First Class berths had got only two and he was also pleading that he could not split up his party, one half to go in First and the other half in Second. I had half a mind to stay away and do the ceremony in Bangalore itself.

But, Bah, had told me to go! With mixed thoughts. I changed my first Class Ticket into a Second Class one and got into a compartment near by. There were only three in that compartment; I consoled myself that the journey may not be so uncomfortable. I was thinking of Baba's Guarantee. There were only three minutes for the departure of the train.

To my surprise, Mr. Das came running to my compartment, and said, he had surrendered his First Class Tickets and his whole party was travelling by Second Class. He told me, I could change. The Railway official also came and told me, I could change. My joy was unbounded I made a dash with my luggage and plumped into the berth. The train whistled off, almost at once.

Wonder of wonders! How Baba's Sankalpa worked, without prejudice to the other five or six persons on the waiting list whose names were above mine, and who had already left the platform some minutes before! What Graciousness! Nothing but Divine!

B S. K Vittal Rao
Bangalore

Thirsty Eyes and Ears

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is the Guide that we need at the present juncture, for He is the Lord who has promised to come in Human Form and reshape the destiny of the World, whenever Dharma declines.

Bhagavan is willing to appear as a respecter of the conventions laid down by human beings for the conduct of meetings etc and so, He has commanded me to seat myself here as President of this vast gathering of devotees, nearly, 50,000 strong.

I am conscious of the fact that all the tens of thousands of eyes here before me are thirsty to see the Divine Splendour of Bhagavan and all the tens of, thousands of ears here are thirsty to hear the Voice and the Message of Bhagavan. Every one present here who has seen or heard Baba already knows that Baba is always with them. Every one of us is near Him, wherever He may be,

for, He is everywhere. He is wherever He is remembered or prayed to. Whenever you think of Him, wherever you think of Him, He is to be found.

In these difficult times, we all need solace amidst the woes and sorrows that torment us. The world sorely needs the teaching of Dharma by a person possessing Divine Authority. So, let us all pray to Baba, "Give us solace; give us guidance; give us strength."

Bhagavan is the Avatar of Sai Baba of Shirdi, to whom millions look for strength and solace and so let me tell you, He belongs to Maharashtra in a special way, though He has come for all Humanity and for all countries.

Hon'ble Sri P. K Savant
Bombay 16-3-1966

Hitha And Priya

The recognition of one's innate Divinity and the regulation of one's daily life in accordance with that Truth are the guiding stars for those who are caught in the currents and cross currents of strife and struggle in populous cities like this. Without that Atmajnana, life becomes a meaningless farce, a mockery, a game of pools. It is the acquisition of that awareness that makes life earnest sweet and fruitful. Man is not aware of the grand goal of his pilgrimage. He is straying into wrong roads which lead him only towards disaster. He puts his faith in things outside himself and plans to derive joy, from and through them. He does not know that all joy springs only from the spring that is inside him; he only invests the outer things with his own joy drawn from inside himself; he envelopes the outer things with his own joy and then, experiences it as though from that other thing ... that is all!

When you try to prepare a meal, you may have with you all the materials you need: rice dhal salt lime spices vegetables. But, unless you have the fire in the hearth, you cannot get the edible meal. So too with life. Jnana (of your own reality, as Just a wave of the Ocean of Divinity) is the fire which makes the material world and the external activities and experience, edible and tasty, assimilable and health-granting and joy-giving. That joy is called Anandam; it is uplifting, it is illuminating; it is constructive.

Life 'here' is for the sake of reaching 'there'. That is to say, Ihanivasam is for para-prapti. And, let me tell you this. You cannot attain Sukham through Sukham. That is to say, the joy of release can be won only through travail and trial. Through pain is achieved by woman the bliss of mother-hood. Through toil, the coveted grain is earned by the farmer from the field. Through long days and nights of steady swatting is the examination passed and the Diploma won by the student. Deprive yourselves of luxury and even comfort, detach yourselves from what you hold dear and near through sheer ignorance of what is the thing most dear and most near to yourself, pine, struggle, strive ceaselessly and, then, you are blessed with the inexpressible Bliss of merger with the Universal, of Sakshatkara. It is grief that makes joy worthwhile, a precious possession; it is the pitch-dark night that prompts the seeker of light; it is death, that lends zest to life.

Life is not a simple affair; it is not governed by uniform laws which can be discovered and applied. Twice two may not always be four, in life, though it may be so in arithmetic. Each one has his own strength and weakness, his foibles, and fears; his skills and handicaps, and so no one prescription can be suggested for all. One day is sunny, but, the next may be rainy. One man may come upon a treasure while walking on a road; the man behind him on the same road may lose his purse and all that he possesses! Each one must proceed from the place where he is, at his own pace, according to his own light. But, if each has caught a glimpse of the Atmic Reality, of the source from which he has emerged and the goal into which he is to merge, then all will reach the goal of the journey, sooner or later. Once that glimpse is received, either through Grace or through a Guru or through some other means, the fascination for the body and the senses which dominate it, and the world which feeds the senses the fascination for the vainglorious adventures in search of fame and fortune, will become meaningless and will fade away; man will then have instead of the Deha-bhranti which now torments him, the yearning to know and be established in the Dehi the Divine Indweller.

For that yearning and the pursuit that is impelled by it, the first equipment that is necessary for the individual is 'a rigorous self-examination' to remove all evil from oneself. Do not try to cover up the defects the down-dragging tendencies and habits. When people go to a shop to purchase cloth to have dresses prepared for themselves, have you noticed that they prefer coloured materials to white? The answer they will give when you question them why they choose coloured material is, "It will not reveal dirt"! So, you see how anxious people are to hide their defects, instead of striving to remove them. They are so much attached to physical comfort and objective pleasure. Really speaking, the body has to be treated as a wound that has to be washed, bandaged, and treated with medicated ointment, three or four times a day. That is the real purpose of food and drink and raiment. Thirst is the disease; drink is the drug. Hunger is the disease; food is the medicine. Craving for pleasure is the disease for which detachment is the medicine.

Once the Alma is cognised, all is Unity; you will find that all is really One. This is the goal prescribed by the ancient scriptures of this land. But, the children of this sacred land have neglected the path and they are today struggling in the quagmires and cesspools of faction and fear. When the four bulls that grazed in the jungle were united and watchful of each other's safety (for they felt they were all One) the tiger did not approach them; but, when discord broke them and created out of the One, four separate individuals, they were attacked one by one, and destroyed by the tiger. That is the fate of those who feel separate. Know that though Vyaktis may be separate, the Shakti is One; that Shakti is the Param-atma-tattwa.

This is the Message that I bring—the Message that will confer strength; peace, hope and fulfillment. This Message is Hitha, though it may not be priya. That is to say, it is surely beneficial though it may not be pleasing. A patient has to take drugs and put himself through regimen that is beneficial; he cannot ask for only sweet medicines and comfortable regimen. The Doctor knows best. He has to be obeyed, for the sake of recovery. The mantris of Ravana spoke only what was priya to him; they were afraid and so, they proved dangerous counsellors. Vibhishana, the brother, alone gave him the hitha drug, the drug which would have cured him; but, since it was not priya, Ravana rejected it and fell into perdition.

The Vedas and Sastras, since they were won by penance and travail by sages and seers who were interested only in the welfare of humanity and the liberation of Man are the greatest repositories of Hitha. They advise that Man must regulate his 'out-look' and develop the 'in-look'; the inner reality is the foundation on which the outer reality is built. It is like the inner wheel in the car, which directs the outer wheels. Know that the basic reality is God, Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent. Become aware of it and stay in that awareness always. Whatever the stress and the storm, do not waver from that Faith. Or you can earn that awareness by reminding yourselves of it, with every breath of yours. How can you so remind yourselves, you may ask. By means of any one of His Names, any Name that is fragrant with Divine Perfume, any Name that is reminiscent of His Beauty, His Grace, and His power.

Start with this first lesson, from the spiritual primer. Do not merely boast that you have mastered the Bhagavad-Gita, having read it a hundred times over, and learnt by rote all the slokas with all the commentaries so far written upon them. Among all the millions who were taught the Gita, Arjuna alone had the Viswarupa Darshan, the realisation that this Universe is but a partial manifestation of his Immeasurable Glory; why is it that these great pundits had no such experience ? Realisation of that reality can come only to the aspirant who deserves it. Arjuna had reached the highest stage of surrender when the teaching started and during the process, he had unexcelled Ekagratha or Concentration. No wonder he was blessed. Unless one has the same degree of Tyaga, the same yearning and the same concentration, how can one expect the result that Arjuna attained? It is no easy path, this path of Sharanagati, of prapati that the Gita lays down. The seed that is dried in the sun will sprout when planted in the soil; it has Janama and Marana; the cycle of birth and death cannot be got rid of by study and, scholarship. Most Sadhakas are like the dried seed only. But, Arjuna was not a dried seed; he was a fried seed. He was Gudakesa, who had mastered the senses. He had repelled the advances of Urvasi, whom he defeated, by his attitude as a son towards his mother.

For all who seek to cleanse the mind and climb upwards to the realm of spiritual bliss where 'this' and 'that' are discovered as ONE, the uninterrupted remembrance of the Name is the most effective Sadhana.

Discourse at Bombay by Baba on 16-3-1966

Cities Aflame

Have you seen Baba
Who sets cities aflame with longing
and, drenches them with the delight of existence
You've missed the very meaning of your life
IF you haven't seen Him
And been spoken to by Him.

The Baba is a lawn of blue light
With a may-flower on top of His hair

And a golden lily on His cranium.
He is heater of a world in pain,
The blue -throated god
That drinks the poison of the world's suffering
To make it happy and whole.

He is the patriarch of each family
That gathers around his knee
And drinks the golden honey of his love.

He's the eternal child playing in his garden
Winning back the adults of an erring world
Through sheer simplicity and innocence of heart.
The Baba's aura of hair
Sends forth incessant arrows
To destroy the evil in the world.

He defies the laws of Physics and chemistry
That he might assert the Higher Law of Spirit.

A Linga materialises
That a million souls may be born.

Matter and spirit are Siamese twins
That have an identical body but a different face.
Only the androgynous God-
Ardhanariswara -
Purusha and Sakthi in One
Can solve the riddle of their birth and growth.

Have you seen Baba
Who sets cities aflame with longing
And drenches them with the delight of existence?
You've missed the very meaning of your life
If you haven't seen Him and heard Him.

Vinayak Krislina Gokak, Hyderabad

Krodha And Kama

Bharatmata is the mother of Vamadeva, who knew his identity with the Universal Prabrahman from the moment of his birth, of Prahlada, who from the day he lisped uttered the Name of Narayana; of Suka, who had the unique Advaitic Realistaion even while a boy; and of

Sankaracharya, who mastered the intricacies of Vedanta even while in his teens. She is the mother of heroes like Bharat, who gambled with lion cubs, Arjuna who could wield his undefeatable bow, in either band; of Shivaji, who faced fearful odds to fulfill the smallest wish of his Guru Samarth Ramadas. Among her children, we have men like Sibi, Harischandra and Karna who are shining examples of the spirit of renunciation and women like Sita Savitri and Damayanti who are brilliant stars in the firmament of virtue. No wonder India rose to the position of the Guru of the Globe, the Teacher of all Humanity. This heritage is fast being forgotten and India started a journey away from her legitimate direction.

Man, according to this ancient teaching, is not simply a coordinated collection of limbs, senses and sensations. He is all these governed by Intelligence, sharpened by the modes and memories earned through many births. That intelligence itself is an instrument with a limited range of efficiency; there are many goals which it cannot achieve. These can be reached only by the descant of Grace and Power from above. Complete surrender of the Ego to that Power will bring it down, fill you with Itself.

Vibhishana was capable of that surrender and so he was accepted and assured quickly. It took Sugriva much longer to reach that stage, for he had some personal aims to realise, through Rama and his faith in him was clogged by doubts. Has he the skill he professes to possess? Can he kill such a formidable adversary as Vali? He surrendered to Rama only when his doubts were cleared.

Speaking of the Ramayana, you will notice that there are two little incidents, centred round two minor characters, which sparked off the entire epic: the resentment of Manthara and the lust of Surpanakha, Krodha and Kama. In the Jeevitharamayana; the Life-epic of each of you, beware of these two, Krodha and Kama a tiny spark of each is enough to destroy Peace and Joy. Weed them out, before they destroy you. The mano-nasana or extinction of the mind (with all its likes and dislikes, its flowing out. into the objective world in search of joy) can be affected, if the senses are rendered ineffective. Then, like the faggots on which the corpses is cremated, in the process of cremation, the corpse as well as the faggots both become ashes. Sensory activity is the warp as well as the woof of the mind; when that ceases, the mind vanishes. It starves and dies.

To get Santosha and Shanti, you must develop a pure unsullied mind, unsullied by egoism and its progeny—lust, greed envy anger hatred and the rest. For this, you must seek Satsang (good company,) Satkarma (good deeds) entertain only Sadaalochana (good thoughts) and read Sad-granthas (good books). You may see a thousand good things or listen to a thousand good words or read a thousand good books—but, unless you put one, at least, into practice, the blemishes in the mirror of your heart will not be wiped off. The Lord cannot be reflected therein

Constant practice with full faith will transmute Nara into Narayana, Manava into Madhava; for, Narayana is your real nature, Madhava is your real essence. You are but a wave of the Sea; know it, and you are free.

From Discourse of Baba on 11-3-1966, Bombay

Baba's Grace

Even before I joined service on 4-6-1929 I had a strong longing to find a suitable Guru for myself, During my service and specially during the period of 1448 to 1956 when I was working as Assistant Director of Panchayats, U. P. Lucknow, I had the good fortune to have an opportunity to travel all over the province including the Himalayas. I visited every nook and corner of the province and came across a good many Sadhus and Saints but none came up to my standard or in other words, none could appeal to me.

I was working at Unnao when, my friend, benefactor and well-wisher and Guru Dr. E. V. Sastry informed me that Sri Sathya Sai Baba of Puttaparthi was the person who would satisfy me and that he was visiting Lucknow in the last week of March 1961. So I took leave and came to Lucknow, and paid homage to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. During my first Darshan, I was more than satisfied that here was the person for whom I was searching so far. On 4-4-61 I got the opportunity of having a minute with Bhagavan and in this short period he approved the Mantra that had been suggested to me and which I was repeating.

I retired from service on 31-12-61. I fell seriously ill about 20-12-61 and remained confined to bed till July 62. Then I slowly recovered. I had as yet to perform the marriage of my youngest daughter Usha and I was finding it hard. People either evaded the proposals on one ground or the other or demanded such a heavy dowry that it was beyond my capacity to pay. In this connection, I may be permitted to give one concrete case. There was a bachelor in engineering service at Lucknow. His father was dead and his elder brother was his guardian. This elder brother of his and my second son-in-law Sri Mahesh Prasad Misra M Sc. Deputy Collector, were not only class fellows but roommates also, for a very long time. So Sri Mahesh Prasad Misra went to negotiate the marriage. The elder brother of the groom not only refused the proposal but added that since I had retired I was not in a position to help his brother in his career.

The Government took up the question of my reemployment with effect from 1. 4.63. The officer in charge of the postings was a personal friend of mine. So I asked him to post me either to Lucknow, Kanpur or Varanasi. He expressed his inability to do so. Then I had a mind to refuse re-employment. I left for Puttaparthi in the second week of February 1963 though I was still a-bit weak. I was fortunate enough to reach there on the Shivaratri day and was present on the occasion of Lingodbhavam. The scene simply cannot be described. It has got to be seen. I had the good fortune of having the interview with Bhagavan on 4. 3. 63. Without my asking anything, Bhagavan said 'Mr. Shukla, why are you worried? The marriage of your daughter will be performed during April and May 63 and you will recover your health and your posting will be according to your liking.' Thereafter I returned to Lucknow.

When I came to Lucknow, my friend told me that he had posted me to Lucknow. So I questioned him why he did so when he had declined my request initially. He told me that circumstances had so cropped up that he found no other alternative! This is simply Baba's Grace.

I went to Kanpur to one place where I was negotiating the marriage of my daughter. The father of the boy agreed to my proposal and added that he would like to have the ceremony performed during summer months to which I agreed. He then asked me to accompany him to the boy and see the boy also, as I had not seen him. The boy was under training as Engineer at Tata's at Jamshedpur and was employed in the Heavy Engineering Corporation, Ranchi. So I accompanied him to Jamshedpur. The boy also accepted the proposal but added that the ceremony may be performed in the winter months as he will not be able to get leave in summer. So we came back. On the return journey, I dropped at Varanasi and told the father of the boy that my Guru had told me that the marriage will be held in April and May 63 and that I was ready and now he must settle the question with his son and even if he gave me a week's time I shall be able to perform the marriage.

The boy's father informed me on 1. 5. 63 that he had fixed the marriage on 11. 5. 63 and I should make all preparations. Of course I was ready and the marriage was celebrated on 11. 5. 63. It is needless to say that the boy I got was the best of all the grooms that I had seen so far seen and negotiated. This is also Baba's Grace.

Of course I have recovered my health in full.

I have got only one son and he did not continue his education after passing his Intermediate Examination. So the job he had was a poor one only. He was much dissatisfied and in addition to this he had three daughters and no sons and so my daughter-in-law was also very sad and dejected. I advised them to visit Puttaparthi and pay their homage to Bhagavan. So they proceeded to Puttaparthi in the month of October 63. They had the good fortune to have interviews with Bhagavan. Bhagavan granted the desire of my daughter-in-law and told her that she would have a son in near future and to my son he said that he shall get an offer of a good job from Bhopal in the month of December and he should immediately join. My son and daughter-in-law told me this thing at Puttaparthi when I went there in the second week of November 63 on the occasion of the birthday celebration of Bhagavan. They returned to Lucknow in December 63. No offer came from Bhopal in December 63 and so we were very anxious. The offer came in December 64 and so my son joined there. He has got a very good job beyond his qualifications and has been confirmed in the job also. This is also Baba's Grace.

In due course of time I got my grandson on 2. 8. 1964, as said by Bhagavan.

I had a great longing to visit Puttaparthi along with my wife on the occasion of Shivaratri in 1965. I had made all the preparations and was going to purchase tickets when my wife asked me not to purchase the tickets just then, as we could purchase them at the Station at the time of departure tomorrow. Then came the news of disturbances and so we had to postpone the journey. The postponement of the journey made me very sad. I surmised that I had not the Grace of Bhagavan to visit him at this time. Later on I came to know the reasons why Bhagavan had got my journey postponed.

My father became seriously ill on 20. 2. 65 and had not passed either stools or wind till 26. 2. 65. He lives in my ancestral village in district Barabanki at a distance of 36 miles from Lucknow. He came to Lucknow on the evening of 26. 2.65 and stayed at my younger brother's place in

Nishatganj. My brother phoned to me and I went there. As it was night we could do nothing but arranged to get him admitted in the Civil Dispensary at Hazaratganj on 27. 2. 65. My brother had a heart attack and he had just returned from the Medical College and was not in a position to do any running. So I took my father and got him admitted in the Civil Dispensary, Hazaratganja on 27. 2. 65. Despite all efforts, the Doctor could give no relief to my father aged 82 years who had become very weak and exhausted. On the morning of 28. 2. 65 Doctor asked my permission to open the abdomen and remove a portion of intestine, as it was a case of intestinal obstruction. I enquired from him as to chances of recovery of my father and he said that it was not more than 30 percent. Then I called in my brother and we were on the point of declining the permission and taking our father to Varanasi when I gave to pinch of Udi (Bhagavan's Udi) to my father and decided to take him to Medical College. So we removed our father to Medical college. A very young R. M. S. who had just completed his studies, was given the charge of my father. He simply inserted a rubber tubing and gave great relief to him He then slept and evacuated in the regular course on the morning of the 1st, March 65 and I brought him home after getting him discharged from the Medical college. Then I realized that Bhagavan knew that this thing would happen and so he did not allow me to visit him on the occasion of Shivaratri in 1965.

Not only this, there was another reason also When I visit Puttaparthi I generally stay there for a month or so. My grandmother (mother of my mother) was alive. She had no male issues, only two daughters my mother and my mother's sister. I had promised her that after her death I will perform all the rites and she should have no anxiety on that account. She suddenly breathed her last on 28. 3. 65 and so I rushed to Mirzapur district where she lived and except for the burning of her body, performed all other rites. I would not have been able to do this if I had gone to Puttaparthi and so it was the additional reason why Bhagavan did not allow me to visit Puttaparthi on the occasion of Shivaratri in 1965.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba is nothing less than an Avatar of Poorna Brahma and it is our good fortune that he is amongst us and we can enjoy his company and follow his advice and thus attain our Mukti.

D. P. Shukla. M. Sc. I. A. S. (Retd.)
Lucknow

Prasanthi Nilayam News

March 13 to 26:	Baba at Bombay
26, 27	Baba' s Engagement at Poona Discourse by Baba
28:	Baba at Gulbarga reached Hyderhad
31:	Inauguration of Monthly Meetings of the Hyderabad Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha by Baba
April 4:	Baba arrived at Prasanthi Nilayam
13:	Dr Triguna Sen D Sc, Vice-Chancellor, University of Jadhavpur, arrived at the Nilayam, for an interview with Baba.
14:	Mrs. Indra Knaur of the Indra Devi Yoga Foundation, Tecate, California arrived for an interview with Baba

Baba's Programme

Baba will be leaving Prasanthi Nilayam on the 1st of May. During May and June. He will be mostly out of Headquarters. Those intending to come for His darshan are advised to come to Prasanthi Nilayam in the month of July.

Gita Vahini

27

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

As the healthy glow of the body is hidden from sight by the clothes that cover it, the individual soul obscured by Ahamkara or egoism is not able to reveal the splendour of the Brahmatattvam, which is its treasured possession. For, Egoism is at the root of all evil, all defects, all deficiencies. It is born in Desire, or kama. Be free from egoism too.

The state of desirelessness is really the state of egolessness. And, what is Moksha or Liberation, except liberation from bondage to the ego? You deserve liberation when you break away from the bond of desire.

Men engage themselves, by and large, in activities prompted only by the desire to benefit from the results. They withdraw from acts that bring no benefit. But, the Gita condemns both attitudes. For, whether consequences follow or not, one cannot escape the obligation to be active. Man cannot completely give up activity. How then, can man avoid being caught up in the mesh of consequences? The Gita teaches that Karma-phala tyaga (giving up all attachment to the fruit of Karma) as the greatest Sadhana designed for this Purpose. Whether desired or discarded, hoped for or not hoped for, every act ends in some consequence, if not immediately, at least after some time. It is inevitable. The consequence may be good or evil; but, if the act is dedicated to the Lord, neither will affect the doer. By that sacrament of dedication, the deed is transmuted into a higher order and made divine, holy, sacred. On the other hand, acts performed under the inspiration of the ego will be fraught with bondage.

Those who are sincerely seeking to realize God to achieve Him, have to become free from the taint of desire. Become mamakara-sunya, devoid of the feelings of "I" and "Mine"; then, you attain Moksha, Salvation. That is the achievement of the goal of life. That stage knows no joy or grief; it is above and beyond them, both Krishna willed that His friend and devotee Arjuna should reach that state and so, He endeavoured to save him, by teaching him, the ways and means through a variety of methods. Moreover, He used him as an instrument to receive this precious gift for the good of all humanity.

Before concluding the sacred counsel, Krishna addressed Arjuna and said, "Give up all Dharmas and surrender to Me. I shall liberate you from all sin. That is to say, give up Aham-kara and Mamakara pride in the ego and in possessions and feelings of I and mine. Destroy the identification of the self with the body, which is only its cage or prison; get firm in the belief that all this is Paramatma and nought else. So, there is nothing else to be done except bowing to His Will and surrendering to His Plan. Man has to give up the twin activities of commission and omission, Sankalpa and Vikalpa, resolving and refusing. He has to follow the Lord's Commands; He has to accept His Will, be happy wherever He has placed him, however He has shaped him. He keeps himself far from the inquiry into the appropriateness or inappropriateness of his acts, but, does them as acts of worship to the Lord, acts for which no reward is expected. That is the sum of his duty.

Some dry Vedantins decked with strings of beads take advantage of this teaching of Krishna to give up all Dharmas and this assurance that He will liberate them from all sin, idly stretch their legs and loll with closed eyes; they shirk their legitimate duties but eat, sleep and roam about, as much as they like or can. They do not discriminate between what is good and what is bad; their excuse is that the Lord has commanded them to transcend Dharma. When elders at home or experienced seekers question their conduct, they answer, "Alas, that you too should blunder thus! Don't you know what the Lord has said in the Gita?"

I have accepted as the basis of my conduct, His Command, "Sarva Dharmaan Parithyajya". I have no need for advice from persons with lesser authority." They feel very proud of their devotion and orthodoxy.

Such people select from the words of the Lord only those portions which favour their inclinations. The words before and after are conveniently ignored, because they are unpleasant, though they are inseparable portions of the same injunction. They ignore the vital of the part of the command, in spite of the claim to be staunch votaries of the Gita.

Giving up all Dharmas, "Maam ekam saranam vraja", says, the Lord. That is "Surrender to Me alone". Have they surrendered thus? No. Have they at least the deep yearning for Liberation? No, for if they had it, they would not have neglected their legitimate duties. They would not have fallen a prey to the demands of food and sleep. Such men are glorious only in gossip; they are great only in glittering. They do not put the Lord's Command into actual practice. They are too idle to do so. Not even an atom of spiritual endeavour can be seen in them.

True aspirants can discern valuable truths in the divine words spoken by the Lord:

Sarva dharmaan parithyajya
Maamekam saranam vraja;
Aham thwaa sarva paapebhyo
Mokshayishyami, maa suchah.

Not that the Lord has said, "Sarva Dharmaan parithyajya", not, "Sarva Karmaan parithyajya". What then is the meaning of this statement? It means, "Perform all acts enjoined by the Lord, for His Glorification, without getting involved and lost in discussions of Dharma and Adharma."

Though you know that there is nothing for you to acquire, for you have placed complete trust in the Lord and live only as an offering to the Lord, still, like Janaka and others, you have to engage yourself in activity for the well-being of the world, Lokasangraha. The Sarvabhoota-antar-atma the soul immanent in every being is not distinct from the atma or soul that is in you. So, be Sarva-bhoota-hithe-ratha, that is to say, eager to promote the well-being of all beings. Perform all acts enjoined by the Sastras and Scriptures for this sake, in the spirit of dedication, with no eye on the fruits thereof. This is the true Nish-kama-karma. Understand the Gita well and, observing its injunctions, establish yourselves in the attitude of Nish-kama-karma. Do all duties as acts of worship, Hari-prasadam. That is the sole task. Leave the rest to Him, the fruit, the consequence, the result. Then, you receive the Grace of Hari and your life on earth is sanctified and becomes worthwhile.

For those who follow the path of Dharma ultimate victory is certain, in spite of diverse difficulties that might hamper them. Those who stray away from the path of Dharma might have wealth and comfort for long, but, they will be overpowered ultimately by disaster. The Kauravas and the Pandavas are the brightest witnesses for this truth.

The Kauravas steeped in Adharma were so blinded by conceit that they subjected the good Pandavas a variety of tortures; but, they met with total destruction. They had the support of all types of parties but, since they did not earn the strength of the grace of the Lord, they were deserted by fate, and ruined beyond repair. Bharatha teaches all people of Bharat this one lesson: Nothing can equal the Grace of God, not even the mightiest array of arms. This is the most valuable message that it embodies.

The Gitabhavanam (Mansion of Gita) is the mansion of Sathya and Dharma, erected on the soil of India, for the benefit of the World. Study it with faith and devotion. Experience the curative and restorative effects of its teachings by actual practice. For such, the Atmarama (the Atma so full of the spring of sweetness and bliss) will be ever present as a reality. The Lord will shower on him His favours in a trice. Pray to the Lord who has all the fourteen worlds in Him and you can certainly become master of the eight treasures, which give happiness here below, and what is even more desirable, Kaivalya (which is the fountain of Nitya-ananda, of Nitya-Sathya and Mithya-jnana).

Why wander about for ghee, when you, have butter with you? Acquire butter, that is to say, the Grace of the Lord, by means of implicit obedience of the rules of life laid down by Him. When that grace is won, one need not pray separately for Moksha or Liberation. He knows best what you should get and when. He will confer what you deserve and can benefit from. Yearn for Him, suffer anguish for Him; there is no need to yearn for Moksha, then. If that is done with no second thought, He will destroy all sin. Hold fast to Him; He can make you Immortal, like Arjuna. Those who seek to escape from this cycle of birth and death must obey the command of the Lord as laid down in the Gita and surrender to Him. Then, he will be crowned with success in every undertaking. He will achieve Victory.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Sankara And `Advaita'

In the history of Indian philosophy the place of Sankara is as assured as it is high. Although he disclaimed originality, he wrought a revolution in the minds of men, the salutary effects of which can be felt even today. He set a model in thinking and exposition which subsequent philosophers in India have striven to follow. A great metaphysician describes Sankara's style of writing as *prasanna-gambhira*, lucid and deep. His works are characterized by penetrating insight and analytical skill. The metaphysics of the Absolute which he taught is, it is true; difficult to understand. Any attempt to expound it would necessarily involve expression of obscurity. But Sankara's manner of exposition does not present us with the usual but unnecessary additional difficulty, which is obscurity of expression. He wrote stupendous works, both in prose and verse; and all of them are marked by depth of thought and lucidity of language. Among his major works

are the great commentaries on what are known as the three canons of Vedanta, viz. the principal Upanishads, the *Bhagavad-Gita*, and the *Brahmasutra*, and such independent manuals as the *Upadesasahasri* and the *Vivekachudamani*.

Very little is known about the life of Sankara, apart from the legendary accounts we have in the various *Sankaravijayas*. We can have only the barest outline of his life, although one would wish more information were available. Sankara was born of Nambudiri parents at Kaladi, a village on the west coast in Kerala, in A D. 788—the date which is generally accepted by scholars as the most probable. He lost his father quite early, and grew up to be a precocious boy under the loving care of his mother. The ways of the world had no attraction for him. He was born, not to lead an aimless life, to vegetate and wither away after a time, but with the greatest mission one could have in life, namely, to lead mankind to the blessedness of unexcelable peace, by dedicating himself dauntlessly and irrevocably to the quest of the Absolute and by sharing his great discovery with all his fellow-beings. So, he renounced the world at an age when most children do not leave behind their toys and trinkets, received formal instruction from Govindapada which gave him the insignia of spiritual leadership, and spent the rest of his life which was not long—for he died at thirty-two—in spreading far and wide the gospel of the Absolute. At a time when false doctrines were misguiding the generality of people, and orthodoxy had nothing better to offer to counteract the atheism of the heterodox than a barren and outmoded ritualism, Sankara recaptured the heights of the Upanishadic philosophy and brought from there for the benefit of humanity the waters of eternal life. Great as was his logical skill, it was not logic alone that crowned his mission with success, but a conviction and authority born of living experience. In the only oblique reference that he makes to himself in all his writing—and this occurs towards the end of the *Sutrabhasya*—he observes, 'How can one deny the heart-felt experience of another as possessing Brahman-knowledge while being in the body?'

*katham hy ekasya sva-hrdaya pratyam
brahma-ved nam deha dharanamcha aparena
pratikseptum sakyate?*

It was out of his own self-evidencing plenary experience that Sankara poured forth his philosophy which bears the name 'Advaita.' He mightily influenced the people of his time—even the tallest of them—and spread over the country a net-work of organizations to serve as its spiritual guide-posts. His philosophy has come to be regarded not only here in India but even abroad as 'one of the most valuable products of the genius of mankind in his researches of the eternal truth.' And as a great contemporary Indian philosopher rightly remarks, 'Even those who do not agree with his general attitude to life will not be reluctant to allow him a place among the immortals.'

The quintessence of the philosophy of Sankara is stated by himself in a half verse thus: The Absolute Spirit is the reality; the world of appearance is illusory the so-called individual soul is the Absolute itself, and no other.'

*Brahma satyam jagan mithya
jivo brahmaiva na purah*

The Upanishadic terms 'Brahman' and 'Atma' indicate the highest reality which is non-dual. As the nature of the Absolute cannot be defined in terms of any category, the Upanishads refer to it as 'not this, not this' (neti neti). This does not mean, however, that the Absolute is a night of nothingness, a contentless void. It is the plenary being, the sole reality. In some texts of the Upanishads, positive expressions are also employed with reference to Brahman—terms like *Sathya*, *jnana*, and *ananda*, existence, consciousness, and bliss. But these too are designed for making us understand the real by telling us what it is not, viz. that it is not non-being, not what is inert, and not that which is related to sorrow. To define a thing is to limit it, to finitize it. The infinite and the unlimited cannot be characterized in terms of finite categories. Brahman is *nirguna* without characteristics. Even to say that it is one is not strictly true; for the category of number is inapplicable to the Absolute. That is why Sankara calls his philosophy 'Advaita' the doctrine of the not-two, or non-dualism.

It is true that there are in the Upanishads passages which characterize Brahman as the cause of the world, and as the home of all auspicious qualities. But how are we to reconcile the two views—the view of Brahman as the Absolute without characteristics, and the view which characterizes it as the world-ground? For solving this problem, Sankara postulates two standpoints: the absolute (paramarthika) and the relative (vyavaharika). The supreme truth is that Brahman is non-dual and relationless. It alone is; there is nothing real besides it. But from our standpoint, which is the empirical relative standpoint, Brahman appears as God, the cause of the world. There is no real causation, the world is but an illusory appearance in Brahman, even as the snake is in the rope. This doctrine is known as *vivarta-vada* (the theory of phenomenal appearance) which is to be distinguished from its rival, PARINAMA-VADA (the theory of transformation).

The principle that makes for the phenomenal appearance of the world is called maya. MAYA has significance only from the relative standpoint of the Absolute. The supreme truth is that MAYA is that which (YA) is not (MA). But from our point of view, MAYA appears as an inscrutable power of God that veils the true and projects the untrue. The power of veiling is termed AVARANA, and that of projecting VIKSEPA. If one were to ask: is MAYA real or not? the only answer is: it is neither real nor unreal. Because the world of plurality appears, MAYA is not unreal; because MAYA is sublated by the knowledge of the non-dual self, it is not real. It cannot be both real and unreal. Therefore, it is indeterminable (ANIRVACHANIYA) Any inquiry into MAYA is not to make the concept intelligible, but to enable one to go beyond it. When one has gone beyond, there remains no problem to be solved.

Who is it that seeks to go beyond MAYA? It is the JIVA, the living soul. The soul is, in essence, the same as Brahman. On account of AVIDYA (nescience) which is the individual counterpart of MAYA it identified itself with a psycho-physical organism and is caught up in the tract of SAMSARA. The sheaths of body, life, and mind that cover the soul are products of MAYA. These, in consequence, come to be mistaken for the self; their characteristics are wrongly imposed on the imperishable spirit. The soul, which has neither birth nor death, is supposed to be born and to die with the body. Action and enjoyment are believed to belong to it. All these notions are due to ignorance. The only cure for this malady is true wisdom.

The reason why JNANA is taught in Advaita as the direct means to release is that release is not something which is to be newly achieved. Release (MOKSHA) is the eternal nature of the self. Only, this supreme fact remains unrealized because of nescience. What is to be accomplished is the removal of nescience. And, that which can accomplish this is knowledge. The point that should be specially noted is that by knowledge or wisdom what is meant here is not mere intellectual understanding but intuitive and direct experience. When all the obstacles to knowledge have been removed through KARMA-YOGA and BHAKTI-YOGA, and when the path of self-inquiry has been successfully pursued, the knowledge of the non-dual spirit dawns, even as the sun rises at the termination of the night. Release through knowledge is attained the moment ignorance is dispelled. As release is the eternal nature of the self one need not wait for realizing it till death overtakes the physical body. Even while tenanted by a body one is released at the onset of knowledge. Such a one is called a JIVAN-MUKTA. From his standpoint, there is no body at all. He seems to live in a body only for the unreleased. After a time when the body dies, we say 'He becomes liberated from the body' (VIDEHA MUKTA). But the truth is that there is no difference in MUKTI (release). When release is attained, there is no more travail for the soul. It realizes its non-difference from the Absolute, which is called *ADVAITA-ANUBHAV*A (experience of non-duality). 'When all the desires that the heart harbours are gone', says the Upanishad, 'then the mortal becomes immortal, and attains Brahman even here.'

To Sankara goes the credit of consolidating advaita and of making it clear beyond doubt that according to this philosophy, there is no need for final despair, no ground for ultimate doubts. The sole Reality which Advaita teaches can never be denied, for it is the self of even him who denies. In the *Upadesasahasri* Sankara declares: 'The Self is not an object. There is neither change nor manyness in it. It can neither be received nor rejected either by itself or by anyone else. He knows that he is the self which is within and without, which is beyond birth and death, decay and age—why should he have even the least fear? Fear results from the erroneous cognition of plurality. Fearlessness is attained when the non-dual Absolute is realized. *Advaita* and *abhaya*, non-duality and fearlessness are but two names for one and the same experience. By calling humanity to a realization of this truth, and by showing the way to that realization, Sankara became the great benefactor of the world that his name signifies. A verse which celebrates his unique service to humanity reads thus:

*sruti-smrti purananam alayan karunalayam;
namami bhagavatpada sankaram lokasanharam*

"I salute Sankara-bhagavatpada, the bestower of blessedness on the world, the repository of wisdom that is contained in the sacred texts, and the incarnation of grace."

Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan M.A. Ph.D.

One should clearly realize, the Self in all beings and all successive multitudes of created beings (akhilam bhutha jatham) in the Self. He should repeatedly and persistently perceive all things as the Self, having for an example, the relation between water and waves. There is only one Brahman without a second as is declared by the Vedanta. The many do not in any way exist.

(Neha naanaasthi kinchith) But, he who sees this Universe as manifold, passes from death to death. (Sankara: Sathasloki...60)

Surrender of Ego

Baba has said often that Lakshmana is the supreme example of Sharanagati or surrender to God; he is pole on which the flag of Rama flew. He is as straight and serviceable and at the same time as egoless as the pole. Baba in one of His recent discourses related an incident from the Ramayana which shows how complete was the surrender. When Rama reached Panchavati He said to Lakshmana, "I feel delighted at this beauty of forest and beauty of water. The woodlands are in blossom. O gentle brother! You are nipuna, a man of insight. On which spot shall we put up the hermitage? Cast your eye around and fix a sight for the thatch-house where we can spend delightful days." Lakshmana was not happy when he listened to this command. He hung down his head and with folded palms, pleaded plaintively.

*Paravaan asmi, Kakuthstha! thwayi varsha sathamsthithe
Swayam thu ruchire dese kriyathaam ithi maamvada*

"Even after hundred years of association with you shall not exercise any independent judgement; I am your dependent, ever. Treat me only as a dependent. I am happy only when so treated. Tell me, of your own record, to erect the hut, at the place which is agreeable to you. I am but an instrument." That is the true sign of the ego-less person. No wonder Rama is described as "Supreethah" "Well pleased" at this reply. As a matter of fact, Rama had requested Lakshmana to select the site, merely to reveal this duality.

So, without further argument, Rama himself pointed out a spot which was "Sarvagunaanvitham" "possessed of all good qualities. "

Baba is the Breath of my Life

The world is a big theatre where the sky is the roof of lights
Big and small. The Earth is carpeted green dotted with colours
And all the lives in the sea, in the air and on the earth
Are actors, playing various roles, at His command
Some enjoying, some suffering, some jumping some fallen
This variety show has marvelous interest, with two screens.
Called Day and Night, brilliant, on the stage, for one and all.
Into this world, I am ushered in, by Baba
To play my role of a fool, now smiling, now weeping
Never steady in devotion to one great and grand idea.
But, Baba likes me, as He has made me by His own hand
And plays with me, as a child will play with a pup!

And so every breath of mine is from Baba
Who sits in my heart, blowing life through me
His breath ambrosial, for my joy.
O my ecstasy is beyond compare!
O.....Baba, Thou art Sai, (the Mother), Baba (the Father)
Thou art the Bandhu (the Relative) Sakha (the Friend)
How can I forget Thee and live here?
If thou wert not with me, nay life would collapse
And nothing would be left of me.
Now, I am able to breathe, sing and speak
Because Thou art the Life of my life, the Breath of my breath
Thou art the root and the fruit of my life
Thou art my God in all His Glory;
Yea...Thou art Lord Sri Krishna, come down to earth
To lift all souls submerged in world's restless Ocean of Samsara
I saw Thee and I See Thee, and my glory is in clinging
To Thy sacred Feet and washing them with my tears
Before offering the flowers growing in any heart
For Thy Worship and Thy Love,
Down the valley, up the mountain,
All over the dwelling places of men
Baba's footprints blaze with love
To enrich the soil and the soul of man.
I am a poor and humble devotee
Who has drunk deep Baba's manna
My joy has risen full to its brim,
My Peace is dancing before my eyes;
I love nothing but Baba's beaming eyes
I love nothing but Baba's beaming smiles
I Owe nothing to anyone but to Baba
Whose Grace abundant has fertilised my heart
Whereon resplendent harvest has been garnered
To fill the Earth with my joy and peace.
Let me fulfill Baba' s Commandment
That nothing but Peace and Joy we shall have.

Dr. K. Vaidyanathan, M. A., Ph. D.

(Dr. Vaidyanathan full of "ecstasy beyond compare" shed his physical body last month. His was a dedicated life saturated with Divine Grace, as these and other poems and writings of his which we have offered to readers, have revealed.) Ed.

God in Human Form

God is formless and with form, too; He transcends both form and Formlessness. God with form is visible, we can touch Him and feel Him and be aware of his Presence. Such is Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba He is God, in human form.

Goethe referred to the 'open secret', open to all, but, seen by none—the divine mystery which lies everywhere and in all beings. 'This divine mystery is in all times and in all places, veritably is'. In most times and places, it is overlooked. And, so do the men of our age when God in human form is amidst us.

To quote Carlyle, 'It is a pity for everyone of us, if we do not know it but live ever in the knowledge of it. 'Among the wise (the Buddhas), Baba is the wisest; among the holy, He is the holiest; among the pure, He is the purest. And, to the sick, He is the divine Healer.

Bhagavan has hailed to give us the Immortal Drink which never perishes, light that never extinguishes nirvana that takes us to Him. Such Divine Person lalties, the Avatars, lift men above the mundane and preserve peace, amidst the fissiparous and destructive tendencies of man. Our age must be proud of possessing God incarnate amidst us enabling every one to see Him. We have to regret that the realisations comes to some too late.

Baba is Omnipotent indeed. His Bhaktas see Him work miracles, beyond the reach of thought. On 4th July, '65, an invalid unable to work was carried into His room by Baba's touch, he simply walked out. Bhaktas know His Grace. Many are the blessings and gifts given to those who win His Grace. His Darshan itself gives the cure to physical and mental ills.

He is omnipresent, too. Bhaktas in London, California and South Africa feel His Presence. Two examples can be given: Sri Kunjappa Sadhu from Durgasramam, Vijayapuram, Tanjore Dt wrote, "I yearned to go over to Puttaparthi, but, since I am an invalid. He himself came to me". H. Charlton from Kabul wrote, "Baba has kept His promise; He is ever near." In the Gita, He says, He is in everything. Only one has to realise it. Prahlada could see Him in the wooden Pillar. Baba is the boatman of the boat, Himself is the destination. He blesses us and leads us. As He steers our soul, He is in us.

And as for His omniscience, if a student who has not spent more than a year at a High School, can talk to anyone in his own language, is it not Omniscience? He can quote from the scriptures, and correct even Sastris and cite verses from the ancient texts. He reveals Himself as God In different manifestations and interprets Divinity from many angles.

Jesus performed miracles and Christians do not under-rate them. Jesus won a king and lost a leper. Miracles are not performnd to win the favour of the helpless and the diseased, but, to give them relief. It is service to man, to living beings, done only out of pure love for all creation. Jesus took upon Himself the sins of man. So does Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He suffers to relieve the wretched. He grants sight to the blind and vision to the spiritually backward. The lame, the crippled, the lunatic are restored. Poor or rich, Kuchela or Kubera, Davies or Lazarus, it is immaterial to Him. He is the 'Kindly Light' leading them, not one step further, but many steps towards the realization or revelation of God. Many are the Dhritarashtras who are blind,

physically, mentally and spiritually. They are all granted true sight, and insight. He is the Guru of all gurus, the vid of the Vedas, the Goal of man, the supreme power, God in all His Manifestations.

With Faith, one can perceive His Divinity, it is 'faithful' that goes first to Heaven, not either 'Hopeful' or even 'Christian', in the Pilgrim's Progress Baba has come with His Grace to savor man. Trust Him and He will lift you up. His Prasanthi Nilayam is the kingdom of God. He is Satyam, Sivam, Sundaram God in Human Form.

Prof. A. V. Suryanarayana

Baba at Anantapur

Baba left Prasanthi Nilayam on 17th April in the evening and reached Anantapur about 8-30 P. M. He took residence with Sri Gopinath, the District Educational Officer. On the morning of the 18th, He proceeded to the Government Girls High School and Basic Training School, which was celebrating the School Day, under His august Presidentship. There were about 800 students present, with their mothers and a large number of 'old students' of the institution. Baba hoisted the National flag in the School Quadrangle, and, presided over the programme of Distribution of Prizes, the unveiling of the portraits of retired Heads of the Institution and the presentation of thankful homage to their services.

Then, He spoke to the students for about an hour about the duties and responsibilities to themselves and the society at large, He described the spiritual greatness of this country and mentioned the names of many saints and sages who embellish the pages of history. He gave many instances of their heroism and sacrifice and dwelt at length on their steadfast Sadhana which was ultimately rewarded with success. He exhorted them to develop mathabhimanam, kalabhimanam, bhashabhimanam, Vidyabhimanam, and deshabhimanam that is to say, pride of one's religion, one's language, one's native culture, one's attainment of education, and one's country. He asked the students to obey their parents and tend them with loving gratitude. They are visible gods, He told them. He wanted them not to harden their hearts against others who are suffering and in distress. "Do not think ill of any one: do not try to discover their faults. Love them, respect them. Revere those who guard and guide you, the elders and the teachers.

If you do not respect your teachers and follow their advice, you can never progress in education. Remember your parents are your first and best teachers; respect their wishes and do not give them the slightest cause to suffer on account of you," He said.

"Sivaji learnt his great devotion to Hindu ideals from his mother. Dharmaraja, Bhima and Arjuna were obedient to their Guru and they were trained by him in Sathya Dharma Shanti and Prema. So, you must have faith and devotion to your Gurus; for, else, you cannot get trained in the great virtues and qualities that have marked out the heroines of India, in the spiritual field", said Baba.

"When you get married, you must take care to see that you are devoted to the husband and to his kith and kin. Bring reputation to the house where you were born, and the house where you are welcomed as the bride. Husband and wife are two wings of the same bird; they have to be fully

complementary and supplement each other in full co-operation. When Sankaracharya and Mandanamisra had a scholastic contest, the latter's wife, Udayabharati was chosen as the arbiter. Imagine the depth of her scholarship which gave her that honor, and calculate how famous she must have been for her impartiality, and sense of fairness and freedom from attachment.

But, such a great lady had no time to listen to the discussions of the two contestants. She had her household duties to attend to. So, like a good housewife, she went into the inner apartments for preparing food for the guests, leaving round the necks of the two participants a flower garland. She announced that the garland round the neck of the person foiled in argument will suddenly fade and that could be taken as the signal for the other person's victory. Note how she was busy with her work as Grihalakshmi. Later, she came to the support of her husband like an ideal wife, challenging Sankara to foil her in argument, for, the wife is the equal half of the husband. That was the attitude of the ideal wife in ancient times."

Baba said, "I love little children, for, they are innocent and self-less, without envy or greed or malice. Their hearts are pure and unsullied. They are like the bees that are drawn to the spotless fragrance of the mallika flowers. These children are really fortunate that they had the chance to win Grace so early in life."

In the evening, Baba presided over the Public meeting held in the vast maidan behind the School, to celebrate the School Day. A mammoth gathering of over 30 thousand people had assembled to receive darshan and to listen to the Divine Message of Baba.

Addresses of reverential welcome were present to Baba on behalf of the students and staff of the School and the citizens of Anantapur. It was mentioned with regret that the previous visit of Baba to the Town for inaugurating the Lalithakalaparishath was ten years ago.

The District Collector, Sri. Narayanarao, IAS spoke about the need for orienting the ideals of family and society and pleaded with Baba to give the needed advice to the moulders of opinion. Sri Ramachandra Reddy, the Chairman of the Zilla Parishad declared that the people of Anantapur District have to be grateful to destiny for Baba had selected their District for His incarnation. Sri Gopinath, the District Education Officer emphasised the urgency of full literacy in an electorate where only 24 percent women were literate.

In His Discourse, Baba exhorted the listeners to realise that they were fundamentally divine and, like an intelligent cultivator who ploughs deep, removes weeds, destroys pests and builds fences to enable him to reap a rich harvest, to cultivate, Satkarma, Bhakti and Jnana in order to benefit from that fundamental divinity. Karma Upasana and Jnana are the stages of tenderness and ripeness and mellowness in the fruit of one's inherent Divinity, He said.

"India, which was once flowing with milk and honey, is now in the throes of want and distress. The cure for this must be sought in the removal of the basic weakness, the weakness that results from ignoring the Atma as the core of one's existence. No amount of planning will fill the land with joy, unless people are made aware of that inner spring of joy, the Atma. People must learn to consider duty as God, to lead dedicated lives and to be content with the joy that is got from

work done as worship. "Develop devotion, faith and fortitude—they will yield better results than a hundred plans. Develop self-respect and self-reliance; they will change the face of the land."

There are many people who try to build Mandirs in My Name for worshipping and for Bhajan. They do it more for showing off than out of genuine need. Cultivate faith and devotion in your hearts, that is enough. Why build new temples and help the older ones to fall into decay? Encourage the temples that already exist to flourish; the Lord can be worshipped under any Name, in any Form. All Names are His; all Forms are His."

"Play the game of life, with Sathya Dharma Shanti Prema Sahana and Ahimsa as your team mates and oppose the team of Kama Krodha Lobha Mada and Matsarya; have the limiting lines of the Brahma-marga and Dharma-marga. Then victory is yours."

Baba said, "At Bombay Poona and other places I toured without a moment's rest and the enthusiasm and devotion of the people were something unseen before. Volunteers many of whom were officers of high rank, merchants, businessmen and millionaires took delight in safeguarding the footwear of devotees, supplying them water etc. Leaders of all ranks of society Ministers and judges and leaders of business from East and West were eagerly seeking Darshan. Hon'ble Sri Y. B. Chavan referred to his yearning for Darshan and received blessings. But, some people who were overcome with malice spread falsehoods in an attempt to cause pain to the public. You can only pity them for their vanity. Remember this: Even if all the three worlds unite, Truth can never suffer defeat. Even if all the Fourteen worlds unite and try, falsehood can never succeed." Baba also commended the idea of starting a Women's College at Anantapur to help the candidates who have now to migrate to long distances and live far away from home in order to qualify themselves with higher degrees. He called upon the people of Anantapur to form a Committee for this purpose without delay.

Baba attended for a short while the Dramatic entertainments at the School, and then, left for Kallur 18 miles off, to visit the factory of the Sreenivas Oils and Fertilisers. A large gathering of workers and villagers awaited Him there. He went round the Factory and blessed the venture as well as the men who were running the Factory. Returning to Anantapur, He visited the homes of a few devotees at their earnest prayer and reached Prasanthi Nilayam in the early hours of the 19th April.

This short programme at Anantapur revealed how thirsty people are every where for the darshan and the discourse of Baba, and how valuable His Message is at the present juncture of the history of India and of the World.

I

Sri Kesavan from Ceylon spoke of the need to know who or what this I is. He said that most people do not have any curiosity about this. They do not investigate it. Well, it is quite simple to know what that I is. You say my house, my car, my land, my shirt, my reputation, my pen, my son... Now the house gets sold, the car changes hands, the land is transferred, the shirt gets torn, the reputation increases, the pen becomes useless, the son dies... but the I which had all these

things persists. Things are attached to the I and gets detached, but, the I stays for ever. The I's of all are but the waves of a single ocean, call it Shakti Atma Paramatma Parabrahma Rama Krishna or Narayana or Siva. They are but the Names; the truth is One, unchanging.

Baba (20-4-66)

Prasanthi Nilayam News

April 18: Baba at Anantapur

20 : Discourse by Baba at Prasanthi Nilayam Speech by Sri. O.C.Kesavan,from Ceylon

May 4 : Baba left for a tour of Coorg (Mysore State)

7 : Inauguration of the Sathya Sai Seva Samithi , Poona

14,15,16: Prasanthi Dharmothsava(The Second in Karnataka) under the auspices of Sri Sathya Sai Mandali, Shimoga

Baba's Programme

Baba will be absent on tour during both May and June 66 intending visitors are therefore advised to inform themselves of His presence at the Nilayam through a reply card or Prepaid Telegram addressed to the Editor.

Bhagavata Vahini

1

The name Bhagavata can be applied to every account of the experiences of those who have contacted God and the Godly (Bhagavan and Bhakta). God assumes many Forms and enacts many activities. The name Bhagavata is given to the descriptions of the experiences of those who have realised Him in those Forms and of those who have been blessed by His Grace and chosen as His Instruments.

The great Work known by that name is honoured by all masters of the Vedas. It is a panacea which cures physical, mental and spiritual illnesses. The Bhagavata is saturated with sweetness of nectar; it shines with the splendour of God.

The principle of Avatar or the Descent of God on Earth, the Incarnation of the Formless with Form, for the Uplift of Beings—this is the basic fact that makes the Bhagavata authentic. By Bhagavata we also mean those with attachment to God, those who seek the companionship of God. For such, the book, Bhagavata, is most precious; it is the breath of their life. To be in the midst of such Bhagavatas is to foster one's own devotion. Unless you have a taste for God-ward thoughts, you will not derive joy therefrom. To create that taste, the Bhagavata relates stories relating to incarnations to the earnest inquirer. Then, one develops the yearning to experience the thrill of God, through all the levels of consciousness. He who has this intense yearning can be a true Bhagavata.

People believe that incarnations of God happen only for two reasons: the punishment of the wicked and the protection of the righteous. But, these represent only one aspect of the Task. The granting of peace and joy, of a sense of fulfillment to seekers who have striven long—this too is the Task.

The Avatar or Form Incarnate is only the concretisation of the yearning of the seekers. It is the solidified sweetness of the devotion of godly aspirants. The formless assumes the Form for the sake of these aspirants and seekers.

They are the prime cause. The cow secretes milk for the sustenance of the calf. That is the chief beneficiary. But, as we see, others too benefit from that milk. So too, though the Bhaktas are the prime cause and their joy and sustenance the prime purpose, other incidental benefits also accrue, such as the fostering of Dharma, the suppression of evil, the overwhelming of the wicked.

There is no compulsive rule that incarnations should occur only on the earth and in human form. Any place, any form, can be chosen by the Fully-Free. Whichever place, whatever Form, promotes the purpose of fulfilling the yearning of the devotee, that Place and that Form are chosen by the Will of God. God is above and beyond the limits of Time and Space. He is beyond all characteristics and qualities; no list of these can describe Him fully. For Him, all beings are equal. The difference between man, beast, bird, worm, insect and even a god is but a difference of the 'vessel' (the Upadhi).

It is like the electric current that flows through various contrivances and expresses itself in many different activities. There is no distinction in the current; it is the same. To speak of it as different is to reveal one's ignorance (Ajnana). So too, the one single God activates every vessel or Upadhi and gives rise to manifold consequences. The wise see only the one uniform current; the ignorant feel that they are all distinct. God appreciates the consciousness of Unity, as the basic motive of acts. He does not appreciate the activity itself being one, without variety; it is suited to the various needs. The fruits of karma or activity appeal only to those who identify themselves with the body and not for the others, who know that they are the indestructible Atma.

Again, you must know that there is no end to the incarnations that God indulges in. He has come down on countless occasions. Sometimes He comes with a part of His Glory, sometimes with a fuller equipment of splendour, sometimes for a particular task, sometimes to transform an entire era of time, an entire continent of space.

It is the story of the last of these that the Bhagavata elaborates. The drama enacted by the Avatar and the Bhaktas drawn towards Him, is the subject matter of the Bhagavata. Listening to it promotes the realisation of God. Many sages have testified to its efficacy and extolled the Bhagavata, which they helped preserve for posterity.

Generally speaking, man gets drawn to sense objects for, he is the victim of instincts. Instincts easily seek sense-objects. They come along with the body and are not derived by any training. The infant seeks milk from the mother's breast; the new-born calf nestles at the udder. No training is needed for this. But, for the infant to walk and talk, some training is necessary. The reason is that they are not automatic; they are socially prompted, by example and by imitation of others.

Training is essential even for the proper pursuit of sense pleasure, for it is the wild untrained search for such pleasure that promotes anger, hatred, envy, malice, conceit. To train them along salutary lines and to hold them under control, certain good disciplines like Japa, Dhyana, Upavasa (Fasts) Sandhyavandana (worship at dawn and dusk) etc. are essential. But, however much their value may be praised and their practice recommended, people do not develop a taste for them. This is because the desire for sensory pleasure has struck deep roots in the human heart. When one is asked to do spiritually salutary acts, one has no inner prompting at all. Still one should not give up in despair. Until the taste sprouts, the disciplines have to be strictly followed. This taste is the result of training; no one has it from the very beginning. Constant practice will create the zest.

The infant does not know the taste of milk. By taking it daily, it develops an attachment for it which is so deep that when milk is to be given up and rice substituted, it starts to protest. But, the mother does not despair; she persuades the child to take small quantities of cooked rice daily and by this process it starts liking rice and it gives up milk. Milk was once its natural food; by practice, rice became its natural food, so natural that if no rice is available for a single day, it becomes miserable.

So, too, though sense-pleasures are "natural" at first, by means of practice and training and listening to the commendation of the wise, slowly the greater and more lasting pleasure derivable

from the glories of the Lord and their recapitulation is grasped; thereafter, one cannot exist without that atmosphere even for a minute; one feels that there is nothing as sweet as the experience of listening to the splendour of the Lord. The company of the worldly who chatter about the senses and the sense-objects will no longer attract; the company which exults in praising the Lord will draw and hold.

This is the real hallmark of the good. Sadhakas and votaries of the Lord are to be judged by these, not by external apparel or appearances. If one mixes with men who revel in sensory talks and activities, then, he puts himself out of court. Spend your time in the company of the godly, engaged in godly affairs. Avoid getting mixed with the company of the ungodly. Do not see their activities or listen to their accounts. Only those who avoid them can be called Bhagavatas, or God's own.

Reading and enjoying the stories of the glory of Krishna in some sacred spot or some temple or prayer hall, shrine or hermitage of a saint or sage, or in the company of the virtuous and the good—that is a source of great inspiration and joy. It makes people forget everything else. Else, one can approach pious men and serving them, listen to their exposition of the glories of God. Taste for such wholesome literature is the result of accumulated merit and endeavour. It is that merit that rewards one with such company. Listening will be enough in the beginning; later the stories will arouse interest in the nature and characteristics of God and the aspirant will seek and find for himself the path to realisation,

Listening to expositions by the wise is much better than reading them or, one can be looking into the text while listening. It is preferable to listen in company, rather than alone; of course, it is excellent to listen with a number of earnest aspirants. If the person who expounds has had the thrill of genuine experience, then it is the supreme luck, for it yields best results. For, his face will blossom into joy, his eyes will shed tears of joy at the very contemplation of the glory of the Lord. Those who listen to him will catch that inspiration; they will experience the joy themselves. In the midst of a group that weeps, tears will spring out of the eyes of those who have come in. When an infant smiles, those around will also smile in unison. So too, the words of those who are saturated with devotion to God will saturate the hearts of those who listen. It is impossible to measure the profit that one can derive while in the company of the great.

Through that process of listening, a dirt-laden heart will be transformed into a clean illumined heart, shining with genuine light. To the foul odours of sense pursuits, keenness to listen to the glories of God is a valuable disinfectant, besides being in itself so full of sweet fragrance. The listening will cleanse the heart through the prompting it gives for good work.

Such a cleansed heart is the most appropriate altar, or tabernacle. In that fragrant bower, the Lord will establish Himself; at that very moment, another incident too will happen; the group of six vices that had infested the place will quit without so much as a farewell.

When these vices quit, the wicked retinue of evil tendencies and vulgar attitudes which live on them will break camp and disappear, without leaving even their addresses! Then, man will shine in his native splendour of Truth and Love (Sathya and Prema); he will endeavour without hindrance, to realise himself; and, finally, he will succeed in merging with the Universal and

Eternal. He will liberate himself from the tangle of ignorance, or Maya. His mind will fade away; the long-hidden secret will be revealed to him; he will discover his Madhavatwa (Divinity).

Man's nature is Prema, Love. He cannot survive a moment when deprived of Love. It is the very breath of his life. When the six vices, to which he was attached so long, disappear, Love is the only occupant of the heart; but, Love has to find an object, a Loved one. It cannot be alone. So, it is directed to the dark-blue Divine Child, the charming cowherd-Boy who is Purity Personified, who is the embodiment of service, sacrifice and self-lessness, who has taken residence in that cleansed Altar. There is no scope now for any other attachment to grow. So, step by step, this Love for Madhava becomes deeper, purer, more self-denying until at last, there is no other need for thought and the individual is merged in the Universal.

When Vaasudeva enters the heart of man vasudeva has no longer a place therein. In other words, when the deva of vasu or wealth is seated in the heart, the divine Vaasudeva or Krishna cannot dwell therein.

Any attempt to accommodate both in the heart is bound to fail. Darkness and light cannot exist at the same time and in the same place; they cannot continue together. Dhanam and Daivam cannot be joint ideals; when Dhanam or riches are sought, Daivam or God cannot also be achieved. If both are sought by man what he will achieve will be neither Dhanam nor Daivam but Dayyam (the Devil).

It is creditable if man behaves as man; it is laudable if he behaves as the Madhava, he really is. But, to behave as a demon or as a beast is despicable indeed. For, man was long born a mineral and died as a mineral; then, he promoted himself as a tree. He was long born a tree and died as a tree; but, in the process, he got promoted as an animal; but, he has now risen to the status of man. This rise from one scale to another has been acknowledged by science and spiritual experience. Now, alas! He is born as man and dies as man. It is a greater shame if he slides into a beast or a beastly ogre. Praise is his due only if he rises to the Divine status. That is real fulfilment of his destiny.

Therefore, avoid contact with vices; develop attachment to virtues; transmute the heart into an altar for the Lord; destroy all the shoots and sprouts of desire; then, your Manasa-sarovaram (the Lake of your Inner Consciousness) will be sublimated into a Ksheera-sagara, (the Pure Ocean of Milk, whereon the Lord reclines on the Serpent-couch). Your real Self will, like the Celestial Hamsa, revel in the placid waters of that Lake, thus transformed. It will discover endless delight.

Who can mark the beginning of the continuous waves of the ocean? It is an impossible task. If any one decided to do so, the wave with which he starts the calculation will be considered as the beginning, the wave with which he stops his calculation will be for him the last, the end. There is a beginning and an end for his count: there is no beginning or end for the process. No one can visualise either, in that boundless illimitable expanse. God's Glory is the shoreless ocean. When one starts describing it, it begins for him; when he finishes his description it is the end, so far as he is concerned. But, His Glory is beyond space and time. Only little minds, limited minds, will argue that God's Glory has a beginning and an end. The stage on which He plays (His Leela) has no boundaries.

The story of His Leela is all Nectar; it has no other component, no other taste, no other content. Every one can drink his fill, from any part of that Ocean of Nectar. The same sweetness exists everywhere, in every particle. There is nothing inferior to mar the sweetness.

The love of God and the love for God are both eternally sweet and pure, whatever the method of your accepting or attaining them. Such love is holy and inspiring. Sugar is sweet when eaten during day or during the night. For, it is night or day for the person who eats, not for the sugar. Sugar behaves uniformly always.

(To be continued)

Sathya Sai Baba

A Petal in the Lotus

I am a petal in the lotus of Baba's Grace;
I am a drop in the Ocean of Baba's Compassion;
I am a flower in the beautiful Baba's Garland;
I am a star in the firmament of Baba's heart;
I am a silken thread in glowing Baba's pithambar;
I am a flaming camphor on the altar of Baba's Temple;
I am a humble blade of grass in Baba's green garden;
I am a ray, issuing out of Baba's radiant effulgence,
I am a dust clinking to Baba's fragrant Feet,
I am a breath, embodied out of Baba's Glory.

—K. Vaidyanathan.

Science and Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

It is amazing to think, how advancement in science can ever possibly bring about atheistic tendencies in the scientific researcher, instead of making him wonder at the magnificence and the infiniteness of the variety of forms of matter and life, on which he directs his researches and enquire within himself "Who is the maker of all these great wonders?" Because even according to him, the egotist scientist, there can be no "effect" without a "cause". The "cause" cannot certainly be Man himself because he is himself the "effect" of a "cause". The question there arises "What," then causes the "cause"; and one again gets perplexed for an answer to this intriguing question, unless one asserts with all the vehemence at one's command, that there is one "Supreme Cause" for all that manifests in this world as "Matter" and "Life"; and that "Supreme Cause" must be all *Light, Truth and Intelligence*, and beyond the concept of Man; because his physical and material instruments of knowledge are too feeble to know "Him". Man has to invoke his "Spiritual instruments" to realise the "Supreme Cause" knowing which everything else becomes known.

It is a well-known and meaningful maxim that says "One who says, he 'knows' does not 'know!' One who says, he does not 'know', 'knows.'" So much of the essence of the quality of humility, which is the inherent nature of "one-who-knows", is contained in those simple statements.

The most advanced scientific knowledge of today is still groping in the dark to know the origin of life, the purpose of life and the reasons for the continuity and diversity of life. The science of "Matter" however much it gets advanced must stop with the ultimate knowledge of "Matter" only, which is entirely outside the knowledge of the "spirit" or the "Soul." A knowledge of the "Spirit" must surely necessitate the wakening of the "the spiritual-Consciousness" of Man. This spiritual consciousness or the "Soul" of man is in its essence nothing but a "spark" from the "Supreme Sparkle " that is " God."

This understanding and awakening of this "spiritual consciousness" in man can only come through a process of introspection and meditation on that "*Supreme-Cause*," which is the source of all that matters as "*matter*" and "*Life*" in this world of man. This meditation is a sort of discipline and exercise to awaken the Godly intuitive powers of man, to enable him to break through the subtle barrier between "*matter*" and "*spirit*". For, "God" is "intuited" not "inferred" by any verbal logic.

To ordinary men of the world who are steeped in worldly matters and to even men of science who are engrossed in the investigations of mere "*Gross Matter*" things that transcend "*Matter*" are incomprehensible. To Understand "*Matter*" man need only use his gross instruments of knowledge, his physical senses. Man is not merely "*Matter*" but is a complex matrix of "*matter*" and "*Spirit*." This "*Spirit*" and "*Matter*" in "*Man*" are being coordinated and energised to activity by an Almighty-Unknown-Power, we call "*God*." A harmonious, happy co-ordination of this "*Spirit*" and "*Matter*" in "*Man*" can best be achieved only through a prayerful supplication in all humility to this Almighty-Power. This harmony in mind and body can be gained more easily through contacts with personages, who are highly evolved in their spiritual stature, than by one's own self-effort.

The knowledge of "*Matter*" as we see and know it in the world external to us, is purely an objective experience. But, the knowledge of the "*Spirit*" is entirely a "*Subjective-Experience*." Language has its limitations. Language has evolved, through a necessity to commune between Man and Man. All expressions and explanations in any language are therefore necessarily in terms of the "world of matter" around us. To convey things of the "*Spirit*" in words of gross-matter is a task of great difficulty.

The Vedantic-knowledge of the Hindus which is in essence a knowledge of the spirit as expounded by our great Rishis and Seers of the past, in the divine language of "*Sanskrit*" to their "*Shishyas*," in its virgin purity, in the process of transmission from mouth to mouth, from the "*Gurus*" to the "*Shishyas*" and again from the "*Shishyas*" to their "*Shishyas*" has naturally been subjected to gradual misinterpretations, due to the limitations in the understanding faculty of the generations of "*Shishyas*;" " and this tended to further misinterpretations through translations into so many modern languages of poor vocabulary.

True spiritual knowledge being mostly a "*Subjective-experience*"—to express and explain this experience in terms of the objective world of 'Matter' in a gross-language of Matter is certainly a Herculean feat and is almost an impossible attempt. The best that could be done by the best of the great ancient sages and Seers of 'Spiritual-knowledge' was to illustrate the ideas in the form of anecdotes and stories; and so we have our great epics Puranas and the Upanishads etc, which to the ordinary man of science looks like some impossible fairytales narrated to children. To ordinary men of the world and men of science in particular, the deeper implications of the supposedly improbable fairytales are incomprehensible. The understanding of the inner meaning of these supposed-fairy-tales can only come as a sort of 'Subjective-experience' to persons who are very much spiritually advanced.

Investigating through the centuries behind us, we find in the epics and literature of every clime and country, the appearance of great personages like Sri Rama, Sri Krishna, Jesus Christ, Buddha etc, who come into this world with a purposeful mission to salvage "*man*" from the depletion of his '*spiritual and Dharmic*' values, that eras his heritage. These great Personages in their time have had their '*Duryodhanas*' and also the '*Pandavas*.' These avatars had in their own kindly way, removed the '*Duryodhanas*' of their time to make place for the '*Pandavas*' so as to establish '*Dharma*' in the land of their birth.

To suit the time and circumstances of the period during which these '*Avatars*' lived, they had expounded and preached their own ethics of '*Good conduct*' the '*dharma*' of the times, which formed the particular religion of the sects of people who followed them. Even so, it is legitimate for one with thought and wisdom to see in Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba one such great personage like Sri Krishna, who has now come into this world of conflicts and passions to bring to the common man, solace and comfort and salvage the struggling crowd of men from their spiritual and worldly distress!

The personality of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is such as to attract and inspire sage and child alike. One has only to contact Him once to be inspired with devotion to Him. His love and kindness to one and all without distinction of class or caste or creed is such as not even a mother could have for her own child!

His exposition of abstruse philosophic truths in simple language mixed with extraordinary pithy parables and anecdotes is something divine, which one could never hope to expect from even the so-called highly-intellectual philosophic pseudo-academics or even the best Vedantins of today.

His method of approach to "*Men*" and "*matters*" is at once, one of cherubic simplicity and inscrutable complexity! In these days of atheistic tendencies, it is indeed refreshing and highly elevating to have a '*Master*' of the stature 'Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba' to the multitude of the '*distressed*' and to interpret and expound in his own inimitable simple Divine way, the ancient philosophic truths which are our heritage.

"*The Master*" in his own inimitable divine way tells us that the sun's light is white and white only, not Violet nor Indigo nor Blue nor Green, nor Yellow, nor orange nor Red as it appears to the 'addicts' of the several 'ices' of religion (Vaishnavite, Shaivite, Madhavite etc.....) who

refuse to come out of the confines of their own `temples,' fitted with coloured-glass-windows. No wonder then that their perception of `Truth' is coloured. For all their pedantic knowledge of the Gita and the Vedic Texts and for all the most advanced knowledge of the scientific bigots, they cannot see the true nature of the `Sun' because they are chained to the `confines-of-their-own-ego,' imprisoned in their own. `citadels' fitted with coloured glass-windows.

They have only to step out into the `open' to see the magnificence and the brilliance of the 'SUN' that is Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, to realise, that the beneficent rays of the `SUN' are available for everybody, without distinction of class, creed or caste to absorb, enjoy and assimilate.

M. S. T.
M. Sc.

Inexplicable

Persons like me are unfit to delve into the glory of Baba or discuss about its manifestations. They are inexplicable, but, true. I can only try to write about an experience of mine, regarding His mysterious Mahima In 1965, about two weeks previous to His Birthday Festival, myself and my mother in-law went to Puttaparthi, with my brother-in-law who was aged about nineteen. About five or six months previous to our journey, my mother-in-law lost a thousand rupees that she had kept at home. My brother-in-law had taken it and hidden it. The poor mother had threatened him, cajoled him, prayed to him to return it, but, with no effect. The entire house was searched many times but, it could not be found. When my father-in-law was informed at last, he said, "After all, it is only his mother's money that the son has taken," and "Kept mum. So, she felt that this matter could be raised when we went to Puttaparthi, with Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and some solution found. As soon as we three reached Puttaparthi, I called my brother-in-law aside and told him, "Look here. Baba is Sarvajna; He knows everything that happens everywhere. He will not keep quiet. Confess now at least. Declare where you have hidden the packet." He replied rather impertinently, "Baba knows everything, is it? Well; we will be finding out soon. Why hurry?"

In a few days, we got the interview with Baba. Baba reprimanded the boy, making him stand before the mother. Even without her saying anything about it, Baba asked him to announce whether he had not taken the money. He confessed the crime before both. "You took it because you felt you could do what you like with your mother's money is it? No, it is not right, give it back," said Baba softly to him. My mother-in-law appealed, "Baba! Get the money from wherever he has hidden it, to this place, now." But, Baba said, "No no there is no harm. Let it be where it is. You will get it back after you reach home. There are so many who have lost their money like you; if I restore your lost money by getting it here from where it is now, the others too will clamour that I might do the same to help them. That will be big bother. But, why? There is no harm. Return home; I shall look to everything." That was what Baba promised.

On reaching home, my brother-in-law started singing another tune. He insisted that he had no knowledge of the thousand rupees and that he had not taken them.

After a few days, the father opened the door of a set of drawers in his Puja room to take out some papers and while searching for the same, he found underneath his papers a bundle of notes, the lost thousand rupees, intact. He realized that his son's secret was out and did, not reveal the discovery to any one.

A few days later, the boy felt a desire to examine the place where he had hidden the bundle, so that he might assure himself that it was safe; so, he went to the switch board, under the stairs, big one with about seven or eight switches. He had opened it, when the current was off, by removing the screws, and after inserting the bundle between the wires inside, he had screwed them on again. Now, he unscrewed the cover-board and found the bundle missing!

"Alas! I delayed looking into this switchboard long because I was certain no one would suspect this as a likely place where money will be hidden. Now, it is gone." He wept aloud. His father then announced that he got the bundle from the set of drawers in the Puja Room.

Now, how did the bundle kept ill the switchboard come into the Puja Room set of drawers? Truly, it is the leela of Baba.

"The money is there itself, it has not gone anywhere outside. It will come to you after you reach home," He said. We had, after reaching home, searched most meticulously all drawers, all almirahs, all boxes with no profit. But, Baba had affirmed it was in the house itself. How to explain this, we asked each other.

Now, it became plain. His Words did not prove of little worth. They were true. His Will must work itself to success. His Blessings must operate to a successful conclusion.

In all matters, in all places, at all times, Baba is with us.

G. K. Rao, B. A.
Kakinada

Bharatiya Culture **Sri Sathya Sai Baba**

Dharma is the way of life that confers lasting joy; the Sastras are the source of Dharma; they lay down the rules of Dharma. The Shrutis and Puranas, the Smritis and Ithihasas are all included in the term Sastra. Of these, the Shrutis are the most authoritative. The others all follow the Shrutis and keep in step with them. Bharatiya culture is the expression of such sacred ideals. Throughout the ages, this culture has been providing spiritual teaching and training in a friendly fruitful manner. The Puranas are but simple and sweet expositions of the Sruthi ideals of life; that is why they are called, the comrades of man.

Those who study the Vedas and understand the principles direct from them are called Srothriyas and Naishtikas. They are the highest grade of seekers. Thos who understand them from the

popular texts like the Puranas and base their conduct on that knowledge are of the middle grade. They get inspired from some excellent poems and dramas also and they follow the Dharma that is sought to be explained through those media. Thus, Hindus have tried to spread the principles of their culture through various means among the masses.

Bharatiya culture teaches not merely the truth about the visible objective world; it lays bare the truth of the subjective invisible world of the spirit also. This is the task of Sanathana Dharma, or Vedadhama. This religion has in it the principles of all contemporary religions. Those who doubt this should examine the scriptural sources in an impartial spirit.

Due to the wide influence of Western civilisation, absence of exposition and explanation by persons who have accumulated experience, inability to clearly grasp the meaning of the texts, and neglect of the Sanskrit language which is the precious treasure of India, truth about the greatness of Bharatiya culture is largely unknown today.

As a diamond shines in splendour when it is cut into many facets, the foundation principles of Hinduism will shine brightly and illumine the world, when one starts the inquiry, patiently and enthusiastically. How can you know the taste if you do not eat? How can you know the depth, if you refuse to enter the water? Those who spurn Bharatiya culture without practising it are as foolish as those who dismiss a dish without tasting it.

Hindu culture is the pillar and support of the nation; it is the backbone of the spiritually adventurous; it grants both this world and the next to all beings. It is really World Culture, the culture that the world needs. Other cultures assume various forms in various climes. But, the culture of Bharat has asserted eternal values, values for all times and all climes—like Daya Dharma and Dama. It has not bent before the pressure of patronage or persecution.

The impact of Western civilisation has given rise to certain new sects that attempt to re-form and modernise Hindu religion. Hinduism has the strength to correct their egoism and establish concord. Hinduism is the one religion that proclaims the truth that there is nothing separate from God and it proves it too. Because people are not able to understand this fundamental integrating principle, hatred and malice have grown in the followers of other faiths.

There are not wanting Indians who see only the externals of religious observance and start condemning religion itself, as fraught with disaster to the people. These people even argue that religion itself should be abolished from life. Alas, their insane slogans remind us of the efforts of the ant to judge the depth of the sea or that of the cat to drink up the Ocean of Milk. Perhaps they do not realise that their negation of religion is itself growing into a 'religion.' Had they known this, they would not have ventured into a field of which they know nothing.

Others attempt to design a composite religion, without first seeking to manufacture a composite mind. Unless all become of one mind, all cannot welcome a single religion. Religion has its root in the mind. Correct the source; the end will be corrected. Ensure that the basement is strong; then you can build a house of many floors over it. Unless you ensure the strength of the foundation, the house will topple down. To plan the destruction of religion without realising what religion does to man, is itself the height of ignorance and irresponsibility. Of course, injustice,

indiscipline and superstition might raise their heads in the name of religion. But, religion never sanctions these.

The chief purpose of religion is to make man aware of his relationship with God. Every person has full rights for worshipping God and winning His Grace. But, whatever the road, whichever the path, the Goal is the same. Vedic religion will not permit you to quarrel with any other religion, or hate it or decry it. It insists on tolerance and respect. If you seek to develop love towards all men and the spiritual outlook that will sustain it, you will have to follow the disciplines laid down in the Sastras, for your stage and state.

What is Truth, what is Love, what is God? Unless these three are clearly understood, man cannot fulfill himself, nor can he realise his true glory. But, people nowadays interpret these, according to their pet fancies without delving into their implications or even without approaching those who know those implications, for instruction. The Sastras emphasise that it is inner conviction, inner purification that matters. Also that the conviction must be expressed through good deeds. This emphasis is now ignored; only the gesticulations of the outer man remain. So, people believe that the observance of the "*Don't touch*" rule is itself sacred, sanctioned behaviour. This is 'kitchen' religion, not Vedanta darshan or the religion expounded in the Vedas.

The fault lies in those who talk and write about religion, without putting the preaching into practice. Thought speech and action must be co-ordinated and complementary. Each should be in strict accordance with the others; that is the sign of the Mahatma, the Dharmic individual, the Pundit. Those who do not adhere to this are Duratmas, not Mahatmas. To be truly religious is to follow the footsteps of these Mahatmas.

Religion has to confer knowledge of this Self; that is its real purpose, not, providing matter for club conversation or coffee-hotel-debates. Every one has to strive to know his own truth and experience it. That striving is the heart of religion; it is the goal of life. Without it, life is as bad as death. Only when superficial activities are transcended does true religion begin. It leads to Brahmananda, through the awareness of ones' identity with Brahman.

Bhakti is the foundation for all religions. Of course, Japa or Homa or offering of flowers, or going on pilgrimages to holy places cannot be taken as bhakti. They are good acts that help promote bhakti. True Bhakti opens the door of Jnana. Faith in God and His Glory and His Grace must be supplemented by discrimination of the Real and the unreal and the control of the senses. Those who argue whether Bhakti or Janna is superior for God-realisation are travellers in the dark, for, they argue from ignorance. The unripe fruit and the ripe fruit have different tastes, but, they are the same fruit; the unripe fruit becomes later the ripe one.

To understand clearly the basic principles and to explain to others these principles, a knowledge of Sanskrit is essential. Samskriti or Culture has arisen out of Sanskrit. Sanskrit is the most ancient of all the languages of the world. It is the original spring out of which has flowed all arts and all ideals. The root words of languages are all to be found in the Vedabhasha or Sanskrit. It is invaluable for world culture, but, it is cause of concern that it has now fallen into neglect.

Some among the supporters of Hinduism who profess to revive it are engaged in the establishment of their own name and fame, than the work which they have to do. They fight among themselves, shouting "I am more worthy of respect", like the Yadavas who destroyed themselves by internecine war. The herd of monkeys ruins itself as well as the garden it enters; so too, these people ruin themselves and damage the reputation of Vedic religion itself.

But, there were many great individuals who sacrificed their all and suffered untold miseries for the sake of reviving and re-establishing the religion of the Vedas. Their Tapas has made this religion survive, with whatever little strength it has. Without them we cannot imagine what would have been the fate. Take an example from contemporary affairs. Every one knows that the whole country is preparing single minded to keep away the Chinese hordes. But, few recognise the fact that, but for Sankaracharya and his establishment of Advaita and his fostering of Vedic religion, India would have become another "China". Deep reflection is needed to realise that enormously important work carried out by such great personalities, incarnations of God or of a part of His Glory. "The advent of the Great is for no little Task", it is said. They do not move among men to discuss tawdry stuff or take part in trivial themes.

Those Mahatmas bound themselves with the duties and obligations of Dharma; they were ready to engage in activities dictated by the Vedas; they gave up all desire to cater to the ego; they respected the rules and regulations prescribed for them by the sastras; they curbed all evil desire; they dedicated themselves to the promotion of Vedas and the revival of the Hindu religion. There is no comparison between them and the religious teachers and expounders of today. Those great men spoke from actual experience and so their authoritative exposition promoted faith and encouraged belief. The exposition by the leaders of today have no base in experience and so, faith is being undermined. For the sake of mankind, this religion has to be revived and strengthened. For, Sanathana Dharma has maintained itself even today, in spite of the devastating current of Time, for this very purpose.

From an Article written for the
Mandalothsava Sanchika, Sanathana Vedanta Sabha

World's First Teacher

The full moon on which the world honours its First Teacher, Vyasa, falls this year on the second day of July. Vyasa collected the riks and mantras of the Vedas and classified them into four groups. The Vedas are the earliest available spiritual discoveries of Man. So, he is called Veda-Vyasa, too. He wrote a number of abstruse philosophical treatises like the Brahmasutra and, in order to popularize the Vedic Truths, he composed the fifth Veda, the Mahabharata with the historic Kuru-Pandava war as the basis.

While he was disconsolate that all this effort did not confer Shanti to his own distracted mind, Narada came to him; and becoming aware of his condition, he asked Vyasa, "You have produced the most wonderful epic (mahadbhutam) which fully deals with all the Purusharthas, dharma,

artha, kama and moksha. You have not investigated the Truth of the Eternal and Universal Brahma and you have shown men the path of realizing it. But, yet you are bewailing your lot! I am surprised at this inconsistency." Vyasa could not analyse his own malady; so, he asked Narada,, who "travels like the sun around the three worlds and who is Atmasakshi, like the Prana of everyone," to diagnose his malady and prescribe a remedy. Narada thereupon advised him to compose another work, exclusively devoted to the description of the glories of God. Thus was born the great book that has inspired millions towards the Godly Path—the Bhagavata.

The Lord says to Brahma, "The Bhagavata is My Sastra; he whose mind is set on the decline of sinfulness, and on fame, piety, victory and liberation should listen to this Sastra. Wherever abides Srimad Bhagavatham, I go there like a cow that is fond of its calf" Vyasa thus became Lokaguru, the World Teacher.

Vyasa Poornima (Full Moon Day dedicated to Vyasa) is therefore called Guru Poornima too. Devotees everywhere revere their spiritual Masters with worship and study that day. Bhaktas celebrate the day in gratitude and meditate on the Path shown them by the Sadguru in his infinite wisdom and mercy. At Shirdi it was a great day when Baba was worshipped in person. At Prasanthi Nilayam and in a thousand homes and Mandirs, Study Circles and Mandalis, the day will be celebrated with Bhajans and Discourses.

This issue of Sanathana Sarathi, reaching readers before Guru Poornima is proud to carry to their homes the first of Bhagavan's articles in the new series "*Bhagavata Vahini*", on Veda Vyasa's last and greatest contribution to transmute humanity into Divinity.

Prasanthi Nilayam News

- May 4-14: Baba fulfilled programmes in Coorg
15: Inauguration of Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha (Shimoga Dt Branch) by H. H. Palmar Mutt Swamiji of Udipi.
19: Baba gave Darshan at Bhajan Session, Sai Baba Temple, Guindy.
21: Baba's Discourse at the Divine Life Conference at Venkatagiri.
23: Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha (Madras): Baba's Discourse, Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan., M. A. Ph. D. presided. Speech by Howard Murphet.
25: Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha (Madras): Baba's Discourse at the Railway Stadium, Perambur. Hon' bit Justice Sri. P. Ramakrishnan I. C. S. presided.
26-June 9: Baba fulfilled programmes at Kodaikanal
June 9-11: programme of engagements for Baba at 'Sri Sathya Sai Nagar' Madurai; Baba' a Discourses.

Bhagavata Vahini

2

Maharaja Parikshit was the very self of Abhimanyu, who had attained the Heavenly Abode of Heroes. When Parikshit was an embryo, growing in the womb of Uttara, he saw the sharp arrow let off by Ashwatthama flying towards him, emitting sparks of fury and terror, bent on his destruction. But, at that very moment, he saw also a Person of Brilliant Charm armed with a Terrific Wheel, breaking that death-dealing arrow into a hundred pieces. The royal foetus was filled with wonder and gratitude.

He pondered deep on the identity of his Saviour. "Who is he? He must also be dwelling in this womb, with me, because he could see the arrow at the very moment I saw it! But, he has such intrepidity and skill that he could destroy it before it reached me. Can he be a uterine brother? How could he get hold of that wheel? If he is endowed with a wheel, how did I miss having it? No; He is no mortal." He argued thus for a long time within himself.

He could not forget that Face, that Form. He was a Boy, with the splendour of a million suns. He was benign, blissful, blue like the clear sky. After saving him so dramatically, he had disappeared. Maharaja Parikshit had the Form always before him, for, he was seeking to see it again. Whomsoever he saw, he examined to find out whether that form corresponded with the Form he had reverentially fixed in his mind.

Thus he grew in the womb, contemplating that Form. That contemplation transformed him into a splendour-filled baby. When at the end of the period of gestation, he was born into the world, the lying-in-room was lit by a strange light. The female attendants of Uttara were dazzled by the brilliance. Their wits were overcome by wonder.

Recovering herself, Subhadra, mother of Abhimanyu sent word to Yudhishtir, the eldest of the Pandavas, announcing the birth. The Pandava brothers were overwhelmed with joy, when they heard the glad findings for which they were waiting anxiously. They ordered that bands play and guns be fired, in honour of the event, for, a scion had been born for the royal family, a successor to the Pandava throne.

The people heard the peal of guns and sought the reason for the joy. They rushed towards Indraprastha in large masses of enthusiasm. Every corner of the kingdom gushed with joy at this event. Within minutes, the City was transformed into a heavenly garden, fit for Gods to give audience to men. Yudhishtir distributed several varieties of sweets to all who came. He granted several cows as gifts to Brahmins. He instructed the ladies of the court to give golden caskets full of saffron and kumkum to women. Brahmins were awarded silk clothes and precious gems. Citizens were transported with joy, for the dynasty had now secured an heir. Night and day, they revelled in hilarious exultation.

Next day, Yudhishtir called the family priest Kripacharya and performed the rite of Jata-karma (first cleansing) to the infant. He satisfied the Brahmins by gifts of various costly jewels. The scholars and priests blessed the child and returned home.

On the third day, Yudhishtir called to his presence renowned astrologers as well as famous palmists and soothsayers, for, he was very eager to know whether the fair name of the kingdom and its culture would be safe in the hands of the prince who had come to carry the burden of the state. He received them at the palace with traditional hospitality; they were given appropriate seats in the hall; they were offered scents and silks.

The king bowed before them and joining his palms in reverential adoration, he prostrated before them, and prayed, "O wise men who know the past, present and future, examine the horoscope of the infant that is born, calculate the positions of stars and constellations, and the planetary influences that will guide his life and tell me how the future will be shaped." He noted the exact time of birth and placed the note on a golden plate, before them.

The Pundits took that note and drew up the plan of planetary positions and studied it with great care. They communicated to one another their increasing joy as they began to draw conclusions; they were in great joy themselves; they could not get words to express their amazement.

The doyen of the group, a great Pundit, at last rose and addressed King Yudhishtir thus, "Maharaja! I have till this day examined well nigh thousands of horoscopes and prepared concerned plans of the zodiacs and constellations. But, I must admit, I have never yet come across a more auspicious grouping than is indicated in this horoscope. Here, all the signs of good augury have assembled in one moment, the moment of this prince's birth. The moment indicates the State of Vishnu Himself! All the virtues will gather in this child. Why describe each glory separately? The great Manu has again come into your dynasty."

Yudhishtir was happy that the dynasty had such good fortune. He was indeed overpowered by joy. He folded his palms and bent low before the scholars who had given him such good news. "This family is lucky to claim such a gem as its scion, through the blessings of elders and of pundits like you as well as the blessings of the Lord who is our guardian. You say that the boy will develop all virtues and will accumulate fame. But, of what use is all that, if he has not acquired the quality of reverence towards Pundits, Sadhus and Brahmins? Please look into the horoscope once again and tell me whether he will have that reverence."

The leader of the group of astrologers replied: "You need entertain no doubt on that score. He will revere and serve the gods and the brahmins. He will perform many Yajnas and Yagas prescribed in the ancient texts. He will earn the glory that your ancestor Bharatha won. He will celebrate even the Ashwamedha. He will spread the fame of this line all over the world. He will win all things that gods or men covet. He will outdistance all those who have gone before him." They extolled him thus in various ways to their hearts' content. They stopped because they were nervous to recount all the excellences; they feared they might be charged with exaggeration and flattery if they continued to detail the conclusions they had drawn from the horoscope of the baby.

Yudhishtir was not satisfied; he wanted to hear more from them of the excellences of the character of the Prince. The Pundits were encouraged by this yearning. They said, "O King, You seem to be eager to know about some more aspects of the child's fortune. We shall only be too glad to answer any specific question that you may feel inclined to put us."

Noting their enthusiasm, Yudhishtir came forward and asked them, "During the regime of this Prince, will there be any great war? If war is inevitable, will he achieve victory? "No," said the Pundits, He will not be pestered by any foe. He knows no failure or defeat in any undertaking of his. This is absolutely true, an unshakable truth."

Hearing this, Yudhishtir and the brothers Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva looked at each other and shared great joy. Meanwhile, Yudhishtir began to speak. He had said, "If that is so..." but, before he could complete the sentence, he hung his head and was plunged in thought. The Pundits noticed it; they said, "You seem to be anxious to know something more. You have only to ask, we shall readily answer all questions." "Of course," said Yudhishtir, "I am happy at all the answers you have given. He will be virtuous, famous, triumphant over all, loving and kind, treating all equally; he will perform many yajnas and yagnas; he will have no enemies; he will bring honour to the dynasty and restore its reputation. All this gives me great joy. But, I would like to know also, how he will meet his end." The brothers saw Yudhishtir getting rather upset at the anxiety which agitated him over this problem. His voice had faltered a bit, when he put the question.

They consoled him and said, "Why worry about that at this stage? The end has to come some day, some way.

It is something that cannot be avoided. Something will cause it; some circumstance will bring it about. Birth involves the contingency of death. We are afraid; the extreme joy of this incident has queered your line of thought a bit. We think this much is enough. We shall leave the rest in the realm of doubt; let us not probe further. Let us leave it to God."

But, Yudhishtir could not somehow give up his desire to know how such a virtuous ideal Prince would end his career on earth. He imagined it must be a truly wondrous finale to a glorious life. So he wanted the astrologers to tell him about it.

The scholars set about the calculations again and took a pretty long time over it. Watching this, the King became excited; he hastened them and pressed for a quick answer. They gave the reply, "This prince will give up his kingdom as the result of a sage's curse." Yudhishtir wondered how such a paragon of virtue can ever invoke upon himself the curse of a sage. He was shocked at the possibility.

Meanwhile, the Pundits said, "Our calculations show that he will be bitten by a serpent." Yudhishtir lost heart at this news. All his joy evaporated in a moment. He became very sad and dispirited.

(To be continued)
Sri Sathya Sai Baba

The name, Bhagavata, denotes that work, consisting of 18,000 verses which was sung by the Sage Vedavyasa in the form of a dialogue between King Parikshit and his own son Suka for the

good of men whose understanding is limited; it is the supreme resort for those who find themselves in the grip of the alligator come in the shape of Kali.

Suthapurana

Three Types of Road

To be born as a human being is a great piece of luck. For, man alone can attain the status of the Divine, by recognising the reality of his being. No beast or bird can reach that height of realisation. But, it is tragic that instead of valuing the chance and utilising it, man fritters his years here and dies, without seeing the light. He is disgracing himself and denying his destiny. A minute's reflection will reveal how far he is from the goal, the precious stage of self-realisation. Man is neither a picture, nor a sculpture, which are both lifeless and have no aspiration of their own. He has activity, aspiration, attainment, a hunger for expansion for immortality. But, what a pity, he does not dedicate his life to the Divine, he is caught up in the vain pursuit of comfort and cosy living. And to style himself as a son of Bharatmata and yet, behave so foolishly is a greater shame. He is simply converting a fine moonlit night into a night of thick blackness.

The "believers", "the orthodox" are mainly responsible for this state of affairs. They neglect the faith, they imitate western culture. Does the west deny its culture? No; they learn about other cultures, and yet, they follow theirs with enthusiasm. But, you have neither this nor that; you fall, in between.

When I see the long lines of people going to Church every Sunday, I am glad; but, when I find you talking apologetically of your visits to temples and sages, I dislike it. Why not assert that you had been to a temple or sage, boldly, with heads erect? Who do you fear even the most trivial persons? Why yield to worry and misery, claiming all the time that you are a believer in God?

* * *

You are born as a consequence of the activities you were engaged in, in past births. When a bus is speeding along, a cloud of dust follows it; when it halts, the passengers get the dust all over. But, how far can you travel without bringing the bus to a halt? The one consolation is: you need not always speed along the mud road; better roads are in store. The mud road, the fair-weather road is the Samithi Road; the metalled road which comes later is the Zilla Parishath Road; at last, you get on into the asphalt road, the road of the Highways department, where the bus will not drag behind it any cloud of dust. The mud road is the Karmamarga, the metalled road is Upanamarga and the asphalt road is jnanamarga. Join the Jnanamarga soon; then, there will be no dust.

* * *

The people of this country have lost reverence for things spiritual. There are many sages and saints in India, but, on account of cynical neglect, like Bhasmasura, India is planning its own

extinction in the cultural field. Bhasmasura placed his hand on his own head and that reduced him to ashes. Persons who have not advanced even one step towards God by means of Sadhana start pronouncing judgements; God cannot be grasped by any one fully. When you dismiss an act as miracle, you are only admitting that it is beyond your ken; you use that word, because you have no other means of describing God's behaviour or movements or action.

In spiritual matters, faith is the basic requisite for progress. That faith had to be guarded carefully, Yield to the Lord, who is more kin to you than your own parents; yield to no other. Do not allow your faith to falter with every passing gust of wind. Believe that all the three worlds cannot unseat Truth; all the fourteen lokas cannot seat Falsehood on the throne. Your duty is to carry on Sadhana undisturbed by what others may say, holding fast to the certitude of your own experience.

From the Discourse by Baba Madras... 23-5-66

As Bhagavan Ramanuja Acharya says in the commentary on Bhagavad-Gita 'He, notwithstanding his birthless state, imperishable nature and Lordship over all existence, yet utilising the phenomena of nature, he comes into birth by his own Maya.' Like the Sun whose rays dispel darkness, Baba dispels ignorance. He keeps himself away from passion and vain activity. He is Amritamaya; Baba is a beacon light `prakasha-roopa,' Satyasankalpa, retaining His unmanifest form.

Chidanand Nagarkar

Sparks From Sai Sambhashan

The true test of Bhakti is the attitude of surrender, of Sharanagati, where the devotee has no will of his own. Take the case of Vibhishana, the brother of Ravana. He came over to the camp of Rama; though the people around Him suggested that he should not be accepted, because he is the brother of the arch-enemy and his motives are suspect—Rama did not place conditions on Vibhishana nor did Vibhishana ask for any consideration or concession. It was just surrender and acceptance, immediate, unquestioned, full. Contrast this with the surrender of Sugriva. He surrendered only after Rama proved to his satisfaction that He had the might and skill to vanquish his foe, Vali. Vibhishana's faith was unwavering from the very beginning; he did not seek any proof of Rama's might to destroy Ravana. Some one asked him how he managed to live in Lanka with that deep devotion to Rama; he replied, 'I lived like the tongue in the midst of the teeth. I had Ramanama on my tongue and so I was able to survive unharmed.' He fell at Rama's Feet. He said, "Deal with me as you like." That is Prapati or Sharanagati. It is a matter of inner feeling, not of outer behaviour. The Gopis had that inner conviction. Krishna was imprinted on their heart as a picture on paper; it could not be removed, at all.

* * *

If you inquire into the truth of things, you will realise that the Atma alone is real. Since the Atma is ignored and the body is ever in the consciousness, grief and misery persist, in spite of all

attempts to avoid them. Faith and self-confidence have disappeared because the body is the centre of attention. Like the fox which bit the string of the trap in its greed to devour everything it saw, man is killing himself with the recoil of his actions. To foster the children, a rich person appoints ayahs and the result: they weep when the ayah dies, but, not a tear is shed, when the mother dies, for the mother makes herself a stranger. The story of Subrahmanya and Ganapati being asked to go round the three worlds as quick as possible is an illustration to demonstrate the glory of motherhood. While Subrahmanya rode his Peacock laboriously across the sky to circumambulate the three worlds, Ganapati went round His Mother, for, she is more than the three worlds to the son. And, He was declared the winner in the contest between the two brothers! The parents, Vasudeva and Devaki looked with tearful eyes through the bars of the prison, when Akrura was taking their young son to the Court of the cruel Uncle, Kamsa. They were moved with inexpressible grief for, Kamsa was bent upon removing from the realm of the living, the son of Devaki. But, they consoled themselves remembering the vision that the infant Krishna had granted them—the Vision that He was the Lord Himself.

Do not think that Krishna incarnated just for the sake of killing the wicked Kamsa, Shishupala etc. He went to Mathura when Kamsa sent Akrura, because, the citizens of Mathura had won the right to see the Lord in Human Form and to worship His Feet; the Mallas had earned the great blessing of wrestling with the Lord Himself and casting off the body in His Presence and at His Touch. It is the merit of the many and the demerit of a few that bring the Lord into the Human form.

Eternal Joy Through Service

From the Bhagavan flows the Wisdom of the Universe. Tuning in to the "Path of the Lord" is a blissful experience that all can enjoy. With the Sound of Om constantly with you, seek His Lessons, reach Upwards and pluck the ripening fruits from the Branches.

* * *

Sai Baba has told us, again and again, that "Service to others is service to self." All have felt the blissful glow that surges through oneself when even the smallest act of good towards another is performed. While meditating on the 23rd of January, 1966, and feeling deeply in tune with the Bhagavan Sri Sri Sri Sathya Sai Baba I asked Him to tell again of this secret to inner happiness and in moments, I was writing the words flowing through the Universe from Him.

"See the tall tree, over there; one branch has young tender leaves on the extreme tips. Look also at the blossoms that are lovingly bestowing smiles upon all who pass along that Path below. The flowers, shall we say in their "worldly ignorance" are, without charge, performing a beautiful service. The blossoms have given especial attention to their colourings, to their tender shape. Look! they even give off a gentle sweet perfume. A perfume naturally sweeter and more exotic than any to be found in a container is being given away to any bird, bee, insect or person. Even the ants from that far away hill have been invited to enjoy the sweet nectar of the blissful flowers, that bloom in the sunlight.

"One could say that the flowers are surely ignorant of Life. For whoever heard of a living thing going to so much trouble just to smile all the day upon anyone that looks; or freely offering honey from tender lips, or taking the trouble to close up shop each night folding the soft petals, just to protect the good free things for yet another day of giving-only to find in a short time that the young petals lose their energy to hold on. And then to see them, one by one, float to the sidewalk to be trampled on by the same folk that took all of those smiles with a mere glance, and enjoyed the wafting sweetness in a few seconds. Or to see the honey supply, so lovingly prepared diminish as the bees and ants and humming birds gathered it up, until all was gone.

"Yes there, Charles, you have a natural example of giving to the very end. Right up until life itself, for those blossoms has been taken away. And what is the use, what is the gain?

"The tree, with its green leaves and sweet blossoms, was brought into the world, by the Divine for but one purpose, to *SERVE*. It was given a life span, as we can call it. The tree itself has what a mortal would call a long life, for seldom do you see a tree die of old age; a tree does not know what is meant by *'old age'*". It may perish due to neglect, air-pollution, soil-pollution, and even through having too much food. Yes, take the tree with shallow roots. Come the gentle rains, it thrives; but give it too much rain and the earth holding the shallow roots softens. The roots with too much water cannot maintain attachment to the sand, or gravel, or the dirt of the field or sidewalk.

"And so, Charles, all must learn a deep lesson from this. Those who give and continue to give find eternal joy, peace and love. They have the fruits of the Good Earth bestowed upon them, or perhaps we should now say to seekers, the fruits of Good Heaven. One can always find more to give. For, goodness multiplies, it has no end, no container large enough could be found once goodness starts to flow. Be of *SERVICE* to others, for that is giving yourself to Me. For each unit you give, I will repay you thrice, nay I shall repay you ten-fold. Try Me and you will see. I say to those who know the joy of giving, "*Look back!*" Yes, look back and see how each time you felt that nothing but a miracle could save you, keep you alive, fill your larder, save your son, stop a disaster—Has not that miracle happened!!! Divine Guidance is always at the side of the Giver. Yes; I will give to those who give of themselves, untold joy and bliss, and what is more I will lead them by the Hand along those petal strewn Paths to Eternal Joy!

" Now, on the other side of the coin, observe yourself whenever you start to *TAKE*. There is little joy, by comparison. You may take through sheer necessity but never will one gain by taking. I do not have to labour this point. The thief who takes has the whole of the police force out, endeavouring to take his life. There is also that other *FORCE* that will get him much faster than any mortal force! He will find that everything automatically turns against him, his loved ones, his own mind. Only the Divine knows how to forgive a thief.

"Then there is the Hunter who takes the lives of life-loving roving animals. That hunter must watch his every step, for the forces of the jungle or the plain are all turned against him. Even creatures he is not hunting are aware that here is some one they must keep away from. Yes; all the forces are pitted against the hunters of life.

"Every deed performed, do it in My Name. Every person who passes near your Path give them the sweetness of your smile. Give freely the nectar of your cup of happiness, of kindness, of blissfulness. Give the warmth of your love. Extend your hand, as I extend Mine to you.

"When you see the Petals of Life falling away understand that this is so, that you did use those hands for good, all your life. When you appear to see your petals fall onto the Path below do not feel sadness but Joy. The Joy that you gave was given to you to be used in good grace, in good Service. The artist, the performer, the singer, who gave hours of joy to great and small audiences must know that the moments were given to lighten the hearts of others. Talents are not manmade! Most of all I must stress again and again that the service must be considered as full reward for earthly activities. Do not look for more—should you receive encores, bless each one and enjoy those additional moments upon the stage of life. All are artists and all are star performers, in My eyes! After you have received the blissful glow from services given, then I shah give you Happiness for all Eternity. What more can you ask! Only the Giver and only the Server can walk the Path in Bliss.

"Take these words, Charles, and *GIVE* them away. Each is Precious. No pearl from the sea, no gold from the hills, no gem from the mine can give the joy earned from giving and serving others!"

* * * * *

Written at the Lotus Feet of the Divine Load from words floated through the Universe by His Light. All can tune into this flow of Wisdom, for His words are for all peoples of the World. Listen to His sweet voice; the source of the stream has no limitations.

Charles Penn

Dharmashastra, The Jewel in India's Casket

Other living beings like birds and beasts are concerned with the world only. But, man is different. He can master the inner and outer instruments of knowledge, the senses the emotions the thought processes etc and, thereby, acquire the awareness of the basic mystery of creation; this gives him the realisation of the Truth, and with it, his native Bliss. Man can practise and attain the five virtues, called Panchasila: Ahimsa (non-violence), Sathya (Honesty) Astheya (Non-theft) Soucham (Purity) Brahmacharyam (Celibacy)—and by these means, his inner consciousness becomes cleansed enough to reflect Truth.

There are certain other matters which every man has to practise in his life. They are the Four Purusharthas; the Four Goals of Human Endeavour. The First Three, Dharma Artha and Kama are ephemeral, when compared with the Fourth, viz. Moksha. But, yet, they correct the behaviour of man and lead him along moral lines. As the feet waist stomach and head are to the human frame, so, these four are parts of the complete Duty of Man. Dharma is the Feet, Artha is the Waist, Kama is the Stomach and Moksha the Head. Of these the Feet which are the basis and the Head which directs are the most important. The other two are useless, without these two.

Without Dharma the Feet and Moksha the Head, what can the waist and the stomach do? Only a corpse can consist of those two only. Those two alone, second and third, Artha and Kama will make a man a corpse, a Shivam into a Shavam. Endeavour to become Sivam—that is the road to elation, eternal elation. Endeavour to become Shavam—that is the road to cremation.

The Shruti says, "Napunaraavarthathe"; "It does not repeat again", speaking of the stage of "No birth and death". Moksha means the cessation of the wheel's revolution, the wheel of birth and death; Dharma Artha and Kama are to be pursued as complementary to the chief goal, which is Moksha. Moksha such as this, is the final event in the career of every human being. The cessation happens when the individual comes to know of Brahman.

To acquire this knowledge of Brahman, two methods are laid down by the ancient scriptures. Each has its own technique, its own code of discipline, mental and intellectual.

The first is the assertive method: defining Brahman as Sathyam Jnanam Anantham, and declaring Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma, that All this is certainly, Brahman. Contemplation on these glories of Brahman along the lines laid down by the guru or by those who have experienced the truth leads one to realisation.

The second is the negating method: defining Brahman as indefinable, declaring that one can only experience it as "not this" "not this" "not the other thing" and so on, with reference to the objective world the sensory ephemeral world. This will lead to the realisation that the "I" which sees hears experiences argues feels imagines thinks—that I is the only entity and that I is all this and nothing else.

Either of these methods can succeed in helping realisation of the truth, only if man is purified and clarified by Dharma-directed Artha and Kama. This is the message of Bharat. This is the teaching of this land, for all who strive and struggle. That is the reason why it is called Karmabhumi, the Holy land of Karma, where man is directed in his activity by great sages who have the welfare of the whole world in view and who knew how to apply the principles of the highest Dharma to the practice of daily avocations. During the centuries, this high ideal got tarnished; it declined; and whenever such a dire contingency arises, the Lord Himself comes as Man to restore the path and lead mankind" along to self-realisation, by realising Him.

The secret of successful activity is known best to Indians. The difference between other cultures and Indian culture lies exactly in this: we accept the intimate relationship between Karma and Janma, whereas others ignore it. The sages of this land discovered the cause and effect relationship between Karma and Janma. He who indulges in activity must needs suffer the consequences; there is no escape. It has to be undergone either immediately or at a later time. In order to go through the consequence, it may be necessary even to get born again, and live. The place the condition of, life etc all are in proportion or in relation to the karma. Good acts produce merit and to go through, the consequence, birth in a good family with chances of happy life is needed. Bad acts produce sin and to suffer the effects, birth in a miserable family with no chance of enjoying happiness has to be imposed.

I am not advising you to follow blindly all that the ancient Rishis said, believing blindly all that they declared. Inquire into the correctness or otherwise of what they lay down. Then believe if you can, the fundamental principles they emphasise. This is the inescapable responsibility of every person born in this land as the child of Bharatmata.

You can know whether a statement is correct or not, only when you put it into practice. Truth can never change or waver or falter. It does not depend on space, time or condition. Truth is as necessary to cross the ocean of life as the ship is necessary to cross the deep blue sea.

Sathya or Truth has to be pleasant also. But just to make it pleasant, you should not add falsehood into Truth. "Sathyam brooyath, priyam brooyath (Speak truth, speak pleasantly) nabrooyakth Sathyamapriyam (if a truth is unpleasant, be careful in revealing it) priyam thu naanrtham brooyath (simply because it is pleasant, do not utter falsehood)". People ordinarily mean by 'truth', saying what exactly you heard or saw with your own eyes without any modification or addition. But, it is much more than that; Truth is the Form of God. Honour it like that. It is the only means by which the mysterious secrets underlying the ancient Vedantic doctrines and beliefs can be grasped by man.

Again everything must be true to itself; how is this possible? A thing is true to itself, if it has the Dharma of that particular thing. Heat is the native Dharma of fire; fire without heat is false. If water is not a liquid, it is not water. If it does not draw iron to itself, how can it be a magnet?

It is the Dharma of the magnet to attract towards itself only iron. It is the Dharma of salt to be saltish in taste and of pepper to have the hot burning taste. Man has to be human, humane; beasts have to behave like beasts. Each has to evince its special quality, power, or aptitude that distinguishes it from the rest. When that unique differential is absent, then, it is A-dharma, unmoral, on the wrong track.

The Swarupa and the Swabhava must be in agreement; that is to say, if a being has the Swarupa (Form) of a man and the Swabhava (Character) of a beast, it is 'false', 'untrue'. In other words, conduct must be in consonance with claims. That is why the Shruti declares, "Be true; there is no Dharma higher than that". "Sathyaannaasthi paro dharmah". Decide your Dharma with buddhi; ask what do I claim to be, what is the special quality by which that claim is established. Then, bend the mind to the performance of the duties which will demonstrate and develop that quality.

There are four groups of people, among those who try to bring these two—the buddhi and the manas—under control. The first is "egocentric": when man seeks but to fill his belly, satisfy his desires, regardless of others. He does not care for his children or for the parents who reared him or the wife whom he wedded or the kith and kin amidst whom he grew; he is unconcerned about their welfare; he is after his own joy, his own happiness. It is appropriate to call such men, human beasts.

The second group is "self-cum-other-serving": where man assures himself of his own happiness, but, thereafter, he is eager to serve the interest of his kith and kin as well as the community where he grew up. These are the step higher than the first group.

The third group is “service-above-self”: when man is prepared to suffer in order to save others from suffering. He considers the happiness of others as his own happiness, and the grief of others as his own. He seeks to live joyfully by making others joyful. He has both viveka and upkara buddhi (discrimination and the spirit of service).

There is fourth group too: “self-less”...when through spiritual discipline, the self and its promptings have been fully conquered. Such people can confer only good upon others; whatever they do, they have the good of the world at heart. They are untainted by ego, and so there is no greed or envy in them. Theirs is the highest dharma.

While considering dharma there are two ideals that have to be kept in view as touchstones to test all the various actions that are recommended. They are Sathya and Dharma. All the rests are subsumed under these two. Those who have stuck to these, “great”; their stories are really conducive to progress. They reveal how to apply sathya and dharma in practical life; they provide the best examples of the spiritual life lived according to sathya and dharma.

“Yatho abhyudya nissreyasa siddhih sa dharmah” it is said. Dharma makes one attain not only earthly happiness but it also confers spiritual salvation. So, the true test of dharma is this—what confers happiness and liberation hereafter, true happiness and lasting liberation. Everything that stands in the way of Dharma is A-dharma.

Which acts confers this double benefit? There are three that do so. They are called Yajna, Dana and Tapas. Yajna again is of three kinds: Karmayajna, Upanayajna and jnanayajna. So too, Dana or charity has three types which can be differentiated: Abhayadana, Brahmadana, Arthdana. Tapas has three forms: sariaka, manasika, and vaachika, that is to say, physical, mental and vocal.

Tapas means, burning desire for achieving God. The usual meaning that is given is asceticism, but, the word for this is titiksha, which implies suffering the dual blows of good fortune and bad, heat and cold, loss and profit.

Charity or Danam: This word does not mean only the giving of things that you have, when you find others needing them, without refusing to part with them; it also means, right appraisal of the needs and capacity of the recipients, their qualifications and merits. If these are not looked into, charity may lead to calamity. A child may ask for a diamond; a mad man may ask for a knife. If you give them these because you feel you should not refuse, then you are causing trouble to all. Hence, when charity is practised, attention has to be paid to the capacity of the giver and what is more important, the capabilities of the recipient. Gifts made in due consideration of these are really the best.

*From an Article written for the
Mandalothsava Sanchika, aanathana Vedanta Sabha*

The Boon

Bharat is a very, fortunate land, for when, people are in great distress, the Lord has appeared often to give, consolation and courage. Baba is the avatar of the Lord come to; grant us faith and hope and strength, at the present juncture. Though I had heard' about Him, I had the good fortune to see Him and be blessed by Him only two years back. We are taught that this Human. birth is very sacred, for, in the heart of span, the Lord resides. Baba has been reminding us that He is the resident in all hearts. I am therefore happy that I am here, in His Presence, on Guru Poornima Day, which is suspicious for the worship of the Guru. And, we have here, the Guru of Gurus, as the Pundit just now pointed out.

I remember today the first meeting I had with Baba... It was quite a pleasant surprise but, I felt I was with a very loving merciful, Teacher who knew me for many years. I remember all the advice He gave me then, and subsequently. I am trying my best to follow the lines of action He laid down. He blessed me and encouraged me to serve the people, with all my heart. Every occasion of meeting Him and being with Him has been an inspiration for me. He does not like blind faith; He always insists on intelligent discriminating faith. He told me that Seva is the flower of the tree of Indian Culture, self-less Seva. I have attended the meetings He addressed in Bangalore, sitting as one among the tens of thousands of people; and, I have been thrilled by the enthusiasm and the devotion of those around me. He speaks as Krishna did to Arjuna, giving us the same message of strength and service. That so many thousands have been attracted from all the corners of India, from the richest to the poorest, from the most illiterate to the most learned, that all of them have so much love faith and regard for Baba is as indication that Baba has the power the grace and the wisdom of an Avatarpurusha.

The greatest boon that we must pray for from Him is the transformation of the mind; the cleansing of impurities. Baba has been reminding us that riches power authority even health are not lasting, that we must make the best use of the years allotted to us and realise our Divinity, by Sadhana. Let us pray, on this great Day, that He will bless us for these:

From the Speech by Hon'ble Negappa Alva

The Zenith of Creation

The traditional number of created beings is 84 lakhs, and man is the final item of the evolutionary procession; but, why did the number stop at 84 lakhs? It stopped because man is the zenith, the fullness, he is Madhava in fact, though he has ignored the truth and holds fast to the belief that he is just a man. He is endowed with Manas Buddhi Chittam and Ahamkaram, all four, in as integrated personality, whereas the birds and beasts and all other species have mostly Ahamkaram alone. The lives of the latter are centred round the aham and its desires, and demands. But, man has the capacity to follow Sathya Dharma Shanti and Prema; man alone has

it. If he does not evince that capacity and develop it, he is as bad as a vanara or a danava (ape or ogre). When man was created, there remained nothing higher to create.

There is a story about Kalidasa which illustrates this point. It is said that the other poets and scholars in the court of Emperor Bhoja were green with envy at the quick rise to fame; of Kalidasa and at the largesse that the Royal patron showered upon him. So, they poisoned the ears of the Emperor against Kalidasa and when he challenged Kalidasa to disprove the allegations he was alone and helpless against his traducers. Kalidasa could appeal only to his other patroness, Kalimata, Mother Kali. He told the king that they could all come to the temple of Kali and when he prayed to Kali to stand witness to his integrity, they could hear the answer that the Goddess would give. He had such faith in his Mother. The entire court was present next, morning at the Temple; Kalidasa prayed. Then, in the tense silence, they all could hear a Voice.....
"Kavirdandee. Kavirdandee, Bhavabhoothisthu pandthah" (Dandi is a poet, Dandi is a poet; Bhavabhooti is a Pundit) That was all. No reference was made to Kalidasa, when all that was wanted was a judgement about Kalidasa and his merits. Naturally, Kalidasa was enraged He forgot himself in his rage and shouted Koham rande? (Who am I, you slut?). Kali kept calm; Her temper was not roused. After a moment; she replied, "Thwamevaham, thwamevaham, thwameva, ham, nasamsayah " (You are Myself, I am thyself, undoubtedly) That identity is the destiny of man.

Vyasa made man aware of his value. He collated the Vedas, wrote the Mahabharata and the Bhagavata and the eighteen Puranas and, the Brahmasutra. All these contain the same nectarine teaching, though the Vedas may be more highly revered. A boat maybe a small appliance, but, it can take you across the sea. A lamp may be a small contraption, but, it can light your path across a jungle. What is wanted is persistent effort, ceaseless Karma, activity. The torch may illumine only a distance of two yards and you may have to go two miles in the night. But, do not despair. Hold it in your hand and walk on. With every step, the torch will illumine a few steps more and so, you can reach the goal safe. Walk on; do not sit idly on the side of the road. Move on from one step to another—sraavanam mananam nididhyasanam. Only, let every act be saturated with Bhakti. Bhakti is not something added on to make life more appetising; it is the very breath of life. It should inspire every act, every word, every thought.

From Baba's Discourses

Sea of Bliss

O the sweetness! O.....the fragrance!
The Nectar He gave me that holy morn!

I shall never more make bitter
The tongue He sweetened then.
I shall never more feel bitter
Towards the men He walks among.
I shall never talk ill, waver in walk
I will new fall ill or fail.

I have no foe, I will not hate;
I shall not grab, I'll give my love.
I will be sweet, come what may;
The Amrita has sweetened me!

I shall not die, there's no more birth
I will merge in the Waves of Miss.

—*One who got the Nectar on Guru Poornima Day*

Prasanthi Nilayam News

- June 15: Presentation to Baba, of a Welcome Address by the Madurai Corporation. Baba's Discourse.
16: Baba's Discourse at Madurai.
23: Arrival of Baba at Prasanthi Nilayam.
- July 2: Guru Pournami Festival: Baba graciously gave Amrith to the thousands who had gathered. At the evening meeting, Hon'ble Nagappa Alva, Health Minister, Mysore and Pundits spoke. Baba gave His Divine Discourse.
3: Pundit's Discourse. Baba's Divine Discourse.
14: Inauguration of the Branch of the State Bank of India, at Prasanthi Nilayam, by Baba. Sri. T. Varadachari, Secretary, State Bank of India, Hyderabad presided

Prasanthi Nilayam Township

The area covered by Prasanthi Nilayam has been constituted into a Township by the Government of Andhra Pradesh.

Bhagavata Vahini

3

“Alas! Is he to suffer at last this tragic fate? Is this to be the reward for all the good in store for him? Can the consequence of years of good living suddenly turn into this calamitous end? It is laid down that those who die drowning, those who are killed by fall from trees and those who die of snakebite have a bad after-life. These are considered "inauspicious deaths"; those whose deaths are such, become ghosts and have to suffer so, it is said. Why should this child end up like that? O, the horror of it. O, the injustice of the whole thing!" lamented Yudhishtir, biting his lips to suppress his sorrow.

The Brahmins hastened to console him. "Maharaja!" they interjected, "There is no reason to give way to grief. Such a great man will never meet with such a tragedy. No. In the horoscope of this child, studying the positions of the planets, we can clearly notice two happy conjunctions, which indicate Vajrayoga and Bhaktiyoga, both powerful and propitious. Therefore, as soon as he learns of the curse, he will give up his kingdom as well as his wife and children and retire to the bank of the holy Bhagirathi River and surrender himself to the Lord. The great sage Suka, son of Vyasa, will arrive there and initiate him into Atmajnana (Self-knowledge) through the recital of the glories of Lord Krishna and the singing of His Praise. Thus, he will spend his last days on the sacred bank of Ganga and breathe his last with the adoration of the Lord. How can such a man meet with any tragedy or calamity? He will not be born again, for, through Bhaktiyoga, he will attain oneness with the Lord of All, Purushottama. Hearing these words, Yudhishtir gave up grief and became happy. He said, "If so, this is no curse; it is a unique boon!"

At this, every one rose. The Brahmins were honoured as befitted their learning and austerity. They were given gems and silken clothes and the king arranged to send them home. Yudhishtir and his brothers moved into their palaces, but, they spent many hours talking about the happenings of the day and of the fears, luckily removed. They were filled with joy at the turn the predictions had finally taken.

The baby grew in the lying-in-room, as the moon in the bright half of the month. Since it was born as heir to the great empire after a succession of dire dangers, every one loved it and guarded it like the apple of the eye, as the very breath of their lives. Draupadi who was broken by the loss of her own children, (the Upapandavas), Subhadra who had suffered inconsolable loss in the death of Abhimanyu, and the Pandava Brothers who dreaded that the terrific arrow of Ashwatthama directed against the posthumous child of Abhimanyu, still in the womb of Uttara, might do the worst and destroy for ever the Pandava line—all were relieved, nay, were overjoyed when they saw the child. They were supremely happy; they spent the days dotting over the little lovely babe whom they brought from the zenana for the purpose, whenever they felt the urge to see it and hold it in their arms.

The child too was very bright; it seemed to watch the lineaments of everyone who fondled it or came before it. It stared into their faces long and longingly. All were surprised at this strange behaviour. Every person who came to it was subjected to this searching examination by the child who seemed determined to trace someone or some, thing, in the world into which it was born.

Some said, sadly, it is seeking its father, Abhimanyu. Others said, "No, no; the child is searching for Lord Krishna." Some others opined that it appeared to be trying to discover some Divine Brilliance. The fact remained that the child was examining all, for some trait or sign which it knew already, to recognise some Form it had in mind. "Pariksha" was the word used by every one for the 'quest' in which the child was engaged and so, even before the formal Naming Ceremony, every one both in the palace and outside it, began referring to the child as Parikshit, 'he who is engaged in Pariksha!

That name, Parikshit, stayed! From the Raja to the ryot; from the Scholar to the boor, from the Monarch to the man-in-the-street, every one addressed the child as Parikshit or referred to him so. The fame of the child grew from day to day. It was on every one's lips. One auspicious day, Yudhishtir had the court priest brought before him and he commissioned him to fix a good day for the ceremony of naming the child-prince.

The priest called together his group of scholars and astrologers and after consulting the conjunctions of heavenly bodies, they discovered a day which all of them agreed was a good one for the event. They also settled at what hour the actual naming has to take place. Invitations to attend the ceremony were sent to the Rulers of the land, to Scholars and Pundits as well as prominent citizens. The king sent his emissaries to invite Sages and personages full of spiritual wealth. Arjuna went to Lord Krishna and reverentially prayed that He should shower His Grace on the child on the occasion; he succeeded in bringing Krishna along when he returned.

When Lord Krishna arrived, the Sages, Brahmins, Rajas, subordinate rulers and citizens got ready to receive Him with respectful homage; the Pandava brothers, attired magnificently, waited at the main gate of the Palace to offer Him welcome. When the chariot of the Lord was sighted, drums sounded, trumpets pealed mighty welcome, and joyful Jais rose from every throat. Yudhishtir approached the chariot and embraced the Lord as soon as He alighted; he held Him by the hand and led Him into the palace, where a High Throne was specially placed for Him. After the Lord was seated, all else occupied their seats according to their rank and status.

Sahadeva went to the inner apartments and the child was brought on a gold plate, resplendent as the sun, made more charming by magnificent jewels. The priests recited prayers invoking the Gods to bless the child and confer on him health and happiness.

Sahadeva laid the child down at the centre of the Court Hall. Maids and chamberlains came in long lines towards the place where the prince was, holding in their hands gold plates full of perfumes and flowers, silks and brocades. Behind specially fitted curtains, the queens Rukmini, Draupadi, Subhadra and Uttara were rejoicing at the happy scene, watching the gambols of the child. Sahadeva took the child and placed it on a bed of flowers in the mantap that was erected for the naming ceremony. But, the child rose on all fours and started crawling bravely on, in spite of the remonstrances of the maids. Apparently, it wanted to proceed somewhere!

The efforts of Sahadeva to stop its journey proved futile. Yudhishtir, who was observing its movements with interest said with a smile, "Sahadeva! Do not stand in the way. Leave him alone. Let us see what he does." And Sahadeva left his hold. He allowed the child to move

wherever he liked. Only, he took care to keep his eye always on him lest he fall or hurt himself. He followed him at every step, vigilantly.

The child, who got freedom of movement, soon made a beeline towards the place where Lord Krishna was seated, as if He was a long acquaintance whom he was seeking to meet. The child grasped the Feet of Krishna and pleaded, by his looks, that he may be taken on to the lap and fondled. The Lord saw his yearning; He laughed aloud; then, He, graciously bent low and lifted the child on to His lap.

Sitting on His lap, the prince was staring at the Lord's face without even a wink; he did not turn his head this way or that or pull at anything with his hands or make any sound. He just sat and stared. Everyone was amazed at this behaviour, so unlike that of a child. Even Krishna shared in the feeling that pervaded the Hall.

Turning to Yudhishtir. Krishna said, "I did not believe when I was told that this child stared at every one who came before him and examined their lineaments. I thought it was a new explanation given by these priests, to the usual prank and play of children. Now, this is really a wonder. The fellow has started examining even Me! Well, I Myself test his behaviour, a little."

Then, the Lord tried to distract the attention of the child from Himself by placing before him a variety of toys, and Himself hiding from view. He expected that the child will soon forget Him. But, his attention was not drawn towards any other object. He had fixed his eye inexorably on the Lord Himself, and it was seeking Him and no other. He was trying to move towards the place where he imagined Krishna was. When His attempts to transfer the attention of the child from Himself failed, Krishna declared, "This is no ordinary child. He has won through My tests. So, the name Parikshit is the most appropriate one for him. He lives up to it already!"

At this, the Pundits recited verses invoking their blessings on the child. The Brahmins recited relevant passages from the Vedas. The music of trumpets rent the air. Women sang auspicious songs. The family preceptor dipped a Nine-gemmed jewel in a golden cup of honey and wrote the Name on the tongue of the child; on the rice grains spread on a gold plate, the name was written and the rice was then showered on the head of the child, in token of prosperity and happiness. The naming ceremony was thus celebrated in grand style. Men and women who attended were given presents as befitted their rank and they departed. Every one was talking appreciatively of the wonderful way in which the child sought out the lap of the Lord. Many praised the steady faith that the child had already attained

Yudhishtir who was puzzled at the unique behaviour of the child approached Vyasa, the great sage, to know from him the reason for the strange search and learn about the consequences of this attitude. Vyasa said, "Yudhishtir! When this child was in the womb and the deadly arrow that Ashwatthama aimed at it in order to destroy it was about to hit its target, Lord Krishna entered the foetal home and made it safe and saved it from destruction. This child therefore has been eager to know who had saved him from within the womb where he lay. He started examining every one to find out whether he had the same effulgence that he saw, while a foetus in the womb. Today, he saw that Divine Form with all its splendour and so, he moved straight

towards Him and prayed to be taken up and seated on the lap. This is the explanation for the strange behaviour about which you are curious to know."

Hearing these words of Vyasa, Yudhishtir shed tears of joy and thankfulness. Overjoyed at the limitless Grace of the Lord, he paid Him reverential homage.

(To be continued)

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

*Sathyam is My Prachar;
Dharma is My Adhar
Shanti is My Swabhava
Prema is My Swarupa
Follow any one of the four
You are Mine, I am yours.*

—Baba

The Inauguration

The fourth of August, 1966 is a day that should be recorded in letters of gold, as Dr. B. Ramakrishna Rao declared, in the history of the Prasanthi Nilayam. For, on that day, at a meeting held in the Prayer Hall of the Nilayam under his Chairmanship and in the immediate Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the Hon'ble Dr. M. N. Lakshminarasiah, Minister for Panchayat Raj, Andhra Pradesh inaugurated the "Township" into which Prasanthi Nilayam has been constituted by Government Notification. Dr. Ramakrishna Rao said that the Nilayam has special needs on account of the daily influx of hundreds of pilgrims who arrive from all parts of India and even from foreign lands and also due to the large number of spiritual aspirants who have settled down here; in order to benefit from the elevating atmosphere and invaluable guidance. He thanked the Government for appreciating these needs and giving the Nilayam the administrative advantages that a township has.

The Honourable Minister declared that he was always willing and eager to offer what little service lies in his jurisdiction and power for the benefit of this Nilayam. He announced that he had sanctioned the asphaltting of the five-mile feeder road that branches off from the Dharmavaram-Kadri Road, so that people can have easier and more comfortable access to the place and he had also impressed the engineering staff with the urgency of the task. He said that the establishment of a township will free the place from the Village Panchayat, and its limits and enable the devotees settled here to provide the special amenities that a place with such all-India and even world contacts require. He quoted a Minister of Bombay telling him (while talking about a Hathayogi's discomfiture) about the lakhs of people who revered Baba in Bombay. They heard His discourses only in translation, but, yet, they were able to recognise Divinity in Him, in the splendour of His Face and the glory of His Countenance. He mentioned that Sadhakas from America, Germany Britain and other countries were coming and benefiting; by Baba's guidance

and teaching. For the better administration of such peculiarly unique colonies and neighbourhoods, the Law has laid down a special type of administrative set-up called Township. The Minister said that this is the very first such Township constituted in Andhra Pradesh. "We deal with and are involved in Artha", the Minister said; "But, Baba deals with Param-arth, the higher values, the highest goals." "As Baba has said, even before this 'body-boat' develops leaks and is damaged, the woe man must endeavour to reach that goal, through the constant remembrance of the Reality behind the world of appearance, and through consistently following a certain routine of Dhyana or Japa every day. This Nilayam from which this caution and this lesson are emanating to the whole world is now constituted into a Township, which can chalk out better facilities and amenities, as suited to its special requirements and status", concluded Dr. Lakshminarasiah.

Baba in His discourse called upon the Bhaktas to make the Nilayam an ideal place where the principles of Universal Love and Service based on Sadhana to realise the Oneness of all creation are acted upon. "To fight with external foes, you have (S)astra, weapons; to fight with internal foes like the senses which drag you away from the path of knowledge and love, you have the Sastras; they give you the guidance," Baba said. The Township administration should have this ideal in view, to foster Ananda for every one, not to create loss or difficulties for others. It must help and not hinder; serve, not swagger in pride. The purpose is not temporary gain but, in accordance with the aims of the Nilayam, long-standing, eternal gain. There are some who read meaning into words that turn the real sense into the ridiculous; they enjoy the game. So too, the human destiny of self-realisation is rendered ridiculous by the foolish pursuit of sense pleasures. Like diabetic patients who go about talking about the evils of sugar, they go about extolling their own ignorant avocations. No one should follow another's tastes; he should concentrate on his own truth. Of course, the senses have to be catered to, but, only up to a limit, a very strict limit. Or else, it would be as unbearable as music that overwhelms the shruti, the background basic tone. The reality should be discovered and demonstrated in every word and deed; then, Nara becomes Narayana, Jana becomes Janardana, Manava becomes Madhava.

In this land of Bharat, the secret of the Sadhana that will reveal this truth was seen and taught by sages in the past. There are three influences that help the individual to gain the truth; Sthanabalam, that is the company one keeps, the place where one spends His life, the atmosphere which one works in; Swabalam, one's own effort, achievement, persistence, endeavour etc: and Anugrahabalam, the Grace of God that flows from high to overcome all handicaps in the way of earnest sadhana.

In this country, you have the maximum sthanabalam for Sadhana, for, here the science of transmuting even stone into God, even a piece of paper into God, has been so long and so deeply rooted, in the faith of the people that all the tornadoes of foreign iconoclastic cultures have not been able to wipe it off the people. To encourage and promote this faith, Bhaktas and those with faith must strive to be inspiring examples to the hesitating and the doubtful. Then, the basic unity of all will be known, then, the petty quarrels that mar the atmosphere now, of state agitating, against state, as if they are separate bodies, instead of being limbs of the same body, will stop, because they will be revealed as silly. Why, even wars between one country and another will appear silly, because the same Brahmic basis is cognised in all humans, nay, in all creation. That is the best means of establishing integration.

The greatest gift of God to man is “the allotted length of life”, the years when he is alive, when he can carry on earnest effort to attain Him. No portion of this precious gift should be wasted. Every moment has to be utilised to the best advantage. Kabir used to utter the name of Rama when he threw the shuttle this side and that while weaving with every breath, he repeated the name of the Lord. In the Prasanthi Nilayam also we have now started a few cottage industries like spinning on the charkha. In big mills where spinning is done by machines the recitation of Ramanama is not heard. But, here while spinning people do Namasmarana.

I feel that the journey to Prasanthi Nilayam and the stay here should not be made very comfortable for, pilgrimages have to be done the hard way. Hard ships make the pilgrimage sweeter in the memory. A thing won after hard struggle is valued more than one got the easy way. Darkness makes light brighter; death makes life sweeter. The toil of the ryot makes the harvest a welcome reward. Fine roads, comfortable rooms with all modern luxuries make pilgrimages, picnics, rather than elevating experiences which purify and help spiritual progress.

You must all be grateful to the Minister for he took your work as His own and gave you all this joy; now, it is up to you to use well the administrative set up that has been conferred for the benefit of this area as well as of the neighbouring areas. Make this township the first in Andhra Pradesh, the ideal Township in all respects. That is my message. “That is my Blessing” said Baba

The Hon’ble Minister had called together, for a Conference at the Nilayam, of presidents of the Samitis of the District as well as the Block Development Officers and Baba granted Darshan to all of them and was present among them for a Group Photograph. They left after lunch and the Minister proceeded to Bangalore from where he emplaned to Hyderabad.

The Heaven

A ring of hills; a river of sand that roars
In rage but twice a year and then is dumb;
Molten lava hardened into rock,
Fanatic rock ground fine by flood,
A tank, a town, a twist, a turn,
A flock, a herd, a line of folded palms,
A hearty tune that fills the air,
A perfume wafted by the wary wind - - - - -
- - - - - and, lo, 'tis Heaven!
No place on Earth like this!
The Heaven for hearts that grieve.
Baba is the Balm, the Boon, the Lord.
Enter all who stumble on the road
From East and West, and North and South.
Welcome to all who fear and falter, grope in hope

The Lord awaits His hungry flock
He guides, commands, consoles
Holds by the hand and saves.

—Tharakadas

The Call of the Flute

One year has passed since I drove away from Prasanthi Nilayam and waved farewell to Sathya Sai Baba and came to U.S.A. As I look back on that eventful July day when I first met Baba, I realise how fast has been the spiritual progress since meeting Him

I first went to Puttaparthi in 1964 to see some miracles, for I had heard that a great Holy one was doing Siddhis. I thought I was going for a day to see miracles, but one glimpse of Baba—and I changed all plans, cancelled all trips, extended my visa, etc; to be with the Master!

His prema (Love) is a tangible thing which comes into the heart, fills it with divine love for all beings. Through Baba's presence the body becomes like a cloud of light, weightless, timeless.

When I look back on myself at Rishikesh, I cannot believe that such a change could take place. I recollect sitting by the Ganges pondering "Who of all those have met is my teacher—my guru?" In my heart cried out, called to the Himalayas, to the Holy ones residing there, hidden from mortal view, "Who of you will help me, who will help? As I sat silently in the dilemma, I heard a voice and there stood a young man from a nearby Ashram whom I had never seen before. Without introduction he spoke, "If you are to reach the goal early you must give up all teachers but one. Get one and you will attain." With that he walked away. Sitting there by the Ganges in the dark with the rippling waters at my feet and the roaring "OM" of the waters in my ears, I mentally threw out all the past and its many teachers. Within two weeks I was standing at Prasanthi Nilayam before Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Whole heart and soul felt at peace in His Presence. Just the sight of His Halo of Hair, or the Orange robe, sent a wave of the consciousness of Shanti through me. He asked (as he asks all who come to Him) "What do you want?" "God" was all I could answer. Many short interviews, he gave me in the ensuing days. A few words, a smile; but an inner change was discernible. Prema (divine love) began to fill my being to overflowing. I became spiritually one with the Guru in those early days. Walking, moving, praying, I was not with the master in consciousness. But that was not enough. He directed me onwards, upwards with the words "WE" "HE" meaning "Don't stop until you become HE, the one universal consciousness."

Before leaving Prasanthi Nilayam Baba created presents, taking them from the "Universal Storehouse" or as Baba says the "Sai Store" with a wave of His hand. There was a little picture for a ring with the Master's face on it, vibhuti, pictures, oh! Many gifts, but the greatest of His miracles is not the spiritual 'siddhi' manifestations, but the Divine Miracle, the transformation of a soul. With His little Kindnesses, little gestures, he unfolds the consciousness. One day he stood

before the group with His face radiant, he sweetly said, “I am so happy”. And I too instantly felt that happiness which is beyond words. It was His unique way of giving the grace of Anandam.

When I asked Him for moksha, His answer was “do Sadhana with great determination. Swami will help.” The days at the ashram were filled with determined effort. I often sat through hours of “meetings” knowing no word which was spoken. But when Baba got up to speak and filled the hall with His prema (love), the place would turn a radiant white with the effulgence of God and my being responded, the heart opened and love flooded me. So many gifts of the spirit he has given me. The gift of seeing the whole world as Prakash, God, the Essence, revealed before my waking eyes. The gifts of Anandam, of Prema, peace, happiness, He says, “I give with down-turned hands, my hand only turns upward to receive the gifts of a devotee’s divine love.

Having seen Him under numerous circumstances I have never seen Him less than perfection in action. Peaceful, humble, kind, loving, joyous yet sternly kind, boyishly young and gay. These are all attributes of His diversified nature. Yet this same body can control the elements and produce any material manifestations. He never flaunts or misuses His gift of siddhi. Only using His spiritual powers to help the helpless, the ailing the sick, the destitute and at times just for happiness, as he did, when with a wave of His hand he took from the universal store house sweet halve still warm of a quality never tasted before or after. He told me of the yogic heat in my system caused by intense sadhana and with a quick movement of the hand he took from “Nowhere” this sweet, and placed it in my hand saying “This is sweet, that is heat, eat,” laughing in His own inimitable way, which makes all who hear laugh with delight in response.

As I sit here in New York, meditating, writing, I no longer look back on the years of spiritual struggle as futile and useless waste. They were years of preparation leading me to the feet of the Master—Sai Baba.

I sit here, by Baba’s grace, not loving... but love itself, not seeking anandam... but the consciousness of Anandam made manifest in me. A smoothness, an inner radiance, which shines in all alike, permeates my being also. No longer need I try to awaken the heart center. My whole self is the center of love, for I am the eternal Ananda and Shanti. Who is there outside? I no longer exist as such, I am part of the cosmic Whole. As Baba says “the body is less than a cloth, it is like a cloud, neither real or unreal. You have never been born nor will you ever die, you are atma.”

The mind no longer fears the future or dispels the past for He, Baba, has said, “Swami is with you always”. Yet the call of the FLUTE is ever heard within my heart and some day I will wend my way back to the sacred feet of Krishna.”

A joy fills the being as one walks on the crowded streets, the icy cold wind cannot take that warm inner glow from the heart. One looks at the tall buildings towering above and sees Baba, at the crowds and there he is. He fills all space even as Divine Krishna”

Hilda Charlton

He and our Hearts

It is not possible to summarise Baba's personality in any formula or within the framework of any rigid evaluation. He is "all things to all men." Because He is the Divine in human incarnation, there is always something of the inscrutability of the divine about Him a certain degree of unpredictability in His ways, as we, in our limited understanding think. To His BHAKTAS, however, to thousands of men, women and children, who go to Puttaparthi, or gather in large numbers wherever he goes, Baba is supremely HUMAN. The divine is made familiar and intimate. He is vibrant with love—His eyes often moistened with deep compassion for the sorrow, sufferings, frustrations, and follies of those who are in His presence. At such moments, as we watch Him surveying the mass of humanity gathered before Him, we become deeply aware of the tremendous power of Divine Love. I have seen men and women almost breaking down in tears at the sight of this supreme ministering power and embodiment of PREMA. The tears are the manifestation of a profound emotional stirring. Only love can achieve "This miracle of tears". A great western mystic, Eckhart, says that only under Divine compulsion can love pour itself out. Such love "Flows from being to being like a mighty river that knows no obstruction." When Baba is present anywhere that spot becomes holy and is "bathed" with the pure waters of love. It is, indeed, Prema Vahini. No one can escape its compelling power. The only thing is that one should make himself open to its dynamic influence, and when one does this, its impact is something stupendous. His love penetrates through us, envelopes us like the air around us, even while it uplifts, subdues and chastens us. A few moments in His presence can transform the individual beyond recognition. There are innumerable instances of people who have come to Puttaparthi with strong disbelief or skepticism. Some have come with the intention of even "testing" Baba. But in every case, the transformation was wrought. Sometimes, the change is lasting and such people are, indeed, uniquely blessed. In some cases, the effect is only temporary—"a moment's passing sensation"—and the person relapses into His former disbelief or ignorance. 'It is such people,' said Baba once, "who cause me the greatest concern and demand my solitude and love."

The manner in which Baba wins our heart is wonderful—a momentary glance of His eye penetrating through the entire being of the person, a charming smile radiating love and understanding, a few words of solace and encouragement, sometimes even a direct assault on the ignorance and prejudices of the person, at other times, glorious teasing where very word sparkles with mischief and fun, but whose source lies at the very depths of affection and compassion. The result is the complete unqualified surrender. How long this surrender lasts or how deep the awareness of Baba's divinity sinks into one's being, depends on the particular person. On these occasions, when we are in the "*korika*" room at Puttaparthi, it is an intensely revealing experience. In many cases, the experience is such an inward upheaval, that the person almost staggers out of the room—deeply touched and overwhelmed by Baba's love, and filled with indescribable ANANDA or bliss. Many persons who have had these 'interviews' with Baba have told me that when they were in His presence, all thought and anxiety were suspended. Baba puts everyone at a complete ease, so natural and affectionate He is. All our problems and the many questions we have intended to place before Him, are already anticipated by Him. I have myself had the overwhelming feeling that here was someone whom I had known for years and years. However short the interview is, we feel that we have been in His presence for a long, long time, and each moment, a new wonder reveals itself. It is amazing how much Baba knows about our

past, how unerringly He puts His fingers, as it were, on our troubles and anxieties, and with what understanding and wisdom, He can guide us.

H. Sunder Rao

‘Amrita’ for Eye and Tongue

[Baba's leela at Bombay]

Many are the ways by which Sri Bhagavan showers His Blessings on His Bhaktas. His 'Leelas' are indeed beyond human comprehension. To cite a recent instance:

In the Greater Bombay, in Matunga (C. Rly) there is a South Indian Iyengar family. Mr. Iyengar himself, his wife, mother and sisters are great 'Bhaktas' of Sri Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. They perform regular Puja and sing bhajans and devotional songs. Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has been very kind to offer His Benedictions on this family of devotees, by causing a continuous flow of 'Vibhuti' and 'Kumkum' from Bhagavan's photos which the family is worshipping in their home.

In Mr. Iyengar's house, a certain silver tumbler is always kept filled with water in front of the Photo of Bhagavan. The water in this tumbler is meant for Bhagavan. Recently, the water in this tumbler started turning into 'Tirtha' all of a sudden, and gave the aroma and taste of Camphor and Clove. This is now happening every day when pure tap water placed every morning turns into 'Tirtha' which is being distributed to Bhaktas.

Myself and my family members had planned to go to Puttaparthi on Guru Poornima Day, to receive Bhagavan's Darshan and Blessings. Personally I had decided to perform the journey by car, as railway tickets were not freely available. Other members of my family had thought of flying over to Bangalore and thence to motor down to Puttaparthi. I had proposed to take two cars for this trip. Some of Mr. Iyengar's family members were also eager to get Bhagavan's Darshan on Guru Poornima day. So they expressed a desire to travel by car with our party. As there was sufficient room available, I readily agreed to accommodate them in the car.

Unfortunately, owing to disturbances in the border towns of Mysore adjoining Maharashtra State, I had to abandon the trip and postpone it to a more opportune occasion. Consequently, the members of Mr. Iyengar's family could not make the trip. Naturally, they were very much disappointed in having lost the opportunity of getting Bhagavan's Darshan on Guru Poornima Day.

But the Omnipotent and Omniscient Bhagavan, ever eager and ready to respond to the call of His Bhaktas would not deny these Bhaktas their wishes. So, in the early hours (at about 5-30 A. M.) on the Guru Poornima Day, Sri Bhagavan appeared at the residence of Mr. Iyengar and gave Darshan for 3 minutes to Sri Iyengar's mother. Mr. Iyengar's mother was over-filled with joy at having achieved her heart's desire of getting Bhagavan's Darshan on Guru Poornima Day. She

prayed to Bhagavan to remain for a longer time in her house, so that her sleeping children could be woken up and they too could get His Darshan. But Bhagavan, after moving about in the house, and placing on a glass plate in front of the Puja, a small quantity of Saffron coloured rice as token of His Blessings, became `adrishya' (invisible).

After performing her daily ablutions and bath, Mr. Iyengar's mother went to the room where the Puja is performed. To her extreme joy and delight, she found that the small silver tumbler which is about 4" high and 2½ diameters was filled with "AMRITA". This `Nectar' containing small slices of plantain, tasted Honey; this was Bhagavan's `prasadam' to his Bhaktas.

The Amrita contained in this silver tumbler would have been hardly sufficient to be distributed in pinches amongst about 10 to 15 persons. But, surprisingly, the level of the `AMRITA' in the tumbler remained constant, in spite of the fact that it was given to one and all who went to Mr. Iyengar's house on that day for Darshan. Many persons were fortunate enough to get this `prasadam' and see the saffron coloured rice. It was possible to distribute so little a quantity of `AMRITA' to so many devotees, because by the Grace of Bhagavan the tumbler had been rendered into an `Akashaya Patra' (inexhaustible vessel). Mr. Iyengar's family members have been distributing this `prasadam' to callers at their house, till late in the night of the Guru Poornima day. Strangely, however, on the following morning, this tumbler was found to be empty.

So, it would be no exaggeration to say that Bhagavan is always kind and good to all his real devotees and Bhaktas and in times of need, fulfils their desires and wishes through His `Leelas'.

J. P. MAROO
Marine Drive, Bombay

[Dear Readers, pause and ponder over this letter. Fill yourself with joy, that you are alive this day when the Lord is in our midst. Resolve to call on Him to mould us all into perfect instruments for His Task. —Ed]

This Bank and That

Among the four Purusharthas, Dharma Artha Kama and Moksha, if man pursues only the middle ones, neglecting the first and the last, he is bound to land himself in ruin; for Dharma the first, is the path and Moksha the last, is the goal. Artha and Kama are to be guided and controlled by the dictates of Dharma and the need of attaining Moksha. They have a place, though only inferior, in the process of living, for Artha won through Dharma has to be used for the Kama (Desire) to attain Moksha (Moha-kshaya or the decline and destruction of attachment.)

To Dasaratha (endowed with the ten chariots, or senses, the five Jnanendriyas and the five Karmendriyas) is born Four Sons, Rama (Dharma) Lakshmana (Artha) Bharatha (Kama) and Shatrughna (Moksha). Since the three brothers followed the eldest, that is to say, since the role of

Dharma was dominant, the Ramayana ended in triumph. You must follow Rama or Dharma in preference to everything else.

In order to give some relief to the Bhaktas who come here and who are here, and to provide them facilities for bringing and keeping the moneys needed for their upkeep, the State Bank of India planned this office and their keenness to be of service has made them get through all the preliminaries, in a very short time. They were also eager that I must inaugurate the branch. Hence, they waited till today, because I was away for some weeks at Coorg, Madras, Kodaikanal and Madurai, and I returned only towards the end of last month.

Perhaps, the date of the Inauguration of this Branch got postponed, so that you could hear another good news: the constitution of Prasanthi Nilayam into what is called a 'Township', since it is a place of great importance attracting people of all religions and all professions from all parts of India, and from lands overseas.

Here, in this Sank you deposit the money you have earned, so that you may have security, so that you can put it into better use. In your distress, you can rely on it to help and come to your rescue. You have earned it by that of physical effort, in the hope that it will give you peace of mind and joy, content and calm.

But, there is something else that is more desirable than Asthi, which means 'property', 'possessions', and 'riches'. If you have that property, you become an Asthi-ka, a theist, a believer, a candidate for self-realisation. That property consists of good deeds, good words, good thoughts. It will fetch you, not the comforts and luxuries that satisfy the trivial cravings of the senses, but, joy which will stop the hunger of the spirit. Ordinary property is subject to depreciation; it will change hands; its value may rise or fall. But, the property of spiritual progress suffers from none of these defects.

In this bank, there may be a lot of money, but, you can draw only what you have deposited and what stands in your name. They wont give you credit for more than that, unless you have satisfied them of your credit-worthiness by consistent honesty and scrupulously clean dealings. In that other bank where you deposit the good that you do and speak and think, the same rule applies: you will get credit only up to the actual merit that you have acquired. You may get a little overdraft now and then, provided you are consistently good and over whelmed with contrition.

No person can draw on another's account in this bank so too, in that other bank; each has to stand or fall on the basis of his own past and present achievement. The son cannot bank on the father's punya or the wife on the husband's. Each Jivi has its own destiny its own accomplishments, its own profit and loss account, with its own balance sheet. Like food, which each one must take individually to appease his own hunger (there is no vicarious appeasing of hunger possible) each has his own separate account, with God which he alone can operate.

The Manager may be your friend, he may sympathise with your position, but, he too cannot help you, beyond your own balance, isn't it? So too, God is impartial; He has allowed you to shape your destiny yourself utilising the endowment of intelligence detachment and discrimination

(viveka, vairagyam and vichakshana) that he has made for you. You succeed or fail, according to the use you make of this capital; He is not affected one way or the other.

If you have no earnings now, you can approach the Bank for a loan on the mortgage of the landed property which has come down to you from your parents or grandparents. That is why you see many people who, though they are not earning any credit with God by good deeds and words and thoughts are still seemingly happy; they have mortgaged the merit of previous births and when that has been spent, they will be rendered indigent, because they are reluctant to earn now for securing a good and joyful life.

The Dhanam that you should earn and accumulate and guard carefully is spiritual wealth. You may know that Arjuna was called Dhananjaya. Krishna uses that name many times in the Bhagavad-Gita. But, the word does not mean 'he who acquired money'; it meant 'he who amassed spiritual wealth' for, Krishna would never appreciate a mere seeker after wealth, in such terms.

How do you too win that title, Dhananjaya? By developing Sahana, (fortitude, ability to stand the buffetings of both success and failure) and Prema (love of all beings). Mere money can be collected by many even by beggary or by dealing in the black market. That is not a laudable achievement. Earn the currency that is accepted in the Bank of God; that is minted as every word thought and deed; it bears the stamp of Bhakti and Shraddha. It is called Virtue. It is current as Sathya, Dharma, Shanti and Prema.

Such virtue will make your money too, still more precious. By developing simple habits and simple virtues, you will be helping the country as, well as yourselves. I bless this branch of the State Bank, so that it may grow more and more useful to the people who reside in this area, and who are in need of its services.

From the Discourse of Baba, Prasanthi Nilayam 14-7-66

Proper Care of the Boat

On 3-5-1966, Baba presided over a mammoth gathering of villagers at Kothacheruvu, a village of 9000 people, about 7 miles from Prasanthi Nilayam, by road. The occasion was the opening of the New Building of the Primary Health Centre (land and part of the cost being the donation of a villager himself) by Honourable Minister for Panchayat Raj, Dr. M. N. Laxminarasiah. Baba was welcomed enthusiastically and taken in procession along with the Minister, with great ovation through the streets, in a decorated jeep.

Speaking to the gathering, after the formal opening of the Building, the Minister said that it was of happy augury that the villagers were able to persuade Baba to be present and to preside "He is so near to us, but we deal with Him as if He is distant. That is the error we all commit", he said. "His Blessings are the basis on which many great undertakings have blossomed into fruition," he declared.

Sri T. Ramachandra Reddy, the President of the Zilla Parishad said, "I am confident that with Baba's Blessings, the drugs administered by the Doctors in this Health Centre from now on, will be effective panaceas. I must admit that it is only after His fame has spread all over the world that we, who are living near Him, have come to realise His Divinity but this is true of previous Avatars also; for, Sri Rama and Sri Krishna too had many who were not aware of Their Divinity. Perhaps, an opportune moment has to arrive for the removal of our ignorance and illusion. I am glad that that moment has come."

Sri T. Chidambara Reddy, Sri Narayana Rao, the District Collector, the Presidents of the Samitis of Penukonda and Roddam and the Sarpanch of Kothacheruvu, and Sri Chowdhary, M. L. A. of Dharmavaram joined in the welcome. Sri T. Chidambara Reddy described the history of the Health Centre and declared that Baba's arrival to bless it was the culmination of its successful career.

Baba appreciated the spirit of service that moved the donors to give the land and the money required for the building. "Like the three blades of a fan which must be activated by the current to rotate like one, in order to make life pleasant, the three, the Cabinet, the Officers and the People must be activated by the spirit of service and work joyfully in unison, in order to make the people happy", He said. "The three must not be disturbed or dislocated by mutual envy or greed or hate or malice; they must all be activated by love and sympathy. Sahana is the lubrication needed. In the firmament of the heart, the intellect (sun) and the mind (moon) revolve on their regular courses. If the passions mentioned above dim the glory, then are to be dismissed as passing clouds that cannot affect the sources of light. The more you reason out things, the plainer will become the reality. Reasoning power will never hinder the discovery of the Truth; only, you have to go as far as reason can take you; then, you can see the vast vistas beyond. Man has been endowed with enormous, immeasurable talents, skills and power. But, he is using all that to journey towards a poor satellite of the earth on which he lives, instead of journeying towards the wonderland of his own inner realms, where he can come face to face with God who is his inner Reality, the inner Reality of this entire phenomenal world.

A man dreams that he is a boy, he grows and marries, he fondles his children and his grand children the story of fifty year, is telescoped to a period of two waking moments. This is within the experience of all. The stream was 'real' experience during the dream; it 'lasted' for fifty years but, when judged from the point of view of the 'waking' it lasted but two minutes. So too, from the point of view of the 'fully awake', the Jnani, even the waking stage is ephemeral, illusory. That is why Jnana is declared to be so illuminating; it reveals the Truth that all this is only 'relatively' real; the Absolute Reality is the Brahman.

This Truth has been discovered and proclaimed in this country ages ago. It is a shame that today the people of Bharat are not aware of this heritage. The tree of life can yield the fruit of Amrita only when it is watered by virtue and fed on faith. Provision of food, clothing, and shelter will not ensure peace and joy; they can come only through virtue and faith. Virtue alone can endow love and sympathy. We are now putting the cart (the body) before the horse; (mind) and providing for the safety and strength of the cart only. The horse (mind) is allowed to grow wild or is starved.

There is no love and sympathy between even the members of a household Kaliyuga has come Kalahayuga, the Era of Wrangling and Wars. Even while foes are surrounding this country, there is wild hate between one State and another, claiming 'this bit of land is mine,' 'that bit of land cannot be yours', forgetting that both are limbs of the same body. Similar is the fate of nations also. Integration of hearts can come about only through the recognition of the Oneness of All, and the renunciation of sensory pursuits. Tolerance is very essential.

The body is but a boat, an instrument, for crossing the sea of change, that you have earned through the merit of many generations. When you have crossed the sea, you realise the Dweller, in the Dwelling. That is the purpose of the body. So, even when the body is strong and skilled, even while the intellect is sharp and the mind alert, effort must be made to seek the Dweller, the Dehi in the Deha.

"This Health Centre helps to keep the body strong and free from handicaps. The boat should be seaworthy. You can make it so, provided you take advantage of this Centre. That is the reason why I have so readily agreed to be present here today."

From Baba's Discourse, Kothacheruvu

Prasanthi Nilayam News

- July 20-24: Pictorial Exhibition of Baba's Teachings at Cowasji Jahangir Hall, Bombay.
- 24: The Medical College Committee met Baba at Anantapur.
- 28: Fifth Anniversary Celebrations of the Dharmapuri Sathya Sai Bhakta Sangham: The District Collector presided.
- August 3: Opening of the New Building of the Primary Health Center, Kothacheruvu by the Hon'ble Minister for Panchayath Raj Baba presided.
- 4: Inauguration of the Prasanthi Nilayam Township by the Hon'ble Minister for Panchayath Raj, Dr. M. Lakshminarasiah. Dr. B. Ramakrishna Rao, Ex-Governor of Kerala and Uttar Pradesh, presided.
- 8: Baba left for Hyderabad, for a short visit.

Bhagavata Vahini

4

The Namakaranam Ceremony of the Prince gave great delight to the subjects of the State as well as the inmates of the Palace, and members of the Royal Household. But, Yudhishtir, the eldest of the Pandava brothers., felt that something more had to be done; he was not content with the joyous festival alone. He called for an assembly the same evening of all the elders, the scholars, the Pundits, the subordinate rulers and leaders of the people; he prayed that Lord Krishna preside over the gathering and confer joy on all. The sages Vyasa and Kripa also attended.

Coming to the Assembly, Yudhishtir stood before the gathering a few seconds in silence, before he fell at the feet of Lord Krishna and the sage Vyasa. He then turned towards the rulers, scholars and leaders and said, "I was able to defeat the foes through your help, co-operation and best wishes, as well as the blessing of the Lord who is present here and of the sages and saints who have installed Him in their hearts. We were able by means of that victory to win back the kingdom that we had lost. Again, through these blessings the light of hope has gleamed in our hearts darkened by despair about the continuation of this dynasty. The Pandava line will be continued by the Prince who was named today by the Lord as Parikshit.

"While all this delights me, I must announce before you that I am overwhelmed with sorrow at the contemplation of another side of the picture. I have committed countless sins, killing kith and kin. I feel I must do some expiation for this; or else, there will be no happiness for me or for my dynasty or for my people. Therefore, I wish to take this opportunity to seek your advice on this matter. There are among you many who have known the Reality and attained Brahmajnana; we have also the great sage Vyasa here. I expect you to suggest some expiatory rite by which I can rid myself of this colossal mountain of sin that I have accumulated as a result of this war."

When Yudhishtir posed this problem in great humility and with great contrition, Lord Krishna said, "Yudhishtir, you are famous as Dharmaraja and you ought to know the Dharma. You know the intricacies of Dharma and morality, of justice, of right and wrong conduct. Therefore, I am surprised that you are afflicted with grief over this war and this victory. Do you not know that a Kshatriya incurs no sin when he kills a foe who has come to the battlefield armed with intention to kill? Whatever injury or pain or loss is inflicted on the battlefield during the fight with armed foes is free from sin. It is the Dharma of a Kshatriya to take up the sword and fight to the very end, without any thought of self, to save his country. You have only observed your Dharma. How can Karma (Activity) along the lines of Dharma be sinful? It is not proper to doubt this and give way to despair. Sin cannot touch you, surround you or bother you. Instead of exulting over the festival of the naming of the newborn Prince, why should you dread imaginary calamities and seek remedies for non-existent sins? Be calm; be happy."

Vyasa too rose from his seat and addressed the King. "Sinful and blame-worthy acts are inevitable in battle. They should not be the cause for grief. The chief aim in battle should be the protection of Dharma from its foes. If that is kept before the mind, the sin will not affect the fighters. A putrid wound has to be treated with the knife; it is not sinful to inflict the surgery. A doctor who knows the surgery, and knowing, does not save the man by doing it, incurs sin. So too knowing that the foe is the source of injustice, cruelty, terror and vice, if these boils are not

treated by the surgeon knowing the cure, because he is reluctant to use the knife (the surgeon being the Kshatriya), he incurs sin by remaining quiet, not by using the sword. Dharmaraja, you are speaking under a delusion. I can understand others less wise being afflicted by these doubts, but I wonder how you are worried over this imaginary of sin?

If however our words do not carry conviction, I can suggest another remedy too. That will remove all fear. Some rulers in the past have resorted to it, after the conclusion of wars, for the removal of the effects of sin. It is the rite of Ashwamedha, the Horse Sacrifice. If you desire, you can also perform this rite, as an expiatory ceremony. There can be no objection to that. But, believe me, you are innocent of sin even without any expiation. Since your faith is shaky, I am suggesting this rite for your satisfaction." After this statement, Vyasa resumed his seat.

At this, all the elders, scholars and leaders rose as one man and applauded the valuable suggestion given by Vyasa. They shouted, Jai Jai, in order to demonstrate their approval and appreciation. They exclaimed, "O! How auspicious," "How significant" and they blessed Dharmaraja in the endeavour to free himself from the sinful consequences of war. But, Dharmaraja was still heavy with grief; he was not free from fear. His eyes were wet with tears.

He pleaded with the assembly, most piteously. "However much you assert my innocence, I am not convinced. Somehow, my mind does not accept your argument. Rulers who were engaged in wars might have cleansed themselves by means of the Ashwamedha yaga. Those were ordinary wars; they were the usual type. But my case is something very extra-ordinary. My sins are three times more sinister, for, (1) I have killed kith and kin (2) I have killed holy elders like Bhishma and Drona and (3) I have killed many crowned heads. Alas, my fate! How monstrous have been my actions?"

"No other ruler could have been guilty of so much iniquity. Not one, but three Ashwamedha Yagas have to be performed to clear this load. Then only I can have peace. Then only can my dynasty be happy and secure. Then only can the administration of my kingdom be safe and meritorious. This must be kindly accepted by Vyasa and other elders and sages."

When Yudhishtir spoke thus, tears dropped on his cheeks; his lips quivered with sorrow; his body was bent with remorse. Seeing this, the heart of every sage melted with pity. The subjects of the King were moved by sympathy. Vyasa and even Vaasudeva were affected. Many Pundits shed tears, without being aware of it. The assembly was struck dumb with astonishment. All knew in a flash how soft the heart of Dharmaraja was. The brothers too, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva were standing with folded palms, in reverential humility, awaiting the word that will assure relief from the Lord who was in the Presidential Seat.

Then the assembly, with one voice, approved the three Ashwamedha Yagas, to relieve the distress of Dharmaraja. One sage gave expression to the opinion of the assembly. He said, "We shall not stand in the way of your desire. We accept it whole-heartedly. We shall celebrate the Yagas in the best Sastric way, until the final rites. For, we seek peace of mind for you, more than anything else. We are prepared to do anything which will give you satisfaction." This was acclaimed by every one in the gathering.

Hearing this, Dharmaraja said, "I am indeed blessed; I am blessed indeed." He gave his grateful thanks for the promised cooperation. He walked towards the place where Krishna and Vyasa were seated and he fell at their feet. He held the feet of Krishna and pleaded, "O Madhusudana! Didn't you hear my prayer? Didn't you witness my grief? I pray that you grant us your Divine presence at the coming Yaga, that you ensure me the fruit thereof and save me from this burden of sin."

Krishna smiled and lifted him up from the ground before Him. He said, "Dharmaraja! I shall certainly answer your prayer. But, you have taken upon your shoulders a burden as heavy as a range of mountains. This Yaga is no small affair. Moreover, the performer is the celebrated King, Dharmaraja! That means, it has to be celebrated on a scale befitting your status. I know that you have no where-withal for this very expensive undertaking. Kings derive money only from their subjects. To spend on a Yaga, the money squeezed out of them is not desirable. Only well-earned money can be used for such holy rites; else it will bring evil instead of good. Nor can your subordinate rulers come to your help, for they too have been miserably impoverished by the late war. It is clear they have nothing to spare. Aware of all this, how could you agree to celebrate three Ashwamedhas in a row? I wonder how you found such audacity in spite of these adverse conditions. And, you have already announced it publicly in this great and distinguished gathering. You did not give Me even a hint about this costly idea. Then, we could have thought out some plan. Well, it is not too late. We shall take a decision after some more deliberation. It does not matter if some delay is caused."

Dharmaraja listened to these words of the Lord and laughed a hearty laugh! "Lord, you are playing a drama with me, I know. I have never decided upon an act without deliberation. Nor have I ever worried about money or the wherewithal. When we have as our guardian, You, with your inexhaustible Grace, why should I worry about anything? When I have the Kalpataru (Wish-fulfilling tree) in my garden, why should I worry, seeking roots and tubers? The all-powerful Lord who has been guarding us all these terrible years as the eyelids guard the eye, will not give us up, at this juncture.

"For You who can whiff huge mountains into dust, this little pebble is no problem at all. You are my Treasure, my treasury. You are my Very Breath. Whatever You may say, I will not hesitate. All my strength, all my wealth is you and you alone. I place all my burdens, including the burden of state and this new burden of the three Yagas at your Feet. You can do anything You like. You may value my word and cancel the Yagas. I have no concern. I am equally happy, whatever You do. It is Your Will, not mine".

Of course, with the Lord who resides in the heart, no special pleading is needed. The Lord melted; He lifted Dharmaraja and helped him to stand. "No; I spoke in jest to test your faith and devotion. I wanted to demonstrate to these subjects of yours how strong is your faith in Me. You need have no worry on any score. Your wish will be fulfilled. If you follow My instructions, you can procure very easily the money needed for the celebration of the Yagas. You can get it without harassing the rulers and squeezing the subjects."

On hearing this, Dharmaraja was delighted. He said "Lord, we shall honour Your command." Then Krishna said, "Listen. In bygone times, a ruler named Maruth performed a Yaga, in a style

that no one since then could approach. The hall where the Yaga was celebrated along with every item connected with it were of gold. Gold bricks were given away as gifts to the priests who officiated; golden images of cows were given instead of cows and plates of gold were distributed instead of lands! The Brahmins were not able to carry them home and so, they took only as much as they could lift or carry. The rest they just cast away. Those pieces of gold are now available in large quantities, for your yagas. You can collect them."

Dharmaraja did not agree; he had qualms about it. He said, "Lord. That is the property of those to whom it was given. How can I make use of it, without their permission?" Krishna replied, "They have cast it away, fully conscious of what they were doing and what they were discarding. They are not alive today. Their children know nothing about the existence of this treasure. It is now under the earth. Remember that all treasure inside the earth which has no master or owner, belongs to the king of that realm. When the king wants to take possession of it, no one has the right to object. Bring that treasure soon and prepare for the celebration of the Yagas," commanded Lord Krishna.

(To be continued)

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

One in a Million Miracle

The divinity and supernatural powers of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba are so widely known that I feel my attempt to describe them will be nothing short of carrying coal to Newcastle. However, a question was posing me what should be the duty of those who had received and realised his blessings? My inner feelings came with an answer that I should express, by way of homage to our Benevolent Swamuluvaru, what I have really experienced as a result of his blessings.

I had the good fortune to have the darshan of our Benevolent Swamulavaru for the first time in 1961 while I was in Delhi. It was at a prayer meeting. There was a very big gathering and I could manage to get only a standing space at a remote corner. When I was having the darshan of the sacred personage from that remote corner, I saw flashes of brilliant light emanating from his palms. With a suspicious mind dominating in me as a Police Officer, I attributed the miracle I saw, to an act of hypnotism.

In July 1965, 5 years later I had an occasion to visit Anantapur. Out of mere curiosity I took a trip to Prasanthi Nilayam, the place being not far off. En-route to Puttaparthi I met the president of Bukkapatnam Panchayat Board. During our talks, he narrated the greatness of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He mentioned to me that swami Sivananda had received Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba with all homage during His visit to Rishikesh.

On hearing this a sudden realisation came in me that when such great men paid homage to this sacred personage there should be real divinity in this Sri Sathya Sai Baba. That very evening I had the good fortune of meeting Him at Prasanthi Nilayam His first query was "Did we not meet

at Delhi?" This shook me; for the fact was that at Delhi I only had His darshan and that was from a long distance of about 50 yards. He then spoke to me on Vedanta. I was amazed at His simple way of explaining Vedanta. I found in Him kindness incarnate. I was so much impressed that I surrendered to Him as a humble devotee. After this sacred interview, I moved to the prayer hall and found it to be a resort for absolute mental peace. When Camphor Arati was being given there after the prayers, I found a second miracle. I saw the burning camphor spreading its light with brilliant crimson colour. Further when I went to bed that night, I experienced nice fragrant smell emanating from the bed. I did not carry with me scent and I was baffled at this miracle.

In September, 1965 I made a second trip to Prasanthi Nilayam, this time taking with me my wife and daughter. Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba blessed my daughter that she will become the mother of a child next year. The second thing he did was he shifted me from one room to another in Prasanthi Nilayam. A week later I realised the significance of the shifting of the room. I received a transfer order and I had to shift from Madras. From the date of my journey to my new place of posting till to-day, all my affairs have been going on most smoothly and happily as well, without the least struggling on my part.

My daughter developed pregnancy; according to medical opinion her delivery date was given as 21-1-66. But the pregnancy prolonged till the second week of August 66 baffling eminent doctors. The Doctors decided to take out the child through a caesarian operation. They fixed it up on 13-8-66 at 8 A. M. On 12-8-66 morning my daughter observed a rose flower decorated on the photo of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba kept in her room in the Government General Hospital drop down and moving towards His lotus feet. That very evening she developed labour pains and on 13-8-66 early hours she delivered a healthy female child.

The miracles I have mentioned are nothing but one in a million. The spiritual fervour my Benevolent Guruvulavaru has infused in me and the kindness with which he is guiding me in my day-to-day affairs are miraculous and inexpressible. In this context I am reminded of stanza (58) in Chapter XVIII of the Bhagavad-Gita which says "With your mind fixed on Me, you shall get over all difficulties by My grace. If out of pride you will not listen to Me, you will be utterly destroyed."

—P. R naidu

We know only one Bhagavan; that is, Sathya Sai Bhagavan. He is the incarnation of Kailaseshwar, Rama, Krishna, and Sathguru. Come, let us meditate on Him, our Father and Mother and Brother, our very Life.

He is the only shelter from pain and worry. His Vibhuti removes all trouble, pain, worry, and illness. Do not doubt this Sivasakthi, of Kaliyuga. Follow Sathya and Dharma; then, you will see your reality.

He is the giver of happiness and peace. Be sure of this. Remember Anal Huq (God) with all your heart.

(Translation of Marathi Song by M. S. Dikshit.)

Studies

Earning a fat salary is not the chief thing at all, no. The aim should be the cultivation of virtue. Studies are the roots of the tree of life. The attachments which the individual develops towards kith and kin, the objects of the world, the ideals and goals, the fancies and fashions—all these form the branches and twigs. The blossoms which the tree produces are the Intelligence and its manifestations. The blossoms yield the fruit of Anandam, or Joy.

The fruit of Anandam confers the sweetness called "CHARACTER". The essence of Character is Virtue. It is in Virtue that the tree of life justifies itself. The root of education fulfils itself in the fruit of Virtue. Without it, life is a waste; it is as much a waste as a tasteless fruit.

So, the aim of all study should be the cultivation of good qualities, the development of virtuous habits, the raising of the standard of values, of one's own self-respect. We say, 'they study' or 'he studies'. What really is the study? Years of study do not give any idea of the 'entity' that studies! The result of study does not reveal itself in character and virtue; the educated person is more prone to temptation and more addicted to evil habits and evil attitudes. The best that can be said of the learned is that they are efficient in the art of argument and cynical discussion and criticism. The real subject of study for men is the study of the means of ending death and birth.

Millions read, and write; millions attain degrees and become experts and specialists; they are efficient collectors of information or big encyclopedias of general knowledge; but; not one can say, who *he* really is. What is the use then, of the vast amount of exertion and energy they have spent for their education?

Each space rocket casts as much as will maintain all the Universities in India for a period of twelve years! What a colossal waste is this? People try to fly millions of miles into space, but they are powerless to travel even half an inch to their own inner realm and discover what lies therein, what their reality is.

This "Science" has enveloped the whole world in mortal dread, each nation holds its life in the clasp of the palm and is shivering in hate and fear, awaiting the moment when it may be reduced to ashes or dust. That is the result of knowledge without virtue. A spark of hatred or pride or short temper can set the whole world aflame today. But, the science that was extolled and practised in India since ages is the science of sense-control, of mind control, of character development, of the cultivation of the individual and social virtues, the progressive unfoldment of the Divine in man, not of the mean in man.

It speaks of the reality as Poornam, Fulfilled, and of this world too, as fulfilled, Poornam. From the full, this full has manifested. It does not posit any incomplete, unsatisfied vacuum or discontent. For, it taps the very spring of eternal Joy and Strength and Wisdom. That is the path of spiritual Sadhana, steady Intellectual and moral discipline. That is the basic, the essential study. The cultured person is the person who has cultured the spirit, not the person who caters to the senses and enslaves himself to their attractions.

When the Buddhi is thus transmuted, man attains Siddhi. When moral discipline is absent, man reduces himself into a brute. There is the spark of the divine in each one and the duty is to foster it and develop it and benefit by it, rather than smother it and silence it.

How to keep in constant contact with this higher self that is seeking expression in our acts and words and thoughts? The best means is the simple exercise of Namasmara, the repetition of any one of the meaningful Names of the Lord, signifying the Glory that lies embedded in man. People indulge in all types of purposeless gossip and scandal; they find time and interest in these degrading pursuits; but, they have no inclination to awaken the Divine in them by constant indwelling on the splendour of Creation and the Creator. See only such scenes as will foster this discipline; speak only of elevating uplifting subjects; listen only to purifying topics; think and feel only pure thoughts and emotions. That is the way to develop the Divinity inherent in each one. Our thoughts now build up only castles in the air; our plans are like bubbles on the surface of the waters. They are ephemeral, because they have no grounding in the permanent, the eternal base.

Life on this world is a bubble that is formed in a second and bursts the next. It is a fair, that lasts a portion of a day. The entire career of a person starts and finishes in a matter of two hours. All the pomp and paraphernalia that man seeks and flourishes are of the stuff of dreams. Which among these is true? Which among these lasts for all time, without degenerating or declining or dying? You are all present now; you are seeing Me and listening to Me; you feel now that this is true. But, how long is this true, how true is all this? This is real experience for you, so long as you are in the waking stage. This night, when you lie down in bed and start dreaming, the dream is as real to you as all this. This waking stage and all this experience are then unreal. You experience fears, delusions, joys, and pleasures in the dream and they are all true, so long as you dream. But, wake up; and, the dream is negated! Both are dreams, a night dream and a daydream. Only one idea is permanent, throughout the dream the deep sleep and the waking, the idea of the 'I', I dreamt, I slept and I woke. That 'I', the I behind all the manifold millions, that I is the Truth and nothing else.

The question may arise, if there is only one 'I', which is the Eternal and the Absolute, why do all the individuals have different experiences? The newly educated worry themselves with such questions. But, they are due to a false cleverness, not deep inquiry. For, the same current activates the fan and gives air, illumines the bulb and gives light, beats the stove and cooks, moves the wheel around and works the machine. The instruments are different, but, the inner energiser is the same. Some bulbs are 40 watts and some 60, or 100 or 1000 watts. The current is the same, but illumination is different. Have a powerful bulb, and the light is strong. Change it, it is dim. Name and form are not essential; the inner current is the truth. Take the body; that itself has the hand as a limb; the hand has fingers, the fingers have nails, in their turn. Through every part of every limb flows the same life-force. So too in this Universe which is the Body of God, every being is a part of a limb, that is sustained by the same divine essence. So, resolve now to analyse and honour every one; distinguish between the essential and the nonessential he; and, revere the essential he, the divine he.

Of course the body which is the case for this divine spark has to be guarded and taken care of, until its purpose of self-realisation is fulfilled. But, its nourishment and care should not

overshadow the attention due to the mind its purification and sublimation. Now the body is nourished with tiffin in the morning, lunch at noon, tea at 4 P. M. and dinner at night. The body is the cart and the, mind is the horse that drags it. No food is given to the horse, which is really the more valuable of the two. Give the mind and its culture the importance it deserves; then only is life worth living. The mind has to be hale and hearty, joyous and peaceful, free from agitations and worries. That can be done by the recitation of some holy name or the performance of some holy act which conduces to welfare. This is the study that will confer lasting joy.

(From Baba's Discourse at Poona)

Krishna Trishna

Thirst for Krishna, for seeing Him, hearing Him, His Flute, for installing Him in the heart, in the mind, for grasping His Reality through the intellect—this thirst is the healthiest, the most conducive to peace. Devotion to Krishna is the chain by which the monkey mind can be fastened and subdued Transmute all the desire with which the senses torment you into the thirst for Krishna and you are saved.

Krish means attract, draw, as in Akarshana. Even a confirmed protagonist of Advaita, (the contemplation of the Universal Absolute without name and form,) like Madhusudana Saraswathi confesses that the attraction for the playful child on the Yamuna sands is irresistible. Lilasuka declares that though the Sastras taught him the truth of the Nameless Absolute, his heart taught him to revere the Cowherd Boy with the Flute. He prays that, when he draws his last breath, the Fair Child of Brindavan with the Feather Flute and flower might smile on him and bless him.

Krishna draws the mind away from sensory desires; that is another way in which the draw operates. He pulls the mind towards him and so, they are pulled away from everything else, for everything else is inferior, less valuable. He satisfies the deepest thirst of man, for peace joy and wisdom. That is why He is Meghashyama, dark-blue as the rain-cloud. The very sight of the rain-laden cloud is so refreshing. He is lotus-eyed, lotus-palmed, lotus-soled; the lotus is reminiscent of cool calm deep lakes of limpid water, the water that quenches thirst. When Krishna-trishna is quenched, the highest Ananda is attained; there is no more need, no more want, defect, or decline. The urge to drink inferior drinks, that only feed the thirst, disappears when once he sweetness of Krishnanama and Krishnabhava are tasted. Sense objects are like seawater that can never allay thirst. Radha, Goda, Meera, Chaitanya, Ramakrishna, Surdas—they knew the nectarine taste of that Name.

The Radha-tattvam, the real nature of Radha can be understood only by those who have acquired that deep 'distressing' thirst for the Formful Aspect of the Lord, and for the Divine Call that resonates in the heart as the entrancing tune of the Flute.

Krishna is said to have been born in Gokula, He grew up in Brindavan, He proceeded to Mathura and He established His Home finally at Dwaraka. The significance of this to the Sadhaka is, "Let Krishna be born in the Gokula of your Mind; let Him grow and play prankishly

in the Brindavan of your heart; let Him then be fixed in the Chitta of Mathura; and, finally, let Him rule over the agitationless Consciousness as the Lord and Master of Dwaraka." The Nirvikalpa-anandam is the final result of His Kingdom established at Dwaraka, in the centre of the waves.

Krishna will get born in the mind of man only when three prerequisites are attended to: Make the Manas, Bhaktimaya, saturated with Bhakti. Make the Intellect, the Buddhi full of Jnanadeepti, the illumination of His Glory. Make the body, the Deha, the instrument for Sad-dharmacharana, the practice of Dharma, of moral virtues. Bhakti is the Raja; Jnana and Vairagya are the two Aides-de-camp of this monarch. They are the guards that ensure safety. Unaccompanied by these two, the Raja is not quite secure.

The thirst for Krishna is a sign of health in the spiritual field. Not to have it is a sign of Bhavaroga, the fell disease that afflicts worldly persons, the symptoms being grief discontent pain and worry, even when wealth and health are endowed. That thirst can be cultivated by the reading of scripture, the cultivation of congenial company, lessons from a kind and considerate Guru and regular practice of Japam. Once it is acquired, the thirst itself will lead you on to places and persons able to quench it. That is the advantage of spiritual quest: the first step makes the second easy.

The bane of modern times is the value attached to a cynical destructive type of judgement, by fickle feeble intellects. A doctor's prescription can be judged only by an equally qualified or a more qualified doctor, not by a patient suffering from the same or a different illness. No person afflicted with lust or envy or greed or attachment or egoism can pronounce judgement on the ethereal formless nameless principle that concretised as Krishna. Krishna is described as blue in physical colour, for, He is as deep and inscrutable as the sky; the blue is the colour which the eye comprehends, though the sky has no colour at all. So too, Krishna has no colour or attributes but, in order to comprehend Him, the mental eye attributes a colour.

Grace of Krishna can be won only by the good. The Rakshasas did not get Amrita; for they would have misused it. Knowledge in the wicked is power misused for the stratagems of bane and greed. Grace too is power and it has to be endowed on the deserving only. Therefore, character has to be sublimated into saturated piety and devotion. Then only can Grace be secured. Mere repetition of the name, Krishna, will be of no use, unless the contemplation of the Glory of Krishna starts purifying the character at the same time. Thus, human becomes divine; manava becomes Madhava. Mrutyu is changed into Amrita. Through *tanmaya*, this mrinmaya becomes Chinmaya; through saturation, this clod becomes God. That is the consummation of Krishna -trishna, the thirst after God, which wells up in one's own heart.

(From Baba's Discourse at Madras)

Glimpses of His Glory

With the blessings of Baba, a new Festival is being celebrated in the Karnataka country, called Prasanthi Dharmotsava. The first such was held in April last at Chokkadi, South Kanara Dt and the second was held at Shimoga in June and the third was celebrated at Sirsi, in the N. Kanara Dt in August. The programme includes Vedaparayana, Pujas like Rudrabhishaka Lalitha-Sahasranama-puja and Sathyanarayana-puja; Bhajan forms an important feature; lectures are given by those versed in scriptures on practical ways and means of acquiring Prasanthi; discussion groups handle the problems of Sadhakas, in the light of the speeches and writings of Sathya Sai Baba, who has come to revive spiritual life and to strengthen the urge, for release from the delusion of Ajnana.

The proceedings invariably begin with the reading of a Message from Baba. At Sirsi, however, the many thousands who had gathered were sad that the Message was not taken by me, as anticipated. On the 18th, 19th, and even on the 20th, the final day, expectant eyes watched for the postman and the telegraph messenger, but, they did not bring the coveted Blessings. So a prayer was sent to Baba at Puttaparthi by express telegram at about 10 A M. "Thousands anxiously awaiting gracious message or sign". And, Baba sent a SIGN. At about 2 P, M., the thick silk coverlet on the sofa seat, reserved for Baba on the platform, from the very commencement of the Festival formed itself into two Pranava symbols, one at the back and one on the seat, the cloth being raised into those shapes to over an inch, with all the curves and lines clearly worked out by the unseen force of Baba's Will. The town was thrilled into reverence and for days on end, men and women queued up to the Sofa to get a glimpse of the mysterious Intimation of Baba's Presence.

On the 21st, I proceeded to Shimoga, calling on a Doctor Srinivas Rao at Talguppa, on the way. He related to me how his son fell down from a height of 8 feet on a cement floor, how his temple was severely hurt and how his medical knowledge assured him that the boy was dead! He went into his shrine room, prayed to Baba to save the boy if he really deserved to have him any longer. He rubbed Vibhuti on the lips and teeth of the boy and, within ten minutes, breathing started; the boy lay unconscious for three days more; but, he recovered and is now quite hale and hearty. That evening, we saw the Footstep of Baba which had become clear enough for all to see, at the exact place in the kitchen of the home of Ramananda Rao's relative, where he saw in a vision, Baba, some six months ago. Rao saw Baba standing before him (as Abhedananda did in the Ramanasram); Baba blessed him then with a vision of Ramadas, his Guru, as well as of Pattabhirama, his Ishtadaivam. Baba spoke to him (the people at home could hear Rao's replies and could sense that he was seeing Babe, Ramadas and Rama face to face) for over ten minutes. Finally, they saw Rao extending his hand in great humility and devotion and they saw a packet of Vibhuti falling into it (the packet given by Baba!) The spot where Baba stood that day was kept untrodden and now, the sacred Foot has manifested there, deeply impressed in outline on the hard cement floor! I saw it and I was filled with awe and reverence.

On the 22nd, I went on a pilgrimage with a group of devotees from Shimoga to the new 'Gokarna', at Kothanaghatta, a tiny little hamlet, two miles and a half from Sravanabelagola (the famous hill upon which stands the tallest statue in the world, the stone image of Gomateswara) There is a lovely little Siva temple there, built about eighty years ago by a pious farmer Lakkasetti Gowda. He brought the marble Linga from Kasi and installed it therein. The Priest who conducts the daily worship is a reverend Brahmin of eighty years. Some months ago, a boy

belonging to the area heard of Baba and he was so eager to have His Darshan that he begged and borrowed his fare. When he came more than once within a month to Baba, He said, "Why do you come here so often, with so much of difficulty? I shall give you Darshan there itself."

Next time, when he went to Kothanaghatta and arranged as usual Abhisheka for Siva, he found inside the Linga the Form of Sathya Sai Baba (!!!) with the lovely halo of hair, the broad smiling face, a garland round His neck, a standing figure up to the waist. I saw It and so did my friends, and many hundreds who had come before me and many hundreds who have gone there since. It is clear from a distance of about five feet, clearer when sunlight is reflected on the Image by a mirror held at the foot of the Dhvajasthambha, and once seen, it can never be erased from the sight. Recently, to the left of Baba, another figure arose inside the marble idol, which was variously interpreted as Siva or as Siva-Parvati, but, we saw it clearly as Sai Baba of Shirdi, with the cloth tied on the head, the beard black and thick, turning towards the right, as if addressing Sathya Sai Baba. We were there from 11 A. M. till 3 P. M. We were amazed at this grand proof of Baba being Sivaswarupa, the indweller in every shrine, receiving the worship of all who call upon Him by any Name. We drank in, the joy of this revelation, delighted at the Forms of the Baba which we could see, whether we were standing or sitting, near or far, in the dim light of the shrine or the, bright light of the sun. We dragged ourselves away at last.

We then went into the village, or rather into the house, of the servant of the temple, who tends the cattle belonging to it and who cultivates the lands endowed by the founder—and, we were surprised to find that Baba is showering Vibhuti as a sign of His Grace from the pictures of Himself, that the ryot has kept for worship in his room. O; what magnificent Grace, what overwhelming Mercy!!

On the 27th, I was at Salem in connection with the first Anniversary Celebrations of the Sathya Sai Bhakta Sangam and the Bhajan and Lecture Programme they had arranged. I took the chance to visit some houses where Baba's Grace is evidenced by miracles. An Auditor had the incalculable blessing of a continuous shower of sacred Ash on an idol of Sai Baba, as well as an 'inexhaustible supply' in a small container. A Lecturer in Physics had a large number of pictures in his shrine, which showered profusely the coveted prasadam. An Engineer employed in a Tata concern had pictures, from which through Baba's Grace, showers of kumkum (of six different colours: rose, pink, blue, crimson, violet, red, from as many pictures) Vibhuti, sandal powder, turmeric powder, unbroken rice grains, and even coins were falling. Baba is all Gods in one. So, a Ganesa image kept Inside a wooden mantapam had a continuous shower of Vibhuti falling upon it, from the top centre of the mantap itself. A small plastic portrait of Baba was hanging at the end of a black string, tiny grains of Vibhuti were falling down from its tip. It was a great lesson on the Truth, of Baba being Sarvantaryami and Sarvasakta, an Eye-opener of the manifold Glory of Baba.

The Vibhuti had stuck to the glass in thick crusts and on some pictures, one could clearly read some writings, like *Om Namo Narayana* in Tamil *Why Fear when I am here*, and the Pranava sign in *Tamil script*.

On the 29th, I went to Palghat, far it was the sacred Onam Festival and there was a desire to spend it with Kerala friends. They had written to me about the devotion of a certain old couple in

Kalpathy, where one among the many pictures of Baba (only one) swung on the nail where it was hung, marking time to the songs sung during Bhajan and where Amrita was forming on the glass of the picture frames. When I reached Palghat, my friends reported that the phenomenon had stopped since a week. I went to the place nevertheless, hoping that something may happen. And, it did. The swinging started and the picture, the 3rd in a row of four, the Sivam Pose of Baba, swung right and left like a pendulum, fast when the tempos was fast, slow when it was slow! When the Bhajan closed, drops of Amrita suddenly emerged from the glass on all the pictures in one magnificent moment of Glory. The old lady told me, "I have kept a silver cup near the shrine; I wept before Baba this morning; He will give Amrita in that cup; wait." She took the empty cup in her palm and prayed audibly, "Baba! Give at least a little of Amrita", and quite suddenly, two spoonfuls of fragrant thick sweet Amrita flowed from the sides of the cup into the bottom, even as we looked on.

Later, I went to Devi Vilas, in; the heart of the Town, and spoke for over an hour to the gathering there, on Baba and His Glory. The day being Onam Festival, special Puja was done and after the speech, the holy camphor flame was waved and the special stotra sung in chorus. Just then, Baba's Framed Picture in the centre of the shrine was dotted with drops they multiplied over the glass; they grew into a flaw! That was the very first manifestation of this unique effect of Baba's Grace in that house and, it is needless to say, every one was supremely happy.

Baba has been announcing by various means to a skeptical world the great news of His Advent. These are some examples of the modes by which He draws attention upon Himself, in His Infinite Mercy, in order to inspire, mankind to a better life under the guidance of God. Accounts of such miraculous incidents as spontaneous showers of sacred articles, the automatic formation of Om and other messages, the swinging of garlands and pictures and lamps, inexplicably clear visions of Baba as such or with other Forms—these are coming to me with full authentications with every post. The desire to share the thrill and the joy has induced me to give the readers this account of what I actually saw with a group of friends in the Mysore, Madras, and Kerala States during a short tour in August last. May more and more people have this glimpse of the Reality of SATHYA SAI BABA, the Avatar that has come to save mankind.

Editor

You can purchase drugs, but you cannot purchase health. You can purchase a bed, but you cannot purchase sound sleep. You might employ even the most expert doctors, but you cannot ward off death. So, realise the goal of life, without delay.

BABA

The Eternal Guide

Gokulashtami is the day of the year on which a grateful world remembers the Advent of Sri Krishna, the Divine Child that fills every maternal consciousness with Anandam, the Divine Boy that is the comrade of every boyish mind, the Divine Youth that warms and warms every youthful heart and the Divine Guide that instructs and inspires every aspiring and despairing person in the

world. For those who have had the great good fortune to see, approach and know Sathya Sai Baba, He is the Krishna who is all these, now. Therefore, it is no wonder that people from all parts of India gathered at Prasanthi Nilayam on 7th and 8th September when Gokulashtami was celebrated there, in the Presence of Baba.

On the morning of 7th instant, Baba moved between the long aisles of seated devotees and granted everyone Darshan and Sparshan. He gave also to each person, man, woman and child present, sweet fragrant Divine Teertham with His own Hand. In the evening, at the gathering of Bhaktas in the Prayer Hall, Mrs. Tahira Sayeed, wife of Brigadier G. M. Sayeed, Commander, Andhra Pradesh Sub-area, spoke of Sri Krishna and the Gita. She said, "Krishna is the: eternal Guide and teacher of Arjuna who is the eternal man who halts and hesitates on his pilgrimage to God" She said that India is a wonderful country which has a splendid spiritual background and a fusion of many faiths, each faith shedding a new facet of light to the illumination of the soul's Path towards Liberation. She spoke of the integration of all faiths and creeds which is achieved at the Prasanthi Nilayam through the Divine Alchemy of Baba. Vineetha Ramachandra Rao, Editor, Pradeepa, Dharwar, also spoke on the attitude of Dedication to God,

Baba in His Discourse said, "Krishna is the Nirakara which has assumed all Aakaras, (the formless which has assumed all forms), and so, is best denoted by the Pranava, or Om. The formless assumed the Human Form in order to teach and inspire humanity to live in Dharma, Morality, Righteousness. Some animals are terror-stricken; some animals strike terror: but the human animal, because its true nature is Dharma, neither fears nor causes fear. Man is capable of calm fortitude; he can bear good fortune and bid with equanimity. The Gita is Krishna's call to man's innate nature to assert itself." "Krishna is Premaswarupa; He cannot manifest in any other Form. He is the Basis for the five Elements and so, He fills the Prapancha World of Five Elements, with His Love. He assumes the Body composed of the five Elements in order to fulfill man's prayers The Gopis are the supremest examples of Identification with God, the Inner Reality. The Krishna Form was imprinted on their hearts, as a picture on paper, inseparable and clear. They breathed Krishnatattwa, moved in Krishna-tattwa and felt saturated in It. That is the ultimate Bliss of all Beings. One can achieve it only by suppressing and sublimating Anger, Lust, Greed, Envy, Egoism etc. That process is called Sadhana.

For that Sadhana, the most auspicious moment for every one is NOW. To escape Death armed with the Rod of Punishment (the Dandapani), you must take refuge in the Kodandapani (Rama armed with the Bow), NOW. A King lost his way while hunting and found a hermitage for rest. The Hermit who was plucking flowers; welcomed him and gave him water and fruits, to appease his thirst and hunger. Soon after, an assassin who tried to kill the King but succeeded only in wounding himself arrived at the Ashram in a pathetic condition and the Hermit left elf in the middle of the conversation to tend him and attend to his wounds. Later, when the King asked the sage to advise him on the best time, the best service and the best person to serve, he had only to reply "The best time is now, the best service is to assuage pain and suffering; the best person, to serve is the person before you."

"So start Sadhana now" Baba exhorted the gathering. Seek the grace of the Lord by self-improvement, by moral purification and by incessant Namasmarana. Do not give up the hold of your thought on the Name. Your mind must be like the sky, radiant with the splendour of the

Name in spite of dust storms, rain clouds and the noise and fury of thunder and lightning," Baba advised.

On 8th September too, there was a gathering of Bhaktas in the Prayer Hall, at 4-30 P. M. when Sri Prabhudasi Niveditha of Dharwar spoke on Sadhana and the processes of sublimating the lower feelings and emotions into higher spiritual levels. Br. Velamuri Satbyanarayana M. A., B. Ed. also spoke on the significance of Rasaleela and the Faith of the Gopis. Baba blessed the Assembly with His Divine Discourse.

"Man gives up the grand adventure for which he has won this human equipment; he demeans his destiny when he runs after trivial victories like amassing wealth or whirling through Space. His vision is befogged by Maya, a Na-rta-ki whose antidote is Ki-rta-na (singing the glories of the Lord.)

Amass the wealth of Viveka, foster the family of Satsang. Live a balanced life, strictly limited to the basic needs of Sadhana, training the senses and the Intelligence to be of service to that essential task. The Sastras teach the limits which should not be transgressed; they are laid down by sages who were interested only in the good of humanity.

Ki-rta-na can be of any of the names of the Lord. But, each name has certain deeper mystic meanings and significances. For example, the Name Rama consists of R A and Ma; R is the bijakshara of Agni, the nucleus-sound of Fire; A is the bijakshara of the Sun or Surya; Ma is the bijakshara of the Moon or Chandra. So, repetition of the Rama Nama invokes the Agni Surya and Chandra principles. As a consequence, Agni reduces the accumulated effect of Karma. Into ash; Surya dispels darkness of ignorance and reveals the truth; Chandra cools and refreshes the Consciousness.

Krishna means He who draws individuals towards Him. This day being devoted to the remembrance of His Advent, you must utilise it to give up the attachment to objective desires and decide to cling to Krishna and surrender to Him. Discarding animal instincts and impulses which he has to outgrow, man should develop the qualities that are specifically human—like discrimination and detachment. They alone lead to Jnana."

Baba reprimanded persons who, though they have been listening for years to spiritual discourses and reading books, have not moved forward, for, they take one step backwards for every step forward. He said, "Garner the gems and treasure them in the heart. Let them help you to overcome the senses and sharpen the intelligence. Above all, do not fall a victim to hypocrisy. Be true, be sincere. Do not try to deceive others by pretending to be what you know you are not."

"When you start seeking Truth, you will find all the forward forces guiding you and helping you on. The whole world helps a person marching towards God. When Rama started on the search of Sita (Sathya) monkeys and bears, rocks and reefs, seas and sky—all cooperated gladly. Nature with all its facts and forces will be a potent source of encouragement, instead of being an impediment. So, march steadily on. That is all you have to do. The path will be made easy, obstacles will vanish, guidance will be provided. Be assured of that. Do not count on anything other than the Grace of the Lord. Have faith that he is your support.

Do not be misled by the apparent luxury in which ‘wicked’ people live or the distressing condition in which ‘good’ people live; do not allow doubt to creep into you mind and damage faith. It is all the result of Karma; both the wicked and the good are now consuming the effects of their past, eating the crop that they have harvested as a result of the sowing of seeds in the past birth. The wicked are sowing misery for themselves and the good are sowing the seeds of the future joy. The present is the time, when you have to be vigilant and wise. The task on His hand is the one that has to be done well and to the satisfaction of the lord.” Baba said, “Use every moment thus in your own best interest and you will reach the goal.”

Prasanthi Nilayam News

- August 18: Baba returned from Hyderabad
18, 19, 20: Prasanthi Dharmotsava at Sirsi (N. K. Dt)
27, 28: First Anniversary of Sathya Sai Bhakta Sangham, Salem.
29, 30: Anniversary Festival of Bhakta Sangham at Omalar.
30, 31: Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha, at Amalapuram, E G Dt. Discourses by Br. Kolluri Somasekhara sastri, Bulusu Appanna Sastri, Rani Narasimha Sastri, Vemparala Suryanarayana Sastry, Sishta Suryanarayana Murthy and Sathchidananda Rao
- Sept. 1: Baba visited Bangalore, and returned.
2, 3 & 4: 40 members of the Sri Sitharamananaasankeerthana Sangham, Guntur stayed at the Nilayam, and had spiritual talks with Baba.
4: The Secretary of the Sangham spoke at the Nilayam on Bhakti. Divine Discourse by Baba
7, 8: Gokulashiami Festival, at the Nilayam.
10: Arrival at the Nilayam of Mrs. Macrae from New York, via Hong Kong.

Bhagavata Vahini

5

Dharmaraja accepted the advice of Vaasudeva, as well as the benedictions of Vyasa. He sent his brothers, with the army, to bring the gold that had been thrown aside by the Brahmins. They left after purifying themselves by partaking consecrated offerings. They discovered the quantities of gold that had been given as presents to the priests at the conclusion of the Sacrifice by Emperor Maruth in the past. They had dropped the gold on the sides of the roads along which they returned home. The army collected these and conveyed them to the Capital on camels, elephants, chariots and carts. It took them some days to reach Hastinapura with all that load. They unloaded the gold, amidst the acclamations of the people.

The citizens were amazed at the success of the expedition; they extolled the good fortune of the Pandavas. They welcomed into the City the princes and the gold shouting "Jai, Jai" until their throats were hoarse, jumping and dancing in joy. They pictured among themselves the grandeur and magnificence of the sacrifice, for which this gold was brought.

Preparations were started that very day for the construction of the ritual altar and the necessary adjuncts on the bank of the Ganga; the sacred area was many square miles in extent. The ground was levelled and cleaned. The dais was built; beautiful buildings arose on the vast area. Porches and verandahs were added. Decorations like flags and festoons embellished the structures.

When the holy day neared, Chieftains, Brahmins, Scholars and Sages moved from all directions towards the sacred place, hastening each other in their enthusiasm to reach early. They took residence in the quarters allotted to them, according to their status and needs. They spent the night counting minutes, in joyful expectation of the magnificent and efficacious Yajna that they could witness when the dawn brings in another day.

The morning came. The auspicious moment approached. The priests took up their positions and got ready to take the vows of initiation. They stood up facing Lord Krishna and the King and said, "O King! We understand that you have resolved to perform not one but three Ashwamedhas (Horse Sacrifices). Is that correct? If so, do you desire us to perform them, one after the other? Or shall we repeat every formula and rite, thrice and have them all concurrently? If you make it known, we shall arrange the participants and performing priests accordingly."

At this, Dharmaraja replied, "What can I say when you know best; I shall agree to whatever advice you offer. I seek only the consent of Vaasudeva for whatever course we adopt" and he turned towards Krishna with pleading eyes. Krishna left the decision to the Brahmins. They discussed among themselves for a while and announced at last that the effect of "Three Ashwamedhas" can be secured by repeating each mantra thrice and offering the Brahmins presiding over the rituals thrice the usual fees. Vaasudeva indicated His approval of this suggestion, and taking his cue from this, Dharmaraja declared that he was agreeable. He desired that the Yajna might be inaugurated.

The recitation of the mantras by the Brahmins shook both earth and sky. The preliminary rites were gone through and the sacrificial horses proceeded on their planned round. They were

caparisoned in great style and they carried on their foreheads the Declaration challenging any one to take them into custody if he dared. When He, who is the recipient of all Yajnas, (Yajnaswarupa) has taken the role of the presiding authority, no words can describe the fortune of the participants and the witnesses. It drew to a successful close with the Valedictory Oblation (Poorna-ahuti).

The experts in sacrificial mantras, the sages and the Brahmins were loaded with presents and fees. Enormous numbers of cows, large areas of land, and vast quantities of gold were gifted away by the King. The whole nation was filled with happiness. Every one was praising the Yajna as indescribably superb. All who came were fed sumptuously at all hours. Sages and ascetics who saw all this lavishness extolled the Yajna performed by Emperor Maruth in the past! They were delighted they got the chance to partake in this Yajna. People once claimed that the Yajna of Maruth was presided over by Indra, the Ruler of the Gods and they felt that it made it incomparably superior to any other sacrifice. But now, they congratulated Dharmaraja on securing the Yajnaswarupa (Vaasudeva) Himself to preside over the Yajna, a piece of good fortune far superior to Maruth's and far more difficult to secure.

At the end of the Yajna, those who had come from far off places as well as others returned home. The kings and chieftains took respectful leave of Dharmaraja and went back to their own principalities. The kinsmen of the King stayed for a few days more and left at their convenience to their places.

However, Krishna chose to spend some more time with the Pandavas; so, He stayed on in Hastinapura. The Pandavas were delighted at this signal act of Grace; they made suitable arrangements for the residence of the Lord; they served Him every day, they filled their eyes with His Beauty, they filled their hearts with His Gracious Words of Instruction; they spent the days in supreme Joy. After some time spent thus in the Pandava Capital Krishna returned to Dwaraka, taking Arjuna with Him. The inhabitants of Dwaraka were overjoyed when their Lord returned to His capital. They welcomed Him in enthusiastic reverence. They feasted on the Darshan of the Lord and were immersed in Ananda.

Meanwhile, news came to Hastinapura that Vidura Dharmaraja's uncle moving about on the environs of the city in the guise of a monk; it travelled from mouth to mouth and at last reached the ears of Dharmaraja, the King. The news was received with surprise and joy. He sent a few scouts to discover whether the news was authentic, and soon, they brought the welcome information that Vidura had actually come and was present. Dharmaraja could not contain himself with excitement.

"Ah! How happy you have made me!" he exclaimed. "This holy moment has made the dried trunk of the tree of hope put forth leaves again. Oh, I can now see and serve Vidura who fostered us and guarded us and guided us, though I feared I might not get the chance at all."

The heartening news was spread by courtiers among the queens and princesses and women of the royal household. Dharmaraja did not rest; he spoke about the great event to everyone around him; he sought out others to share with them the joy. He issued orders to the army that appropriate arrangements should be made to welcome into the Capital the brother of his late

father, Sage Vidura, foremost among the votaries of Lord. The citizens too were alerted and asked to prepare a grand reception.

They decorated the streets and mansions on each side of them; they erected arches and hung festoons and hoisted flags. They allotted galleries and seats on every road for children, women, and the aged, so that they might have a fine and clear view of the procession and of the great Sage. It was an inspiring sight to see many old men and women hobbling on with their sticks, eager to get a glimpse of Vidura, whom they extolled as the very embodiment of Dharma, as the very Godfather of the Pandavas. Some thought at first that the sighting of Vidura on the outskirts of the City must have been in someone's dream, and not in actual fact. They had lived long enough to swallow the rumour without personal verification. For, they never could believe that Vidura would ever come back to Hastinapura. They grouped themselves on vantage points and got ready for the great moment when they could rest their eyes on the saint. All along the route, every building was overflowing with humanity; the trees carried strings of adventurous youth, full of excitement and expectation, shouting in acclamation the impending arrival of Vidura

The King, decked in ceremonial robe, ascended the royal chariot and started out of the palace with his brothers to bring home the famous votary of the Lord,

Vidura appeared before them walking barefoot, slow and dignified, with matted hair and wearing the robes of a monk. The King and his brothers stepped down from their vehicles, bowed reverentially to the Feet of Vidura and walked behind him, at a respectful distance. The citizens ran forward and fell at Vidura's Feet in spite of the earnest entreaties of the guards that they should desist. The Pandavas could not express Welcome in words; their joy was immeasurable. So, their eyes spoke it, with tears of gratitude. They clasped Vidura in their arms and prayed to him that he should get into the Chariot so that the thick ranks of onlookers on all the roads might get Darshan to their hearts' content. Vidura was persuaded to agree. Seated in the Royal Chariot of the King, Vidura gave Darshan to the people who had gathered en route. At last, the procession reached the Palace. It was a sweet flood of song and joy that flowed along the roads of the city that day.

Some of the citizens were so overcome with joy that they were rooted to the spot. The arduous life of Tapas that Vidura had undertaken had so transmuted his personality that he appeared a different person, a person glowing with divine aura, like Indra, King of the Gods. The people were describing their exultation in their own words to one another. Many shed tears remembering the trials and tribulations which Vidura had undergone and the Peace that he had acquired. The queens and princesses too had Darshan from inside the purdah and they were supremely happy.

(To be continued)

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Autobiography of an Ajnani

I was born one day. It seems I cried that day, wondering why I was born again. I joined school one day. I learnt lessons taught for many years, in schools and colleges. I did not learn a thing about the destiny of all human beings. I tried to live like others. I tried to please every one.

I mistook Maya for Reality. I felt that I was the doer and the sufferer. I became attached to this and that and I allowed the mind to wander wherever it pleased. I became very unhappy and wandered here and there, for getting happiness.

One day, I was called by the Lord, Sathya Sai Baba. I did not know that He was using us as His instruments, and that He was Paramatma. He narrated my troubles. He asked me to control my bad thoughts and my mind. I said that I had so courage. He asked me to take courage and He gave me courage to understand the reality of God's Chaitanya within all of us.

I felt greatly relieved to find that the Atma within us is only a witness of this Maya and it is not affected by joy or sorrow. The happiness I got from senses was only short-lived.

The enemies within me resisted this view and brought me back to the old attitudes and wrong conceptions. The mind again wandered here and there, and landed me in trouble.

I learnt from the Lord Sri Sathya Sai Baba that the only way to overcome the wrong attitudes was "Dhyanam" or repeating the name of the Lord whenever I found time.

This is helping me a lot to get rid of Ajnana, little by little. It is clear to me now that without the Grace of the Lord, we cannot be rid of Ajnana completely. I am waiting patiently for the day when the Lord's Grace is showered on me, without break.

—GNA. B. Sc.

The joy of Moksha is your birthright; but you do not know it. The Guru has to remind you. You go to a friend, with a copy of the Gita in your hand, for a loan of ten rupees. While giving you the loan, he takes the book and turns over its leaves. A tenner you had kept in it (but forgotten) falls out, you have no need of the loan. The Guru does not gift a new treasure; he only reveals the treasure you already have.

BABA

The Navaratri Rite

"Yad yad karomi thad thadakhilam Sambho! Thava aradhanam", "Whatever I do, all those acts, O Siva, are only acts of worship offered to Thee," said Sankaracharya. Every act of man every day of his life including even the act of inhaling and exhaling, is an oblation in the great Yajna to glorify Him: Man must fill himself with this elevating thought and inspiration, and sanctify every act of his. The day when this inspiration has prompted all acts is indeed a day instrumental in elevating man towards the attainment of Liberation. Otherwise, it is a day dragging him further down into bondage. But, there are many who have neither the culture nor the fortitude to fill

themselves with this spiritual impulse. For their sake, the great sages who are ever eager to save mankind from perdition, have instituted vows and rituals like the Navaratri, the Festival of Nine Days.

'The word, Nava, means both 'new' and 'nine.' The Navaratri makes a man, NEW. For, its purpose is to recover man from his bestial tendencies and awaken in him Divine characteristics and renovate him. "Janmanaa jayathe sudrah, karmanaa jayathe dwijah" "Man is born a Sudra, but, by his acts, he can be born again into a higher stage." This achievement is the victory that is to be celebrated on Vijayadashami Day, when the Valedictory Path of the Navaratri rite is taken by the initiate. Man is said to be residing in this physical fort with nine gates; but, he foolishly identifies himself with this fort, of which he is only the inhabitant. The Navaratri helps him to recognise that he is not the deha or physical fort but the dehi or the occupant (Jivi) only. This new status in knowledge (dasa) is to be won by the dashami or the tenth day of the Navaratri festival. That is the inner significance of all the puja and parayana (readings) that are enjoined for observance during the Festival. The Navaratri or Festival of Nine Days means also the fight that man has to wage against the Nine Foes that try to smother his spiritual grandeur, tree six: (Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada, and Matsarya—Lust Anger Greed Attachment Conceit Hate) and the three: Ahamkara, Mamakara and the Mahathtattwa. These are to be fought and overwhelmed by the Nine modes of Bhakti which are emphasised in the injunctions laid down for the Festival: Shravanam (Listening to sacred lore) Kirtanam (Singing the Glories of God) Vishnusmaranam (Recapitulation of the Names of Vishnu, constant remembrance of the Lord) Padasevanam (Tending the Feet of the Lord) Archanam (Offering of flowers etc to the image of the Lord) Vandanam (Rendering thanks to the Lord in grateful reverence for all that he has done to us) Dasyam (cultivating the sense of being the servant of the Lord) Sakhyam (developing the sense of being the comrade and companion of the Lord) and Atmanivedanam (Surrender of one's will to the Lord). This summarises the significance of the Festival for the individual.

Nowadays, the explanation is being given that Navaratri or the Dasara is celebrated in honour of the arrival home of the harvested crops and the filling of domestic granaries. There is some element of truth in this theory also. For, there are two Navaratri ordained every year: the Sarannavaratri, (September-October) and the Vasanta Navaratri (April-May). The first celebrates the joy of the earth recovering from the summer and the autumn rains and the second, from the winter, when spring arrives. The first is dedicated to the Mother and the second to the Father aspect of God whose Rama Incarnation took place on the Ninth Day after the arrival of Vasanta or Spring. The Sarannavarathri celebrates how the Jaganmata saved her children from wicked forces, by incarnating Herself from the Universal Eternal Mahashakti that She is.

The two Navaratri between themselves guard the world, by invoking the Motherhood and Fatherhood of God. The nine foes of man that sap his spiritual strength are undermined by the Nava-avarana Puja of the Raja Rajeswari cum Navadurga which is laid down for the Navaratri rite in the scriptures. Initiation for the Rite is really initiation for the battle unto victory against these enemies.

There is also another significance worth remembering. Klan is enjoined by the scriptures to worship the Meeting Moments, the Sandhyas. One such period is the break of Dawn when Night departs and Day arrives. Another is when the Sun after attaining the zenith starts the decline in

the sky. The third is the time when Day departs and Night comes in. There is a fourth Sandhya too, when Night is darkest and at its zenith and when Night just starts to fade into the hours of decline. At that time, man cannot distinguish whether it is physical or mental, sleep or wakefulness. It is a physical as well as a psychological. Sadhana. It is difficult for man ordinarily to catch that moment of Sandhya and utilise its potentialities for spiritual progress. Each season too has a Sandhya with its succeeding season, a Sandhya that is full of potentiality but, hard to determine and make use of. During these Junctions, emanations of Divine Energy occur most. Another and perhaps the most potent of these Sandhyas, is the Sandhya between Life and Death. The Lord when He taught the Gita has emphasized the crucial significance of this moment. He who brings into memory the Lord at that moment can win Bhagavatsarupya, identity of his Form with the Form of the Lord. The worship that is enjoined during all other Sandhyas serves to train the individual to do the right thing at the last Sandhya of his life when he is face to face with death. The Navaratri, and the Sarannavaratri about which we are now writing are festivals of the Sandhya series and so, they are of great significance to Sadhakas.

There is a sloka in the Gita which throws some light on this Rite. It runs thus, "Ya nisa sarvabhuthanam, thasyam jagrithi samayami; yasyam jagrithi bhuthani, tha nisa pasyatho mune." The usual interpretation of this sloka is: "When it is night for all beings, the Samayami or the person who has established control over the senses is awake and when it is day for all beings, the Muni or ascetic has his night" This meaning cannot be right, for, it would make every person who sleeps during day and wakes up at night, a Samayami or Muni! That is quite wrong, is it not? The real meaning of the sloka is: He really is the Samayami or Muni for whom all that is hidden (by night) from consciousness is known and for whom all that is known and all that attracts the worldly man is outside consciousness since he is not attached to them or attracted by them. This transformation of Night and Day, from the usual solar day and night, and this assumption by them of a new significance and importance are the basic advantages of the Navaratri Rite. Practice of this novel discipline for at least nine days and nights may help to stabilise the attitude.

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has come in Human Form in order to save mankind from the wickedness of this Kali Age; He has awarded the Navaratri Festival a valued place in His Mission of reviving Dharma and the scriptures that teach it. Since five years, He has included the Vedapurusha Saptaha yajna as a part of the celebrations, so that the minds of men can concentrate for seven days on the Purusha that is extolled in the Vedas. At the very beginning of this Kali Age, Emperor Parikshit saved himself from the cycle of birth grief and death by this Saptaha of keeping the Mind fixed on the Purusha, described in the Vedas. Khatwanga saved himself by contemplating on the Lord for seven ghatikas only.

The underlying discipline is the same in all these Dikshas, or Disciplines. Parameswara is the Seventh, beyond the Six Eoos, the Arishadvarga. To attain Him is, of course, the grand Goal of all Disciplines and all seekers.

"Maam evaye prapadyanthe maayaamethaam tharanthithe", says the Gita. All offerings made to every God reaches Me alone and they grant the result craved for namely the crossing of Delusion or Maya. Maam here may mean either "Lakshmi" or "Myself". The thinkers of the Visishtadvaita school assert that, if the Mother's Grace is won, She will allow the Jivi to meet and realise Easwara. It is as if in the circle of this Jagat, Narayana Yogamaya (Jagadamba, the Mother, the

Mayashakti) and Nara (Man) are revolving; Maya is the curtain bidding Easwara from the Jivi; he cannot visualise Easwara on account of the Mother between. He can never overstep Her. So, man has to turn round, look away from Nature and turn towards Narayana, whom he can then meet face to face. So long as he follows Maya, he cannot conquer it; he must turn away and flee. Then, he can visualise the Lord and receive His Blessings.

When man thus turns away, Kama which was so long a drag, becomes transmuted into the longing for God; Matsarya or the spirit of competition will be transformed into the attempt to please God better and quicker than others; greed which man was hitherto exhibiting in garnering and guarding every single pie will now be sublimated into the garnering of every minute and second of the time available and utilising it to the most profitable extent. Egoism will prompt him, not to defame others and try to put them down, but to be nearer the Footstool of God than others.

This is the consequence of "Paraang-mukhatha" or "Facing backwards" the attitude which each must cultivate. The Saptaha during the Navaratri in the Immediate Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba will promote this attitude in every aspirant, if only he is physically and mentally a participant. That is the genuine Navaratri Diksha and the genuine Navaratri Siddhi. When the Poornahuthi is offered, the aspirant too must offer in the flames of Jnana his Karmas and take the Valedictory Bath in the Holy Waters of Baba's Grace. They would have then deserved to reach the Vijayadasa, the Status of Victory.

From the Telugu article by Velamury Sathyanarayana M. A., B. Ed

Madhusudana is a Name applied to Krishna, not because He killed an Asura called Madhu. The Asura Madhu is different; it is the wrong feeling that man has, that sensual pleasures are madhu or sweet. That is the Asura, which Krishna-bhakti kills. Man believes that pleasures derived through the senses are the sweetest. Krishna makes him realise that devotion to God is a thousand times sweeter.

BABA

The Nature of Godhead

All beings on this world have consciousness, the nucleus of intelligence. This gives them the idea of likes and dislikes. They have the capacity to think of alternatives and to select one among them as most helpful for survival or for deriving physical mental or spiritual satisfaction. Man is endowed with this discriminatory skill to the highest limit among animals and so, the scriptures declare that, the Human Birth is the most fortunate chance. Man has created pictures of the world and theories of its origin according to his mental development and so, there are as many religions as there are human minds. But, these were expressed coherently through some great leader who is said to be the Founder of the Religion, as Mohammed or Jesus Christ and the doctrines are contained in some one text like the Quran or the Bible.

For the Hindus, Parameswara or God Himself is the Founder of the religion, and the record of the intuitive visions of His, that the sages won through His Grace namely the Vedas, are the text. The Vaishnavas the Saivites and the Saktheyas all derive their inspiration and sustenance from the Vedas, only.

What do these Vedas teach? They teach what is beyond the reach of the human intellect, viz., the principles of Dharma necessary for individual and social uplift, the nature of Godhead by which alone we can understand ourselves and the world around us. The Vedas contain injunctions and prohibitions, examples and exhortations, to obey the injunctions and observe the prohibitions, as well as the Upanishads. Even when the Vedas lay down the Dharma for man, the object is to render God manifest and so, the entire Veda can be taken as dealing with God only.

The Vedas say that God is the ultimate, Cause: "Yatho vaa imaani bhoothaani jaayanthe, yath prayanthyaabhisamvisanthi." "From which all this emanates and into which all this merge." This is expressed by Badarayanacharya as, "Janmaadyasya yathah"; "from where since birth." In other places, God is described as Sathyam Jnanam and Anantham. He is Truth Knowledge Endless; All this Universe is only a quarter of Him. The other three quarters are beyond. "Out of fear caused by Him, the winds blow; death flies fast moved by that fear". These reveal the sovereignty of God.

The Vedas have two sections: Karmakanda and Brahmakanda. What is usually referred to as Upasanakanda is part of both these. Karma in the Karmakanda is a name that is given to the offerings made to the Gods. They are of many varieties, Srouta, Smartha, Nitya, Naimitika, Kamyas etc. Each of these has to be done with the mind concentrated on the deity propitiated by that Karma with the rites prescribed for it. Since all deities and Gods are but manifestations of Parameswara or Godhead, these Karmas too can be said to be for the Glory of God.

Of course, the gods Indra, Surya, Agni, Soma, Mitra, and Varuna are spoken of and extolled in the Vedas. But, they are not separate from or rival to the one Supreme God. Indra means "He who is great" "He who is endowed with splendour, majesty." And, God is the source of all majesty and splendour and wealth and happiness. So, Indra and the other Gods are derivatives from God. Agni means, Agram nayathi, that which causes Origin and Decline, Srishti and Laya, that is to say, the Divine. Mitra means He who has Maitri, or, He who is friendly, well disposed, amicable and kind. Others are friendly for some reason or with some object in view; but, God loves because it is His nature, there is no calculation of profit or consequence for Him. God's Love is steady, undiminishing. He wants all to be liberated from the prison of life and death and so He is the nearest Mitra or Friend. God is the only true and lasting Friend of Man.

Or, take the expression, "Umayaa sahithassomah". Uma is the constant accompaniment of Siva, His Shakti. With that Shakti Siva can create worlds in a second and destroy them in a second. He is called Soma, (With Uma) because He has that Shakti ever. The name Varuna too is capable of wader and more significant interpretation Varuna means He who deserves to be propitiated by every one, chosen by every one; that is to say, Varuna means God Himself. Rudra too comes from the root, meaning, to weep; it denotes the God who makes every being weep, at the moment of the final dissolution. Prajapati, another word, used in the Vedas indicates the Mastership which God has over all beings.

A doubt may arise in some that it is not consistent with the Mercy of which God is the embodiment for Him to make all beings weep, at the time of Pralaya, the Universal Merge. The surgeon operates with a knife in order to restore the patient's health and make him well. He does so, with the good of the patient in mind, isn't it? Pralaya is intended to develop the renunciation needed to overcome the attachment to the flux that is Samsara.

In the Purvamimamsa Sastra, it is laid down that Indra is the Mantra and not any corporeal Phenomenon since at the same time Indra receives offerings at many places. But, in the Uttaramimamsa Sastra, this view is condemned and the view that Gods may have corporeal existence is propounded. Such doubts arise because a difference is made between Gods and God. If the fact be known that all offerings are for the One God and that all Gods are that One God, there can be no room for doubt. The Puranas describe how those who worshipped God long like Saubhari could by reason of the efficacy of their devotion assume many bodies and be in many places at the same time. Why wonder then that God who resides in all hearts attends all Pujas and accepts all offerings in all places?

All Yajnas or Sacrifices are said to be Vishnu, Yajno vy Vishnu. By all Yajnas, Vishnu is propitiated; even the Mahabharata War was elevated to the status of a Yajna, because the questions of Dharma and its validity and vitality were decided by it.

The Vedas speak of two varieties of Yajna; Bahya and Anther, the Outer and the Inner. Sacrifices like the Jyotishtoma are outer rites. In the Taittiriya Sakha and the Thaandi Sakha the inner yajnas are described. In these, the Atma is the Yajaman, the Performer, the Agent. Shraddha is his consort. The body is the fuel. The breast is the sacrificial platform; the heart is the Gaarhyapathyam, the Face Is the Aahavaniya fire, the stomach is the Dakshina fire; death is the Valedictory Rite. This means that man must, throughout his life, offer himself as a sacrifice to God by serving Him with earnestness and sincerity. Every Karma of man is but an oblation in that unbroken Yajna celebrated for His Glory, and for man sharing in that Glory.

Hence the declaration to the Shruti, "Kaanda dwayopapaadyaya Karma Brahma Swarupine, Yajnesaaya name namah". The Lord who represents all Yajnas is both Karma and Brahma.

In the Brahmakanda of the Vedas, the nature of Brahma is depicted, in both Saguna and Nirguna aspect. Sagunabrahma is also known as Upasya-Brahmam; that is, Worshippable Brahmam. Nirguna-brahmam is known as Jneya-brahmam, Knowable Brahmam. Of course, the Reality is Nirguna, capable of being experienced intuitively by the highest class of aspirants. For the sake of those whose capacity is not so high, the middling type of Sadhakas, certain characteristics are imposed on the characteristics-less Brahmam. For those without even this much of qualification, Karmas; Idol-worship and other visible and practical ways of sharing in the joy of approaching the Lord are prescribed. Vyasa In his Sutra, Thath thu Samanvayaath, has demonstrated that all statements in the Vedanta are about either the Saguna or Nirguna Brahmam. Sankaracharya also has proved by his commentaries this basic lesson that they endeavour to teach.

The Saguna Brahmam is realisable by certain Vidyas that are described in the Upanishads, like Daharavidya. Saandilyavidya, Upokasalavidya Vaiswanaravidya etc. Thus, it is clear that the

Vedanta is full of teachings to realise God. God is worshipped either through Karmas, where His Praise is part of the rite or independent of rites and ceremonies. Both methods are indicated and described in the Vedas, which have only one mission among mankind—to instruct about God.

(To be continued)

From the Telugu Article by Kolluri Somasekhara Sastry

At the Height of Spring

I searched amidst the stars, among the blooms of Spring,
I found You at the Height of Spring,
I knew not where I was, since eye met Eye.
I float on waves of fragrance, waves of shimmering beauty.
I must deck my heart with lights, since. You reside;
Sorrow and grief are the tallow I burn.
You are unique, beauty and terror in One;
You draw, but, perhaps, are not aware
You scatter pearls of joy among the pained
Your eyes flash metaphors and stories, to those who see the Grace.
Ah, how I miss the gathering soaked in Bliss!

But, these hands that reach me out to help
It is Your Hand, these hands that help, I know.
My boat has reached the shore; no storm can toss.

O, Soul of Spring! I have had only thorns
Through all my life; O fill my lap with flowers
Afraid of being bold, I yet do ask
Can I hope for Grace? Can I yearn for joy?
O, Horning Breeze, pray waft these Lines to Him
Whose splendour I see in Moan and all the Stars.

Bono Tahina Sayeed, B. A. from the Urdu Original

Develop Detachment

When the newborn child weeps, all around are happy and their faces are lit with smiles; this is strange, for when some one weeps, others should not laugh. But, this is the fate of man. He weeps that he has come into the world; but, those who have been there long are not aware of the truth and they are misled into joy at petty comforts and transient pleasures. Man is happy one moment, the next he is plunged into grief or fear and the moment after, he is deep in worry. When the seven colours of the spectrum revolve together, the effect is "no colour;" when they

stop revolving, the seven can be separately Identified. When the three blades of the electric fan revolve fast and no blade is separately noticeable, they give cool comfort. So too when the different qualities of Satwa, Rajas and Thames are unrecognisably Integrated, then only is man happy.

Supari is brown; pan is green; chunam is white, bet, when these three are together chewed, the colour is red! When the three Gunas are equated in Sadhana, the result is shanti. The lamp is the Satwaguna, the wick is the Tamoguna and the oil is the Rajoguna. When the three are integrated, they give the Light of Jnana which illumines all problems.

When a plane flies across the sky, it leaves no mark on it, no streak that lasts, no furrow or pot-hole that interferes with further traffic. So too, allow all feelings emotions to cross your mind, but, do not allow them to cause an impression. This can be done by inquiry, by quiet reasoning within oneself, more than by listening to lectures or study of books. Little children are trained to walk, by means of a three wheeled contraption which they hold and push along. The Pranava is such a contraption, with the three wheels of A U and M, the Omkara Tricycle. Holding it, man can learn to use the two feet of Bhakti and Vairagya. If he gives up his hold on the Omkara, he plumps down on the ground, helplessly. If he walks on with the help of the Pranava japa, he can certainly realise the Glory of the Brahman, which is the very substance of the Universe.

Nagamahasaya, the householder disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was able to escape the chains of Samsara by becoming humbler and humbler smaller and smaller, with less and less egoism, and so tiny, that he could creep through to safety. Vivekananda on the other hand expanded himself until he identified himself with the entire Universe and so, the chain broke, unable to contain his majesty. Nagamahasaya felt I am the servant of the servants of God;" "Dasoham." Vivekananda felt that he was the Master, the Isa who was Idam Sarvam, Sadaa Soham, He was always steady in the conviction that he was That. This is called Jeeva-brahma-aikya-anusandhaanam, the Practice of the Consciousness of the Identity of the Individual and the Universal. This is the real Kalyana or Holy Rite, which man must endeavour to celebrate.

That identity will not develop Ahamkaram or Egoism. It will merge the ego in the Universal; the idea of I will disappear in the Thee, which is the only entity one becomes aware of. Egoism, conceit, Ahamkaram is the bane of the Age. In every field of activity, pride is the undermining evil. Even sanyasins and the presiding monks of matths are not free from this fatal flaw. "Eat like a dog and wander like a fox", was the lesson an old sage taught his disciple. He should not have any thought of the morrow or about where to lay his head. He should not cater to the senses or count his age or feel his pulse and complain of ailments. He should not celebrate his birthday or encourage others to do so. The essential attitude that one should cultivate is, to engage in all activities that are one's duty without getting attached to the work. As the sky's clear blue is not affected by the clouds or rainstorms lightning or thunder, but, remains the same in spite of those temporary disturbances, the mind of man too must be clear and clean, in spite of all the storms and sirens of life.

Edison, the great scientist and inventor, used to be in his laboratory for hours and even days together, concentrating on some experiment on which his whole attention was bent; milk or bread or tea was pushed through the door, but, they were all untouched by him. So great is the

concentration that science demands. Consider then how much more should the Sadhaka be fixed in Ekagrata, or single-mindedness in order to achieve success in the subtler and more slippery sphere of spiritual conquest.

That is the supreme task of man, the victory for which he has come equipped. He must be light and bright, like a lamp on the waters of the Ganga; if weight is added, it will sink and the light will go out. The weight is "Attachment to worldly goods", "the pursuit of sensory pleasures". Just ponder for a moment: how many millions of men have died so far? Have any of them taken from here anything to the realm into which, they have disappeared? A man was dragged to court; he asked three comrades of his to come and bear witness to his innocence. One friend said, "I shall not move out of the house; let them who want my statement come here"; the second said, "I shall come up to the doors of the court; but, I dare not get in. The third said, "Come on! I am ever with you." The first is the wealth one has accumulated; the second is "this kith and kin" who will come as far as the cemetery; the third is "the fame, the honour, he has won."

When a person dies, his property and things remain at home; they do not go with him into the beyond. His relatives cannot also go; only the good or, the bad name he has earned will last. So, he has to live in such a way that posterity will remember him with gratitude and joy. To lead the good life, constant prompting from the God within is, a great help. That inspiration can be got only by constantly reciting the Lord's Name and calling on the inner springs of Divinity.

The Name is so valuable an instrument to win His Grace, to realise His Presence, to picture His Form to remember His Glory that even if it is repeated from the heart once in the morning, once in the evening, that will make the Griham a Griham, instead of a Guha or Cave. The lamp of the Name when it is lit will illumine the household and make it, a home, instead of a hole. If a lamp is kept burning in a room, it may go out when winds blow in from the windows. The Indriyas are the windows and when they are open, the "Name Lamp" will not burn steadily. So keep the outer-faced senses closed to the influences that attract, and concentrate on the Name of the Lord and its beauty and sweetness. Note how happy, contented and carefree were the great saints who revelled in that Name, Jayadeva, Tukaram, Kabir, Surdas, Tulasidas Ramakrishna. By simply shouting Sivoham, you cannot become Siva; develop the qualities of Divinity like Universal Love, absence of attachment, etc. Then, you will be entitled to assert Sivoham, though you may not assert at all, for you will have no a ham feeling then!

There are some who say that in the Kaliyuga man can save himself by means of this Nama-japa, and that this is a special concession for the weaker mortals of today. Probably, they think that it is quite easy to reel off quickly names of the Lord on the tongue, like a tape recorder. It is not only in the Kaliyuga, in every Yuga Nama-japa saves man. Bhima in the Mahabharata is considered to be a strong fighter and a very emotional and short tempered hero, but, really speaking he was a great Bhakta. Once Krishna showed this to his brother; when Bhima was fast asleep, they could hear from every pore of his skin the sound of Nama-japa emanating ceaselessly.

Dharmaraja had uttered some white lies during the War in order to foil the plans of the enemies and for this, he had to spend a few minutes in Hell. When he was approaching that place of torture, his very nearness conferred on the unfortunate dwellers such refreshing peace and

coolness and comfort that they prayed to him not to desert them. Dharmaraja learnt that they were able to get some relief, because he had accumulated merit by his good deeds. Then, Dharmaraja declared, "Let them have all the consequence of all the good deeds and let me be impoverished of all the joy due to me". This made them happy no doubt, but, Dharmaraja did not become poorer, for the very act of renunciation was such a colossal meritorious act that colossal joy was available for him in heaven, besides the quantity already earned by him.

Every act has its consequence which cannot be escaped, except by the Grace of the Lord. The Grace of the Lord can be won only by virtue and truth. So, develop Sathya, Dharma, Shanti, and Prema; cultivate Vairagya, non-attachment to things and persons; remember death which is around the corner and time which is fast fleeting away. Take recourse to the ways of liberation, before you are bound.

From Baba's Discourse at Prasanthi Nilayam

Narayani

In the Devi Mahathmyam, which is read-reverentially during Navaratri, there are sixteen slokas in the thirteenth chapter called Narayani Sthuthi, the Praise of Sakthi, as Narayani. They are full of significance and deep philosophical meanings.

Sakthi is the first wave of activity in the Supreme Absolute, that caused all the subsequent evolution and Involution. It is the origin of the Elements and the Gunas and of Names and Forms, of Ignorance and Delusion as well as of Intelligence and Wisdom. So, Narayani, which is another word for this Primal Energy is "Sarvasya buddhi rupena janasya hrdis samasthithe"; She is established in everyone's heart as Intelligence, and, as such, She grants Heaven to those who do meritorious acts with a desire for the fruits thereof and Moksha for those who do acts without any thought of the benefits.

She is Time, which acts through seconds and minutes and is ever interested in change, from childhood to adolescence, from middle age to senility and senility to death. She is "Parinaama-pradaayini" She is also the joy in every auspicious occasion, the auspiciousness in every joyous occasion. She is the Energy latent in Pranava, the Effulgence of the Sun Moon and Fire, the Grace that is sought by all praying minds.

She is Sanaathani, Eternal, Beginningless and Endless. She is the repository of all attributes; She is, "Srishti-sthithi-vinaasaanaam, sakthi" the Motive for Creation, Existence and Death. She is Braahmi-sakthi for Creation, Vaishnavi-sakthi for Sthithi and Maheswari-sakthi for Decline and Destruction.

She is ever intent in protecting and rescuing the distressed and the panic stricken, who take refuge in Her and call upon Her in anguish. She is "Saranaagatha deenaartha parithraana paraayanaa" She is established in the Vimaana (Egoism-less) consciousnesses of Hamsas (sages); She wears the Trisula, the three pronged spear (indicative of Her control over the Past the Present and the Future, the Crescent Moon (indicative of the cool comfort that Her Grace

confers) and the Serpent (indicative of the Kundalini that is aroused and awakened. through Rajayoga.) She is Maha-vrishabha-vahini (having the Four-legged, four principle-based Dharma, as the Vehicle).

She is Lakshmi (Wealth); Lajja (Reluctance to do wrong, found in all good people) Mahaavidyaa (the Upanishads which teach the process of escaping from the coils of delusion about our real nature) She is Shraddha (faith in one's Reality and the possibility of discovering it) She is Pushti (health and strength of body, the vehicle for self-realisation): She is Sathwagunaswarupi as well as of the Swarupa of Rajas and Tamas. She is skill and scholarship; she is all Forms and all Names.

Sarvathah paani paadaanthe
Sarvathokshi siro mukhe
Sarvathah sravana ghraane
Narayani namosthu the.

Her hands and feet are everywhere; Her eyes head and face are everywhere; She inhales and listens everywhere.

It is this Universal Absolute Energy that pervades permeates and persists in the entire Creation, that we worship as Mahakali, Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati, during the Nine Days of Dasara Festival. As Mahakali, she destroys evil tendencies and impulses; as Mahalakshmi, She endows as with joy, as Mahasaraswati. She grants Intelligence enough for achieving liberation.

To the Students

What is called modern civilisation might give a little more comfort, health and personal happiness, but, real mental strength and peace are absent in it. Only virtue and truth can award these two. Why should the body be kept in good trim? Why should man be fed clothed and housed comfortably? Why should man live well or rather, live at all? Who is exactly deriving happiness? Is it the sense or mind or intelligence or consciousness? Who is this I that seeks happiness and is happy or is not happy? Try to think of answers to these questions.

After knowing who this I is, you must try to know what this outside world is. You see these flags fluttering; now, what is it that flutters? Is it the cloth, or the rope or the wind? You know it is the unseen wind that causes that flutter. So too, you see the effect, not the cause, when you observe Nature around you. The bungalow is seen, not the foundation under the earth; the tree is seen with all the crowning glory of leaf and blossom and fruit; but, the roots that grip it and feed it are not visible. You cannot therefore deny them. So too, for everything that can be seen heard smelt tasted and touched, God is the cause. Man is born as man because he is to realise this truth, and feel the Presence of God in all beings and things.

Education is incomplete and even ineffective if the educated have not known the Reality or at least the means of knowing It. The only means of knowing it is to cleanse the Intelligence of

Delusion and deluding prejudices. To cleanse the Intelligence, virtue has to be practised, along with reverence humility and detachment. Reverence has to begin with the parents and elders and teachers. Revere them, be humble before their longer experience and deeper love. Know what Dharma is and follow it strictly. That is the message of Sanathana Dharma, which is the precious gem in the necklace of Bharatmata. Now, you are casting off that gem and priding yourself on the plastic tinsel that you have, put in its place! Years ago, the copy books in primary schools had the lines, "Jayaram Jayaram Jai Jai Ram" "Suddha Brahma Paraathpara Raam", introducing the children to the glory of the Name of the Lord and the Brahmic substratum of all Creation. Now, they are taught to sing, "Ding dang bell, puss is in the well" or, "Baa, Baa, Black sheep, have you any wool?" reducing them to the level of sheep or, pussies. The sense of human dignity is destroyed by this tinsel type of education.

The tree of life is dried up if the roots are eaten up by greed or envy or hate. Education must train children to love, to co-operate, to be brave in the cause of truth, to be helpful and sympathetic, to be grateful. The training must be supplemented by the conduct of the teachers, the parents, and the elders. There is no use teaching the children one thing and holding out examples of the opposite before them. When Bharatha sought Rama and weeping, told him of the death of their father, Rama asked him, "Bharatha! You do not follow the disciplines taught by Dharma. That is why you are weeping now." Dharma makes you brave and calm.

From Baba's Discourse

Prasanthi Nilayam News

Programme For Dasara 1960

- October 15: 8 A. M. Hoisting of the Prasanthi flag.
5 P. M. Festival of the Tenth Anniversary of the Sri Sathya Sai Hospital.
President: Mrs. Opal Macrae of New York.
- 17: 8 A. M. Inauguration of the Vedapurusha Saptaha. Yajna.
4 P. M. Inauguration of the Annual Sessions of the Akhila Bharat Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha.
- (From 17th to 23rd October: 7 A. M. to 11 A. M.: Yajna and Puja, 3 to 7 P. M.: Discourses, and 8 to 11P. M.: Music, Drama etc.)
- 18: Inauguration of the "Prasanthi Nilayam Township" by Dr. N. M. Lakshminarasiah, Minister for Panchayath Raj, Andhra Pradesh. (Noon: Feeding of the Poor; distribution of clothes to the Poor.) .
- 21: Orchestral Music-by the Child Artistes of the Vasant Sangeet Niketan, Bombay.
- 23: Poornahuthi Rite of the Vedapurusha Saptaha Yajna, Abhisheka, Mahamangalarathi.

Bhagavata Vahini

6

Inside the Palace, Vidura enquired about the welfare of every one of his kinsmen. Then Kunti Devi, the Queen Mother, came in and casting her endearing looks at him, said, "At last, we have been able to see you, O Vidura!" She could not say more.

After some time she resumed, "How could you stay away so long, ignoring the very children whom you reared with so much love and myself and others who revere you so much? It is through your Grace that my children are today rulers of this land. Where would they be today if you had not saved them on many a critical occasions? We were the target for many a disaster; but, the greatest one was your being away from us. That affected us most. Even the hope of seeing you again was extinguished in us. Now our hearts have sprouted again. Aspirations scattered by despair have come together. Today, our joy has attained fullness. O, what a happy day!" Kunti sat for a while wiping her tears.

Vidura held her hands, but, could not resist his own tears. He was recapitulating the varied events of the past, in the Pandava and Kaurava groups. He said, "Mother Kunti Devi! Who can overcome the decrees of fate? What must happen, happens. The good and the evil that men do have to result in good and evil. How can man be called free, when he is bound by this law of cause and effect? He is a puppet in the hands of this law; it pulls the strings and he makes the movements. Our likes and dislikes are of no consequence. Everything is His Will, His Grace." When Vidura was thus expounding the fundamental spiritual truths that govern human affairs, the brothers Dharmaraja, Bhima, Nakula, and Sahadeva were sitting near, wrapped in close attention.

Kunti raised her head at last and said, "Through your blessings, we won the war; but, we were powerless to save the lives of the sons of Draupadi and the son of Subhadra. Misfortune haunted us so strongly. Of course, as you said, no one can escape one's destiny. Well, let the past be forgotten. It is meaningless to worry over what cannot be set right. I must say, my thirst has now been considerably relieved; I could meet you at last. Where were you all this time? Tell us."

At this, Vidura replied that he had been on a pilgrimage to a number of holy places. The brothers listened with rapt attention to his story, prodding him with questions. Dharmaraja said often that he was awaiting the day when he too could go through all those holy experiences. He folded his palms in reverence whenever a holy shrine was mentioned and with closed eyes, he pictured to himself the sacred spot. Meanwhile, Bhima interjected, "Did you proceed to Dwaraka? Please tell us your experiences there." Dharmaraja too added, "You must have met Lord Krishna there, isn't it? Tell us all what happened, in full detail." Kunti Devi too became eager to hear his description; for, she said, "Tell us, tell us. My son is there now; you must have met him too. How are they all? I hope the old parents, Nanda and Yasoda are well. And, Devaki and Vasudeva?" A shower of questions fell on Vidura, even before he started talking.

Vidura was not over-eager to answer. He talked as if he was anxious to avoid being drawn into the topic. For he had learnt from Uddhava while on the way to Dwaraka that the Yadava clan had perished and Krishna had closed His Human career. He had no desire to plunge the Pandavas

into grief, when they were elated at meeting him after a long time. "Why should I who have given them so much joy, be myself the cause for wiping off that joy?" he argued. "They are sure to know about it from Arjuna who will be returning from Dwaraka with the sorrowful news." So, he swallowed the news that popped up quite often into his mouth; he satisfied himself and them, by describing the glory of Krishna. He said, "I did not like to visit kith and kin with these ascetic robes on; so, I did not meet any of the Yadava leaders or Nanda, Yasoda and others," and kept quiet. He did not dilate further on Dwaraka and his own Pilgrimage.

"I came to you because I heard that you have won the war and are peacefully engaged at last in ruling over the kingdom which was rightfully yours; I felt drawn towards these children whom I had fostered from a tender age. It was affection towards them that drew me here. Among my kith and kin, I was tempted to visit only you; I did not desire to meet any others," he said and turned towards the Vedantic teachings which he wanted to impart. When the conversation ended, Dharmaraja prayed that Vidura might take residence at the quarters specially arranged for him and himself accompanied him to the mansion.

There he appointed certain persons to serve Vidura and requested him to take rest at that place. Vidura did not relish the idea of spending his time in that seat of luxury; but he entered the mansion lest Dharmaraja be displeased. He lay on his bed, reviewing the past. He sighed when he realised that the stratagems which the blind Dhritarashtra, his own brother, employed to destroy the Pandavas, the children of his other brother Pandu, recoiled on him and caused the destruction of his own clan. He admired Dharmaraja for the magnanimity he was showing towards Dhritarashtra, in spite of the fact that he had tortured the Pandavas in various ways. Dharmaraja was revering him with great faith and devotion and attending to his comforts. He felt the utmost disgust when he recapitulated the wickedness of Dhritarashtra's heart; he was ashamed that the old man was coolly wallowing in the luxury of the palace, instead of cultivating detachment from the flimsy pleasures of the senses and attempting to realise the goal of human life, namely, Liberation from the cycle of birth and death. He experienced an uncontrollable agony that his brother was wasting the few remaining years of his life on earth.

His yogic vision told him that the Pandavas too will soon disappear; that the same Krishna who guarded them here will look after their best interest in the hereafter too. But, he surmised that the blind king will suffer more, after the departure of the Pandavas. He resolved to send that unfortunate brother out on pilgrimage and the ultimate realisation of his destiny. He did not want any delay to intervene. So, he slipped out in the darkness, without being noticed by any one, and walked straight into the residence of Dhritarashtra.

The blind king and his queen, Gandhari, were of course expecting Vidura to call on them, for they had learnt that he had come to town. So, when Vidura stepped in, he embraced him and shed tears of joy. He could not contain himself. He listed one by one the calamities that overtook him and his children and lamented over their fate. Vidura tried to console him with the profound teachings of the scriptures. But, he soon discovered that the petrified heart of the old man will not melt at the application of cold advice; he knew that his stupidity can be overcome only by hard blows.

So, he changed the tune and resorted to blame and abuse. Hearing this Dhritarashtra was alarmed. He expostulated, "Brother! We are burning in agony at the loss of our hundred sons, and you prick the wound with sharp needles of your angry abuse. Even before we taste the joy of meeting you after so long a time, why do you try to plunge us deeper into distress? Why should I blame you for hard-heartedness? I am laughed at by all, blamed by all, I have no right to find fault with you." With head bent and resting on his palms, Dhritarashtra sat in silence.

Vidura recognised this as the opportune moment for instilling the lesson of renunciation, which alone could save him from perdition. He knew that his purpose was beyond reproach, for, he wanted them to undertake pilgrimage to holy places and fill themselves with sanctity, and meet great and good men and recognise the Lord within and thus save themselves. So, he decided to use even stronger words with a view to transforming him and the queen. Though filled with pity at their forlorn condition, Vidura had in mind the dire days when they would need all the courage that Jnana alone could give them; so, he was determined to prod them into action. He said, "O foolish King! Have you no shame? Do you still find joy in earthly pleasures? Of what avail is it if you wallow in the mire until you die? I thought you had enough of it and more. Time is a cobra that lies in wait to sting you to death. You dare hope that you can escape it and live forever. No one, however great, has escaped the sting. You run after happiness in this temporary world and you seek to fulfil your desires in order to get some paltry satisfaction. You are wasting precious years. Make your life worthwhile. It is not yet too late to begin the effort. Give up this cage called home. Dismiss from your mind the paltry pleasures of this world. Remember the joy that awaits you, the world that is welcoming you, the end of this journey. Save yourself. Avoid the foolish fate of giving up this life in the agony of separation from kith and kin. Learn to die with the thought of the Lord uppermost in the mind at the moment of departure. It is far better to die in joy in the thick of the blackest forest than die in distress in the palace of this capital city. Go, go and do tapas. Get away from this place, this prison which you call, home."

(To be continued)

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Birthday Message

In the beginningless and endless Stream of Time night and day, and summer and winter roll endlessly on; they are carried mercilessly on over the Universe by the Flood. The term of living beings diminishes with every day. While being carried forward in the flood, man is surprisingly unaware of His fate; he never spends a thought on his fast declining life-term, He is blind in his ignorance.

Riches and wealth are short-lived; office and authority are temporary; the life-breath is a flickering flame in the wind. Youth is a three-day fair. Pleasures and fortunes are bundles of sorrow. Knowing this, if man devotes this limited term of life to the service of the Lord, then, he is indeed blessed.

Seek refuge at the Feet of the Lord even before the life-breath flies out of the cage of the body. It is an open cage! Any moment, the bird may fly into the outer regions. That is the fact. The ignorant do not realize this; they beat their drums and proclaim proudly how rich they are or how happy they are, surrounded by their sons and grandsons. Alas, the very physical frame which is so carefully nourished since birth rots and falls aside. What then shall we say of those who feel that these other things are "mine"? Theirs is but the delusion of an insane mind. Everything is untrue, everything is Impermanent: castles in the air, constructions in dreams.

Contemplate on this Truth; approach Sri Hari and glorify Him; that alone can confer on you permanent Joy.

Inside the room called Body, in the strong box called the Heart the precious gem of Jnana exists; four wily thieves (Kama Krodha Lobha and Asuya) Lust Anger Greed and Envy are lying in wait to rob it. Awake to the danger before it is too late; reinforce yourself with the support of the Universal Guardian the Lord, and keep the Gem intact. That will make you rich in Prema, rich in Santhi.

When the clouds that hide the face of the moon are wafted by the winds, the moon shines clear and cool; so too, when the clouds of egoism are wafted away, the mind of man will shine pure and full, with its own native Light. That is the stage of Bliss. When that is attained, there is no more grief. Where there is the limp, there darkness cannot exist. The lamp of Jnana once lit never dies, never fades, never flickers. The Ananda and the Santhi too never fade, never flicker. But, the Ananda and the Santhi that men seek from the objects of the world prompted by their senses flicker fast and fade and die. They satisfy for a moment a foolish craze. They are attained through lust anger hate and envy and so, they are false and fickle. Control and conquer these; then only can you acquire real Ananda and Santhi. You can not only acquire these, you can become these.

What do the wars of mankind teach, except this—that lust anger hate and envy are evil forces that haunt man? Examine the anarchy and the lawlessness, the chaos and killings that have arisen in the world today. They are the products of these forces. Why, even the ills of your bodies and of your homes are but the consequence of these evils. Unaware of the faults and failings in oneself, man imputes faults and foists failings on others and starts blaming and hurting them. This is sin; this gives you a feeling of innocence and exultation for a while, but, cannot confer anything other than worry grief and pain.

Hate and envy distort man's true charm. Anger is the fuel for all varieties of sin. Just look at yourself in a mirror, when you are attacked by anger, and you will discover that you are then akin to Surpanakha Or Lankini of ancient times. The Rajoguna that is over powering you then is the Rakshasa trait you must learn to avoid. Those aspiring for success in the spiritual field must therefore decide to control anger, to subdue the vagaries of the mind with its changing resolution to do and not to do things. They must put down their mental agitations and worries and see that they do not create worry in others also. They must convince themselves that in every one there is Sivam, recognisable as Swasam; they must develop Viswaprema and demonstrate it in their words and deeds. May you all win Sathyam Santhi and Sukham through these means. May you merge in the Source of all Anandam.

There is also another point. The Sastras say that envy greed lust anger are all Vyadhikaranam, sources of disease. Those afflicted with these qualities may consume the most healthy food; but, it will not give them health. They will suffer from various digestive and nervous troubles. Therefore, Bhaktas and those aspiring to be liberated must cut asunder these evil tendencies with the sharp sword of Jnana. They must pray the Lord to save them from contact with these foul characteristics. From this very moment, pray for the Grace which will enable you to control and conquer them. Deepen your faith, in God. Expand your Prema kind take into its fold, the whole of mankind. There is no alternative Path for the Bhakta.

BABA

A king was enraged when a saint he had invited to his court did not accost him first; the saint talked lovingly to the ministers and officers and even servants, but ignored the King on his throne. When the enraged King ordered the saint to be bound hand and foot, the saint said "How much more enraged must be the King of the Kings, Lord of the Worlds, that you Ignore Him and deal only with lesser things?" Then, the King saw light and became humble:

BABA

Incomparable Glory

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba reveals Himself to His devotees in most mysterious ways. We do not know of any other Divine Incarnation who so clearly and so plainly discloses His Universality and His Omnipresence, with such unmistakable testimony. Baba has come to dispel the rising clouds of disbelief in God and assert that God is far more magnificent than what Science is able to gauge. Read the following letters and ponder over the fact of the Advent of the Lord:

From Ankola, North Kanara District, Sri B. Gopalakrishna Naik, B. Sc., B. Ed., writes on 1-4-66, "From the photograph of Sri Bhagavan Sathya Sai Baba in our house, Vibhuti Kumkum and Turmeric powder have been showering since two months." From Rajkot, P. R. Anjaria B. A., L. L. B. writes on 5-1-66, 'On Vaikuntha Ekadasi we performed special Puja; we keep one coconut as prasad to Baba with a prayer to crack it, indicating His presence and Favour on us, in the morning, we beheld with surprise and devotion that the small plate with the coconut had a small quantity of Vibhuti in it and the coconut had also cracked half way in circular cracks at 3, 4, places." At Jamnagar, during the Mahasivaratri celebration in March 65, soon after Omkar Recitation, when the Bhajan "Omkaara priya Sayi Raamaa, Munijanavanditha Sai Raamaa" was sung, Dr. Gadhia writes, "To our great surprise we saw Om and Sri written on the glass over four big photographs hung in the hall. It was written in either ghee or Amrita, we could not know; when we smelt, it had the fragrance of Amrita. About 50 of us who were there were thrilled to witness this unique Leela."

Sri G. V. Raghavulu writes from Madras on 1-3-66, "On 10th Feb, at about 7-15 A. M. a stranger came to my house and handed over a white envelope to my daughter-in-law at the door. She

received it and asked the gentleman to take his seat in the verandah. She came upstairs and gave me the cover. Immediately I came downstairs, but the gentleman could not be seen. I opened the cover. To my awe and wonder I found three ten-rupee-notes and one packet of Vibhuti. The whole house was struck with astonishment and curiosity. My daughter-in-law confessed that she had felt the previous night that if only she could have 30 rupees, she could go to Puttaparthi for Mahasivaratri. I like to mention here that all of us in the family are staunch devotees of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Next day, Friday 11th Feb., there was a handful of Vibhuti below our beloved Baba's Picture in the shrine room. My daughter-in-law reached Puttaparthi for Sivaratri. On Thursday, 24th Feb, Baba was distributing money and fruits for some people at Prasanthi Nilayam. My daughter-in-law was standing, admiring the solemnity of the occasion. Baba's Grace suddenly fell on her. He said, "I have given money and Prasadam, but, still, your people do not have faith."

"One of my close friends, Sri Ningappa Byasi, writes Sri R. M. Desai, B A., M. L. A from Bangalore, "is a native of Bagalkot, Bijapur Dt. He used to attend Dasara at Puttaparthi every year. He had to stay at Bangalore this year, for unavoidable reasons. He had taken up a room at the Tourist Hotel. Very much disappointed that he had missed the Dasara Darsan, he finished his morning Puja on the opening day of Dasara and came to my room in the Legislators Home. "I will surely go there on my way back to Bagalkot from here," he said. When he returned to his room in the hotel, he was surprised to find there Prasadam in a leaf cup and a packet of fragrant Vibhuti. He brought the Prasadam and the Vibhuti to us and related the incident with a voice that quivered in joy. We all partook of it; the joy of Sri Ningappa was beyond description."

Dr. P. A. Menon from Palghat, Kerala writes on 5-11-66, "Probably because I distribute in my clinic to my patients the Vibhuti Baba gives, more than drugs, Baba has been very gracious to me since I returned from Puttaparthi after Dasara. On Sunday 31st Oct, the Vibhuti showers started. Since Monday, Kumkum also in two colours, light red and dark red. And, see how Baba is proving that He is Sarvadevathaaswarupam! The Vibhuti and Kumkum are showering from the pictures of Ayyappan, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Vivekananda, Saradamani Devi, the Samadhi at Shirdi Bhagavan Sri Sathya, Sai Baba Himself, Lakshmi, and Kanyakumari. When I opened my purse yesterday, I was surprised to find that the little photo of Baba I had in it is hidden in a heap of Vibhuti emanating from it. Just this morning, the picture of Guruvaayurappan (Krishna) has a thick layer of Kumkum!"

Sri Oza, Organiser of the Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba Study Circle Chital, (Saurashtra) writes on 31-10-66, "I would like to write an instance of Bhagavan's Leela on the 23rd October. In the morning, after completion of Arati, we saw Om on the left shoulder of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's portrait. All the members collected immediately and they had Darsan of the Om written in a substance without colour. By this instance, we believe that Almighty Bhagavan has accepted our prayers and was present at our place on that Day."

Sri P.O. Arumugam writes from Ambil in Trichinopoly District, Madras on 7-11-66, "On 27.10-66, We felt that we must design a flower carpet out of floral petals for Bhagavan to come into our house, as they do in Prasanthi Nilayam, during festive occasions, when Baba walks from the Nilayam towards the Auditorium. So, we got flowers of various hues, jasmine rose mallika chrysanthemum, dahlia, kanakambaram and croton leaves of variegated tint. For a length of ten

feet, we prepared a multicoloured carpet for His Feet to tread. We decided among ourselves that we could see the footprints of Baba as He walks over it. We prayed that He might come. At night, after Bhajan and Arati were over, when we looked at the carpet, O!! What a wonderful spectacle! He had walked over it. We could see the footprints, right and left, and the petals a little crushed as He trod on them.

The same day, sandal paste appeared on the portrait of Baba. And, a gold plate, about two inches long and 1/8 inch wide appeared on the sandal paste! We performed Arathi and kept it in the shrine room. It is in the form of a crescent and it is even now with us, in the room, a precious possession, given us so miraculously by the Grace of Baba."

Sri R S Gopalakrishnan from Madras writes on 14-1-66, "I enclose the copy of a letter I received from my brother's sons at Calcutta. They write, "In our house, invariably the Vibhuti appears, in all the photos, Ganesa, Guruvayurappa, Dharma Sastha, Ramapattabhishekam, and Ardhanariswara. Some days back, Kumkum also appeared on Baba's photo. On the sacred Ashtami, when our family deity, the Siva of Vaikom has the Special Festival, we were discussing among ourselves the grand celebrations at Vaikom that day and just then, Vibhuti of the same variety as is given as Prasadam at Vaikom appeared in Baba's Photo." They write, "I am writing this to you, so that you may find out the significance of all this and let me know what to do." So, Sri Gopalkrishna ends his letter with the request, "Can you please help me with your valuable advice as to the significance of these Leelas so that I may write to them."

What can we say of the significance, except this, the statement that Arjuna made when he was granted the Vision of the Lord's Omnipotence and Omnipresence, "O Possessor of Incomparable Glory! In all the three worlds, there is no one equal to you"

(Ed)

The Existing Mind

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has said that `existing mind' is the thief which has stolen from us the precious gem of Atma. He gives us instructions to punish this mind and recover the gem. We learn from Bhagavan that the mind in its pure state has the Satwic guna. In that state it is easy for us to recognise the Atmic reality. Atma is God's Chaitanya which sustains everything in the Universe. Baba says that we are all forms of the same Atma. It is the Atma that gives power to our intellect and senses. How is it that our existing Mind has become impure and behaves like a monkey? Baba says that it is due to impressions of past births and the present environment.

The trouble with our present mind is that it identifies itself with the pain and the happiness got by the body. It has developed desires. It has become crooked and it goes after temporary happiness derived from satisfying desires. Baba's present Mission seems to me to be to make us realise that we must keep the Mind aloof from contact with the senses and take it towards the Atma, which is our true self. Ego is the False Self, which is body-consciousness.

The method which Bhagavan recommends is the Bhakti Marga. He asks us to fix upon a Form of God which we respect and utter the Name of that Form with true devotion and love. He asks us to do Bhajans and Namasmarana, keeping the Form always in view. He does not want us merely to utter the Name mechanically. There must be intense Love and Devotion for the Form, so intense that we forget the false self of Ego. He instructs us also to move with good people always and avoid sensual pleasures. He is also particular that we should cultivate in our daily life the four principles, namely, Sathya Dharma Santhi and Prema. Since Bhagavan has come as the Avatar, let us all develop love and devotion to Him and obey His instructions fully. Let us utter His Name and obtain His Grace for punishing the Existing Mind which is the thief. He has come like an engine ready and prepared to drag along vehicles like us to the destination called Mukti. We have only to follow His instructions and be a vehicle attached to Him, Let us not miss this opportunity.

It is said "Mind normal is Man; Mind fast is Mad; Mind stopped is God." Let us pray to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba to grant us strength to stop this existing mind, which is the thief, and thereby give us the ticket to travel in His train.

G N Acharya

The moving Finger writes

The moving finger writes—
The fingers that play the flute in every human frame—
The moving finger writes
The history of Time and Space.
The moving finger writes
The destiny of man.
They write, they draw, they wave, they twirl
They rise and fall, full circle or arc or curve
In playful lilt or sport; but, meaningful most
Marking time, all the time, though time is but a wink
And space, a span
In Baba's Mighty Move.
What do they do, these light and lovely digits of the Lord
These active agents of Grace and Godly Majesty?
They rise—
As they rose to raise a peak against the flood
Let loose on man by a jealous god—
They rise ... and they stop a flood!
The onward marching troops of alien brood
Go reeling back, over the range of peaks!
They wave,
They pass smooth over a tormented brow, a tortured mind

They have the lotus petal touch

(The fingers held the Lotus once)
They rise in a sweep
And scatter the surging clouds.
(They wielded the Chakra once.)
The inner foes of some one He blesses
Do flee when the fingers rise to warn;
Those fingers domesticate the brutal throng.
The moving fingers write an undeciphered script
And, somewhere on this earth, tragedy becomes a tale of joy

A mother gets news of long lost son; a father learns his son is good;
The moving finger writes
Some Sadhak he seeks to bless
Sits up; and reads the symbol Om
He bows, he knows; his daze, his doubt, what name to rear
In the nursery of his heart is gone.
The Om he got when he wrote it here, is to him the only hymn.
The finger comes down quick, you are puzzled when you see!
But a monk is *hit* in a far off place
Straight on the back of his head!
He has slept the sleep of tired search
In lanes of labyrinth libraries
He wakes; he sees His Heavenly Form; He asks; is answered
He is blessed by that blow.
The fingers jerk—
The same little jerk that broke the bridal bow
The same little jerk that swished the whip on fiery battle steeds—
The fingers make a jerk ... but, now
In far off Jammu vale a poison cup is snatched from desperate hold
A loaded rod of death is shifted quick
A life revived with tonic touch.
Those fingers draw an arc—a tiny arc, on air, from where He is
And, lo, a scientist lost in the maze of doubt in
Anakara, or Prague perhaps
Sees the arc in a flash ...ah, just the thing, the size!
He uses it to fill the diagram gap...and he wins.
He earns both name and fame.
The fingers turn, not just a turn; all turns are good
When he turns them so.
For he is Mercy come as Man.
The fingers turn, they turn the scales
To favour simple faith,
To favour repentant hearts, yearning minds.
They draw, they draw lines and curves and squares on sand!
And, lo, along the lines, the sand is changed to sweetness, fragrance, holiness.
The fingers comedown in a curve

And, mark! A space ship, rocket with two aboard
Drops safe on earth, right on spot!
The fingers come down in a curve—and mark,
Auspicious things are scattered everywhere
For all who earn His Grace!
The finger rises a tiny height.
That instant, the ancient Linga of a shrine
Is rich with his picture, inside the stony sanctity
A tiny height, for all to see for ever more.
The fingers twirl and turn around
And all the spheres and stars obey
They move around so smooth, in ordained orbits true,
They calm the flood, they scotch the flame;
They direct the pilot over the Rockies peaks
To the spot where the wreckage lay.
They rise! The two fingers are wide apart and swing,
They wave in rhythmic melody
That and this, you and He, inner outer, Knower Known
Both of the self-same Hand.
The fingers doodle in the air
But, he is doodling on your heart
And, as the lines run round
The heart becomes the seat of Beauty Truth and Bliss.
Every line is a direction which reveals
The destination we miss.
The moving finger writes the history of Time and Space
The moving finger writes
The Destiny of Man.

—N. Kasturi Kavisammelan 22-10-66

Good Citizens

"Why fear when I am here?" assures Baba to each one of us, repeatedly. When He calls as for 'interview' in the Korike room at Prasanthi Nilayam or elsewhere, He is concerned with our everyday problems, about the ache in the head or stomach or the liver trouble which the doctor has pronounced incurable or even about troubles between husband and wife. He intervenes personally in difficulties and saves us from calamities. He is thus verily our true friend, philosopher and guide.

Vivekananda said that you cannot preach renunciation to beggars who have nothing to renounce; renunciation is for the haves, not for the have-nots. Baba realises that the spiritual seed cannot grow unless the soil is right and ready. With a chronic head ache or stomach ache, spiritual

practice is Impossible. First the aches that ail the body and mind must be cured. That is why He is ever so anxious to cure our bodily ills and our mental ills.

This is perhaps the most unique feature of Baba's approach to our spiritual uplift. And it is something which is necessary in a democratic age. But few teachers ancient or modern have attempted anything on a mass scale; they have always helped the individual spiritual aspirant, when he is ready. True to the spirit of the democratic age, Baba is attempting our spiritual renaissance with democratic methods. Baba is trying to make us first good citizens of the world in which we live before we can become citizens of the spiritual world.

—Dr. Narayanamurthy

Ten Days of Divine Thrill

Tens of thousands of devotees gathered at the Prasanthi Nilayam from all parts of India for the Dasara Festival this year. On the 14th Oct., Baba addressed the candidates for volunteer work and spoke to them about the principles of social service that should guide them and inspire them. "Just see how Hanuman served Rama. He was not elated that Rama assigned to him, the task of discovering Sita and conveying to her the good tidings; nor was he downhearted when he contemplated the magnitude of that task. He took it as a command which has to be obeyed; he felt that he would not have been selected, had he no qualification for it; he felt that the selection confers that qualification. With that self-confidence he leaped across the sea," He said. He advised that they should speak soft and kind, seek chances of helping the old, the sick and the distressed and welcome all with an open heart. He spoke to the selected volunteers on the 16th Oct., too, emphasising once again the need for courtesy and kindness, and asking every one to treat the period of volunteership as a Sadhana, which has to be continued even after they left Puttaparthi for home.

On the 15th inst, the First Day of Dasara, the Prasanthi Flag was hoisted by Baba on the Nilayam, after a short discourse. Baba gave Darshan from the Porch, where a special platform gave all a fuller view of Baba between two golden images of Krishna and Buddha. He spoke on the means of acquiring Prasanthi and how the whole world has to be made a Prasanthi Nilayam, by the adoption of those means. The Tenth Anniversary of the Sathya Sai Hospital Day was celebrated that evening, with Mrs. Opal Macrae of New York as the President. Dr. Thayarao, the Doctor who has recently joined the Staff proposed her to the Chair and Dr. B. Sitharamaiah the Secretary of the Hospital Committee read the Report for 65-66 in Telugu, while Dr N. Jayalakshmi, the Resident Medical Officer presented the same in English. Mrs. Macrae, who is a great social worker interested in the cure of the mentally deficient by the therapy of music had much to say from her practical experience on the attitude that a doctor must have towards the patients, especially children. She described the deep peace that envelops the hospital here and the inspiring scene of the surrounding hills. She gave examples from New York and Hong Kong clinics of the steady flow of love which awakens health; and sanity in the diseased and the Insane. She congratulated the doctors on, the opportunity they have secured to serves the sick, in the wonderfully unique Hospital. Baba, in His Discourse said, "The, therapeutic value of music was realised in India from very ancient times; music can still the waves that agitate the mind, it

was discovered. Various ragas were formed which will produce various emotional transformations. Mrs. Macrae has explained here experiences in the treatment of children and you must appreciate the patience and skill with which she planned the cure.

Death is besieging the body with an army of diseases, and the reinforcements, sent, by God alone can save the city from falling into his hands. Treat the body as an instrument for God-realisation, nothing more, nothing less. Man has come to this stage through millennia of evolution and the next stage is "illumination", "transmutation into Divinity". Man should not die as mere man, nor should he slide into bestiality, or brutishness. It requires constant effort to be aware of the core of Divinity which each one has, to be aware of it, when things go awry, rather than when things go well. It is when you are ill that drugs are needed most. But, when things go awry, man starts blaming God and neglecting Him, though he may be praying and adoring him when things are rosy. At the first touch of calamity, faith in God crumbles down. That is the pity. A parrot may sing hymns gaily, but when the cat strangles its throat, it starts screeching.

"The body should be preserved and guarded against evil only to know the glory of the Indweller. You must have heard the story of the fishes in a tank; the leader warned the rest, of the oncoming draught and the consequent threat to their lives: The tank would go dry and the fisherman would make a meal of them all. But, they refused to escape into the river and the sea. So, they died pretty soon. One's sojourn here is drying up, every minute, and the sooner one escapes into the flood of Grace and the Sea of Divine Glory, the better. Of course, there is no death; there is only journey's end, or a halt on the long pilgrimage." Baba said.

On the 17th Oct, Hon'ble Narasinga Rao, Minister for Law and Religious Endowments inaugurated the Vedapurusha Saphaha Yajna at 10 A. M. at the Prasanthi Nilayam, in the specially decorated Auditorium. Baba entered the Hall in procession along with the Minister, with the Pundits and Ritwiks and Students of the Vedasastra Pathashala all dressed in the ceremonial robes of sacrificial orthodoxy, and the air resounding to the music of Nadaswaram and Vedic Mantras. The, Minister referred to Puttaparthi as the "Holy Centre of the Twentieth Century" and extolled the Peace and Quiet as well as the atmosphere of Sadhana that sanctified the Place. He said, "The taste upon which Bhagavan has set us is far more important than the task which the country is now engaged in, namely, raising the standard of life of the people.

We find in all the advanced and advancing countries that a rise in the standard of life leads immediately to disquiet, loss of mental balance, upsurge of passions and similar calamities. India is following the same road and so, one has to lay emphasis on our age-old disciplines which tend to establish fortitude, detachment, courage and peace of mind. No effort was made in India for some years after the achievement of Independence to lay this "foundation" of progress, but, latterly, the attention of every one has been rivetted on the cultural values of this land. In this great work, Bhagavan is directing lakhs and lakhs of people towards the pathways of peace; he is giving courage and confidence to the scholars and pundits; he is opening the eyes of all to the vast treasures that lay hidden in our scriptures. These children studying the Vedas and Sastras in the Pathashala here are as important a regiment as the regiments of that other army, which guards our frontiers against the foe; they have to guard our culture against invasion and disintegration." The minister assured that the Government too will endeavour to move along the path laid down by Baba for the resuscitation of the country. For, according to him, the nation has to plan for a

moral society in addition to a prosperous society. The nations that have attained a high standard of life have accumulated various types of social diseases and crises." Baba in His Discourse said that the Vedas, the most ancient scripture of man, has laid down Rites And Yagas, just as primers contain pictures to induce children to learn letters. The letters are the main thing; the pictures are intended to helping the pronunciation and the 'deciphering of the symbols underneath. So too, the rites are only for producing discipline, clarity and purity of mind, Bhava-shuddhi as it is called. The Sanathana Dharma has all the lessons for individual liberation and social happiness; but, the cinders have been covered over by ash, which can be removed by a whiff of enthusiastic action, by the scholars and the public." The Saptaha Yajna was then inaugurated amidst the acclamation of thousands of eager participants.

The Annual Sessions of the All-India Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha was held on the evening of the 17th in the Divine Presence of the Founder President, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Brahmasri Remilla Suryaprakasa Sastry of Rajamundry spoke on the significance of the Vedapurusha Saptaha Yajna. Bhagavan is strengthening popular faith in the Vedas through the annual celebration, in correct orthodox style, of Vedic Yajnas, he said. The Vedaparayana that is part of the Yajna is declared to be good for the welfare of the World; the Vedas are full of prayers to the Gods to fill the world with happiness and wealth, both secular and spiritual. The Vedas say that people should be encouraged to worship God as manifested through Fire or the Sun or in Images or in one's own heart, according to the level of their attainments. Baba has arranged the Athirudrahoma (Offering of ritual oblations in the Fire), Suryanamaskara (Offering of Ritual Prostrations to the Sun), Rajarajeswaripuja (Offering of Floral Worship to the Image of the Mother Deity) and also the Pranava recitation, (Awakening of the Realisation of the God within), in order to arouse the various levels of attainment to the higher stage.

Baba said, "The main purpose is the purifying of the inner faculties and the saturation of the mind with holy thoughts. As Sastry said, every item of the Dasara programme, the speeches the music the dramatic shows—all are intended for this very purpose. Each individual is the heir to the empire of liberation, Mokshasamrajya, but, he feels himself poor and helpless. It is only by detachment, by renouncing sense pleasures that this empire can be won.

A green gourd sinks in water, but, a dry one floats easily. The weight of desire and attachment must disappear by the process of drying and then, you too can float happily in the waters of Samsara.

Some of you may doubt whether a few people reciting the Vedas can benefit the rest of humanity. Of course, you have to sit attentively, quietly listening and contemplating on the magnificence; just as in a family home, the master works and earns and feeds the kith and kin, so long as you are established in 'kinship' with the Person who arranges the recital, you get the benefit.

The stars which are far larger in size and shine much more brilliantly appear microscopic in size, while the moon which is far smaller, shining with borrowed light, a satellite of the earth, appears the largest in the sky and sheds much more light. When you are far from a glorious thing or person, it appears small; approach it, then its true size and splendor will reveal itself to you. The

splendor of Sanathana Dharma can be known only by studying it and practising it; not by regarding it as something that was current only in the ancient past.

On the 18th Oct, about 5000 poor people were fed sumptuously; about a 1000 women were given Saris and 600 men were given Dhotis at the Santhi Vedika, Prasanthi Nilayam, in the immediate Presence of Bhagavan, by Srimati Easwaramma Lakshminarasiah, wife of the Hon'ble Minister for Panchayat Raj, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh.

On the 19th Oct, and subsequent days, members of the Central Committee of the Akhilabharata Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha as well as other Pundits discoursed on various subjects connected with spiritual discipline. Br. Pidaparathi Krishnamurthy Sastry, Br. Chada Chynelavaru of Aukiripalle, Chathurvedi Narasimhasastry, Major Rayaningar, Sri V. K. Rao, I. C. S., Br. K. Veerabhadra Sastry all gave discourses on Baba as well as on various aspects of Baba's Teachings.

On the 20th, Br Remilla Suryaprakasa Sastry explained with reference to Vedic texts the spiritual benefits that accrue from the offering of food to the hungry and Br. Ghandikota Subrahmanya Sastry from New Delhi, (who was officiating as the Sarvadyaksha of the Vedapurusha Sapthahayajna) spoke on the Avatar of Sathya Sai Baba, declaring on the authority of texts, that He was Gayatri Saraswati and Siva-Shakti. Br. Kollur Somasekhara Sastry declared that Baba was the subject matter of all the Vedas and all spiritual roads lead to Him only.

On the 21st, four members of the Central Committee of the Sabha were honoured by Bhagavan with Golden Kankanas for the wrist; Silver Plates Shawls. Vidya Bhushana Br. Ghandikota Subrahmanya Sastry, Vedasamrat Br. Cherukumilli Kameswara. Ghanapati, Amnayavchaspathi Br. Remilla Suryaprakasa Sastry and Deivajuabhushana Sri Pidaparathi Krishnamurthy Sastry.

On the 23rd, Dr. B. Ramakrishna Rao, the Honorary President of the Sabha gave a brief report of the activities of the year, in Andhra, Madras; Mysore, Maharashtra and of the impending establishment of Branches in other States of India as well as outside.

On the 23rd and on the 24th Oct, sessions of the Kavisammelan were held in the immediate Presence of Baba. Br Deepala Pichayya Sastry, Chathurvedi Narasimha Sastry, Begum Tahira Sayeed, Vidwan B V Rama Sarma, Vidwan R Seshama Raju, and N Kasturi, read the poems they had composed and were blessed by Baba.

The members of the Bhagavata Bhakta Sumajam, Guntur, which has been taken into the fold of the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha by Bhagavan held their Thirathra Programme on 15,16 and 17th at, the Nilayam with appropriate rites and an interesting series of Harikatha Kalakshepams on Thyagaraja, Sithakalyanam, Krishnarayabhamm, and Bhaktakuchela and Tharangagana and Ashtapadigana.

On the morning of the 19th October, the residents of Prasanthi Nilayam Colony presented an Address of Welcome to Hon'ble Dr. N M Lakshminarasiah Minister, Panchayat Raj, and thanked him for the uniform kindness with which he was dealing with their demands for improving the amenities of the place. The Minister said, Baba used to change the topic to some spiritual matter,

whenever I raised the point of amenities but, I felt that it would be worth while to provide facilities for this place of international importance and as a first step, to agree to its being constituted into a separate unit, since its problems are different from that of an ordinary village. The minister placed in the hands of Baba the Gazette Notification constituting the Prasanthi Nilayam into a Township and announced that he had secured the co-operation of the Zilla Parishad also for a protected water supply scheme for the township and the village. He spoke of the atmosphere of spiritual peace that pervaded the Nilayam even during the feeding of thousands of poor people and the distribution of clothes to thousands, the previous day. Sri S. A. Krishnaswami Iyengar, Secretary to Govt. Panchayat Raj Dept also spoke a few words about the possible lines of work for the Township.

On the 21st and on the 22nd, the child artistes of the Vasant Sangeet Niketan, Bombay delighted the assembly with their sweet orchestral music. The child prodigies, under the inspiring direction of their teacher Sri J L Vasant, showed their mastery of various instruments. They won the Blessings of Bhagavan, by their innocence and skill.

The Vedapurusha Saptaha Yajna which started on the 17th came to a close on Vijayadashami Day, 23rd Oct, with the Poornahuthi, offered to the sacrificial fire, in the immediate Presence of Bhagavan. Later, Akhanda Vibhuti Abhishekam was offered to Shirdi Sai Baba and after the Avabhritisnana of the Ritwiks and Acharya of the Yajna, the Kalasatheertha was sprinkled by Bhagavan on the assembled Bhaktas. In the evening, Chaturvedi Narasimha Sastry and Kallury Veerabhadra Sastry spoke on the Bhagavatham.

Baba said that 23rd Oct was a thrice-blessed day, a Thrivenikshethra in fact, since it was the Day on which the Yajna concluded with the Poornahuthi, it was the Day marking the Vijaya or Victory of the Daivi forces over the Asuri forces, and hence named Vijayadashami; it was also the Day celebrated at Shirdi as the Day of Samadhi, when the previous Body left. The sum and substance of all that was said by Him during these days was this, said Baba: "Have tolerance towards all; be unmoved by loss or profit, good or bad, up or down." So long as man has Kama (Desire) he cannot 'have' Peace (Santhem). Therefore, the control of the mind that runs after sense-pleasures is very important. This can be done only by tying up the mind with the cord of shraddha to the post of Bhakti, feed it on the Name of the Lord and put blinkers on it so that it can see only the Form of God. It is better if the vision itself is corrected so that it sees only the truth, namely, the omnipresent Lord, rather than the distortion of variety.

On the 24th, during the Uyyalothsavam, Nidadavol Achutharamiah and party gave a thrilling musical recital (Burrakatha) on the heroic life of Karna. On the 25th Oct, Major R P. V. Rayaningar gave a discourse on the significance of some slokas from Krishnakarnamritham.

Sri. V. K. Rao, I. C. S., also spoke that day. He said, that Faith in western culture and civilisation declined when the world knew how Hitler's Germany tortured Jews in concentration camps and gas chambers and hatefully wiped off millions of them. It appeared as if all the advance in material comfort and secular knowledge has no effect on the heart which is callous to the call of Love Tolerance Service and Concord. These can come only through simple living and high thinking, as practised and taught by the sages.

Baba spoke on the need for tolerance in human communities and mutual respect among men. He said that the family of Siva is pictured in a specified manner, in order to teach man this very lesson. Siva has snakes as His jewels and ornaments; He has them on the wrists ankles shoulders neck and waist. His Son, Kumaraswamy rides on a Peacock, which is the snake's foe. His elephant-faced Son rides a Mouse, which snakes run after and eat. Parvati, the Divine Consort, rides on a Lion and the Lion is the traditional hunter after the elephant. Nor does the Lion show any kindness to the Bull, which Siva uses as His vehicle. In spite of these irreconcilable accompaniments, the Divine Family is happy and well coordinated. This is a lesson for man. When the true nature of the Atma which is the reality in man and which is the same in all beings is known, there will be no more fear or suspicion or hate or malice or envy. Mankind will be a happy united loving family.

If you hesitate which word to use, what idea to incorporate, in a poem that you write, then, it cannot be true poetry. It must come spontaneously, without strain. There should be no effort to advertise some person or an idea or ideal. No frenzy or fanaticism, or passion should appear in true poetry. Poetry must elevate, encourage, inspire, reveal. It must emerge out of disciplined, controlled living and thinking.

BABA

The Annual Report

It was during Dasara 1963 that Baba willed the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha. The universal reverence once commanded by the unique culture of this land had declined considerably; people were fast developing a distaste for practising it, due to the superior attractions of western culture and the craze for imitating it. Bhagavan felt that it was urgent to restore the underlying values of Sanathana Dharma, in this country and in the entire community of nations. So, He inaugurated this Sabha for the propagation of the precious revelations of the sages and saints of India.

The repositories of the knowledge of the texts of that Dharma and the living examples of its excellence as a guide to daily life have also come to a sad plight. They have lost the support of the rulers of the land, as well as the people themselves. They are on the brink of losing their faith in themselves and in the scholarship they represent. So, the very Lord who prompted the Dharma has come again to instill self-confidence in them and to encourage them to share their knowledge with a world that is thirsty for the nectar they have preserved so far.

When Bhagavan wills, nothing stands in the way. During this short time, the Sabha has started its valuable work of spreading the knowledge of the Vedas Sastras Upanishads and Puranas in many States of India where Branches have been formed, like Andhra, Mysore, Maharashtra, Madras. They have all chalked out a practical programme of discourses in the several towns and villages in their jurisdiction, a programme of monthly meetings where scholars expound the essential and universal teachings of the sacred scriptures.

Recently, meetings were held at Bombay when lakhs of eager citizens were able to get the Darshan of Baba and listen to His Divine Discourses. I was blessed by Baba with the good fortune of rendering into Hindi those Discourses and I am grateful for having been so chosen. Preparations are being made to have the Sabha and its activities extended to Poona, Surat and Bhavnagar, and also in the Punjab and Bengal (Calcutta). Requests have come to establish Branches from Trichinopoly, just as the one established recently in Madurai.

Even from East Africa, Hong Kong and the USA reports have come of their efforts to have branches of the Sabha so that they might know more about the Dharma of this land and of Baba and His Message of Harmony and Love. Delegations from East African Cities are now here pressing Baba to visit their Bhajan Mandalis and bless them with His Divine Discourse.

I must inform you of another development also. The Sanathana Bhagavata bhakta Samajam, Guntur which under the leadership of Br Sishta Chandramouli Sastry has a band of scholars and interpreters of Sanathana Dharma doing the work of propagating the Sanathana Dharma has now come into the fold of the Mahasabha and can look forward to a more intense programme of work in this field.

Dr. Ramakrishna Rao

Prasanthi Nilayam News

- Oct 17: Inauguration of the Annual Sessions of the Akhilabharatha Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha
20&23: Drama: Radhabhakti: by Boys of the Sathya Sai Vedasastra Patasala
23: Vijayadasami; Poornahuthi
24: Uyyalothsavam
28: Arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Margolis from USA
Nov 10: Arrival of Dr. S. Bhagavantham from Delhi
11: Deepavali: Speeches by Sri Balakrishna Eradi, Ernakulam (Kerala) and Dr. S. Bhagavantham. Discourse by Baba
13: Arrival of Miss Gena Letang from France, via Hong Kong.

Birthday Festival

The 41st Birthday of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba will be celebrated at the Prasanthi Nilayam in the Immediate Presence of Bhagavan on Wednesday, 23rd November. Intimation has been received from hundreds of villages and towns in all the Continents of the world that they are celebrating the Birthday of the Lord that day.

Bhagavata Vahini

7

Vidura continued his admonition of Dhritarashtra: You have reached this advanced age; but still, without any shame or hesitation, you are leading a dog's life. You may not be ashamed of it, but, I am. Fie upon you! Your method of spending your days is worse than that of a crow."

Dhritarashtra could not bear more. He cried, "O! Enough, enough. Please stop. You are torturing me to death. These are not the words that one brother should address another. Hearing you, I felt you are not Vidura, my brother. He would not have reprimanded me so cruelly. For, is Dharmaraja, with whom I now am, a stranger? Have I taken refuge with an alien? What is this that you are saying? Why these harsh words! Dharmaraja is fostering me with great love and care; how can you declare that I am leading a dog's life or a crow's? It is a sin—if you entertain such ideas. This is just my fate, and nothing else." Dhritarashtra bent his head and moaned.

Vidura laughed in derision. He said, "Have you no sense of shame that you should talk thus? Dharmaraja might, out of his goodness, care for you more than his own father. He might look after you with a love greater than your own sons. This is but the reflection of his character. That is but the amplification of the significance of his name. But, should you not plan for your own future? One leg of yours is already in the grave and you are blindly filling your stomach in comfort and rolling in luxury. Reflect for a moment how you tortured Dharmaraja and his brothers, to fulfil the wicked intentions of your vile sons, how you devised stratagems for their extinction. You put them in a wax house and set fire to it; you attempted to poison them. You insulted their queen in the most humiliating manner before a vast assembly. You and your abominable brood piled grief over grief on the sons of Pandu, your own brother. Blind, senile, thick-skinned elephant, you sat on the throne, perpetually asking those beside you, 'what is happening now? What is happening now?' How can you stay in this place enjoying Dharmaraja's hospitality, rolling over your mind the iniquities perpetrated by you for his destruction? When you were devising their end, did they cease to be your cousins? Or, did the cousinship emerge now, when you came to them for stay? You tell me so proudly that they are treating you well, without a shred of shame!

Why speak so much? The disastrous game of dice took place at your initiative, isn't it? Do you deny it? No. I was a witness to that game. I advised you against it then; did you take it to heart? What happened then to the love and sympathy which you are now freely pouring forth? Today, like a dog you are gulping the food the Pandavas are placing before you and leading this despicable life."

Hearing these words of Vidura which pained him like hammer-strokes, Dhritarashtra developed a dislike for his style of living. Vidura's intention was to prod him into the life of a recluse and the life of Sadhana, so that he might realise his Self before it was too late. At last, he felt that Vidura was speaking the truth and giving him a true picture of his low nature. He said, "Brother! Yes; all that you have said is true, I admit. I have realised it now. But, what am I to do? I am blind and therefore, I cannot go into the forests for Sadhana alone. I must have a companion. What shall I do? For fear that I may suffer without food, Gandhari never leaves me even for a moment."

Vidura saw that he had modified his attitude and had seen light. He emphasised his original advice. He said, "You have become blind due primarily to this attachment to the body. How long can you be burdened with it? It has to be dropped by the wayside some day, some place. Know that 'you' are not this body, this package of nauseating things. To identify yourselves with the physical frame is the sign of extreme foolishness. The body is being besieged perpetually by Death with His army of Diseases. But, you are unaware of it; you do not care for the pro and the con; you snooze your fill and snore. This drama has an end, remember. The curtain has to come down. So hie towards some holy place without delay and meditate on God and save yourself. Let death come and carry away your body there; that is the most excellent end. Do not die like a dog or fox, somewhere, somehow. Arise and go; develop detachment. Give up this delusion, escape from this house."

Thus was planted in his heart the seed of renunciation. Dhritarashtra pondered long and broke into tears. His lips quivered. He moved his hands from side to side to contact Vidura. At last, he held his hands and said, Vidura! What can I say to you who gave this most valuable advice, advice that is certain to promote my best interests? Though you are younger in age, your Jnana makes you senior to all of us. You have full authority to speak as you like. Do not consider me as someone outside your circle. Hear me with patience. I shall certainly follow your advice." He then began to describe his condition to his brother.

"Vidura," he began, "How can I leave from here, without informing Dharmaraja who is looking after me, with more care than even a son? It won't be proper to do so. Then, he might insist on coming along with us; his nature is such. You must save me from this dilemma. Take me to a place where I can engage myself in Sadhana."

When he pleaded thus, Vidura replied, "Your words sound strange. You are not going into the forest to eat banquets, to witness carnivals, or to enjoy true beauty of the scenery. You are giving up everything with a full sense of detachment. You are taking up a life of austerity and spiritual discipline. And, in the same breath, you are talking of 'taking leave' of kith and kin! This is odd. You resolve to lay down the body in the pursuit of the Ideal, but, you are considering how to get the permission of men who are related to you through the body. These bonds cannot help Sadhana. They can never liberate you. Bundle them up and sink them deep. Move out of this place with just the clothes you wear. Do not waste a single moment of your life."

Thus, Vidura advised him without mercy; he did not change the tune of his song; he emphasised the importance of immediate renunciation. Dhritarashtra was on his bed listening intently and ruminating on the next step. He said, "Vidura, what you say is quite true. I need not describe to you my special difficulties. This body is decrepit; these eyes are blind. I must have some one at least to guide my steps, isn't it? Your sister-in-law has 'blinded' her eyes by a bandage, in order that she can share my handicap and suffer similarly. How can we two blind persons move about in the forest? We have to be dependent on others all our lives."

Vidura saw the tears rolling down the cheeks of the old man; he pitied his plight, but, he never revealed his pity. He said assuringly, "Well, I am prepared to take you to the forest; I am ready. What greater pleasure have I than releasing you from here, for this sacred purpose? Come, Arise,

Start." Vidura stood up. Dhritarashtra too rose from his bed and stood on the floor. Gandhari too stood by his side, with a hand on his shoulder. She pleaded, "Lord, I am also coming with you, ready for anything."

But, Dhritarashtra said, "O, it is very hard to guard women in the jungle. The place is infested with wild beasts and life there is bound to be full of privation." He spoke in this strain for a long time. But, she argued that she could not desert her lord, that she could stand the privations as much as he, that it was her duty to continue serving him until her death, that she was only following the tradition set up by the gems of Indian womanhood, that it is not Dharma to prevent her from observing her Dharma, that life in the zenana without him would be unbearable for her, that she would welcome instead life in the jungle with her lord and demanded permission to accompany him.

Dhritarashtra was silent; he did not know what to say. It was Vidura who spoke. This is not the time to discuss the niceties; how can this lady who never stayed away from you a single moment, suddenly leave your company and live apart? It is not proper. Let her also come; we shall take her. For those who march forward to do austerities, there should be no fear or delusion, no hunger or thirst, no grief or suffering. It is not Tapas (asceticism) to complain of these or anticipate these. When the body itself is being disowned, what can privations do? Come, there is no justification for delay." Vidura moved forward, leading Dhritarashtra, silently followed by Gandhari who had her hand on his shoulder. The saintly votary of God, Vidura, took the pair unnoticed by the guards and the citizens through the side streets and out beyond the city limits. He hurried them on so that they may reach the forest before dawn. But, the Ganga had to be crossed in a boat and no boatman was there to take them across before sunrise. So, they had perforce to wait on the bank of that holy river. Vidura made them rest for a while in a bower and himself arranged for a boat to take them all to the other bank in the dark.

(To be continued)

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

The physical eye, not even an inch long with a small black dot in the middle is able to see stars that are millions and billions of miles afar; how much more powerful then must be the spiritual inner eye? Imagine how deep it can penetrate into the mysteries of the Aspire to acquire that eye.

—Baba

The Nature of Godhead

In the Krishna Yajurveda, there is a chapter named, Satharudreeyam. It is also called, Rudradhyaya and Namovaaka. Usually it is referred to as Namakam. In this, the Lord is described as all this variety, manifested in the Universe. In the chapter called Chamakam that follows, attempt is made to maintain perpetual contact with such a Lord. Every word in the Namaka becomes a Mantra. Bhaskara Bhatta In his Commentary on the Vedas has demonstrated this fact clearly.

Again, in the Purusha Suktha, it is stated that the entire Universe Is God and nothing else, nay, that the Universe is but a part of Him. In Sri Suktha, Durga Suktha and other similar suktas the Might or Power of the Lord denoted as Lakshmi or Durga is praised and adored.

The Vedas contain recommendations or commands about certain types of behaviour or conduct or certain acts; they also state the good arising from the observance and the evil arising from its omission. They have also many short narratives and episodes to strengthen faith and encourage action, called Upakhyanas. Other parts extol Brahmavidya. The acts and rituals are recommended through various arguments, chief among them being that they are pleasing to the Gods, who are praised in that context. There are also some reprimands for those who do not care to perform the rituals or who deride them. All acts that keep man away from God and bring obstacles in the way of the service of God are condemned.

The Vedas are very difficult to understand without the help of commentaries; without knowing the meaning, it is purposeless to read or recite the Vedas; it is said to cause even grief, if it is so recited. It is said that the Lord alone is aware of all the Vedas and their meanings. Nahi anyah Pundareekaakshaath Vedam vyaakhyaathumarhathi: The Lord alone has the authority to comment on the Vedas. The Vedas are infinite. They have infinite expanse and infinite branches. Hence, Sri Sankaracharya has referred to the Vedas as Sarvajnakalpa. The Lord alone is Sarvajna; He alone revealed them and their meanings, to the purified intuitions of the sages. These sages were of Satwic temperament and purified by rigorous asceticism. Formerly, the Vedas with their thousand Sakhas were studied along with their meaning and significance. Later, one Sakha with the complementary six angas came to be studied. Now, the meaning is neglected and only one Sakha is studied. Formerly, an austere life of mendicancy was highly recommended for the student of the Vedas; later, they had to live on the offerings in rituals; now, food earned through servitude or trade is the means!

In the Krita-yuga, Dharma stood on the four, legs of Tapas, Jnanam, Yajnam and Danam. In the subsequent Treta-yuga, since Tapas declined, Dharma had to sustain itself on three legs. In the Dwapara-yuga, Jnanam declined and so Dharma had to totter on the two legs of Yajna and Dana. Now in this Kaliyuga, Yajna has disappeared and so Dharma is having the precarious support of only one leg, Dana. Even that leg is afflicted with the gangrene of improper or illegal acquisition, the scabies of unbelief and neglect, the thorns of lust and anger, and so Dharma is unable to stand at all; it is in perpetual danger of falling and failing. It is very hard for people of this age to grasp the significance of the Vedas if the meaning is given succinctly. Therefore, Vidyananda, like Mallinatha for the Raghuvamsa, wrote the meaning for every single word of the Vedas. Persons who are well versed in this commentary are also becoming rare today. Hence Brahmananda Saraswathi has separated the scholars who know the meaning of the Vedas as Vedaveththas and those who know only the recitation of the text as Vedapataks.

In the Gita, Bhagavan has said that when the Vedas decline, the world will naturally forget Him and so, the Lord Himself will come down as Man in order to, save man from perdition. The Sathya Sai Baba Form is thus the Lord Himself. He has resolved to revive the Vedas before they are lost; this is the greatest piece of good fortune for us. This heroic endeavour of swimming against the current of the times is possible only for the Divine Phenomenon.

Br. Kolluri Somasekharu Sastry

You have to sweep your room everyday, for dust, dirt and scrap accumulate and lie thick. To make the room neat and healthy, this process has to be done with scrupulous regularity. So too, sweep the mind free from the dirt and dust of unhealthy desires and the cobwebs of doubt. Do Sadhana (Japam and Dhyana) regularly.

—Baba

The Voice of the Heart

There is no fear while He is so near;
Still, my eyes arc, filled with tears!
O—they are tears of joy, not grief.

Sometimes it looks as if, He does not glance at me
But, no it is a gesture of grace and care!
Even the absence of the glance.

From today, I shall have no despair,
No trace of frustration
I bid good-bye to grief.

Like a fresh-blown rose
In whose lap there smiles the charming spring,
In His shimmering Robe,
His Robe—the banner of peace—!
The air is rich with fragrance
And joy. The world is fairer far
With a new brilliance of colour.

O Comrades! With what shall I compare Him,
I pray. The full moon is dim—
Before His dazzling face.
In His lotus palm, there is the healing balm
For all the burns of life.
Do you adore the Formless in the Form?—
Question the disputants, but, leave alone
The dispute; I am already prey.

How I long to behold the charm
Imbibe and fill, recall, meditate
Through all the days of life—
Alas, Tahira, do you realise

That life is too short for this?
Urdu Original recited at Kavisammelan by Bano Tahira Sayeed; Dasara, 1966

Every one—whatever the sex or caste or race or place of birth—has the right to recite the Pranava. The only qualification needed is 'an awareness of the meaning of that great Symbol'. Just as G and O and D give the sound God, the sounds of A and U and M result in the sound OM. It must be pronounced correctly and with the mind fixed on the sense.

—Baba

The Pole Star

The pure heart shines with a faultless brilliance. Sweet love grants unblemished joy. Goodness is the most efficacious specific for the illness that lays humanity low. Goodness is the reservoir of even immortality. Attach yourself to goodness fully and you can renounce all sorrow. Goodness confers great contentment; Ananda confers great freedom from fear. In fact, when life becomes merged in the thought of God, it is fixed on the Pole Star.

Man is the child of Immortality. All men are brothers, for all are sparks of the same Divine Flame, All are fundamentally Atman; the love for the Atman and the endeavour to realise it are the birthright of each individual. There must be mutual love and there must be universal Ananda, resulting from this mutual love.

But, today, the happenings are quite contrary to this state of things. What shall we say of human behaviour, what shall we say of the daily bickerings and troubles? What of the conflict of opinions and arguments? What of the lootings and killings? What is the cause of all this? All are our own; all are ourselves. We are pointing the knife against ourselves; is this a sign of purity of mind? What has happened to the injunction laid down in the Vedas, "Sathyam vada; dharmam chara?"

Each person aspires to be happy and to have peace of mind. With this in view, each one engages himself in various activities. But, both happiness and peace evade him and play hide and seek with him. But, does man give up the search? No. Like atop, he turns round and round to capture them. Still, they elude him.

What is the reason for this state of affairs? "Is it defective effort, or the very law of activity? Or, is it the fundamental nature of the world itself? Or, is this failure due to the spirit of the times? No; a little thought will convince that no one of these surmises is true. The real cause is "absence of faith in the victory of the good." That faith can come only with the growth of devotion to God.

At present, there are many who declare they will reform the world. They have the intention to reform and they endeavour hard. They shout from platforms, thumping the tables, that the world

is in a bad condition and that they have the remedy ready, with them. But, the result of their efforts make the world more seriously ill.

How can purity be attained by lectures? They propose to cleanse the community by means of more money; how can money improve morals? The Five Year Plans have followed one after another; but, the rot remains. The evil has become heightened. The atmosphere has become fouler and fouler.

What is to be done next, to improve matters? Is the diagnosis wrong, or is the drug not available? The fault lies in wrong diagnosis and wrong treatment. The illness is unlimited freedom. That has brought about the state of uncontrolled passions and the resort to weapons of destruction. Liberty has to be enjoyed within certain limits; otherwise it becomes licence or even licentiousness. The limits of liberty are called disciplines. The discipline has to be exercised in all fields of activity. Absence of this discipline has led to the sad plight of the country today.

Before man decides to lead others and to prescribe for the world, he must learn to have command over himself and his emotions and passions and be at peace with his own Inner urges. He should win a victory over his inner foes; then only can the outer foes be defeated.

The effort to establish peace is so gigantic today but, the result, the concrete result is very little.

Well; the world itself is a mystery to man. It is beyond the reach of human intellect and imagination. And, each man is a fragment of that mystery. Of course there are some who have seen through the nature of the world and have succeeded in realising its true condition. But, man neglects such sages. What then can he do, to live in peace upon it? Eat and then, you know the taste. Enter and then you know the depth. Consult them and then, you get a true sense of values.

The wheel of time revolves relentlessly with no interval. The evil of one day emerges as the good of another day; the morals of one sect becomes in the eyes of another, immoral. What is right for one is wrong for another. One man's foe is another's friend. Caught in this trap of duality man swings like a pendulum, unaware of the underlying unity; he struggles with many a fall, many a blind search, stumbling along the track of life. He weeps and laughs, he rejoices and regrets, he halts and hastens—since the beginning of his history. This is the tale of man's sojourn on this world. But, however hard the track, he must sooner or later reach the Summum Bonum, the Paramapada that is the inescapable destiny.

Man must know this high destiny and steadily walk the path of Sadhana; he must pull down the obstructing walls. He must develop the great and unifying quality of love and approach all with brotherliness. That gives man the supremest happiness and peace. For Atmashanti, (Peace of Mind) there is no better instrument than Viswaprema (Universal Love).

One other point. Imitation can never form the basis of progress. To take pride in imitating others is the first step in spiritual fall. It weakens one's discrimination and reasoning power. It cuts at the very root of liberty. The aim of the Hindu way of life, of the Hindu culture and of the rules laid down for the Hindu is very significant and full of meaning. It is nothing less than directing the entire consciousness towards higher values and ultimately, towards God.

MY BABA JI!

My Baba Ji!
I have come to know about you.
That you have come
To wash the karmic sins and their stains.

My soul cries, (but, fate chides;)
"If I ever come back to home again!"
Ah! the sweet home—
The home which knows no sorrows and their pains.

You are what Gita declares:
The One who comes to save;
One with the cosmic—the cosmic yourself—
The wish- the hope- the realization.

Ah! you have come to testify
What is India- and what she has been:
The land of the sages and the saints.
The land of rishis and maharishis,
The land of yogis and mahayogis,
The land of avatars and Mahaavatara.

Ajit Singh Gill, Salt Lake City, Utah, USA

Birthday for the Eternal

"The world is on the brink of a volcano of fear; it is shivering in the shadow of war, caused by the promptings of hate and greed. At this desperate hour Baba has come to give strength hope and courage to humanity. He has come to re-establish love and righteousness among men and to delineate the limits of behaviour and conduct among men and communities of men." said Dr B Ramakrishna Rao, while addressing the vast concourse of devotees that had gathered at the Prasanthi Nilayam, at 8 A.M. to witness the Hoisting of the Prasanthi Flag on the Nilayam, by Bhagavan, to mark the Inauguration of the Birthday Celebrations, on 23rd November. "On one side, we see the growth of mutual distrust, of factions and recriminations, of patent injustice; but, on the other, we take comfort from the advent of Bhagavan which is in augury indicating that the golden age is not far" he said.

Baba in His Divine Discourse, said that man has vast skills and capacities by which he can remould the world, and make it a heaven. He can win immortality for himself and win undying bliss; but, he has taken a wrong turn in his march towards the goal and so, he is wandering helpless and forlorn in the wilderness of grief, pain and despair. He is everywhere suffering from the illness: wickedness. The only cure for this is "spiritual discipline."

Sathyam Sivam and Sundaram are the characteristics of the Atma which is the core of every one. They mean: Truth Joy and Beauty. Follow the Karmamarga with the harmony and charm of "Sundaram"; follow the Bhakti-marga with the exhilaration and joy of Sivam; follow the Jnanamarga with the directness and steadfastness of Sathyam. All three are needed for success. Bhakti without Jnana and Karma will be hollow and directionless as a balloon. Karma without Jnana and Bhakti will be as barren as a plastic fruit. Jnana without Karma and Bhakti will be as monstrous as a body with bloated head and tiny trunk, and limbs. Above all, there should be practice, not simply, scholarship or precept. A man once went on a pilgrimage with a ganja plant in his hand; at the end of the pilgrimage, he wept that the ganja plant had not turned into a tulsi plant, though he had immersed it in all the holy teerthas and rivers which he had come across. External worship and devotional acts serve only to impress others; they leave no impression on the mind of the doer himself. Bharatmata is the embodiment of Shanti, Sathya, Dharma and Prema. The Vedas enjoin on you that you should revere the Mother as divine; in this case, reverence should result in your becoming imbued with Sathya, Dharma, Shanti and Prema. Baba explained how the Prasanthi Flag symbolised these four great qualities that every Indian must cultivate as his heritage so that the world can benefit thereby.

At 10 A. M., Baba gave Darshan at the gaily decorated Auditorium where about 10,000 people had assembled. The ceremony of anointment was gone through there, with the mother, brothers and sisters taking part in the function. Then, Baba went among the Bhaktas, conferring on each the fortune of touching His Feet and placing in the hands of each one of the thousands gathered there a 'laddu' as a Birthday Gift. It was nearly 3 P. M. when Baba returned to the Nilayam after this unique programme of Grace'.

At 4-30 P. M., at the assembly of the Bhaktas, Sri Chidananda Nagarkar, Principal of the Music College, of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, placed In the Lotus Hands of Baba the Hindi Book, "Sathyam Sivam Sundaram", being the translation by him of the Life of Baba. He spoke in Hindi for a few minutes on the Message of Baba to suffering humanity. Then, Sri Pinge, read the Marathi Padyarathnamala, being the Birthday Offering of the Sathya Sai Study Circle, Dadar Bombay. Baba spoke on the efficacy of the Name for self-realisation. All misery is caused by the flux of Samsara. Samsara is a tree that can be destroyed only by the axe of discrimination. It can be reduced to ashes, only by the fire of Jnana, Jnana of the Universal and the Eternal. This Jnana is promoted by the repetition of the Name, with the attention concentrated on the significance. The mind can be freed from attachment and the consequent sorrow (and temporary elation), by performing all tasks as dedicatory offerings to the Lord. In the mind thus cleansed, the Countenance of the Lord who is resident within can be clearly reflected. He who has no support to hold fast is liable to fall; so too, he who has no faith in God is deprived of an unfailing support during the storms of disappointment and despair or even exultation at petty successes. Having that faith transforms man into a fearless individual. Scholarship is useful only when you intend to

teach; for your own development in the spiritual field, control of the diverse pursuits of the mind and steady discipline are enough.

At 8 P. M., Baba sat in the flower-bedecked jhoola at the earnest entreaties of thousands of devotees. The famous clarinet artiste, Sri A. K. C. Natarajan of Trichinopoly gave a recital of Karnatak Music; then Brahasri Peddinti Dikshith Das enlightened and entertained the assembly by his 'Harikatha' on Bhagavan Sri-Sathya Sai Baba.

"On the evening of the 24th, Brahasri Sishta Chandramouli Sastry, President of the Sanathana Bhagavata Bhakta Samajam (Krishna: Guntur) spoke on the magnitude of the Bhakti of Hanuman, with various quotations from the Ramayana and other texts. Baba declared that every one is entitled to the Crown of his own inner Glory, but, he has to win it by means of victory over the six foes, and ascend the throne with Satwaguna as the Prime Minister. This Guna can be won by a mind freed from sensual attractions. Referring to Hanuman and His adherence to Ramanama, Baba said that the Nama "Rama" consists of three sounds, bijas as they are called, Ra Aaa and Ma. Man's grief is due to three causes: (1) Sins (2) The darkness of ignorance (3) and the agony of disappointment caused by frantic pursuit of sense pleasures. The name Rama is the cure for all these three, for, Ra is the bijakshara of Agni or Fire, and so, it burns all sin into ash. The akshara Aaa is the bija of the Sun or Surya and so, it dispels darkness. The sound Ma is the bijakshara of the Moon or Chandra and the cool moonlight serves to allay the agony of disappointment. So, the Name Rama is held to be supreme among the names of God. Speaking about the apparently hard times that devotees of the Lord have and the travails they undergo, Baba said, "The human eye can see stars that are millions of miles away, but, it cannot see itself. For that, it needs a mirror. The mirror is a piece of glass with a reflecting screen of black, painted on one side. So too, it is only when the black screen of travail is painted that one can see oneself as one is."

At 8 P. M. that day, a very charming dance programme was given by little Radhika and Neeraja, six years and four years old, daughters of Sri S. K. P. Padmanabhan, of Salem.

On the 25th November, at the evening assembly, Sri Indulal Shah, the President of the Sathya Sai Seva Samiti, Bombay addressed the gathering in Hindi, on the main points of Bhagavan's Message for the revival of Dharma and the establishment of Peace in the individual and in society. Brahasri Kuppa Bairagi Sastry and Deepala Pichayya Sastry spoke on the Glory and Characteristics of the Avatars and explained how the Sastras afford confirmation of the Divinity of Baba. Baba in His Concluding Discourse said that while other religions attempted to make man a better man, individually and socially, the Sanathana Dharma based on the Vedas attempted to make man into God, manava into Madhava, Nara into Narayana. He said that God cannot respond though His Name is uttered by the tongue, while the doors of the heart remain closed. Discrimination alone can reveal the absurdity of identifying oneself with the body. That is why the ceremony of initiation into spiritual life called Upanayana consists in teaching the initiate the Gayatri mantra, which invokes God to arouse the discriminating capacity, the Dhee-shakti.

Referring to the Ramayana, which the Sastris had quoted from, Baba said the entire Ramayana is built upon the Krodha (Anger) of Manthara and the Kama (Lust) of Surpanakha, two minor

characters is the epic. He then spoke of the Ramayana which each one is going through, namely, this life upon the earth. He said that anger and lust, Krodha and Kama are the prime forces of the human story and they have to be stilled, so that it may not end in tragedy.

That night too, the Salem Sisters entertained the assembly with some more delightful dances.

Thus the Birthday Festival, the celebration of the Advent of the Avatar was an experience of joy and Wisdom, which will remain engraved in letters of gold in the hearts of all who participated in it.

On the 26th November, Baba inaugurated at 5 P. M. the Public Library at Bukkapatnam, sponsored by the Library Department of the Andhra Pradesh Government. Baba passed through the main street of Bukkapatnam in procession accompanied by Sri Raghava Reddy, the Deputy Director of Library Department and Sri. T. Ramachandra Reddy the Chairman of the Zilla Parishad. At the Public meeting held in the village, thousands had gathered to have His Darshan and to hear His Discourse. Baba pointed out that a Library by itself would not be a great acquisition without the practice of virtue as laid down in the best of books. Reading, without getting the urge to improve ones character, behaviour, and attitude, without humility reverence and loving service only makes the head a library. It does not conduce to better and happier living. He asked the organiser to select for the Library books that do not excite the emotions and passions and books that do not dull reasoning power, that is to say, Rajasic and Tamasic Literature. He spoke of the increasing volume of such books and cautioned against the danger that comes of placing these in the hands of people. He said that villages must get rid of factions and villagers should learn to work together for the common good.

Nine paths lead to the Grace of the Lord, say the Sastras. They are, Shravanam (Listening to His Glory) Kirtanam (Extolling His Glory oneself). Vishnusmaranam (Keeping the Lord and His Glory ever in the memory) Padasevanam (Worshipping His Feet) Vandanam (Adoring His Image and His devotees) Archanam (Ritual worship) Dasyam (Service) Sneham (Developing the attitude of a companion and comrade of the Lord) and Atmanivedanam (Dedication of oneself to the Lord). They are the paths that lead one to the goal. Each individual must aspire for the Grace of God. That Grace will endow joy here and hereafter. But, unhappy man gets involved in the agitations of his mind and intoxicates himself with ignorance and so he denies himself the joy of basking in the Grace of God. In India, the special sacredness of humans birth and the ways of making it fruitful have been known since ages. But, few realise this and benefit by it.

Nowadays, idol-worship which is considered a valuable discipline by Hindus, is being ridiculed. This is a big error. For, as a cup or some other vessel is needed to drink milk, so too to imbibe the Grace of the Lord a vessel called Idol is necessary. The Idol is a means and not the end; it is the outer form, the inner content is Divinity. Western critics laugh at idol worship and say that Hindus reduce God into stone; but the truth is, Hindus elevate stone into God. God is the seat of Illumination; He scatters all darkness of Ignorance. That is why Sri Sankaracharya said Bhaja Govindam (Extol the Glory of Govinda) Bhaja Govindam Bhaja Govindam, Moodha Mathe! (O Mind that is immersed in the sempiternal darkness of ignorance).

There was a pilgrim once who reached a jungle at nightfall. He found that he had to go through five miles of jungle before he could get shelter in a village. He had a small lantern in the hand; he lighted it, but found to his dismay that the flicker could light only a yard ahead of him. How can I walk five miles with the help of this tiny circle of light, he lamented. A wise man passed that way and saw his plight. "My dear fellow, hold that lantern in the hand and walk on. You can go five miles or fifty, and always you will be in the circle of light around the lantern." So too, on a raft made of two logs tied together, a man can safely cross the ocean. The instrument may be small, but, the work it can do may be out of all proportion to its size. A small torch will help a man to pass through a thick forest. So, do not think that the Name of the Lord is just a mutter of a syllable or two. Though small, through it the Principle of Divinity can be realised. A tiny seed contains within itself the potency to produce the huge tree.

The Sastras say that in the Krita Age, man was able to achieve liberation through Dhyana, in the Treta Age, through Yajna, in the Dwapara Age through Archana and in this Kali Age, He can reach the goal through Namasmaranam, constant dwelling on the Name of the Lord. It is not enough if you know the Glory of the Name; it would be like the knowledge of the vitamins that a tablet contains. That knowledge cannot cure; swallow it; let it be assimilated; then, the tablet will cure. Mere exercise for the tongue is no good; feeling too must saturate the Name and the brain must be reminding one of the Name. Then is the joy complete.

Everyone craves for Shanti, but, performs acts that lead to the opposite end, A-Shanti. He desires Peace and courts worry. He plants the Cotton tree and looks forward to the Mango fruit. One must know how to earn what one needs. I am amused when I see man behaving like this. He is like the bird that sees the lump of flesh and hops towards it, unaware of the net which is laid to trap it. Man is unaware of the trap, of His being bound. Through the contemplation of the Nama of the Lord, He can escape from the net. But, for the Name to liberate Him, His heart must be rendered pure. Otherwise like the untinned copper vessel which turn food cooked into poisonous stuff, the vicious heart will turn all discipline into springs of dire pain.

People read the Ramayana from beginning to end continuously for 50 or 60 years, but, they do not evince even an iota of the devotion of Hanuman. They make no attempt to bring the Ramayana into their daily life. They discourse on the Bhakti of Hanuman or of the Radha or they talk loud and long on Chaitanya, but, of what they speak, they do not practice a bit. They sing songs on the Glory and the grace of God. Even radio receiver sets do; and tape recorders also sing. God seeks sincerity and steady faith, not outer pomp and show.

A king once ordered a building contractor to bring Him fine straight smooth timber, without any knots; the poor fellow searched in all the depots throughout the land but could not find the timber without the knots, though He could procure a few lengths of smooth round wood. At last, He saw a plantation of bananas and there saw the tall straight smooth round knotless timber he was looking for. He brought the banana trunks to the king, but, He derided Him for His stupidity, for, though the outer qualities were there in the banana trunks, the inner strength and stamina were not there. Similarly, the Lord too looks more for the inner purity and strength.

Of course, it is good to yearn for Anandam; but you must know also the means by which it can be acquired. Death awaits at every step and you must be conscious of the urgency of the

endeavour. A farmer yearned to take up more land for cultivation and He went to Tungabhadra area and the Nagarjunasagar area in search of land for cultivation. Finding that the price of land there was very high, He went to Northern India. He learnt that in a Himalayan state, good land was cheap and easily available. So He proceeded thither. The Raja promised to give Him all the land that He could walk around from sunrise to sunset on a single day. So, in His uncontrollable greed, He rose with the sun and without wasting a minute for breakfast, He walked fast indeed, He ran very fast in order to cover as much land as He could. He never took a second's rest; He was happy that He could get a pretty vast area free: when the Sun was about to set, He was within a few paces of the point from where He had started. He was too exhausted to take even the few steps He needed; He fell down on the ground He coveted so much and breathed His last. His heart could not stand the strain of walking so fast, so long, with such hurry and tension. At last, He got only six feet of ground for His grave. Greed spelt His doom. In spiritual matters too people have this greed. They are immersed in worldly tumult for 23 hours and 55 minutes, they remember God for 5 minutes only (when some fear overtakes them, it may be a few minutes more), but, expect God to set right all their problems. To become pure enough to deserve Grace, you have to remember God, whenever you get the chance, wherever you get the prompting.

Singing hymns makes the remembrance more vivid and the heart melts at the awareness of God's Glory, when praise is poured through music. The Lord has announced to Narada, "Wherever my Bhaktas sing, I install Myself." The Lord loves harmony, melody, and music. The name when sung attracts more. Beat, the time, sing in tune. Birds that perch on a tree fly away when you clap hands beneath it and shout. So too, to drive away the birds of Lust Anger Greed Attachment Pride and Hate that perch on the tree of your self, beat the time with both palms and shout, O Rama! O Krishna!—that is enough; that saves the time needed to cleanse the area of the mind also.

The chance to realise God must be fully utilised. Of course, one must know the method and means the marga. You may have a knife; but remember the knife is to be used for slicing fruit or cutting vegetables for the dinner. It is not to be used for cutting open one's own neck. So too, do not use the chance of this human career to ruin oneself; use it to liberate oneself.

The Namam (Name) is the Nava (Boat) by which you can cross the sea of life; so, take care to see that it springs no leak, through Kama, Krodha and the rest. These gunas cause leaks in the heart; so, if you have them, even Grace when poured into it by God will fall through and go to waste. So, one has to be extra vigilant. I have said often that the mind is like the lens of a camera. Point it towards any object and click; it will create the impression on the plate. It is for you to choose the good and reject the bad. Try to merge with the vast, the magnificent, the Universal. When a glass of water is poured into the sea, it is transformed into seawater. Do not pour it into the drain pit, for, it will become drainage water.

Again, spiritual discipline has to be practiced regularly every day; it is like sweeping and dusting the floor of the home. A day's neglect means accumulation of more dust. The altar of the heart will be clean if Sadhana is regular. "Sarvada (Always) Sarvakaaleshu (At all times) Sarvatra (At all places) Harichintanam (Remembrance of God)", say the Sastras. You may not have any other resource, but, the strength derived by the repetition of the Name is resource enough.

To slake ones thirst, all the waters of the Ganges is not necessary; a glass is enough. For the cure of disease of "birth-death," the tablets of Nama are enough. They are like the B12 tablets now being given for various illnesses. The name is a panacea; there is no need to seek another, it has sufficient efficacy.

Samsara is the taranopaya; remembrance of the Name of the Lord is the means of liberation. Take the instance of Narada. Someone asked Him why He was continuing to recite the Name of the Lord even though He had access to Kailasa and Vaikuntha and He had won the Grace of the Lord in full measure. Narada replied, "What greater Anandam can I have?" When Tukaram was walking along repeating 'Ram, Ram', some passer by asked Him, "What do you hope to get by this incessant repetition? Is it Kailasa or Vaikuntha?" He replied, "I do not know what is meant by Kailasa or Vaikuntha; I only know that Ramanam gives me Heavenly Bliss". When the heart beats to the tune of Ramanam, that is heaven, indeed.

(From Baba's Divine Discourse)

Grace Abounding

It is only a few years since I heard of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. I came to know of Him through my son who is employed at a place near Puttaparthi. Though I had occasion to hear about His Mahimas, I was not tempted to put faith in them. On the first day of March, 1965, my son attended the Sivaratri Festival and he sent me a description of the Akhanda-vibhuti-abhishekam and the Lingodbhavam; he also sent me Prasadam. This induced me to go over to Prasanthi Nilayam in May but, unluckily, Baba was not present there.

My son attended the Gurupoornima Festival on 27-7-65 and during the interview, Baba told him(!) "Your mother has three stones in the bladder; they give her great pain; I shall give you medicine; send them to her," and He gave him 10 packets of Vibhuti. He kept 2 for himself and sent the remaining 8. The moment she took the parcel from the Postman, the bells in the Chandramouliswara Temple near my residence rang of themselves! So, she was overjoyed and she started taking them in great confidence. During the past 6 years, she had under gone treatment in many hospitals, with no benefit at all. She had swellings as big as cucumbers and unbearable pain. When the 8 packets were finished, the pain ceased, and the swelling subsided, though there was some sign of one of the 3; we attributed it to the fact that 2 of the 10 packets were held back.

Meanwhile, I went to Prasanthi Nilayam in August and Baba was all kindness to me. He created Vibhuti for me and blessed me. I realised that He was the Lord Himself. I placed His Picture in the shrine and started worship in orthodox style. The day after Dasara, when we were all engaged in Bhajan, the unhealed third swelling started giving my wife excruciating pain; we were helpless; we continued recitation of Sai Nama. Just then a little boy of 10 or 11 appeared and approaching her, hit her abdomen with his tiny palm three times, repeating 'Baba, Baba!' We could not, see him again. She was completely cured and began moving about as usual.

Later, I developed diabetic carbuncle; It was operated on; I returned home from hospital. But, two others emerged by the side of the old one and grew fast into major boils; I suffered much and my bed was surrounded by kith and kin, who despaired of my life and tried to shift me to hospital. They left me at 11 P. M. and at 1 A.M., Baba appeared at my bedside! He stroked my back, saying, "Do not go anywhere. There is no fear; it is all over." At the same time, He appeared before my wife and gave her the same assurance. I fell off into deep sleep and when I awoke, the boils had disappeared (!) with not even a trace left (!) We were thrilled at this sign of Divine Grace.

Every Thursday, we recite the 108 flames of Sri Sathya Sai Baba and do Special Puja. On the First Day of January, 1966, while we were engaged thus in full sight of all, a small packet of Vibhuti fell from nowhere (!) in front of Baba's Picture! I took it up, pressed it on my eyes, opened it and placed small quantities on the tongues of all present. It was extraordinarily Sweet (!) and wonderfully fragrant (!) For hours, the tongue was tingling with the heavenly taste.

Baba saves and blesses those who pray to Him. He has come to rescue those who call on the Lord with a sincere heart; He is the Lord Himself.

Kopparapu Galakrishnamurthi

Prasanthi Nilayam News

- November 23-25: Birthday Festival
25: Pictorial Exhibition on Baba's Message at Jamshedpur.
26: Inauguration of the Public Library at Bukkapatnam, by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.
- December 4: Arrival of Mrs. Jaclyn from U S A
10: Arrival of Mrs. Jasmin from Canada
11: All Kerala Sathya Sai Devotees' Convention at Ernakulam, Kerala
11-12: Prasanthi Dharmothsavam, at Davanagere, Mysore: Principal Dharwadkar presides.